THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ECHOES

The January Meeting

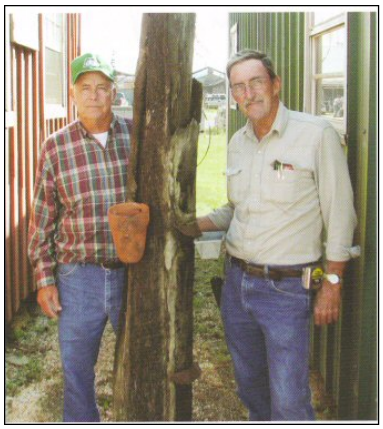
Tuesday, January 25, 2011

3:00 p. m.

The Thomas E. McMillan Museum

The Program

Turpentining : Keeping Alive a Dying Art



Our guest speakers, pictured, are Roy Foster and Joe Gibson. This article by Blake Bell from the Atmore magazine (atmore, October 2010, p. 22) describes how they are keeping alive "A Dying Art."

"To most people turpentine is just something that is used as paint thinner. Most people don't know that the substance has a wide variety of uses including medical treatment for certain ailments. Many people aren't even aware that this handy goo comes from pine trees, something we in south Alabama have in abundance.

"Until I met Joe Gibson and Roy Foster I was like most people when it came to my knowledge of how turpentine is collected and used.

"Joe and Roy explained turpentine is actually a multifaceted extract that people from our area and from all over the southeastern United States have been working with for generations.

"Joe began harvesting the pine sap at around age 12 while working during the summers and after school and has continued to work with rosin, the technical term for the tarry substance emitted from the inner core of pine trees, ever since.

"Roy too has had a hand in the process of collecting turpentine for almost his whole life. His family worked with rosin on their land as a crop just as others harvested cotton or tobacco. Years ago his family would drain the sap into 55-gallon drums to sell to places like the Newport Company once in business in Pensacola.

"So, why such a big fuss over some sticky liquid? Plenty of reasons. Paint thinner,

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WEBJ of Brewton

Volume 38, Number 1

January, 2011

Contents

The Next Meeting

February 22, 2011

(George Washington's Birthday)

Program to be Announced

Dues

Remember that paying your dues at the January meeting would be a good way to start the new year.

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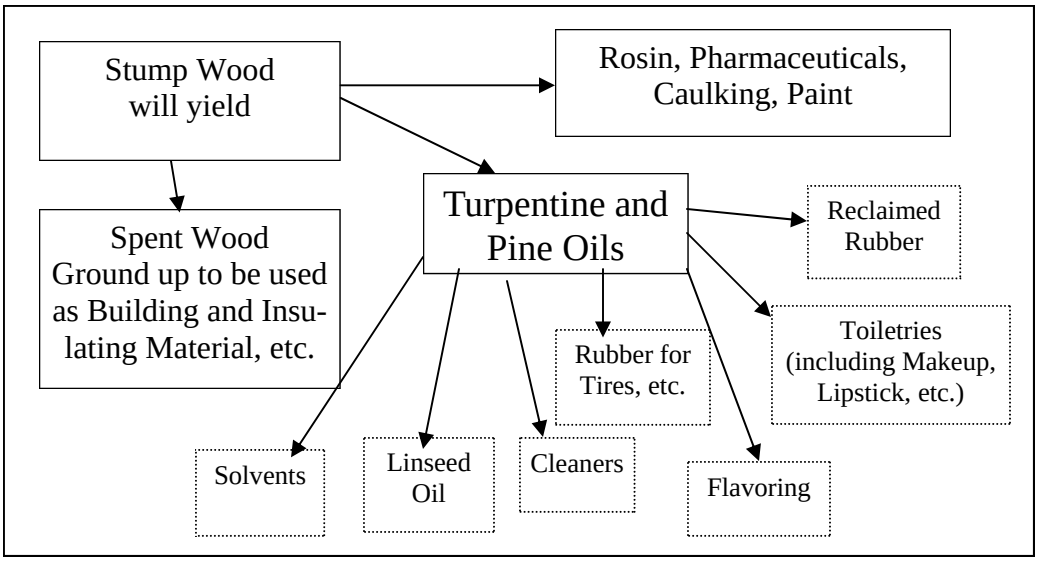
Turpentine Use



(Continued from page 1)

medicine, a grout-like material for sealing cracks and even a bubble-gum substitute, to name a few. Joe and Roy said they have used the rosin as something to chew on as kids and have even boiled it to use the steam as a way to treat cuts.

