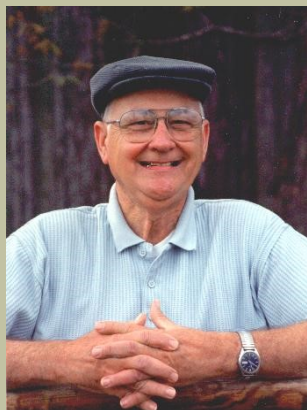


The February Meeting Tuesday, February 23, 2016 3:00 p. m. The McMillan Museum

The Program: "Why, Where, Challenges, People," A Recap of the Pharmaceutical Sponsored Expeditions to the Tropical Rainforests, Presented by Darryl Searcy



Darryl

I am honored to be your speaker at the February program. I intend to show a series of images that will tell a story about where we've been, why we went there, some of the challenges we faced, and to introduce you to a few of the people we met along the way. Without the trust of important decision makers at the chief pharmaceutical companies and their willingness to take a chance on proven, or unproven, jungle plant knowledge of people who have actually lived and performed research in the pharmacological gardens of the world, none of this program would be possible.

As we made way to embark on the first expedition, it was decided that the major universities of this country would be invited to recruit field workers who would accompany the lead scientist. In addition to gaining field knowledge, the recruits would receive graduate credits. The application response was overwhelming.

The research based pharmaceutical companies sponsored and sent out expedition groups to the 10 major rainforests of the world for the sole purpose of locating the source of former plant collections, and to analyze related specimens in order to discover new and better uses for the knowledge already in hand. Environmental changes dictate that plants, like animals, must adapt to

(Continued on page 2)

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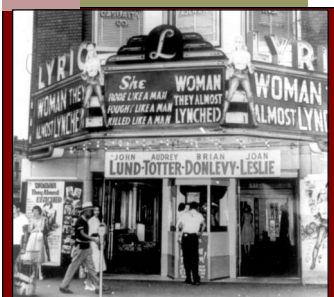
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The March 22, 2016 Program "Show and Tell"

A Correction: In the January 2016 ECHOES, Dr. Elizabeth Benchley was incorrectly identified as Dr. Judy Bense, President of the University of West Florida. Dr. Benchley's picture and her position at the University of West Florida are given below. Our apologies to Dr. Benchley and Dr. Bense.



Dr. Elizabeth D. Benchley is director of the Division of Anthropology and Archaeology and of the Archaeology Institute at the University of West Florida.



Birmingham's Lyric
Theatre in 1953

Volume 43 Number 2

February 2016

The Program (Continued)

(Continued from page 1)

these changes and the pharmaceutical companies needed to know what effect those changes have had on the chemical makeup of its original source. Comparative studies would be made of new collections with those collected a century ago to test the changes that have taken place over that span. My particular

group, therefore, visited the Amazonia seven times during the past 12 years in partnership with the Exploro-Napo research stations located in the state of Loreto Iquitos, Peru.

Other major rainforests that we visited over the same time period and beyond are located in Ecuador, Bolivia, Central America, Spain, North America, India, Madagascar, Malaysia, the Central African Congo/Cameroon, and Nigeria.

The purpose of the expeditions was to harvest fresh specimens of plants that were originally taken and studied whereby useful products had already been developed. Because of environmental, climate and nutrient changes, as well as the rapid disappearance of rainforest due to slash and burn agriculture, it was and is essential that the pharmaceutical companies know and update vital research records while the original source is attainable. Our job was to locate those sources using known coordinates and information collected by previous generations.

Human life and knowledge of preserving the rainforests are ongoing concerns, which must have come into being almost simultaneously. All known cultures of the past - Egyptian, Babylonian, Jewish, Chinese, and Indian had their own useful systems of medicine and health care. According to the ancient Books of Knowledge, health is considered a prerequisite for achieving supreme ends. The preventive and



**Research Field Team and Guides at ExploroNapo
L-R Juan Torres Gomez, Pedro Lopez, David Maceira,
Yosvanis Batista**

curative aspects of disease are important components of this concept. It was our job therefore to locate and collect the source and harvest new specimens so the laboratory scientists may analyze and compare the old with the new as a changing world surely dictates a change in extract makeup.

Ancient systems predominantly used plant based

raw materials in most of their preparations and formulations. Modern pharmacopoeia contain at least 25% of their drug makeup from plant extracts that are duplicated under laboratory conditions. These are then followed by many others which are synthetic analogues based on prototype compounds isolated from the plants.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 80% of the population of developing countries relies on traditional medicine, which is mostly plant drugs, for their primary healthcare needs. Medicinal plants are for the greater part natural and have few harmful side effects. Most are safe and have proven cost effective for the preventive and curative therapies that are essential in achieving the goal of "good health for all."

The demand for medicinal plants is increasing in both developing and developed countries and 90% of these plants are harvested from wild sources without applying scientific management. Hence, many species are under threat to become extinct. Medicinal plants occupied an important position in the socio-cultural, spiritual and medicinal arena of rural people throughout the world. Their sustainable management and harvesting can conserve biodiversity, sustain human and environmental health, generate employment and enhance the export of good health to the world.

(Continued on page 3)

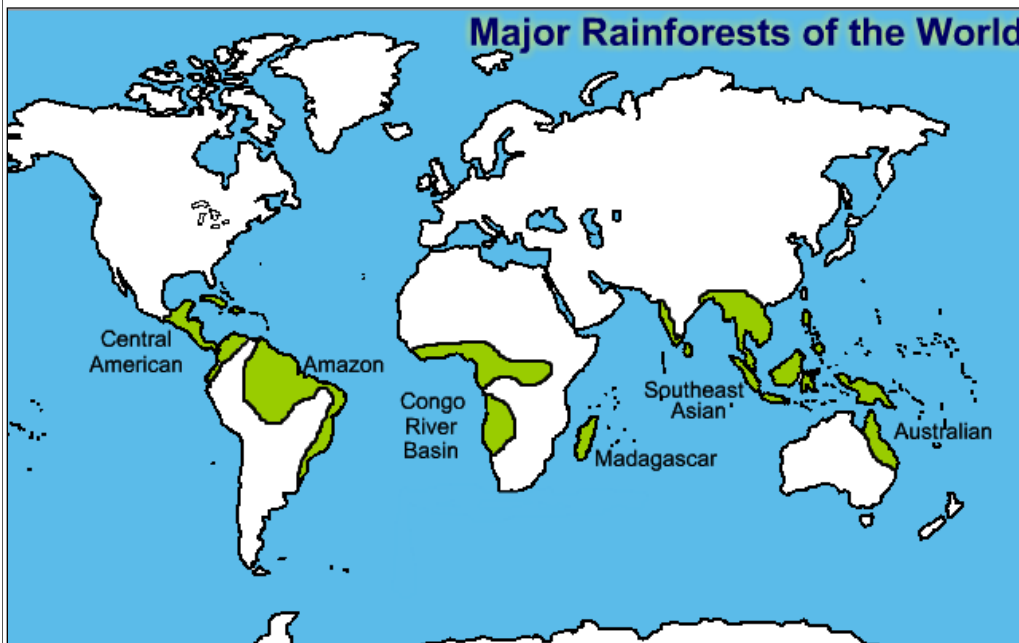
The Program (Continued)

