

## The February Meeting Tuesday, February 25, 2014, 3:00 p. m. The Thomas E. McMillan Museum

### The Program: "Expedition to Cameroon"

Using pictures from the trip, Darryl Searcy will give a presentation on his most recent trip for Pfizer Drug Company. He will explain the "Why" and "What" of this expedition to the Congolese jungle

## A Brief History of Cameroon

### By Darryl Searcy

The earliest inhabitants of Cameroon were Pygmies of the Bakas tribe. These people still inhabit the forests of the south and east regions. They speak a dialect known as Bantu, which is still in use today.

Like Madagascar, the people of the region had to deal with numerous landlords dating back to the 1500s - first the Dutch and then Portuguese who ruled over a vast river basin.

Today the area is divided into republics such as Chad, Republic of Congo, Nigeria, and the Republic of Africa.

Malaria prevented the Portuguese and other invaders from establishing significant settlement and conquest until

the late 1870s. At that time a suppressant known as Quinine became avail-



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Cameroon Flag

Volume 41, Number 2

February 2014

**The March Meeting**  
**Tuesday, March 25, 2014**  
**3:00 p. m.**  
**in the**  
**Thomas E. McMillan Museum**  
**The Program:**  
**Ronnie Herrington will give a**  
**History of the Elim Baptist Church**  
**at Roberts, Alabama.**  
**Also included will be information**  
**on two cemeteries near the church.**

## A Brief History of Cameroon



**A Panoramic View of Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon**



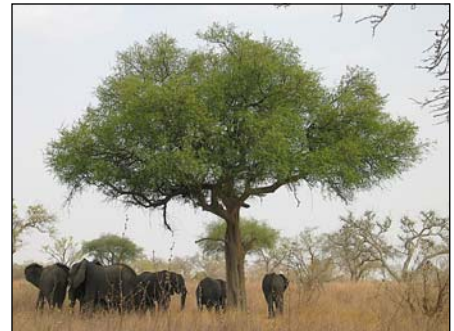
**At top left , Volcanic plugs dot the landscape near Rhumsiki in the far north region. The fantastic landscape has been compared to a moonscape.**

**At bottom left, the Lobe Falls which are among the few that flow directly into an ocean.**



**At top right, elephants surround an Acacia tree in a national park.**

**At bottom right, mud and grass huts of the Musgum who live in the far north region of Cameroon.**



*(Continued from page 1)*

able.

When a vaccine was found, the Europeans became more and more greedy and began to deal freely in coastal trade along with the acquisition of slaves, especially in the northern part where the Muslim people organized a slave trade network.

However, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century Christian missions became better established and began taking an active part in abolishing the business of buying and selling of humans.

Beginning in 1884, all of Cameroon and parts of its neighbors became the German colony of Kamerun. After World War I, this colony was parti-

tioned between Britain and France under a League of Nations mandate, and France gained the larger geographical share. Britain's territory was a strip bordering Nigeria from the sea to Lake Chad, and a sizeable foothold in South Africa.

In 1955 the people of Cameroon began a struggle for independence against the French and the Brits. When peaceful rebellion failed to work for them they took up arms and gained independence in 1960. The death toll was in the hundreds of thousands.

One year after independence, the Union joined with its Muslim neighbors and voted to form a Federal Republic. Still the French and British continue to resist and to this day hold some authority over the area, especially in the southern regions. €

## First Day in Cameroon

**By Darryl Searcy**

Oh Geez! What have we done? We are on the ground for some two hours and the time is 6:00 PM West Africa Time, August 23, 2013.

We have collected all our baggage, exchanged our currency and presented ourselves to the authorities who stamped our paperwork and bid us welcome to Cameroon Central Africa - anyone for a fine Cuban cigar?

Currency exchange - Holy Moly!

\$1.00 = 491 CFA (Central African Franc)

\$5.00 = 2,458 CFA

\$200.00 = 98,335 CFA

The kicker here is that the currency is printed in round numbers -- 100, 200, 500, etc., which means our pockets will be weighted down with coins of unknown value. At least we now have a measuring stick should anyone get an idea on how much he should spend for a trinket. Most of our expenses would be covered by Exploronapo and an authorization card issued by the rental agency - not to worry, right? We're not in the real Africa yet.

