

Hart Hotel, Baker, Florida

Volume 34, Number 10

October 2007

The October Meeting

Tuesday, October 23, 2007, 9:30 a. m.

A Field Trip to the Baker-Block Museum

Baker, Florida

Agenda for Visit to Baker-Block Museum

- **9:30 a. m.:** leave from the McMillan Museum in Brewton.
- **10:30 a. m.:** arrive at the Baker-Block Museum in Baker.
- **10:30 a. m.-1:00 p. m.:** Tour of the Museum and free time in the Museum.
- **1:00 p. m.:** Lunch at the Gator Café in Baker.

The Museum

According to the website The Baker-Block Museum Journal (<http://www.rootsweb.com/~flbbm/baker.htm>), the Baker-Block Museum was completed and opened to the public in July 1996.

The Museum is located in what was once the old General Store. Built in



Postcard of Baker, postmarked Cobb, Fla. The date is Oct. 16, 1911. Cobb, original name of Baker. Picture courtesy of Baker-Block Museum collection..

1908, the building is described as "located where cattle once were penned awaiting shipment by rail to market."

Baker, Florida

The website on the Museum gives this information on the history of Baker:

"The town of Baker was established in 1907 along a well used migration trail from North and South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama.

"It was named in honor of Reverend R.G. Baker . . .

Before that, the community was known as Cobb.

"Early settlers gained their livelihood from cattle raising, sheep herding, logging, and naval stores operations . . .

"As Baker grew, it boasted cotton gins, a bank, drug store, lady's store, doctor's office, mercantile store (now the Museum), hotel, post office, turpentine still and the Shaw blueberry farm, which was at the time, the world's largest."

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The Next Meeting

There is no meeting in November. The next meeting will be the Christmas Party, Tuesday, Dec. 11, at the home of Ann and Ed Leigh McMillan.

Look for further details in a November/December Newsletter.

Minutes of the September Meeting

President Ann Biggs-Williams presided.

Guests included **Kevin Russell**, husband of the speaker for the program, **Debbie Foley Russell**; **Joshua Simmons**, UWF student researching Coca-Cola bottling company buildings; and **John Appleyard**, who is working with **Tom McMillan** on a history of Brewton.

The membership approved the following changes in dues recommended by the Society Board:

Yearly Membership - \$25.00; Lifetime Membership - \$250.00; and new category of membership, Business - \$50.00.

Minutes as published in the September Newsletter were approved. The Financial Report was approved.

Reports included: tax exempt status of Society has been confirmed (was granted in the 1970's); there is progress on the Historical Plaques Project; there was discussion of the benefits to genealogy

researchers if we offered the internet site ancestry.com.

Our speaker, **Debbie Russell**, who has been with the Conecuh National Forest Services for 29 years, presented a program on the history of the Forest.

Refreshments after the meeting were served by **Sammie McGlothren, Debbie Wilson, and Jacque Stone**.



The pictures at left of unknown subjects once living near Wallace were donated to the Society by Ann Torrans. They are called ambrotypes.

The ambrotype (1851-1890s) is a thin negative image on glass made to appear as a positive by showing it against a black background. The reverse of the glass plate was either painted black or backed with a black material.



The ambrotype was an inexpensive alternative to the daguerreotype, similar in size and also mainly used for portraits. Just like daguerreotypes they were kept in wooden or leather cases and were unique images. But ambrotypes were not so expensive and easier to produce, although their exposure time was much longer.

It was not uncommon for an ambrotype to be colored; if not colored they have a grayish white appearance.



***New Sign for the Museum on
Blacksher Lane***

Treasurer **Susan Crawford** wishes to thank the society for the beautiful flowers, fantastic card, and all of the good wishes she received during her recent surgery.

News of Members

We would like to welcome a new lifetime member, **Chuck Johns** from Brewton, Alabama who has a great interest in local history.

Margaret Jane Gaston of Georgiana, AL, is a new member. Margaret's special interests include genealogy, cemetery restoration, and placing CSA markers at the graves of her ancestors who fought for the Confederacy.

She is a native of **Bellville, AL** in Conecuh County and shares with us that she does not put the "e" after Bell as that community was named for the BELL brothers who are buried

there.

