

## The September Meeting

Tuesday, September 22, 2015, 3:00 p. m.  
McMillan Museum  
Jefferson Davis Community College Campus



David Robb commented on the picture above: "In his February 16, 1818, letter to Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, Gov. William Wyatt Bibb enclosed this small ink and watercolor drawing (much enlarged here) on paper. It was used by Moritz Furst to create the invisible map of Alabama featured on the first official seal of Alabama" ([http:// www.alabamaheritage.com/issue-114-fall-2014.html](http://www.alabamaheritage.com/issue-114-fall-2014.html)).

### The Program

#### The Story of the First State Seal of Alabama: Governor Bibb's 1818 'Mother Map' of Alabama and How It Was Used to Make Alabama's First Seal

David Robb of Huntsville will present the program based on his recent article: "An Invisible Map Revealed" published in Alabama Heritage, Fall 2014.

He comments in the article: "Thanks to advances in technology, historians have recently discovered an early state seal of Alabama. The discovery of this seal, which has the rare use of a map in its center, opens new lines of historical exploration and allows scholars to reflect in new ways on the values of Alabama's founders."

Alabama's first governor helped shape this seal, which features the state's major waterways. It was created by Moritz Furst, a prominent nineteenth-century medal-maker.

Our speaker, although retired, is

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Our Speaker  
David Robb

Volume 42, Number 9

September 2015

### The October 27, 2015 Meeting McMillan Museum, 3:00 P. M.

**The Program:**  
Jay Lamar of the State Bicentennial Commission will Present an Overview of the Bicentennial Plans along with Program/Resource Opportunities.

### Refreshments For the September Meeting

**Plan on Bringing Your Favorite Snacks. ECHS Will Provide Drinks But Not Food for this Meeting.**

# The Program

(Continued from page 1)

staying very busy as a regional historian/scholar, lecturer and museum consultant. His career has included directorships at the Telfair Museum in Savannah, Georgia, the Kimball Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, and the Huntsville Museum of Art. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Alabama Historical Association and is Director Emeritus of the Huntsville Museum of Art.

His scholarly research and writing on a variety of subjects include the architectural photography of Frances Benjamin Johnston, the natural ice trade in the South, the adventurer Zachariah Cox, and the origins of Alabama's boundaries. His articles appear in the Encyclopedia of Alabama and Alabama Heritage and he continues to present papers and pro-

grams at universities as well as local and state historical associations.

In reference to the article on the "invisible" map on the state's first seal, he says he has been intrigued by map making and design ever since his college art history studies

His wife, Frances Robb, is also an art historian and museum consultant. Her special interest is in social history and the history of photography. She presented a program to ECHS in June 2007 on the photography of the state's first geologist Eugene Allen Smith. Her answer to questions about the "mystery" pictures in the custody of Valeria Long of Longevity Antiques is in this issue of Echoes. €

## Confederate Memorial Dedicated at Canoe

On August 15, 2015, there was the dedication of the first Confederate Veterans Memorial in Escambia County. Included in the ceremony was the raising of Confederate Flags as a part of the Flags for Alabama program. Also, part of the program was an imbibing ceremony representing the action of a Confederate soldier at Fredericksburg who, after the battle, found canteens and gave water to wounded soldiers of both sides. .

The site, donated by Bobby Ellis, was called perfect for the memorial by Kevin McKinley, local commander of the Carney Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

In an article in the Atmore News, Kevin explained that the memorial has been placed where, during the

Civil War, 8,000 Union troops and their wagons were bogged down in mud and prevented from looting the area.

A local woman moved livestock to an island in Canoe Creek so the troops could not reach them. Kevin commented that the waterlogged troops had to empty their cartridges to make fires. Many empty miniballs have been found in the fields where the troops camped (<http://www.atmorenews.com/2015/08/19/confederate-memorial-dedicated-at-canoe/>).

Approximately 250 attended the dedication including local, state and regional members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. €



**Firing a Civil War Era Canon Is Part of the Ceremony**



**The Memorial**



**The Imbibing Ceremony**



## News and Announcements

### **Steadham Family Reunion Sunday October 4, 2015 11:00 Steadham Chapel and Cemetery**



#### **Steadham Memorial Chapel**

The descendants of John Victor and Mary Virginia McGhee Steadham will meet at the Steadham Chapel and Cemetery located at 987 Taylor Circle, near McCullough, Al.

