

The October Meeting The Thomas E. McMillan Museum Tuesday, October 23, 2012, 3:00 p. m.

The Program

Guest Speaker Mitchell McMillan will present a program on the Geological History of South Alabama (What's under our feet and why). He will also discuss the Recent Discoveries of Oil and Gas in the area, especially the Little Cedar Creek Field near Evergreen.

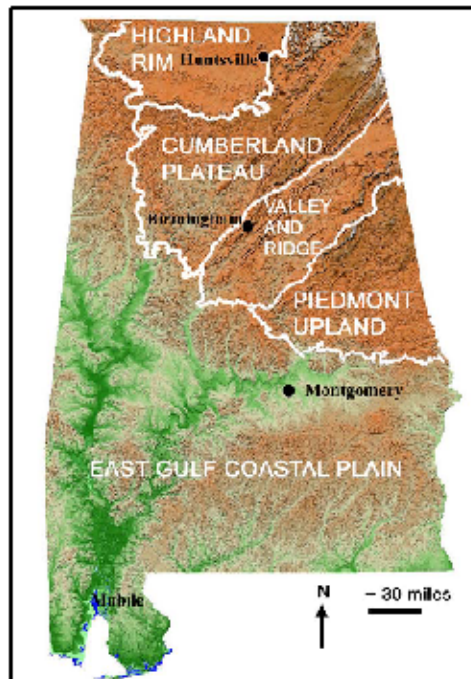
Mitchell, who is getting a Masters Degree in geology from the University of Alabama, is the son of ECHS President Tom McMillan.

The Program: Alabama's Geologic Diversity

The online Encyclopedia of Alabama gives this introduction to the geology of Alabama:

"Alabama is a very geologically diverse state. Rocks exposed at the surface range in age from Precambrian to Holocene (2.5 billion years to about 1,800 years old).

"Alabama's vast



Physiographic Regions of Alabama

geologic history includes episodes of continental collision and mountain building that produced numerous landforms, including in the folded and faulted sedimentary rocks of the Appalachian Valley and Ridge; the metamorphic rocks of the Piedmont Upland; and the extensive coal beds of north-central Alabama during the late Paleozoic and the formation and evolution of the Gulf of Mexico basin,

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No Meeting in November
The December Meeting
is the Christmas Party,
Details TBA.

A Correction

In a Recent Edition of ECHOES, we failed to acknowledge the author of the article on "The Man Who Robbed the Robber Barons," Jerry Simmons.



Pot Found Near Fort Mims
by Jeff Ross

Volume 39, Number 10-

October 2012

The Program *(continued)*

(Continued from page 1)

as recorded in the Mesozoic and Cenozoic strata of the East Gulf Coastal Plain.

“These geologic events have shaped Alabama's landscape, and the rock strata that bear testament to these events are either host to significant natural resources-oil, natural gas, and groundwater-or, in many cases, are themselves composed of valuable economic commodities, including coal, limestone, sand, gravel, and clay.

“Additionally, the landscapes, watersheds, and habitats of the Alabama we know today are formed on the foundation of the underlying geology and have in turn produced the state's impressive biodiversity, which is almost unparalleled in the rest of the United States “ (<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1549>).

The Program: Alabama's Hottest Oil Play

The following article by Chris McFayden was published in October 2009 at

<http://blog.al.com/business-alabama/2009/10/alabamas_hottest_oil_play.html>.

“Since 2000, a swath of timberland outside of Evergreen, county seat of Conecuh County, has been the hottest oil and gas pay dirt in Alabama.

In mid-October petroleum landmen in the Conecuh County Courthouse were again feverishly working elbow to elbow.

““On some days my record room is full of people,” says Cathy Garner, chief clerk of probate court. “It goes in waves. Right now it's kind of busy. Some days it's packed; like little ants going at it.”

The Little Cedar Creek Field, 20 miles east of Ev-



Oil Derrick at Little Cedar Creek Field

Picture courtesy of Columbia-Petroleum at

<<http://www.columbiapetroleum.com/little-cedar-creek-field>>.

ergreen, produced over 2.4 million barrels of oil in 2008, almost half of the total state production, and the companies developing it apparently think the end isn't in sight. Drilling permits and leasing activity have extended eastward outside of the field limits, nearing the Covington County line.

“Dallas-based Midroc Operating Co. has drilled more than 60 wells in the area, beginning in 2000. Shreveport-based Sklar Exploration Co. entered the play in 2006 and has drilled 11 wells in the field. Columbia Petroleum LLC, based in Jackson, Miss., completed its first well in 2008. Those and smaller companies, including lease traders/speculators, continue the current leasing buzz, presumably ahead of another wave of drilling.

“Of the over 70 wells drilled in the last eight years “only a handful have not been successful,” says David Bolin, assistant oil and gas supervisor for the Alabama Oil and Gas board. Bolin says the rock formation that traps the oil in the Cedar Creek field is not the usual type that seeps into a limited, dome-shaped area. It ranges over a much wider area, at a depth of over 12,000 feet, at the top of the Smackover formation.