There will be no hotel/clean-up time for us until we reach Douala. Our vehicles and cargo carrier were waiting out there somewhere - we just had to find Yaounde Nsimalen Auto Lease and claim our prize. The rental for a late model Land Rover is \$6.95 a day + low-rate insurance, no mileage, but you buy petrol at about \$5.00/gallon -- good! About 3,000 CFA - not bad for a vehicle that would cost a cool \$150.00 a day + insurance + mileage + gasoline in the United States. We looked around the airport in hopes of finding a rental agency of the same name and voilà we would have our transportation - no such luck.

Now what? Do we send for them or do we sit



**The men in the photograph are personal tenders for the expedition.**

here in hopes they get the idea and bring the vehicles to us? We located the agency and were told to sit tight - the vehicles would be at the airport in no time.

We are now outside sitting on our bags for over an hour and no vehicles in sight. We place another telephone call. Oh yes, your vehicles are waiting at the gate - send someone out and the

“automobile” would be released. Jacques, good, dependable Jacques held up four fingers and grabbed Arnie by the shoulder - “I need four more drivers, you, you, and you come with me.”

The African nation of Cameroon is one with limited access to health care, with a ratio of only 1.9 physicians per 10,000 people. Such statistics demonstrate the health care needs of most African countries, so caution on our part will be paramount. Good care, good health, good drivers. Until we get to Douala we would trust whomever Jacques put behind the wheel would be able to follow his directions. After Douala we could iron out this minor detail. Whatever happened to any one of us, such affliction would have to be grinned and borne in silence until we reached the Catholic hospital north of Douala.

However, the papers and briefings provided to my assistances and me did not cover any personal experiences or striking perspectives on health care disparities. I suddenly realized I needed a better appreciation of health care providers around the globe. In this case we were told to rely on the Cameroonian organization ASCOVIME (Association des Competences pour une vie meilleure). How kind of them to think of that! All this was a concern at this moment because we had yet to

*(Continued on page 4)*

## First Day in Cameroon

(Continued from page 3)

drive the 148 mile distance from Yaounde to Douala, where peaceful bedding for a night would be provided with pleasure.

Nice to know that we are in good hands.

“Jacques, crack a whip and get us out of here. We

have miles to make before jet lag dulls our senses, hunger diminishes our sense of direction, and weariness brings on temporary sleep deprivation sickness.” €

## News and Announcements

### ECHS Loses Charter Member



John Richard Miller, Jr. passed away on January 26, 2014. A native of Brewton and civic and business leader, John Richard had lived in Destin, FL for the last several years.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Alabama Historical Association Annual Meeting Scottsboro, AL, April 10 – 12, 2014



**Scottsboro Train Depot and  
Museum**

The Spring Newsletter for the association, now online, contains details of special events and tours as well as a schedule of meetings and speakers.

One can register for the meeting online through the form provided in the newsletter or through

PayPal. A copy of the newsletter is also available in the Alabama Room.

\*\*\*\*\*

### “Alabama Voices” Exhibit Now Open



**Alabama  
Department of  
Archives and  
History**

Called the Centerpiece Exhibit of the Museum of Alabama, “Alabama Voices” opened on February 15, 2014 at the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

The exhibit expresses the idea that “Alabama’s history is the story of its people; to understand this story, we must listen to their voices.”

(Continued on page 5)



## News and Announcements

(Continued from page 4)

### Brewton Reborn All-stars



**Decorated Trash Barrels, The barrels, part of the Brewton Reborn project, help curb littering and add to public art.**

*This message is from Connie Baggett, Director of the program Brewton Reborn, which is designed to “build community.”*

“Hope all is well with you! The city council will be honoring individuals and groups who have played pivotal roles in making the Brewton Reborn project a tremendous success. The Escambia County Historical Society is one of the groups that helped build community through its support.

“I would like to personally invite your members to attend the council meeting at City

Hall on Feb. 24 at 4:30 p.m. to be recognized for your efforts as well as take part in a short meeting afterwards for discussion of plans for this year.”

