



Stained Glass Panel at Trinity

Volume 36, Number 4

April 2009

The April Meeting

Tuesday, April 28, 2009, 3:00 p. m

At the Thomas E. McMillan Museum

Jefferson Davis Community College Campus

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

It is time to Pay Dues for 2009

Business Members: Don't Forget to Renew Your Membership for 2009

The Program

Escambia County Probate Judge Emilie Mims will give an historical perspective on the materials available through the Probate Judge's office for genealogical and historical research.

A probate judge's office, of course, is a main source of documents and records for any county, since it issues licenses (business, driver's, marriage, hunting and fishing, adoption); records name changes; the names of conservators and guardians; mental commitments; wills and estates; real property (mortgages, deeds, liens, judgments, resolutions, death certificates, or anything pertaining to property in the county); personal property (includes, among other things, military discharges, and birth and marriage certi-



ates from other counties or states); corporate registrations; and notaries public, among other records.

A descriptive list of all the records in the probate judges' office and recommendations for accessing them can be found at this web address <<http://www.co.escambia.al.us/probate2.html#recordinginstruments>>.

www.co.escambia.al.us/probate2.html#recordinginstruments.

In addition to seeing the documents by visiting the Court House, county records from 1996 forward, with a few exceptions, are now available online. One of those exceptions is marriage certificates, which can be accessed electronically from the Probate Judges' office but are not online.



Our Speaker: Emilie Mims

Appointed Escambia County's Judge of Probate by Governor Riley on April 1, 2008, Judge Mims will serve out the remaining term for previous Probate Judge Rachel Agerton. In a profile in the Brewton Standard (April 9, 2008),

Judge Mims stated, "I've always known that I would serve in public office at some point because of my mother." Her mother, Patricia McKenzie, served as Atmore's mayor from 1976 – 1986.

Although this is her first public office, Emilie is well known for her leadership in community beautification and heritage preservation projects. Before assuming the job of Probate Judge, she was the director of the Atmore Chamber of Commerce. She created Atmore's Williams Station Day, worked with the Atmore Heritage Park, and sup-

(Continued on page 2)

Contents

Stained at Trinity	2
Just Briefly	3
Written in Stone	3
The Creek War Symposium	4
Snapshots	5 & 6
Business	7
The Longleaf Pine Forest	8
Sawmilling	9

The May Meeting

May 26, 2009

Cliff Perry will present a program on Native American Citizenship.

The Program (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

ported many beautification projects in Atmore.

Because of her contributions to the city of Atmore, the Atmore Chamber of Commerce recently honored her with a Lifetime Achievement Award. She is a member of many boards in the county concerned with healthcare, education, and community development.

In addition to her career in civic life, Emilie is also known as an artist in stained glass; in fact, she states in her Brewton Standard profile that if she had a different job it would be in the artistic field. She worked as a stained glass artist from 1976-1991. During this time, she exhibited and sold the glass panels she designed and made at juried art shows and also made commissioned works.

Below is a composite of photographs of her panels at Trinity Episcopal Church in Atmore. There are two 10-foot trumpeting angels facing each other at the entrance to the church. Over the door is a stained glass panel of lilies.



Judge Mims marrying a couple in the cupola in Brewton's City Park, spring 2008. The cupola has now been moved to Dogwood Hills with plans for a larger structure, a band stand, to be built in the park.

Picture Courtesy of the Brewton Standard.

Stained Glass at Trinity Episcopal Church, Atmore

The pictures of the windows at Trinity are courtesy of Sherry Digmon, editor of the Atmore Magazine, who was gracious enough to make these pictures and email them to us.



Just Briefly

Surviving the embarrassing events of the last meeting where I inadvertently scheduled two speakers, I am happy to see the beginnings of Springtime. With this new season will likely come new challenges and new situations, among which I count it most fortunate to include the dedication of a marker at Pilgrims Rest Cemetery in Alco.

The Historical Society had little part in the marker except that one of our most beloved and esteemed members, Mary Catherine Luker, was a mover and shaker in getting the cemetery recognized. By the time you read this, a dedication ceremony will have occurred and the City of Brewton should be thanked for their role in making it happen.

Special thanks go to Jeff Ross and Robert Davis for being gracious in dealing with my error mentioned above. Mr. Davis came from near Cullman and Mr. Ross from near Atmore, so Jeff deferred and said he'll be happy to return at a future date. He stayed with us and seemed to enjoy Davis' presentation. All's well that ends well.

Several new members have joined this year and if not in this issue, we'll list their names in a future issue of Echoes.