“Because of the unusual nature of the trapping mechanism, says Bolin, early seismic studies failed to detect the field's potential. Hunt Oil Co. discovered the field in 1994 but drilled only one well and sold the field to Midroc in 2000. The field had racked up a total of 7.6 million barrels of oil by end of 2008, becoming the state's largest producing field in 2005 and reversing the declining trend in the state's total oil production from 1999 to 2004.” €

News and Announcements

Poarch Creek Indian Cultural Museum Grand Opening Sunday, October 27, 2012



The Poarch Cultural Museum

ECHS Members visited the museum on a field trip when the museum was first completed. The group were given an extensive tour by Robert Thrower as part of a visit that included other sites on the Poarch Indian Reservation.

Humanities Class Visits Thomas E. McMillan Museum

Instructor Deborah Albritton, a member of the English faculty at JDJCC, brought her class for a visit Monday, Oct. 5. The visit was arranged by history instructor Lisa Pace-Hardy who is a member of the newly formed Museum Committee.

Thomas E. McMillan Museum Committee

JDCC President Dr. Bain has appointed a Museum Committee for the Thomas E. McMillan Museum. Expressing the belief that the museum is an under-used asset for the college, he has appointed from the college staff and faculty: Jerry Simmons, Museum Coordinator; Lisa Pace-Hardy, History Instructor; Carrie Johnson, Art Instructor; and Veronica McKinney, Director of Human Resources. Lee Barrentine, Recruiter, has been invited to join the committee.

Ranella Merritt and Carolyn Jennings of ECHS have joined the committee and Ann Biggs-Williams has been invited to join the committee.

The Committee has met twice (meetings have been every two weeks) and have discussed ways to achieve Dr. Bain's goal with suggestions of using events to support various areas of the college, using social media to publicize (Facebook), using rotating exhibits, and using class tours.

The committee is acting on the suggestion to use Facebook by arranging tutoring in the creation of and handling a web site on Facebook. As previously reported the class tour idea has been utilized. The committee has also discussed and proposed expanding the description of the title of the Museum to include that it is a museum of the cultural history of the area.

The Next meeting of the Museum Committee will be Thursday, October 25, 2012, at 1:00 p. m. in the Elivra McMillan Room. All who are interested are invited to attend. We are also open to suggestions and to new volunteers and members.

University of South Alabama Archeology Museum Opens



The new museum (shown at the left), opened on Sunday October 14, 2012 with an Open

House for the public offering guides to aid in a full understanding of the exhibits as well as refreshments.

Archeologist and Museum Director Dr. Greg Waselkov says the exhibits have been selected from over 10,000 objects. From an article on al.com, we learn that the rarest items in the museum date back more than 10,000 years, a collection of stone spear points used by the region's earliest residents. Artifacts from that era are hard to come by because the area the Gulf's first native peoples inhabited is now

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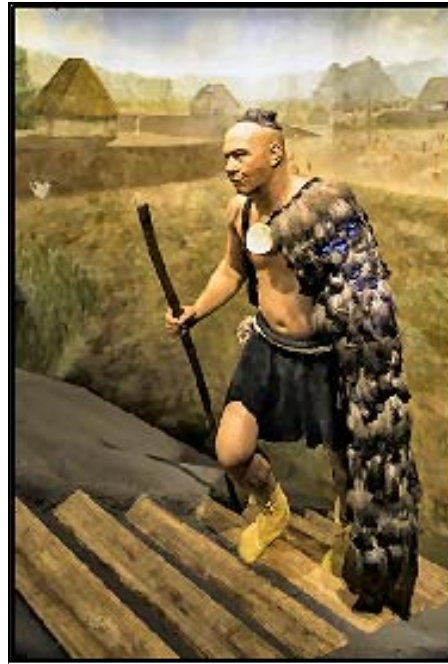
News and Announcements *(continued)*

(Continued from page 3)

underwater.

“We’re lucky to have what we have. The oldest stuff is mostly way out in the Gulf due to sea level rise. There’s about 8,000 years of history out there underwater. Or, it’s buried deep in the Delta muck,” said Greg Waselkov, archaeologist and museum director. “With the museum, we’re hoping to show what kind of information archaeology can give us about us.”

“The picture below shows one of the life size statues at the Museum. It represents “a chief of the Mound Island village climbing a staircase in front of a mural depicting the community. In the background a crowd plays a ball game important in the Mississippian culture. Mound Island was one of the most important sites on the Gulf Coast from about 1250 to 1450” (http://blog.al.com/live/2012/10/new_archaeology_museum_at_the.html). €



**Exhibit at the USA
Archeology Museum**

Dr. E. O Wilson Visits Mobile

By Ann Biggs-Williams

Dr. E. O. Wilson, Harvard University Biologist and Pulitzer Prize Winner came to Mobile on October 11, 2012 and ECHS members Susan Blair and Ann Biggs-Williams traveled there to see him as Dr. Wilson was honored for his latest publication.