"You might even recognize the sap from a story we have all heard. 'Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.' In Genesis 6: 14, as God instructs Noah on how to build the ark, the pitch he is referring to is almost identical to the rosin Joe and Roy have grown up handling. What better confirmation could there be for something's reliability than being endorsed by God himself. Well, God and the NCAA. The University of North Carolina's mascot, the Tar heel, is also a reference to the rosin from pine trees.

"But the real story behind this versatile product isn't all of the things it can be used for but rather the method once used to extract and collect it. Joe and Roy say the way they once did things, an almost-artistic process of 'bleeding' a pine tree, is now almost extinct. As they grew up Joe, Roy and everyone else who worked with pine trees had a very specific process for obtaining the rosin.

"At first the trees were cut deeply in the shape of a V, a process called cat facing. Once the cut was deep enough, small jars or bowls were placed or hanged from the trees in order to collect the slowly oozing material. This careful method for obtaining the rosin had to be done in just the right way and required a craftsman's touch,

"Around the 1950s, as technology progressed, acid began to be used to eat away at the tree's bark in lieu of the more cumbersome method of cat facing.

"Today almost no one uses the once prevalent process and we are slowly losing the knowledge of how it was done as we lose the generation who employed it. The blue collar 'do it yourself and waste nothing' mentality has given way to big business and factories with faster and more efficient ways of collecting rosin. But Joe and Roy know the importance of self-reliance and the need to preserve the knowledge and ability to take care of one's self and family using the hands and heart God gave us.

"During the days of cat facing, not only was the sap from a pine tree used, but everything else that could be salvaged was put to use as well. Joe and Roy said pine needles were boiled in order to make tea and the seeds from pine cones were eaten much like sunflower seeds, The trees themselves were, of course, used for timber or kenneling.

"The whole process would last from around March until approximately October and was a repetitive routine of chipping away at a pine tree until it was ready to be 'dipped.' After two to three weeks, when the process was complete, it was time to start all over and begin chipping again. Somewhere around the early fall months, things changed with the season and workers began to 'scrape' the built up rosin that had accumulated throughout the

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The Program *(continued)*

(Continued from page 2)

year off the trees. Joe and Roy said many times this thick gel of sap would be frozen and a few inches thick,

"With the many things that can be done using rosin it is obvious that it will continue to be something we rely on daily for as long as we still have Southern Yellow Pines, even if we don't know we're using it. What will not remain, however, is the craft of extracting it the way our fathers and grandfathers did. That is unless we make a point to remember the way things were done once, back when things were done right. . . ."

Remembering the Naval Stores Industry in Alabama

A. J. Baker, of Bakers Chapel, Georgia described the naval stores industry in Alabama this way:

"I was raised on a farm and had every opportunity to observe just what was going on in and around our small farm. Our place was surrounded by a primeval forest where workers of the industry were constantly seen during the summer season. Nearly all of the farms were small and provided only provisions consumed at home. Hence the turpentine industry brought in a little cash during those hard times.

Both Photos are of a Turpentine Still at Wallace, Alabama

"The tools used in carrying on the industry were the boxing ax, the hack, the puller, the dipper, the scraper, the bucket, the scrape box, and the barrel. Some of these implements will seem foreign to many of the people today.

"The predominating forest of trees at that time was the longleaf pine from which the sap was extracted. A notch or box, as it was called, was cut near the ground in the tree, holding about a quart. This was done with a boxing ax. The next tool used was the hack. The hack was used to cut streaks along the trunk to about head high.

"The streaks were cut by the puller, primarily done during the spring and summer. The streaks usually dried out in a few days stopping the flow of sap. Then, of course, a new one must be applied to start the sap flow again. When the notch or box was full of sap it was ready to be dipped, put in barrels, and hauled to market. This was known as dip turpentine.

