

The March Meeting Tuesday, March 22, 2016 3:00 p. m. The McMillan Museum

The Program

The monthly Escambia County Historical Society program scheduled for February had to be rescheduled to March 22nd due to inclement weather. The program to be presented by Darryl Searcy was intended to show a series of images that will tell a story about where he and his plant collection crew have been, why they went there, some of the challenges they faced, and to introduce the audience to a few of the people they met along the way. He will also present a brief slide show of a few of the plants collected and the intended purpose of the harvest. The program outline has not changed and Mr. Searcy will now tell his story at the March 22 meeting which begins at 3 p.m. at the Thomas E. McMillan Museum on the Brewton campus of JDCC.

Darryl

News and Announcements



**Photo of
Lee Bain
Courtesy
of
<flannel
andflo-
ral>.**

Lee Bain Art Display

The Brewton artist, shown at left at one of Brewton's Farmer's Markets, will display samples of his paintings, graphics, and book cover designs in the meeting room of the McMillan Museum until the end of March.

This is a preview of the show he will display in May. Those attending the March ECHS meeting will have a

(Continued on page 2)

Contents

Women in Alabama Politics Exhibit	3
This Month in Alabama History	4
Our Business Members	8
Rolling Stores: Walmart on Wheels	9

**April 26, 2016 ECHS Meeting
Larry Massey will present a program
on Railroad Bill. Mr. Massey has
recently published a new book on the
famous outlaw.**



**Julia Lide, Nurse in
Spanish American War**

Volume 43 Number 3

March 2016

**Jamelle
Folsom's
inaugural
ball gown
shown
here is on
display in
AL
Women in
Politics
exhibit.**



News and Announcements

(Continued from page 1)

chance to see the preview.

In April, a display of works by students at the college will be displayed in the meeting room.

Alabama Historical Association 2016 Annual Meeting March 14-17

With headquarters at the Embassy Suites Hotel in downtown Montgomery, the 69th meeting of the Association will allow those attending to see the reemergence of the Montgomery Riverfront area as a lively and attractive place that people want to visit.

Online access to the spring newsletter of the Association describing all the activities and programs of the meeting, as well as registration forms, can be found at <<http://www.alabamahistory.net/meetings.html>>.

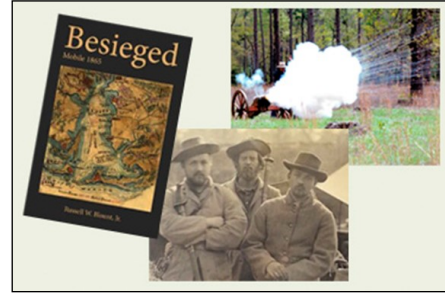


FORUM 2016 Wednesday, July 27, 2016 - Sunday, July 31, 2016

This is the 10th Biennial of the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) FORUM.

The NAPC website states: "As the only national conference focused on the issues facing local historic preservation boards and commissions, FORUM 2016 includes dozens of educational sessions and discussion panels, mobile workshops and tours, and five days of non-stop networking for commission staff and volunteers representing local, state and national organizations and government agencies."

Information on the program, registration, and lodging can be found at <<https://napcommissions.org/forum/>>.



Saturday, April 9, Commemoration of the 151st Anniversary of the Battle of Fort Blakely

From the Park's website, "The Historic Blakeley State Park will commemorate the 151st anniversary of the Battle of Fort Blakeley with a special day of exciting living history and educational programming.

"Activities will include period weapons demonstrations, guided soldier camp tours, a lecture by local author Russell Blount, Jr., children's activities, and a display of a collection of authentic Civil War-era artifacts associated with the armies who fought at Blakeley and nearby Spanish Fort.

"Together, they will interpret the experiences of some of the soldiers who participated in the largest Civil War battle fought on Alabama soil and the civilians in the greater Mobile area who lived through the closing days of the war in south Alabama" (<http://blakeleypark.com/events.asp#top>).



On exhibit on the second floor of the Alabama Department of Archives and History, through June 2016, "Women in Alabama Politics" explores the role of women in our state's history from suffrage to the present through textiles, artifacts, photos, documents and campaign ephemera. €

Women in Alabama Politics Exhibit



Suit Worn by Lurleen Wallace

This suit and hat were worn by Alabama's first and only female governor, Lurleen Wallace, when she took the oath of office in January 1967

It is part of the Women in Alabama Politics exhibit at ADAH.



