



The
Escambia
County
Historical
Society,
Founded
1971

The February Meeting
Tuesday, February 27, 2018
McMillan Museum
Coastal Alabama Community College
Brewton Campus
3:00 PM



The Program:
Presentation by Dr. Elizabeth Benchley on the
Exploration of the de Luna Settlement.

From the University of West Florida's (UWF)
Archaeology Program Profiles:

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

Dr. Benchley manages the institute's resources to support the academic and research interests of the division's faculty, staff and students.

Her local research focuses on the Spanish, British and American archaeology of the Pensacola area. She teaches courses in cultural resource management and writing in anthropology and she is active in public archaeology outreach.

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Don't forget to Bring Your Favorite Finger Food or Snack for the Refreshment Period after the Meeting. ECHS Will Provide the Drinks and Ice.

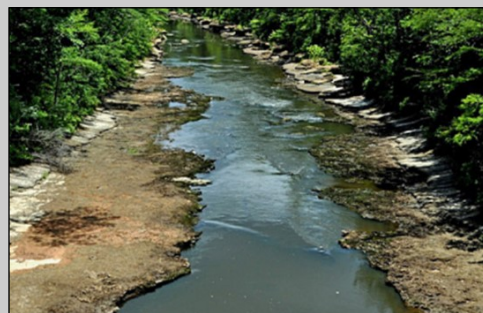
March Meeting

Tuesday, March 27, 2018



Sherry Johnston will present a program on "Our Rivers, Our Treasures-- Past, Present and Future."

Sherry is a Genealogist/Historian with the Evergreen/Conecuh Co. Public Library



The Sepulga River



Olive Jar Neck Sherd from de Luna Settlement

Volume 45 No. 2
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The Program

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Dr. Benchley received her doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where she directed the archaeological research laboratory and

managed the cultural resource management program for over 20 years.

She has authored hundreds of reports and monographs on her archaeological investigations in the Midwest and the Pensacola area. €

Site of First Multi-Year European Settlement in the U. S. Identified by University of West Florida Archaeology Program



**1559 Landing of Tristan de Luna at Pensacola.
Painting by Herbert Rudeen, 1959.**

*The University of West Florida's Press Release
Concerning the Luna Site Discovery - Dec. 17, 2015:*

The University of West Florida archaeology program recently identified the archaeological site of the Luna settlement – multi-year European settlement in the United States – in a developed neighborhood in Pensacola.

The artifacts discovered are evidence of the Spanish settlement by Tristian de Luna y Arellano from 1559 to 1561, the earliest multi-year European colonial settlement ever archaeologically identified in the United States.

The work began on Oct 2, 2015 when Pensacola native Tom Garner discovered Spanish colonial and

Native American artifacts at a privately owned residential lot within view of the two uncovered shipwrecks in Pensacola Bay, which were also linked to the Luna expedition.

In 1983, Garner attended a UWF archaeology field school led by Dr. Judith Bense, founder of the UWF archaeology program and current University president. Garner is well versed in the identification of historical artifacts and aware of areas considered likely candidates for the location of the Luna settlement.

After multiple visits and surface collections Garner brought the artifacts to the UWF archaeology lab on Oct. 30, 2015. Dr. John Worth, associate professor of

(Continued on page 3)

Site of First Multi-Year European Settlement in the U. S. Identified by University of West Florida Archaeology Program

(Continued from page 2)

historical archaeology, is an archaeology and ethno history expert and focuses on the Spanish colonial era in the southeastern U. S.

“What we saw in front of us in the lab that day was an amazing assemblage of mid-16th century Spanish colonial period artifacts,” said Worth. “These items were very specific to this time period. The university conducted fieldwork at this site in the mid-1980s, as have others since then, but no one had ever found diagnostics of the sort that Tom found on the surface. People have looked for this site for a long time.

With the cooperation and support of residents and property owners, UWF began test excavations at the site and recovered additional artifacts in undisturbed context. Worth is the principal site investigator and Dr. Elizabeth Benchley, director of the UWF archaeology program, provides administrative and financial support. Garner also recently joined the team as a research assistant and neighborhood liaison for the project.

UWF archaeologists recovered numerous sherd of broken 16th century Spanish ceramics found undisturbed beneath the ground surface. They are believed to be pieces of assorted cookware and tableware, including liquid storage containers called olive jars. Small personal and household items were also among the findings—a lead fishing line weight, a copper lacing aglet and wrought iron nail and spike fragments. Additionally, the teams recovered beads known to have been traded with Native Americans.

