



The  
Escambia  
County  
Historical  
Society,  
Founded  
1971

## The October Meeting October 24, 2017 McMillan Museum Coastal Alabama Community College Brewton Campus 3:00 p. m.



### The Program

A presentation by guest speaker, Glenn Wills about his journey through Alabama collecting "remnants of Alabama 's past,"

Our speaker will have copies of his two books, Forgotten Alabama and More Forgotten Alabama available for sell.

### About the Author

Glenn Wills grew up in Huntsville, Alabama. He graduated from Butler High School and the University of Alabama in Huntsville. After a few stops along the way, he eventually found his niche in television news. Starting with an internship at WAAY-TV, Glenn then made his way to WHNT-TV as a full-time news employee, first as a photographer.

His path would eventually lead him to WVTM-TV in Birmingham, again beginning as a photographer, then as an assignment editor and ending up as a satellite truck engineer. Operating the satellite truck kept him on the road a great deal. In eight and a half years, he managed to log close to a quarter million miles.

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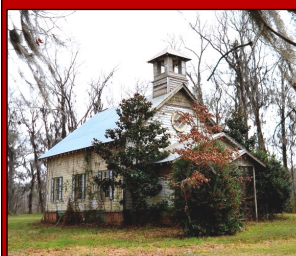


**Abandoned Church on HWY 38 between Demopolis and Livingston. From *Forgotten Alabama*, Facebook**

**Don't Forget to Bring Your Favorite Finger Food for Refreshments after the Meeting. ECHS Will Provide Drinks.**

### Remaining ECHS Meetings for 2017

- November: No Meeting
- Thursday, December 5, 2017: Christmas Party in the McMillan Museum 2:00-4:00



**Church as Movie Prop for town of Spectre**

Volume 44 Number 10

October 2017

## The Program

(Continued from page 1)

It was during this time he began to notice the things we built, used and eventually left behind. After leaving WVTM, Glenn decided it was time to make his vision a reality. He mapped out the entire state of Alabama in the summer of 2013 and began an odyssey to document those physical reminders of the past.

### About the Books

*This description of his first book, Forgotten Alabama:*

Glenn Wills takes us on his journey across Alabama as he documents the remnants of Alabama's past. What started as a chance encounter of noticing an old car along the highway and not having a camera became a mission. Over the course of the last ten years, he visited all of Alabama's 67 counties, logged 30,000 miles and took close to 12,000 photographs. Be it an old house, an abandoned store, a derelict bridge or any number of other physical reminders of the past, all of these played a role in our lives at one point. Glenn felt the need to save these memories in his book Forgotten Alabama

*The author says of More Forgotten Alabama:*

This is a beautiful coffee-table style hardcover book complete with dust jacket. In it, I explore the backroads of Alabama, photographing forgotten and abandoned structures.



**Photo of Marion, Alabama  
Fire Department Truck in  
Perry County  
from the book  
Forgotten Alabama**



**Marsh Store in Locust Fork,  
Alabama from the book  
Forgotten Alabama.**

## From Glenn Wills' "Forgotten Alabama" Facebook Page and Blog



**Consolation Church in Red Level  
The church has burned since this  
picture was made.**

**In response to publication of the  
picture on the facebook page,  
"Forgotten Alabama," this comment:  
"It did, in fact, become a victim of an  
act of arson. We have had to deal with  
years of vandalism and disrespect at  
this church site. Someone sadly was  
selfish enough to ruin such a great place  
of remembrance for so many families."**



## From Glenn Wills' "Forgotten Alabama" Facebook Page and Blog *(Continued)*



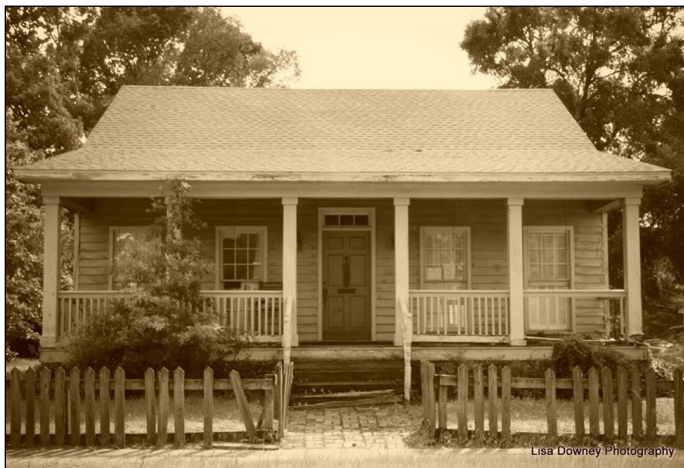
The photographer, Mark Stacey, comments on the photo to the left, which has appeared as a cover photo for the "Forgotten Alabama" Facebook page:

