

February Meeting

Tuesday, February 26, 2008, 3:15 p. m.

Thomas T. McMillan Museum



Bartram in Alabama

The February program will be a presentation by Dr. John Hall on William Bartram and his journey through Alabama. Hall's presentation will focus on Bartram's 1775 journey through Alabama, where he recorded first-hand information on native inhabitants and the unspoiled natural environment.

His writing and illustrations were published in 1791 in Bartram's Travels, which Hall terms "one of the most important documents of American science and the first book of Alabama natural history."

An educator and museum professional, Hall is founding curator at the Black Belt Regional Museum at the University of West Alabama.

"This world, as a glorious apartment of the boundless palace of the sovereign Creator, is furnished with an infinite variety of animated scenes, inexpressibly beautiful and pleasing, equally free to the inspection and enjoyment of all his creatures. -William Bartram

He was associated for many years with the University of Alabama Museum of Natural History as research associate, director of interpretation and assistant director for natural history. He has served as executive director of the Alabama Museums Association.

Anyone interested in Alabama colonial and frontier history, Indian history, natural history and gardening will find the presentation of real interest.

The lecture is part of the Draughton Seminars in State and Local History, sponsored by the Caroline Marshall Draughton Center for the Arts & Humanities at Auburn University

"ON THE EVE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, William Bartram left behind his home and his business failures in Philadelphia to journey to the Southeast, a mythic frontier of uncharted rivers, unknown flora, and exotic tribes.

His three-year journey to study the region established Bartram, then in his mid-thirties, as among the young nation's greatest scientists. he became an eloquent witness to her natural wonders and native inhabitants.

His book, commonly referred to as Bartram's Travels, has endured as one of the most important documents of American science and the first book of Alabama natural history."

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William Bartram

Volume 35, Number 2

February 2008

The March Program

The March Program will be a preview of the play on the History of Flomaton being prepared by Stephanie Salter, to be presented as a part of Flomaton's centennial celebration.

Stephanie lives in Monroe County and is married to "the sheriff in the play *To Kill a Mockingbird*." Her training background are in theatre and education.

(See page 3)

ECHS Officers for 2008—2009



From the Left-:

Ranella Merritt, Editor, Newsletter/Journal

Darryl Searcy, Vice-President

Susan Crawford, Treasurer

Jacqueline Stone, Secretary

Jerry Simmons, President

Just Briefly....

by *Jerry Simmons*

It's an honor for me to be elected president of your society. You know that there are a lot of big shoes to fill from those who've held this office in the past, and I certainly hope I am up to it.

The truth is, even though I was born in Century, Escambia County, Alabama is a big part of my raisin'. From the first I remember, Brewton and Atmore were where my mother used to take me when she wanted to shop. These were the "big cities" in my young mind. Although it often took her a day or two to prepare to take my brother and me to Pensacola, it just took a few minutes for her to get us in the car and take off to Brewton. I don't think I was any more impressed by the size of Pensacola than I was Atmore or Brewton. Maybe I just didn't know the difference.

We came through Brewton several times a year on our way up to visit mom's brother and sisters in Evergreen, where she was raised, although she was born in Burnt Corn. I bought one of my first cars here at J-M Chevrolet in Brewton, a used 1956 Chevrolet 4-door hardtop, in 1960. It sure was a pretty thing and I took good care of it, too. It served me well.

I have modest goals for the society for the next two years. I want us to continue to preserve and protect the history of Escambia County, Alabama. You've already done a great job, with the combined efforts of just about all of you pitching in! And the move to the new area for the Alabama Room has been accomplished, and now all we need to do is finish up.

By "finish up," I mean there are items which have piled up

and need to be sorted, some of which should be tossed out. This takes time and people. All the more reason you should consider volunteering your time to help.

Financially, the society is in good shape, owing no outstanding bills and with none looming in the future. That's not to say we can sit on our laurels, though, because equipment gets tired and has to be repaired or replaced and paper and pencils need to be purchased. The collection of microfilm is still incomplete and we ought to get busy making a prioritized list for purchase. Suggestions are encouraged, too.