These items are consistent with materials previously identified in the shipwrecks offshore in Pensacola Bay.

The artifacts were linked to the Spanish expedition led by Tristan de Luna y Arellano, who brought 1,500 soldiers, colonists, slaves and Aztec Indians in 11 ships from Veracruz, Mexico, to Pensacola to begin the Spanish colonization of the northern Gulf Coast in 1559. One month after they arrived, the colony was struck by a hurricane, sinking many of their ships and devastating their food supplies. After two years, the remnants of the colony were rescued by Spanish ships and returned to Mexico.

The Luna settlement inhabited Pensacola from 1559 to 1561, which predates the Spanish settlement in St Augustine, Florida, by six years, and the English settlement in Jamestown, Virginia, by 48 years.

“If the Luna settlement hadn’t been devastated by a massive hurricane and had instead achieved its original goal, the reasons and circumstances surrounding the 1565 establishment of St. Augustine might never have happened,” explained Worth. “If Florida had grown as an extension of New Spain through Pensacola on the Gulf coast to Santa Elena on the Atlantic the history of the United States itself could have evolved quite differently.”

The winter encampment of Hernando de Soto’s Spanish exploratory expedition to Tallahassee Florida from 1539 to 1540, is the only earlier European habitation site positively identified by archaeologists in the southeastern U. S. Two earlier Spanish colonial settlements have yet to be found – those of Juan de Leon near Fort Myers, Florida, in 1521 and of Lucas Vazquez de Ayllon near Brunswick Georgia, in 1526. However, neither settlement lasted more than a few weeks.

The discoveries made at the site of the Luna settlement signify that the two shipwrecks previously discovered in Pensacola Bay were wrecked at the anchorage for the entire Luna fleet. The first shipwreck was discovered by the Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research, and the second was found by UWF. The second shipwreck is currently being excavated by UWF with the assistance of a Florida Division of Historical Resources Special Category Grant. This new information about the location of the settlement may help UWF archaeologists narrow the field of search for the remaining shipwrecks.

With the continued cooperation of residents and property owners, UWF archaeologists will continue to examine the neighborhood to determine the extent and organization of the site.

“The shipwrecks have provided a tremendous insight into the nature of the machinery that brought Spain to the New World and how they operated this entire vast empire,” explained Worth. “In terms of understanding who they were after coming to the New World, this kind of archaeology at the terrestrial site will provide us that window.”

... “It’s hard to believe that this opportunity is finally here,” said Worth. “Not only do we know where the site is, but now we get to explore it.”

In order to protect the neighborhood and the integrity of the site, the UWF archaeology program does not plan to disclose the exact location of the Luna settlement. €

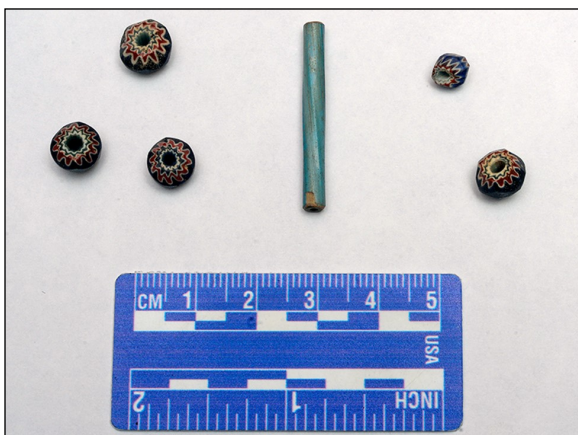
Artifacts Found at the Luna Settlement



Wrought Iron Nails.



Assorted Metal Artifacts Including Two Decorative Sheet Copper Rosettes, Rolled Lead Line Weights, a Fragment of an Engraved Copper Bell, and a Rolled Copper Aglet, or Lacing Tip.



Glass Trade Beads, Including Five Seven-layer Faceted Chevron Beads, and One Tubular Nueva Cadiz Twisted bead (with Scale).



Sherds of Spanish Lead Glazed Coarse Earthenware.



Sherds of Incised, Punctated and Plain Native American Pottery.

Tom Garner's Firsthand Account Of Discovering the Luna Settlement

The following article is from the website of the University of West Florida (UWF) Department of Anthropology and Archaeology (<https://uwf.edu/cassh/departments/anthropology-and-archaeology/luna-settlement/>).