Dress Worn by Suffragette Bossie O'Brien Hundley

On February 27, 1922, the 19th amendment to the U. S. constitution providing for female suffrage was unanimously declared constitutional by the eight members of the U. S. Supreme Court. The Amendment passed Congress in 1919 and was ratified by the required three fourth majority of states in 1920. While Alabama did not officially ratify the 19th Amendment until 1953, federal law prevailed and Alabama women began casting votes in 1920.

The new micro-exhibit "Women in Alabama Politics" will highlight the work of Alabama suffragettes like Bossie O'Brien Hundley who wore this green velvet dress around 1890. Hundley was a noted participant and leader in the women's suffrage movement in Alabama.

A talented spokesperson for the suffrage movement, Hundley famously debated women's voting rights with Congressman Tom He-flin In front of a crowd of thousands in Wetumpka. Her dress is on display in the exhibit that opened on March 10, 2016



Secretary of State Agnes Baggett with Other Female Alabama Elected Officials ca. 1970.

Baggett is shown seated at her desk. The women standing behind her, listed left to right, are: Marilyn Quarles, State Representative; Bettye Frink, State Auditor; S. A. Cherry, Board of Education; Melba Till Allen, State Treasurer; Juanita McDaniel, Public Service Commissioner; Annie Laurie Gunter, Director of the Alabama Consumer Protection Department.

This Month in Alabama History

March 1 - 7

March 3, 1817



The Alabama Territory is created when Congress passes the enabling act allowing the division of the Mississippi Territory and the admission of Mississippi into the union as a state. Alabama would remain a territory for over two years before becoming the 22nd state in December 1819.

March 2, 1901

Trustees of the Alabama Department of Archives and History meet in Gov. William J. Samford's office to organize the nation's first state archival agency. Charged with, among other responsibilities, "the care and custody of official archives [and] the collection of materials bearing upon the history of the State," the department was housed in the capitol until 1940. In that year it moved across Washington Avenue to the War Memorial Building, which had been constructed for the Archives.



This photo from ca. 1901 is of the founding director of ADAH, Thomas McAdory Owen, sorting records in the basement of the Capitol.

March 2, 1961

Alabama native Luther Leonidas Terry begins serving as U.S. Surgeon General under President John F. Kennedy. Terry was born in Red Level in 1911 and graduated from Birmingham-Southern College in 1931. As Surgeon General he issued a landmark report on smoking and health that raised awareness among policymakers and the public about the dangers of smoking. Terry served until October 1, 1965.

March 4, 1861

The first Confederate flag is raised over the Alabama Capitol at 3:30 PM by Letitia Tyler, granddaughter of former U.S. president John Tyler. The flag, which flew on a flagpole by the capitol clock, was not the Confederate battle flag, but the "First National Pattern," also known as the stars and bars.

March 7, 1965

Six-hundred demonstrators make the first of three attempts to march from Selma to the capitol in Montgomery to demand removal of voting restrictions on black Americans. Attacked by state and local law enforcement officers as they crossed Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge, the marchers fled back into the city. The dramatic scene was captured on camera and broadcast across the nation later that Sunday, causing a surge of support for the protesters.

This Month in Alabama History *(Continued)*

March 8 - 14

March 10, 1948.



**The Picture of
Zelda to the
left is from a
Sidney Lanier
High School
Yearbook.**

Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald--Montgomery belle, writer, artist, and (with her husband, F. Scott Fitzgerald) icon of the Jazz Age--dies in a hospital fire in Asheville, North Carolina.

March 9, 1964

In the Alabama case New York Times v. Sullivan the U.S. Supreme Court hands down a landmark free speech decision. A Montgomery city commissioner, L. B. Sullivan, had sued the Times for running a factually inaccurate ad that criticized the city's handling of civil rights demonstrators. Citing the First Amendment the court ruled against Sullivan, thereby strengthening the right to freely criticize government.

March 10, 1890

Juliet Opie Hopkins dies. Hopkins served as the Superintendent of Civil War Hospitals established in Richmond by the State of Alabama during the Civil War. She became a Confederate heroine for her efforts and her portrait even appeared on Alabama state bank notes during the Civil War years.

March 11, 1861

The Confederate Congress, meeting in Montgomery, adopts a permanent constitution for the Confederate States of America to replace the provisional constitution adopted the previous month. The seceded states then ratified the essentially conservative document, which was based largely on the United States Constitution.