A celebration of 40 years meeting in the chapel building will be

observed.

Following the gathering, there will be a pot luck lunch. Bring your favorite dish along with pictures, articles, and stories of your ancestors. All relatives and family friends are encouraged to attend. For questions you may contact Elaine P. Brooks at 251-267-3442.

ECHS members enjoyed a visit to the Steadham Chapel in 2014. Elaine, who is an ECHS member, was a host for the visit.

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### **West Florida Genealogical Society October Meeting Saturday, October 3, 2015, 10:00 AM West Florida Genealogy Library**

Presenting through a pre-recorded national webinar, Katherine D. Benbow, who is in charge of DNA projects at several genealogy organizations, will discuss the question "DNA: Which Test Should I Use and Why?"

Charlotte Shipman of the West Florida Society writes:

"Choosing the right DNA test depends on the question you are trying to answer about your ancestry. This presentation will provide an overview of the three types of DNA testing for genetic genealogy purposes: YDNA, MtDNA or mitochondrial DNA, and atDNA or autosomal DNA. Information will be given about the major testing companies with examples of their typical displays and costs.

"A case study will be presented detailing the

search for the biological ancestral line for an ancestor whose results did not match the supposed family of origin. This involved the use of Y-DNA and atDNA testing.

"Ms. Benbow will recommend various resources available for further learning, including some for adoptees."

Members and guests are welcome to attend. Refreshments will be available at 9:45. Meeting begins at 10:00.

Contact: Charlotte Shipman, [850-477-7166](tel:850-477-7166), [cschipman@mac.com](mailto:cschipman@mac.com)

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#### **Mary Shell, who Presented the Program at the Meeting, is Shown with Foster Kizer, Supporter of Creating an Historic District.**

### **Atmore Considers Creating An Historic District in the Downtown Area**

A meeting was hosted by the Atmore City Planning Commission Tuesday, August 25, to discuss the idea of forming an historical district in downtown Atmore.

Special guest at the meeting was Mary Shell, planner from the Alabama Historical Commission, who went through the process of developing a plan for an historical district, the steps needed to make

the plan into a reality and the reasons for forming such a zone.

"Forming a registered historical district in your town will increase property values, provide tax incentives and preserve the beauty of the area," Shell said. "We have seen property values increase significantly when prospective buyers know that the character of an area will be preserved. That assures them that their property will not be adversely affected by poorly planned development in adjacent property" (<http://www.atmorenews.com/2015/09/02/historic-district-considered/>).

The meeting was only informational with no action taken.

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(Continued from page 3)

### **Brewton Chosen as a Smithsonian Hometown Teams Traveling Exhibit Site**

The program, which includes 180 other small towns in 30 states, is a traveling exhibit which will celebrate sports and community “the stories that unfold on the neighborhood fields and courts, and the underdog heroics, larger-than-life legends, fierce rivalries and gut-wrenching defeats.”

“And what better place to get those stories than the site of the Battle of Murder Creek?” asked Brewton Mayor Yank Lovelace when interviewed for an article in the Brewton Standard. He added, “We are thrilled that the Smithsonian has chosen Brewton to be a partner site,” and that the city is working to develop a local exhibit “to facilitate educational initiatives about sports and ideals such as team work, fair play, leadership and respect” (<http://www.brewtonstandard.com/2015/09/01/Brewton-chosen-by-museum/>)

The city has not announced any final decisions such as the site and dates of the exhibit.

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### **A Message from Don Sales, McMillan Museum Coordinator:**

Thanks for all the volunteers in the Alabama Room and the McMillan Museum. A special thanks to Marie Heaton, Carolyn Geck, Susan Blair, Jack Jackson, and Jeff Ross for their help.

However, we can use even more volunteers. Plan on coming to the Alabama Room to have fun with us any Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

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**Martha Dixon Celebrated Her 100th Birthday September 2, 2015**

With proclamations from the governor, state legislature, and the City of Andalusia, Martha Dixon, shown above, was honored at a birthday celebration at Springdale, and event location in

Andalusia.

