



The  
Escambia  
County  
Historical  
Society,  
Founded  
1971

**The April Meeting  
Tuesday, April 24, 2018  
McMillan Museum  
Coastal Alabama Community College  
Brewton Campus  
3:00 PM**

## The Program



**Photo on the website requesting donations for documenting the first prehistoric trade canal in north America (566 AD). <<https://www.gofundme.com/prehistoic-intercostal-trade-canal>>.**

Guest speaker Harry King will be sharing his discovery of "Prehistoric Indian Trade Routes and the Trade Canal being documented in Gulf Shores, Alabama."

Dr. Gregory Waselkov, Director of the Center for Archeological Studies at the University of South Alabama, will be accompanying him.

Harry A. King grew up in Andalusia, Alabama as the youngest of four boys. He graduated from Livingston University with a BS, Business Administration Degree and immediately entered Officer Candidate School as a

*(Continued on page 2)*

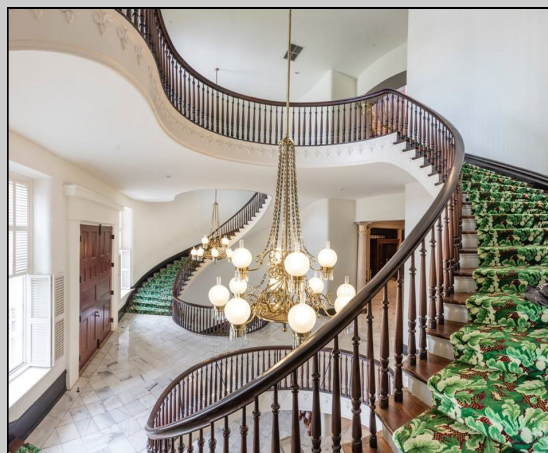
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**The ECHS May Meeting  
Tuesday, May 22, 2018  
McMillan Museum  
3:00 p. m.**

**Guest Speaker Tom Parker, Associate Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, will speak on the English Common Law which is the Basis of American Law.**



**Staircase Alabama State Capital**



**Dome of Alabama State Capital**

**Volume 45 No. 4**

**April 2018**

**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.**

## The Program



**Naples, Florida—An artist's rendering of a canal that was probably used as a shortcut for transporting goods by the Calusa has been dated to between 800 and 1100 A.D.**

**Robert Carr, executive director of the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy (located in Davie, Florida), said that the canal is part of a complex web of canals in southern Florida. This section of the canal was found with ground-penetrating radar in the center of modern Naples. "These canals are the only transportation canals in North America outside of Mexico. So, in that sense they are a major engineering marvel that indigenous people have constructed," he told WGCU (<https://www.archaeology.org/news/2129-140521-florida-calusa-canal>).**

**Note: The Calusa were a Native American people of Florida's southwest coast.**

*(Continued from page 1)*

flight student at Pensacola Naval Air Station. He is retired (LCDR) from the US Naval Reserve and has been an active volunteer at the National Museum of Naval Aviation, Pensacola, Florida.

A long-term real estate broker/developer in Florida and Alabama, Harry has developed properties that include Lafitte Cove Marina and Peg Leg's Oyster Bar on Pensacola Beach and Blakely Plantation subdivision in Baldwin County Alabama. Harry is currently a broker with National Land Realty.

Harry and his wife, Anita, are parents to Harry King, Jr. and Katy King Elliott and are active grandparents to Kayla Rose. He and Anita are members of St. Andrew by the Sea Church.

Harry is an avid bow hunter and fisherman and archeology hobbyist. He enjoys Little Lagoon where he has spearheaded archeology digs on Little Lagoon in coordination with the University of South Alabama. He participates in water quality testing and oyster harvesting that is coordinated through Little Lagoon Preservation Society. €

## Prehistoric Alabamians

*The following material comes from a brochure on Alabama Indians at <<https://www.nps.gov/ruca/planyourvisit/upload/alabama-indians-brochure-finished-2-2.pdf>>.*

### The First Alabamians

Twelve thousand years ago or more, primitive hunters followed huge mastodons and ground sloths into Alabama's valleys. The great beasts died out, but the hunters survived. Slowly, unevenly, their descendants built the remarkable cultures found almost 500 years ago by the first Europeans.