The Sons of Confederate Veterans of Canoe have succeeded in raising finances to erect an historic marker for Canoe. The dedication is set for March 15 and I hope some of you will join me in attending. We are talking about a cooperative effort to get markers all along U.S. 31, U.S. 29, and Highway 21 from where they enter the county to where they exit. Maybe that thought will gain momentum. What's your idea?

We welcome all of your support, be it financial, physical or moral.

Those members who live far away, we appreciate you, because many of you contribute above and beyond the norm. Those nearby additionally give us encouragement by those pats on the back. All of you makes us glad we're doing what we're doing.

Thanks.

News of Members

Ann Biggs-Williams recently traveled to Mobile to attend a focus group that discussed preservation of records.

Kelly Hoomes, wife of Jacqueline Stone's son, John Hoomes, recently was hired by the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery. We wish her well in this position. Anyone visiting the archives might look her up to say hello.

News of **Alan Robinson** who continues to do well in recovering from the stroke which he suffered on New Year's Eve.

Alan has moved from the West Florida Rehab Institute. He is now staying in the Broadview Assisted Living Home which is two blocks north of the West Florida Hospital site, just off of Davis Highway.

The home faces Davis Highway even though it has an Abbie Lane address. Abbie lane runs perpendicular to Davis Highway Alan is in Room Number 132 at the Broadview.

Alan Robinson
Room 132
2310 Abbie Lane
Pensacola, FL 32514
(850) 505-0111

Alan does not have a phone in his room. Instead he uses his cell phone. The number for his cell phone is 251 363-0831.

Alan is taking therapy most days at the West Florida Rehab Institute. He travels over by van each day. Alan can now get in and out of a regular passenger car and is free to leave the home whenever the opportunity avails itself

Speaker for March



Stephanie Salter (left) is a graduate of Louisiana State University and the University of South Florida in Tampa. She is a former teacher in the Program for Academically Talented Students in Pensacola Florida, where she taught creative writing, speech, and drama. Her publications include a book, SPOTLIGHT: Solo Scenes for Student Actors and several one-act plays.

In 2004 Stephanie wrote and assisted in the production of *Voices at the Crossroads: Stories from Mockingbird Country*, a two-act play presented at the Old Courthouse Museum in Monroeville, Alabama. For the past two years she has also been a member of the Mockingbird Players and served as the assistant director for Monroe County Heritage Museum's production of *To Kill a Mockingbird*

The name of the play she has written for the celebration of Flomaton's Centennial is *Crossties: Tales From the Junction*.

Stephanie lives with her husband Butch Salter in Burnt Corn, Alabama.

Meetings for 2008

March 25	September 23
April 22	October 38
May 27	November—No Meeting
June 24	December Christmas Party TBA
July 22	
August 26	



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Black History Resources on Ancestry.Com

Since this is Black History Month, it is a great time to suggest that you can find great material on Black History at Ancestry.com, the excellent web site for genealogical and historical research which is now available in the Alabama Room in the McMillan Museum.

New sources for research on African-American history and genealogy which have been added to the African American Learning Center include the Southern Claims Commission Records and the Freedmen's Bureau Marriage Records.

The web site advises,

"You can learn more about these collections by visiting their respective pages and reading the database descriptions below each.

U. S. Southern Claims Commission Master Index, 1671-80

U. S. Southern Claims Commission, Allowed Claims, 1871-80

U. S. Southern Claims Commission, Disallowed and Barred Claims. 1871-80

Freedmen's Bureau Marriage Records."

A Query

From Rita Simmons:

"I have had for years a plate that I received from my mother-in-law after she passed that has a painted signature of Esther M Downing. When I "googled" her name, the Brewton Standard came up with a story of the Downing Family History.

"Before I sell this piece to strangers, do you or anyone in the area know who Esther M. Downing is and if her family would want to purchase this from me vs. strangers?"