\*\*\*\*\*

### Alabama Historical Association Awards Historical Marker to Covington County

#### Side One: The Andalusia Railroad Depot

“September 20, 1899, the first Central of Georgia locomotive with a work train arrived in Andalusia over these tracks, which extended to Cotton Street. Track laying was under the supervision of G.L. Burtcheall and C.B. Yancey, with J.N. White in charge of the track men. The Covington Times wrote “the engine stopped within 50 yards of the Courthouse and just sat there and ‘blowed’ for several minutes.” The train was pushed by engine No. 1542 with H.H. Ward as engineer and W.E. Pye, fireman. Service was discontinued on March 31, 1983, with engineer A.M. Evans guiding the last

train of empty cars out of the station. The Depot building was completed soon after the turn of the century and, since opening to the public in 1987, serves as headquarters for the Covington Historical Society and its Three Notch Museum. The building, the oldest wooden commercial structure in use within the city, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

#### Side Two: Andalusia Becomes the County Seat

“The first county seat on the banks south of the falls of the Conecuh River was ‘Covington Courthouse,’ sited soon after the county was created in 1821. In 1826, when John Devereux was postmaster, the name was changed to Montezuma. Early citizens of the area included John Devereux, John Barrow, Dave Bullock, Captain Tatum, Henry Jones, John H. Stone, Samuel Bracken, Samuel Jones, Seaborn Jones, William Spurlin, Samuel Gates, Charles Stanley, and William Carter. After this small community was repeatedly flooded, a new site on top of Devereux Hill was chosen for the county seat in July 1844, and called Andalusia. The choice of name probably reflected the importance of the region’s principal trading center, Pensacola, which was so long ruled by Spain.” €



**Covington County Courthouse  
Andalusia**

## Snapshots

### ECHS Officers for 2014-201



**From Left, Standing:** Jacque Stone (Secretary), Barbara McCoy (Librarian/Curator), Ranella Merritt (Newsletter Editor), Carolyn Jennings (Vice-President), Susan Crawford (Treasurer), and Tom McMillan (Historian).

**Seated:** Sally Finlay (President).

**Not Pictured:** Ann Biggs-Williams and Clay Lisenby (Publicity).

### Passing the Gavel

**Tom McMillan, previous President,  
and Sally Finlay, newly elected  
President**





## Snapshots

### ECHS 's Own Sherlock and Watson



**Ranella and Paul Merritt are in front of the stained glass panels which were saved when a previous Escambia County Courthouse was torn down. The display is in the Elvira McMillan Parlor.**



## Our Business Members

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Colonial Cameroon



**German Colonial Era Building now used as retreat for president of Cameroon.**



**German Colonial Era Building.**



**German Period Building now used as a school.**

The black and white photos are from a UK collection now on flicker <[flickr.com/photos/nationalarchives/collections/72157625827328771/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalarchives/collections/72157625827328771/)>.



**After he was appointed the first Premier of the Southern Cameroon May 1958, Dr. E. M. L. Endeley, O.B.E. toured the territory to explain the new Ministerial system of government. Here he is seen (sitting, third from right) with a Native authority council in Bamenda.**

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Colonial Cameroon



**Tea is now being produced in the Tea Factory which was completed**



**Bark being stripped from mahogany at a timber camp near Victoria (a city also known as Limbe).**



**Workmen spraying the trunk of an Obeche tree with Gammaxene to protect it against timber-boring insects.**

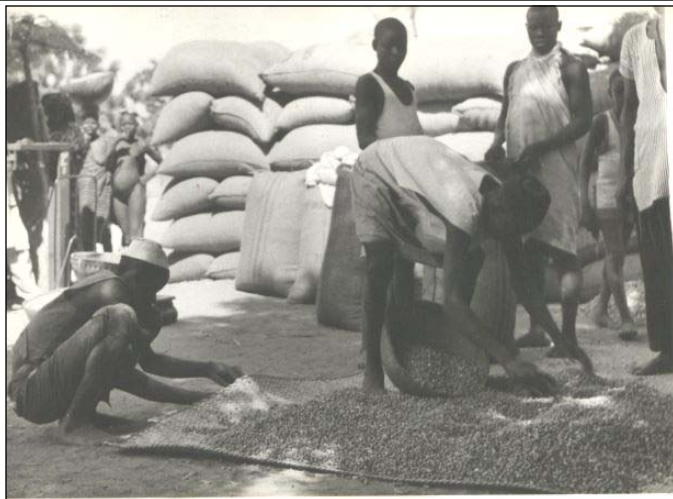


**Schoolboy Sports at Victoria on 26 October, 1956.**



# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Colonial Cameroon



**Groundnut Buying Centre, Gwoza, Northern Cameroons.**



**Domestic Science Centre at Wum. Miss Bebe, the Domestic Science mistress, is seen instructing the women using a hand sewing machine.**