It's always great to welcome those who choose to go along with us on this trip of preserving the history of Escambia County. It's quite an experience – quite a ride – and we are happy you're there!

In case you've ever wondered about the letters in the upper right-hand corner of your mailing label, I'd like to explain what they mean. They are abbreviations for your membership status, as follows:

REG - regular member

HON - honorary member

BUS - business member

DEL - delinquent

COM/CMP - complimentary

LIF - lifetime member

If you notice a code on your label that you think doesn't fit your particular status, please let me know.



Written in Stone

The following Article is by Sherry Johnston, ECHS member and president of the Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance. Here Sherry covers some of the practical things one needs to know about the laws and regulations governing cemetery preservation.

Over the last several weeks, I've had various queries as to how the cemeteries in our state are protected from economic development, timber management or even, oil production. So many people mistakenly think that just because there are no visible signs of a cemetery, then, it's okay to dig or develop a piece of property. That isn't the case, especially rural Alabama and Conecuh County.

One of the main reasons for writing a column every week is to help make others aware of the many cemeteries which once dotted the landscape of our county, and also to help identify, locate, protect and preserve the ones we do know about. Written in Stone was developed to help us all be more aware of the plight of our forgotten history—the history that can be found in every little rural or town cemetery—museums of stone which can tell us so much about the foundation of our county and our state.

First off, the Burial Act of Alabama State Code, S13A-7-23.1 gives us all implicit instructions as to what can and cannot be done in a cemetery, whether willfully or maliciously and who helps to protect our cemeteries? Each one

of us—the Alabama Historical Commission, the Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance, the Canebrake Genealogical and Historical Society and community leaders, and citizens.

If you have land that you want to build upon or enlarge an existing cemetery, one of your first steps would be to contact the Alabama Historical Commission, and your local historical society to see if they have records on the cemetery or property in question. You might find out that you need a permit, or an archaeological study done, or ground penetrating radar done to the land BEFORE you dig! Just because you own the land doesn't give you the right to ignore what's already there! Just because you can't see it doesn't mean that it doesn't exist!

For more information on how to protect or preserve local cemeteries, please call Sherry S. Johnston at 251.578-2670 or email at canebrakesociety@yahoo.com or the AHC's Cemetery Project Coordinator, Lee Anne Wofford at 334.242.3184. Copies of the legislation and Cemetery Register Applications are always available at The Evergreen-Conecuh County Public Library.

The Creek War and the War of 1812 in the South: A Symposium

This illustration of Horseshoe Bend highlights this symposium which is to be held at Auburn University May 22-23.

Co-sponsored by the University and the Horseshoe Bend National Military Park, the event will feature an impressive list of scholars:

Susan Abram - [Western Carolina University](#)

Kathryn Braund - [Auburn University](#)

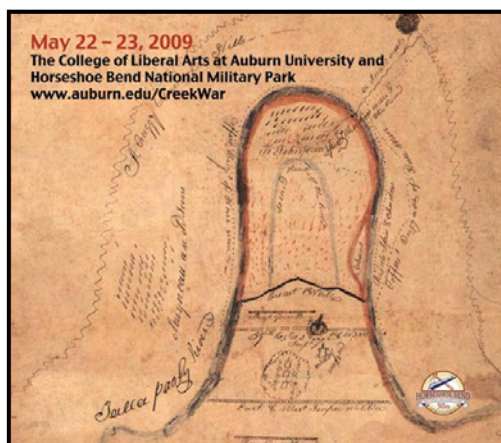
Robert Collins - [Auburn University](#)

Gregory Dowd - [University of Michigan](#)

John Grenier - Independent Scholar

David Heidler - Independent Scholar

Jeanne Heidler - [United States Air Force Academy](#)



Ted Isham - Creek Council House Museum

Ove Jensen - [Horseshoe Bend National Military Park](#)

Tom Kanon - [Tennessee State Library and Archives](#)

Jim Parker - [Fort Toulouse -- Fort Jackson](#)

Craig Sheldon - [Auburn University Montgomery](#)

Robert Thrower - [Poarch Band of Creek Indians](#)

Greg Waselkov - [University of South Alabama](#)

Several of the scholars have been guest speakers for ECHS, such as Greg Waselkov of South Alabama and Robert Thrower of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

REGISTRATION FEE INCLUDES LUNCH AND REFRESHMENTS

\$25 (One Day)

\$40 (Both Days)

See www.auburn.edu/creekwar for schedule

and directions to Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art.