Ms. Dixon, through the Dixon Foundation formed with her husband Solan Dixon, now deceased, has been a benefactor to many cultural and educational organizations in Covington County for more than thirty years. The Dixon Foundation is also noted for major contributions to the forestry department of Auburn University including the Dixon Forestry Center.



Springdale, shown at the left, is the home built by John G. Scherf, founder of Ala Tex, former shirt anufacturing business in Andalusia.

The home and its four acres of grounds, now is owned by the city and used as an “events” center.

### **Field Trip to Southern Monroe County A Possibility for October 15, 2015**

Tentative Plans are underway for a very interesting field trip visiting points of historical interest along the Old Federal/Stagecoach Road in Southern Monroe County.

Tentative plans are to meet at the City Hall in Repton at 9:00 on Thursday, October 15.



Visits along the route would include Enoch and Galatia Churches. In Uriah, plans are to visit the famous King-Garret House, shown at the left.

The route will include battle sites for the Creek War with the location of the famous Canoe Fight as well as a Civil War Site at Mt. Pleasant. The Galliard “Summer House,” the English Plantation and the McConnico Cemetery are also on the list of possible stops.

Finally, there will be a return to Perdue Hill and a chance to see the interior of the Masonic Lodge and the Travis Cabin.

Travel would be by car; Lunch and drinks, “Bring your own.”

Sounds like a wonderful tour, so stay tuned for more details possibly at the September Meeting. €

## E. O. Wilson Film Will be Aired on PBS September 30, 2015

The film, *E.O. Wilson—Of Ants and Men*, has already been named a Finalist for the 2015 Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival. It will be shown at 8:00 p. m. central time. The following review of the film is from the E. O. Wilson Foundation website:

“Beginning with his unusual childhood in Alabama, *E.O. Wilson—Of Ants and Men*, chronicles the famed biologist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author’s lifelong love for the natural world and the groundbreaking research that would establish him as the foremost authority on ants. It is an exciting journey of ideas but also an endearing portrait of a remarkable man; often dubbed “a Darwin for the modern day.”

“Wilson’s discovery of ant pheromones in the 1960s led him to start thinking about systems of communication in nature on a grand scale. He was one of the first to start thinking about ecosystems, still a revolutionary concept at the time, and the ways different species fit together inside them. His book, *Island Biogeography* and the word “biodiversity,” which he coined in the 1980s, have since become the cornerstones of conservation biology.

“This would have been enough for most scientific careers but there was so much more to come. Wilson’s work on ant communication led him to his remarkable studies of advanced social behavior



**E. O Wilson**

*Picture from the E. O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation website.*

throughout the animal world, and when his studies turned to human behavior, the new and controversial discipline of sociobiology was founded, creating an uproar in the scientific community. Hardly had that controversy died down when he was embroiled in yet another fierce debate about the theory of evolution, which has brought him into conflict with biologists who fiercely oppose his

theory of ‘group selection.’

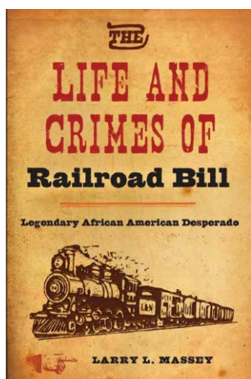
“But above and beyond these scientific debates lies Wilson’s abiding passion for the natural world and its conservation. *E.O. Wilson—Of Ants and Men* culminates with his work in the great National Park of Mozambique, Gorongosa, which brings together the great themes of his life and work: nature and humanity’s place in it” (<http://eowilsonfoundation.org/e-o-wilson-of-ants-and-men-to-premiere-september-30-on-pbs/>). €

### **E. O. Wilson Interviews on Alabama Public Broadcasting’s Discovering Alabama**

Wednesday, September 30 at 10:00 pm

- Sunday, October 11 at 12:00 pm
- Monday, October 12 at 12:30 am
- Sunday, October 18 at 6:30 pm
- Thursday, October 22 at 9:30 pm

## What Is Being Said about Larry Massey’s Book about Railroad Bill



“Fascinating. Massey brings to life the stories and mysteries surrounding this legendary figure of the nineteenth-century Southeast and shows how the outlaw has influenced our cultural heritage.” —Susan Reynolds, associate editor, *Alabama Heritage*.