Wilson’s latest book, Why We Are Here, Mobile and the Spirit of a Southern City was coauthored with Alex Harris, an award winning pho-



ECHS Members Ann Biggs-Williams and Susan Blair are standing behind Dr. Wilson who is seated. Of course, we must mention Little Lot-tie who is in Ann’s right arm.

tographer and documentarian who is a professor at Duke University. Harris had been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Nonfiction in 1991 for his work, River of Traps. The prize went instead to The Ants, by Wilson and Bert Holldobler. It was this event which led 20 years later to the collaboration between the two men for Why We are Here.

After reading Edward O. Wilson’s memories of his southern child-

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Dr. E. O Wilson Visits Mobile *(continued)*

(Continued from page 4)

hood in The Naturalist and the fiction work, Anthill, Alex Harris approached Dr. Wilson about collaborating on this newest book. Over a two year period, Dr. Wilson and Harris visited Mobile together and separately.

Susan and Ann first learned of the book at the 2011 annual meeting of the Alabama Historical Association in Point Clear where Wilson and Harris presented a preview to conference attendees. They have been looking forward to the book's publication ever since.

Susan and Ann attended a book signing for the two authors at the Mobile Botanical Gardens the afternoon of October 11 and then attended the opening reception that evening at the Mobile Museum of Art that opened an exhibition of 68 large scale photographs of Alex Harris's that are from the book. The exhibit, "Why We are Here, Mobile and the Spirit of a Southern City, a Collaboration" will be available for viewing from October 5, 2012 to January 6, 2013.

In his book, Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge, Dr. Wilson wrote about the need for all human beings to have a story that tells where they came from and why they are here. This new book is Dr. Wilson's story about a place called Mobile where Wilson spent much of his time growing up.

Dr. Wilson also lived in Brewton, Alabama in 1944-45 which has been previously reported in an ECHS Newsletter, ECHOES, Vol. 34 No. 4. The word **Brewton** always brings a smile to Dr. Wilson's face and he told the ladies --as he had previously written to Ann-- that in his fiction novel, Anthill, the town of Clayville is based on Brewton. Anthill, published in 2010 is an eco-novel that tenses the interrelationship of organisms and their environment with that of human beings. It is a coming of age novel with a Huck Finn twist.

Susan and Ann were thrilled to have their photo taken at the Mobile Botanical Gardens with Dr. Wilson and count it as a fantastic way to remember how they spent 10/11/12, a date that won't happen again any time soon. €

The McGowin Marker Dedication

**Jacob Lewis McGowin,
1836—1899**

**Marker Dedication Service
Held in the Heart of Dixie**

Cpl. Jacob Lewis McGowin, who was born March 28, 1836 in Conecuh County and died June 14, 1899 near Hattiesburg, Mississippi was honored Sunday, October 14, 2012 at 2:30 p.m. at his grave site at the Old Mason Cemetery in the Dixie Community, located in north-eastern Escambia County, Alabama.

Donald Keiron McGowin of Trussville, Alabama, started the search to learn more about his



McGowin ancestors and the War of Northern Aggression in 2011. He is now a member and Adjutant of the Sons of Confederate Veterans Forrest Camp 1435 in Trussville. He ordered a marker to place at his veteran ancestor's grave and marked the unveiling of the upright marble stone with an impressive service assisted by SCV and re-enactment groups from Alabama (Adm. Raphael Semmes Camp 11 - Mobile) and Mississippi (5th Brigade, Miss. Division).

In attendance were 1st Sgt. Terry Bailey, Co. C, 15th Con-

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The McGowin Marker Dedication *(continued)*

(Continued from page 5)

federate Cavalry (Baldwin Rangers), pvt. Tom Robinson, Captain James Huffman, Pvt. Don Green, Pvt. Stephen Ellison, Pvt. Jessie Taylor, and Pvt. Stacy Smith. The ceremony included the Libation Ceremony with Pvts. Stephen Ellison & Jessie Taylor and an Artillery (Semmes Camp's "Matilda") & Musket Salute by the Co. C. 15th Confederate Cavalry and "Last Call" played by Pvt. Tom Robinson (last bugle call of the day in Confederate camps).

Cpl. Jacob Lewis McGowin served in Companies D & F, 3rd Battalion of the Florida Cavalry and with Company I of the 15th Confederate Cavalry, which was formed by the Confederate government from several Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi units who had independently guarded Mobile and the coast for years prior. Pvt. Don Green was proud to attend from Petal, Mississippi as his ancestor, Cpt. W.B. Amos, was Cpl. McGowin's and Co., its commander.

John Douglas McGowin, Keiron's father, shared a brief history of the McGowin Family History in Escambia County (originally in Conecuh Co. before Escambia County was formed in 1868). Jacob Lewis McGowin had three wives (twice a widower) and a total of sixteen children. The first wife was Rebecca Frances Moore, the second wife was Sarah (Sally) Douglas McGowin, and the third wife was Donnie Sowell of Brewton.



**Capt. James Parmr at the Podium
Kevin McGowin, organizer of the
event is behind him in white suit.**



Kevin McGowin at the Podium



Folding the Battle Flag

John Douglas McGowin and Donald Keiron McGowin descend from Jacob and Sally's union. John's father was Douglas DeVaughn McGowin and his grandfather, Jacob's son, was John Raybon McGowin. Jacob's father, James (II.), was the brother of locally-known Samuel Lewis McGowin (the McGowin Cemetery on Hwy. 29), both being sons of James McGowin (I.) and Mary Lewis. After James died, Mary migrated to Escambia from Screven County, Georgia in the 1830s with her McGowin children and her second husband, Thomas Floyd.