"I shot this photo back in 1979 or 1980. It was an excursion train to Chattanooga from Huntsville. The old Memphis & Charleston freight depot on the right was the second oldest continuously operated depot in the world until 1996. It burned in 2004 but the shell still remains."



The accompanying note for this photo reminds readers that Mr. Wills wants to have photos from readers that can be posted on his Facebook page. He writes:

"The old Geneva Grain Elevator in Geneva. No idea how old it is. Couldn't find much history about it all. But, it has to be the tallest structure in Geneva County and can be seen from miles away. I posted my own photo because I'm not getting new photos from y'all. If you have shots of abandoned and forgotten structures, please feel free to post them to the page to help keep it fresh. Thanks!"



This photo, attributed to Lisa Downey Photos, was a cover photo for the "Abandoned Alabama" Facebook page.

The abandoned home is in the Church Street East Historical District, Mobile, Alabama.

## News and Announcements



### **ECHS Member Kathryn Wilkerson Passes Away.**

Kathryn actively participated in the society through her attendance, her articles on local and family history, and her participation in the Society's "Show and Tell" programs.

She also contributed to The Alabama Room through the donation of books such as Lumbering in Northwest Florida and Alabama, and a

yearly subscription to the magazine Alabama Heritage.

Always eager to expand her knowledge, she regularly attended state historical meetings and seminars.

A resident of Pensacola, she attended ECHS meetings and enjoyed participating in field trips until the last few years when her health confined her to a care facility in Pensacola. We will miss her.

\*\*\*\*\*



### **Baldwin County Heritage Museum Announces Annual WWI & WWII "Memories of Baldwin County" Exhibit**

The exhibit opened on Oct. 18, 2017 and will be on display until December 7, 2017 with plans to be on display again in mid October thru Dec 7, 2018 and again in mid October thru Dec. 7, 2019 as part of Alabama's Bicentennial Celebration

This exhibit features the role that Baldwin County played in both World Wars; from Baldwin county individuals serving our country, the Navy fields that trained future pilots, the secret "Operation Ivory Soap" (that held its training at the Grand Hotel) to the Baldwin County Homefront.

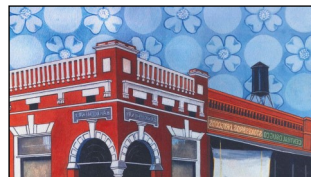
The Homefront includes two satellite Prisoner of War Camps in the county, U-boats in the Gulf, war rations, sewing with feed sacks and a post-war site

(the "Ghost Fleet" of Liberty and Victory Ships once housed in the Mobile Delta).

The Museum is located in Elberta, Alabama at 25521 US Hwy 98 East. Email address is <bchm@bulftel.com>. The facebook page address is <[www.facebook.com/BCHeritageM](http://www.facebook.com/BCHeritageM)>.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Upcoming Events for The Alabama Historical Association**



**October 27- 28, 2017  
"Fall Pilgrimage in the Wiregrass!"**

**Friday, October 27 in Dothan will be the Pre-meeting.** Activities include tours during the day and entertainment at dinner with a presentation of Alabama Bicentennial Trivia.

**Saturday, October 28, will be the "Fall Pilgrimage"** meeting in Abbeville with presentations to learn more about Henry County's rich history.



**April 12-14, 2018  
"71st Annual Meeting" in Birmingham, Alabama.**

The Association is announcing a "Call for Papers" with proposals for presentations at the meeting. Proposals must include a one-page abstract of a 20-minute presentation on an Alabama history topic and a curriculum vitae or résumé that includes the author's email address, postal address, telephone number, and academic or organizational affiliation (if any). Proposals should also indicate if the presenter will require any technical equipment (projectors, sound equipment, etc.)