“A compelling and highly readable account of the life of a notorious figure in Florida and Alabama history and how he became the subject of legends and a folk ballad that is still sung today.”—John Burrison, editor of *Storytellers: Folktales and Legends from the South* (<http://upf.com/mkt/samples/LifeandCrimesofRailroadBillPressKit.pdf>).

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# Larry Massey's Book about Railroad Bill: The Life and Times of Railroad Bill

(Continued from page 5)

## An Interview with Larry Massey about the Book

How did you first become interested in Railroad Bill?

I began researching my great, great grandfather, whose history is intertwined with that of Railroad Bill, and the more I unraveled the stories of the two men, the more interested I became in the history of the outlaw.

What makes Railroad Bill such a unique outlaw? Unique should have been Railroad Bill's nickname.

Nearly every incident in his criminal career was unique—each was as profound to law enforcement and the public in the 1890s as they should be to readers today. Moreover, he was initially a hardworking turpentine worker who was inoffensive and well liked until a failed attempt to arrest him for carrying a repeating rifle that resulted in a gunfight. He then turned into an outlaw as bold and cunning as one could imagine. He repeatedly demonstrated skill in outmaneuvering the best efforts of railroad detectives, Pinkerton detectives, sheriffs' posses, and private bounty hunters.

What are some of the more common misperceptions about Railroad Bill?

I believe many performers and admirers of the popular folk song "Railroad Bill" probably believe it is based on a mythical person. But Railroad Bill was real, and he demonstrated a criminal persona equal with stories told of popular western outlaws of the nineteenth century. There must be so many rumors and stories to choose from.

How did you decide which to include in the book?

I sought actual facts for the book, taken from newspaper articles from the 1890s and reports by individuals involved in Railroad Bill's story. My objective was to tell the entire story as revealed in those sources. The original materials, however, varied considerably. Thus, I addressed that by collecting everything available for a particular event and arranging the information as a mosaic with overlapping pieces of information. With that in view, I was able to see

each event more clearly and select the apparent facts that I used to write the book.

What is your favorite tale about Railroad Bill? My favorite story about Railroad Bill is true.

It is his gunfight with trainmen at Hurricane Bayou in which he singlehandedly fought nearly a dozen armed men. Alternatively, the inability of authorities to capture the outlaw produced a wave of tongue-in-cheek stories in Escambia County, Alabama, in the 1890s. Those had a single theme: the outlaw could purportedly conjure into an animal or inanimate object to confound his pursuers. I like those stories equally well.

Was there a specific story about Railroad Bill that sparked your interest but that wasn't included in the book?

Yes. After the book was proof set, I found an 1895 newspaper article with valuable information. The article states that my great-great-grandfather brought Railroad Bill to Alabama from North Carolina. From family tradition, I suspected that to be the case, but I did not have direct evidence. It was too late to integrate into the book text, but I added a paragraph in the preface that reveals some of the information.

Why do you think the folk song "Railroad Bill" has been so popular throughout the years? Which is your favorite version?

I am no musician, but I would say that the rhythm of the song, the simplistic theme relating to a bad man, and the fact that the song from its beginning was part of the folklore have contributed to its success. Also, numerous versions have been performed successfully by commercial artists since the 1920s, thus helping to keep the song popular for more than a century. My favorite version is the one sung by Frank Hutchison in 1929. It is similar to the version my mother sang to me when I was young.

How does the story of Railroad Bill compare with stories of more well-known outlaws of the nineteenth century?

The story of Railroad Bill is as intriguing and dramatic as the great American stories of Jesse James, John Wesley Harden, Billy the Kid, Rube Burrow, etc. It should stand the test of time in the annals of American history (<http://upf.com/mkt/samples/LifeandCrimesofRailroadBillPressKit.pdf>). €

## The Mystery Photos Are Enlargement Photographs/Portraits

Last month's *Echoes* (August 2015) carried the story of three "mystery" photographs/portraits which are in the custody of Valeria Long, owner of the shop Longevity Antiques here in Brewton. Frances Robb, who is an art historian specializing in historical photographs, looked at the photographs in *Echoes*.