A flag presentation was made by the 15th Confederate Cavalry to Keiron's 9 year old daughter, Emma Elise McGowin, Cpl. McGowin's Great-Great-Great Granddaughter. A wreath was placed at the grave by Clementine McGowin Whitman (John Douglas' sister), Jacob Lewis McGowin's Great Granddaughter, Dana Wright McGowin (Keiron's wife), McGowin's great great granddaughter-in-law, and Emma Elise McGowin, Great-Great-Granddaughter. The handmade wreath represented the agriculture heritage of the McGowins and Escambia County, consisting of pine boughs and cotton from the nearby fields in full, snow-white blossom. It was a majestic

beautiful Lord's Day.

Members from the Escambia County Historical Society joined McGowin family and friends for this

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The McGowin Marker Dedication *(continued)*

(Continued from page 6)

event. ECHS members attending were: Tom McMillan, President; Sally Finlay, Vice-President; Jacqueline Stone, Treasurer; Susan Crawford, Treasurer; Dave Allen, Archivist; and ECHS Trustees Darryl Searcy and Ann Biggs-Williams. Other ECHS members attending were Sherry Johnston and Lydia Grimes.

Also present were members of local United Daughters of the Confederacy groups including from NW Florida and Pensacola. Sir Francis McGowin, Curtis Thomasson, and others from the Andalusia SCV (Covington Rifles)

Camp and Kevin McKinley from the Atmore SCV (Carney) Camp all attended. E. Mason McGowin, Jr., a descendant of Samuel Lewis McGowin (Jacob's uncle) attended from Chapman, Butler County.

Several McGowin descendants attended who were in town for a church reunion in Brooklyn. Keiron's brother Jason Patrick McGowin of Spanish Fort attended with his family and his toddler, Tatum, Jacob's Great-Great-Great-Granddaughter. Many others attended.

The overwhelming attendance was humbling to the thankful McGowin family. €

More Pictures from the McGowin Marker Dedication Ceremony



Taps
Pvt. Tom Robinson C. C15th
Confederate Cavalry Bugler



ECHS Member Darryl Searcy
standing with a descendant of Jesse
Lewis McGowin's Company



Group Picture of Those Attending



Canteen Used in Libation
Ceremony

Show and Tell: Photographs and Stories from the ECHS September Meeting



To the left are framed arrow heads which Jeff Ross brought. The date for arrow heads is estimated to be from 2,000 to 3,000 B. C.

Below on the right is an iron pot from the Fort Mims area which was also brought by Jeff Ross. Jeff actually found two in the area of the Fort and gave one to the Fort Mims Museum. The one shown here he donated to the Thomas E McMillan Museum at the Show and Tell Program. Below to the left Jeff is shown (on the left) with Tom McMillan, holding the pot that has been donated.

To the left of the pot on the table is the effigy of the head of an Indian Chief shown in detail on a following page



Shown above to the left is Bucky McCoy who is holding a bag filled with PayDay candy bars which he brought and shared with the group. He worked in a factory in Ohio that made the candy bars.

To the right is the corner stone of a school for African Americans in Escambia County, Alabama (Atmore). Barbara McCoy, Bucky's daughter-in-law, brought the stone to Show and Tell. She is researching the history of this school.



Show and Tell: Photographs and Stories from the ECHS September Meeting (continued)



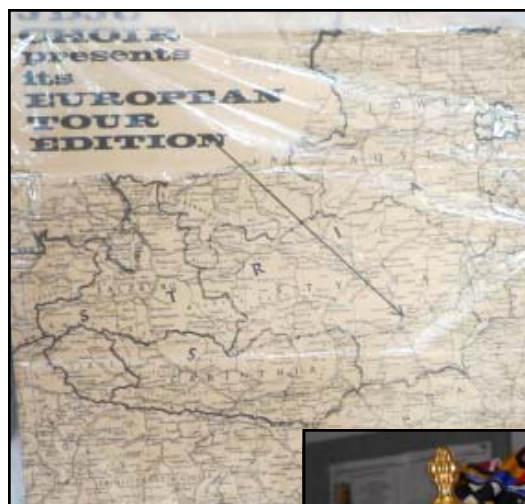
Above to the left, Martha Simmons is shown as she presents family pictures and the prize winning quilt made by her grandmother, which is shown on the right. The picture above to the right of Martha is of her grandmother, “Katie” Martha Matilda Godwin, who married Benjamin Edward Crook.

Martha reported that her grandfather was a carpenter, builder and that some of his houses still remain in Brewton, such as the Parker home on Belleville. He died when a beam from a house he was working on fell on him.

The quilt was entered in a contest sponsored by Sears and Roebuck. The winner of the contest would receive \$1,000. In all, 24,000 quilts were entered in the contest.

Katie’s quilt won Honorable Mention in the final judging (It was first in the regional contest), rather than a higher award because she had not purchased all of the material from Sears, the sponsor of the contest.