"During the spring and summer season (or working period), some of the sap would lodge on the face of the boxed tree. The face is where the numerous streaks had been made by the hack or by the puller. Since not all of the sap of the tree would reach the box below, some of it would lodge on the face. Here it would harden and lose much of its liquid appearance, becoming a sort of dry turpentine. During the summer season the accumulation of this turpentine amounted to quite a haul.

"During the fall and winter, the turpentine was scraped from the face of the tree, gathered in suitable boxes, packed in barrels, and made ready for market. This was known as scraped turpentine and it gave the workers something to do during the off-season. The tree face was made ready again for the prime summer season. Often, a new face would be hacked on the opposite side of the tree trunk. All too often this double facing was more than the tree could bear and it died.

"After the turpentine was gathered and placed in barrels, it was hauled to market by mule wagons, as there were no trucks then. If there had been trucks, the roads would have been inadequate for their use. At the market place, the barreled product was weighed and paid for at a certain price per the gage weight that was in force at the time.

"The next step of the gummy product was the distillation. The larger merchants who owned the stills bought up the barreled turpentine. The stills consisted of a large retort (a vessel in which substances are distilled or decomposed) with a capacity of several barrels. The retort was built in a furnace under which a fire produced a slow heat driving the spirits into a condensing or cooling system. The product was then placed in tight non-leaking barrels for shipment to the commission merchants. The residue or rosin was also poured into barrels for shipment."

Snapshots of the Christmas Party

Our Business Members

Please patronize our business members. Be sure to tell them you appreciate their support of the Escambia County Historical Society!

The ECHS *Journal* Section

WEBJ

The discovery of a photograph in a stack of material in the Alabama Room waiting to be filed and the recognition that one of the people in the photograph had recently passed away prompted this section on Brewton's WEBJ.

The photograph of Charles Herman (standing) and J. C. Williams (at the control board for the station) appeared in an article from the Brewton Standard, "On the Air for Thirty Years" (Thursday, July 25, 1977), which recalled the opening of the station:

"Next Monday, August 1, marks the thirtieth anniversary of Radio Station WEBJ, which went on the air on Friday, August 1, 1947.

"The first broadcast 30 years ago was a dedicatory program at 1:00 p.m., held before a joint meeting of the Brewton Lions and Rotary Clubs in the old Lovelace Hotel.

"W. Emmet Brooks, founder of the station remarked at that first meeting that the station' would be operated entirely for the benefit of the people of the area within its coverage.

"It was a momentous meeting when the station went on the air. Mayor C.C. Fountain of Brewton, Mayor Herbert Robertson of Evergreen, Wayland Mills, president of the Rotary Club, Broox G. Garrett, speaker for the Lions Club, Ed Mac Lovelace, Chamber of Commerce representative, John R. Miller, vice-president of T.R Miller Mill Co., and Flournoy Lovelace, state representative, made brief talks during the dedicatory program.

"The Chamber of Commerce noted that it marked a new era in the business life of Brewton.

Thanks to Hazel W. Carter of Brooklyn, Alabama (daughter of Jesse Clayton Williams, pictured above) , we have the pictures from the opening of WEBJ.

Ms. Carter notes that her father "engineered the building of WEBJ for Mr. Emmett Brooks, and was one of the first voices on the air."

"Many businesses carried advertisements of radios, with one business noting that they had all models of Crosley radios from $25 up, and reminded· listeners to tune in at 1 :00 p.m. on Sundays for Guy Lombardo Time.

"A partial listing from the program log in August, 1947, begins with 'Sunrise Jamboree' at 6:00 a.m., followed by 'AP News - Good Morning Man' at 7:00. Other newscasts, including farm news and weather were on the log.

"As for music, there was Tony Pastor's Orchestra, Bing Crosby, Vaughn Monroe, Four Knights, Escambia Playboys, March Time, Noon Day Jamboree, Morning Moods, Dinner Music, and many will remember the Hawaiian music sponsored by Carter's Photographers.

"Later there were such innovations as 'The Man on the. Street,' bringing live coverage of events and comments from local citizens. A quiz- show gained great popularity and listeners sat by the phone to see if their number would be called. If they answered a question correctly, they could win anything from theater passes to groceries to a restaurant meal.