**Death of Chief Manga Williams: Grasslands Chiefs paying their respects at Victoria.**



**Delegates to the Bamenda Conference on the future constitution for the southern Cameroons pose outside the Bamenda Community Hall, May 1956.**



# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## ECHS Christmas Party 2014



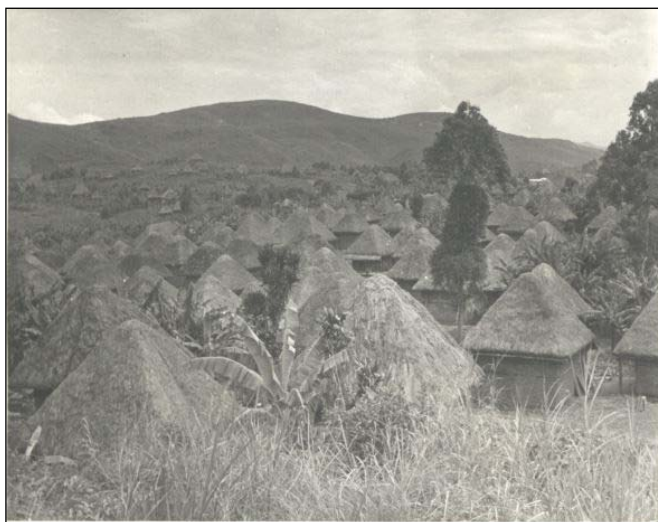
**Gwoza Dispensary, Northern Cameroons.**



**Cattle on a mixed farm, Gwoza Settlement scheme, Northern Cameroons.**



**Erosion works at Mobi**



**A typical village in the Bamenda grasslands.**

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## A Journey to St. Martin de Porres Catholic Hospital, Njinikom, Cameroon

Hello, I am Jared von Savo (University of Utah, Provo) and I have been charged to remember in words a visit paid this day to the St. Martin de Porres Catholic Hospital in Njinikom, Cameroon. It is the first Sunday break and the beginning of our second full week in Cameroon.

The time available to us seems much too short indeed. However, our expedition leader had high hopes that all the crew could have brief visits to a church of his choice - that was not possible, so a number of us decided to visit the St. Martin de Porres Hospital, the Catholics among us. That has now come to pass.

We attended a Mass and sermon followed by a tour of the hospital facility, as well as a short walk-about along its corridors. Among the group were those expedition members of Mormon and Jewish faiths. It was strange how the group were suddenly transformed having arrived at this magnificent place. There were no Catholics, no Mormons, no Jews; one people come together at a special moment.

It had been a restless night for most of us as we had anticipated these side trips with much enthusiasm. Our expedition team had broken into three groups - one traveling south to Buea to attend the Hope Methodist Mission church; one group traveling due north to visit the Baptist Hospital and Sanctuary at Mbingo, and we now gathered on a mountainside to soon witness miracles in progress.



- **Crew Member Jared Von Savo**  
**Brigham Young Univ. Utah**

Upon arrival, we set our backpacks and a couple "bivouac" tents on the hospital grounds (with permission, of course). Regardless of whether or not the men could freshen up before Mass was doubtful, as it so happens nearby residents of the compound had a coop of chickens that contained several loud-mouth roosters. Those feathered demons began to crow at about the same time as our arrival, no doubt trained to awaken the devout for early Mass.

We swore vengeance against the hapless creatures but ceased our anger and frustrations once we heard the convent of the Tertiary Sisters of Saint Francis chanting unlike anything we had ever heard before. As the sisters raised their voices to the mountain top it sounded like a chorus of songbirds. The sun began its peek over the horizon, swelling to brilliance not seemed possible before. Every man among us, Catholics and non-Catholics alike rose to his feet as though to bring the voices



**St. Martin de Porres Catholic Hospital**

nearer.

As we stood in awe of this glorious concert, a dozen or so nuns in colorful habits appeared, lifting their angelic voices in praise. A sister carried a sick child in her arms. No drums sounded, as the group approached, faces aglow in a wonderful sign of faith.