Locating the site of the 1559 settlement of Tristán de Luna has been a "holy grail" of Pensacola historians and archaeologists for many years, likely since the publication of "The Luna Papers" in 1928.

My interest in the settlement began in the early 1980s under the guidance of Norman Simons, former curator of the Pensacola Historical Museum in Old Christ Church and later the first curator of the T. T. Wentworth Jr. Florida State Museum. Norman instilled in me a love of Pensacola history and, as an avid supporter of Pensacola archaeology, started me down the path of artifact identification.

In 1983, at the urging of Norman, I attended an archaeology field school at the University of West Florida under the direction of Dr. Judy Bense. It was through Judy that I learned professional archaeological methods. In my mind it was Norman Simons and Judy Bense who, more than 30 years ago, set the stage for the discovery of the Luna settlement.

On Oct. 2, 2015, while driving through a Pensacola neighborhood, I noticed an area of ground that had recently been disturbed. Based on information contained in "The Luna Papers," this general vicinity had, since at least the early 1980s, been considered a possible candidate for the site of the Luna settlement. The presence nearby of two shipwrecks associated with the Luna expedition further pointed to this general vicinity as a likely candidate.

With this information in mind I checked the area of disturbed ground to see if any artifacts might be present. I immediately noticed a large rim fragment of what I identified as middle style olive jar, a Span-



Tom Garner with Assorted Pottery Sherds He Originally Found on the Surface of the Luna Settlement, including Spanish Olive Jar, Lead Glazed Coarse Earthenware, Majolica, and Incised and Plain Native American Pottery.

ish colonial pottery type, as well as several other fragments of pottery. Although middle style olive jars can occur over a significant time range, I knew that they could possibly be associated with the mid-16th century.

With the idea in mind that this artifact could represent the Luna settlement, I contacted the UWF Archaeology Institute and explained what I had found. The institute then began the process of establishing contact with the property owner so that further investigation could take place.

On Oct. 23, I revisited the area of disturbed ground and noticed that the middle style olive jar rim was still in place. At that point, I decided to perform a thorough surface collection of the area as artifacts exposed on the surface of the ground are susceptible to damage or collection by persons untrained in archaeological methods. It was

my desire in collecting these potentially significant artifacts that they be properly preserved and not removed or damaged.

During the course of this first surface collection, I discovered a large fragment of Columbia Plain majolica pottery, which can clearly date to the mid-16th century. At that point I understood that the site was likely associated with the Luna expedition. I immediately called the Archaeology Institute again, explained what I had found, and informed them that I had begun surface collection.

Over the course of the next week, I performed three additional surface collections of the area of disturbed ground and recovered numerous Spanish colonial and Native American artifacts, primarily fragments of pottery. On Oct. 30, I brought the collected artifacts to the UWF Archaeology Laboratory where they were viewed by:

- Jan Lloyd, Director of the UWF Archaeology Laboratory
- Dr. John Worth, Associate Professor of Historical

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Tom Garner's Firsthand Account Of Discovering the Luna Settlement

(Continued from page 5)

Archaeology in the UWF Department Anthropology

• Dr. Elizabeth Benchley, Director of the UWF Division of Anthropology and Archaeology and Director of the UWF Archaeology Institute.

John, an authority on Spanish colonial artifacts, archaeology and documents, confirmed that this artifact assemblage did date to the mid-16th century and was likely associated with the Luna settlement. John's

initial assessment of the artifacts was "Holy Moly!"—the best assessment of an archaeological site I've ever heard.

One week later, on Nov. 6, with the generous permission and support of the property owners, a UWF archaeology team under the direction of Dr. John Worth, with assistance from Dr. Elizabeth Benchley, began preliminary investigation of the site of the 1559 settlement of Tristán de Luna. €

Brief Chronology of the Tristan de Luna y Arellano Expedition

This material is from the website of the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology of UWF at (<https://uwf.edu/cassh/departments/anthropology-and-archaeology/luna-settlement/>).

