

ECHOES



Alco Methodist (p. 10)

Volume 36, Number 1

January 2009

The January Meeting

Tuesday, January 27, 2009, 2:00—4:30 p. m

At the Thomas E. McMillan Museum

Jefferson Davis Community College Campus

*******Don't Forget*******

The January Meeting is the Time to Pay Dues

The Program

To Kill a Mockingbird: Successes and Myths

This following information on the program and the speaker is from the Roads Scholars Speakers Bureau of the Alabama Humanities Foundation:

"Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird, published in 1960, is a powerful novel that continues to enjoy phenomenal success internationally, as evidenced by sales figures, editions, translations, an award-winning movie, dramatic productions and other indicators.

"Despite these successes, myths about the novel – some serious and some humorous – abound. A detailed discussion of some of the myths themselves underscores the subtlety, the complexity, the richness and the honesty of this enduring Alabama classic.

"The recent success of the movie "Capote" featuring Harper Lee, the new (unauthorized) biography and the first publication by Harper Lee in more than 20 years has created new interests in To Kill a Mockingbird."



**Guest Speaker: Nancy
Grisham Anderson**

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"A Mississippi native, Nancy Grisham Anderson completed her undergraduate degree (magna cum laude) at Millsaps College (Jackson, MS) and her graduate work in English at the University of Virginia.

"After teaching at Millsaps and in high schools in Germany and the United States, Anderson joined the English faculty at Auburn University Montgomery, where she is currently an associate professor of Eng-

lish and director of Actions Build Community: The AUM-Taulbert Initiative.

"Nancy served as Director of Composition at AUM for 17 years and has taught all levels of writing courses, from developmental composition through a graduate research and writing course.

"She also teaches American literature surveys and Southern literature classes and has published works about Lella Warren, Zella Sayre Fitzgerald, Mary Ward Brown, Harper Lee, Clifton Taulbert, and Richard Marius.

"She has received both the William J. Calvert

(Continued on page 2)

Inside This Issue

Just Briefly & Money Talks	2
News of Members and Announcements	3
Lehman Brothers	3
Queries and Alabama Secedes	4
Christmas Parade 2008 Snapshots	5
Christmas Party 2008 Snapshots	6
Business Members	7
Pilgrim's Rest Cemetery	8
Alco Methodist Church	10

The February Meeting

February 24, 2009

Anne Feathers of Greenville will present a program on "Catfights and Coffins: Stories of Alabama Court-houses." The program is arranged through the Auburn University College of Liberal Arts Speakers Bureau and the Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts and Humanities.

Mrs. Feathers is a resident of Greenville, Alabama.

The January Program (Continued)

(continued from p. 1)

and James Woodall awards from the Association of College English Teachers of Alabama (ACETA) and been named a Distinguished Teaching Fellow at AUM. In May of 2006 she received the Eugene Current-Garcia Award as Alabama's Distinguished Scholar.



weekly writing workshops for children in Montgomery's housing communities and coordinates a Make-a-Difference Day project entitled "Reading Makes a Life-long Difference, which was recognized as one of the top ten programs in the nation in 2004.

"Nancy met Harper Lee in 1983 when they both appeared on the Alabama History and Heritage Festival in Eufaula, and their paths have continued to cross since that first meeting."

"As director of Actions Build Community, Nancy conducts

Just Briefly *by Jerry Simmons*

MONEY TALKS

Remember, January is the month for dues renewals. Annual dues are \$25.00 per person. These dues are used solely for publishing newsletters, maintaining facilities in the Alabama Room, odds and ends necessary for smooth operation of the Society, and to sponsor the annual Christmas dinner. Please send your dues to ECHS, P.O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36427. You could even give a gift of membership to someone.

Since we are a 501(c) (3) corporation, donations over and above the dues, are tax-deductible. Be sure to check with your tax preparer to make certain of your tax status.

Members wishing to make a tax-deductible gift may send the gift to the Treasurer at the above address. If you wish to add a



Jerry Introduces Leigh-Ann as the recipient of the scholarship and awards her certificate at our Christmas party.

loved one to our Memorial Plaque, send your request and a donation of \$25.00 or more to the Treasurer. A notice of the memorial will be placed in the newsletter at the time the name is added to the plaque.

The Society scholarship fund is available for a tax-deductible donation, too. We awarded the first scholarship to Jewell Leigh-Ann Wiggins of Brewton at the Christmas party. The funds were placed in the college bookstore for Leigh-Ann to draw upon for books and supplies. It was really nice being able to assist

a young person with her college education.