Martha has been invited to take the quilt to one of the events at Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, to be displayed.



Elizabeth Edwards brought items connected with the Jefferson Davis Concert Choir’s 1970’s participation in the Graz, Austria, Music Festival. The Director of the Choir was Joe Terry.

Shown at the right on top is the album cover for the music of the choir presented in Graz. On the bottom is a dish which was purchased in Austria on the tour.



Show and Tell: Photographs and Stories from the ECHS September Meeting (continued)

Robin Brewton brought a picture of his great-grandfather Jesse McCoy, who was the first mayor of Atmore. Mr. McCoy was also a bank president and he ran a naval store. On display also was a gold plated coffee cup that Mr. McCoy used. The picture and the coffee cup are shown below.



Picture of Grandfather of Ann Biggs-Williams

Ann brought her mother's sister's billfold. Inside were two pieces of paper in her grandfather William J. Smith's handwriting as well as his social security card. Ann showed a picture of him when he was nineteen and when he was older. Mr. Smith had written "My Life's Story" when he was fifty-five. He died in the 1970's.



Above, the centerpiece for the refreshment table and to the right hostesses Susan Blair and Jo Brewton.



Show and Tell: Photographs and Stories from the ECHS September Meeting (continued)



Above are framed arrow points and shark's teeth from the area collected by Tom McMillan. Tom has included in the pages displayed below the boxes material on the geologic history which explains why these artifacts, such as shark's teeth, are found far inland and why material only found in the African continent appear in arrow points made from rocks in the area.



To left, top: close-up of an effigy of an Indian Chief (first photographed by itself and then to the right of the pincushion in the lower picture) which was carved from stone and is dated around 2,000 B. C. Jeff Ross brought this amazing find.

The bottom picture shows a pincushion brought by June Martin. It was her mother-in-law's pin cushion. The beautiful figure of a woman still remains and June made the skirt which fits around the original pin cushion.

Show and Tell: Photographs and Stories from the ECHS September Meeting (continued)



Above is the Panoramic Camera brought by Neil Collier.

To the left top is a display of radios restored by Alan Robinson. The inserted picture immediately to the left shows the radios as well as other items brought for display at Show and Tell.

Bob Rutledge, shown at the right, brought artifacts recovered from the De Luna Expedition to Pensacola in 1559. He is holding a cannon ball found at the wreck site (The six ships in the expedition were all sunk because of a hurricane).

Bob is one of the divers who works with teams from the University of West Florida excavating the site of the ship wrecks. The wreckage of two ships has been found so far.

Bob also brought a medallion which reads, "If you smoke here, You'll smoke later" on one side and on the other displays a picture of a person at a table with a broom who is urged to not be lazy.



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The ECHS *Journal* Section

Mr. Claude Parker's Life

Susan Crawford, ECHS Treasurer, has given us this story written by her father.

Mr. Claude Parker's Life By Himself & Co. If lost return to me (Written in 1929)

I was so very young when I was borned. I didn't know much about the place or when I was born but Mama and Papa say I was borned May 23, 1913. They was much older than I and probably knew a little more than I did, so I reckon they are just about right if they hadn't made no mistake in the time. Yes and they say I was born on the banks of the Yazoo River near a little town called Belzona, Miss. Well I didn't hesitate to believe that because I always did think that I looked like something that came floating down the river and pulled to the bank in mistake of some other kind of animal.

We lived on in that place for about 1 year. Of course I didn't know nothing about it but Ma and Pa says so and I guess they are right. We moved to 5th St. 40th Ave. in Meridian, Miss. in 1914 Ma and Pa said. They have forgot just how long we lived there and I wasn't big enough to know whether we lived there at all or not but I don't suppose it was long. Next we moved out on the Jackson Highway about a half a mile out of the city limits. We moved from there and I still wasn't big enough to know what was going on in the World.

We moved out on the Poplar Springs Drive not so far from town. Nothing of great importance happened in my life there so I will pass over the year or two we lived there. We moved again to the other side of Meridian about 5 miles from town.



Claude and his Wife.

Susan Crawford, Claude's-writes of this picture that it was taken in 1945 in front of the Finlay house right before Claude was shipped overseas where he was stationed in Japan during the occupation.

At this place is where I first began to remember things that happened to me. There was a lot of deep gullies close around the house. Well one afternoon I had gone to sleep and what do you think I just got right up in my sleep and walked to the edge of one of those gullies and pitched off head first but I must a turned a complete summersault for I lit on my feet. It scared me awful bad when I found out I hadn't killed myself. There was a few bruises about me and I was all right in a day or two but you can believe me I always woke up afterwards before I started to jumping in ditches on my head.

One day I was down to the barn while the cows were being fed and thought I would try to milk one of the cows; well, I didn't hardly know what happened to me but from the looks of my head she kicked the urine out of me and

then jumped on me with all four of her feet and what's more I haven't tried to milk a cow again.

Well we moved from there back toward town. It was only 3 miles to the courthouse from where we lived. We were living there when I started to school at Oakland Heights School. Miss Strange who was an old maid school teacher having considerable experience about teaching little children was my first teacher. I got started off without much trouble or confusion.