Anyone who has information can contact the Society in one of the following ways:

email the Society at escohis@escohis.org or

call 251-867-7332, or 251-809-1528.

Mailing address:

ECHOES

Escambia County Historical Society

PO Box 276

Brewton, AL 36427.

This is a picture of Ben Stallworth, Sr., (1878–1949) of Brewton, blacksmith for the T. R. Miller Mill Company, shown here dressed to go to church.



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New Books in the Alabama Room

By Jerry Simmons

Since the fall of 2007, John Appleyard of Pensacola has done research in the Alabama Room for a book he is writing about the history of Brewton. Almost each time he came in, he brought with him one or more books to donate to the Society. If one did not know already that he is a prolific writer of history, you will by the time you read the following of the books he gave us:

Pensacola – The Spanish-French Confrontation, 1660-1720, by John Appleyard Agency, Inc., 1993 – The eyes of the French and Spanish turned toward Pensacola and Northwest Florida, causing conflict

The Steamship Tarpon, by John Appleyard – The story of a vessel out of Pensacola that sank in the Gulf of Mexico in 1937

The Story of Justice in Escambia County (Florida), by John Appleyard and the Appleyard Agency – Changes that took place in Northwest Florida from territorial times until today

Stephen R. Mallory, Secretary of the Navy, Confederate States of America, by John Appleyard Agency, Inc., 2000 – Mallory, sometimes applauded, often criticized, was an adopted son of Pensacola

The History of Education in Escambia County (Florida) 1870-2005, by John Appleyard, 2005 – An overview of the educational system in the county from its beginnings to the present

Mysteries of Pensacola, 100 Years Ago, Volume VIII, by

John Appleyard and the staff of John Appleyard Agency, Inc., 2007 – A series of fictional mysteries featuring the Sherlock Holmes/Dr. Watson characters of Patrolman Corporal Yelverton and scientific detective Henry Coburger; the places they go, the things they see, hear and do, are real, but the plots and villains are fictional

80 Years – The Story of Pensacola Rotary Club 1915- 1995, by John Appleyard, 1995 – An account of the years of the existence of the Pensacola Rotary Club

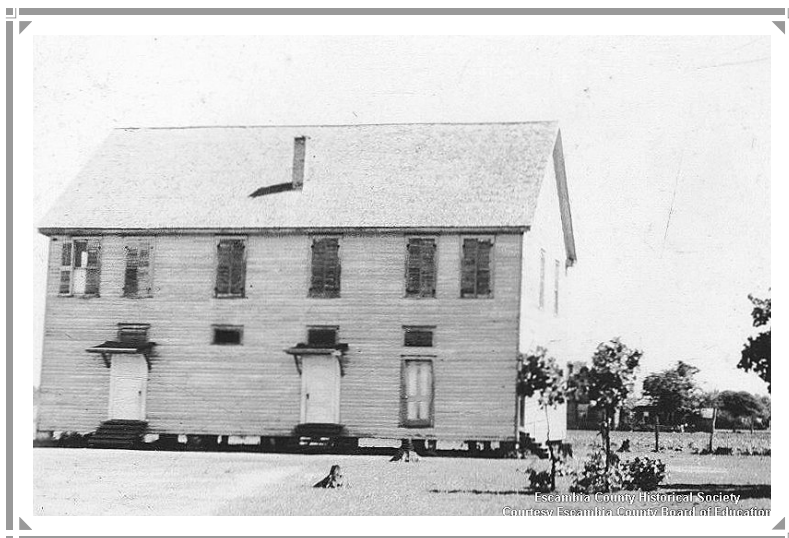
The Pensacola Area Chamber of Commerce 1889-1994, by John Appleyard and the staff of the John Appleyard Agency, Inc., 1994 – A compiled record of the happenings produced by more than a century of service to the community

A Touch of Rural America: Bradley's Country Store, by John Appleyard – A story of pioneers in Leon County in northwest Florida

Pensacola: A City Under 6 Flags, by John Appleyard, 2003 – Across these pages the reader will come to know giants who built and made the community what it is today

Lumbering in Northwest Florida and Alabama, by John Appleyard and the staff of John Appleyard Agency, Inc., 2006 – Includes photographs and the story of the influence of timber on this area

Our library already had this book, donated in 2007 by Katherine Wilkinson, but we are thrilled to have another copy!