(Continued from page 2)

There are about 7,480 drug manufacturing units throughout the Americas and Asia, all keeping in mind the growing demand for plant based drugs and cosmetics in domestic and international markets. There has always been a great need to have good quality plant based medicines, and to ensure the quality, there is also a growing need for public test houses as well as statutory drug testing laboratories. Presently there are just a handful of laboratories in this country that can perform the few

basic tests needed. In order to assure that quality medicines reach the consumer, it is necessary to set up testing laboratories that are capable of renovating and upgrading old supplies that can be intergraded into new and fresh material.

Having said and written these noble sentences, it will be my purpose to reflect with you a few of the collections and allow you to relive journeys into often dangerous territories in search of medicinal plant specimens that have proven vital to overall good world health care. €



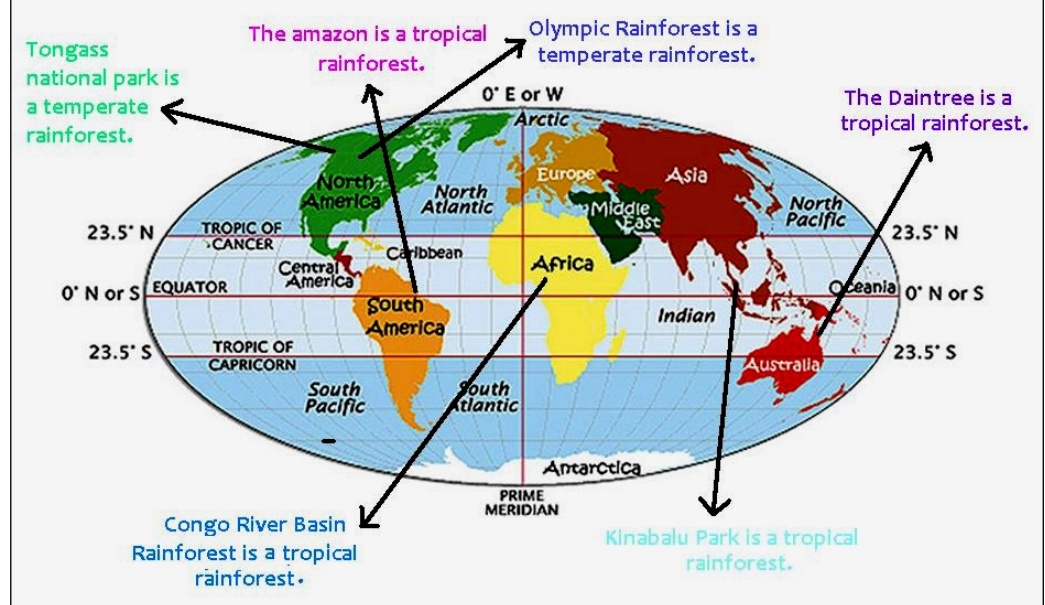
All map illustrations are from Google Images.

The label in the lower right corner of the map below is hard to read.

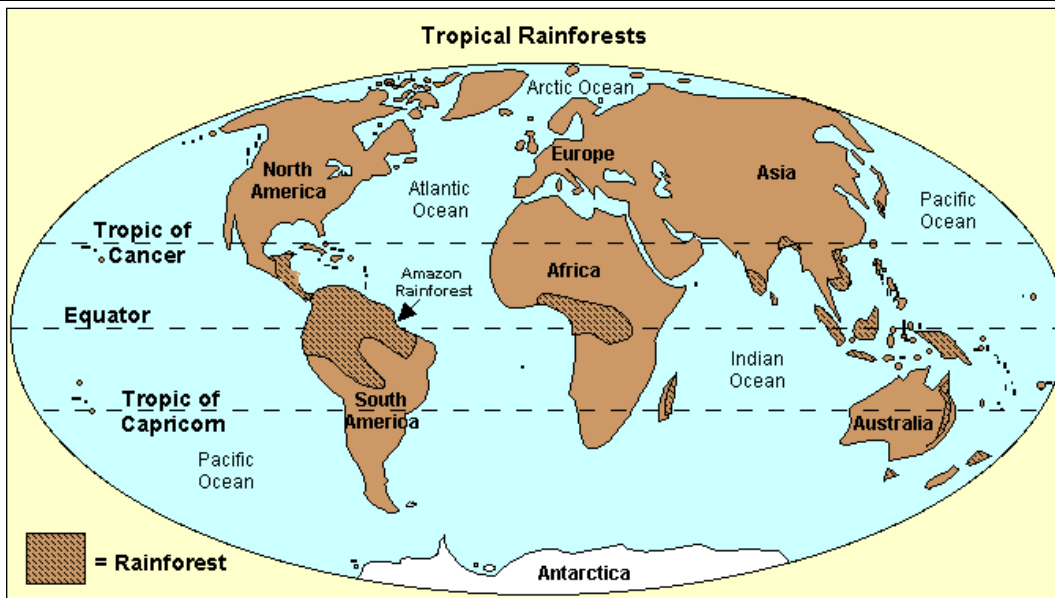
It states "Kinabalu Park is a tropical rainforest."

The concept of mapping the Earth using two sets of parallel lines, one running from north to south and the other from east to west, was first utilized by the Greek Eratosthenes.