Margaret shares with the Society info on the **Burnett-Donald-Simpson Cemetery** on County Road 23, between Castleberry and Bellville which was rediscovered in 2001 and is now involved in ongoing restoration.

ECHS members **Virginia Clark** and **Kathryn Wilkinson** attended a lecture recently at the Bagdad Historical Museum about early American architecture where they heard **Dr. Philippe Oszuscik** from the University of South Alabama

Dr. Oszuscik described the early architectural styles and influences of the French,

English, and Island natives. After the lecture, **Ginnie** and **Kathryn** toured Bagdad and found examples of the types of architecture discussed.

ECHS welcomes **Mr. Alvin H. Enfinger** of Chumuckla, Florida as a new member.

Mr. Enfinger was the man behind the restoration of the Coon Hill Cemetery-- the oldest cemetery in northern Santa Rosa County, that originated around 1820. Mr. Enfinger invites ECHS members to an Open House and free seafood dinner at the Coon Hill Cemetery on Sunday, October 28, after church.

The Simpson-Donald-Burnett Cemetery

Restoration work started August 18, 2006 on the **Simpson-Donald-Burnett Cemetery** located on the old **Bellville** to **Castleberry Road**, County Road 23, about 3.6 miles south of the crossroads at Bellville.

Several broken headstones, some with distinguishable names and partial dates, one completely intact marker and broken markers that are face down, were located and tape was used to identify these burials.

The following surnames are a partial list of the descendants of those buried in this cemetery according to Margaret Jane Gaston: **Simpson, Skinner, Gulley, Nettles, Palmer, Etheridge, Horger, Barlow, McCondie, Robbins, Andrews, Jackson, Crum, Riggs, Crook, Carter, Baggett, McMillan, Donald, Bradley, Watson, Gaston, Suddith, Crosby, Burnett, Purifoy, and Lee.**

Keep Up-to-Date

Remember the Dues Changes

- Yearly Membership - \$25.00
- Lifetime Membership - \$250.00
- New category of membership, Business - \$50.00.

Non-Profit Status Confirmed

ECHS has confirmed it has non-profit status with a letter from the Internal Revenue Service. The society is classified as a public charity with 501 (c) (3) status. We are also classified as a public charity under sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) of the Internal Revenue code.


Contributions to our organization are deductible under section 170 of the code, and we are qualified to receive deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106, or 1522 of the Internal Revenue Code.

First Business Membership

With the new dues structuring and a new "business" category, the first business partner we have is from Alan Robinson and his business, "The Jukebox and Antique Radio Works."

The advantage a business owner has is that not only are they members, but the yearly fee means the business can advertise in the newsletter. See Alan's ad at right.





**the Jukebox and
Antique Radio Works**
sales & service

Alan Robinson
205 Airport Drive
Brewton
AL 36426

tel: 251-867-7920
hij: 251-867-9997
E-mail: -goodfbo@hotmail.com

Snapshots from the September Meeting



Peggy Bracken poses before the Memorial Plaque in the Parlor in the Museum. Peggy is the person to contact for anyone wishing to add a name to the plaque. Cost, \$25.00



New Addition to Memorial Plaque in Parlor in Museum



Joshua Simmons, Evelyn Franklin, and Jacque Stone visiting in the Museum.



Speaker Debbie Russell showing one of the maps she used in her presentation on the history of the Conecuh National Forest.



Annie Smith visiting with speaker Debbie Russell



Virginia Clark holds "Get Well" Card sent to Treasurer Susan Crawford. Virginia does a good job of sending "Get Well" cards from the Society.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Nineteenth Century Churches in Alabama

Our Endangered Historic Churches

An article on the [Alabama-West Florida Conference \(of the United Methodist Church\) Commission on Archives and History](#) website, "Our Endangered Historic Churches" by Rev. Ed Shirley, comments on the difficulties in preserving the historic churches of America: Rev. Shirley is vice-president of the Commission on Archives and History.

"America's historic church buildings are endangered by the diminishing population in rural areas. Most of the descendants of the churches' founding families are far

removed from the area. Sawmills, general stores, theaters, and cotton gins are very rare to find. Even in a state of ruins, they vanished quickly.

"In most cases, the historic church buildings are the only structures that remain from the community's early history. Why? Family members considered the church to be an heirloom of great sentimental value. Baptisms, weddings, and funeral services are weaved into the family's heritage through the church's life.