MRS. LUKER RESIGNS

I reluctantly accepted the resignation of Mary Catherine Luker as Trustee at the Officer and Trustee meeting January 13. Mrs. Luker states she just doesn't feel as though she is able to carry on the duties of Trustee as she once did. Even though we insisted she stay, she was determined to have someone else fill that responsibility.

Mrs. Luker has been a mainstay of the society for many years. She has written many historical articles and is always one we could count on to give support and encouragement. Her keenness and depth of perception, discernment, and discrimination in all

she did, especially in practical matters will be sorely missed, although she assures us she will still be around. At any rate, thank you for all that you've done for the society, Mrs. Luker.

The consensus of those present at the meeting is that Tom McMillan be moved from his position as alternate Trustee to Trustee. We are still waiting for Tom to accept this new position. The officers will present a name to the membership in the next few weeks for another alternate trustee.

News and Announcements

Budget Cuts force reduced hours at Alabama Department of Archives and History

Because of mid-year budget cuts, the Alabama State Archives will end its Saturday hours as of February 1, 2009. Previously scheduled events for 2009 will be re-scheduled or cancelled.

New hours for the Department's museum galleries will be Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The research room will be open Tuesday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is free.

Anyone interested can visit the Department's web site at www.archives.alabama.gov or call 334-242-4435 for information on upcoming events.

Still scheduled is the public forum on "Current Research in Alabama Archaeology," to be held in the Archives building at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 7.

The workshop for researching African-American ancestry will be held on Saturday, January 31, 2009 from 9:30-2:30 at the Archives.

For more information, contact the archives at www.archives.alabama.gov or call (334) 242-4363.

Flomaton High Named One of Nation's Top Schools

The school is a recipient of a Bronze Medal ranking in the U. S. News and World Report's "Best High Schools 2009."

The school will be presented a certificate and plaque by Gov. Riley.

ECHS Members to Present Program to Mobile Genealogical Society

In April, Ann Biggs Williams and Jerry Simmons will be presenting a program on the resources available for family research in Escambia County, Alabama.

Ann will concentrate on the resources available in addition to those in the Alabama Room, and Jerry will describe those in the Alabama Room.

Lehman Brothers a Part of Alabama History

The web page of the Historical collection from the Harvard Business School <<http://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/lehman/history.html>> has posted an article on Lehman Brothers, the financial firm whose collapse signaled the collapse of many financial markets.

According to the article, Lehman Brothers played an important part in the financial and commercial history of the United States for over 150 years. What was to become a world wide investment bank (having 5000 employees in the London branch alone), began in Montgomery, Alabama in 1844 when Henry Lehman, an immigrant from Germany, founded a dry goods store.

Joined by his brothers in 1850, the firm acquired its name, Lehman Brothers. It eventually evolved from selling dry goods to being a cotton and commodities broker, but remained a family affair, run by and owned by members of the family until the 1920's.

The firm suffered with the rest of the southern economy during the Civil War and had to rebuild when the war ended. It had established a New York office in 1858. In 1870 Lehman Brothers was a leader in establishing the New York Cotton Exchange and later the coffee and petroleum exchange.

In 1867, the business was chosen as the financial agent to help sell Alabama's bonds as well as service the state's debts, interest payments, and other obligations. It became a firm with a tradition for municipal finance.

Involved in financing many emerging industries, the firm was not able to survive problems with mortgage derivatives. In September 2008, the U. S. government declared Lehman Brothers insolvent and said the firm must either liquidate or sell to a solvent company. They liquidated and ceased to exist.

Second-floor office for Lehman, Durr, & Co. in 1874. The Lehmans formed a brief partnership with John Wesley Durr to build a cotton storage warehouse.



Queries

Photo of Railroad Bill

ECHS member Larry Massy is interested in purchasing an original photo of Railroad Bill. Larry can be contacted at <MasseyLLM@aol.com>.

Interest in Locating Book Entitled Slave Days

R. Patrick Gilliland is researching the African American families of King, Jackson, and Ashley of Escambia County. He needs information on locating a book entitled Slave Days by Pixie Hoomes.

He is interested in this book because in it three families, the Boulwares, Snowdens, and Bolers, are referred to as slave holders of an "Aunt Sherman Ashley," who might be one of the family members he is searching for.