Frances has given us permission to publish her comments on these photographs, a discussion which gives the interesting early history of enlargement photographs.

What amazing photographs! Thanks for sending me the pdf that includes them. Here are a few of my thoughts. Could you please forward them to M. Long? Thanks. Frances

Ms. Long is absolutely correct. They are charcoal "enhancements" atop a palely printed enlargement photograph. They are, in other words, photographically based portraits, based on smaller photographs, sometimes made at the time of the enlargement, sometimes years earlier. They became popular in the late 19th century when electric-light enlargers were available in local photographers' studios and in distant "enlargement houses."

The latter were serviced by salesmen who went up and down streets and country roads soliciting business. They would take orders, receive the money and the small photograph that would be the basis of the enlargement, and write down the order, including the customers' preferences for the frame and for the enhancements, which might be a few touches of pencil, covering the photograph with charcoal, or colored pastel crayons, or even coloring the surface with oil paints.



**Valeria Long Is Shown with Two of the Photograph/Portraits. Above Are the Three "Mystery" Photographs.**



The small portrait would be taken to the enlargement operation, enlarged, and charcoaled or colored by hand (usually by young ladies; this was a respectable job for a young woman). Then it would be returned to the buyer. Sometimes only one photograph was made from the smaller one; sometimes several, depending on the family, its wishes, and what it could afford.

The frames for these images are usually ornamented with plaster of Paris decoration, which gets very brittle with age and breaks away. This has happened to these images. Too, the paper the enlargement is printed on gets very brittle with age as well, especially if the cover glass on the frame is lost. And the portraits are large, to hang over the mantel or on the wall; as time passed and other things replaced them, they were often stuck into closets or beneath beds, and of course were damaged there.

Enlargement portraits were popular until the Great Depression. The first mystery picture (woman and child) can be dated to 1915 to the early 1920s; the simplicity of the frame helps support this date. The others are a bit more ornate, especially the portrait of the man. I believe that it may date from about

1919 or so, although the tie the man wears is a bit old-fashioned for that date, suggesting that he was a man of very conservative taste or the enlargement portrait is based on a portrait of him taken at an earlier date.

The portrait of the woman, the most speaking likeness of the three (a speaking likeness is one that seems to authentic that the person depicted might be just about to speak to the viewer), looks to have been made about 1918-1920. The severe suit and necktie, and the brimmed hat were popular during WWI, and

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# The Mystery Photos Are Enlargement Photographs/Portraits

(Continued from page 7)

stayed popular among older women, who did not update their best clothes every year, into the mid-1920s and even after.

Ms. Long is exceptionally fortunate to have these interesting portraits. They show that black Alabamians who could afford such luxuries were willing to pay for them, and that these individuals were moving into the general culture from which they had, in the previous century, been excluded.

Ms. Long is right in thinking that we may never

know the identities of these people and never know their stories, but what we do know about enlargement portraits suggests that they often marked a special occasion: a major birthday or anniversary, or a death. Perhaps their publication will turn up someone who can identify them and tell us about them. Meantime, they have found a dedicated custodian. Thanks, Ms. Long!

*A Final note: Frances Robb has a new book that should be out later in the fall of 2016 entitled, Shot in Alabama: A Photographic History and Photographers Checklist 1839-1941. €*

## Snapshots from the August 2015 ECHS Meeting



**Left to Right, Sally Finlay, Darryl Searcy, and Larry Manning. The picture is one that Larry painted for Darryl when Larry was an art instructor at JDCC.**

**Darryl has donated the picture to ECHS.**



**Larry Manning and Debra Sims in Front of Debra's Grandmother's (Bernice Sims) Pointing of a Farm Scene, the first Painting Bernice Did for Larry When She Took His Art Class at JDCC.**



**Judy Purnell Enjoying the Gallery of Art by Bernice Sims and Other "Outsider" Artists which Larry Manning Brought for his Presentation at the August Meeting.**