"But no one sat by the phone when 'Second Spring' a favorite soap opera came on. One of the most popular of all soap operas, Brewton listeners like those throughout America, vicariously joined in the problems of the stars of 'Second Spring.'

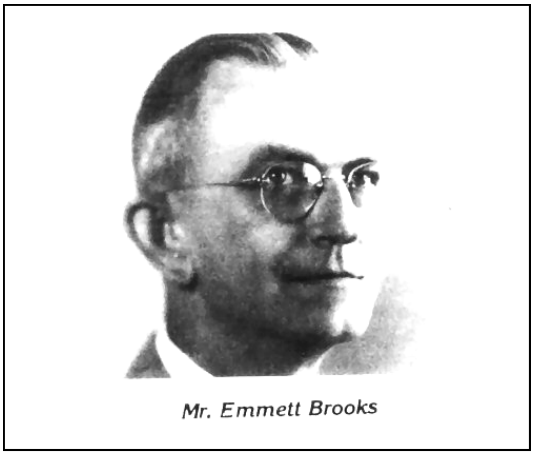
"During those days, as today, ample time was appropriately devoted to the ministry and to religious· music, as well as to announcement of church activities and special services."

The ECHS *Journal* Section

WEBJ *(continued)*

Group Photograph from Opening Day Celebration

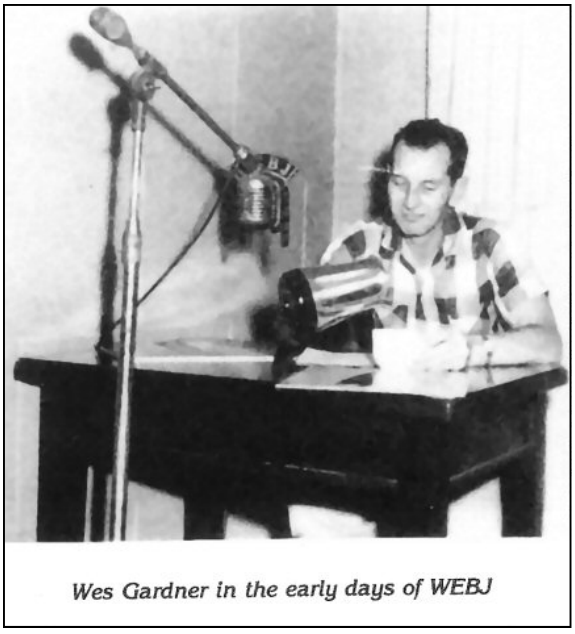
The Radio Station



Mr. Emmett Brooks

When W. Emmett Brooks, pictured above, founded WEBJ in 1947, it was one of the first radio stations in a city the size of Brewton and was the only radio station located between Montgomery and Mobile.

He owned the station from 1947– 1957.

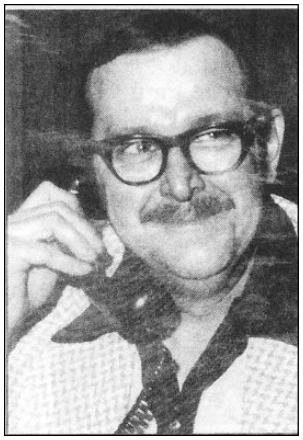


Wes Gardner in the early days of WEBJ

J. W. "Wes" Gardner and his wife Catherine Caffey Gardner purchased the station in 1957 and owned it until 1986.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

WEBJ *(continued)*



Eugene Paul "Gene" Cashman joined the WEBJ staff in 1963. He purchased the station in 1986. He was known for his "Brewton Today" radio program.

His daughter, Candy Cashman Smith, became the owner in 1996.

Owners

1947-1957 Founder W. Emmett Brooks

1957-1986 J. W. "Wes" Gardner and his wife Catherine Caffey

1986-1996 Eugene Paul "Gene" Cashman

1996-2004 Candy Cashman Smith

2004-present Dennis Dunaway

WEBJ: A Lifeline for Many during Hurricane Ivan

Dennis Dunaway and Candy Cashman Smith are show working the phones and announcing on the air at WEBJ during the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

Candy Smith owned the station from 1996 (at the death of her father Gene Cashman) until 2004 when Dennis Dunaway became the owner.

