

## The October Meeting Tuesday, October 22, 2013 - 3:00 p. m. in the McMillan Museum on the Jefferson Davis Community College Campus

### The Program: Show and Tell

Come and share an item of historical interest with other attendees. Items can be of interest in family, local, or national history, so bring the item and share the story.



A 1937 radio and parts brought to a Show and Tell program by Alan Robinson.



From a previous Show and Tell program, a wooden, handmade game board for Mancala, a game popular around the world



#### ECHS President Tom McMillan

Tom is shown during a Show and Tell program with the Winchester Rifle, 1873 model, which Leonard McGowin used to kill Railroad Bill on March 7, 1896.

Railroad Bill was known to have killed Tom's great Grandfather, Sheriff McMillan.

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**No ECHS Meeting in November.  
The December Meeting or  
Christmas Party  
Will be in Pollard.**

**Vice President Sally Finlay will be  
the Hostess for the Christmas Party  
The Date and Time TBA.**

**ECHS will furnish drinks.  
Members are asked to bring their  
favorite "Finger Food."**



McGee Farm, Historic Site  
Mobile County

Volume 40, Number 10

October 2013

## News and Announcements

### Antarctic Presentation

This gracious note was sent to Ann Biggs-Williams by Billy Blackwelder as a "Thank You" for the visit of Billy, Gus, and Brian who presented a great program about Antarctica at the September meeting.

"Gus, Brian, and I want to thank you and your group for inviting us to give our Antarctic presentation. We had a wonderful time and we're very impressed with your southern hospitality. I don't think we've ever had a group that was as nice and accommodating.

"Thanks for the goodies (food). We weren't five miles down the road before we lit into our snacks. Thanks to Tom McMillan for the copies of the book Image of America: Escambia County. As tired as I was, I finished the entire book last night. I thoroughly enjoyed the amazing photographs.

"Our thanks to all who had a part in arranging our venue and preparing the food.

"Thanks to Dr. Bain for seeing us off. It was nice to know that he too has been to Antarctica. As I explained to him, we have several members in our Old Antarctic Explorers Association who made similar cruises resulting in their becoming members of our organization.

"My wife Joyce, Gus, and I hope soon to visit your museum and tour your town and surrounding area. By the way, I cherish my signed Hank Locklin album.

"Thank you for everything.

"Sincerely, Billy, Gus, and Brian."

### The First Annual Stockton Sawmill Days

Alabama Travel comments:

Join Stockton, Alabama, part of the oldest settlement in Baldwin County and home to Alabama's first sawmill, as it celebrates its history and heritage. Step back in time to the days of sawmills when logging along the Mobile-Tensaw Delta was done with mules and draft animals.

Learn to hitch a team, pull logs, and load a wagon. Watch professional lumberjacks compete in log-rolling, pole climbing, cross-cut sawing, and more.

Many other demonstrations and displays to enjoy. Live music throughout the day. Juried "folk art".

Parade of wagons, antique cars, mules and horses (some in costume). Sawmill biscuits, tomato gravy, local fried catfish, & cheese grits prepared by Stagecoach Café known for its down home, southern-style cooking.

Only 1.5 miles off I-65 on the beautiful grounds of Baldwin County's Bicentennial Park in Stockton, AL. November 2, 2013, 9am-4pm. Admission prices & more info: [www.stocktonala.com](http://www.stocktonala.com) — 251-937-3738 .



**This is one of the "floating hotels" furnished by the sawmill for the loggers who worked in the swamp. They stayed on the river all week and were brought back into the mill for the weekend to be with their families. — at Tensaw River, Stockton, AL. (<https://www.facebook.com/StocktonSawmillDays>).**



**Cypress Swamp Logging**  
**<[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/StocktonSawmillDays)**  
**[StocktonSawmillDays](https://www.facebook.com/StocktonSawmillDays)>**

(Continued on page 3)

## News and Announcements

(Continued from page 2)



### Cemetery Preservation Workshop

The 12th Annual Alabama Cemetery Preservation Workshop will be conducted on Saturday, Nov 2, 2013 in Birmingham on the campus of Samford University. Registration will start at 8:30 a.m. in the Brock Forum inside Samford's Dwight M. Beason Hall (Building #51 on the attached campus map). Parking is adjacent to Beason Hall at the end of Riley Road.

The program will start at 9:00. Lunch is not included in the registration fee this year but the university's cafeteria is next door and their regular menu will be available for your choosing. The program will continue after lunch at Beason Hall before we relocate to Homewood's historic Bailey/Sellers/Oak Grove Cemetery in the early afternoon.

This promises to be an exciting and informative program with presentations and demonstrations by some of the most highly sought-after and respected experts in their fields.

To see a detailed program of the workshop and register, go to this address to download a flyer on the event:

[http://www.alabama-cemetery-preservation.com/2013-cem\\_workshop.pdf](http://www.alabama-cemetery-preservation.com/2013-cem_workshop.pdf)

### 5th Annual "Wreaths Across America"- Alabama National Cemetery



This email from Ted Urquhart, President of the Alabama Cemetery Preservation

Association announces a joint project of ACPA and the Blue Star Salute Foundation:

Dear ACPA Members & Friends:

The ACPA is a supporting organization of the

Blue Star Salute Foundation, Inc (BSSFI). The BSSFI along with the Alabama National Cemetery Support Committee have been sponsoring the placement of wreaths on the gravesites of those interred there as a part of the National Wreaths Across America Day, which is Dec 14th this year.