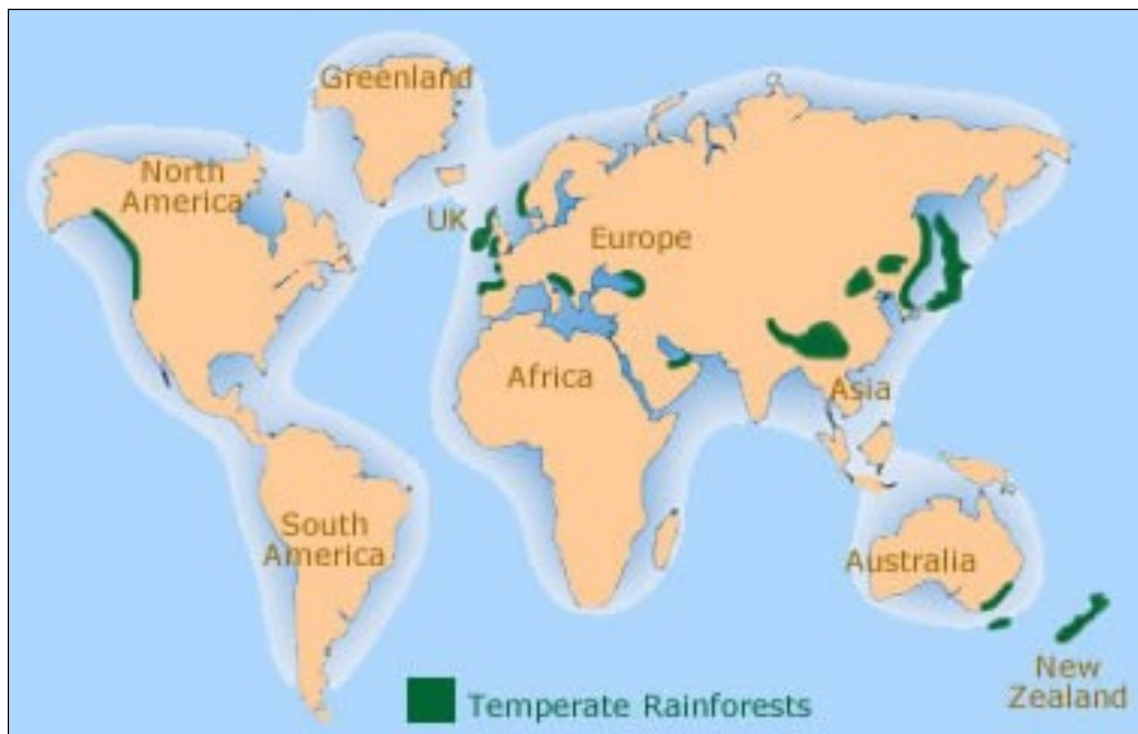
Hipparchus, another Greek, was the first to use these lines as coordinates for specific locations.



The Program (Continued)



Both Tropical and Temperate Rainforests receive large amounts of rain but Temperate Rainforests have cooler temperatures. Tropical Rainforests are found in the area between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, as shown on the map to the left.



Wikipedia defines Temperate Rainforests as coniferous or broadleaf forests that occur in the temperate zone and receive heavy rainfall. Temperate Rainforests are found along the Pacific coast of the USA and Canada (from northern California to Alaska), in New Zealand, Tasmania, Chile, the United Kingdom and Norway.

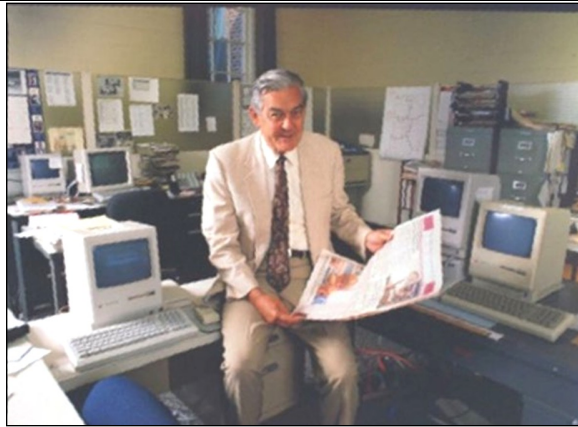
In the U. S. temperate rain forests are also found in parts of the southern Appalachians. The largest of these forest blocks in the Appalachians are located in western North Carolina, northern Georgia and western Tennessee. These include the Chattahoochee National Forests and nearby Gorges State Park. In addition, small areas in the highest elevations of the Great Smoky Mountains also receive substantial rainfall.

William Emmett “Bill” Brooks

A recent email from ECHS member Ed Williams, notified the society that Bill Brooks, Brewton native and distinguished newsman, had died.

A distinguished newsman himself (former editor of the Brewton Standard, professor of journalism at Auburn University and advisor for the award winning Auburn Plainsman), Ed’s note reminded us that Bill Brooks had been important to Brewton in his role as newspaper editor-publisher as well as radio owner.

Beginning his career as a newsman with the Brewton Standard, Bill worked for his father W. Emmett Brooks who had bought the Standard in 1920. In his email about the death of Bill Brooks, Ed Williams noted that he had worked for the Brewton Standard with Bill Brooks as his editor and mentor.



William E. Brooks Jr. is surrounded by MacIntosh computers in the newsroom of the Vincennes Sun-Commercial.

Under his guidance and vision Indiana's oldest newspaper was the first in the nation to produce its news product on Macs.

Picture and text courtesy of the Santiva Chronicle <<http://santivachronicle.com/Content/Op-Ed/Op-Ed/Article/SANTIVA-TODAY-A-Tribute-to-Mr-Brooks/12/33/4180>>.

In 1947, father and son, Emmett Brooks and Bill, established Brewton’s radio station, WEBJ. (See the Jan. 2011 ed. of ECHOES, as well as the article at the bottom of this page for more about the development of WEBJ.) It was distinguished as a radio station for a small town in that it broadcast daily bringing local and national news to rural areas every day rather than a few days a week.

In 1958, Emmett Brooks sold both the Brewton Standard and WEBJ. Bill moved to Indianapolis where he had accepted the position of editorial writer with the Indianapolis Star.

In 1964, he accepted a promotion, to become managing editor at the Vincennes Sun-

Commercial, the oldest newspaper in the state.