In the Mobile Press/ Register article "Voices in the Wilderness" (Sept. 29, 2004), writer Connie Baggett, spoke of the invaluable service Dennis and Candy gave to the community and surrounding area through their work at the radio station immediately after Hurricane Ivan:

"In the first days after Hurri-

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WEBJ: A Lifeline for Many during Hurricane Ivan *(continued)*

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cane Ivan hit south Alabama, many people in Escambia county had no electricity and no telephone service, and they searched through the static on battery-operated radios until they found one signal coming through loud and clear.

"At WEBJ-AM radio, 1240 on the dial, owner Candy Cashman Smith and radio personality Dennins Dunaway fielded calls for and forwarded information over a mere 1,000 watts of power."

Brewton's First Radio Set

It is appropriate that the first person to have a radio set in Brewton was the founder of the Brewton Radio Station, W. Emmett Brooks.

Lydia Grimes of the Brewton Standard discovered this article about the radio, "First Radio Bought In Brewton Area Is Owned by W. Emmett Brooks," (Brewton Standard, August 12, 1976).

"Among the many other dates concerning Brewton which W. Emmett Brooks can relate rapidly and accurately, is the date the first radio set made its appearance in Brewton.

"Mr. Brooks purchased the first radio brought to Brewton from Clap Eastham Company, which no longer exists. The excitement he and others felt then over the set has made the date of the radio's installation, May, 1922, an unforgettable one.

"The Brooks home, where the present post office is located, had to be equipped for the radio set. Two outdoor poles 25 feet high were strung with a long wire to pick up signals, which were brought into the set on a lead from the antenna wire, and a ground wire was also necessary.

"Mr. Brooks stated that the tubes were powered by a six-volt automobile battery, while the sound was picked up on headphones with a dry battery.

"People eager to hear the radio had to wait their turn. Only one set of earphones could be connected to the set at a time and listening was 'passed around' among those hearing a program. A year or two later, Mr. Brooks recalls, separate speakers were connected to sets, and within a short term radios were being purchased with built in speakers.

The First Radio Set

The radio is now on display in the Thomas E. MacMillan Museum at Jefferson Davis Community College, Brewton.

"Mr. and Mrs. Brooks related that, in spite of its size, the radio set picked up with remarkable clarity radio stations over the eastern half of the United States, many of which cannot be heard here today on modern sets. This was because there were comparatively few stations in the country and most of them had clear channels without the interference that is encountered today with so many on the air.

"Weather permitting, it was not unusual to tune in on this set on almost any night stations KDEA, Pittsburgh; WEAF, New York City; WLW, Cincinnati; WHAS, Louisville; WGN, Chicago; WSM, Nashville; KMOX, St. Louis; Krill, Dallas; KWKH, Shreveport; and WOR, Newark, along with other nearer and less powerful stations. . . ."

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Watch History

Pocket Watches - Railroad Timepieces - Wristlets What's The Connection?

History and Evolution

By Darryl Searcy

The following is a continuation of the article on the history of watches from the Nov./Dec. issue of ECHOES.

On July 16, 1817, the following notice appeared in the Worcester National Aegis: *Publick Notice -- Luther Goddard with his son Daniel Goddard have taken and opened the shop opposite Mr. D. Waldo's Brick Store in Worcester, for the purpose of making and repairing Watches, where they keep many Watches & Eight Day Time Pieces – all warranted good – together with an assortment of Silver & Gold Ward, Chains, Keys, Seals, and Worcester, July 16, 1817.*

The eight-day timepieces were probably made by Goddard's cousin Simon Willard, who advertised in the same newspaper on September 25, 1822, that *"he has authorized L. Goddard & Son to sell his new Patent Alarm Time Pieces."*

In 1828, Goddard moved to Preston, Connecticut, and by 1830, he had moved to Norwich. He later returned to Massachusetts, where he died on March 24, 1842, at the age of eighty-one.

By 1835, though few watches had been made in America and none had been made by machine methods, the Pitkin brothers, Henry (1811-46) and James Flagg (1812-70), of East Hartford, Connecticut, were developing a watch they hoped could be made successfully in quantity. Henry, as well as two older brothers, John O. and Walter, had been apprenticed as a silversmith and watch repairman, probably under Jacob Sergeant of Hartford. The youngest brother, James, was trained by his older brothers.