We lived in this place about 4 years. I spent most of my time going to school, eating and sleeping during the winter. In the summer I chewed sugar cane, ate watermelons, slipping off to the swimming hole and getting a paddling when I got back home. We had a bull yearling that had been picked at until he

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

Ezra Plumb: Master Carpenter of the Antebellum Era

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was pretty mean but he hadn't tried fighting any body until he got after me. Well he gave me a wild goose chase I should say; he ran me for about half a mile and we had it round and round through bush, tall weeds and around stumps.

My screaming and bellowing brought my father to the rescue just in time for I had give completely out and was ready to collapse and the bull was getting madder and madder all the time. It was pretty hard to catch him and put a rope on him but it was finally done. It wasn't long before he was made into beef. It serves him just about right I reckon for he hadn't no business disturbing me when I didn't do nothing for him to get insulted about.

By this time, I had conquered the 4th grade and they had quite confused me. I got a whipping at school most as regular as I got my breakfast, but it's all over now and I don't see where it done much good so I'm not still mad about it. We moved again up on 5th and 45th Ave. Nothing of great importance happened while I lived there. I only had a few bicycle wrecks and such like but I was lucky and always came out on top, top of the ground sliding on my stomach. I started to school at West End School while I lived here. I was always into trouble but I would slide out of it some how and crawl right back into it so I can't see where I made anything by getting out of it so I just got right back into trouble and stayed there. It wasn't long before we moved to Hooper Street and 4th Ave then we moved back to 5th St. and 40th Ave in the same house we lived in when we first came to Meridian 12 years before. I joined the B.Y.B.O. (a Baptist youth organization) while I lived there and was a very good little boy on Sunday but during the week I always got into 3 or 4 fights a week. I had many thrilling adventures while I lived there but haven't time to note them just now. When I was 13 yrs. old I moved to the place I am occupying now. I started to school at Cuba in 1926. It didn't take me long to get acquainted with the pupils and teachers, especially the teachers for I had to re-

port to their rooms or the office most every afternoon, where I got 3 whippings in school that year. When school was out I spent the summer like most all boys do, fishing, going in swimming and working a little when I had to.

Spring 1928-we were coming from school one evening; the weather was cold as ice, the curtains were drawn and we couldn't see out. All at once I heard a boom! Crash! and I woke up on the cow catcher of a freight train still seated beside my brother, Milton. The truck (school bus) was torn to pieces and it scattered the school kids around pretty much. All of us that had anything a matter with us got in the caboose of the train and went to the hospital. There were no serious injuries done. There wasn't a bone broken in anybody.

Ever since then I want to run when I hear a train coming. In three or four days I was going back to school.

When school was out, I passed to the eighth grade. I got along very good during the first semester but the last half I got into all kind of trouble. A crowd of us played hooky one day and went in swimming and Miss Stewart, the principal, went and got Mr. Walker and his car and came hunting. Well they found us. We had just got out of swimming. When Douglas saw it was his dad's car coming up the road, he ran and jumped behind some bushes but it didn't do no good for they got all 8 of us and took us back to the school.

Well we were a pretty sick looking bunch of boys, but we had to take our medicine. The teacher sent for a wagonload of switches and they brought back trees that would have been big enough to saw in a few years but they served the purpose just as well as if they had been quite smaller. She had already whipped seven when my time came so you see she was about give out and mine wasn't so bad as some of the rest.

I passed to the 9th grade that year and I have been getting along very well since I have been in High School, although its mighty distracting sometimes when Miss Brown goes to put an English test on the

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

(Continued from page 15)

board and has to wait until they get through with the first questions so she can put the rest of the questions on the board.

*The train wreck was described in detail in a book by Claude's sister, Beatrice Shearon, entitled, *He Touched Me*.

Postscript

A couple of years after this was written Claude hitchhiked to Texas one summer and on the trip he contracted Typhoid Fever. He was at home, in a coma when he overheard the family planning his funeral. He said later that it shook him up and he told himself that he had better get up off of that bed or they were going to put him in the ground.

He survived the fever and later married Elizabeth Fitzgerald of Pollard, Alabama, having met her while she was teaching school in Cuba, Al. Claude and Elizabeth were living in Marion, Al and were rearing 4 children when he decided to answer the call to arms during WWII. He moved his wife and four children to a little white house belonging to the Finlay family of Pollard, across the street from the Lindsey, Fitzgerald House, now restored by Sally Finlay.

Elizabeth's parents, Bessie Mae and Emmitt Fitzgerald were living in the Lindsey Fitzgerald House and Bessie would help with the kids while Claude was gone. Claude's two oldest children started to school in the first grade that year in the old Pollard schoolhouse. Susan and Jerry were in the first grade, taught by Mrs. Yula Kelly. Elizabeth also taught school there that year. She taught a combination of sixth and seventh grade. Jerry was truly his father's son. Susan remembers him getting a paddling nearly every day for fighting at recess. The principal, Ms Elsa Lundquist, would spank him and whomever he was fighting with the back of a coal scuttle. In those days, 1945, the schoolrooms in the old school house were heated by a potbellied stove, which burned coal.