The following email from Glenn Nivens (also serves as ACPA Assistant Rep for Shelby Co) provides additional information and asks for your support in providing 100% coverage for the Alabama National Cemetery near Montevallo, AL.

Many other veteran, municipal, church, private and family cemeteries across the nation are participating in the Wreaths Across America Day program with volunteers placing wreaths on veteran's gravesites. Please see the list of participating cemeteries on the Wreaths Across America website at <https://secure2.convio.net/waa/site/SPageServer/?pagename=searchmap> to see if there's one you may wish to also sponsor one or more wreaths.

Greetings All;

Note that this year (2013) we are needing between 2,600-2,700 wreaths to adorn the existing graves at our National Cemetery. As of today, we have in the bank enough sponsorships to cover the costs of 1,050-1,100 of the needed wreaths. The order must be submitted to the Worchester Wreath Company in Herrington, ME on/about 20 November 2013...and as of today, we only can order about one-third of what will be needed for the annual wreath-laying ceremony on 14 December.

We sincerely ask that you print copies of this material, share them widely, and forward this email to everyone in your email address list, so that when the time comes, in the third week of November, we are able to order a wreath for EACH grave in the Alabama National Cemetery for the 2013 Holiday Season.

Also, mark your calendars...and share with neighbors and friends...that at 10:00AM, Saturday, 14 December we want YOU, sponsors of the wreaths, family and friends of those buried in the [National Cemetery](#), and the [general public to join us](#)

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## News and Announcements

(Continued from page 3)

for this splendid honor to those who are now resting here after having Honorably Service the United States of America in our Military Services.  
The Holiday Wreaths will adorn each of our loved

ones graves from 14 December 2012 until about 15 January 2013...and EACH AND EVERY grave deserves a wreath!

Your interest, consideration and caring is much appreciated. €

### Sponsorship form for Wreaths Across America Alabama National Cemetery, Montevallo, Alabama

The Blue Star Salute Foundation, Inc. (BSSFI) of Alabama is seeking sponsors for annual Wreaths Across America, a nationwide fundraising effort to place fresh Maine Balsam wreaths on each of the Veteran's graves each holiday season.

All wreaths sponsored through this BSSFI fundraising campaign are laid on Veterans graves at the Alabama National Cemetery in Montevallo during a Wreaths Across America National Remembrance Ceremony, at 11:00AM on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The cost for each wreath is \$15.00. This year we will need between 2,600 – 2,700 wreaths for our Alabama National Cemetery! The public, ALL wreath sponsors and family members of all Veterans buried within ALNC are invited and encouraged to attend and participate in the ceremony. DEADLINE is 20 November.

If you would like to sponsor wreaths for the annual Wreaths Across America, please return this completed form and your sponsorship to BSSFI, P.O. Box 203, Harpersville, AL 35078. Checks or money orders should be made payable to BSSFI, For: Wreaths Across America. Sponsorships are accepted throughout each year. For more information about the Blue Star Salute Foundation, Inc., please visit our website at [www.bluestarsalute.org](http://www.bluestarsalute.org). All donations are tax deductible. €

### Wreaths Across America Sponsorship Form

Name of Individual or Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor or In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsorship Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature and Date)



## The 2013 “Places in Peril” in Alabama

The following article is taken from the Center for the Study of the Black Belt at

<http://centerforblackbelt.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/PlacesInPerilWEB2013.pdf>.

The Alabama Historical Commission and the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation have announced the 2013 “Places in Peril” list. Released each year during National Historic Preservation Month, the listing calls attention to some of Alabama’s most significant endangered landmarks.

“These are places that make our communities distinctive and tell us who we are as a people,” said Frank W. White, the Commission’s executive director.

David Schneider, Senior Director of Preservation Services at the Alabama Trust, states “Each year people are energized to take action. And this helps places survive to serve as essential assets for community revitalization.”

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the “Places in Peril” program. Since 1994 these preservation advocacy groups have highlighted 216 imperiled historic sites throughout Alabama. Three quarters of the places on the list are still standing, with one quarter having a secure future.



### **Troy Masonic Temple Pike County**

Troy’s Masonic Temple is a striking downtown landmark.

Architect Enoch Crites designed this three-and-a-half-story Romanesque Revival building (circa 1890s) with carved stone arches, terracotta molding and a pressed metal trim work. A round stone plaque with the

Masonic logo of the square and compass can be seen in the upper “half story.”

The building housed the Masonic Temple on the upper floors. A lively mix of tenants, key to town life, occupied the first two levels. The ground floor contained a grocery store and print shop.

The second floor had general office space, which included a post office from 1903 to 1912 and a “picture show” house from 1915 through the 1930s.