The Pitkins ran a shop in East Harford for the manufacture of silver articles; they later opened a retail store in downtown Hartford. The store was destroyed by fire in 1833. They took over Sergeant's shop shortly thereafter and began experimentation with the machine-made watch. One of their four apprentices, Nelson P. Stratton, later became involved in the Boston Watch Company, American Watch Company, and Nashua Watch Company. He began working for the Pitkins in 1836. By this time they were making the tools and machinery necessary for the production of their American lever watch.

In their experimentation, the brothers attempted standardization so that the watch parts would be interchangeable. They cut the wheels in stacks and as uniformly as possible, though final hand-finishing was found to be necessary. They tried to avoid using foreign-made parts, but dials, hands hairsprings, mainsprings, and jewels, when used, had to be obtained from importers. The first fifty watches were marked "Henry Pitkin," but later examples were engraved "H. & J.F. Pitkin." No place of origin was engraved on the East Hartford-made watches, though the words "Detached Lever" appeared on the balance bridge and an American flag was engraved on the back plate. Watches numbered 90 and 164 are in existence today at the East Hartford Museum, along with documents in which Ambrose Webster (1832-94), a historian of the watch making business, claimed in 1890 to be the owner of *watch* 90.

In October of 1841, the brothers moved their watch business to New York in hopes of finding a better market for their product. Unfortunately, Pitkin & Company was not successful, for its watches were too expensive to compete with imports. During the summer of 1846, Henry had a nervous breakdown and on September 8, while being taken to Bloomingdale Sanitarium in New York, he fell or jumped from the Croton Aqueduct, then under construction, and was killed.

After his death, the oldest brother, John, came to New York and with James formed the firm Pitkin & Brother. They manufactured watch cases, but not watches, and sold imported watches. The manufacture of cases was discontinued about 1850 and James continued to import and sell watches until 1865. It is believed the Pitkins manufactured about four hundred watches. Those made in New York, marked "Detached Lever/Pitkin & Co./New York," were quite different from those made earlier in Connecticut. Watch number 367 remains in existence today. Watch number 378 was illustrated on the cover of

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Watch History *(continued)*

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the 1884 edition of the Jeweler's Journal, but as of this date, 2010, its present location is unknown.

Pitkin & Company archives acknowledge that the watch was developed in Europe sometime after 1500, and that there is reasonable doubt that any watches were constructed in America before 1809.

In 1838, the Pitkin brothers of East Hartford, Connecticut, attempted to produce watches by machine methods, thus paving the way for others.

Another maker was Jacob Detweiler Custer (1805-72) of Norristown, Pennsylvania. He developed a number of unusual clock-movement styles during his career. On February 4, 1843, he was granted a patent for a watch of his own design. The patent model with its original key is in the United States National Museum in Washington, D.C. Mr. Custer apparently made only a dozen or so of these watches. Watch number 7, a non-jeweled fusee watch is also at the National Museum today.

Bulova's Bronze Casey Jones Watch

Machine-made watches were first attempted in 1838 and successfully made after 1850, when many firms were formed specifically for the purpose. Some lasted only a short time; others achieved enormous success and produced millions of watches, some selling for under a dollar.

Successful production of a machine-made American watch was achieved after 1850 through the efforts of Aaron L. Dennison and Edward Howard. Aaron Lufkin Dennison (1812-95), a native of Freeport, Maine, was trained as a clockmaker and jeweler by James Carey of Brunswick, Maine (he moved to Boston in 1833). He first worked for Currier & Trott, jewelers, and then set up a watch-repair business near the corner of Washington and Milk Streets. A short time later he worked as a watch repairman for Jones, Low & Ball of Boston. Jubal Howe, a former apprentice of Luther Goddard, was in charge of the watch-repair department and Dennison undoubtedly learned some of Goddard's watch making techniques from Howe.