If interested, please submit your proposal to the

*(Continued on page 5)*



## News and Announcements

(Continued from page 4)

program chair: Dr. Victoria Ott, Box 549031,  
Birmingham-Southern College, 900 Arkadelphia Road  
Birmingham, AL 35254  
(205) 226-7826, [vott@bsc.edu](mailto:vott@bsc.edu)

\*\*\*\*\*

### News and Upcoming Events from the Alabama Historical Commission



### The Cahawba Foundation Takes Steps to Protect Park

The Cahaba Foundation's campaign to preserve Old Cahawba, the site of Alabama's first capital, achieved a major first step in September when the foundation broke ground for a new gated entrance to the archeological site. The gated entrance will secure entry into the park afterhours.

Also, the Foundation, which was organized in 2008, has raised over \$1,000,000, allowing the Park to purchase those lots held in private ownership for the state, ensuring that they will be restored and preserved for archaeological study.

ECHS had a field trip to Cahawba (part of a bus tour of Selma, Cahawba, and Perdue Hill) in June 2015.



### Alabama State Capitol Open for Tours Year- Round

For 150 years the Alabama State Capitol has overlooked downtown Montgomery from its hilltop setting. This National Historic Landmark is a

working museum of state history and politics. The Office of the Governor and other executive branch officers occupy offices in the building.

**The Goat Hill Museum Store** is the best place to find Alabama-made gifts, specialty food, souvenirs, holiday ornaments, and more! It has the most unique gifts under one historic roof. Located inside the Alabama Capitol at the Union Street entrance.

**Daily Tours** - self-guided and guided. For more information contact the tour office at 334-242-3935 or [capitol tours@ahc.alabama.gov](mailto:capitol tours@ahc.alabama.gov)



### Fort Toulouse/Fort Jackson- Frontier Days and 300th Anniversary Celebration

**Celebration of 300th Anniversary of Fort  
Toulouse. Wed, November 1, 9am –  
Sat, November 4, 4pm.**

This celebration will be during the annual Alabama Frontier Days event.

**Special activities** will take place at 11:00am and include the unveiling of markers outlining a portion of the original 1717 fort. A short dramatic presentation will bring to life the moment French marines first met the Alabama Indians.

### Frontier Days

**Using Fort Toulouse/Fort Jackson Park as its historical backdrop**, Alabama Frontier Days focuses on demonstrating frontier life in the southeast during the period 1700-1820.

**The public can experience** this living history as frontier trades and crafts are demonstrated by living historians in period correct costumes.

**The event takes place** over four days, Wednesday to Saturday, from 9 AM to 4 PM each day.

**Admission charged:** \$8/adult and \$7/child. For more information please call 334-567-3002.

**Where** Fort Toulouse-Jackson Park, 2521 W Fort Toulouse Rd, Wetumpka, AL 36093, USA ([map](#))

**ECHS took a bus tour** to Frontier Days at Fort

(Continued on page 6)

## News and Announcements

(Continued from page 5)

Toulouse/Jackson Park in the fall of 2016.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **A Month of Eugene Walter at the Monroeville Old Courthouse Museum**



The Monroe County Museum, has had an exciting series of events throughout the **month of October to celebrate the genius of Eugene Walter**, noted poet, novelist,

lyricist, artist, art collector, gourmet cook and food writer, actor, theater designer, puppeteer, gardener, filmmaker, bon vivant, character extraordinaire and **native son of Mobile.**

**The last program in this month of programs concerning Eugene Walter will be Thursday, October 26, at 6:00 p. m. at the Museum.**

Entitled "Oh, That's Just Eugene: A Panel Discussion" will feature **Sue Brannan Walker, former Poet Laureate of Alabama**, and **novelist Carolyn Haines** in a discussion of the life and works of Mr. Walter.