In a tribute to Bill Brooks in the newspaper the

(Continued on page 6)

Radio Station WEBJ

ECHS received correspondence from Bill Brooks in 2011 when he sent an email concerning an article that had appeared in the January 2011 ECHOES on the history of Brewton Radio Station WEBJ.

He wrote the email to explain the contribution of T. R. Miller Mill Co. and John Richard Miller to the development of WEBJ. Mr. Brooks email:

The contribution of T. R. Miller Mill Co, as a corporation, and John Richard Miller, personally, to the creation and success of radio station WEBJ should be acknowledged publicly.

In a casual conversation after both of us returned after service in World War II, John Richard asked me, “Why don’t you start a radio station for Brewton?”

I took the idea to my father, W. Emmett Brooks. He formed Brewton Broadcasting Co. as President, and was kind enough to make me Vice President and minority stock holder.

A consulting Radio Engineer was retained to find a site. He chose vacant land owned by the mill company not far from its Creosote Plant. To my knowledge, a nominal lease was negotiated and the station was built in the flat between Murder Creek and a branch running into that stream.

Without the encouragement and direct help from T. R. Miller Mill Company, establishing WEBJ would have been more difficult.

One other note concerns the station’s call sign. It contains both my father’s and my initials. When he filed application with the Federal Communications Commission for license to operate, he did not specify a call sign. Some unknown FCC official sent back approval of the License for Radio Station WEBJ [for William E. Brooks, Jr.].

Thank you for your recent coverage.

Note: Mr. Brooks responded to the article on WEBJ not only with this information but he also sent a check and joined ECHS. His father, W. Emmett Brooks, was a Charter Member of ECHS. €

William Emmett “Bill” Brooks

(Continued from page 5)

Santiva Chronicle, editor Davis Staver, who worked for Bill Brooks at the Sun-Commercial, described him as an exemplary newsman:

“William E. Brooks Jr. was a true Southern gentleman from Brewton, Ala., who made his way north with his Southern drawl to Indiana because he was also a good newspaper man

“The real importance of Mr. Brooks – I could never bring myself to call him anything but Mr. Brooks although he asked me to call him Bill – came in the newsroom of the Vincennes Sun-Commercial. He was a hard news man who fought for open door laws and against local political nepotism. He read the

paper and made his writers better. Watching him pen a sharp, focused editorial in a matter of minutes was a sight to behold. He showed me through example how to be a solid reporter. Being in the newsroom with him was worth all the classes any aspiring journalist could take” (<http://santivachronicle.com/Content/Op-Ed/Op-Ed/Article/SANTIVA-TODAY-A-Tribute-to-Mr-Brooks/12/33/4180>)

Davis Staver, is currently the editor of the Santiva Chronicle, a newspaper covering the islands of Captiva and Sanibel which are located near Fort Myers, Florida.

Bill Brooks passed away in 2015 in Gulf Breeze, Florida, where he had lived after retiring. €

New Exhibits in the McMillan Museum

Antique toys, part of the collection of the late Gerald F. Stewart from North Carolina, are now on display in the McMillan Museum. They are on loan to the Museum.

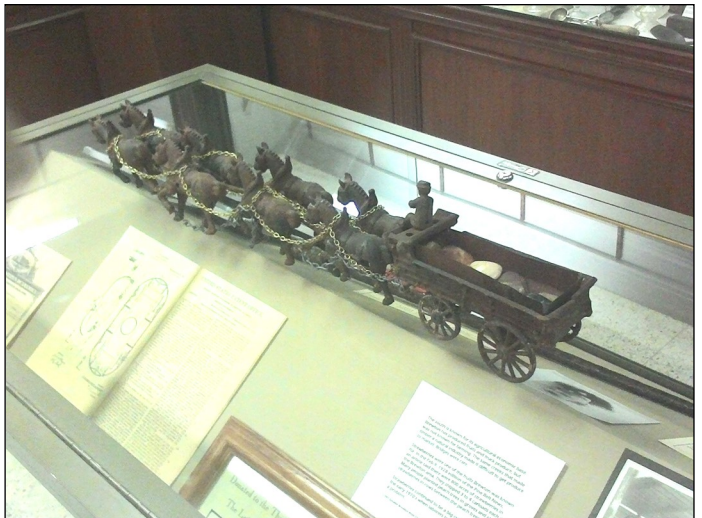


The Police Patrol
Museum Coordinator Don Sales has appropriately placed the patrol over the Criminal Record for Escambia County, open pages of the ledger are below.

Wagon Hauling Supplies
To the right, one of four depictions of Wagons in the collection: the Police Patrol, Two Hook and Ladder or Fire Petrol Wagons, and this Haulage Wagon.



The Train
It circles the barn in an exhibit, a farm with house and outbuildings that has previously been donated to the Museum.



New Exhibits in the McMillan Museum (Continued)

Hook and Ladder Here comes the fire department.



To the right, both Hook and Ladders or Fire Patrol Wagons race toward the viewer. Above and below are the Individual Fire Patrols.

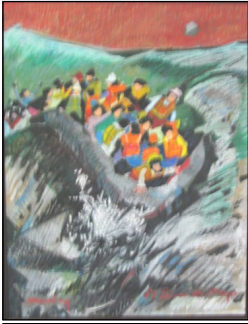
To the right, below, the Haulage Wagon with Eight Horses is shown again



According to his notes, Mr. Stewart used 3000 flat toothpicks, a bed sheet, paint, glue, 1/4 inch display glass, silicone glue, and an oak base to make the ship shown at the left.

The 3 mast ship has sail, jib sheet, and crows nest, 3 decks with passenger ways, 2 cabins, a captain's cabin (furnished), crew quarters, 2 cargo holds, ladders for each deck, and 24 guns which are 1/2 inch in size.

News and Announcements



One of the paintings.

Art Exhibit On Display in the McMillan Museum

"Refugee," an exhibit of paintings by Larry Manning, former art instructor at JDCC, is now on view in the ECHS meeting room. The exhibit will remain throughout February.

Christ of Latter-day Saints. Registration will start at 8:30 a.m. in the Cultural Hall inside the church.

The program will start at 9:00. The workshop will relocate after lunch to the historic Friendship United Methodist Church Cemetery not too far from the church

For more information see the ACPA's website home page at: <http://www.alabama-cemetery-preservation.com/>.