The Masons abandoned the third floor many years ago for newer quarters. A drug store moved into the first level in the mid-1970s. Currently, the rest of the building is empty and long-term water damage is causing significant deterioration of the upper floors.

The City of Troy is interested in having this important building preserved as a valuable piece of its downtown revitalization effort.



### **Thomas Jefferson Hotel**

The 19-story Thomas Jefferson Hotel dominates the western skyline of Alabama’s largest city. Known as the “Pride of Birmingham” during its heyday, this Renaissance Revival building opened a month before the 1929 stock market crash.

The hotel provided lavish accommodations for many celebrities like Presidents Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover. Other patrons included entertainers Mickey Rooney, Ethel Merman, George Burns and Ray Charles.

Alabama figures, such as George Wallace and Paul “Bear” Bryant, stayed there also. Today, only pigeons, squatters, and occasional urban explorers visit the hotel.

Vacated since 1983, when local health officials declared the old hotel uninhabitable, 30 years of neglect has taken its toll on the building. Attempts to revitalize it have not been successful.

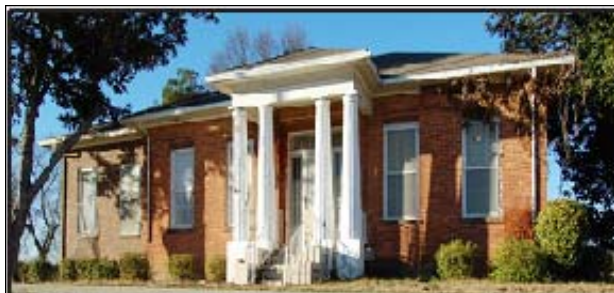
Downtown Birmingham’s revival continues to grow with more buildings restored each year. The Thomas Jefferson is a landmark that can bring marvelous opportunities for its owners and the city.

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## The 2013 “Places in Peril” in Alabama

(Continued from page 5)

### **The Chappell House Montgomery County**



The Chappell House, (circa 1850s) is an early preservation success story. Recognizing its historical significance, the Montgomery Housing Authority restored the city's only surviving brick Greek Revival-style cottage in the 1930s.

For approximately 70 years it served as business offices for the surrounding Riverside Heights housing project. With the housing project now gone, the vacant Chappell House was facing an uncertain future.

In 2007, the City of Montgomery unanimously approved a municipal master plan that included saving the old house. In recent years, the city slated the property for demolition.

Since naming to the 2013 “Places In Peril,” the Capitol Heights Investment Club, a historic neighborhood preservation organization, purchased the property, which was slated for demolition by the City of Montgomery.

In partnership with Landmarks Foundation of Montgomery, funds and materials are being raised to aid in the preservation and sale of the house.



### **Urquhart House Madison County**

The Urquhart House is one of Madison County's oldest buildings. It

evolved from a one-room log cabin into a larger, five-room house. Its dilapidated condition is a threat to its survival.

The house sits on land transferred to Allen Urquhart in December 1813. This simple log dwelling was typical; few of these early houses still exist. Urquhart and later owners added more rooms to the cabin and outbuildings to the property.

The Federal period mantles, windows and door trim are intact. An early 20th century barn and privy survive. The owners value the house and its history and they are currently looking at ways to stabilize it.



### **Old Grace Episcopal Church Colbert County**

Old Grace Episcopal is among the oldest

churches in Sheffield. Constructed in 1903, it is a brick and stone building designed in the Late Victorian Gothic style. In 1963, the Episcopal Diocese sold the building, which has since been used by various congregations.

Maintenance of the structure is a concern. Leaks in the roof contribute to ongoing moisture damage in the building. The original woodwork and historic fixtures remain. Previous owners removed the stained glass and pews.

There is hope for Old Grace Episcopal Church. The Colbert County Historical Landmarks Foundation recently acquired the building to prevent its demolition. Working with the Historic Sheffield Commission, Landmarks is raising funds to restore the building. These dedicated volunteers plan to preserve it as a museum, an events center and for other community uses.

(Continued on page 7)



## The 2013 “Places in Peril” in Alabama

(Continued from page 6)



**Carrollton  
Male and  
Female  
Academy  
Pickens  
County**

Private  
“academies”

were among the earliest schools in Alabama. By the mid-19th century, these institutions appear in small towns and large cities.

In Pickens County alone, there were 11 private academies in 1855. The Male and Female Academy was one of these. Today, it is one of only 15 surviving antebellum school buildings in the state.

According to an early publication, Jeremiah Marston founded the old Carrollton Academy around 1850. An 1876 advertisement from the West Alabamian listed courses offered at the school. This included Latin and Greek taught by a Professor Bell.

The academy also served as a boarding house for students and teachers. When it closed in the early 20th century, the school became a private home.

Many mid-19th century features are intact, including an old chalkboard discovered behind a wall. The building should be preserved for future generations as a reminder that early Alabamians valued education.



**George  
Searcy House  
Tuscaloosa  
County**

Elegant 19th  
and early 20th-  
century man-  
sions once  
lined Greens-

boro Avenue in Tuscaloosa. The George Searcy House (circa 1904) is one of the few surviving buildings from that era.