"Unfortunately, we are entering an era where these historic church buildings will

vanish like sawmills and general stores from long ago. The structures in the poorest counties are perishing at a faster pace. If there is a local historical society their funds are very limited."

The following material on the historic churches in Alabama is taken from the commission's website.

Dr. Robert Couch of the Commission, his partner, Joe Harrington, and Bob Gamble, who works with the Alabama Historical Commission, are responsible for pictures and the commentary on the history and architecture of the churches.

This 119-year-old Dallas County Church is located on Church Street in Marion Junction, Dallas County, just off U. S. Highway 80. The history which accompanies the photograph notes:

"The first church building was a simple square building containing a single room and heated with a pot-bellied stove. In 1907, sparks from the old stove landed on the wooden shingled roof one Sunday following services and caught fire. A bucket brigade of members and neighbors quickly extinguished the fire and saved the church from extensive damage. There was some damage. The church building has undergone several expansions and remodeling, the last in 1959." In 2006, the membership of the church was listed as 21 but noted as "most active."



The Marion Junction United Methodist Church (1888)



Calvert United Methodist Church (1889)

The Calvert UMC church building is actually in Washington County located just north of the Washington/Mobile County line on U. S. HWY 43.

In 2006, the church listed a membership of 85.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Alabama's Nineteenth Century Churches (*continued*)



The Oak Bowery United Methodist Church (established in 1836, current church building dated 1897)

A brief history about the community of Oak Bowery and the church states: "Oak Bowery in Chambers County was once a proud thriving community of prominent men and women. These included such notables as Alabama's Governor William J. Samford, Chief Justice James R. Dowdell, and noted Methodist Evangelist Sam P. Jones."

The Oak Bowery United Methodist Church was founded 1836 and its current building, just south of Lafayette, was constructed in 1897.

In 2006, this church in Chambers County (located on U. S. Highway 431 N) had between six and fifteen members attending services. However, it is still active in the community, sponsoring a covered dish dinner for members and friends every "First Friday" hosting each spring an annual Chicken BBQ and Cake sale.

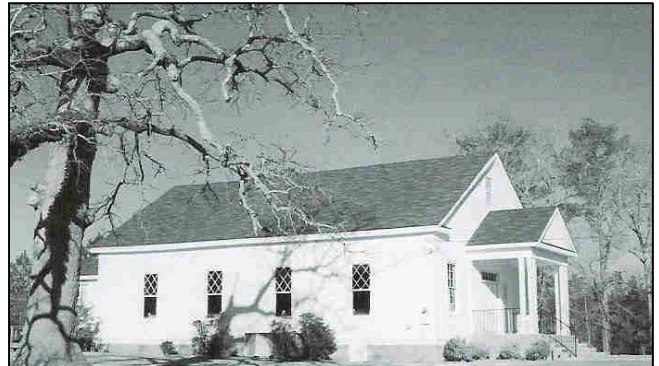
Oak Bowery is described as a church that "remains a most beautiful one and still a source of pride for the historic little Oak Bowery Community."

The Sardis Methodist Church has a long and rich history which includes these details:

"During the War Between the States soldiers camped on the church lawn. Later, during Reconstruction, Ku Klux Klan members paraded throughout the congregation one evening during a revival.

"When the great depression was upon the land, Depression era children brought fresh eggs from the farm and placed them on the church altar. The eggs were then sold to help support the cash strapped church."

This church is located in Lee County, Alabama, at 1036 State Highway 50, south of Dadeville, Alabama.



The Sardis United Methodist Church (organized in 1837 with current sanctuary constructed in 1857)



The Autaugaville United Methodist Church e,

Referred to as a Greek Revival structure, the church has two front entrances, which is said to be a common form of Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterian churches in the 19th century. Men would enter and sit on one side and women and young children on the other.

The steeple of the church is unique.

Rather than the usual pointed steeple one with crosses, this church has a "crown of thorns."



The ECHS *Journal* Section

Alabama's Nineteenth Century Churches *(continued)*



The Simple Exterior of Brewersville United Methodist Church

Brewersville United Methodist Church is located on Highway 28 about eight miles east of Livingston, Alabama. The date for construction (1840) was found carved into one of the large floor beams.