March 13, 1887

Fugitive State Treasurer Isaac "Honest Ike" Vincent is arrested on a train in Big Sandy, Texas, and is returned to Alabama for trial. Four years earlier Vincent had absconded with more than \$225,000 in state funds unaccounted for. Vincent was tried and convicted of embezzlement and sentenced to fifteen years in the state penitentiary.

March 14, 1780

After only a day of resistance the British commander at Fort Charlotte surrenders Mobile to Spain. The city remained under Spanish control until the War of 1812 when the United States took it over, adding it to the Mississippi Territory.

This Month in Alabama History *(Continued)*

March 15 - 21

March 17, 1970



The Alabama Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville is dedicated, with Wernher von Braun calling it "a graphic display of man's entering into the cosmic age." Now known as the U.S. Space and Rocket Center, visitors tour the museum, which includes rockets and spacecraft, and participate in activities like Space Camp.

March 15, 1929



Elba residents are forced to take refuge on house-tops as they await rescue from rapidly rising flood waters. Rains beginning in late February resulted in flooding that affected most of the state and left 15,000 south Alabamians homeless. Although the Flood of 1929 hit Elba the hardest, several other towns, including Geneva and Brewton, were covered in as much as fifteen feet of water.

March 17, 1825

Benjamin Sterling Turner is born a slave in North Carolina. In 1830 he was brought to Dallas County, Alabama. After freedom Turner began a mercantile business and was elected Dallas County tax collector in 1867. In 1871 Turner was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, becoming the state's first African-American congressman.

March 17, 1863

John Pelham, a 24-year-old Confederate hero from Calhoun County, is mortally wounded on the battlefield at Kelley's Ford, Virginia. He died the next day and his body lay in state in the capitol at Richmond before being taken to Alabama for burial. Pelham's skill and daring as an artillery commander distinguished him from the outset of the Civil War and earned him the nickname "the gallant Pelham" from Robert E. Lee.

March 20, 1872

Because of financial problems, the Methodist church transfers the grounds, buildings, and legal control of East Alabama Male College in Auburn to the State of Alabama. The institution is rechartered as the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama, the first land-grant college in the South to be established separate from the state university. The school became Alabama Polytechnic Institute in 1899 and Auburn University in 1960.

March 21, 1932

Over 250 Alabamians die in tornadoes that sweep the state. More than 1,500 others were injured and damage was estimated at \$5 million. The western and north-central parts of the state, especially the towns of Northport, Cullman, and Columbiana, were hardest hit.

March 21, 1965

Rev. Martin Luther King leads 3,200 marchers from Selma toward Montgomery in support of civil rights for black Americans, after two earlier marches had ended at the Edmund Pettus Bridge--the first in violence and the second in prayer. Four days later, outside the Alabama state capitol, King told 25,000 demonstrators that "we are on the move now . . . and no wave of racism can stop us." On August 6, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law.

This Month in Alabama History (Continued)

March 22 – 28

March 27, 1814



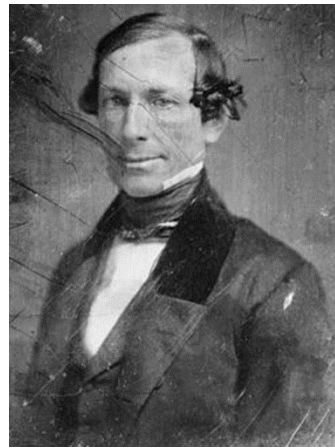
In the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, Andrew Jackson leads a force of Americans, Creeks, and Cherokees against Red Stick Creeks. Attacking the Red Stick stronghold of Tohopeka on the banks of the Tallapoosa River, Jackson's men killed more than 900 people. The victory soon led to the end of the Creek War and the cession of 23 million acres of Creek territory to the United States.

March 24, 1832

In Washington, D.C., representatives of the Creek Indians sign a treaty ceding "to the United States all their land, East of the Mississippi," which included large portions of east Alabama. Known as the Treaty of Cusseta, it was negotiated in the wake of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Approximately 20,000 Creeks were removed to the Oklahoma Indian Territory by 1840, although some remained, including the ancestors of the Poarch Band of Creeks, who are concentrated near Atmore, Alabama.

March 24, 1853

William Rufus King of Selma is inaugurated as Vice President of the United States near Havana, Cuba. Elected the previous fall on the Democratic ticket with Franklin Pierce, King had been in the warm Cuban climate since January in an attempt to recover his failing health. When it became apparent that he would be unable to travel to Washington for the inauguration, Congress passed a special act to allow him to take the oath of office in Cuba. When his health did not improve, King returned to Alabama, where he died April 18, 1853, never formally serving as Vice President.