Patrick Gililand also is requesting information on the King Family from Escambia County. He says he is having trouble locating cemetery transcriptions. His email describes the Kings as African Americans.

Patrick offers this information about two family members: Newton King and Dennie King, who were both born in Es-

cambia County in Pine Grove. Newton died in 1941 and Dennie King in 1931.

Patrick Gilliland can be contacted at <RGilill369@aol.com>.

Interest in the Cruitt Family

Lori Maxwell is interested in the Cruitt family in Alabama. From her email:

"The first Cruitt in Escambia county (I believe) was Gilbert Maddicott Cruitt - born 12 Dec 1815 in Paignton, Devonshire, Devon, England and died 3 Sep 1887 in Hadley, Alabama, USA. He married Mary Louisa Gallaspie in 1842 in Monroe, Alabama. They had 10 children (that I know of)."

She has included a genealogy chart listing the descendants of Gilbert Maddicott Cruitt that she has found in her research.

Anyone interested in doing an obituary search for her in the records of Escambia County or in her genealogy findings can contact Lori at <tristan0805@yahoo.com>.



Alabama Secedes

This picture depicts the scene outside the capitol in Montgomery, Alabama where the crowds waited for the vote from the convention which met to decide to secede or remain in the union of the United States.

On January 11, 1861, Alabama seceded from the United States, becoming the 4th state to do so.

The vote to secede by the Alabama convention was 61 to 39, a much closer vote than many other states. There was strong Union sentiment in Alabama in the northern parts of the state.

People in Winston County seceded from Alabama and created the Republic of Winston County.

The Christmas Parade 2008



The Float for the Historical Society , a beautifully re-stored 1957 Chevrolet.



Elvis (Darryl Searcy) waiting for the parade to begin.



Lydia Grimes, Darryl Searcy, and Pat McArthur (Pat's dog in front), who rode in the parade.



Elvis and his ukulele, oops, guitar



Pat McArthur waving to the crowd.



En Route

Christmas Party 2008 Snapshots



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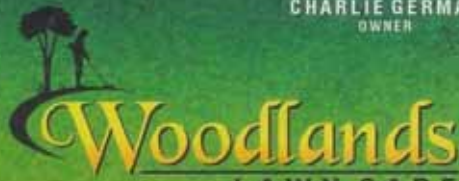
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The ECHS *Journal* Section

History of Pilgrims' Rest Cemetery

By Mary Catherine Luker

The old Pilgrims' Rest Cemetery is located in the City of Brewton on Alco Drive between Scott Street and Blacksher Lane. The land was probably owned by Aaron Lovelace who was one of the founders of the Pilgrims' Rest Baptist Church located across the country land from the cemetery.

"This church was established on September 17, 1854, and Joseph Brewton was a charter member. Aaron Lovelace also owned the land adjacent to the cemetery according to a court record showing that he sold some adjoining property to a Mr. Rabb in 1906.

Eventually, the Pilgrims' Rest Baptist Church split and one of the groups moved to Cotton Springs on the old Belleville Road on land owned by Ezekial Lovelace. This church was named Point Pleasant Church.

"The other



Shown here is ECHS Member Mary Catherine Luker who nominated the cemetery for the register, showing the certificate that places Pilgrims' Rest Cemetery on the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register.



Alco Methodist Church Building as it looks today. You can see it is directly across Alco Drive from Pilgrims' Rest Cemetery.

group continued to be Pilgrims Rest Baptist until 1878 when the building was moved to Brewton.

"This location later was the site of the Alco Methodist Church that was organized in the late 1800's, with the first building completed in 1889. This building still stands today but is now owned by another denomination.

E. T. Brewton surveyed the Pilgrims' Rest Cemetery, and at that time, it was enclosed with a fence (Editor's note – In the address she gave in 1985 at the dedication of

the E. T. Brewton Marker, Annie C. Waters, author of the History of Escambia County, Alabama, 1983, credits E. T. Brewton with the installing of the "ornamental iron fence" that once enclosed the cemetery).



Monument to E. T. Brewton, railroad agent after whom the town of Brewton and East Brewton are named.