**Refreshments will be served. Free to the Public.**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **What's Happening at the Archives?**



*Alabama* DEPARTMENT OF  
ARCHIVES & HISTORY

### **Fall Genealogy Workshop**

- **Monday, October 30 from 9:00 to 12:00**  
"Untangling the Web: Finding Your Alabama Ancestors in Cyberspace"  
Presented by Nancy Dupree  
Gain valuable knowledge of the best websites, online resources and most effective genealogical search strategies to take your

family history research to the next level.

Dupree will provide instruction about how to use online resources including Ancestry.com and Fold3. This workshop is suited for all levels of research experience.

Cost is \$30 for the public and \$20 for Friends of the Alabama Archives members.

### **Veterans Day Book Talks:**

- **Thursday, November 9 at 12:00:**  
Beautiful War: Studies in Dreadful Fascination Presented by Philip D. Beidler

From the University of Alabama Press, this introduction to the book:

Beautiful War: Studies in a Dreadful Fascination is a wide-ranging exploration of armed conflict as depicted in art that illustrates the constant presence of war in our everyday lives. Phillip D. Beidler investigates the unending assimilation and pervasive presence of the idea of war in popular culture, the impulses behind the making of art out of war, and the unending and debatable aimless trajectories of war itself.

- **Friday, November 10 at 12:00:**  
The Shadow Tiger: Billy McDonald, Wingman to Chennault Presented by William C. McDonald III and Barbara Evenson.

This introduction is from Good Reads:

Billy McDonald of Birmingham, Alabama, had an adventurous and dangerous career as a pilot in the Golden Age of Flight, and into World War II. He jumped from military cadet to wingman in Chennault's famed aerobatic flying group Three Men on a Flying Trapeze.

In China, he moved from instructor for the Chinese Air Force to combat pilot flying Chennault's legendary Hawk 75 Special against the Japanese over Nanking in 1937.

He began by ferrying world-famous passengers like Hemingway and high-value cargo like gold for the China National Aviation Corporation and then flew gasoline and gunpowder over the Hump (Himalayas)

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## News and Announcements

(Continued from page 6)

for Chennault's Flying Tigers and the Chinese Army.

Through it all, controversial and legendary aviator Claire Lee Chennault remained his mentor, often his boss and always his friend, indelibly shaping his life.

This is the story of a remarkable career, and a man who bore witness to some of the twentieth century's historic events and pivotal characters.

Mac tells us the tale in his own words through newly-discovered photos, correspondence and manuscripts.



**Billy "Mac" MacDonald, Lt. Gen. Claire Lee Chennault and John Henry "Luke" Williamson during their time as members of the U. S. Army Air Corps acrobatic team, the Flying Trapeze. Photo special to the Journal. (Over the Mountain Journal, Birmingham).**

### Food For Thought:

- Thursday, November 16 at 12:00**

Anne Mae Beddow, Pioneering World War I Nurse Anesthetist. Presented by Anne Gibbons.

In this presentation, Anne Gibbons will present the remarkable life and work of Anne Mae Beddow, a pioneer in the development of anesthesia techniques as a battlefield nurse during World War I. A graduate of St. Vincent's School of Nursing in Birmingham, Beddow was one of the first nurse anesthetists to administer sodium penthathol to patients. Because of her published research, the drug became one of the most widely used anesthetics of the twentieth century. A 2016 Alabama Women's Hall of Fame Inductee, Beddow has been recognized by the Alabama Association of Nurse Anesthetists and the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists for breaking barriers of advancement for women in medicine.

Anne Gibbons, niece of Anne Mae Beddow, is a graduate of Birmingham-Southern College and Cumberland School of Law.



**Anne Mae Beddow (front row, 5th from the left) pictured with other St. Vincent's Hospital Nurses. To the Left, Ann Mae**



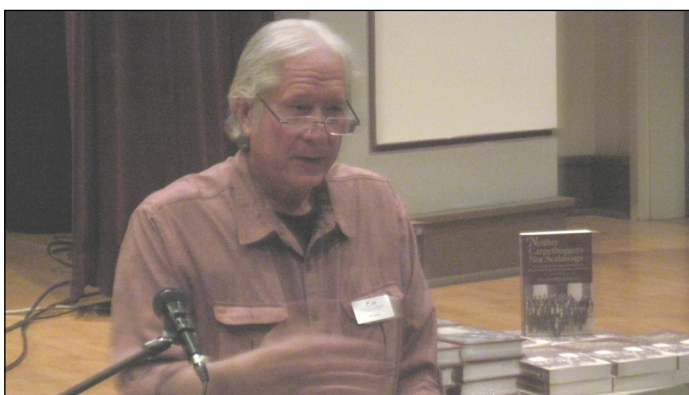
## **Snapshots from the September 2017 ECHS Meeting**