Although the exterior is very simple with no belfry or steeple, the interior is described as lovely with "a beautiful country charm" and very fine carving in the pulpit and rail. The pulpit shows the intricate design often seen in lecterns in English churches of the period, suggesting an English carpenter did the carving.



Interior View Showing Fine Carving of Rail and Pulpit



The slave gallery which wraps around three walls and has the decorative detail of support columns.

Details of the pulpit



Dayton United Methodist Church is one of the oldest churches in Marengo County, Alabama. It is a Greek Revival style church built with slave labor.



The circuit rider's room is located on the first level. It still contains the original cot, wash stand, and oil lamp.



***Dayton UMC in Marengo County
(1849)***

"Alabama's Historic Wooden Churches" will be a series. We will be glad to publish pictures and information you may have on historic wooden churches in Escambia and surrounding counties.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Passing Through Pollard - 1873

Trip to the Baptist Association, Belleville, AL

By Rev. R.W. Brooks
Written in the early 1930's

On the 15th of October, 1873, Friday Morning, Martin Hare and I started out from our home in Florida, which was 5 miles south of Flomaton, to go to the Bethlehem Association which met at Belleville on Saturday. There had been a drought for four or six weeks. We started off in an open buggy, with a long bodied mare pulling it. Considering those horse and buggy days, we made good time, arriving at Burnt Corn that evening. We stopped at the home of Jack Oliver, and spent the night.

Before bed time one of the Oliver boys came in and said our mare was sick with colic. The sick horse brought many neighbors and almost all of them had a remedy for sick horses. Most of the remedies were tried on the poor sick mare, but about ten o'clock she died. Whether all the medicine killed her or the colic I never knew, but one thing I did know, we were horseless!

My friend had to have something to pull his buggy back home so he went to a mule dealer in Belleville, and bought a mouse colored mule, with zebra streaked legs. He gave a draft on Eppin-Bellas and Co. of Pensacola for \$175.00. I thought then and still think it was too much, and before we got home with that mule I was sure a nickel with a hole in it that was about his value.

When we left Belleville I took the mule's halter and was leading him

behind the buggy, when he planted his front feet down and stopped dead still. The rope went through my hands so fast it almost caught fire. I got out, and caught the rope, and made a half hitch around the buggy axle, as we started off again. He went nicely for a half mile when the mule did the same thing as before, lifting the men, buggy and all off the ground. The rope held this time so he did not try it anymore, as it almost jerked his head a loose. We finally got back to



Buddy Elder of the Wallace Area, watering "Old Dan."

Circa 1950s

Oliver's, gave him his pony and hitched up the mule.

That was the most sociable mule I ever saw. When we came to a house he always went up to the gate and stopped, without consulting the driver. When we would approach a dwelling on the road, Mr. Hare would begin to pull off line, but the mule would stick out his tongue and go right on to the house and stop. We would manage to get him away, and as luck would have it in those days houses were few and far between.

After leaving Oliver's the rain stopped but when we got to Pollard, Little Escambia Creek was a raging torrent. George Bradley, whom we knew, said he would get us across the creek by putting the buggy on a "Billy," a thing made of poles spiked together, and float it across. Mr. Bradley said he would also swim the mule across.

The gentleman was in the habit of getting drunk and at this time he was almost past going. After we got the buggy across, he got on the mule and began kicking him in the side. Finally the mule made one long jump and landed in the middle of the creek, Mr. Bradley going down with him.

The mule rose up on his hind legs and made one more jump to reach the shore. Mr. Bradley was a sober man as you ever saw at this time. I was young in those days and anything would start me laugh-

ing. Hare and I being safe, on the side of the creek towards home, we both just about busted our suspenders at Bradley's predicament. When we got to Big Escambia, the Ferry boat was washed down towards Ferry Pass. We left the mule with a Mr. Knowles, the Ferry Man, and walked 5 miles down the railroad home. I never saw that mule but once more and that was enough for me.

Source: Escambia County Historical Society, Alabama Room, Vertical File: Pollard.

OPEN HOUSE COON HILL CEMETERY

October 28, 2007

Sunday after Church

EVERYONE IS INVITED

Free Seafood Dinner of Fried Catfish, Fried Mullet,
Coleslaw, Baked Beans and Hush puppies

Although Dinner is free

DONATIONS WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED!