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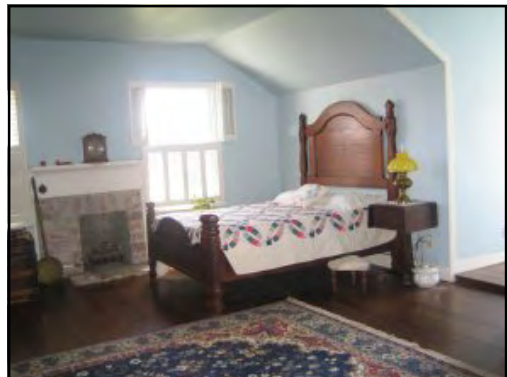
Call 334-844-4948 for more information.

Sponsored by the Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts & Humanities in Auburn

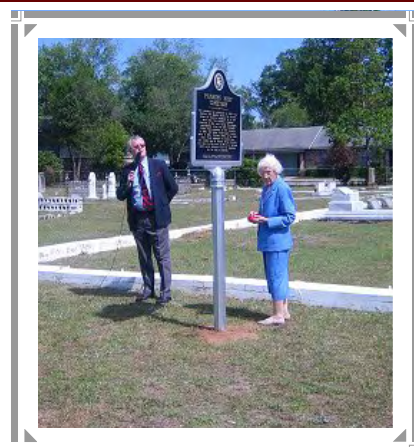
University's College of Liberal Arts and Horseshoe Bend National Military Park.

The symposium is supported in part by the National Park Service's Challenge Cost Share Program

Snapshots: Fieldtrip to Magee Farm



Snapshots: Dedication of Marker for Pilgrims Rest

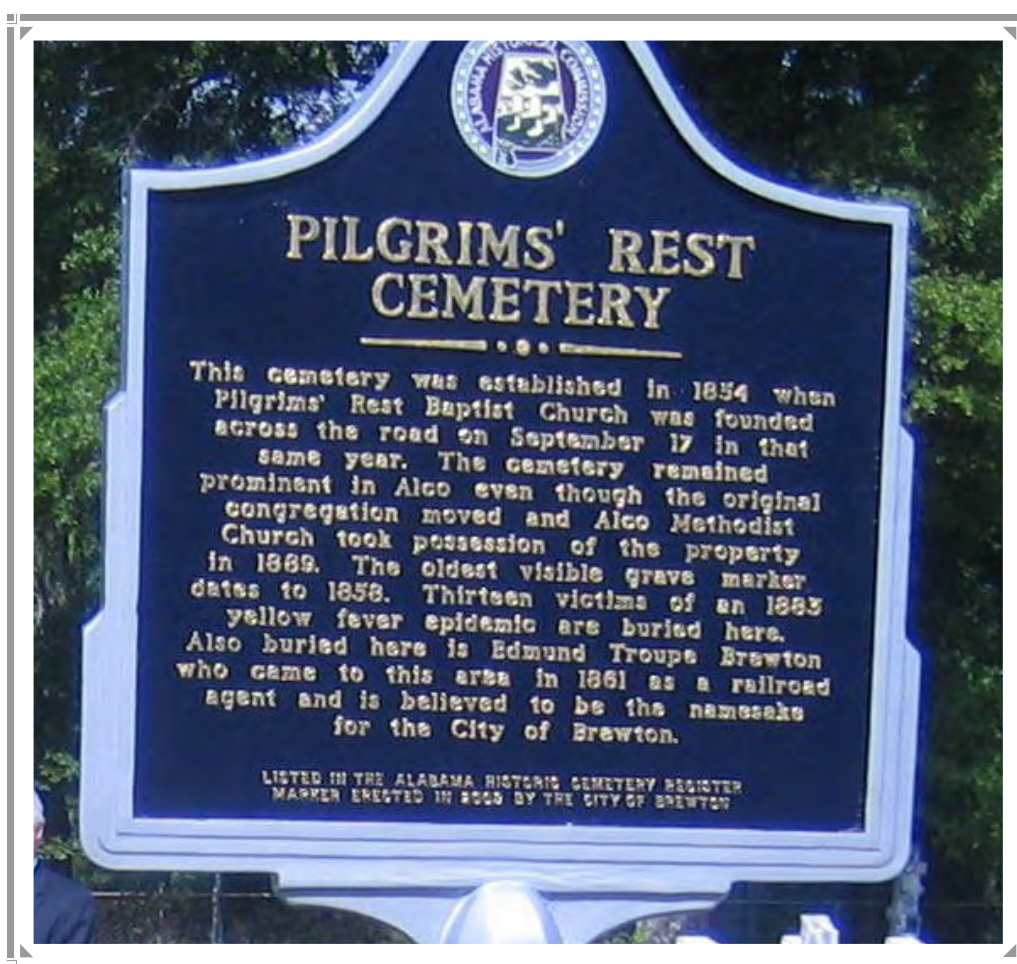


Top: Ted Jennings and Mary Catherine Luke

Right: Table at Reception provided by ECHS



Bottom: the Historic Marker for Pilgrims Rest, and another Historic Marker in Brewton is for Union Cemetery