**Guests and Members of ECHS Listen to Richard Bailey's Presentation.**  
The Meeting was moved to the small auditorium in the Neal Colonial Center at the college because the regular meeting room in the McMillan Museum was being used as a voting location.

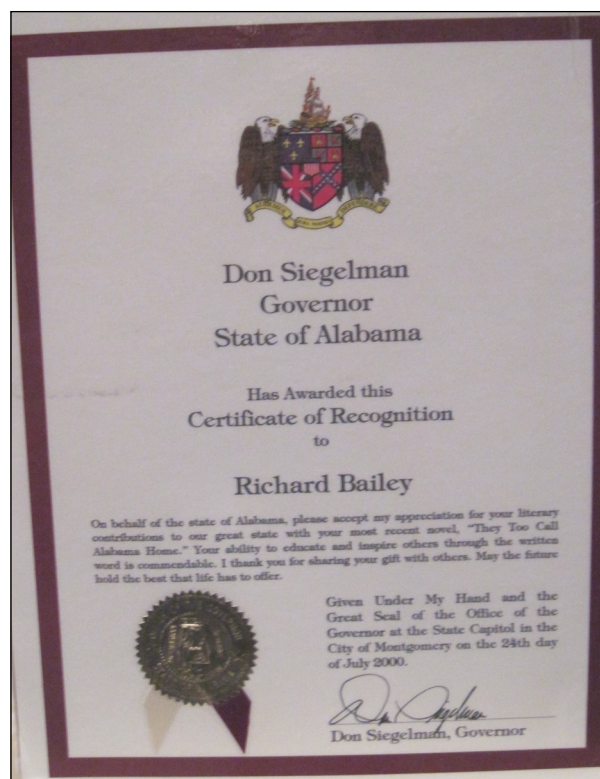


**Guest Speaker Dr. Richard Bailey**



**Museum Coordinator Don Sales Introduces the Speaker**

**To the Right, Photo of Richard Bailey's Certificate of Recognition from Governor Don Siegelman.**



**Seated in the Auditorium: First Row, ECHS President Sally Finlay; Second Row, Barbara McCoy and Charlie Booher; Third Row, Florence Rowser and Jacque Stone; Fourth Row, Robin Brewton and Darryl Searcy; Fifth Row, Amanda Bell and Rev. Willie Blue. Rev Blue is the Senior Pastor of the Second Saint Siloam Missionary Baptist Church of Brewton.**



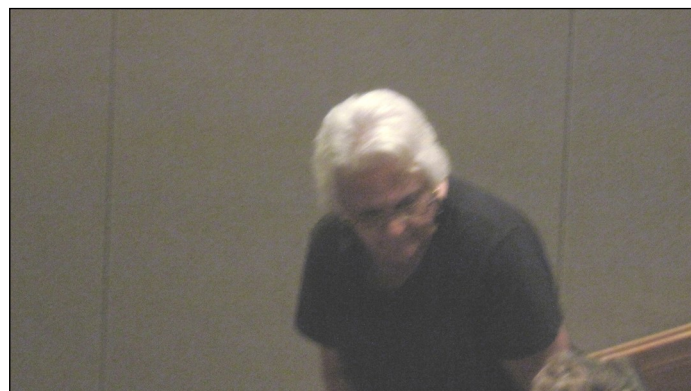
## **Snapshots from the September 2017 ECHS Meeting *(Continued)***



**After the meeting, Dr. Richard Bailey autographing his books for those who made purchases.**



**Charlie Booher and Don Sales visit on the auditorium stairs.**



**ECHS Vice-President Carolyn Jennings**



**In the back, on the left, Speaker Dr. Bailey talks with Robin Brewton.  
In the front, on the left, Rev. Willie Blue visits with Charlie Booher.**



**Three in the Center  
Amanda Bell next to Rev. Willie Blue, and  
in front of them, Darryl Searcy.**



**ECHS Secretary Jacque Stone taking notes  
at the meeting.**

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Girl Scouts In Brewton— A Year In The Life Of Troop 309

By Ann Biggs Williams

It was with an aching sadness and a wave of nostalgia that I read an article in the August 23, 2017 edition of The Brewton Standard that after 68 years of history in Brewton, Alabama “Girl Scouts (are) no more in Brewton.”

