



Said to be Reverse Side of
Great Seal of Confederacy

Volume 39, Number 3

March 2012

The March Meeting

Tuesday, March 27, 2012, 3:00 p. m
The Thomas E. McMillan Museum

The Program

ECHS member Yancey "Yank" Lovelace will share his genealogy research. Yank will present the "History of the Lovelace Family in Brewton," beginning with Governor Francis Lovelace of New York in the 1600's. €

Cistern in the Park

Information for this article has been taken from ECHS member Lydia Grimes' article "Window to the Past: Unearthed Cistern Reveals History," The Brewton Standard, March 17-18, 2012, pp. 1 & 10.

Pictures also courtesy of Lydia Grimes.



Cistern and Marker

took photographs of the cistern and ECHOES published them as a query.

We had further coverage of the story of the cistern in the February 2012 issue of ECHOES where we published

The city of Brewton has uncovered and placed an historic marker at the remains of a brick water-cistern in Burnt Corn Creek Park. Several months back, the city asked ECHS to research the history of the brick cistern which had been uncovered by crews working to clean up the park. Ann Biggs-Williams

comments and pictures submitted by Shon Scott of the remains of the cistern in the process of the clean-up. Shon remembered playing in the park as a youngster and submitted a picture of what a full size cistern could have looked like.

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The April Program

Claudia Campbell, President of the Fort Mims Restoration Association, will speak at the April 24 ECHS meeting. Claudia's topic will be "Fort Mims--Past, Present & Future."

Volunteer Tuesdays

Join ECHS volunteers on the first Tuesday of the month to help with organizing research materials in the Alabama Room.

Summary of the Minutes of the ECHS Meeting February 28, 2012

Visitors

John Hoomes, son of ECHS Secretary Jacque Stone

Julia Blair, sister of ECHS member Susan Blair

Cynthia Dean of the Pensacola Genealogical Society

Lola Claude and Annell Prim of Brewton

Business

Darryl Searcy was nominated and approved as an Alternate Trustee.

Announcements

Although ECHS did not participate in the rummage sale at the Hourglass for this March, the society could participate in one next fall.

Tom McMillan acknowledged and complimented an article in the Tri-City Ledger by Jerry Simmons on the Battle of Burnt Corn Creek. President McMillan also reported that some items had been

found in the recent expedition to find the exact location of the Battle of Burnt Corn Creek and that a future expedition is planned on searching for the site.

Anne Biggs-Williams asked for volunteers to help with research requests and queries which have been made to the society. If there are no volunteers to do the research, she will seek permission to publish the queries in the newsletter.

Lydia Grimes was present at the meeting and was available to autograph copies of her book.

A seminar will be held at Fort Mims on March 17-18, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. on "The War of 1812 and its Effect on the Tensas Country."

The Program

Guest Speaker Dale Cox presented a program on the lynching of Claude Neal. This event, its cause and the consequences are the subject of Dale's recently published book on the subject. €

Books Donated to the Alabama Room Since March 2011

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ♦ <u>The Federal Road: The Very Worst Road</u> , Jeffrey C. Benton
Finlay Foundation/In Memory of Doris Bruner | ♦ <u>Creek Paths and Federal Roads</u>
Angela Hudson
Findlay Foundation/In Memory of Helen Hildreth | ♦ <u>Voices of the Confederate Navy</u>
R. Thomas Campbell
Donated by David O'Neil Allen, Jr. |
| ♦ <u>The Mississippi Territory and the Southwest Frontier, 1795-1817</u> , Robert V. Haynes | ♦ <u>Two Egg, Florida</u>
Dale Cox
Donated by Dale Cox | ♦ <u>By Sea and By River: The Naval History of the Civil War</u>
Bern Anderson
Donated by David O'Neil Allen, Jr. |
| ♦ Finlay Foundation/In Honor of Wilellen Elliot | ♦ <u>Christmas in Two Egg, Florida</u>
Dale Cox
Donated by Dale Cox | ♦ <u>Defeating The Totalitarian Lie</u>
Hilmar Von Campe
Donated by Hilmar Von Campe |
| ♦ <u>The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins, 1796-1810</u>
Thomas Foster, Editor
Finlay Foundation/In Honor of Mary Catherine Luker | ♦ <u>The Battle of Marianna, Florida.</u>
Dale Cox
Donated by Dale Cox | ♦ <u>Brick Road To Boom Town</u>
Brian R. Rucker
Donated by Brian Rucker |
| ♦ <u>Images of America: Brewton and East Brewton</u>
Lydia Grimes
Ann Biggs-Williams/In Memory of Peggy Gill Bracken | ♦ <u>Traces of John M. and Fannie M. Brown</u>
Russell Brown
Donated by Russell & Karla Brown | |