After a brief tenure in New York, Dennison returned to Boston and in 1839, on Washington Street, established the firm of Dennison, Adams & Company as dealers in watches, tools, and materials. In 1846, he moved to another location on Washington Street and with Nathan Foster organized the firm of A. L. Dennison & Company. Though Dennison first manufactured boxes for the jewelry trade, he became increasingly interested in the manufacture of watches. In January of 1850, he wrote: *"It is now about ten years since I first began to entertain the notion that the manufacture of watches might be introduced into this country with advantage, but I had supposed that in order to compete with the cheap labors of the old countries, Yankee ingenuity would have to be taxed to a considerable extent to produce a favorable result.*

For the first five or seven years of the above period, I contented myself with simply entertaining the opinion…..Once I recollected…to Mr. Willard in Congress St. that I believed that ten or twenty years would not elapse before American made watches of a medium quality could be afforded for one-half the price of English manufacture, to which, as I expected, he expressed dissent…. Of course, whether this is correct remains to be proved, but after a still further consideration of the subject I am of the opinion that the final result will be a s likely to produce the articles at one-quarter the price of importing as it is to exceed the first estimate by any degree."

Dennison became acquainted with Edward Howard, then in partnership with David Porter Davis in the manufacture of clocks and balances. He impressed Howard with his ideas on the potential of watch manufacturing and was given a small room in the Howard & Davis factory at Roxbury, Massachusetts, where, in 1849, he began to experiment and develop machinery for watch produc-

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Watch History *(continued)*

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tion. Howard & Davis provided him with ten thousand dollars and Samuel Curtis, a successful Boston gilder, dial maker, and ornament painter, invested another twenty thousand dollars. A new two-story brick building was built for his use around 1850.

Seeing that the time keeping business could be made into something even bigger. a young immigrant from Bohemia named Joseph Bulova (1851 - 1936) was certain that he could break into the business and make something of it. He founded and incorporated as the J. Bulova Company in 1875.

Hamilton's "Standard Railroad Approved Pocket Watch

Cr. 1904Cr. 1904

Bulova established his operations in Woodside, New York, where he did, in fact, achieve astronomical success. He made tremendous innovations in building timepieces and developing watch making tools that revolutionized the industry beyond measure. In 1923 the J. Bulova Company became the Bulova Watch Company. One of its numerous and great innovations was development of the Accutron watch which used resonating tuning forks as a means of regulating the time keeping function.

Bulova was not the first company to assert itself as a business intent on making watches in America. That honor would have gone to the Keystone Standard Watch Company. The Keystone Standard quickly merged with another watch maker called Aurora Watch Company of Illinois. The merger proved too big and too complicated and the enterprise was forced into bankruptcy before it really got started. The Keystone/Aurora was sold at a sheriff's sale to a group of Lancaster, Pennsylvania entrepreneurs whose objective would be to "build a few watches of the highest quality."

A decision was made to name the new company after James Hamilton, owner of a large tract of land that had been granted to him from William Penn and included what is now the city of Lancaster. The new company would be known as The Hamilton Watch Company, Est. 1892. It would ready itself to compete with Joseph Bulova.

The Hamilton Watch Company housed itself on a 13-acre (53,000 m2) complex in Lancaster. Hamilton eventually took possession of 'Aurora's' machinery, with quality being its primary goal. The company wasted no time in setting itself out to manufacture "America's Finest Watch." The first watch made under the Hamilton name was an 18-size 17-jewel pocket watch that was first presented in 1893.

Watches are, of course, portable time-keeping devices. Many examples are as large as some present-day clocks, but today, watches are usually small and delicate in nature, yet durable enough to withstand the normal abuse of daily use.

Pocket watches were the standard of watch making until the twentieth century, though smaller models had been introduced in the late nineteenth century designed to be worn by ladies on a neck chain or as a pendant. Wristwatches were not introduced until World War I, and they were not generally accepted by gentlemen until after 1930.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the American watch industry became the greatest in the world. However, economic trends of the present century have forced the surrender of that honor to the Swiss watch industry.

Today, the Bulova Watch Company estimates that it is possible that well over 1 billion watches were made in America between 1850 and 1950, at which time the industry began to decline.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Watch History *(continued)*

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The (Wristlet) Wristwatch

Today a wristwatch is considered as much a status symbol as a device to tell time. In an age when cell phones and digital pagers display tiny quartz clocks, the mechanical wristwatch has slowly become less of an object of function and more a piece of modern culture.