The article states that the Girl Scouts of South Alabama Inc., formerly relinquished its rights to the use of the Cola D. Parker Scout Hut in Brewton, a building owned by the city that was located within walking distance of the old Brewton Elementary School. The City-owned building, located on St. Nicholas Avenue, has been vacant for over a year. Girl Scouts had used the scout hut since 1949.

In a subsequent edition of The Brewton Standard, (October 4, 2017), there is a Letter to the Editor from a representative of Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, stating that a Daisy Troop is forming in Brewton. (A Daisy Troop is for girls Kindergarten to the First Grade).

I volunteered with scouting several years in the late 1970's and early 1980's which was a very active

### The Girl Scout Promise

**On my honor, I will try:  
To serve God,  
My Country and mankind,  
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.**

time for scouting in Brewton. When I was hired as an Assistant Librarian at the Jefferson Davis Junior College (JDJC) by Mr. Woodfin Patterson, the college's first president, Mr. Patterson said he encour-

aged and expected faculty to be involved in the community in some volunteer capacity. My immediate supervisor, Janel Redditt, the first librarian at JDCC, had organized the Escambia County Historical Society.

My volunteer choice was to work with Girl Scouts. I was never a scout myself. In the rural area where I grew up, 4-H was the extracurricular activity of choice for young people. However, Kathy Smith, wife of JDJC Choral Director Larry Smith, asked me to be an assistant leader with her Brownie Scout Troop. I learned about scouting from Kathy-- and later from Diane Manning, wife of JDJC Ceramics Instructor Larry Manning. It was a joy to work with each of these Girl Scout leaders.

Then in 1980-81, with the help of a parent, Elsie Nall, I had my own troop. I kept a photo album for

*(Continued on page 12)*



**Photo shows the Cola D. Parker Scout Hut  
in the background.**

**Girl Scouts Celebrate Cookie Sales**  
Celebrating sales with a placard are girls of the Brownie Troop 309, who sold a total of 984 boxes of Girl Scout cookies.

Front row, from left, are Sharon Smith and Cindy Nall.

Middle row, are Rachel Buckhault, Christy Smith, Ruth Morgan, Shandrinke Barton, Melanie Watson, Keta Moore and Toni Thomas.

In the back row is Mrs. Judy Smith, cookie chairman for the troop.

With March 7-13 designated a Girl Scout Week, the troop, along with other area troops, was celebrating the 70th year of Girl Scouts, which was founded March 12, 1912.

Top salesgirl of Troop 309 was Christy Smith, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Smith.

Ann Biggs is troop leader.

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Girl Scouts In Brewton— A Year In The Life Of Troop 309

*(Continued from page 11)*

Brownie Troop 309, which I am now donating to the Thomas E. McMillan Museum at Coastal Alabama Community College's Brewton campus. The following girls were in my 1980-81 troop: Shandrinke Barton, Rachel Buckhault, Mitzi Fountain, Toi Littles, Keta Moore, Ruthie Morgan, Cindy Nall, Christy Smith, Sharon Smith, Toni Thomas, and Melanie Watson.

The photo album jogged my memory of some of the numerous activities in which the girls were involved. For example, they planted a Pink Dogwood in front of the Thomas E. McMillan Museum. If

memory serves me right, they planted a time capsule along with it. Troop 309 had an investiture service to present the scouts their pins. In addition to the weekly meetings, Troop 309 took field trips to places such as the Montgomery Zoo and W. A. Gayle Space Transit planetarium. The Scouts went to the movies at the Ritz Theater in Brewton. The girls had a party at Brewton Pizza Hut. Troop 309 made trips to the Dairy Queen and to Todd's Bake Shop.