- **June 11, 1559:** The Luna fleet departs from San Juan de Ulúa (Veracruz).
*Note: San Juan de Ulúa, also known as Castle of San Juan de Ulúa, is a large complex of fortresses, prisons and one former palace on an island of the same name in the Gulf of Mexico overlooking the seaport of Veracruz, Mexico (*From Wikipedia*).
- **July 12, 1559:** The fleet reaches the coast of Florida at Santa Rosa Island near modern Navarre Beach.
- **Late July, 1559:** Accidentally passing the Bay of Ochuse (Pensacola Bay), the fleet reaches the Bay of Filipina (Mobile Bay), offloading surviving horses to travel by land back to Ochuse.
- **August 14, 1559:** The fleet arrives at the Bay of Ochuse (Pensacola Bay), selecting a site for settlement (christened Santa Maria de Ochuse) and off loading ships over the following five weeks.
- **September 1559:** An exploratory detachment of 100 men under two captains is sent into the interior from Ochuse, one by land and the other by water up the Escambia River returning after traveling 20 leagues in 20 days and arriving just after the hurricane.
- **September 19-20:** A hurricane strikes the fleet at Ochuse destroying all but three vessels and most of the provisions.
September –November 1559: A detachment of 200 men under four captains is sent back into the interior from Ochuse, discovering a large Indian

town called Nanipacana along the central Alabama River some 40 leagues inland, remaining there and sending word back to Ochuse.

- **December 1559:** The first relief fleet arrives in Ochuse from San Juan de Ulúa.
- **Mid-February, 1560:** Luna and most of the remaining colonists move inland by land and water from Ochuse to Nanipacana (christened Santa Cruz de Nanipacana), leaving 50-100 men at Ochuse.
- **Mid March-Early April, 1560:** Luna sends a detachmet in four boats upriver from Nanipacana, returning in 22 days after traveling 60-70 leagues along the Alabama River.
- **April 15, 1560:** Luna sends a detachment of 200 soldiers under Sergeant Major Mateo del Sauz upriver from Nanipacana to the Coosa province (near Calhoun, Georgia) in search of food.
- **June 24, 1560:** After multiple petitions from starving soldiers and other colonists, Luna orders Nanipacana abandoned, and colonists descend to Mobile Bay.
- **Late July, 1560:** Luna's colonists move from Mobile Bay back to Ochuse on Pensacola Bay; a second relief fleet arrives in Ochuse eight days later; some colonists are evacuated with the returning feet.
- **August 10, 1560:** Luna dispatches 50-60 men in two frigates and a bark to sail to Havana and proceeds to establish a temporary settlement at the Punta de Santa Elena (Parris Island, South Carolina).
- **Late August, 1560:** The Sauz detachment

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Brief Chronology of the Tristan de Luna y Arellano Expedition

(Continued from page 6)

accompanies Coosa warriors in a raid on the rebellious Napochin province (near Chattanooga, Tennessee).

- **About November, 1560:** The Sauz detachment returns to Ochuse from Coosa.
- **December 1560:** A third relief fleet arrives in Ochuse from San Juan de Ulura; more colonists are evacuated with the returning fleet.
- **Early April, 1561:** A fourth relief fleet arrives under Angel de Villafane, with orders from the Viceroy to replace Luna as governor; Luna is licensed to go to Spain, with most of the remaining colonists taken by Villafane to Havana,

leaving only a detachment of 50 men at Ochuse.

- **May 27, 1561:** After staging the expedition in Havana, Villafane reaches Santa Elena exploring northward before storms and the loss of two frigates force him to abandon the settlement.
- **Late August, 1561:** After returning to Hispaniola and Cuba, Villafane returns to Ochuse to pick up the remaining soldiers before returning to San Juan de Ulua.

*Note: Hispaniola, Spanish La Española, is the Second largest island of the West Indies, lying within the Greater Antilles, in the Caribbean Sea. It is divided politically into the Republic of Haiti (west) and the Dominican Republic (east). €

Working with the Luna Excavation

By Charlie Ware

Little did I know that when I stopped to visit with my uncle that day (August 20, 2015) I would be witness to the beginnings of one of the most significant archeological discoveries in the history of the United States. My uncle, who was 96 years old at the time, had lived at this beautiful location overlooking Pensacola Bay for almost fifty years.

When I arrived, he was walking across his yard carrying a folding chair. It turned out that a bull-dozer was about to demolish an old house across the street and he wanted a ring-side seat for the entertainment. I went and got a chair for myself and joined him as the bull-dozer began plowing through the house. After about an hour the house was flattened and workers began loading the scrap on to trucks.

A few weeks later, as this site was being prepared for construction of a new house, Pensacola historian Tom Garner happened to be walking by when he spotted sherds of pottery in the upturned dirt. He asked if he could examine it and discovered it was the rim of a 16th century olive jar. He gathered several items and took them to the Archeology Department of the University of West Florida where it was confirmed that the items would be consistent with an early Spanish settlement.