William Rufus King

March 25, 1931

Nine black youths, soon to be known as the Scottsboro Boys, are arrested in Paint Rock and jailed in Scottsboro, the Jackson County seat. Charged with raping two white women on a freight train from Chattanooga, the sheriff had to protect them from mob violence that night. Within a month, eight of the nine were sentenced to death. Based on questionable evidence, the convictions by an all-white jury generated international outrage.

March 26, 1910

Orville Wright pilots the first plane in Alabama, causing the Montgomery Advertiser to report "a strange new bird soared over the cotton fields west of Montgomery." The Wright brothers came to Montgomery to set up a pilots' training school. Several pilots were trained, but the brothers left the area by the end of May. Replacement parts for broken machinery were difficult to locate in the area and the flyers' efforts were frustrated by numerous spectators during their stay. €

Text and photos for "This Month in History" are from ADAH and the ADAH facebook page.

Our Business Members

**Remember to support
our Business Members**

Herrington's
The FLORIST, Inc.

"Where Flowers Are Special"

719 Douglas Ave.
Brewton, AL 36426
(251) 867-7085
(800) 235-0824

RONNY HERRINGTON

the L house
Printing & Frames

Custom Event Stationery
Business Documents • Custom Framing

131 Saint Joseph Avenue
Brewton, Alabama

251-867-9962
Lhouseprinting@gmail.com

William Smith 251.238.3966

Quality
Lawn Services

PO Box 823 Brewton, AL 36427
QualityLawnsBrewton@yahoo.com

Place your future in our hands...



"The Bank To Believe In"

A Locally Owned Community Bank
Striving to Meet Your Financial Needs

Personal Loans

- Rates based on length of time and type of collateral

Real Estate Loans

- Fixed rates up to 15 years
- Adjustable rates up to 30 years
- Home Equity Loans
- Construction Loans

Local Decisions

- Fast approvals
- Local closings
- Minimum fees on all loans



ESCAMBIA
COUNTY BANK

P.O. Box 601 • Flomaton, Alabama 36441
Telephone (251) 296-5356

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Rolling Stores: Walmart on Wheels

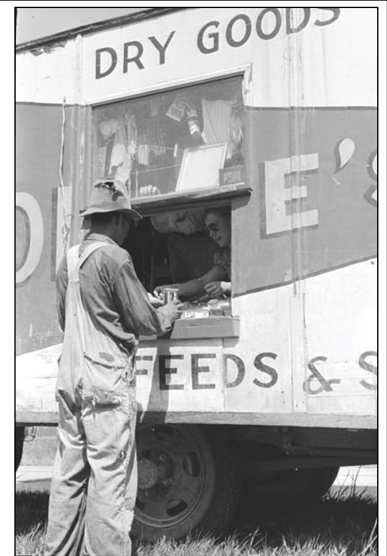


The stores opened up in the back and the customers, if there was room, could go in to look at items. Some stores had a side opening for customers to approach and buy through, as shown at right.

<<http://www.weisradio.com/tag/rolling-stores/>>

At Right, making a purchase at a traveling grocery store, Forrest City, Arkansas. 1938.

<<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1997023519/PP/>>



From The Business of Food: Encyclopedia of the Food and Drink Industries, this introduction to the Rolling Stores:

“Rolling Stores served as food delivery systems from the 1930’s through the 1960’s not only in Alabama and other parts of the south but in rural areas all over the U. S. The traveling store would follow set routes to rural towns and out in the country side where very few people had transportation to get to town and a grocery store. Even though residents of rural areas traveled on Saturday to town to purchase supplies and for a social outing, having the traveling stores coming to their neighborhoods and homes meant they could get supplies when they ran out without having to worry about an inconvenient trip to town.

“The stores were constructed out of large trucks or old buses. Customers could purchase groceries (dry goods and fresh produce), clothing and tools. Customers often had to pay by credit or by bartering. It was common for customers to offer chickens, eggs, pecans, or produce in exchange for the goods they needed to purchase. The stores would have either cages on top in the back to put the live poultry in or cages slung underneath with a trap door inside to drop the chickens down into the cage. These traveling stores would also provide their customers with

kerosene, carrying large cans of the product on the back of their vehicles” (googlebooks.com).

Also called peddling wagons, peddling stores, or peddling trucks, the rolling store owners had to pay fees for licenses to operate. Billy Hinson in his article on the rolling stores in Alabama notes that owners had to pay a state license tax in every county they sold goods in. In the 30’s and 40’s, the fees were \$100.00 to the state, \$50.00 to the county, and \$.50 to the probate judge. In order to sell cigarettes, they had to pay license fees of \$15.00 to the state and \$ 7.50 to the county.