Another “Unknown” school in Escambia County. One more in the series of school buildings that are not identified. Do you recognize this school?

Snapshots



From the left:

Jerry Simmons, Peggy Bracken, and Ann-Biggs Williams



Hostesses for the January Meeting with Mardi Gras decorations on the table.

Susan Crawford and Peggy Bracken



Three January Birthday Girls

From left to Right: Dement Hay, Wilellen Elliott, and Betty Holmes.

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

Brushy Creek Methodist Church

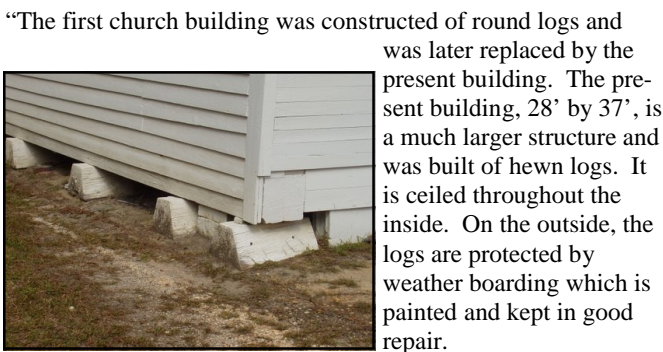


From an article in [The Heritage of Conecuh County, Alabama](#), we have this history of the Brushy Creek Methodist Church.

“Brushy Creek Methodist Church, originally called Brush Creek Church or Brush Creek Society, is located near Lenox in Conecuh County Alabama. The date it was organized is not known, but it is among the oldest churches of the Alabama-Florida Conference.



Repton charges. During the period of 1875 to 1898, no record of membership is available.



“The first church building was constructed of round logs and was later replaced by the present building. The present building, 28’ by 37’, is a much larger structure and was built of hewn logs. It is ceiled throughout the inside. On the outside, the logs are protected by weather boarding which is painted and kept in good repair.

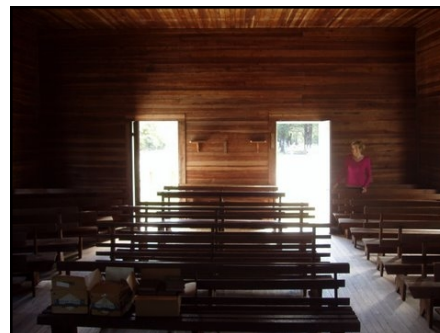
“The church cemetery contained 266 graves as of October 1, 1967. Many of the graves were marked stakes until recently they were replaced by neat concrete markers. The oldest tombstone bears the date of March 18, 1857. . . .”



According to the [Heritage Book](#) article, in 1910, when Spring Hill Methodist Church was built about two miles to the north of Lenox, many of the Brushy-Creek members transferred to the new church. Others moved away and by 1948, the Brushy Creek Church membership had dwindled to a point where services were discontinued.

At this point, the first Thursday in August was proclaimed Homecoming Day.

On this day every year the cemetery is cleaned and there are preaching services at eleven o’clock, followed by dinner on the grounds. There is also a Easter Sunrise Service at the church each year. . . .



Brushy Creek was designated an historical site about 1990.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

“NO MAN IS AN ISLAND”

This is a continuation of excerpts from a book about the Centennial of Flomaton, by Jerry Simmons.

No Man is an Island :The entire quote: “No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind;...” John Donne (Meditation XVII; English clergyman & poet 1572 – 1631).