In May, near the end of the school year, Troop 309 participated in an Association event coordinated by Anne Alford at Camp McMillan. Lorena Brickman and Jean White were the other leaders I remember.

*(Continued on page 13)*



**At Left, the Brownie Troop Visits  
The Montgomery Zoo**



**1981, Troop 309 Plants Pink Dogwood in  
Front of the McMillan Museum on  
Alabama Coastal  
(Formerly Jefferson Davis)  
Community College campus**



**At Left, Photo of the 4 top cookie sales-  
girls in Brownie Troop 309**



# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Girl Scouts In Brewton— A Year In The Life Of Troop 309

(Continued from page 12)

That was a day of fishing, hiking, nature walks, scavenger hunts, and game playing. I bought my very first fishing license to take “my girls” fishing that day. Mike Williams, who I was dating at the time and later married, made each of “my girls” their very own bamboo fishing pole. You can imagine that Miss Ann and Mrs. Elsie were impressed with that!

At each of our regular weekly meetings, there was a round metal tin called “The Cookie Tin,” that the scouts took turns taking home to bring to the next meeting full of cookies. The girls were particularly thrilled when the cookie tin came in with **homemade** cookies instead of bought cookies!

One of our Troop’s most memorable activities of that year was our entry in the Christmas Parade. At that time, Rev. J. S. Cunningham, who lived on the Ridge Road, used to travel to town on his wagon pulled by his horse, “Dolly.” Rev. Cunningham and Dolly traveled 5 miles to town and 5 miles back for the parade. Troop 309 looked really special in a horse drawn wagon. I guess I was naïve as a leader then since I didn’t seem to worry about any liability from using a volunteer with a horse drawn cart in the parade.

Then there was the big project of the year, the annual Girl Scout cookie sale. My troop sold 984 boxes that year. Mrs. Judy Smith, Mother of Christy and Sharon, was Cookie Chair for our Troop and did a tremendous job. Top sales girl was Christy Smith. Christy was in a “fly up” Ceremony when she moved to a junior troop.

There is a sad memory associated with our troop in later years. One of our Troop members, Rachel Buckhault died unexpectedly the summer of 1986. She was a loving child who died much too soon.

I talked on the phone with former Brewton Scout Leader Jean White prior to writing this article. She reminisced about all the good times she and Lorena Brickman had as leaders and some memorable camping experiences.

Lorena Brickman Frederick wrote a Letter to the Editor in the September 13, 2017 Brewton Standard, relaying her dismay at the end of scouting in Brewton. Lorena wrote in her letter that when the paper mill came to Brewton, wives of the workers led the troops. Lorena listed some past scout leaders, such as Estelle Low, Pearl Alford, Sybil Mitchell and Dement Hays. She stated that Mrs. Cola Parker brought scouting to Brewton. The Scout Hut in

(Continued on page 14)



### Fun-filled Wagon Ride

**Many children would have gladly traded places with the Brownies of Troop 309 in the Brewton Christmas Parade held Saturday, Dec. 5, 1981. The Rev. J. S. Cunningham and his horse “Dolly” provided a ride in the parade for the troop.**

**Moreover, Rev. Cunningham and Dolly drove five miles into Brewton and five miles back home the day of the parade.**

**With Rev. Cunningham, standing, Brownies on the wagon are: from the left, Rachel Buckhault, Shandrinke Barton, Toi Littles, Christy Smith, Keta Moore, Melanie Watson and Sharon Smith.**

**Troop members not pictured are Ruth Morgan, Cindy Nall and Toni Thomas.**

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Girl Scouts In Brewton— A Year In The Life Of Troop 309

(Continued from page 13)

Brewton has a plaque by the door named the Scout Hut, The Cola Parker Girl Scout Hut. The Brewton Civic League has been known over the years for sponsoring Girl Scouts locally.