For approximately 30 years, this fine Neoclassical building served as offices for the Board of Education. The house is vacant and for sale.

Searcy was a prominent local businessman. At a

time when “Old South” nostalgia was gaining popularity, he chose large Ionic columns for the front of the home. While the building retains many of its original details, including an unusual cylindrical spiral staircase salvaged from an earlier Tuscaloosa home, the six massive columns that once graced the imposing facade are missing.

The Tuscaloosa County Preservation Society, Tuscaloosa County Commission and Phoenix House were partners in the 1980s renovation. The Searcy House has seen many transitions, but it is very much a place worth saving.

**Painted Bluff  
Marshall County**

“Painted Bluff” is one of Alabama’s most special



and historic places. Native peoples created colorful carvings and drawings on bluffs and in caves. On two bluffs overlooking the Tennessee River, approximately 80 orange, red and yellow drawings are an estimated 600 years old. These

symbolic images

include people, snakes, birds and other animals.

“Rock art was an important part of prehistoric people’s religion. It helped link people to their faith and to nature,” according to Dr. Jan Simek, President Emeritus and Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Survival is uncertain. These paintings are exposed to the elements. Nature is slowly eroding the paint, posing a long-term threat, while modern graffiti and rock climbers are a more immediate concern

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) manages the area with these irreplaceable art works.

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## The 2013 “Places in Peril” in Alabama

(Continued from page 7)

Currently, the TVA is researching ways to maintain the images and carvings for the future.



### **Old Greensboro Hotel**

#### **Hale County**

Once an elegant downtown structure, the Greensboro Hotel remains a local landmark. The hotel has great potential for driving economic

development with an owner committed to preservation.

Impressive brickwork is its most significant feature. Brick-arched doors and windows stand out prominently.

The hotel began as a two-story building with “Flemish bond” bricklaying, a decorative pattern created by alternating short and long sides of brick. This type of brickwork indicates an early construction date, possibly as early as 1830.

When the third story was constructed (circa 1890s), an elaborate brick cornice and pressed metal cornice caps displaying the hotel’s name were added. At a later date, owners added two-story cast iron

balconies on the front and side streets.

While the hotel guests and cast iron balconies are gone, the old Greensboro Hotel is ready for new uses. Redevelopment options include housing, offices, restaurant or retail space.

### **Rosa A. Lott School Mobile County**

From 1949-1968, The Rosa A. Lott School in Citronelle was the only African-American high school in northern Mobile County. Prior to its construction, children traveled more than 30 miles to school or boarded away from home in order to get an education.

Under the leadership of local educator Rosa Amelia Lott (1903-1952), the Citronelle Consolidated School provided grades 1-12 for local students and at least 18 communities in Mobile and Washington Counties.

The building’s distinctive design and large bank of original wooden windows are noteworthy. The U-shaped plan and lack of an interior hall allowed students to walk directly into classrooms from the outside. This plan is rarely seen in mid-century wooden school buildings.

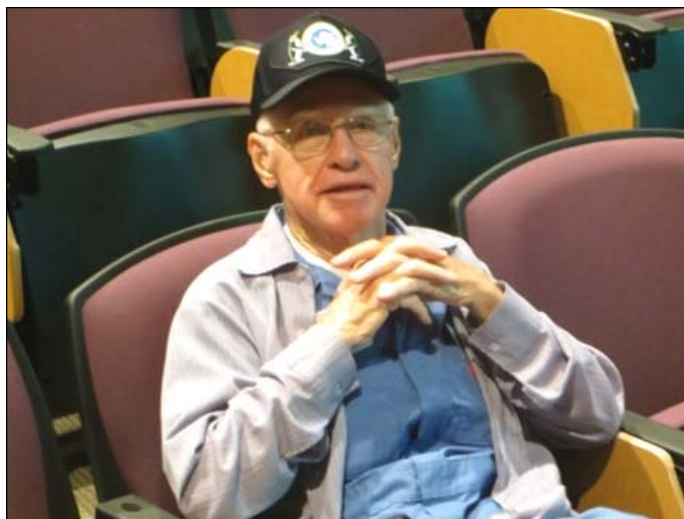
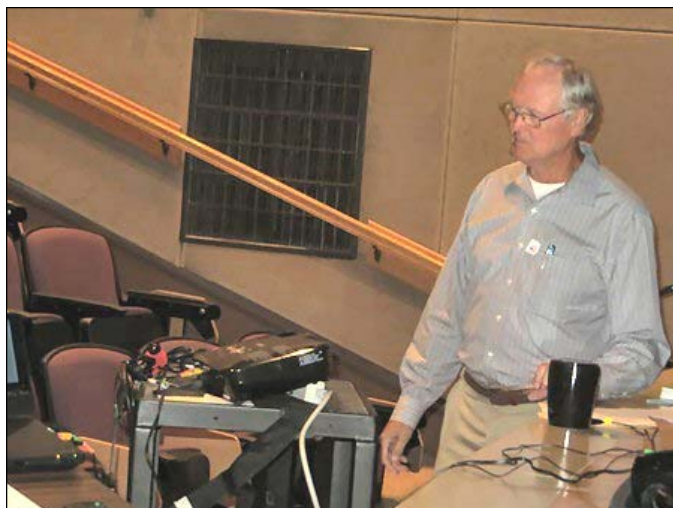
The Lott School closed in 1968 when integrated with other schools. Currently empty, it suffers from little maintenance and continued deterioration. The Rosa A Lott Historical Preservation Society is working to save the building and return it to community use. €