**Russell Cave-8,000 B. C.**  
**Russell Cave is located in northeast Alabama near the town of Bridgeport in Jackson County. It is a significant archaeological site that provides a record of thousands of years of human use.**

**Native Americans from the Archaic period to the historic era occupied Russell Cave.**

*(Continued on page 3)*



# Prehistoric Alabamians

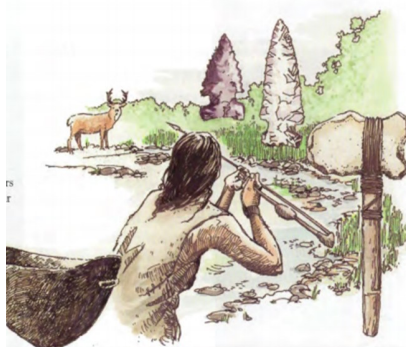
(Continued from page 2)



**Mabila-1540**  
**Chief Taskaluska and**  
**Hernando De Soto**  
In a battle between these two leaders at the Indian town of Maliba, Spanish victory proved costly with the loss of luggage and other supplies, including proofs of richness of the land which would have attracted future colonists. This development was a decisive blow to the Spanish plans for conquest and settlement of the southeastern U. S.



**Creek Wars-1812-1814**  
**Andrew Jackson and**  
**Red Eagle**  
Horseshoe Bend, located in what is now Tallapoosa County, was the final battle in the Creek War of 1812-1814. Jackson with an overwhelming force, defeated the Creeks, the decisive victory earning him national recognition. As a result, in the Treaty of Fort Jackson the Creeks ceded 21 million acres of land to the U. S. Red Eagle who had led the Creeks at Fort Mims did not participate in the battle.



## Paleo Indians

**The First Families of Alabama (from 10,000 B.C. to about 7000 B.C.)**

Their ancestors probably came into America across the land

bridge between Alaska and Siberia 20,000 or more years ago. By at least 12,000 years ago, these hunters migrated, following game across North America into the timbered land that is now Alabama. In addition to smaller prey, they sought mastodons, giant bison, and other animals now long vanished.

Paleo Indians roamed in small family bands of no more than 25 to 30 people. They lived off the land, gathering plants and hunting the huge Ice Age beasts whose meat was food and whose skins provided clothing and shelter.

It was life with one primary focus — survival.

Today these nomads' distinctive stone spear points and scrapers are found throughout Alabama. In the late Paleo period they developed better tools and increased their hunting skills.

Then the climate warmed and the Ice Age faded.



## ARCHAIC

**Hunters and Gatherers (from about 7000 B.C. to 1000 B.C.)**

As the weather and environment changed, the great beasts became extinct. Now Native Americans focused more on smaller

game such as deer, turkey, rabbit, and even skunk, fox, and wildcat. Streams provided fish and mussels. Gathering nuts, berries, roots, and greens, Archaic Indians had a varied, healthy diet.

(Continued on page 4)

# Prehistoric Alabamians

(Continued from page 3)

Archaic people established more permanent camps close to plentiful food sources, making seasonal trips to the best hunting grounds. Hunters gained distance and accuracy with the introduction of the atlatl, a spear thrower. Craftsmen chipped out an array of stone tools and weapons and carved fine stone and shell ornaments. Carved stone pots and, later, simple pottery permitted cooking and food storage.

Cultures did not advance evenly in all parts of the state. While some groups still lived an Archaic way of life, others had already taken a major step into the next phase of sophistication.



## WOODLAND Crops, Pots, and Burial Mounds (from about 1000 B.C. to 800 A.D.)

Cultivation began when Indians discovered they could grow food in addition to

gathering wild plants. This more dependable food supply did away with the need for seasonal migration and Woodland people started settling in villages.

While hunting and fishing remained important, the focus of life had shifted. Now there was time to develop art and religion. Pottery not only was useful, but it often flourished into an art form. Intricate designs graced beautifully shaped vessels.

The Woodland people mastered carving, leaving behind both fanciful and lifelike stone effigies of themselves and the animals surrounding them. Artists also fashioned shells and stones into decorations.

Complex religious rituals resulted in creating burial mounds which today are widely scattered throughout the state. Trade with other groups brought conch shells from the Gulf of Mexico and copper from the Great Lakes.

The prosperity of the Woodland Indians ushered in the next and grandest era of prehistoric Alabama Indian culture.



## Mississippian

### The Temple Mound Builders (from about 800 A.D. to 1500 A.D.)

It was a society based on raising corn. Bolstered by extensive trade, the economy supported an art

community and great public works.

Mississippians developed elaborate rituals and a complex social structure. Across the South into the Midwest, they built mounds to support temples and the homes of their nobles. Skilled artists worked with stone, pottery, bone, and copper, creating beautifully formed and decorated objects. The society was structured with classes of priests, nobles, warriors, craftsmen, and workers.

As many as 3,000 people once lived at Moundville, Alabama's best known Mississippian site. For 500 years no city in the Southeast again reached that size. Here some 29 mounds, protected by a palisade, overlooked the river plain.