Monroe County Heritage Museum Annual Genealogy Workshop Set for Saturday, March 19, 2016

Tentative plans are for the workshop to start at 8:00 a. m., ending around 3:00 p. m. More details to come.

Amtrak Inspection Train Stops in Atmore

As a part of getting Amtrak service restored in Atmore, the community planned a "community event" for the Inspection Train's brief stop in Atmore on Thursday afternoon (February 18, 2016). Jerry Gehman, head of the city's initiative for the Amtrak visit, described plans for the effort as "a good all-American, small town event."

Participating in the brief stop by Amtrak were the Escambia County High Jazz Band, Poarch Creek Indian Princesses, Northview High School ROTC, Chamber Ambassadors, and veterans.

Source <http://www.atmorenews.com/2016/02/10/amtrak-event-planned/>.



Harper Lee in 2007

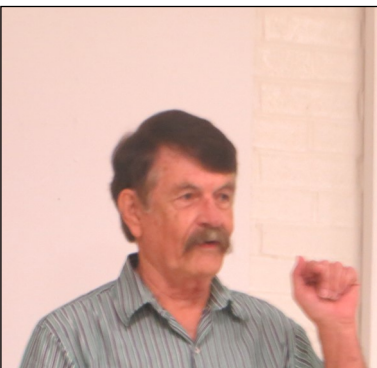
For the First Time To Kill a Mockingbird Coming to Broadway

Producer Scott Rudin has acquired stage adaptation rights for To Kill a Mockingbird and has hired the screenwriter Aaron Sorkin to adapt the story.

15th Annual Alabama Cemetery Preservation Workshop Planned for April

The Workshop will be conducted on Saturday, April 30, 2016 in Gardendale at The Church of Jesus

Snapshots of the January 2016 ECHS Meeting



Snapshots of the January 2016 ECHS Meeting



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The ECHS *Journal* Section

Cracklin Cooking Time! Anybody Want to Sample A Cracklin?

By Darryl Searcy

There are two places in this world where perfect cracklins abound -- the Ozarks and in rural southern kitchens from Georgia to Louisiana.

I remember well the first shot I had at making cracklin (cracklings). I had retired and decided to make my home in south Alabama near a younger brother and an older sister. Every year my brother, Shelby (Shell), leased a sizeable property of "hunting land" from a lady that lived up near Burnt Corn. When the weather turned cool following the first frost, he knew that his good friend in Conecuh would be planning for just the right time to butcher her fattened pigs.

Butchering time was a special event and the entire neighborhood came a-calling to help preserve all the good stuff in brine or wrapped for the freezer. There was grinding and seasoning sausage meat and stuffing it in natural chitterling casings, and, Lord help us, cutting strips of fat that came off the back and belly portion of the porker with lots and lots of skin. These strips were cleaned, cut into small pieces and set aside for later rendering into cracklins and jar up-on jar of pure lard.

Sometimes the ground and spiced meat was shaped into patties and dropped in the hot lard just long enough to cook out any blood particles and these, too, were packed in the jars or crocks. Hot lard was poured over the partially cooked goodies, which would preserve the tasty treats for several months. The crocks and patties were let to cool overnight before sealing and storage in the smokehouse. Securely put away in such a manner ensured that the delicious breakfast treats would keep unspoiled through-



**"Travailler C'est Trop Dur"
A painting by Herb Row of four Cajun men
playing music and cooking "grattons" or
cracklin's at a "boucherie" or traditional
communal hog**

out the cold winter soon coming. Open a crock, take out a few patties, bake a few biscuits and the feast was on.

And now the second good part - rendering cracklins. Mind you, cracklins in the South are a special dish, so when you see a sign on the roadway that says "Fresh Cracklins" it's not a misspelling. Cracklins, or cracklings, whatever, was of no consequence, as you knew well what was coming down. Shell didn't always seek out a slaughterhouse to get his cracklin fat, he called on his friend and offered to help

with the butchering in exchange for a sack of fresh meat-laced fat that was "grade-A select" for making cracklins. If all else failed, whereby his take of fat was less than what he needed for a "good mess," he usually found decent cuts at the local grocery store butcher shop.

There was one occasion when he and I drove the distance to Breaux Bridge, Louisiana (300 miles) and bought up several coolers of meat from his friends at Babineaux's Slaughterhouse. Why go so far away for his product, you ask? Well, the butchers there knew him well and also knew precisely what honest folks wanted in their cracklins. Shell also knew that he would get exactly what he went for and with a near-to-nothing price.

We began with about 10 lbs. of raw fat (grade-A) and cut it to small chunks as needed to get the rendering expected. If the pieces didn't come pre-cut, no problem, we sliced our own. It doesn't have to be perfect, because when cooked the final size will be about one-half that of the raw pieces.

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

Cracklin Cooking Time! Anybody Want to Sample A Cracklin

(Continued from page 11)

The first thing we did was rig up a cutting table outside. The wood planks were scrubbed cleaned and scalded and a makeshift table was set up a considerable distance from the fire, as there is always a risk of instant blaze and grease burns during the cooking. We scrubbed and cleaned his large black-iron pot with vinegar (one time we used his turkey fryer) to remove all traces of soap and other deposits. To make “rendering” safer, we spaced the fire and pot a considerable distance from the prep table.

Hot grease is bound to splatter so some grass is going to die, and if luck holds, we should escape the process with zero burns. Nevertheless, our philosophy during these exciting times was “deal with it.” To stir the pot during the cooking, a large wooden ladle was needed. Not to worry, under the shed sat a johnboat with two perfectly good oars that proved to be ideal for the job. Later in this piece I will take you through the delightful steps of cooking off the perfect cracklins, but first, let’s enjoy a piece of history.

It is often said that nothing on the hog is wasted except the squeal. The bristly hairs are used for paintbrushes; the ears are used for dog treats (and people treats in some restaurants); the fat, called lard, is coveted by bakers for flaky pie crusts; pickled pigs feet are found in jars in bars and the smoked trotters are used for flavoring soups; cheeks are chic in Yankee hip restaurants; intestines (called chitterlings - a.k.a. chitlins), are an acquired taste in the South, but soul food for descendants of slaves; the fatty layer streaked with muscle beneath the skin is everybody’s favorite, that’s bacon; and the skins are used to make cracklins and rinds.