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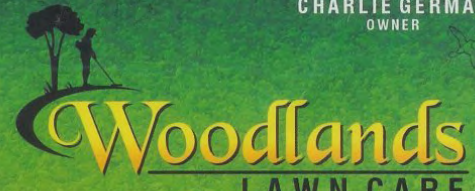
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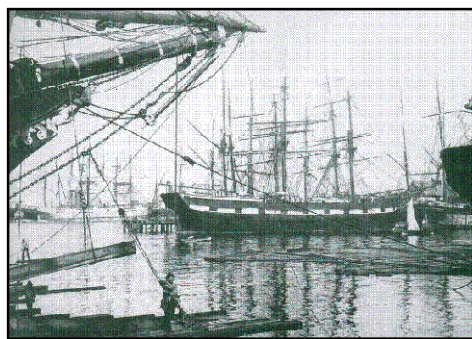
The ECHS Journal Section

The Longleaf Pine Forest

By Jerry Simmons

Andrew Jackson left his mark on the sparsely populated region of Northwest Florida in the second decade of the 19th century. Pursuing his political ambitions, however, he went back to Tennessee and on to bigger things, eventually becoming our nation's 7th president. However, many of his soldiers stayed in the Gulf coastal region and sought their fortunes here. Many managed to sustain a living farming or hunting, but the ones logging believed their future lay in the virgin pine forests.

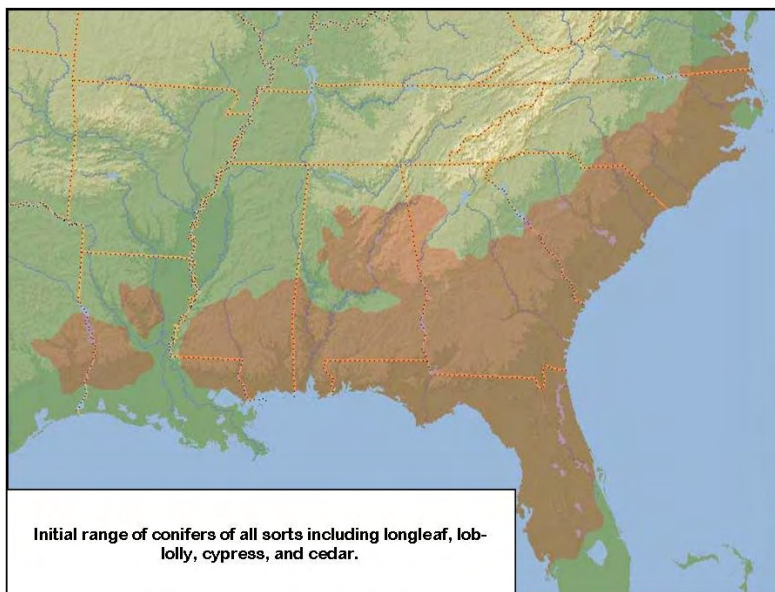
These forests extended from the Atlantic coast west all the way into Louisiana and Texas, and north for hundreds of miles.



Pensacola harbor circa 1896—not the timber booms, and the ship being loaded at left.

Longleaf heart pine became the most economically important tree in America. It was in fact the favored tree for all construction. The wood itself is dense, rigid and as strong as red oak with inherent resistance to rot, decay, and insects. Its amber to reddish heartwood is hard and durable and these slow growing trees were almost all heartwood with little sap as filler.

The way longleaf grew, tall with straight trunks, multiplied the inherent value of the lumber. Longleaf masts consistently



sold in England at prices 25 to 30% above other conifers from North America. Trees took 200-400 years to mature and some might have reached 500 years. The typical height of a tree at maturity was 80 to 100 ft. with a maximum height of probably 125 feet. The diameter of longleaf pine at chest height at maturity was typically 24-32 inches with a maximum of 120 inches.²

When young, they grow a long taproot. The taproot is exceptionally strong, therefore trees

were sometimes not cut above the ground, but dug up, including the long taproot. Longleaf differs from other pines in that the tap root is nearly as large in diameter as the tree's trunk, tapering gradually to depths (on average) of 10 to 15 feet.

This large diameter at the root and its strength is primarily what early shipbuilders were looking for when choosing trees for masts. This extension of the tree's length was used below decks as the sturdy base of a mast.