The lead Sister signaled us to walk with them to a

*(Continued on page 14)*

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## A Journey to St. Martin de Porres Catholic Hospital, Njinikom, Cameroon

(Continued from page 13)

couple of small shelters where fruit, peanut butter and bread awaited. It was so very, very quiet here. Families of patients were stirring, carrying wood on their heads to a community cook shed and the smell of burning fires and food clutched our nostrils. They told us the rains were early this year, and a Sister apologized for the dampness.

At this early hour the ward rounds were beginning. The Sisters broke into three groups, each following a physician and his head nurse. At a precise moment we were motioned to step behind a Dr. James Hake, whom we learned later was a three-year family practitioner from the Stadsapotheken District of Amsterdam, Netherlands.

While we were not allowed to enter a patient's room, the first stop was a new patient with endometritis due to a criminal abortion, followed by a patient with hepatitis, another with coagulopathy, and yet another experiencing unknown seizures from



**St. Martin de Porres Catholic Hospital Clinic for Crippled Children in Bafut.**

immunization.

Although some patients could barely muster the strength to speak, each said "Thank you" to the doctor and nurses, and whether or not the patient could

tuberculosis.

The outpatient department was already full when we entered from the wards. Each person was addressed by name, a procedure meant to put the patient at ease. The final patient that we were allowed to see was a nine month old girl who suffered from malaria. The doctor said in broken English that the children suffer most from this disease because of their lack of

be helped, the expression of gratitude was always followed by a kind gesture of hands folded in prayer.

These feeble gestures were particularly meaningful to me since I am a professed Lay Christian of Mormon faith. I loved the Cameroonian custom of saying "Thank you" and a welcome after each introduction.

When our tour was ended, the Cameroonian priest, Fr. Eugen, told us that the locals give preferential treatment to strangers



**St. Martin de Porres Catholic Hospital Sisters of Mercy**

(Continued on page 15)



# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## A Journey to St. Martin de Porres Catholic Hospital, Njinikom, Cameroon

(Continued from page 14)

in their midst, like Jesus told them to do in the Book of Matthew

It was befitting for us to make another stop at the Bafut to St. Joseph Child & Adult Home, a rehabilitation hospital, also run by the Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis. Sister Prisca, a physical therapist, proudly showed us around her domain where we saw Cameroonian and Belgium PTs

treating patients with strokes, bone injuries, cerebral palsy, amputations and paraplegia.

We were introduced to teachers and students for the blind who were being taught to read Braille books. We saw the workshop for orthotics, shoes and prostheses. We walked among children at parallel bars learning to use their new braces. There were a handful of patients still in casts after having osteotomies for leg straightening, patiently waiting the 10 weeks required before getting braces and beginning their walking exercises.

Miracles were happening in the present and expectantly all around us. The faces of believers were here in the patients, their mothers, the therapists, the prosthetists and especially the Sisters.

Our tour came and went too quickly. It was our good fortune to be there for the beginning of the daily celebration of St. Martin de Porres Catholic Hospital. Later the Seraphic Singers led the responses at the Mass held in the hospital courtyard. Village singers and dancers welcomed the guests and encouraged donations from the community and visitors. A prayer to St. Martin de Porres is a good way to end this essay.

Thoughts of the day will continue to challenge me and my colleagues. Here we stood in the center of a



**St. Martin de Porres Catholic Hospital**

far-away country, enjoying the best of good health having come from a country half a world away where we enjoyed the best of healthcare, many of us never thinking how blessed we are to be able to take for granted so many things that these people cherish for a brief time.

When we left the compound gates, Professor asked each of us to pause for a moment in prayer

regardless of our faith. Not a single man moved, but instead bowed in silence as Arnie Bell read a prepared prayer given to him by Rev. Lawrence Shinnick, Pastor of St. Leo's Cathedral at Demopolis, Alabama.

"Dear St. Martin, teach us to be generous with the gifts that God has given us. Make us sympathetic towards those who are suffering and afflicted. Pray to Our Redeemer and to Our Lady of Mercy that our hearts may not be hardened by sin and selfishness, but that we may always be kind and generous to our neighbors because they are the children of Our Heavenly Father. Amen."