Hinson tells the story of a rolling store operator in Blount County who had to be careful and drive into the back yard of one house on his route to deliver goods because the front yard was in Jefferson County and the back yard was in Blount County where he had a license. He made sure business was transacted in the back yard because he didn’t want to pay fees in two counties (Billy Hinson, “The Rolling Stores of Alabama,” The Alabama Review, July 2004).

Many of these stores were developed by the grocery store owner who found that his business had declined because it was the depression years. Times were tough, many families had little money, so they grew their own food and made their own clothes. Few people had cars, so a trip to town to purchase goods

(Continued on page 10)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Rolling Stores: Walmart on Wheels

(Continued from page 9)

was difficult and for many families occurred only two or three times a year.

Carolyn Stewart in her blog, "Country Musings," writes, "Due to the depression and then W. W. II, cars were rare amongst the country folk where I grew up. Going to the store required arranging transport in advance or walking or riding your plow horse" (<http://carolyn-stewart.com/>).

Billy Hinson in "The Rolling Stores of Alabama" also emphasizes that the rolling stores at one time were a popular alternative to going to town. Hinson writes that Bessie Cooper of Baldwin County said she would rather wait for the rolling store than drive the horse and buggy, her only transportation, to Robertsedale.

In addition to store owners who saw rolling stores as an alternative way to serve customers and revive business, others saw starting a rolling store business as an opportunity to be an entrepreneur. They were the drivers and owners. Some were "Mom and Pop" operations with shared driving and customer service duties among the couple and also the children.

The stores were very popular with the communities they served for their arrival each week represented a chance to hear news, to gossip, in general to communicate and socialize with other members of the rural community. Often the trucks would sound their horn as they approached a stop at a farming community but quite often the truck had already been spotted and word had spread that the rolling store had arrived.

In "Remembering the Rolling Stores," John Ranger Evans (who started the rolling stores part of his business in Murray County, Georgia when business in his general store declined), said that he painted his

In response to an online article about rolling stores, Hollis McKinley says: "Had them in Escambia County, lived on a rural route from Atmore. What a jog of some good memories."

Doris Dagan responded to Hollis McKinley: "Did we grow up in the same area?"

My grandmother lived in the northern end of Escambia County, what is known as Walnut Hill, Florida on a dirt road.

Dorothy and I would spend part of the summers there. I remember the "rolling store" would come by so often. My mom and dad had a fish market in Ferry Pass when we were in school.

My dad bought an old telephone truck. He would put ice in the different compartments and would take fish to the same area and peddle them. Thanks for allowing me to stroll down memory lane" (alabamapioneers.com/rolling_stores).

trucks red because he knew that folks who saw a big red truck coming down the road would realize it had to be an Evans Rolling Store (<http://www.murraycountymuseum.com/rs.html>).

In "The Rolling Stores of Alabama," Hinson tells the story of R. C. Grantham of Coffee County who had a big horn on the side of his truck which some said sounded like a train whistle. When they heard the horn, everyone would drop what they were doing, get their money and trade items, and go to the place where the truck stopped:

"There a crowd of excited children and adults would gather. Grantham was the 'man of the hour' and would

open the back door to allow people to enter the store. During the time of buying and selling, he would tell folks about what was occurring in the world and nation. Grantham often got home after dark and then began loading for the next day."

Many of the drivers were noted for being kind to customers in extending credit, often for weeks, until the crops came in. To deal with customers who didn't have money, trading was a standard practice. The most common products used in exchange for goods were chickens, eggs, and butter. Other items used included shelled corn, jams, pecans, sweet potatoes, vegetables, syrup, and smoked link sausage.

Although chickens were the most frequently traded meat, some drivers accepted dressed rabbits and squirrels. One man remembers a driver who would take the rabbits he had trapped and cleaned. He thinks that maybe the man was just being kind to a child who wanted candy but had no money and there was really no market for trading the rabbits. The rabbits were hung on the outside of the truck and the driver would only accept them in the cold months.

(Continued on page 11)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Rolling Stores: Walmart on Wheels



Rural Saskatchewan back at the turn of the last century,
<<http://s173955726.onlinehome.us/2007/10/>>



Rural Georgia, 1930's
<<http://www.country-magazine.com/>>

(Continued from page 10)

All the rolling stores were similar in what they carried and the business that had to be done at the end of the day. There had to be someone to do the bookkeeping and to make sure customer orders were kept so they could be delivered the next week. These might be specifications for clothes or shoes.