A side note about “chitlins” -- When we were kids back in the 30s and 40s (young’uns) there was a folk song that came out of Tennessee that went something like this: “When its chitlin cooking time in Cheatham County, I’ll be courting in those Cheatham County hills, and I’ll take a Cheatham County chitlin cooker for I’ve a longin that a mess of chitlin fills.” Need I dwell on saying that cooking chitlins and cracklins went hand-in-hand.

Pork skins and pork rinds are two names for the same thing, made from the skin of the hog. Called

baconettes in Cajun Country, “chicharrons” in Spanish, scratchings in England and in the good-ole USA we call them cracklins. The rinds are made by frying just the dried skin of the back or belly of the hog, no fat attached, until they get light, puffy, and crunchy, like giant rice crispies. Serve these delectable tidbits warm with a light dusting of dehydrated cheese and vinegar and its “slap ya mama time;” not the least bit greasy, which is probably why the 41st President, George H. W. Bush, preferred pork rinds over any other snack.

In 1998 our older brother, Therold (Ted), published his first novel, Remembered Names - Forgotten Faces (Xlibra Corp., Princeton, NJ), where an entire section of the book details the art of “hog killing” and how the various cuts of meat were handled in earlier times (pages 146-147). In part, he writes: “Several women spent time trimming fat from lean meat. They cut it in small pieces, and even used some bellies to cut into small cubes of fat rather than smoke-cure for bacon. Big buckets of fat cubes were put into Mandy’s black iron wash pot. A slow burning fire was set under the pot and it was cooked until the pot was full of hot lard and browned, crisp, meat that remained when the lard was cooked out. Someone stood at the pot at all times, stirring with a long-handled wooden paddle so the lard would not scorch. After cooking the lard was ready to be removed from the pot. The fire was raked away.

“A white cloth was tied over the top of a barrel. The crystal clear hot grease was taken from the wash pot by dipping with a long-handled water dipper, and poured onto the cloth. The lard went to the barrel, and the fried fat, or cracklings, was caught on the cloth. When the barrel was full, it was set aside to cool overnight, solidify into a white, slippery grease, and be capped with a wooden lid. The lard was used for frying meat, seasoning greens and other vegetables, and for making soap.

“The fried fat was dumped into white sacks, and later used as seasoning in greens and beans. Best of all, it was used all winter long when Mandy made her famous crackling bread. She mixed cracklings with corn, buttermilk, eggs, salt, soda and a little flour; dumped it into a hot skillet that had been coated with

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

Cracklin Cooking Time! Anybody Want to Sample a Cracklin?

(Continued from page 12)

lard; and baked it in a hot brick oven. The family wanted it daily back when the boys were home. The bread was eaten with vegetables, or crumbled into a bowl of milk to be eaten with a spoon, as one would do with mush.”

I suspect most of our northern friends are scratching their heads to this day to figure out exactly what bread is made in the southern kitchen that would call for a hefty “hand full” of cracklings. The bread is featured in the book To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee in which she emphasized that cracklin bread was Scout’s favorite snack. It was cooked for her by the family cook and was given to the child when she behaved well. The first time it appears is when Scout begins school for the first time and a fierce argument took place when she refused to wear a dress and make ready to join school society. In the book Scout proclaimed that it was not often that the cook made cracklin bread because she said she never had time, but with both children in school that day, making cracklin bread was an easy thing to do. Nevertheless, with Scout at school the cook decided to make amends in hopes of repairing the bond between them by making a cake of crackling bread.

For Shell and me, the art of cooking off pork rinds and fat was on a very small scale. We always started with a pound or so of store-bought lard - not Crisco, not Canola oil, not vegetable shortening ... lard. This was just right for the amount of product we expected to put in our cook pot. When the lard had melted, it was time to dump in the renderings. The reason we added hot lard at the beginning was so our raw product wouldn’t stick to the bottom and burn. We kept the fire low but would gradually increase the heat as the fat meat began to crackle. When doing this part we stood by the fire and pot, as constant stirring was necessary to prevent the soon-to-be cracklins from sticking to the bottom once the water had cooked out.

Shell was a mechanic by trade, so he had an old tripod that he used to hoist heavy equipment. He rigged up the tripod and hung the cookpot a few inches above the fire. When he dumped in the pound of lard he also threw in a cup of water. When the water and hot lard reached about 200° he added the meat. When

he thought the temperature had reached about 250° it was our job to put all effort into it to keep the heat at that level. This seemed to be about right to render the fat and not burn the oil. Too, the lower temperature also kept the frying pieces from sticking to the bottom of the pot. Now, we could sit back and enjoy a frosty beer - stay with it until all the bubbles stopped rising and popping - about an hour or more. Obviously, the more you cook the hotter the grease will get, so any real efforts were to continually stir the pot and keep the hot fire and coals raked back or forward so to maintain an even temperature of not more than 300°. One could smell that delicious meat cooking for miles and miles up and down Hickory Hollow.

Take out a few cracklins and put them on some paper towels or newspaper - shake them around a little. Let the cracklins cool for about 15 minutes and help yourself to one of the finest southern dishes imaginable.

Okay, so let’s say you want to make the skins pop up to a crunchy goodness. That’s easy but can be a burn hazard so be careful. Take all the cracklins out of the hot grease and remove a good amount of the hot lard, leaving just enough to float the cracklins you want to crunch up. Keep the kids at a safe distance and be sure you do this outside. Heat the oil back up to about 350°. Once the oil is up to temp put the cracklin back in and let them start to fry again. Now toss a few ice cubes into the grease. It’s going to roar and pop within about 3 seconds, so stand back. The ice makes the skin pop and softens it so it chews easier. Again, this is going to be a violent reaction when the ice is added, so stay clear!

The last thing you want is pork skins flying four feet in the air followed by plumes of hot grease that will burst into flame when they hit the fire. We had a few skins bounce onto the porch deck that drenched everything in hot oil. I had to don safety glasses and grill gloves, and when it was all done, we had to power wash the deck and fend off the dog at the same time. But, I can assure you the cracklins were good. This is not for the novice. Once all the crackle and pop settles down, continue to cook the cracklins for three to five minutes more and take them out to cool.

Put them in a pan with a new batch of newspaper

(Continued on page 14)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Cracklin Cooking Time! Anybody Want to Sample a Cracklin?