In November, the owners of the site agreed to stop work on the house for five days to allow the University to conduct further excavations. These excavations resulted in numerous sherds of pottery, metal objects, and beads. Archeologists were then

sure they had discovered the site of the 16th century Tristan de Luna settlement. Their next chore was to branch out to determine the extent and layout of the settlement.

Meetings were held with property owners in the neighborhood to get permission to do excavations on their properties. The University assured all property owners that all care would be taken and the property would be returned to its original condition. My uncle agreed and work was scheduled to start in his front yard on February 17, 2016.

I knew I couldn't miss out on this opportunity to witness history in the making, so I traveled to Pensacola to be there at the break of day on the morning the work was to begin. The excavation crews arrived a short while later and began to unload their equipment. They were archeology students from the University of West Florida and I was surprised that most of them were young women.

The yard had been surveyed and marked with red flags. The sample digs were to be in a pattern about twenty feet apart. Each hole was to be about two feet square and three to four feet deep. The insides of the holes would be examined for texture and layering. When dirt was taken from a hole, it was put into a sifter. The sifter was a contraption about the size of a card table and had handles so it could be shaken. The screens were of varying thickness so that even the smallest items would eventually be trapped.

I walked around and watched the operation for a while. Shortly after starting to dig, several pieces of

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Working with the Luna Excavation

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pottery had been found and everyone was getting excited about the work. I felt an urge to participate, so I volunteered to help. I was put in charge of shaking one of the sifters.

Within a few minutes of starting my job, I spotted a small object on the screen. I picked it out and gave it to one of the instructors. He carefully removed some of the dirt, examined the object with an eyepiece, and called everyone over to see. It was an Indian trade bead which the Spanish acquired in Italy and brought to the New World to use for trade. A phone call was made to the University and soon a number of archeologists arrived to examine the bead. This had been a very significant find.

Thinking about this later, I realized I had been the first human to touch this bead in over 450 years. I'm sure it must have changed hands many times back in the 1500's, but I couldn't help wondering who the last person was who handled it before it became lost and buried.

A number of other objects were discovered that day. Digging continued later in the back yard and sonar has detected several large formations buried deep in the ground. These have not yet been excavated but it has been determined that my uncle's yard was at, or very near, the center of the location of the Luna settlement. I can't wait to see what turns up next. €



The Indian Trade Bead Which Charlie Found When He Was Using a



Top to Bottom, a Bead, a Pottery Sherd, and a Wrought Iron Nail.



Digging for Treasure



Using a Sifter.

Con

Continued on Page 9)

Working with the Luna Excavation



A Pottery Sherd



A Sample Pit or Dig.



An Instructor Examining an Object with An Eye Piece



Instructors Having a Conference.



Starting a Dig or Pit.



Top to Bottom, a Bead, a Pottery Sherd, and a Wrought Iron Nail.

News and Announcements

Bob McMillan, Brother of Tom McMillan, Passed Away This Month

Bob, who was noted for his support of civic and cultural activities, generously giving of his time, energy, and resources, is remembered with by two ECHS members.

From Ann Biggs-Williams, "One memory I have of Bob is that in my early years at JDJC, Bob was often in the musicals at the college and he and his wife would always sponsor a party for the cast after the play. I remember when the college acquired its very first video camera (since I did the videotaping) and how excited the cast members were when Drama Instructor Hermine Holzborn showed the first videotape of the play at the cast party."

Darryl Searcy recalls, "When I was with the City of Brewton Tree and Beautification, and if Mr. Bob saw me working at Burnt Corn Creek Park (now Jennings Park) or at City Park, he never failed to stop to ask how I was doing and if I needed working tools or supplies.

"If something was needed, I would tell him. In a few minutes or the next day the tool or supplies would be delivered to me along with a bottle of water. It was the same if I were on 31 South trimming and pruning the crepe myrtle trees, or working with the sidewalk plant boxes and hanging baskets.

"I'm not sure if he ever knew my name, but I am sure that he cared deeply about my welfare and about what I was doing."

ECHS Members Tom McMillan and Don Sales attended the Birthday Bash Celebration at the L & N Depot in Evergreen, AL.

The event hosted by the local Bicentennial Committee served a birthday cake, of course, but also Alabama shaped cookies. Area historical societies were invited to set up tables with exhibits showing their history with Conecuh County. Bicentennial Committee members were present in period dress.

Don Sales' take on the event, "Good food, good friends and fun."