Smaller centers flourished on other rivers. Satellite villages grew up along the streams for many miles around these major religious and market centers, some 12,000 people total allied with the Moundville chiefdom.

Archaeology at Moundville Archaeological Park shows no Native American contact with the white man. A sophisticated culture flourished then declined as political instability tore apart the fabric of their society. €



# News and Announcements

## April is Confederate History and Heritage Month



This note from ECHS member Keiron McGowin,

This is Confederate History and Heritage Month. Today, 4/12/18, I went to Old Mason Cemetery on 29 in Dixie and cleaned the grave and placed flags for my great great grandfather, Jacob Lewis McGowin (also an Escambia County Commissioner in 1880s). I found thistle and camellias nearby to place on his grave. Have a wonderful day!

\*\*\*\*\*



## Alabama Archives Needs Help in Recording WORLD WAR I SERVICE RECORDS

Robinson	Daniel	2,626,842	Colored
Residence	Prairie	Wilcox County	Alabama
Inducted	at	Camden, Ala.	on June 21/16
Place of birth	Prairie, Ala.	Age at date of birth	24 1/2, 1896
Organizations served in, with dates of assignments and transfers: 42 Co 11 Twp. Rm 128 Reg. Brig. 10 1st Div. Co C			
SEE FILE FOR INFO TO DEATH			
Grades, with date of appointment: 1st Lt.			
Engagements: 22			
Wounds or other injuries received in action: Died of Purulent peritonitis Aug 2, 1918			
Served overseas from: to death from: to			
Discharged on demobilization			
In view of occupation he was, on date of discharge, reported: percent disabled.			
Remarks: Person notified of death: Mrs. Belle Robinson Mother			
From No. 10, 100, 100			

The Archives' collections contain more than 100,000 index-card service records of Alabama men and women

who served in WWI. The cards contain information including enlistment date, birthplace, race, branch of service, and more.

The archives is asking for the public's help in transcribing the information found on the cards to create a new,

searchable resource for the public.

Virtual volunteer work is done with a standard web browser and requires no special software or equipment. Anyone with an internet connection can participate. Groups or individuals are encouraged to adopt their home county's records.

To participate or for more information, contact: Meredith McDonough, Digital Assets Coordinator, Alabama Dept. of Archives & History [meredith.mcdonough@archives.alabama.gov](mailto:meredith.mcdonough@archives.alabama.gov) (334) 353-5442

\*\*\*\*\*



## One of the Letters Written and Illustrated by Belgian School Children Thanking the United States for Its Humanitarian Efforts in 1914.

## The Glory & Gratitude to the United States Exhibit At the State Capital until April 30, 2018

Few people know that a large-scale humanitarian effort took place during WWI. As early as 1914, thousands of Belgian and American volunteers pulled together under the leadership of future President Herbert Hoover to save millions from starvation.

The "Glory & Gratitude to the United States" Exhibit contains copies and translations of 20

letters of gratitude written and beautifully decorated by Belgian schoolchildren in 1915.

For more information contact Lisa Franklin, Site Director, at 334-242-3188.



## Another Example of the Beautifully Illustrated Letters of Gratitude from the Belgian Children

(Continued on page 6)

## News and Announcements

(Continued from page 5)



**Kathryn  
Tucker  
Windham**

### **Kathryn Tucker Windham inducted to Alabama Newspaper Hall of Honor this Month**

ECBS Member and Auburn Journalism Professor Emeritus, Ed Williams wrote:

Kathryn Tucker Windham is the 2018 inductee.

Happy to be at the Alabama Newspaper Hall of Honor on the Auburn campus Saturday morning to see my dear friend Kathryn Tucker Windham inducted to the

prestigious hall of the state's great newspaper women and men.

The honor is so well deserved and I'm so proud that I got to nominate my friend Mis' Kathryn. We spent many good times together, none better than those picnics at Live Oak cemetery in Selma.

I know she must have been looking down on Saturday's ceremony and saying, "A good time was had by all."



**Concerning the photo above, Ed wrote, "I got to join the Windham family for a photo — her grandson David and wife Alex Windham, daughter Dilcy Windham Hilley and grandson Ben Hilley."**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Fort Morgan Living History Memorial Day Tribute MAY 26, 9:00AM-3:00PM**



Uniformed interpreters will bring the fort to life through demonstration of period drills on the fort's parade ground as well as artillery demonstration at the water battery.