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and paper towels. Lightly season with a spicy mixture and move the pan around briskly to absorb the liquid fat. Put the crispy cracklins in a paper bag with paper towels and shake every few minutes. This will help get even more liquid fat out. Let cool to room temperature then put in a glass jar and close the lid. This preserves them quite well. Or, go ahead and hurt yourself, rear back in your chair and eat the whole batch.

Why are pigskins and barbecue so popular at football watching parties? As any fan will tell you, the green field on which the game is played on, marked with parallel white stripes, is called a gridiron. What he or she may not know is that a gridiron is an early name for the iron grate with parallel bars upon which meat is cooked over coals, hence the origin of the name.

And what is the central object of the game? A pigskin, of course. A fellow named Jeff White once wrote: "There's one thing you can be sure of though, a Southerner didn't create the football. Ya see, a football was originally made from a pig's bladder. If you're a Southerner, a pig's bladder ain't nothing but one step away from a chitlin'. Now technically a chitlin' is made from the stomach and intestines of a pig. I think we could've found something better to do with a pig's bladder than toss it around at family reunions." Besides, it was a worthless endeavor, as eventually the oval kick-about was made of cowhide. Riding on the pigskin pun, Rudolph Foods Co. is campaigning to make Super Bowl Sunday the National Pork Rind Appreciation Day, whereby consumers can cast their vote in support at VotePorkRinds.com. Rudolph's will donate 10¢ per vote to Wounded Warriors Family Support, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that provides support to the families of those who have been wounded, injured or killed during combat operations.

Clearly rinds are not health food, but Men's Health magazine recommends them as a smart snack. Rudolph Food tries to tout the health benefits of rinds by claiming that there are 0 carbs and 0 trans fats and 80 calories, 9 grams of protein, 10 mg cholesterol, 220 mg of sodium, and 5 mg of fat in a serving of

their product. Others will claim that 1 ounce of peanuts contains 14 grams of fat while pork rinds contain only 8, and 57% of the fat in pork rinds is monounsaturated oleic acid, the kind of "good fat" associated with olive oil. Another 13% of the fat content is stearic acid, a type of saturated fat that's considered harmless, because it doesn't raise cholesterol levels.

Don't be sucked in by all that - just pop one in your mouth and enjoy it for the moment.

Cracklins are deeply woven in Southern culture, especially among African American and Mexican immigrants. In Puerto Rico, Mexico, and the Philippines, they're "chicharrons con gasa". In New Orleans, they're called "grattons". Some may call their radically different crispy, salty, and crunchy chunks "gold nuggets," but no matter what you called these cousins of bacon, only chocolate is more decadent and "dope" more addictive than homemade cracklins. There is a big difference between store bought and the recipe used at our house in those days when "killing time" hung in the air like the sweet scent of summer magnolias.

Daddy's cracklins were a vast improvement over any home made cracklins recipe you'll find south of the Mason-Dixon. They were not traditional - just better. And here's why. They were not deep fried and they wouldn't break your teeth. As kids, the cooking seemed to us to take forever to come off the fire, but they were worth the wait.

To quote from my old local buddy, a self-proclaimed aficionado on southern cracklin bread. He often quoted some abstract label that said, "Make Cornbread, Not War." Now, I never made the connection between the two, but I was drawn to it because cracklin bread is a sacred thing in the South, almost a way of life, and like barbecue, can be the subject of great debate among Southerners; flour or no flour; sugar or no sugar; is there an egg or not? My friend could always tell bad cornbread from good because he was a cracklin bread snob and would not eat it if had been held in a warming drawer.

Based on that brief observation I'm going to follow the lead of my sister in that her cracklin bread has no flour and no sugar. It has the tang of good buttermilk and just a smidge of smokehouse bacon. To get it

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right you have to cook the bread in a black iron skillet just before you want to eat it, with plenty of smoking-hot lard. That is the secret to a golden, crunchy crust.

Practice makes perfect, which is probably why she, like all self-respecting Southern women, makes fresh bread (not necessarily cracklin bread) every single day. €

The Making of a Shaman (Medicine Man) Published by Feline Press, "Rainforest Ventures" Exploro-Napo Gainesville, Florida

The Ceiba Tree -- "abuelo," grand-father of the forest, "kapok, lupuna" -- is a giant in a forest of giants. Rising to 150 feet or more, it towers over the high forest canopy of the Amazon basin. Its trunk can grow to 18 feet in diameter, its great stabilizing buttresses might reach 30 or 40 feet out into the encroaching jungle. The locals say it possesses more spirits, has more power than any other tree. It was into the sheltering arms of a mighty ceiba that Antonio Montero Pisco's grandfather entrusted him when he was but nine years old.

The time was about 1950; the place, a small village along the Napo River in northern Peru. Antonio had been with his maternal grandparents since he was four, given to them by his parents to raise. Perhaps his family had grown too large, perhaps the grandparents needed care, or perhaps there was a special future for this child. His grandfather was a powerful medicine man, a Brujo, a Shaman, and it was in that direction that young Antonio would also be directed.

Antonio grew up much as any young boy in the jungle. He shared a thatched, stilted hut in the village of Kokama with his grandparents. He learned to paddle a dugout canoe, to make nets and to fish, to gather fruit and dig cassava, to tend chickens, to



Don Antonio Montero Pisco demonstrates the use of native plants as medicine and dye at ExploroNapo Research Station.

wield a machete, to know the forest plants and trees. And when he was nine, his grandfather took him to the ceiba tree and left him alone there for a month between its sheltering buttresses.

His instructions were to make a hole in the bark of the tree, put a calabash in the hole, plug the hole and wait eight days. At the end of that time, unplug the hole and eat the gelatinous sap that had collected there. Beyond that, keep a strict fast -- no fruit, no sugar, no salt, only a bit of

dried fish -- and talk to no one.

"During the thirty days I was in the jungle alone, I saw things I'd never seen and was frightened," he recalls with vivid gestures. "My grandfather said they were the spirits of the forest. I was so scared I cried, I tried to run away." He was beaten for this, and made to promise that he wouldn't run away any more. "It's tough being a Shaman," he says, a glint of humor in his dark eyes.