A View of the ECHS Table Showing Exhibits from the McMillan Museum, the Alabama Room, ECHS, and Coastal Alabama Community College
Both Photos of the Event Courtesy of Cleveland Brown



Tom McMillan and Don Sales with Sherry Johnston Who Will Present the March Program for ECHS

WEBJ Has a New Radio Interview Show "Loyd and Friends: Interesting Conversations with Interesting People" at 7 am. at 1240 a.m. on the Radio Dial.

The show will also be available at www.webjradio.com according to info on the Facebook page for WEBJ1240am. €

Snapshots of the ECHS January 2018 Meeting



John Angel, New Treasurer for ECHS



The Program Was "Show and Tell." Here Jacque Stone displays part of her trivet collection.



Paul Merritt shows photo of Old Main, a dormitory at Mississippi State destroyed by fire. Paul was in the dorm and escaped with one important item, his typewriter. The Dorm fire was later connected to a famous murder and trial.



Sally Finlay shows a wrench found wedged in a tree.



Charlie Ware with framed picture of his kindergarten band and the uniform jacket made by his mother.



Back Row, Jo and Robin Brewton and Front Row, Susan Blair, Jacque Stone, and Beverly Stark.

Snapshots of the ECHS January 2018 Meeting *(continued)*



An early kitchen item brought by Lydia Grimes.



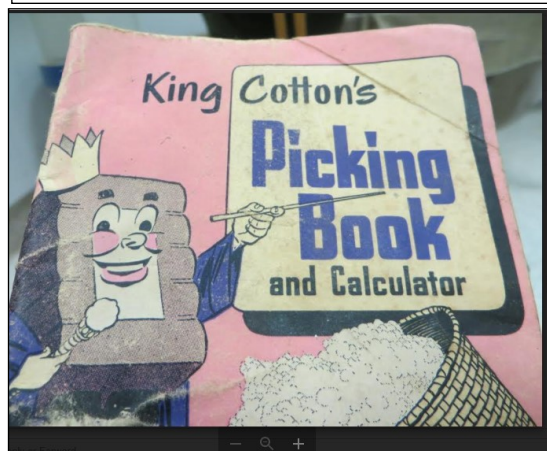
Items Made out of Horseshoes brought by Jacque Stone.



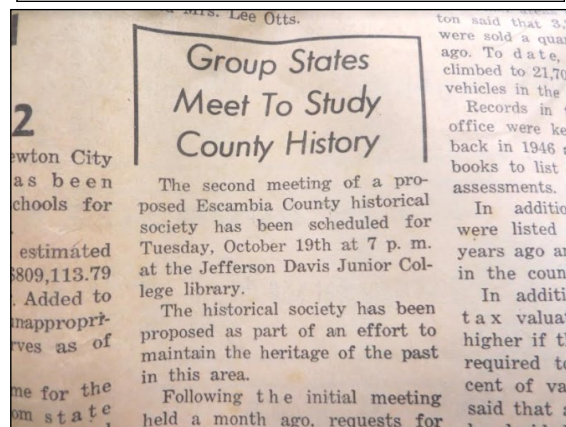
Miniature model of stove which rolling stores operators carried with them for customers to see what they could order. Items brought by Don Sales.



Barbara Page shows playbill for the Ritz Theatre from period of 1940-1945. She has donated it to the McMillan Museum.



Ann Biggs-Williams brought a King Cotton record book used by cotton pickers.



Carolyn Jennings brought Oct. 14, 1971 Brewton Standard with announcement of second meeting of committee planning to establish an historical society which eventually became ECHS

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Legacy of the Strength Family

The Legacy of a Heritage Farm

The couple shown in the picture to the right are part of a family whose ancestors have been a part of Escambia County history since the establishment of Fort Crawford. The couple, Byron and Christine Strength, are in the backyard of Byron's family home in the Pineview community in Escambia County. The property has been in Byron's family for 140 plus years, since it was purchased by Byron's grandfather, Coleman Strength, in 1876.

Lydia Grimes in her article in the *Brewton Standard* on the Strength family and their farm says that Coleman "bought 320 acres of land from Henry Morningstar and used the virgin longleaf pine trees to build a home for his wife, Nancy Jernigan, and a family of five children. He also floated timbers down the creeks and rivers to Pensacola where they were sold and paid for with silver dollars" (<http://www.brewtonstandard.com/2016/10/19/its-an-ol-fashioned-barn-raising/>).