(Continued on page 3)

Books Donated to the Alabama Room Since March 2011 *(Continued)*

(Continued from page 2)

- ♦ Tourism In Antebellum Pensacola: Image & Reality
Brian R. Rucker
Donated by Brian Rucker
- ♦ American Heritage History of World War I
Joseph L. Gardner
Donated by John Appleyard
- ♦ Remembering the 40's
Nick Freeth
Donated by John Appleyard
- ♦ New Deal and Global War: Roosevelt's First 100 Days
William E. Leuchrenburg
Donated by John Appleyard
- ♦ Southern Genealogist's Exchange Society Text book 1
Marjorie D Russell
Donated by David O'Neil Allen, Jr.
- ♦ Southern Genealogist's Exchange Society Text book 2
Marjorie D Russell
Donated by David O'Neil Allen, Jr.
- ♦ The National Museum of Natural History
Phillip Knopper
Donated by Paul Merritt
- ♦ The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins, 1796-1810
Thomas Foster, Editor
Finlay Foundation/In Honor of Mary Catherine Luker
- ♦ Creek Paths and Federal Roads
Angela Hudson
Findlay Foundation/In Memory of Helen Hildreth

Cistern in the Park *(Continued)*

(Continued from page 1)

Now the area around what remains of the cistern has been cleaned up, there is a low chain length fence around it, and the interior has been filled with red wood chips. The cistern has its own marker.

ECHS archivist David Allen did extensive research on the history of the cistern and must be given credit for the wording and the information on the marker. It reads:

“This tank was used to hold water for the City of Brewton Electric Light and Water-Works, Fire Protection System and was built circa early 1890’s. This location was originally the Blacksher Miller Lumber Company, which became Foshee and McGowin Lumber in 1899. The Lovelace Brothers bought the mill in 1900.

“There were other tanks and wells within the site used to support fire control as well. Fire was a huge issue for lumber mills as many of them in the area had fires over the years which destroyed their facili-



The Cistern Marker

ties. There were at least three wells dug and were used to constantly feed the water level in this tank. One well is just down the embankment from the back wall of the tank structure and it still flows today out of a vertical cast iron pipe.

“There would have been a hose-reel pipe close by the tank. Notice the old brick

foundation across the walk path from this location. The Sanborn Map of 1898 shows a small, hose-reel house, possibly housing a pump as well. The tank is shown at this particular location with three springs feeding it.”

The cistern is estimated to be 110 years old.

Note: The Sanborn Maps were made to show location and type of building materials (brick or wood) of structures in towns for the purpose of setting insurance rates. There are copies of some of the early Sanborn Maps of Brewton (and others of Pollard and Flomaton) from the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth century in the Alabama Room. €

ECHS Member Encourages Participation in the Great Backyard Bird Count

This letter appeared in a recent issue of the Tri-City Ledger

Dear Editor:

As an ambassador for the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) and a member of the Hummer Bird Study Group, I would like to thank you for your well written article encouraging participation in the annual bird count. The GBBC is a joint project between the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the Audubon Society.

Bird checklists may be submitted through March 5, so final tallies are not in as I write this letter. However, to date, a total of 103,109 checklists have identified 617 species and 17,265,843 birds nationwide.

The Ledger's spotlight entitled "Mary Marie's Winter Home" (see next page in this newsletter) led Ledger reader, Euna Langford, to contact Fred Bassett who came to her home on Feb. 27 and banded not one but four Rufous hummingbirds! Mrs. Langford has had winter hummers for years but just learned of the ongoing research through the Tri City Ledger.

Readers who would like to know more about Mr. Bassett's research can go to www.hummingbirdresearch.net for more information. Also, the Hummer Bird Study Group website at www.hummingbirdsplus.org has additional information.

Although "my" winter hummer has made the trip to Brewton five consecutive winters, a couple in Enterprise, Ala. have had a female Rufous hummingbird visit for nine consecutive winters.

Mr. Bassett recently caught a female Rufous hummer on Dec. 28, 2011 in Foley, Ala. that had been banded July 19, 2011 near Dunster, B.C., Canada. The distance that bird traveled was 2,250 miles. The record however, is a bird banded in Tallahassee, Fla.



Rufous Hummingbird

"Often described as 'feisty,' the Rufous may have the ideal size-to-weight ratio among North American hummingbirds. This bird outflies all other species, and usually gets its way at feeders at the expense of slower, less-maneuverable hummers. The Rufous has the longest migration route of all US hummingbirds (hummingbirds.net). Photo by Dan True

that was captured months later in Chenga Bay, Alaska, over 3,500 miles.