Sanda Martel in her article "The Peddler and the Rolling Store," describes the business at the end of the day:

"All of the rolling stores that accepted payment for goods in the form of butter, eggs, live fowl, freshly killed (dressed) rabbits, squirrels, etc., had someone at the home store who accounted for these transactions and disposed of the bartered goods in a manner that was as profitable as possible for the company. For example, Paul Burgess, son-in-law of J. W. Evans, said that Evans' rolling stores took in so many squirrels and rabbits that they had a contract to deliver them to a buyer in the Atlanta area by pick-up truck. He said that they had various buyers for the butter, eggs, chickens, ducks, turkeys, etc., accepted as payment for merchandise each day" (<http://sanda-halcyondays.blogspot.com/2012/09/the-peddler-and-rolling-store.html>).

Peggy Wesley Chesteen Caylor of Coffee County wrote that one day the rolling store came first; we traded eggs for fruit. Then the ice truck came, brought a block of ice and while leaving the driver backed over a chicken. That day during the week we had a Sunday Dinner -ice tea, fried chicken and fruit .

As chickens and eggs were the most frequently used trading items, there are more stories about these bartering items. Children would trade one egg for a penny worth of candy and one individual confessed that sometimes he was guilty with other boys of bartering a stolen egg or

two for candy. One commenter said he remembered his grandmother kept a flock of red feathered chickens just to be used to trade for goods from the rolling store.

At the end of the day, the chickens had to be weighed so the operator could get the correct price per pound. The bartered eggs also had to be checked, "candled," at the end of the day to see if they were good. Operators had to be careful not to sell rotten eggs so they would shine a light on the egg to see if there were any spots on them. Some would roll a tube out of brown paper, place the egg in it and examine the egg while looking toward a light. Operator Charles Vickery says that you can put a light in a can with a hole on top for the egg and then look to see if there are any "impurities, blood spot or hatching eggs, or rotten eggs" (Hinson "The Rolling Stores of Alabama").

(Continued on page 12)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Rolling Stores: Walmart on Wheels



Farm Families purchasing from Rolling Store. The picture was made by the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1939. From National Archives.



Picture from 1937 was used in association with the Pick Wick Dam Project.
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org>>

(Continued from page 11)

In addition to kitchen and other household items, customers could get feed for their farm animals. In an era of wasting nothing and repurposing, the feed sacks were considered as important as the feed. Hinson says the farmer's wife always bought the items that came in sacks. He reports that the wives did not trust their husbands to pick out attractive sacks or matching sacks which would allow the wives to make clothing, linens and other household essentials from the sacks: "They did not trust the men to select the sack patterns that would later become draperies, dresses, apron, napkins, and tablecloths" ("The Rolling Stores of

"The children, in the evening, when they was out of school or in the summer...you would see them down the road, just a-dancing because they knew they was going to get some candy or get something off that rolling store." (William King)

William King ran a rolling store in Russell County from 1863-1994.

From Sanda Stewart, this observation: Most people remember well the three sandwich staples available from most rolling stores—bologna, cheese, and bananas cut from a hanging stalk.

The stores also bought mayonnaise or miracle whip, mustard, and peanut butter, as well as wax paper to wrap the sandwiches youngsters would take to school for lunch.

Schools did not have lunchrooms until World War II ended and military barracks were declared surplus and made available to schools to use as lunchrooms.

Classrooms and cloak-rooms usually smelled of banana sandwiches.

<<http://sanda-halcyondays.blogspot.com/2012/09/the-peddler-and-rolling-store.html>>.

Alabama"). Neighbors often exchanged empty sacks until they had enough of one pattern to make a garment or a household item.

Another popular item that was purchased and repurposed was the wooden boxes that the large rounds of hoop cheese came in. Women wanted the box with its lid for storage. They would ask the driver to save the box and would purchase it when empty.