Some may say that what happens in Pensacola or Mobile doesn't matter to Escambia County, Alabama, but that is far from the truth. Events occurring in these cities since the 1700s, particularly in Pensacola, had far-reaching consequences on Flomaton and the county. Over time, both Mobile and Pensacola had developed a thriving commerce in shipping and overland trade, although Mobile far surpassed Pensacola. River traffic along the numerous rivers emptying into Mobile Bay was several times what Pensacola experienced. The comparatively tiny Escambia River was rarely deep enough to support commercial vessels for any distance, while the Mobile, Alabama and Tombigbee rivers were navigable for miles.

Even so, Pensacola became an important trade center for the Creek and other Indian tribes in the immediate region, probably due to the trade paths that had few creeks, rivers and swamps over which to cross.

In West Florida during the British period from the 1760s until the 1780s, England increased its military

presence in Pensacola. Being strong here gave them nearly absolute control of West Florida against the upstart Americans in the possible expansion of the Alabama Territory and any designs they might have for the

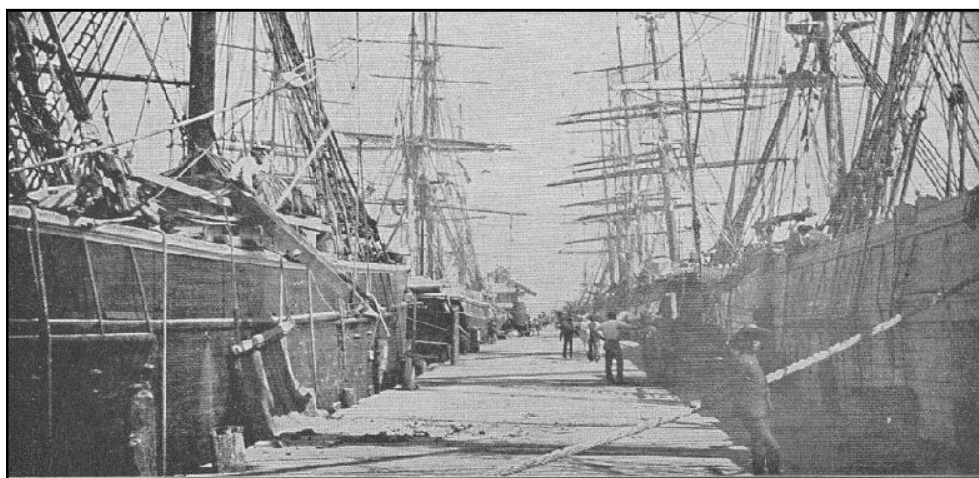


Photo by Turton.

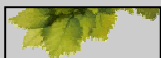
Palafox Street Wharf from South End Palafox Street, Pensacola.

upper Gulf of Mexico. However, the American Revolution stopped further development of the region by the British.

In 1781, Spain regained control of Florida. During this last period of Spanish control, Pensacola remained a small isolated settlement. Spain was weak and could not control or govern Florida effectively.

During the turmoil of the early 1800s, even inciting local tribes to harass settlers in the Alabama Territory wasn't enough to curtail an influx of white settlers from points north. The southern Alabama wilderness gradually became filled with pioneers willing to face danger to make new lives for themselves and their families.

(Continued on page 9)



The McMillan Museum and ECHS now offer free access to the online service, Ancestry.com, one of the best sources for tracing family history. However, access to this web service is available only from the Museum.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

“NO MAN IS AN ISLAND” (continued)

(Continued from page 8)

Much may be said about General Andrew Jackson’s army traveling near the site of the town of Flomaton. Many historical documents indicate that Jackson made camp with his army on Big Escambia Creek about seven miles from what is known today as Flomaton in June, 1816. The following officers were listed as being there: Captains Richard Whartenby, August I. Langham, David E. Twiggs, Richard R. Bell, George Vashon and John S. Allison.