Coleman's son Frank inherited 80 acres from his father in 1910. He and his wife, Mary Moye, built a family home in 1911 and raised seven children. Byron Strength was one of those seven children.

Byron's daughter Theresa Bell and her husband Jerry Bell, present owners of the farm, in their online blog describe the current purpose and function of the farm, now called Legacy Acres: "Legacy Acres has been a part of our family for over



Frank and Christine Strength, photographed at Frank's family home in the Pineview community in Escambia County.

The couple were married in 1948. Frank passed away in November of 2017.

The Pineview community is located off HWY 113, west of Brewton. It is said to be the highest point in Escambia County, AL



**The Strength Family Home
The two pecan trees were planted in 1911. Photos on this page were made in October 2016.**

140 years. The property has been used to raise cattle, hogs and timber as well as growing corn, hay, peanuts, cotton and soybeans.

"It all started with Coleman Strength, our great grandfather. Seeing an opportunity, he purchased 320 acres from Henry Morningstar on August 30, 1876. Since then we have worked hard to keep the land in our family from one generation to the next by farming and selling timber. In 2013, Legacy Acres was designated as an Alabama Century and Heritage Farm by the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industry.

"We realized that our family wasn't going to take up the trade of farming when both children went off to become engineers. With that in mind, we wanted to leave a lasting legacy for them to come back and visit. Legacy Acres was born from that. We wanted to provide a place for not only events but learning for children and adults alike.

"By providing a real 'farm experience' we hope to encourage people to start their own farms, get outside and learn more about their own environment. The year 2016 is our inaugural year in this business, but we are working to provide a quality experience for all that come to our farm" (<http://www.legacyacresal.com/history/>).

*Note: Heritage or century farms must have been in continuous use by the same family for over 100 years.

As mentioned, Theresa and her husband began their project of making Legacy Acres an agritourist and

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Legacy of the Strength Family

(Continued from page 14)

event destination in 2016. They have built a new barn with a caterer's kitchen and rest rooms which allows them to use it for weddings, corporate meetings, reunions and other meetings or other get-togethers.

In continuing the family's tradition of stewardship and preservation, they still have a herd of Brangus cows and produce the corn and grass to feed them. The Bells also grow sweet corn, squash, tomatoes, okra and watermelons. In the spring they allow the public to enjoy a "you pick" period for tomatoes and some other vegetables

They have carried on the family's tradition of giving back to the community. We learn from an article in Cooperative Farming News that the Bells raise sugar cane and donate it to Crossover Ministry, a group from Opp, Alabama who help men overcome drug addiction. The men come to their farm to cut and strip the cane. Then, they make the syrup at their campus and return some for the Bells to sell.

The Bells also continue the family tradition of selling pecans from trees planted by their ancestors. Teresa often shares the family story of the five pecans. When Theresa's grandmother married, an uncle gave her five pecans to plant. He told her the proceeds from these trees would pay her taxes each year. Although only two of the original trees are left, as Hurricane Ivan destroyed the other trees in 2004, the remaining trees still produce many pecans that the Bells sell each fall (<http://www.alafarmnews.com/index.php/a-legacy-of-loveo>).

The Fort Crawford and Andrew Jackson Legacy

As descendants of Benjamin Jernigan, by Coleman Strength's marriage to Nancy Jernigan, the Strength family can trace their roots back to the earliest settlers in Escambia County. Benjamin is mentioned as one of the earliest settlers at Fort Crawford and as a friend of Andrew Jackson.

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To the Left, Frank Strength and Wife, Mary Moya Strength With Their Children

In 1911, Frank Strength and Mary Moya married and took over the family farm. This began the true agricultural farming that is still done to this day at Legacy Acres. They raised a family of seven children with all of them working on the farm at some point in their life.

Their son, Byron Strength, continued farming the land, some of which was owned by his sister Olene Cooper, after Frank retired. Byron raised cattle, cotton, corn, hogs, soybeans and timber. Byron is shown with his wife Christin on the previous page.

Pictures and texts from <<http://www.legacyacresal.com/family/>>.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Legacy of the Strength Family

(Continued from page 15)

Kevin McKinley in an article for the Brewton Standard says of Benjamin, "He settled within two and a half miles of where Fort Crawford subsequently stood, and on the west side of Burnt Corn Creek, within three-quarters of a mile of the present site of Brewton. This was in the latter part of 1816, or early 1817. Not more than two or three settlements had been made in the county at that time.