Area birding enthusiasts have a treat at the end of this month. Northbound migrant birds returning from their winter in the tropics are banded as they head northward at Fort Morgan.

Spring banding at Fort Morgan State Historical Park is scheduled for March 31 - April 12. The banding is free, and open to the public. There is a small fee to enter the fort property. I attended my first banding event with a group of volunteers from Turtle Point Environmental Science Center many years ago. The Ft. Morgan bandings are held every- spring and fall.

Thanks for your focus on our rich natural heritage.

Sincerely,
Ann Biggs-Williams €

GBBC Smashes Records!

Also from Ann Biggs-Williams, this follow-up:

You did it! Or, as one participant tweeted: "Way to go, citizen scientists!" Participation in the 15th Great Backyard Bird Count, February 17-20, shattered all previous records. Bird watchers in the U.S. and Canada submitted more than 104,000 checklists, reported 623 species, and observed more than 17.4 million birds. New checklist records were set in 22 states and in 6 Canadian provinces. The 100,000th checklist was submitted by Denise St. Pierre and her family in Lac Du Bonnet, Manitoba. To mark that watershed moment we're awarding Denise the Eliminator Squirrel-Proof Feeder donated by Wild Birds Unlimited."

Mary Marie: Hummingbird That Winters in Brewton

Mary Marie's Winter Home

By JANET LITTLE COOPER
Ledger Managing Editor

For the fifth winter straight, a female Rufous hummingbird has made it's home in Brewton at the residence of longtime bird enthusiast Ann Biggs-Williams.

Williams named the bird on its second winter trip to Brewton.

"I named her Mary Marie because on the second year she came back my mother-in-law Mary Williams and my neighbor

Marie Pickett were here," Williams said. "They took a photo of my mother-in-law holding the hummer in her hand."

Williams contacted Fred Bassett with Humming Bird Research in Montgomery who was able to place a band around the birds leg to watch and confirm its return.

"Mr. Bassett is trained," Williams said. "He travels all over south and central Alabama and northwest Florida banding and documenting hummingbirds like Mary Marie. He takes pictures and measures her each year she comes."

Williams said Mary Marie showed up in her yard in late October and remains - for now.

"She will probably be here until March," Williams

said. "About two weeks after she leaves the more common hummingbird - the Ruby-throated will come for spring and leave in the fall. Mary Marie probably spends the rest of the year on the West Coast."

Williams's Rufous hummingbird wasn't the first winter bird to call her yard home.

"About six years ago a rare bird alert was put out online because I had a Buff-Bellied hummingbird," Williams said. "A man drove all the way to Brewton from Illinois just to see it because they are so rare. That was my first winter bird."

Williams did say Mary Marie has a companion this winter - a Baltimore Oriole who keeps draining the hummingbird feeder of its sweet nectar.

Rufous Hummingbird - (*Selasphorus rufus*)

The Rufous Hummingbird is a small hummingbird, 3 inches with a long, straight and slender bill. It is often described as being "feisty". This bird outflies all other species and has the longest migration route of all U.S. hummingbirds.

Pictures of
Mary Marie
taken by Bassett
in October



News/Announcements

A Call for Fort Crawford Artifacts

ECHS is interested in documenting (not collecting but making a photograph of and preserving information about) artifacts from the Fort Crawford area.

The society and its president, Tom McMillan, are researching the exact location of the fort. Thus, any artifacts collected from the fort with information of the location when collected as well as identity and use of the item will help in locating the fort as well as preserving a record of the fort and its history.

Anyone with items can contact ECHS President Tom McMillan at the phone number 251-867-9044 or email <tmcmillan@longleafenergy.com> or JDCC Museum Coordinator Jerry Simmons at phone number 251-809-1528 or email jerry.simmons@jdcc.edu.

Retirement Reception Planned

Sherry Martin, formerly Director of Administration and Personnel, will be honored with a reception on Tuesday March 27, 2012 at 11:00 a. m., in the Neal Building on the Brewton Campus.

Deborah Hammons has started work as the new Administrative Assistant to the President, replacing Ada Adams, who retired some months back.

Book Signing for a New Book about Escambia County, Alabama

The book, Escambia County, will be available for sale and signing by its editor Tom McMillan on Wednesday, March 28, 2012 from 4:00-6:00 p. m. at the Brewton Public Library.