(Continued on page 9)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

History of Pilgrims' Rest Cemetery (continued)

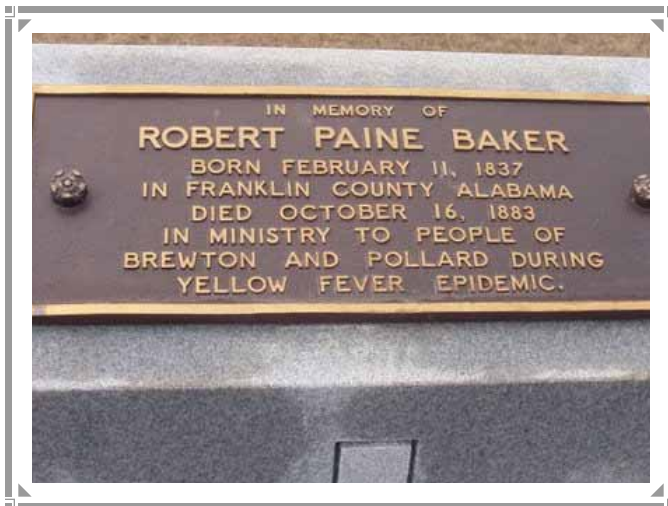
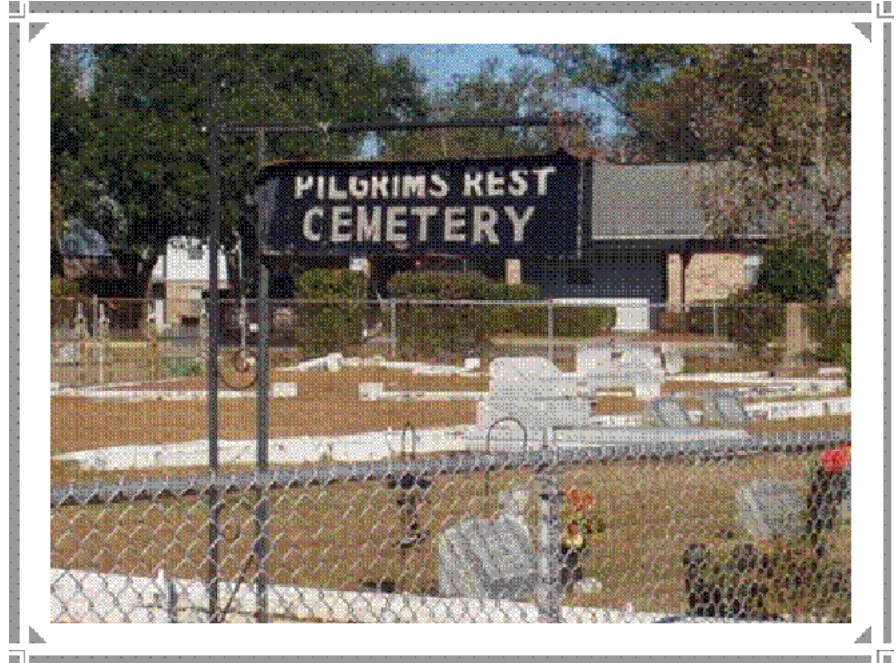
(Continued from page 8)

Many of the monuments and markers have been destroyed, but the oldest still visible is that of Joseph Brewton, born in Kentucky in 1768. He died in Escambia County, Alabama, in 1858.

The town of Alco was incorporated after a sawmill employing 286 people, the Alabama Lumber company (from which "ALCO" was derived), was built.

"The town included a jail, hotel, drugstore, post office, and a depot. After a fire destroyed the mill in 1896, many of the people moved away, and the city of Alco was dissolved on January 29, 1897.

"In 1945, Alco was annexed by the City of Brewton."



Memorial to a pastor of the Alco Methodist Church who died during the yellow fever epidemic of 1883. His memorial is at the entrance to Pilgrims' Rest Cemetery.



Grave of Joseph Brewton whose marker denotes this as the oldest grave in Pilgrims' Rest Cemetery. The dates are 1768-1858.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Alco Methodist Church

By Rev. Eugene Murphree

The following history of the Alco United Methodist Church is taken from the Brewton Standard for Thursday, October 19, 1978. The history was furnished to the Standard by Rev. Eugene Murphree, who was a church pastor, from a recording made by a member of the church.



Alco Methodist Church as it appeared with original steeple. This steeple was damaged and replaced by a smaller one which was also damaged. The church building today still stands but without a steeple. (photo from an old newspaper)

“The Alco Methodist Episcopal Church was organized as a mission church of the Gulf District, Alabama Conference in 1889. It was organized by the Reverend N. (Ned) Baggett of Florida.