Whether a particular tree has roots this long depends upon the species of pine and the soil type it is growing in. If the water table is deep the tree will send deeper roots down but in shallow water table soils the tap roots is shallow.

Longleaf pine is also known as Southern Yellow Pine or Longleaf Yellow Pine, and in the past as Pitch Pine (that term was dropped since it caused confusion with Pitch Pine, *Pinus rigida*). Long leaf pines are found in the upland pine forest habitat, not directly on the coast.

One of the majestic pines—impressive as it might be, this is still not a virgin longleaf pine of the 1800s. These first limbs are some 50 feet above the ground



The ECHS Journal Section

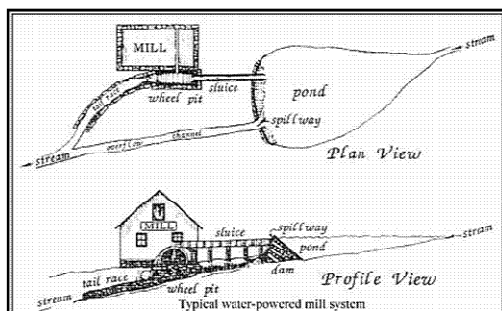
Sawmilling

By Jerry Simmons

Small sawmills sprung up throughout the Northwest Florida and South Alabama area by the early 1800s with the majority being water-powered, although many were manually operated utilizing a pit saw.

One of these new sawmills was the pioneer in northwest Florida. Joseph Forsyth, a fugitive from a violent argument in New Orleans where a Frenchman was killed, made his way to Pensacola. He found work near present-day Bagdad at a brickyard owned by a John Hunt.

Forsyth, already well off from his time in Louisiana, saved his pay and made the acquaintance of John de la Rua, a wealthy landowner and a prominent Pensacola businessman. De la Rua had been the beneficiary of land granted to favored citizens by the Spanish king in 1817. For about eleven years de la Rua had partially cleared the property and may have even begun construction of a small dam. De la Rua's efforts to develop the land, however, were frustrated by labor shortages due in large part to hostile Indians who roamed



This water powered mill system courtesy of the web site

<http://uwf.edu/anthropology/research/industrial/arcadia/>

the area. Finally in 1828, he sold the property to Joseph Forsyth for \$400.00.3

Forsyth erected a dam across the creek to produce water power and started the construction of a small saw

mill. He ran short of money for his venture and enlisted the financial help of brothers Ezekiel and Andrew Simpson.

Thus in 1830 the firm of Forsyth and Simpson was established, and with the added capital of the Simpson brothers, the sawmill on Pond Creek was soon completed.



A "saw pit" (or "sawpit") is a pit over which felled trees are placed so two men, one above and one below, may use a long two-handled pit saw, often called a whipsaw.

from that, about 100 yards downstream, another sawmill with a sluice 700 feet long from the pond to deliver the water power.

This mill, Arcadia, is the site of the first and largest Early American industrial complex in Florida. The industries included water-powered sawmills, planing and lathing machines, a grist mill, bucket and pail factory, shingle mill and a cotton textile mill. Arcadia had a stone quarry, a tannery, silk cocoonery, blacksmith shop, storehouses, kitchen, community well, and living quarters. A mule drawn railroad and a sixteen-mile-long log flume provided means of transportation for the industries.

Sawmills had been built near rivers and streams which were their primary source of power and were the means of transportation to the mill and then the finished product to market. Steam power, however, was introduced to north-

west Florida in the 1830s. Now, the logistics of transportation and power was practically eliminated. Lumber producing mills became a ubiquitous sight in the forests of northwest Florida.

Due to the wood shortages in Europe, large quantities of fine Heart Pine timbers were also exported during the 19th century. All this led to the end of the vast forest lands of Longleaf pine; today only about five percent of the original Longleaf Pine forest remains.

In the 1870s, with a rapidly expanding industrial boom in the U.S. and Europe, many factories were built and cities mushroomed. There was a need for low cost building materials with one obvious answer the good quality pine construction timber from Northwest Florida. The vast tracts of giant pine trees extended for miles to the north of Pensacola and such bountiful natural resources created the Northwest Florida and South Alabama logging industry; then steam gave rise to a dominant commerce. Much of the harvested timber eventually passed through Pensacola, being either manufactured into building lumber or exported overseas aboard sailing schooners docked at one of the many city wharfs.



Simpson & Co. Sawmill 1896

Bliss Quarterly, 1896

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<u>Flomaton Centennial Scrapbook</u>	\$46.00	\$40.00

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