## Snapshots from the August 2015 ECHS Meeting *(Continued)*



**Debra Sims, oldest of Bernice Sim's Grandchildren Spoke about Her Grandmother's Influence on Her.**



**Bernice Sims Picture Owned by Larry Manning. At Larry's Request, Bernice Added to this Picture of Downtown Brewton the Figures of Herself and Her Six Children in the Upper Right Hand Corner.**



**Enjoying Refreshments in the Elvira McMillan Parlor.**

## Snapshots from the August 2015 ECHS Meeting *(Continued)*



**Thad Moore Spoke About the Bernice Paintings Which He Owns and Exhibited at the Meeting.**

**The Bright Colors and Active Figures in Her Paintings Brighten Any Setting.**



**Thad Moore's Mailbox Bernice Painted for Him.**

**Larry Manning Brought the Hat Made of Plastic Bags Shown on the Left as well as the Table on the Right.**



**More of Larry Manning's Collection of Outsider Art.**

**Larry Commented that If You Want To Be Remembered As An Artist Pick a Great Name to Sign on Your Pictures, such as "Cornbread," the Signature on the Picture on the Bottom.**



**More of Larry Manning's Collection of Bernice Sim's Art.**



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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Recollections of My Boyhood in Brewton, Alabama (1880-1896)

By Robert Colley Granberry

### Events Recalled (Continued)

*Mr. Granberry says that he recalls two trying experiences from his first sixteen years. He has just told the story of one event, being bitten by a rattlesnake and being very ill as a result. Now he relates the final event in this section of "Events Recalled."*

The other trying experience which came my way was in 1893. Shortly after school closed, I came in contact with poison ivy. This poison got into my face and into my hair, as well as in my hands. I had a very thorough dose of the poisonous substance. My sister, however, gave me undivided attention. During those days when I was shut in because of being poisoned, she prepared a set of ninety-nine questions on English history. I had studied that course during the previous year, and I was told that if I could pass an examination on those ninety-nine questions, I would pass the school work for the year. Since I had to stay in the house anyway, I did not mind so much studying those questions.

### Persons Remembered

As I look back upon the first fifteen years of my life, in addition to the leading citizens, whose names I have previously recorded, and the pastors, and the teachers, it is strange how certain persons impressed themselves upon me.

I can see now the fish man. His name was George Mantel. He lived out of town toward the river, and brought strings of fish into Brewton, and, walking up and down the streets, disposed of his fish to housewives. George Mantel gave his entire time to fishing. I understood in later years that he did very well financially. He was quite a picturesque character. George frequently wore no shoes, - in fact, that was his customary appearance.

Aunt Jane Travis was a colored woman who ran a little fish place next to the railway station. Aunt Jane was not very tall, but exceedingly wide. She was a real person. No one knew her by anything other than "Aunt Jane." She was as black as black can be, spoke in very loud tones, and called everybody "honey." Aunt Jane was proud of her position as the best firefighter in town. She could pour more buckets of

water on a fire than any other person in the community, white or black. Everyone liked Aunt Jane and regarded her with something of affection. She was devoted to everybody who lived in town.

Another Negro who spent his life in Brewton and who was a familiar figure was Kit Smith. He was the town barber. Kit was interested in everybody and in everything. He knew all about the various families, and looked upon himself as Aunt Jane did, as a "leading" citizen. Both Aunt Jane and Kit have been dead for decades.

I was greatly impressed late one afternoon as I sat on the back steps of our house by a conversation between my father and a Negro man in overalls. It soon developed that the Negro was a detective secured from an agency in Birmingham. Every few nights some house in Brewton had been robbed, and no one was able to catch the thieves. Father secured this Negro detective who came into Brewton as a wandering carpenter. As they sat on the back steps and planned the campaign to catch the thieves, my eyes became large and my heart beat fast as I realized that I was in the presence of an actual, living detective. It was a thrilling moment.

Well, the plans must have been good. The Negro detective evidently knew how to work, for within three weeks he had been taken in as a member of the gang of eight thieves. When he knew their plans for a robbery on a given night, he revealed these plans, and the authorities had do difficulty in capturing the entire outfit with the stolen goods on them.