“George P. Weaver, C. E. Weaver, and N. G. Schad were members of the Board of Trustees. The total cost of the building was estimated at about \$4000.00. The Alco- Charge was composed of the following churches: Alco, Weaver’s Chapel (now Cedar Hill), and McDavid, Florida.

“In 1889, the same year of organization, the 22nd Annual Conference of the Alabama Conference was held at the Alco Church with the Bishop I. W. Joyce presiding and C. I. Mann acting as Conference Secretary.

“The first pastor to be appointed to the Alco-Charge was the Reverend John M. Carroll who was transferred from the Gulf Mission Conference of Texas. .

Early 1900’s

“... Due to the loss of records and the passing of

friends who could have given us the history of this time for memory, the records for the Alco-Charge are sketchy and dim. But the charge moved slowly but surely on. Its membership was small, and its salary was meager and there was very little money for the program of the church. But with the help of God, the Mission Board, the Ladies Aid Society, and the work of some great men and women of God, the church continued to grow.

“Again in 1917, the Annual Conference was held at the Alco Church (the first time was 1889, the year of the organizing of the church). By the late 1920’s and the early 1930’s, the church program began to move a little faster.

“In 1932 . . . the old parsonage was sold to Mr. and Mrs. H. D. Gillis. The Reverend Thornburg and his family moved into the [new] parsonage in 1936. (I. A. Thornburg was initially Presiding Elder later served as Presiding Elder and Pastor.)

“Following the Annual Conference of 1936, work was begun on the basement of the church in November. This was completed in 1937. Later it was enlarged . . .

United Methodist

“In 1939, the Alco-Charge became a part of the United Methodist Church. At the time of Unification

(Continued on page 11)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Alco Methodist Church *(continued)*

(Continued from page 10)

the Alco-Charge was composed of Alco and Cedar Hill. The charge remained the same and each church received half-time services.

“... School rooms were completed and first used on Easter Sunday, April 10, 1955. The approximate cost of the rooms was between six and seven thousand dollars.

“In 1957, Alco became a full time church with the Reverend J. H. McDonald as pastor.

“AT the present time (1978) the church is full time, while the charge consists of Alco and Pollard. . . .”

Alco Methodist Church Closes

One year after the church celebrated its 100-year anniversary, the Alco Methodist closed. Alvert R. Glass wrote this Letter to the Editor, for the Brewton Standard for April 25, 1990:

Editor:

“t is not an easy task to close a church that you have been attending, working in and for, and worshipping in for 20 years.

March 25, the last Sunday of March, was the last day for the Alco Methodist church of Brewton. (The church was officially closed on May 31, 1990).s

Our membership had steadily decreased for several years. When children grow-up and move away, it seems that some parents lose interest in the church.

This is a wrong decision. We had some members who came to help us sometimes. Some that never came. As you know, it takes kindness for a church to survive and grow. Our membership had dwindled down to just older people who were on pensions.

Some years ago when the oak tree fell on the front part of the church and destroyed the steeple area, the insurance company refused to pay one thing on

the damages. We had to rework and repaint the entire church outside and inside which cost us \$19,000.

“he insurance company happened to be a Methodist insurance. If we had not had some good contributions from the people in the Brewton area and contributors from the Ala-West Fla. Conference, plus some savings we had in the bank, we would not have survived. Our finances dropped to low level [at] which we could not keep the church going.

We hated to give up the church. The members who cared and shared, worked and worshipped, have transferred to other Methodist churches in our area of Brewton and East Brewton.

I spent 20 years in the church. Now it is hard to realize that the Alco Methodist Church is just a (memory). Last year we had our 100 year anniversary, and this year we are a dead church.

The Alco Methodist Church was constructed and completed in January 1889. During its length of service, there have been 50 pastors, 17 district superintendents, and many members. Over the years, many members have moved on to other churches.

The ladies of the early Alco Church played an important part in the church as they do today. But you cannot keep a church going on small contributions to no contributions. It takes giving and all working together to hold a church together.

Now what will happen to the church building No one knows at the present. Some of the furniture will go to other churches.

We have good and bad memories of the Alco Church that we cannot forget.

So goodbye to the Alco Church.

THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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(Business members get a business-card sized advertisement in 11 issues
of the newsletter. Larger sized ads are available)

ECHOES, The newsletter for the Escambia County Historical Society, a 501 (c) (3) corporation, is published monthly except November. Comments are welcome. You may email the Society at escohis@escohis.org or call 251-809-1528. or 251-867-7332.

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❖ Dues are to be paid at the beginning of the year.
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