With Andrew Jackson’s appearance on the scene, Pensacola and Spanish Florida became a territory of the United States in



Daguerreotype of Andrew Jackson in his latter years, possibly taken April, 1845

1821. “Little is [documented] of the area after that time until the Civil War era.” (Tri-City Ledger, November 18, 1981).

By then two major industries had taken hold in Pensacola: brick-making and lumber. With its perfect harbor and ready access to the open waters of the Gulf of Mexico, Pensacola slowly developed into a major Gulf Coast seaport. The only question was how could they get more exports to the port and more quickly?

Railroads.

KNIGHTS OF LABOR

The Knights of Labor were active as a labor union in the area at the end of the 19th and start of the 20th centuries. There was a brand of terrorism going on around the sawmills at Foshee and Bagdad in Santa Rosa County, Florida, with men being shot, waylaid in ambush, and other violent acts. The K of L were blamed for the bulk of it, whether true or not.

From many accounts, since one of their goals is to assure equal pay, it’s possible they were trying to get equal pay for black workers but owners and operators of sawmills and other industries were wanting to keep them out.

The Knights of Labor, also known as Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor, was one of the most important American labor organizations of the 19th century.

Founded by seven Philadelphia tailors in 1869 and led by Uriah S. Stephens, its ideology may be described as producerist, demanding an end to child and convict labor, equal pay for women, a progressive income tax, and the cooperative employer-employee ownership of mines and factories.



The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Burnett-Donald-Simpson Cemetery

Margaret Gaston has sent us a letter with this information about a dedication and the story of finding and preserving this cemetery

“There will be a dedication of Alexander Donald’s War of 1812 headstone on March 8, 2008 at 10:00 a. m. Alexander Donald is buried in the Burnett-Donald-Simpson cemetery, located on Conecuh county Road 23 between Belleville and Castleberry.

“Had it not been for Mr. Ed Leigh McMillan’s interest in this old cemetery which led to his locating the cemetery & fencing it in, in the 60’s, in all probability our efforts to locate the cemetery in 2001 would have been for naught.

“BUT FIND IT WE DID! And that was just the beginning.

We were told the cemetery was located on “heir” property, by a nearby resident, and the next time we went to the cemetery the gate had a lock on it.

“Not to be outdone, and with the help of many interested descendants, Terry Sullivan (Conecuh County Tax Assessor) and records found at the old courthouse dating back to the 1889 LIST OF LANDS SUBJECT TO TAXATION, in the SE1/4, there was 38 acres owned by Blacksher Brothers & Miller Lumber Company with 2 adjoining acres known as the Burnett Graveyard being “set aside” property, not subject to taxation.”

The first Escambia automobile, a 1905 Pope-Toledo, was co-owned by Dr. D. C. Burson, Messrs. Morse Brooks, L. G. Brooks and Mrs. Minnie Brooks Hayes