Railroad Bill became as famous in south Alabama and northern Florida as did Jesse James in a wider area. Railroad bill was a Negro who was most daring; he would not stop at murder when cornered. For about three years he terrorized that section of the country. Not only did the state government take cognizance of his activities, but the federal government also gave assistance. This man's specialty was in robbing freight trains; this activity is why he was called "Railroad." He had all of the Negroes throughout several counties so afraid of him that they would never report his whereabouts even though they knew. In a small way, Railroad Bill was an Al Capone.

On many occasions, when law-enforcing officers would hear that he was in a certain section,

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Recollections of My Boyhood in Brewton, Alabama (1880-1896)

(Continued from page 12)

companies of men would be organized in an endeavor to surround and capture him. But he usually escaped. His name became a byword in all the homes, and in every section of at least a dozen counties.

One of the finest men ever produced in Escambia county was Mr. McMillan, the sheriff. The sheriff heard of a location where this desperado was hiding. But Railroad bill saw Mr. McMillan first, and in 1895 killed the sheriff of Escambia. "Railroad" was not killed until 1896. The account of his escapades, as well as of the death of the desperado, was carried in the press of the nation. I went to see this dead Negro as he lay "in state" in Brewton. The death of Sheriff McMillan occasioned great sorrow in Escambia County.

### Adult Social Life

There was no active news organ in Brewton during a part of my boyhood day. A town paper was begun in 1882. by the name of The Blade. It lasted for about a year. The Banner was begun in July of 1883, and continued for a brief period. In 1885, The Times saw the light of day, and in 1887, The Standard Gauge. All of these were weekly, four-page papers, subscription price one dollar per year. I think it was in the early nineties that The Pine Belt News was launched. Brewton never has had anything other than a weekly paper. The established paper at present is The Standard Gauge. It is well arranged, ordered, and edited.

*Note: The Recollections was written in 1946.*

And so, in a general way, there was no active news agency to make much of social events. But there was a decided adult social life at that time. The years between 1880-96 was the era of the checkered vests, heavy watch chains, large signet rings, horse-drawn buggies, and of the manifold skirts.

There were gatherings of families and church socials; there were fish fries, baseball games, and picnics. During the patriotic celebrations considerable drinking was in evidence. Traveling from town to town was by railroad and it was, therefore not frequently done

Of course, a small boy in such a town does not know much of the adult social life, and has only a general impression of what is going on.

### A Recent Visit

Recently I returned to Brewton for a brief visit. It was my privilege to be in the town from October 7-12, 1946. It was fifty years since I had left the community. It was an unforgettable experience—this return to Brewton, —in many ways.

Multitudinous were the changes to be noted. Brewton has a population now of around 7,500. It is a well-ordered city, with lovely homes, progressive churches, good schools, three banks, and an active Chamber of Commerce.

The descendants of the early and original families of Brewton are among the constructive and useful leaders. But most of the faces, and so many of the names were entirely new. The Brewton of the now (1946) is a place of great contrast to the Brewton of the then (1880).

But not all has changed in the half-hundred years. The railroad is in the same spot. The caboose on the Louisville and Nashville freight trains has not been altered during the decades. The whistle of the trains on the trestle below the town as it approaches the community is the same. The south Alabama sun is warm as it was then, and the evening breeze is cool and clean as it was in the yester-years. And one finds that in the stores and on the streets there is the same friendliness and the same cordial courtesy.

Brewton was a good place in which to be born; a good place in which to live now is Brewton. €

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Alabama's Great Seals



**The Seal was Designed in 1817, Adopted in 1819, Revised in 1868, and the Original was Restored in 1939**

*The following article is taken from the Website e Reference Desk:*

"Alabama, unlike most other states, has a seal that is significantly different from its coat of arms. The current seal had been used prior to 1868 but was then replaced with another design. The original seal was readopted by law in 1939. It bears a map of the state with all of its principal rivers clearly drawn.

"This seal celebrates the importance of Alabama's river systems in its history. Around the edge of the seal are the words "Alabama" and "Great Seal."