CELEBRATION OF THE HISTORIC SITE RESTORATION

This event is an OPEN HOUSE to visit the oldest cemetery in northern Santa Rosa county. It originated around 1820, about the time of the first settlers. The close-in quarters of the Coon Hill community was located about 1/4 mile away, near a big spring and fresh water. It had a general merchandise store, a stable, blacksmith shop, a Pony Express headquarters, a U.S. Post Office and a Church that alternated between Methodist and Baptist.

Prominent people buried at Coon Hill include 2 Senators, 2 Circuit riding Preachers, 15 civil War Veterans, 2 Tax Assessors, 3 Postmasters, and many other prominent people. Ancestral names of Byrnes, Campbell, Davis, Diamond, Enfinger, Ezell, Hart, Howell, Lee, McGaha, Mayo, McCaskill, McDavid, McKinnon, McMillan, Miller, Pearson, Penton, Pyburn, Reynolds, Rutherford, Salter, Savell, Severson, Slade, Williams, and many others are buried here.

We have had three major desecrations over the last 12 years that were devastating. About 150 headstones and slabs have been badly broken. The big unbreakable ones have been pushed over, sometimes breaking the slab as they fell. The landmark statue of Mary, "The Mother of Jesus" was broken beyond repair and has been replaced. We also have installed three wrought iron gates in the concrete wall openings with the name "COON HILL" above the Entrance gate. About 100 headstones and slabs and 73 new markers have been replaced or repaired. We are proud of this Historic cemetery and sometime in the future there may be a need to open a new section for burials.

THANK YOU FOR CARING AND COMING!

DIRECTIONS

FROM SOUTH: Go North of Chumuckla Crossroads on Chumuckla Hwy. (#197) for 5.6 miles. Turn left on Wade Road - follow for 1/2 mile to a stop sign. Continue straight (now on Mineral Springs Road) for 2.6 miles. Turn right on a graded dirt road and go 2 miles to the Cemetery.

FROM NORTH: 12 miles south of Jay, turn Right on Mineral Springs Road or Wade Road.

BRING YOUR LAWN CHAIRS, OR YOU MAY STAND AND EAT
OFF THE FAMOUS CENTURY OLD CONCRETE WALL. COME JOIN US!

For Coon Hill Burial Association Trustees: c/o Alvin H. Enfinger
Phone: 850.994.7033 9487 Chumuckla Springs Road
Jay, Florida 32565

**THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Escambia County Historical Society
P.O. Box 276
Brewton, AL 36427
Phone: 251-867-7332

E-mail: escohis@escohis.org

We're on the web!

www.escohis.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL DATED MATERIAL

**Books for Sale
Price**

Mailed Regular

<u>A History of Escambia County</u>	\$55.00	\$50.00
<u>Headstones and Heritage</u>	\$40.00	\$35.00
<u>Escambia Historical Society Cookbook</u>	\$10.00	\$ 5.00
<u>Wildflowers of The Escambia CD</u>	\$17.50	\$15.00
<u>Pictorial History of Brewton</u>	\$40.00	\$35.00

**Clip the following form and send to ECHS
Treasurer, P.O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36427.**

Membership Renewal/Application Form

Notice that some pages are "Journal" pages. On these pages are longer and often more in-depth stories of interest usually found in the Society's *Journal*. You may expect at least 2 journal pages in each newsletter.

Due to rising costs and to keep membership rates the same, the membership voted to include journal-type pages in the newsletter instead of making a separate publication. We hope you enjoy this new format.

If you have a suggestion for a topic, or will help in research, please let us know!

Name(s) _____ **Date** _____

First

Middle

Last

Address _____

Street/P.O. Box

City

State

Zip

Phone _____

Email _____

Dues (\$25.00/person) _____ **(\$250.00/person Lifetime or \$50.00/year business)**

Donation _____

Amount enclosed _____

Your interests _____

You will help with _____

❖ **Dues are to be paid at the beginning of the year. Give a membership as a gift!**

ECHOES, The newsletter for the Escambia County Historical Society is published monthly except November. Editor, Ranella Merritt; Assistant, Jerry Simmons

Comments are welcome. You may email the Society at escohis@escohis.org or call 251-867-7332, or 251-809-1528.

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ECHOES

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