Mr. Jernigan was soon joined by James Thomson, Benjamin Brewton, R.J. Cook, Lofton and Loddy Cotton" (<http://www.brewtonstandard.com/2017/04/26/early-church-was-among-first-in-county/>)

Benjamin Riley, in his History of Conecuh County, comments: "At this time the fort was occupied by the Seventh Georgia Regiment. General Jackson was in the habit of visiting the home of Benjamin Jernigan-the father of the venerable William

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Jerry and Teresa Bell in Front of the New Barn at Legacy Acres. Behind them is the sign designating Legacy Acres as a Century and Heritage Farm.



Frank Strength, Theresa Bell's grandfather, built this home in 1911. The Bells hope to restore the home that suffered some damage from Hurricane Ivan.



The Bell family are (from left, back row) Seth, holding Millie; Angie; Whitney; (front) Cooper; Jerry; Owen; and Theresa. They are standing in front of the home built by Theresa's grand father in 1911.

Photograph and text from
<<http://www.alafarmnews.com/index.php/a-legacy-of-love>>.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Legacy of the Strength Family of Escambia County, Alabama

(Continued from page 16)

Jernigan, now a resident of Pollard. Mr. Jernigan had removed with his family from Burnt Corn Springs for the purpose of herding cattle for Jackson's army.

From the direction of Pensacola, Jackson sent the Jernigan family supplies by the Conecuh River, and many were the annoyances to which the boatmen were subjected by the Indians firing upon them from the thickets along the banks" (<https://books.google.com>). €

Atmore's Newspaper History

By R. W. Brooks

The following article is taken from the ECHS newsletter for January 7, 1974. It appeared in the Atmore Advance, May 18, 1932.

The man who goes into the newspaper business is like the fellow who has typhoid fever. If it don't kill him, it leaves him in bad shape. In other words, he is never the same any more. He wants to be a newspaper man or work on one and nothing else will ever satisfy him. Atmore has boasted of a newspaper since 1903 and I have been connected with it directly or indirectly a good deal of the time. I have never gotten over liking the business.

The first newspaper was started in Atmore in September 1903 by John M. Gatlin, who moved from Century and started the Atmore News having it printed in Atlanta by the Western Newspaper Union. He later sold to Dr. D. C. Burson who changed the name of the paper to the Atmore-Spectrum or rather the News was merged into the Spectrum. He edited the paper until 1912, assisted by his sister, Miss Blanch, and as that was in the days before the linotype, she

got to be almost an expert at setting type. I think sometimes she longs for the chance to do some more newspaper work. The paper was sold to Mr. Neil who hailed from the far west, Nebraska. Neil was a good newspaper man as far as the mechanical department was concerned but I was called on to edit the paper, which I did until he went to Brewton and purchased the Standard Gauge of that city.

The Record was later sold to different parties, none of them making much success of it and at last it was bought by R. B. Vail of Bay Minette, now owner of the Baldwin County Times. He later sold it to Mr. Sharp of Mobile. In the meantime, Tup Lucas came to Atmore and started a printing establishment and later started the Atmore Advance. Mr. Sharp struggled alone with it for a few months and finally gave it up and moved the plant to Mobile. The Advance came out just in time to take its place and give the people of this section an up to the date local newspaper, and as the merchants soon waked up to the fact that it pays to advertise, it continues to grow and now has close to 1500 subscribers and to say the least for it, it is decidedly the best paper in Escambia County. €

Rev. R. W. Brooks: Author of "Atmore's Newspaper History"

The full title for this article is "Rev. R. W. Brooks: Biography and Genealogy, Interviewed by Annie L. Bowman, January 18, 1940."

Rev. R. W. Brooks, of Atmore, has been in this county longer than any living man now residing here, (1940) and he knows more about the history of the county, possibly than any other person.

Rev. Brooks is now 88 years old (1940), and came to this county about the time the county was formed. His mental faculties are alert and up to the minute, and his memory which carries him back to before the

Civil War times are marvelous to those who meet him and hear his stories of the past.

He is not only a retired minister, but Justice of the Peace, Railroad Agent, Express Agent, Postmaster, Editor and Writer.

He has served as pastor of Baptist churches here and in Mississippi and Florida. He has always lived an active life, it being devoted to his church, his family and friends. He seems to be happiest when doing something for others, and he numbers his friends by the hundreds (<http://www.alabamapioneers.com/biography-rev-r-w-brooks/>). €

ECHOES
THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

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