**Rosa A. Lott School**

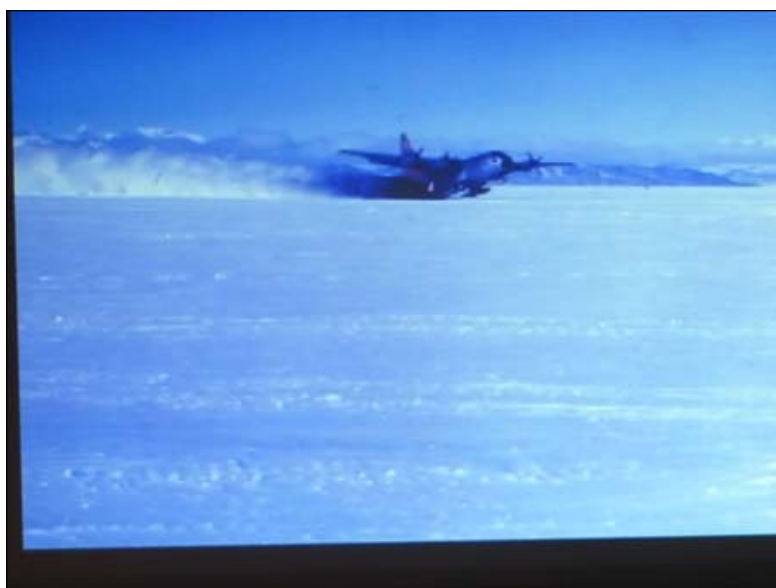
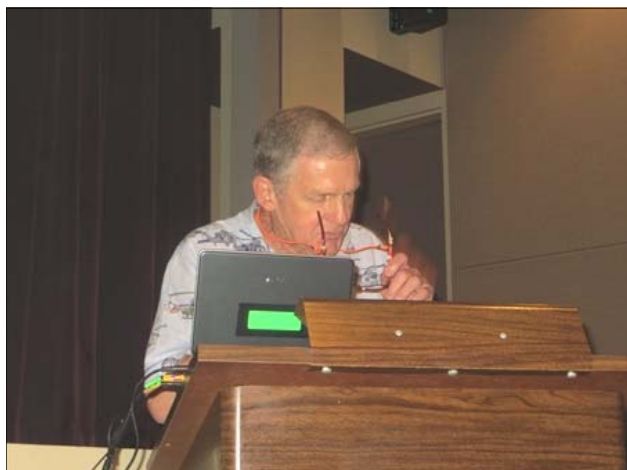


## Snapshots of the ECHS September 2013 Meeting



## Snapshots of the ECHS September 2013 Meeting

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our Business Members**

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Ghosts Still Lurking

Since it is the month for Halloween and the original suggestion for Show and Tell (called “Tell-It-All”) included telling “memories of strange and unusual events for which there was never an explanation, a supernatural happening, family legend or tradition, frightening cemetery episodes, unbelievable sights, or some mischievous act for which the perpetrator was never identified,” (Annie Waters), here are some ghost stories associated with Escambia and surrounding counties

First, an article by Doris Bruner, a former ECHS member and Brewton Standard staff writer, on ghosts stories of our area. Doris also gave a program on Ghosts and Legends of Escambia County for ECHS in 1974.

### **Doris’ article:**

Halloween, with its “trick or treat” trappings, grinning jack o’lanterns and cardboard witches, was relatively unknown among pioneer settlers of the Brewton area, being overshadowed by Thanksgiving, Christmas, and other holidays.

Had there been sufficient sweets around to pass out to youngsters, chances are that the distance between houses, necessity of traversing swamps and fording streams and the ghosts that frequented the various areas would have discouraged “trick or treaters” of any age.

Panthers and bears occasionally seen in the murky swamps or steep river bluffs shared their habitat with shadowy things, according to imaginative stories handed down through the years. Meet now some of the “Ghosts of Yesteryear.”

### **The Nightgown Ghost**

The vicinity of a clear creek toward Jay is the domain of a woman’s ghost, the curious circumstances of her death never solved, for one morning many years ago, the woman’s body was found on the creek bank.

Clothed in her nightgown, she had been horribly mangled, whether from an animal or a human, no one knows. It was never determined how she met her fate, moreover why she came to be on the banks of the stream clad in a nightgown. Had she walked in her

sleep only to have a horrible awakening as she met her doom? Had she been spirited from her home some distance away by some nameless Thing?

Nobody knows.

But told and retold are accounts of how her screams of pain and agony are heard from time to time, shattering the quiet along the rippling stream.