In later years when I no longer worked with scouting, I encountered one funny story about the annual Girl Scout Cookie Sale. As a librarian at JDCC before the days of the Internet, we knew when an increasing number of patrons came to the library asking for the local newspaper to take to the photocopier, that there was something of interest in that particular issue. On one particular occasion, an article about the annual Girl Scout cookie sale touted a new variety of cookies that was “fat free.” The paper had mistakenly added an **r** to the word fat in a very strategic place to create a new word. My Father-in-Law, John Dana

Williams, known for his wit, said he was going to buy a dozen boxes of those cookies and photocopy the article to send to some of his old Navy buddies from World War II!

It still seems sad about the demise of Girl scouts in Brewton. I understand that participation is down nationwide. I guess kids have other activities they are involved with --and then there is that thing called a “smart” phone that seems to gobble up the time of young people and keep them tethered to cyberspace.

**Boy Scouts** and **Cub Scouts** are still active in Brewton with a charter from the Brewton First United Methodist Church. As I write this, the national organization for Boy Scouts announced on the evening news that **girls** will be allowed to join cub scouts in 2018 and scouts in 2019. My, my—how times have changed....



**At Left, Troop 309 Visits Todd's Bake Shop  
in Brewton, Alabama**



**The Brownie Troop with Fishing Poles**



# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Mayor W. R. Holly: Savior of the Town of Atmore

Taken from the website Alabama Pioneers, the story is by WPA writer Annie L. Bowman.

### The Story

Mayor W. R. Holly of Atmore was born and reared at Abbeville, Alabama. Although he moved here (Escambia County) when quite a young man, Mayor Holly is looked upon as the savior of the town of Atmore. He is about sixty years old and has been instrumental in saving the town from financial problems and embarrassing debts.

He finished high school in Abbeville and attended the University of Alabama, where he graduated with high honors. He says he did a little of everything while in college, studied a little, went to see the girls, gambled and drank some with the boys and played football, but he managed to get by some way.

### Principal of Brewton Institute

After he finished school, he took up teaching as a career and was principal of the Brewton Institute for a number of years. During this time he married a girl from his home town. However, he became disgusted with this work. It was too slow a way to make money.

In 1909 (?), he and his wife Ruth left Brewton and moved to Atmore where he went into the Drug Store business. He owned the Escambia Drug Store for years. He later sold it at a big profit and retired for a while. Sitting still was a hard task for him and he reopened a drug store across the railroad from the Escambia Drug Store. Here he prospered as he did in the other store.

However, he says he found this work so confining he sold out and bought farm and city property. He built a row of business houses in the northern part of the town which is called Holly Block. Aside from this, he sold mules and horses to the farmers about the country.



**1930's Business District on North Main, Atmore**



**Atmore City Hall ca. 1930**

He says, it is harder to take care of the money you make than it is to make it. At this time, things were not going in the town administration to suit him. "I had to look out for my property the best I could. I thought the best way would be to run for Mayor"

### Town Was Heavily Indebted

He has been in office nearly eight years now. When he took the office, the town was something like the country before Roosevelt went in office. It was badly in debt and things were getting worse. He began to clean up the waste and prepare for better government.

Now the town is in better shape than found in most small cities. After making substantial

payments on old accumulated debts, the city treasury showed a surplus of \$10,000 this year.

A new city hall has been built that is a credit to a town much larger than Atmore. A trim brick building which was built in 1936, at a cost of \$10,000 faces the railroad near the center of the town. Seven miles of street were paved also under this administration with city funds and about twenty miles of sidewalks were laid mostly with city funds.

### Debts Paid in Full

The town's debts are paid in full. The Brewton Standard and the Mobile Register have been very complimentary to Mr. Holly for the financial handling of the town's money and have paid their respects with articles of his good work in their papers. Mayor Holly says, he is proud of this little community and was more than proud to say that Atmore's financial conditions are in good shape and would continue this way as long as he is Mayor.

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

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We're on the web!  
[www.escohis.org](http://www.escohis.org)

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**Books for Sale**

|   | Regular | Mailed  |
|---|---------|---------|
| <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 |
| Addendum to Headstones and Heritage           | \$20.00 | \$25.00 |
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(\$25.00/person, \$35.00/two family member at same address; Lifetime, \$250.00/person; \$50.00/year business)

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**Dues are to be paid at the beginning of the year**

**Many members give a membership as a gift!**

**Business members get a large scale**  
**advertisement 11 months of the year.**

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

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