Walk into the boardroom of any Fortune 500 company and you're likely to see dozens of prestigious wristwatches, including such names as Rolex, Vacheron Constantin, Frank Müller, Omega, Jaeger-LeCoultre, and Patek Phillipe. However, this was not always the case. Less than 100 years ago, no self-respecting gentleman would be caught dead wearing a wristwatch. In those days real men carried pocket watches, with a gold half-hunter being the preferred status symbol of the time.

Wristlets, as they were called, were reserved for women, and considered more of a passing fad than a serious timepiece. In fact, they were held in such disdain that many gentlemen were actually quoted to say they "would sooner wear a skirt as wear a wristwatch".

The established watch making community looked down on them as well. Because of their size, few believed wristlets could be made to achieve any level of accuracy, nor could they withstand the basic rigors of human activity. Therefore, very few companies produced them in quantity, with the vast majority of those being small ladies' models, with delicate fixed wire or chain-link bracelets.

This all started to change in the nineteenth century, when soldiers discovered their usefulness during wartime situations. Pocket watches were clumsy to carry and thus difficult to operate while in combat.

(Left is the Elgin WW-I Military Watch Model 375, cr. 1904)

Therefore, soldiers fitted them into primitive" cupped" leather straps so they could be worn on the wrist, thereby freeing up their hands during battle. It is believed that Girard-Perregaux equipped the German Imperial Naval with similar pieces as early as the 1880s, which they wore on their wrists while synchronizing naval attacks, and firing artillery.

Decades later, several technological advents were credited with the British victory in the Anglo-Boer War (South Africa 1899-1902), including smokeless gunpowder, the magazine-fed rifle and even the automatic or machine gun. However, some would argue that it was a not-so-lethal device that helped turn the tide into Britain's favor - the wristwatch.

While the British troops were superiorly trained and equipped, they were slightly outnumbered, and at a disadvantage while attacking the Boer's heavily entrenched positions. Thanks to these recently designed weapons, a new age of war had emerged, which, now more than ever, required tactical precision. British officers achieved success by using these makeshift wristwatches to coordinate simultaneous troop movements, and synchronize flanking attacks against the Boer's formations.

In fact, an "Unsolicited Testimonial" dated June 7, 1900, appeared in the 1901, Goldsmith's Company Watch and Clock Catalog as follows: "… I wore it continually in South Africa on my wrist for 3 ½ months. It kept most excellent time, and never failed me.—Faithfully yours, Capt. North Staffs. Regt."

This testimonial appeared below an advertisement for a military pocket watch listed as The Company's "Service" Watch, and was further described as: "The most reliable timekeeper in the World for Gentlemen going on Active Service or for rough wear."

In 1906, the evolution of wristlets took an even bigger step with the invention of the expandable flexible bracelet, as well as the introduction of wire loops (or lugs) soldered onto small, open-faced pocket watch cases, allowing leather straps to be more easily attached. This aided their adaptation for military use and thus marked a turning point in the development of wristwatches for men.

To be continued . . . .

ECHOES
THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 276
Brewton, AL 36427
Phone: 251-809-1528

E-mail: escohis@escohis.org

We're on the web!

www.escohis.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL

DATED MATERIAL

Address correction requested

Books for Sale	Mailed	Regular
A History of Escambia County	$55.00	$50.00
Headstones and Heritage	$40.00	$35.00
Escambia Historical Society Cookbook	$10.00	$ 5.00
Wildflowers of The Escambia CD	$12.50	$10.00
History of Brewton and E. Brewton (sc)	$51.00	$45.00
History of Brewton and E. Brewton (hc)	$66.00	$60.00
Flomaton Centennial Scrapbook	$46.00	$40.00

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

Membership Renewal/Application *Form*

Date _____/____/_____

Names) _____

Mailing Address _____

Do you prefer to get your newsletter by U.S. Mail ___ or email? ___

Phone _____ Email _____

Dues _____ **($25.00/person, $35.00/two family members - Lifetime, $250.00/person; $50.00/year business)**

Donation _____

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

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, 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.