"In 1817, William Wyatt Bibb, the governor of the Alabama Territory and the subsequent first Governor of the state, realized he needed an official seal for his commissions and other state papers.

"With permission of President James Monroe and a law adopted by Congress, the territorial governor was authorized to select a design for a seal. Governor Bibb believed the best seal would be a map of the territory showing its rivers. It also showed the territories (now states) surrounding it. The map was shown affixed to a living tree, with no motto.

"By 1819, when Alabama became a state, the territorial seal was designated by the first legislature as the state seal. The state seal remained unchanged for 50 years" (<http://www.ereferencedesk.com/resources/state-seal/alabama.html>).



**Alabama Seal of 1868**

*This article on the Seal of 1868 is also taken from the e Reference Desk:*

"During the Reconstruction period, a Republican-dominated legislature had a new seal made. The design was replaced with a new seal on December 29, 1868. The law describes the design thus:

*The seal is in the form of a circle, and two and a quarter inches in diameter; near the edge is the word 'ALABAMA' and opposite, at the same distance from the edge, are the words 'GREAT SEAL.' In the center of the seal an eagle is represented with raised wings alighting upon the national shield, with three arrows in his left talon. The eagle holds in his beak a streamer, on which immediately over the wings are the words 'HERE WE REST.' The crest-word, which give name to the State, signifies "The land of rest." This seal was used for 71 years to authenticate official documents and letterhead.*

"This design is still used by the Alabama Department of Labor.

"In 1939, a bill was introduced by the legislature to restore the original seal as the Great Seal of Alabama. When the bill came up, it was approved unanimously by the Senate and the House. Governor Frank M. Dixon approved the new law and the Secretary of State had a new Great Seal created. Act no. 20.

"In 1939, at the request of Governor Frank M. Dixon, the original concept of a map design was returned to use. The new seal was adopted during a special

*(Continued on page 15)*



# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Alabama's Great Seals

(Continued from page 14)

session called by the Governor. The design was described as follows:

*The seal shall be circular, and the diameter thereof two and a quarter inches; near the edge of the circle shall be the word "Alabama," and opposite this word, at the same distance from the edge, shall be the words, "Great Seal." In the center of the seal there shall be a representation of a map of the state with its*

*principal rivers. The seal shall be called the "Great Seal of the State of Alabama." The seal shall be kept and used as required by the Constitution and laws.*

"The use of stars in the border, the specific design of the letterforms and the map image, the labeling of adjacent states and the Gulf of Mexico, and the application of colors to the seal are not described in the law (<http://www.ereferencedesk.com/resources/state-seal/alabama.html>). €

## Moritz Furst: Crafter of the First Alabama State Seal

*The following article is taken from a website called dbpedia:*

"Furst was an American artist of Jewish-Slovak origin. He was born in Pezinok, near Bratislava, and died in Philadelphia.

"Prior to immigrating, he was enlisted by the American consul at Livorno, Italy, in 1807, and came to the United States to work as an engraver. In 1808 he settled in Philadelphia, where he set up business as a seal and steel engraver and die-sinker.

"He was subsequently employed by the United States Mint in Philadelphia and soon received recognition as an early American medalist. Thirty-three of his patriotic commemoratives and portraits, including his best-known work which honored heroes of the War of 1812, are still issued by the U.S. Mint.

"He struck the official portraits of Presidents James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren. He also executed the first recorded American Jewish medal, to commemorate the death in 1816 of the patriot and religious leader Gershom Seixas" ([http://dbpedia.org/page/Moritz\\_Fuerst](http://dbpedia.org/page/Moritz_Fuerst)).

In his article on the first state seal and its status until recently as an "invisible map," David Robb says of Furst that he, "deserves recognition among the major shapers of Alabama's public image," pointing out that his 1818 seal inspired the current Great Seal of the State. Also Furst's 1818 seal contains the only known map made by him (*Alabama Heritage*, Fall 2014). €



**Furst Designed the medal celebrating Andrew Jackson's Victory at the Battle of New Orleans.**

*Images of Medal  
Courtesy of Heritage  
Auctions*

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

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