Drivers were noted for kind gestures and for doing special orders. Hinson tells the story of a driver who watched an elderly lady eying sewing notions but who did not have the money to buy them. He saw that she had on a bonnet and although it was old and faded, he convinced her that his wife would like

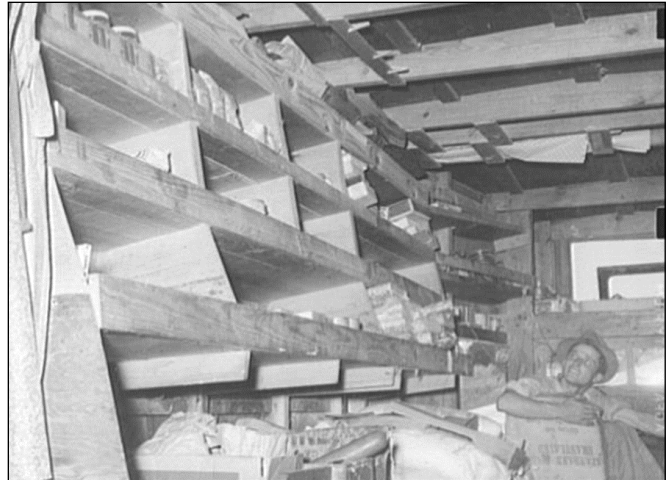
(Continued on page 13)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Rolling Stores: Walmart on Wheels



**Interior of H. F. Hamrick
Rolling Store in Ranger,
Georgia**
<[http://www.
murraycountymuseum.
com/rs.html](http://www.murraycountymuseum.com/rs.html)>



**Interior of traveling grocery store selling
to rural people near Forrest City,
Arkansas. Shelves were slanted backward
to prevent items from falling out.**
<[http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/
fsa2000012505/PP/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa2000012505/PP/)>.

(Continued from page 12)

to have a new bonnet just like hers. The elderly woman returned a week later with the bonnet and got the sewing items in exchange. Of course, the driver's wife knew nothing about the bonnet and had not expressed a desire for one.

Sometimes the drivers dealt with special orders. Charles Vickery who drove routes in Monroe County recalls that a lady who lived south of Frisco City ordered a casket and he delivered it to her (Hinson, "The Rolling Stores of Alabama"). Customers would order shoes by drawing an outline of their foot on a piece of paper or giving the driver a piece of wood or a twig the length of the shoe being ordered.

**From ECHS Member from Pensacola,
Peggy Blair:**

When I was growing up, we had 2 grocery trucks, Mr. Dunaway and Mr. Mathews who had small covered bodies on the truck, partitioned with boxes of all sorts of veggies, and fruits like appear in the produce sections of the big grocery stores now! They'd come around a couple times a week with lovely fresh produce!

We also had a fish monger - little black man with a bull's horn. You could hear him coming from blocks away! He'd fish early in the morning or the night before and put his catch on ice in a big metal oil can that he'd put on wheels.

We could hear him from blocks away, as I said, and Mama would tell us to go out on the porch and wait for him. We'd have whatever kind of fish he'd offer!

Those were the days! The Watkin's Man (Mr. Swanson) would come by about once a month with his salves, soaps, and seasonings! Everybody used Watkin's!

Peggy is ECHS Member, Paul Merritt's, Aunt.

Roger Sauls in his article "On the Road with Groceries: the Story of the Rolling Store," sees the drivers of the rolling stores as a hardy lot whose days were filled with a mixture, a contrast, the hardships of the road and the warm embrace of their customers who were always glad to see them, days of feast and famine:

"They risked breakdown when they ventured too far into isolated areas, having to resort to their own mechanical skills, not always the best, to extricate themselves from emergencies brought on by an overheated engine or a flat tire. The elements weren't

always their friend, either. The heat in summer could be punishing, the cold could make their vehicles feel

(Continued on page 14)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Rolling Stores: Walmart on Wheels



Rolling store which goes from door to door selling groceries, hardware, drygoods, drugs, and a variety of household and farm supplies. Near Montezuma, Georgia, May 1939 photo by Marion Post Wolcott. <<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/380976449705567258/>>.



Inside a rolling store a with tank of kerosene to the left. <<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/61643088626039257/>>.

(Continued from page 13)

like iceboxes, and heavy rain could turn the roads into quagmires. There was also the not unrealistic fear of robbery, since the transactions with rolling stores were made in cash, the cash usually secreted somewhere on the person of the driver" (<http://porterbriggs.com/on-the-road-with-groceries-the-story-of-the-rolling-store/>).

Sauls also sees the drivers as representing two personality types, the actual neighbor, a part of the community, who visits with his customers, trekking

Jean Brooks wrote: "Rolling Stores came through the rural South and carried basic groceries, also sewing goods and some hardware. The stores would take eggs as money a penny a piece, but in those days you got a lot for a penny. It was great for people living way out in the country with only a wagon and a mule for transportation." <<http://alabamapioneers.com/rolling-stores-return/#sthash.oUQHphss.O6o3SIQV.dpuf>>.