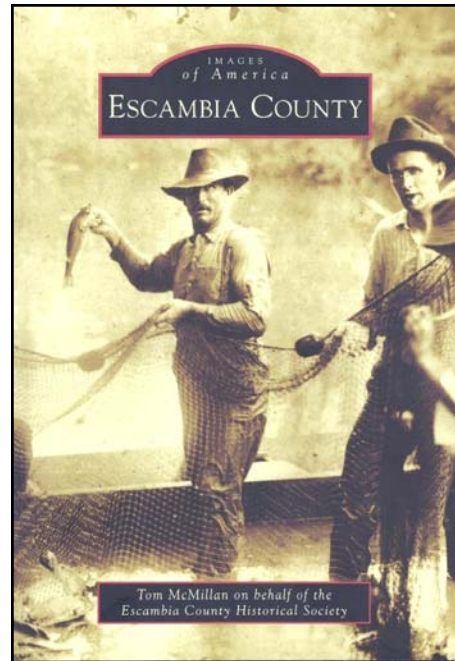


Brass Flintlock Pistol Barrel
Found at the site of fort Crawford near Brewton some years back by Mr. John R. Downing. This [pistol may date to the late 1700's-early 1800's and has engraving on one side that says "London."]

Part of the "Images of America Series" developed by Arcadia Publishers, it contains not only photographs covering all parts of the county but the history and background of the pictures as well.

Tom McMillan edited and published Escambia County on behalf of the Escambia County Historical Society. Proceeds will go to ECHS.

The book (a paperback) sells for \$21.99 plus sales tax. €



Cover of Escambia County

This excerpt from the book, describing the picture on the cover, is an example of the history that is included with the pictures

"Aubrey Strong, Dan Brantley (holding the fish), and Joe Larkin (right), proudly display their catch in the Pollard area on the Conecuh River. Hunting and fishing have always been a source of enjoyment in Escambia county. In the early days, residents could use a net and bring home a bucket full of fish. The county has many sloughs, lakes, and swamps associated with the Conecuh River Bottom."

Picture and text courtesy of D. W. McMillan Trust

Alabama Historical Association Annual Meeting in Huntsville April 12-14

Events include a pre-meeting tour of the village of Mooresville (established during Alabama's territorial period), an evening reception at Alabama Constitution Village, site of the 1819 convention in which 44 delegates ushered in statehood for Alabama, a walking tour of Twickenham, the city's oldest neighborhood, and a banquet at the Davidson Center for Space Exploration.

Programs include readings from a diarist who recorded the events of the period of the first Federal occupation of Huntsville during the Civil War, and a presentation by banquet speaker, Roger Launius, senior curator at the Smithsonian Institution's Division of Space History

For more information, go to
<www.alabamahistory.net>. €

Artifacts from the McMillan Museum on Display at Fort Mims

At the event, "The War of 1812 and Its Effects on the Tensaw Country," held March 17-18, 2012 at Fort Mims, photographs of exhibits from the JDCC McMillan Museum were used.

These were photographs of artifacts found in an archaeological dig at the location of Fort Montgomery, sister fort to Fort Mims.

Fort Montgomery (1814-1818) was a Federal Fort located two miles from Fort Mims, a location described as opposite the Alabama River "cutoff."

The fort was rebuilt in 1817 and a hospital was added to the facilities. (*The information about Fort Montgomery is taken from the website [American Forts](http://www.northamericanforts.com/East/al.html)* ><<http://www.northamericanforts.com/East/al.html>.) €



Shifting Dirt

The two young men shown next to the restored stockade walls of Fort Mims are performing one of the basic tasks of the archaeologist. These are sons of Greg Waskellov, archaeologist at the University of South Alabama.



Exhibit at Fort Mims

Museum Coordinator Jerry Simmons photographed the McMillan Museum's exhibits pertaining to Fort Montgomery and the period of the War of 1812 and the Creek Indian War.

These were enlarged and shown at the event.

A Business Member



Snapshots of the 2012 February Meeting



**Speaker Dale Cox of
Two Egg,
Florida**



**Tom McMillan presents Dale Cox with a
copy of Annie Water's book The History of
Escambia County, Alabama at the conclu-
sion of Dale's presentation at the February
Meeting**



**Alan Robinson with
copy of Dale Cox's
latest book,
The Claude Neal
Lynching.**



**Jacque Stone with Dale Cox, as she pur-
chases one of Dale's books.**



**Above: Hostess Sammie
McGlothren**



**At Left: Pat McGowin and John
Hoomes**

Snapshots of the February 2012 Meeting *(Continued)*



Above, hostess Sammie McGlothren and the refreshment table. Below, Sammie and Julia Blair.