After that year was over the war ended, and Claude, who had been stationed in Japan during the occupation, returned home and moved his family back to Marion, Al where he worked for the government and raised 5 children until his death at the age of 46.

Claude's children remember him as a God fearing, energetic, hard working, fun loving man who was very proud of his children, loved his wife immensely, and was a great cook who loved to entertain family, relatives, and friends.€

Why We Do What WE Do

By Darryl Searcy

The question has been asked many times, and I always find it difficult to answer. Why do you do what you do? Why go to distant parts of the world to do plant collecting? Why South America or Asia? Why not find your plants here in North America?

When you really think about it, the reasons are simple - the rainforests of the world just happen to be Mother Nature's Kitchen. As such, the kitchen is being destroyed at the rate of 30 acres every minute of the day. We are collecting from these areas before they are completely destroyed, most destruction being done in the name of industrial expansion. In addition, current supplies of plant specimens are out of

date, so we are attempting to upgrade those older specimens that had tremendous use in the past and are expected to have even more uses in the future. Consider, if you will, the changes that have taken place in an environment that has changed drastically in the last 40-50 years. Environment, nutrients, and habitats are forever changing and these changes cause plants and animals to adapt. We need to know how these changes will affect the medicines that we use today, and if we can improve on what we have. Are we ready to change as well?

Thus, we go to the most endangered rainforests of

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Why We Do What WE Do *(continued)*

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the world (of which there are 10 so designated) to locate the source of an original specimen and to harvest new specimens for study in order to make better comparisons. As well, we look for hybrids that have evolved since the original specimen was harvested. And we look for mutations, or other plants of the same family that might, or will, have changed according to an entirely different set of rules.

The question is then raised as to whether my small group are the only people doing this? Absolutely not. Field researchers today number in the thousands and they come from every continent of the globe. Every government, every society, every research organization has an interest and all are sending parties out to explore and harvest while supplies are still available.

In the USA alone only about three percent of the original temperate rainforest remains, mostly inside Olympic National Park in Washington State. Prior to the arrival of homesteaders just over a century ago, the Olympic Peninsula contained more than a million acres of old-growth spruce and hemlock. Because of habitat destruction, many plants and animals have now become "island dwellers" inside the Olympic area.

Tropical rainforests comprise only 40% of the world's tropical areas and only 20% of the world's total forests. They cover 6-7% of the Earth's land surface. Half of the world's plant and animal species live in the tropical rainforests of the world. Thirty acres of trees are cut in these rainforests every minute. As you read this, tropical rainforests are shrinking. Each second a portion of rainforest the size of a football field is destroyed.

One of the biggest threats is "slash and burn" agriculture. Remember, most rainforests are in developing countries, with very few economic opportunities. Rainforest soil is poor. So farmers cut down the forest, burn it, put lots of nutrients into the soil, and then farm it. Unfortunately, once the forest has been cut,

the soil erodes away very quickly. So the soil is only fertile enough to farm a few years and then the farmer must move on, cut and burn more forest and repeat the cycle again and again.

For biologists, tropical rainforests are some of the richest, most exciting areas on earth! They are home to gigantic trees, colorful birds, millions of insects, and a variety of fascinating mammals. There are three main regions of tropical rainforest: in Central and South America, in West and Central Africa, and in Southeast Asia. The Amazon Basin forest is the largest, covering 2.3 million square miles. Within these three regions are 10 rainforests that are considered endangered. Although rainforests are important centers of biodiversity, they cover only about 6% of the Earth's land surface. This is less than half the area they covered 50 years ago.

What makes a tropical forest? Tropical rainforests are places that receive heavy rainfall either seasonally or throughout the year. They are close to the equator and get lots of sunlight and warmth. Temperatures are uniformly high - between 75 and 90 F. They usually receive more than 75 inches of rainfall per year.

Rainforest trees are different from trees of the temperate forests. In the rainforest, trees grow to gigantic size, supported by strong, strut-like buttresses at the base of the trunk that help to stabilize them in the shallow forest soils. Huge creepers twine themselves around the trunks that also help to support them. Some are parasites and others merely use the trees for support. Many rainforest trees have dark green, often leathery, leaves which taper sharply so that water drains quickly from the surface. Flowers like orchids and bromeliads grow directly on trunks and larger branches - these are called epiphytes, and are the most important when collecting research material. Birds, butterflies and insects easily reach these flowers and act as pollinators, thus promoting new growth and encourage the creation of hybrids. Where rain falls all year round, the forests are evergreen - the trees do not lose their leaves, or do so at different

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times.

A mature lowland tropical forest consists of several layers. The top layer of vegetation consists of scattered tall trees which tower above a closed canopy layer formed by the crowns of other trees. The canopy is the most exciting part of the rainforest, it is here that most of the flowering and fruiting of the trees takes place, attracting a variety of spectacular creatures. It is also here that the greater part of today's medicines are found. Below the canopy is a third layer, formed by smaller trees whose crowns do not meet. Below this is a layer composed of woody and herbaceous shrubs. Finally, there is the ground layer, which receives very little sunlight and must survive through adaptation, mutation, and further joining forces through hybrid creation.