*Prayer by Rev Fr. Anthony Ndang Ndichia, €*

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Fish Pond, Alabama

**By Jerry Simmons**

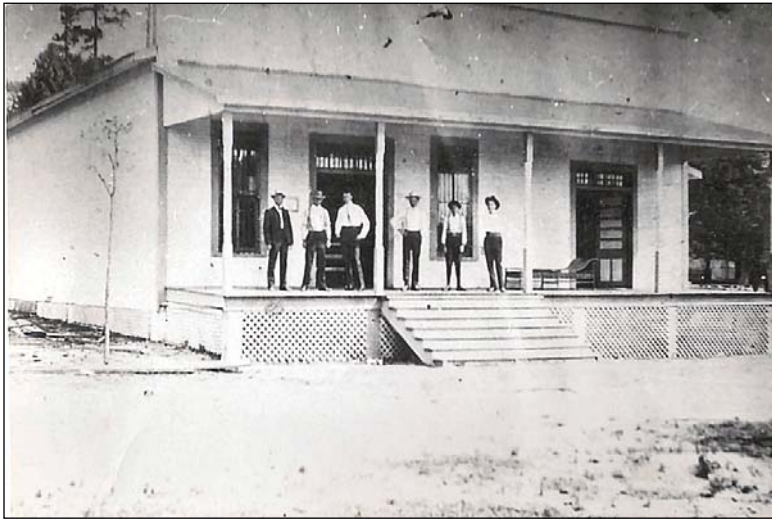
*The following article appeared on the Alger Sullivan Historical Society for February 2, 2014 and is reprinted with permission*

Several weeks back, I ran a couple of columns about names of communities in Florida and Alabama. Recently we uncovered information about a place that had a very descriptive name: Fish Pond, Alabama. It's located in Escambia County, Alabama, not too far from Brewton.

As an aside, I need to tell you that Jerry Fischer and I have a passion for old pictures. Actually, many of them are really old to me, but Jerry was present when most of them were taken. Just kidding – he's not really THAT much older than me. Anyway, he came up with some photos from Escambia County, Alabama, that floored us both. The pictures were of Fish Pond, and we had just become acquainted with Fish Pond a few weeks before; the pictures really helped us in knowing more about the place. A picture showing a business in Fish Pond should be accompanying this article.

I also recently found an article Dr. Darryl Searcy wrote for the Escambia County Historical Society's newsletter "ECHOES" in 2004, and wanted to use some of it here for those of you who hadn't heard of the little community before now. Many of you are pretty much like me, because I had not heard of Fish Pond myself until I began working at the McMillan Museum.

According to "The History of Escambia County, Alabama," by Mrs. Annie Waters, there was a genuine fish pond at the site of the community. It seems



**Store at Fish Pond**

Cedar Creek Lumber Company in Brewton had a logging railroad out there, east and north of Brewton, and the pond must have been a good place to start a little town. Its demise began as the logging played out, although another community sprang up not too far away, a little bit south, and its name became New Fish Pond.

Logging camps were developed because of the distance from the men's homes was too great for a daily commute. Many camps were simple boxcar structures on a siding of the logging railroad. They were furnished with bare necessities of life, ready to be relocated by rail once most of the trees in a particular area were felled. In the case of Fish Pond, a thriving community (some called it a town), sprang up. Dr. Searcy wrote, "There are a few scattered remnants left behind, a brick here and a few fallen remains of what must have been the company commissary, or perhaps a school or a home.

It was said that a school and homes once stood there ~ in fact, a brick yard operated there as well. The brick yard was run by the logging company and it apparently provided bricks to be used in the construction of other buildings. Bits and pieces are still strewn around, although you'll have to climb a fence to see them, and you might have to do a little kicking of dirt piles to find them."

As was the case of the Alger-Sullivan Lumber Company logging camps, living quarters were segregated and most of the laborers were blacks. It's said that in the early 1900s maybe 30 families lived in

*(Continued on page 17)*

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Fish Pond, Alabama

(Continued from page 16)

Fish Pond more or less permanently with the majority of them working for Cedar Creek Mill (which later became T.R. Miller).