Two Group Shots during the program, the one above showing President Tom McMillan on the right front.



Above Barbara Page, Beth Bain, and Barbara McCoy . At the right, Barbara McCoy is pictured with Lydia Grimes and Ranella Merritt.



The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Great Seal of the Confederacy

The following article is by Guy R. Swanson, formerly Curator of Manuscripts and Archives of the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia.

Thanks to Jerry Simmons for finding and recommending this fascinating story.

One of the most important objects in the Museum's collections is the Great Seal of the Confederacy, the symbol of the nation that Southerners created in 1861 and defended until 1865.

After the Confederacy collapsed, the seal escaped capture by Federal authorities and remained hidden until 1912, when it was purchased by "three public spirited citizens of Richmond," Virginia. In 1915, they loaned the seal to the Confederate Museum for display during the Veteran's Reunion, and it remained there on view in the Solid South Room on the first floor.

The great seal was formally presented to the organization in 1943.

When creating a national seal, the Confederacy's provisional and permanent governments faced a situation similar to that of the Founding Fathers. In 1782, they had considered designs based on Biblical scenes or European heraldry, before adopting the image of an eagle clutching arrows and an olive branch as the Great Seal of the United States.

Nearly eighty years later, on 9 February 1861, the Confederate Congress created the Committee on Flag and Seal, and for the next two years it considered alternatives that might serve as an appropriate great seal. The Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865, indicates that there was considerable debate on seal designs and mottoes that might identify the new nation.



**The Original Seal on Display in
The Confederate
Museum in Richmond**
(note the writing is reversed, since this side was
meant to create the seal on an object)

One design the House of Representatives considered in 1863 had "in the foreground, a Confederate soldier in the position of 'Charge Bayonet'" who was "surrounded by a wreath composed of the stalk of the sugar cane, the rice, the cotton, and tobacco plants,...." Another alternative was "an armed youth in classic costume...surrounded by a wreath composed of sugar cane, rice, cotton, tobacco plants...."

During the same year, the Senate considered adopting the image of the equestrian statue of George Washington in Richmond's Capitol Square

for the seal. President Jefferson Davis had selected a spot at the foot of the statue to deliver his 1862 inaugural address. Leaders of the revolutionary generation, especially Washington, were identified as the founders of the United States and the Confederacy.

The salutation of Davis's address recalled this legacy: "Fellow-Citizens. On this the birthday [22 February] of the man most identified with the establishment of American independence, and beneath the monument erected to commemorate his heroic virtues and those of his compatriots, we have assembled to usher into existence the Permanent Government of the Confederate States. Through this instrumentality, under the favor of Divine Providence, we hope to perpetuate the principles of our revolutionary fathers. The day, the memory, and purpose seem fitly associated."

Choices for the motto on the seal emerged with the various designs. Confederates believed that the motto associated with their cause should reflect their interpretation of the original Union as created in 1787, or

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Great Seal of the Confederacy *(Continued)*

(Continued from page 10)

a strong faith in blessings from God. Some of the mottoes under consideration were “Liberty and Independence,” “Glory to God in the Highest, on earth peace and good will toward men,” “Deo duce vincemus (With God as our leader we will conquer),” “Deo duce vincimus (With God as our leader we are conquering),” “Deo favente, animo fervente (With God favoring, and the soul raging),” “Deo vindice (With God as our defender),” and “Deo vindice majores aemulamur (With God as our defender we are emulating our ancestors),”

What is clear from the debate over the seal’s design and motto is that Confederates wanted an identity for their nation, recognized instantly by Southerners and other nations. A mixture of compromise and politicking yielded the final design of the great seal as approved in Congressional Joint Resolution No. 4, and signed by President Davis on 30 April 1863: “the seal of the Confederate States shall consist of a device representing an equestrian portrait of Washington... surrounded by a wreath composed of the principal agricultural products of the Confederacy,...with the following motto: “Deo Vindice.”

In late May 1863, after Congress had approved the design particulars, Secretary of State, Judah P. Benjamin, sent explicit instructions for the seal’s manufacture to James M. Mason, the Confederacy’s diplomatic representative in England. Benjamin’s letter included a photograph of the Washington statue to serve as the model, with a circle drawn on the back of the picture in the desired size of the seal.

The secretary of state also noted that, “In regard to the wreath and the motto, they must be placed in your taste and that of the artists.” He concluded, “Pray



An Early Engraved Version of the Seal

give your best attention to this, and let me know about what the cost will be and when I may expect the work to be finished.”