### **The Mill Branch Horseman**

Also frequenting a stream is the well known Mill Branch Ghost. This hardy spirit has endured through five generations, and though the name of the stream has changed to Mantel Branch, its shadowy resident has retained his original name and identity.

Where the branch is spanned by a small bridge at the foot of Cedar Hill, east of Brewton, is now the scene of much activity (This account was written in 1069.). It was a thriving community around a century ago, when lumber, farming, and tar industries had brought settlers to the area. In ages past, the old prickly pear field and swamp had been the camping area of Indians as evidenced by the abundance of arrowheads found through the years by youth of the Cedar Hill area.

At the time the Mill Branch Ghost entered the picture, around the late 1860’s, bustling pioneer homesteads were firmly established on the hill and surrounding flatland. Hardy by the stream was the settlement of “Little Germany” whose residents brought with them many of the customs of their native Bavaria, adding to the aura of mystery surrounding the ghost’s haunts.

It was necessary to ford the streams at that time, and there began to frequent the fording area a ghost and rider, with hair-raising accounts given from time to time by those unfortunate enough to encounter him.

Accounts vary as to the ghost’s origin. Was he the spirit of an Indian returning to the scene of some former battle? Was he the victim of a foul murder committed at the ford? Or was he perhaps one of Andrew Jackson’s men, a member of a scouting party who had met his doom and whose soldierly spirit

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Ghosts Still Lurking

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refused to rest? No one knows.

But all accounts agree on some points. The ghost is that of a man who had ridden a horse, and perhaps had met his fate while on horseback.

The *modus operandi* of the Mill Branch Ghost varies with the elements. On cloudy, dismal nights, it is recounted, hoof beats and hollow clanking of his harness trappings denote his presence with low moans becoming audible as the hoof beats come nearer.

However, on moonlight nights, when one would think it too bright for his appearance, he is even more bold, having been seen riding by, bent over in the saddle, or sometimes unhorsed and stumbling, as if stricken by a mortal wound.

Even in this present generation, hoot owls sometimes raise an ominous warning along the branch, and many are the young men who have whistled vigorously as they have walked past this century-old ghost.

### **The Swamp Mound Ghost**

Though of a more ephemeral nature, and existing only in sounds and strange events, the ghost of the old Conecuh River Swamp Mount is much older, possibly of Indian, pirate, or even Spanish origin. Now on private land, the mound (one of many in the area), is near the Conecuh River and east of Brewton. The formation measures are that it is 100 feet in length and 60 feet wide and is composed of river bottom sand, though rising twenty feet above water level. Whether it is an Indian burial or ceremonial mound, a pirate's cache or simply a curious land formation, has never been fully determined.

A large chain has been seen from time to time in the center of the mound, and who knows to what this chain is attached down in the depths of the ancient mound. Through the years, adventurous boys have attempted to reach the chain, only to have it disappear deeper in the sand. All digging, so witness report, has been discouraged by horrendous sounds of moans, clanking chains, and the rusty, raspy creaks of opening hinges emanating from the sandy depths.

Why, you wonder, don't the owners have a bulldozer plumb the depths and solve the mystery of the mound? The report of this mound comes from prominent citizens, intrepid and fearless, not given to supernatural fears and old wives' tales. Thiers is the ownership of the land upon which the mound stands, though they share the legends with others, preferring to preserve the mound, and enjoy the mystery surrounding and the chilling sounds that guard whatever treasure or bones lie underneath.

### **Murder Creek Saga**

If these stories are too nebulous to sufficiently affright on this Halloween, certainly the historical account of Murder Creek's naming rivals a ghost story and bears retelling. The following excerpt from the History of Alabama, by Albert James Pickett, published in 1851, tells of early carnage along that quiet stream.

"A Bloody transaction occurred in the territory of the present county of Conecuh (now Escambia). During the revolutionary war, Colonel McGillivray formed an acquaintance with many conspicuous royalists, and, among others, with colonel Kirkland, of South Carolina. That person was at McGillivray's house, upon the Coosa, in 1788, with his son, his nephew, and several other gentlemen.

"They were on their way to Pensacola, where they intended to procure passports, and settle in the Spanish province of Louisiana. When they determined to leave his hospitable abode, McGillivray sent his servant to guide them to Pensacola.

"The presence of this servant would assure the Indians that they were friends, for it was dangerous to travel without the Chieftain's protection. Colonel Kirkland and his party had much silver in their saddlebags. Arriving within a mile of a large creek, which flows into the Conecuh River, they met a pack-horse party about sunset, going up to the nation (Creek nation). They had been to Pensacola, on a trading expedition.

(Continued on page 14)

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Ghosts Still Lurking

(Continued from page 13)

### The Murderous Cat

“This party consisted of a Hillabee Indian, who had murdered so many men that he was called Istilicha, the Manslayer — a desperate white man, who had fled from the States for the crime of murder, and whom, on account of his activity and ferocity, the Indians called the Cat, — and a blood-thirsty negro, named Bob, the property of Sullivan, a Creek trader of the Hillabees.