A rainforest is a world of abundance. Tropical rainforests have the greater variety of trees than any other forests in the world. The richest in plant species are Amazon forests, but in general all tropical forests have an incredible variety of plant life. For instance, a hectare (2.41 acres) of Malaysian rainforest may contain 180 species of trees (compare this to a temperate forest where a hectare might have just 10 species of tree). The tropical forests of West and Central Africa have the fewest species of trees, but even here the diversity is high compared to a temperate forest. Some rainforest trees like mahoganies, teaks, rosewoods and okoumes (tree woods of East Africa that are best used in boat building) provide valuable timber, while other rainforest products are nuts, fruits, rubber and rattans.

Rainforests are the most endangered habitat on earth. Each year, some 54,000 square miles of rainforests are destroyed, the trees being felled for timber by logging companies and cleared by people for farming. The most endangered rainforests are those in West Africa, where human populations are doubling every 20 years, and in Central America and South-East Asia. Although large areas of rainforest

remain in Central Africa and South America, they, too, are disappearing at an alarming rate. Time is short if we are to salvage and save the remaining rainforests for future generations. Our small expeditions are minuscule in comparison to the giant corporations seeking greater profit. The World Wildlife Federation is committed to conserving the world's rainforests, not only for the incredible wealth of plants and animals that live in them, but for the benefit of the indigenous peoples who live there and cannot protect themselves.

WWF has been working to save rainforests for more than 35 years. Today, work continues in key areas like Peru's Manu Biosphere Reserve and the Korup National Park in Cameroon. Assisting tropical countries to save their rainforests - through creating protected areas and exploring ways of using forests wisely - is a priority for the World Wildlife Federation and I am proud to be, and have been, a small part of it through connections with research based pharmaceutical companies and the Exploronapo organization. €

Seeking Information

Jerry Simmons needs information on a book in the Alabama Collection, The Last Gunfighter: John Wesley Hardin by Richard Marohn.

There is no record of purchase and ECHS would like to acknowledge the person who donated it if it was a donation.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Alabama's Champion Catalpa Tree

By Don C. East, member of the Clay County Forestry Planning Committee. This article was originally reprinted in part from The Clay Times-Journal.

"I think that I shall never see

A poem as lovely as a tree . . ."

- Alfred Joyce Kilmer,
American poet, 1913

"Most of us know the Catalpa tree as a scrawny bush-like tree growing along the banks of the area's beautiful creeks, where we find our yellow and black Catalpa worms used for fish bait. However, recently a Clay County specimen of the Catalpa tree was recognized as a State Champion Tree. When a group of family, neighbors, and friends gathered under this magnificent tree at the Eloise [DeVaughn] Samuels property in September 2008 for the official award ceremony, it was already beginning to show a hint of autumn color in its leaves.

"With a circumference of 200 inches, a height of 64 feet, and a crown spread of 68 feet for 281 total points, this specimen also holds the record for the oldest Catalpa tree in the state of Alabama. At 212 years of age, this tree began its growth in 1796, only 20 years after the birth of our nation. The champion tree has witnessed the Louisiana Purchase, as well as the War of 1812, Mexican War, Spanish-American War, Civil War, World Wars I and II, Korea and other crises since. It also witnessed the birth of the state of Alabama in 1819 and that of Clay County in 1866.

"This stately tree has also been present and used as a backdrop for personal DeVaughn family events such as weddings, picnics, reunions, and Sunday afternoon get-togethers over the generations of the family. In fact, the original house on the property was sited mainly because of the presence of the tree



as front yard shade and a horse hitching facility.

"The Samuels property at the site of the champion Catalpa tree was initially acquired by Eloise's great grandfather, Wesley Freeman DeVaughn in the mid-

1850s. After the property passed through her grandfather, Eloise inherited it from her father, John W. DeVaughn in 1978. In mid-1998, Eloise and her now-deceased husband, Ed Samuels, applied to have their property certified as an Alabama TREASURE Forest. After a rigid inspection by a forester, wildlife biologist, and soil conservationist, the prop-

erty was

certified in the autumn of 1998.

"This is the only certified TREASURE forest in Clay County that has "aesthetics" as the primary management goal. Anyone driving down Blakes Ferry Road cannot miss the well-manicured home, flower gardens, fields, and forests of the Samuels farm. It is obvious Eloise feels a strong attachment to this family land. It has been said that land is the soil of the soul that teases man's body and spirit. Particularly in the South, it holds a firm grip on the psyche and is the source of much we cherish and value.

"As Eloise's son, Vaughn, reflected during the award presentation, "This tree's great life reminds us how temporary our own are in comparison." This huge Catalpa is much more than just a tree, it's also a member of the DeVaughn family and a witness to most of our nation's history."

This article is taken from the following web site:
<http://www.forestry.state.al.us/Publications/TREASURED_Forest_Magazine/2008%20Fall/Trees%20of%20Alabama%20-%20Alabama's%20Champion%20Catalpa.pdf>. €

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*ECHOES, The newsletter for the Escambia County Historical
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