Mason experienced delays with the artist that he initially contracted to engrave the seal, but Benjamin finally heard about significant progress on 4 April 1864. Mason had scored a great success by arranging to have Joseph S. Wyon, Chief Engraver of Her Majesty’s Seals, craft the one for the Confederate government.

Wyon executed the seal in silver, which was the element used to cast those used by the English government. Silver had the advantage of resisting rust, which threatened seals that were engraved in steel.

The finished product was 3 5/8” in diameter, 3/4” thick, and weighed three pounds (Troy). Included in the final transaction were an “ivory handle, box with spring lock and screw press, 3,000 wafers, 1,000 seal papers, 1,000 strips of parchment, 100 brass boxes, 100 cakes of wax, 100 silk cords, 1 perforator, 3 packing cases lined with tin,” and a detailed set of instructions for using the seal and its accouterments.

Mason “Thought it better to have these supplies sent, in absence of the proper materials in the Confederacy.” The final cost was £122.10.0, which in mid-nineteenth century exchange was around \$700. Mason also worried, however, about the possibility of the new seal being captured in its circuitous and dangerous journey from London to Richmond. He took the liberty of holding it until he heard Secretary of State Benjamin’s plan for transporting the seal.

Mason was to have a trustworthy army or navy officer return it to the Confederacy, “with the most stringent directions for having it ready to be thrown into

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Great Seal of the Confederacy (Continued)

(Continued from page 11)

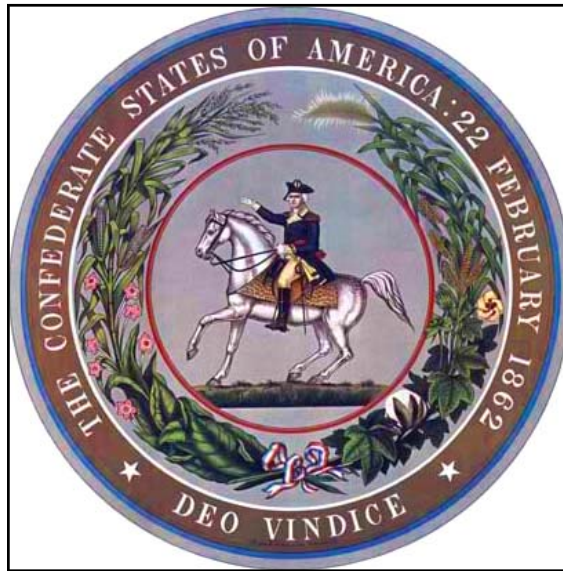
the sea, should the danger of capture become imminent.” In addition, an impression of the seal would remain in England, so that if the unthinkable occurred there would be little problem of having another cast. The matter was settled by 6 July 1864 when Mason entrusted Lieutenant Robert T. Chapman of the Confederate navy with delivery of the seal. The seal was placed in a small box that was carried in a leather satchel.

Chapman, along with several officers from the former Confederate vessels *Alabama* and *Georgia*, left Liverpool on the Cunard liner *Africa* for Halifax, Nova Scotia. Since there were threats from the blockade, he “made no secret of talking about his anxiety and his plans for throwing it overboard....” When the *Africa* reached Halifax, Chapman and some of the others boarded the steamer *Alpha* for St. George, Bermuda.

While in Bermuda, an anxious Chapman decided to go on to Wilmington, North Carolina, ahead of the seal’s press and other supplies. After four tries, and with the seal in his pocket, Chapman made it to Wilmington. The Great Seal of the Confederacy was presented to Secretary of State Benjamin in Richmond on 4 September 1864.

Back in London, Mason was relieved to learn that the seal had arrived safely in the Confederate capital, but for the next several months, he and Benjamin exchanged notes on the whereabouts of the press and supplies. Without its press, the great seal was probably never used in an official capacity, and the permanent government continued to use the seal of the provisional government.

The provisional seal had a design of a scroll and the “word ‘Constitution’ above and ‘Liberty’ below.”



An Early colored Version of the Seal

After the Confederate government collapsed, Benjamin threw this first seal into the Savannah River as he fled the South for England.

The seal press remained in Bermuda in the care of John Bourne, a Confederate commercial agent, who held it until his death in 1867. The press was then sold at auction and disappeared until 1888, when John S. Darrell purchased it as a piece of junk.

Darrell had the press cleaned, found it in good condition, and then mounted it in a glass case. After unsuccessful attempts to

obtain a silver replica of the great seal to use in the press, Darrell had one cast in brass. The press is now in the custody of Darrell’s descendants, the Cox family of Hamilton, Bermuda.