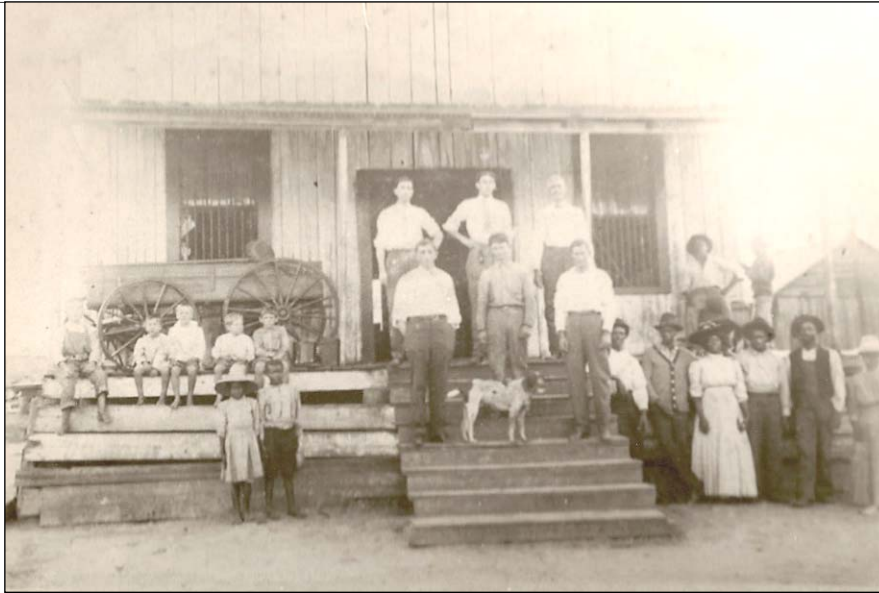
There were log ditches as well as rails leading from Fish Pond and one named by Searcy was called “Hart Blow

Ditch.” It ran almost all the way to the Brewton mill sometime before 1900, since the train track wasn’t laid until shortly after 1900 when the mill began using steam locomotives to haul the logs.

The pond was used for a staging area; the logs would be placed into the pond to keep worms and other pests from getting into the wood, destroying the log before it ever got to the mill. Having the logs floating made it much easier to sort the timber by size, length, etc. before they were sent on to the mill. Two men could move a lot of logs around.

The principal reason that ponds are no longer used for storage is that logs cut from second and third-growth forests will not float [too well]. If you go by the mill near Highway 31 in Castleberry, you may recall seeing great big sprinklers spraying giant stacks of logs. They still use water but the process doesn’t work like a log pond.

Remember, “Fishpond was not just a camp,” Dr. Searcy wrote. “It had stores and convenience businesses, making this sort of a ‘town within a town’ for company employees. When timber close to the Old Fishpond was exhausted, a new camp site was developed and named - appropriately - New Fish-



**Fish Pond: On the Front Porch of a Store**

pond. In each case, there would have been approximately [as many as] 60 men and women [and maybe even children] living and working within the environs of the sites.”

Fish Pond’s main purpose was to support the logging operation of the mill; also there were livestock to

tend, such as mules to drag logs to the railhead and perhaps even hogs to be used as food for the inhabitants. Mechanical work had to be performed on the equipment, especially since steam locomotives had a nasty and inconvenient habit of breaking down miles from anywhere.

A turpentine camp was run by the Company as well and the trains could carry the barrels of pine resin from the woods to another staging area for a turpentine distillery. Also like the ASLC, most of the logging operation was shut down by the late 1940s as the trees were cut out or log trucks gradually took over the job of transporting the logs to the mill.

Searcy told of a lady who lived in Damascus who said “she remembered the turpentine still business, ‘with barrels of turpentine being shipped out of the town regularly. There were logging trains running from Fishpond,’ she recalled, remembering also that the big train yard had a fence around it. ‘It seems to me,’ she mused, ‘that the town had a brick yard and a commissary, but no church. The people had to attend church in Damascus.’” €



**ECHOES**  
THE NEWSLETTER FOR  
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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*ECHOES, The newsletter for the Escambia County Historical Society, a 501 (c) (3) corporation, is published monthly except November. Comments are welcome. You may email the Society at [escohis@escohis.org](mailto:escohis@escohis.org) or call 251-809-1528.*

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Historian/Curator, *Carolyn Jennings*

**TRUSTEES**

*Ann Biggs-Williams*  
*Ranella Merritt*  
*Tom McMillan*  
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*Darryl Searcy, Alternate*