"The knowledge I have was sowed like seeds by my grandfathers," Don Antonio explains. "Later," he says, "I continued to learn from my elders (his other grandfather was also a shaman), but learned more from the plants themselves." He quietly learned the ways of the plants through his teens, at the same time taking the kind of jobs that gave young men of

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The Making of a Shaman (Medicine Man) **Published by Feline Press, "Rainforest Ventures" Exploro-Napo** **Gainesville, Florida**

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his generation a larger world. He worked as a bush-whacker for a rubber company, he went upriver to the city of Iquitos and worked as a baker. But always he came back to the jungle. In his early twenties, he became a practicing shaman.

Don Antonio Montero's recipe for ayahuasca includes the namesake plant and five other adjuncts, each of which he feels lends important synergy to the mixture. Some are used sparingly -- only two or three leaves -- while others might have as many as one hundred leaves included. If the dosages of the adjuncts are excessive, the mixture can "leave a person crazy." Ayahuasca is clearly a serious medicine, not a recreational drug.

The method is to pound five kilograms of ayahuasca stems and cook them in water in a clay pot for twelve hours. After they are boiled to a thick syrup, water is added and the mixture boiled down again. It is boiled three times in this fashion, with the adjunct plants added at appropriate times. The resulting liquid is dark brown and earthy, not bitter.

The recipe for "Anahuac" (a Quechua Indian word for "soul vine" or "spirit vine."). The plant is a sturdy vine that is best used after the age of eight or nine years. A mild infusion of the stems is used both by native farmers and city dwellers as a purge.

"Brugmansia aurea" (also known as Angel's Trumpet) is a potent member of the nightshade family. This plant contributes only two leaves to a typical ayahuasca mixture. It contains scopolamine, atropine, meteloidine, noratropine, and other strong alkaloids; even a leaf worn around the neck may cause one's eyes to dilate.

"Sacha ajo" -- Besides being an adjunct in the ayahuasca mixture, this garlicky-smelling plant, which has a depressive effect on the central nervous system, is used in amulets and magic rituals called "limpias," in which patients are bathed in a potion made from its extracts to cleanse them from bad luck. However, Don Antonio attributes good luck to this plant, as it has also been reported by two independent sources to have been effective in curing pancreatic cancer.

"Piper spp.", a plant which contains caffeine. Don Antonio calls this plant "guayusa," which is generally classified as *Ilex guayusa* (holly).

"Psychotria alba" -- Use a small amount of this emetic, which also contains the alkaloid dimethyl-tryptamine, to make the bitter ayahuasca beverage a little more palatable.

The shaman's responsibility goes beyond mixing the drink, though. He monitors and encourages his patients, calms them with chants, keeps them focused by brushing them with the leaves of shacapa. He is their physician and guide. €

The Addendum to Headstones and Heritages Receives Praise

It is rewarding to receive feedback from the public praising one of ECHS's services such as one member of the society has received in an article recently published in the Pensacola Journal. The article, "Why were we left out?" by columnist David H. Green applauds the work of Darryl Searcy who updated and made inclusive the cemetery listings for Escambia County, Alabama.

Darryl was essentially continuing the work begun by Reginald McFarland and Lennis Shelton who published in 1974 the cemetery listings for the county in their book Headstones and Heritages. Here is

Mr. Green's article:

"Why were we left out?"

Darryl Searcy was talking with a member of a church in Brewton, Ala. They were looking in a book listing all the graves in the county -- except it didn't. None of the souls of Second Saint Siloam Baptist Church was listed. It wasn't a little country church which had dried up and been forgotten. It was just across the CSX railroad track from the main part of Brewton.

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The Addendum to Headstones and Heritages Receives Praise

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Had there not been a book claiming to list all the graves, nobody would've cared. Winners at assorted awards ceremonies have left you bored to snores thanking everybody lest they hurt anybody's feelings. Losers are off the hook. The book's like a winner who left somebody out.

It probably was an oversight, but a specific kind of oversight. It was an oversight which didn't see any of the cemeteries traditionally used by black people. It even left out the black portion of mixed-race cemeteries.

I guess that's what they meant by "segregation forever." When people pray for a color-blind society, they would prefer one which sees everybody as just people, but don't hold your breath lest you die and be left out.

Being a good man, Darryl felt guilt for the failings of the rest of us and vowed to do his best to right their wrong. He started with the omitted occupants of the specific cemetery and worked outward.

It was hard work, but he's used to such after some 75 years and counting. Hundreds of graves were marked but unnamed. Assorted vandals had broken many of the markers. (What? You thought the vandals only lived near you? Lots of them desecrate graves for the scrap metal of the bronze markers or mar the markers for the same reason small children pop bubbles -- just something to do.)

Total destruction is hard, so he managed to piece together 6,087 headstone pieces and counting, despite falling into a few sunken graves. He found folks who remembered who went where -- or at least nobody would dispute them. Others were such that nobody even pretended to know.

In time we'll all be forgotten.

He wanted to hold back that time as long as possible, found an online site which would record and share his information and is keeping his promise. . . .

He acknowledges several others who have helped him in his labors. People from all over the nation have called to thank him for the work they've done [these listings at "Find a Grave"] in helping locate the burial sites of the remains of distant kindred. He's deaf now, but appreciates their appreciation. Every-

body needs an "Atta boy" every now and then. He's earned his.

When asked why their loved ones were left out, he could have explained how nothing gets done until someone does it. They could've done the work, but didn't. Instead, he turned the question around into, "How can we include you?"

Here is Darryl's introduction to the Addendum to Headstones and Heritages:

The Escambia County Historical Society is pleased to announce the publication of its Addendum to Headstones and Heritage (McFarland & Shelton, 1973) -- Contributors to this work were: Darryl Searcy and Barbara McCoy of the Escambia County Historical Society; Martha Williams of Pensacola, Florida; Charlotte Williams of Walnut Hill, Florida; Jeremy Ray of the City of Atmore, as well as the support and encouragement of Rev. Willie Blue of the Historic Second St. Siloam Church. This Addendum to the original Headstones and Heritage book is intended to reflect those burials having occurred after its 1974 publication to the present day, October 2014. The source material was generated from headstone interpretations and hands-on survey work of all known cemeteries within Escambia County

Newspaper obituaries, funeral home notifications, burial permits, church records, and the generous offerings of information from archives maintained by the cities of Atmore, Flomaton and Brewton were invaluable in developing a history that includes our black friends and neighbors. €

ECHOES
THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 276
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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 or call 251-809-1528.

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