“As soon as Colonel Kirkland and his party were out of sight, these scoundrels formed an encampment. The former (Kirkland’s party) went on, crossed the creek, and encamped a short distance from the ford, by the side of the trading path

“Placing their saddlebags under their heads, and reclining their guns against a tree, Kirkland and his party fell asleep. At midnight, the bloody wretches from the other group cautiously came over and, seizing the guns of Kirkland and his men, killed every one of them, except three negroes, one of whom was the servant of the great Chieftain, as before stated.

“Dividing the booty, the murderers proceeded to the Creek nation, and when the horrid affair became known, Colonel McGillivray sent persons in pursuit of them. Cat was arrested; but the others escaped. Milfort was directed to convey the scoundrel to the spot where he had shed the blood of those men, and there to hang him, until he was dead.

### Vengeance

“Upon the journey to that point, Milfort kept him well pinioned, and, every night, secured his legs in temporary stocks, made by cutting notches in pine logs, and clamping them together. Reaching the creek where poor Kirkland and his men were murdered, Cat was suspended from the limb of a tree, the roots of which were still stained with the blood of the unfortunate colonel and his companions.

“While he was dangling in the air and kicking in the last agonies, the Frenchman (Milfort) stopped his motions with a pistol ball. Such is the origin of the name “Murder Creek.”

There are divers other frightening tales woven into the history and folklore of Escambia County. There are whisperings of the unexplained swamp lights, of bottomless waterholes in woodland depths, of Hanging Trees, of buried treasure.

What Shakespeare, an old ghost lover himself, said of Cleopatra, might well apply to our local ghosts, “Age cannot wither” them, “nor custom stale” their “infinite variety.”

For though this is the enlightened year of 1969, local ghosts are of infinite variety and show no sign of diminishing. Indeed, many horror story spinners say that ghosts are apt to appear at any time, even this Halloween.

So beware. (from the Vertical Files of the Alabama Room, reprinted from the Brewton Standard, for Thursday, October 30, 1969). €

## Georgia Pacific in Brewton Seeks to Move Graveyard from Mill Grounds

From the Brewton Standard for Wednesday, October 16, 2013,

“GP officials are going through the process of getting permission to move the more than 50 headstones and remains of Franklin Cemetery to Brewton’s Union Cemetery.

GP and cemetery officials



**Franklin Cemetery**

called the effort a “win-win” because it would provide a more peaceful — and accessible — resting place and also open up four more acres at Union Cemetery for new plots” (<http://us-mg5.mail.yahoo.com/neo/launch?rdsc=100&rand=1753925052#mail>). €



# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Today's Ghost Stories: Alabama's Seven Most Terrifying Places

The following article "7 Most Terrifying Places in Alabama as Seen on TV" by Kelly Kazek appeared on the web site [al.com](http://al.com) on October 10, 2013. Kelly Kazek is the north Alabama region reporter for [al.com](http://al.com).

Now the Seven Most Terrifying Places:



**One of the Deserted Mansions in Cahaba**

### **Number One: Cahaba Featured on "Deep South Paranormal" May 2013**

Alabama has had four capitals since it became a state in 1819: Huntsville was temporary capital in 1819, Cahaba or "Cahawba" from 1820-1825, Tuscaloosa from 1826-1846 and Montgomery since 1847.

Old Cahawba is now home to only two buildings, a few cemeteries and dozens of ghostly legends. By 1876, homes and businesses were dismantled and the town was unincorporated in 1989. Today, it is maintained as an historical site.

But it's not called a "ghost town" for nothing.

According to the episode description for "[Deep South Paranormal](#)," the Syfy show that featured Cahaba earlier this year (May 2013), visitors and workers frequently hear disembodied voices and the sounds of children laughing.

Investigators also reported that site director Linda Derry lost her keys in a cemetery where a father and son named Bell were buried after being killed in a shootout on Cahaba's main street. Hours later, a horseback rider found the keys in a nearby cemetery where the Bells' family slave, Pleas, was buried. "Pleas was often ordered to steal keys by the Bell family," the investigators reported

*Note: the Skyfly Channel reported that the two families, the bells and the Troys had feuded for years. When the Troys accused the Bells' slave Pleas of stealing, they killed him and the whole Bell family.*



**Sweetwater  
Now a Private Home.  
Photo from [Wikipedia](#)**

### **Number Two: . Sweetwater Mansion "Paranormal State," April 201**

Sweetwater Mansion is a plantation home in Florence designed by Gen. John Brahan, a veteran of the War of

1812. The eight-room, brick home on Sweetwater Creek was first occupied by Brahan's son-in-law Robert Patton after its completion in 1835. [Patton was elected governor of Alabama](#) in 1865.

The home has been the source of numerous ghost tales, including one about a caretaker who said she saw a casket holding the corpse of a Confederate soldier in a downstairs room. The apparition is thought to be that of one of Patton's sons killed in the Civil War. Sweetwater Mansion was featured in an episode of [A&E's "Paranormal State"](#) in 2011.