The best starting point for tracing the post-bellum history of the great seal is April 1865. State Department clerk William J. Bromwell had previously moved three cartons of departmental records to a barn near Richmond, and he had also been ordered to transfer seven additional cartons of records to Danville Female College in Danville, Virginia. With the end of the Confederacy near, Secretary of State Benjamin then instructed Bromwell to take all of the records to Charlotte, North Carolina.

The clerk arrived there on 1 April 1865, placing the ten containers—one of which held the great seal—in the courthouse in strongboxes. But the surrender at Appomattox, Davis’s flight and subsequent capture, and Benjamin’s escape to England seemingly made Bromwell the formal custodian of the records. Bromwell returned to Richmond to practice law, and then moved to Washington, D. C. in 1866, where he was employed by John T. Pickett in his law firm. Bromwell made certain that the records followed him, and

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Great Seal of the Confederacy (Continued)

(Continued from page 12)

eventually he informed Pickett that he had custody of them.

In 1868, the two agreed that Pickett would act as Bromwell's agent, and Pickett approached the Federate government about purchasing the papers for \$500,000. U. S. Secretary of State, William Henry Seward, was interested in purchasing them, but expressed concerns about their authenticity and the price.

Negotiations broke down until the next year when the government indicated its willingness to purchase the papers for an undisclosed amount. Pickett must have been unimpressed for he broke off the talks, and later tried to sell the records to a group of Southerners for \$25,000.

It was not until 1871 that Congress appropriated \$75,000 for the purchase, when Pickett (and Bromwell) accepted. Federal authorities were now interested in the papers because of damage claims being made against the United States by former Confederates; the records could help determine if the accusations were genuine.

Seward then appointed Navy Lieutenant Thomas O. Selfridge as the State Department's representative to inspect the papers. All along, from the start of the negotiations, Pickett claimed that the Confederate records were in Hamilton, Ontario, affording them protection from confiscation by the U. S. government. In reality the papers were still concealed in the Washington, D. C. area.

In June 1872, Pickett and Selfridge traveled by railroad to the announced storage site, with the papers heading to the same destination on the same train! Once in Canada, Pickett carefully produced the papers. Selfridge made the inspection and determined the records were genuine. The pair returned to Wash-



Great Seal Represented on the Floor of the Texas Capitol

ington with the papers once again following them on the train.

After additional inspections by government officials, Pickett received the \$75,000 payment on 3 July 1872, and the sum was divided with Bromwell. At some point during the trip, Pickett gave Selfridge the Great Seal of the Confederacy. The reasons why the exchange took place are unclear, and both

men knew it had to remain a secret between them.

In 1873, however, a third party gained knowledge of who possessed the seal. Pickett had arranged for Selfridge to loan him the seal in order to have 1,000 electrotypes manufactured and coated in gold, silver, and bronze. New York electrotyper Samuel H. Black completed the task for \$778 and gave Pickett his Masonic oath that he would never divulge information about the seal's owner.

The two signed an agreement on 15 May 1873 that completed the transaction. The replicas were then placed on sale with all generated revenue going to relieve Southern widows and orphans. The amount that Pickett raised is unknown. "The understood," as Selfridge referred to the seal, arrived back in his custody on 21 May.

By 1885, he and Black were the only two who knew the truth about the great seal. Bromwell had died in 1875, and Pickett, in 1884. Pickett's electrotypes and his correspondence with Selfridge left clues that would eventually reveal who owned the great seal.

Questions arose about the authenticity of the item from which the copies were made, and Pickett sent an electrotypes to London to the firm that had engraved the true seal. J. S. and A. B. Wyon confirmed that it was identical to the one produced in 1864. They

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The Great Seal of the Confederacy (Continued)

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added further that “we have no hesitation in asserting that as perfect an impression could not have been produced except from the original Seal. We have never made any duplicates of the Seal in question.”

Ever so slowly, detective work by several individuals interested in the great seal, and working apart from one another, began to reveal who had custody. Miss L. T. Munford, of the Confederate Memorial Literary Society and its Confederate Museum in Richmond, contacted the War Department in 1905 seeking information about the seal’s location. Acting Secretary of War Robert Shaw Oliver informed her that the department had never held the seal and suggested that South Carolina was supposed to be the custodian. Miss Munford also received notification from the Smithsonian Institution that the United Daughters of the Confederacy held the seal.

North Carolina Judge Walter A. Montgomery was also interested in the seal and came close to locating it. While researching the Confederate government at the Library of Congress in 1910 and 1911, he, too, started wondering what had happened to the great seal. After carefully reading Pickett’s correspondence with Selfridge—the Library of Congress had only recently acquired the Pickett Papers—Montgomery concluded that Selfridge held the seal.