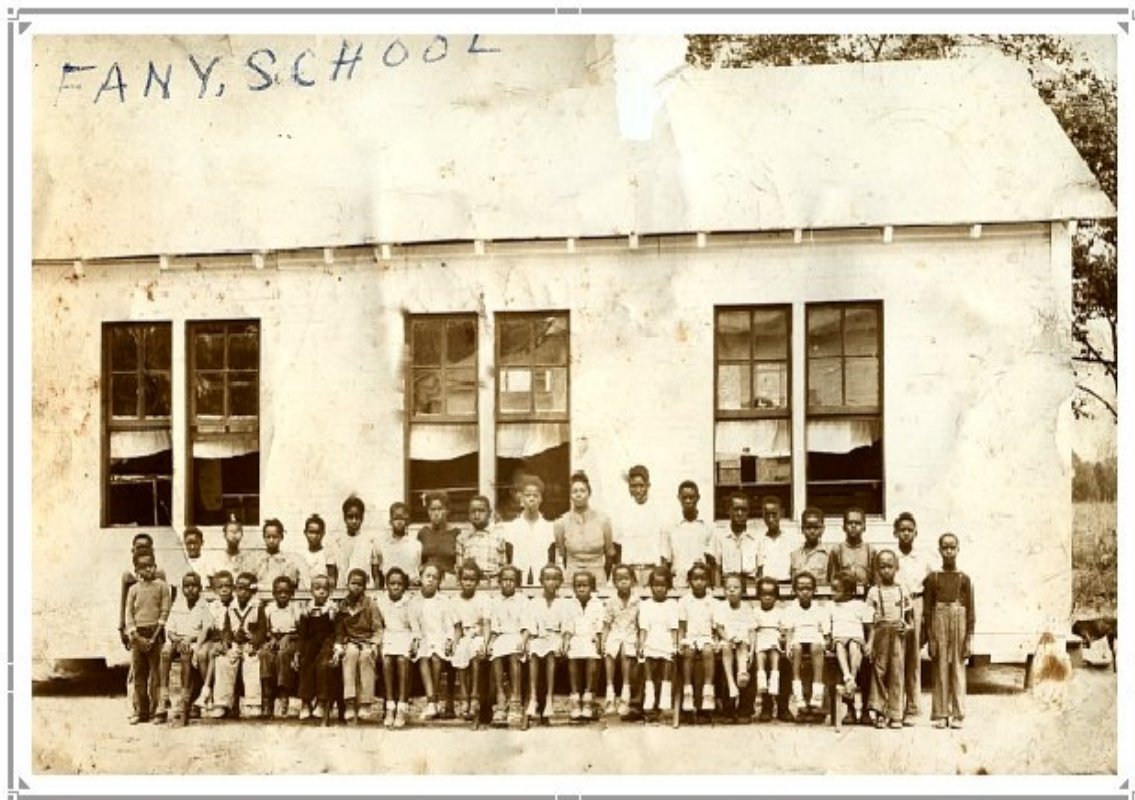


The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Fannie School

This Fannie School below (circa 1946 and incorrectly spelled “Fany”) was a one-room school located one mile north of Flomaton off Highway 31. There was one teacher, Ms. Fannie Houze, from Brewton. The school was established in the early 1900s or possibly the late 1800s. The school was closed in about May 1948. The black school at Fannie was located near where the old Damascus church was, about a mile or so north of its present site.

At that time, the black children of the area were transported to Pollard Jr. High because there was no school for blacks in the Flomaton area. Rev. Willie Carter of Century recalled that his family moved from above Pollard to Century so the children could get a better education. One reason was that Alabama did not provide books for the school children and Florida did. There were several black children who walked from the area of Martin Luther King Blvd. to Century every day to attend classes, come rain or shine.



Fannie School 1946

Back row, L-R: Charles Odom; unknown; Mary Francis Mitchell; Catherine Brown; Clara Mae Carter; Sophronia Dixon (Quinley); Willie Mark "Preacher" Benson; Lola Burt (Washington unknown); Elisa Jaye; Ms. Fannie Houze, teacher; Edward Dixon; Aubrey Lee Deese; Solomon Odom; A.C. "Lett" Watkins; Willard Newton, Jr.; Willie Lee "Buck" Benson; Nathaniel "Bannister" Odom; John Davis Mitchell

Front row, L-R:
Jimmie Newton; General Dixon; Arthur James Odom; Hardy Caffey, Jr.; Shederick Burt; Dewey Henderson, Jr.; J.D. Benson; Geneva Watkins; Rosie Mae Odom (Gandy); Oddie Mae Burt (English); Myrtle Lee Benson; Rosie Mae Carter; Arthurine Benson (Price); Salone Burt; Mamie Salter (Watts); Emma Odom (Fletcher); Annie Ruth Watson; Lucy Ann Salter (Brooks); Minnie Rene Dixon; Cecelia Watkins; Carl Mitchell

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

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<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 once 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 as low as possible, the membership voted to include journal-type pages in the newsletter instead of making a separate publication. We hope you enjoy this format.

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

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ECHOES, The newsletter for the Escambia County Historical Society is published monthly except November. 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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