### **Number Three: King-Griswell Plantation, "The Dead Files," June 2012**



The King-Criswell Plantation was built in Monroe County by William "Dock" King, the nephew of the only U.S. vice president from Alabama, [William Rufus King](#). Construction began in the late 1850s on a nearby site at Packer's Bend. [According to RuralSouthwestAlabama.org](#), the outbreak of the Civil War scaled back plans for the grand mansionbama.", although it is still "said to have the broadest facade of any plantation home in Ala

More than 100 years later, the home was bought by former state legislator Eugene Garrett and moved to its present location in Uriah. It is now privately

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Today's Ghost Stories: Alabama's Seven Most Terrifying Places

(Continued from page 15)

owned.

A team from the [Travel Channel show "The Dead Files"](#) went to the home after its owner at the time reported she feared for her life after being attacked by an evil entity.

### Number Four: Pratt cotton Gin, "Deep South Paranormal," May 2013



A team from the Syfy show "Deep South Paranormal" went to Prattville to investigate reports that the empty [Daniel Pratt Cotton Gin Factory](#) was haunted by the spirit of a boy killed when he fell down an elevator shaft. The factory was built in 1844 by [Daniel Pratt](#), the industrialist who founded Prattville.

The show's website claims: "Some people in the town believe that the old property is haunted, quite possibly by the ghosts of factory workers who died while there, or by Daniel Pratt himself. Unregulated safety conditions that existed at the time for factory workers would often lead to accidents and deaths."

### Number Five: Bear Creek Swamp, "Deep South Paranormal," May 2013

Swamps are naturally creepy places but [Bear Creek Swamp](#) in Autaugaville has given rise to legends of hauntings for decades.

The team from "Deep South Paranormal" wrote: "Among the legends of Bear Creek

Swamp that keep many from driving through the area after dark are rumors of phantom cars that speed by only to fade into darkness, a 4-foot apparition that appears in front of vehicles and floating orbs of light.

"In addition, many claim the swamp, which was originally occupied by the Creek Indian Tribe, is haunted by the ghosts of the Creek Indians, early settlers and fallen soldiers. A more disturbing rumor, however, tells of the ghost of a mother looking for her lost child that attacks anyone brave enough to utter the phrase 'We have your baby' three times."



### Number Six: St. James Hotel, "Deep South Paranormal," May 2013

Built in 1837, Selma's St. James Hotel is one of the oldest in the South. Although it has closed for nearly 100 years, it was restored in 1997 to its condition in the glory days when outlaw Jesse James was reportedly a guest.

The ["Deep South Paranormal" team reported](#): "Visitors often report smelling the heavy scent of lavender at various areas throughout the hotel. Employees are also scared to walk around the hotel at night and there are just floors they won't go to."

One of the night-shift workers claimed he heard incessant knocking when he was working his shift at the front desk even though he was alone. The sound of a dog running up and down the halls as well as barking in the courtyard has been heard."

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Today's Ghost Stories: Alabama's Seven Most Terrifying Places

(Continued from page 16)

### Number Seven: Sloss Furnaces, "Ghost Hunters" (2010), Ghost Adventures" (2008"



Birmingham's Sloss Furnaces is one of the most unusual historical sites in the country: It is the only known blast furnace turned into a museum. It is also home to many legends stemming from its long history making pig iron from 1882 to 1971

The Syfy website reports: "The 50-acre industrial plant, operating from 1882 until the early 1970s, was a warehouse of death: folks boiled alive by steam explosions, burned to death in the blast furnaces and plummeting 40 feet to their deaths in the underground tunnels. Obviously, those perished will want to haunt the site of their wretched demise."

In 2008, a team from [Travel Channel's "Ghost Adventures"](#) filmed an episode at Sloss. The Travel Channel website says: "On Sept. 9, 1887, Richard Jowers was working at Furnace Number One. Standing near the top of the furnace, he slipped, and he and the heavy bell he had been preparing to melt tumbled into the molten steel below. There was nothing anyone could do to help, and they stood helplessly by as Jowers was incinerated."

It is rumored they were able to remove his head and several bones before his remains were lost completely. At night, this old building, now a national landmark, still echoes with noises from its perilous past."



**USS Alabama: Sought After Site for Paranormal Films But Access Never Granted**

Late at night, people have reported hearing eerie footsteps echoing on the decks of the War World II-era battle ship [USS Alabama](#). When they turn to look, nothing is there. At least, nothing human. A shadow, a moan, a creak lead visitors to wonder if the five crew members who died in a 1944 turret explosion are still on duty, refusing to let even death end their watch.

For decades, even before the great ship's arrival in Mobile Bay in 1965 when she was established as a tourist attraction, people have reported hearing strange noises and seeing shadowy figures below decks.

Despite her 37 months of active service during World War II, during which she earned nine Battle Stars, the USS Alabama never suffered any casualties from enemy fire, with [the deaths from the explosion](#) being the only ones reported aboard ship. But the legends persist, making the USS Alabama a prime destination for paranormal investigators.

A quick search of the internet leads to reports that crews from reality TV shows have been aboard the ship, but these reports, too, are legend. According to Karen Conner, marketing director for the Alabama, no paranormal investigators have ever been allowed on board.

"We've always declined," she said. €



**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](mailto:escohis@escohis.org)

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