Sanda Stewart comments in "The Peddler and the Rolling Store": Because space was so limited, the store only carried as much of each can or box of goods as the owners thought might be sold in a single day. Each night the rolling store returned to its home base where it was restocked in preparation for the next day's trip. Companies employed people to work night shifts to do all that was necessary to have the rolling store cleaned and restocked, ready for the next day's run

out to the fields to see their crops and give advice. The other is the mysterious stranger that no one in the community knows. He is the loner that no one knows where he came from or where he goes after he finishes his routes:

"There was a mystique about these men, the adventurous men who drove rolling stores. Some were neighbors to the customers

they served, a friend. But some seemed like rootless loners who dwelled wholly in neither

(Continued on page 15)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Rolling Stores: Walmart on Wheels



The Rolling Store Drivers Were a Hardy Lot.
<<http://porterbriggs.com/on-the-road-with-groceries-the-story-of-the-rolling-store/>>.



The Bottom right is an Interior of a traveling grocery store selling to rural people near Forrest City, Arkansas in 1938.
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/fsa.8b20411/>

The Top, Right shows customers waiting their turn to go inside a rolling store in Georgia.
<<http://www.murraycountymuseum.com/rs.html>>/

(Continued from page 14)

town nor country. Where they did live was a matter of speculation, a great mystery. Some were thought to spend day and night in their trucks, self-sufficient and self-enclosed as tortoises, men who emerged at dawn and disappeared at the coming of dusk.

“Sometimes they were unmarried men who found lonely farmwives a welcome possibility for diversion. Others were family men who relished day’s end and the consolations it brought of wife and children. They lived in houses set on a firm foundation, looking forward to an aromatic supper cooked from scratch, and that animated time of day in which tales from the road could be told around a groaning table” (<http://porterbriggs.com/on-the-road-with-groceries-the-story-of-the-rolling-store/>).

The rolling stores owners and drivers created good memories and earned the respect and loyalty of their

customers. One writer commented that she and her mother would always scurry around to find change to buy something from the rolling store operators when they came “not so much that we needed anything but it was the fact that they brought goods to our doorstep, so to speak, and because they did it for a living; we supported them. And, to me, those are good enough reasons for us to part with our hard-earned money” (<http://www.grit.com/community/the-old-fashioned-rolling-store.aspx>).

Important changes in the economy and the culture meant the demise of the era of the rolling stores in rural America. The improved economy at the end of the depression years meant more jobs so that more people could afford cars. Roads were paved and women joined the work force providing even more money to spend on the household. “The economy moved out of the Depression, ladies moved out of the kitchen, and the Rolling Stores moved out of business” (Hinson). €

ECHOES
THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 276
Brewton, AL 36427
Phone: 251-809-1528
E-mail: escambiahistoricalsociety@gmail.com

We're on the web!
www.escohis.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL
DATED MATERIAL
Address correction
requested

Books for Sale

	Mailed	Regular
<u>Headstones and Heritage</u>	\$20.00	\$25.00
<u>Escambia Historical Society Cookbook</u>	\$10.00	\$15.00
<u>Wildflowers of The Escambia CD</u>	\$10.50	\$15.00
<u>History of Brewton and E. Brewton (sc)</u>	\$35.00	\$40.00
<u>Flomaton Centennial Scrapbook</u>	\$30.00	\$25.00
<u>Addendum to Headstones and Heritage</u>	\$20.00	\$25.00
<u>Headstones & Addendum Together</u>	\$40.00	\$50.00

Clip the following form and send to ECHS
Treasurer, P.O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36427

Date _____ / _____ / _____

Names) _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

Do you prefer to get your newsletter by
U.S. Mail ____ or email? ____

Dues _____ (\$25.00/person,
\$35.00/two family members at same address; Lifetime, \$250.00/person;
\$50.00/year business)

Donation _____

Amount enclosed _____ Members get a business-card sized advertisement in 11 issues of the newsletter. Larger sized ads are available)

Your interests _____

You will help with _____

❖ **Dues are to be paid at the beginning of the year—give a membership as a gift!**

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.

OFFICERS

President, Sally Finlay
Vice-President, Carolyn Jennings
Secretary, Jacque Stone
Treasurer, Susan Crawford
Echoes Editor, Ranella Merritt
Librarian, Barbara McCoy
Publicity, Ann Biggs-Williams and
Clay Lisenby
Historian/Curator, Tom McMillan

TRUSTEES

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