In an October 1911 article for the Richmond Times-Dispatch he reported his conclusions, hoping that Selfridge would release the seal. Nothing resulted from his efforts. Not until Gaillard Hunt, Chief of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, began working to locate the seal was the mystery truly solved.

After examining Pickett’s papers, Hunt concluded,



A Representation of the Great Seal

just as Montgomery had, that Selfridge owned the seal. Hunt then took his efforts one step further and informed Selfridge that he intended to publish his findings unless he gave up the seal.

Fearing a scandal over his acquisition and ownership of the seal, Selfridge agreed to Hunt’s demand, but only if he received \$3,000. Hunt now faced a financial dilemma and enlisted the help of Lawrence Washington, descendant of the first president and a fellow employee at the Library of Congress. Washing-

ton quickly found three prominent residents of Richmond—Thomas P. Bryan, Eppa Hunton, Jr., and William H. White—who agreed to give \$1,000 apiece for purchasing the seal.

The buyers signed a preliminary agreement with Selfridge in May 1912 but had one important stipulation: the seal in question must receive authentication as the Great Seal of the Confederacy. Bryan, Hunton, and White arranged for J. St. George Bryan and Granville Gray to travel to London to visit the Wyon studio to obtain the needed authentication.

The firm was then headed by Allen G. Wyon, nephew of the original engraver, and after making a wax impression, he confirmed that the seal was genuine. Wyon signed a document attesting to its authenticity and attached it to the seal.

While Hunt was in the process of proving that Selfridge held the seal and raising the \$3,000, he was also in touch with Miss Susan B. Harrison of the Confederate Memorial Literary Society. The two had met earlier when Miss Harrison had traveled to the Library of Congress to study the preservation of manuscripts.

In April 1912, he told her in a confidential letter

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that he had located the great seal and added that he hoped a Southern institution would eventually become its custodian. In additional correspondence of the same month, he remarked that he hoped to receive some of the credit for helping the Museum obtain the seal and the “sole credit” or having located the item. Hunt assured Miss Harrison that “no one [would] have the Seal who does not promise to give it to a public institution in Virginia—preferably your Museum.” “If you restrain yourself for a couple of weeks,” he concluded, “you will see the drama closed.”

Miss Harrison notified Hunt on 26 April 1912—Confederate Memorial Day in the Deep South—that, “Since reading your letter... I have been floating on pink clouds....” She said that if the seal were given to the Museum he would “be the Hero of the whole play,” and the “Society will give you a reception and crown you King of Kings, waving Confederate flags and singing Dixie—.” The matter, unfortunately, remained unsettled for three more years.

In October 1913, Miss Sally Archer Anderson, President of the Confederate Memorial Literary Society, approached Eppa Hunton, Jr., about depositing the seal at the Museum. “I do not know if you and your associates have made up your minds,” she began, “as to the proper place in which to put as a gift The Confederate Seal, but I feel so intensely... that our Museum is the place for it, that I venture to impose on you this letter.”

Miss Anderson recounted the special care that objects and manuscripts received when given to the Museum, and noted the special training that Miss Harrison received from Hunt at the Library of Congress. She added that the Museum owned fireproof



The Seal of the President of the Confederacy

cases for its documents and a fireproof safe for the most valuable items in the collections. Miss Anderson's letter, and no doubt other efforts that followed, must have influenced Bryan, Hunton, and White.

On 24 May 1915, Hunton presented Miss Harrison with the great seal and all the papers that certified its authenticity. The items were loaned to the Museum, and Hunton added, “It is a pleasure to be able to put the Seal with you....I know your organization will value and care for it as it deserves to be.”

The seal remained on loan to the Museum until 1943 when the heirs of Bryan, Hunton, and White decided to give their interests to the Confederate Memorial Literary Society. With urging from Miss Anderson, the transfer took place in June and July of that year, and the descendants signed deeds of gift that formally completed the donation.

In 1970, the seal was put in active use for the first time. The Confederate Memorial Literary Society established Literary Awards in that year to honor outstanding scholarship in Confederate history. The Jefferson Davis Award honors narratives and the Founders Award honors edited primary sources. Each prize winner receives a framed citation bearing an impression of the great seal in red wax.

The history of the Great Seal of the Confederacy and its journey to the Museum is a story of mystery and luck, and the determination of Bryan, Hunton, and White to ensure the preservation of this unique object. That they perceived the Museum as the proper custodian for such a famous treasure, almost three-quarters of a century ago, is indicative of this institution's long-standing reputation as the principal center for the study of the Confederacy. €

ECHOES
THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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