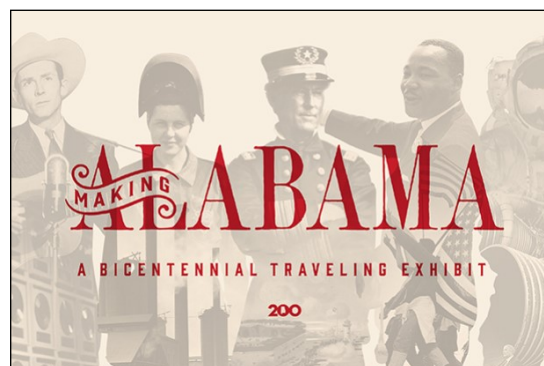
Special talks given by the site historians will provide insight into the events that transpired as well as introduce topics little written about in books. Speakers will explore the military history of Mobile Point from the War of 1812, Civil War, WWI, and WWII.

Artillery, small arms, and other presentations will demonstrate the complexities of military garrison life at Fort Morgan. Also, living history staff will remember those who gave their lives in service at Fort Morgan.

Admission: Adults \$7.00, Students & Seniors (65+) \$5.00, Children (ages 6-12) \$4.00. 251-540-5257 <[www.fort-morgan.org/](http://www.fort-morgan.org/)>.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Making Alabama: A Bicentennial Traveling Exhibit**



"Making Alabama: A Bicentennial Traveling Exhibit" is a statewide celebration of 200 years of statehood presented by Alabama Humanities

(Continued on page 7)



## News and Announcements

(Continued from page 6)

Foundation in partnership with the Alabama Department of Archives and History and the Alabama Bicentennial Commission. The exhibit showcases the decisions and turning points that shaped Alabama history, culture, and geography through interactive displays and teaching resources.

This impressive display blends artistic collages, interactive computer tablets and an audio medley of song and spoken word to tell the story of Alabama – from becoming a territory to achieving statehood. It also conveys a message of “Hope” in its presentation about the future.

In addition, host communities for this traveling exhibit are assembling their own historical exhibits and collateral programming and activities to showcase their own history and put their signature on this event.

The exhibit will crisscross the state March 2018 through November 2019, touring all 67 of Alabama’s counties with up to three-week engagements in each host community. If your community or organization is interested in learning more about hosting this free exhibit, please visit the exhibit’s website <<http://www.alabamahumanities.org/>>.

Four copies of the exhibit have been created. The Roman Numerals in the schedule represent the particular copy of the exhibit. The first round of hosting cities and dates are listed below.

### Hosting Schedule

#### April

I	Cullman	April 15 – May 22
II	St. Clair	April 8 – 22
III	Wilcox	April 1- 14
IV	Lee	April 1-27

#### May

I		
II	Talladega	April 25- May 31
III	Marengo	May 5- 31
IV	Bullock	May 1-18

#### June

I	Winston	May 26- June 8
II	Cleburne	June 6-22
III	Lowndes	June 11-25
IV	Dale	June 1- 23

\*\*\*\*\*

### Alabama Aviation History Traveling Exhibit



**“The Alabama Aviation History Exhibit” Debuted at the Alabama Shakespeare Theatre in January 2018 with the Opening of Fly, a Play about the Tuskegee Airmen. This is a scene from the play.**

The Alabama Bicentennial Commission and Airbus unveiled the bicentennial traveling exhibition “Alabama’s Aviation History” at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival in Montgomery on January 26.

Sponsored by Airbus, the exhibition showcases Alabama’s long and significant history in aviation, aeronautics, and aerospace innovation and achievement. Its earliest beginnings predate the famous Wright Brothers’ first civilian flying school, established in Montgomery in 1910, and its history embraces both world wars, as well as a pivotal ongoing role in space research and exploration. The Alabama Community College System and the Alabama Humanities Foundation are partners in the project.

Michelle Hurdle of Airbus notes that the exhibition celebrates a history that helped bring Airbus to Alabama. “Airbus found a real home in Alabama where innovation and excellence are traditions. The exhibition will help tell that story to people all over the state.”

To inquire about the exhibit schedule or venues, contact Laura Anderson, AHF Director of Operations, at 205-558-3992 or Rmail <[landerson@alabamahumanities.org](mailto:landerson@alabamahumanities.org)> €

## Snapshots of ECHS March 27, 2018 Meeting



**To the Left, Charlie Ware Helps Speaker Sherry Johnston with the Technical Equipment. Ann Biggs-Williams is behind Sherry. To the Right, Don Sales Introduces Sherry. Paul and Ranella Merritt Are between Don and Sherry.**



**Speaker Sherry at the Right, Front. To the Left, Front row are Left to Right, Mike Edwards, Carol and Al Jokela, Jimmy Barlow, and Jo and Robin Brewton. Second Row, Barbara Page, June Martin, Jacque Stone, Barbara McCoy, and Carolyn Geck. Back Row, Don Smith and Susan Blair.**



**Photographer Ryan Davis**



**A Photograph by Ryan Davis Used in Sherry Johnston's Program.**

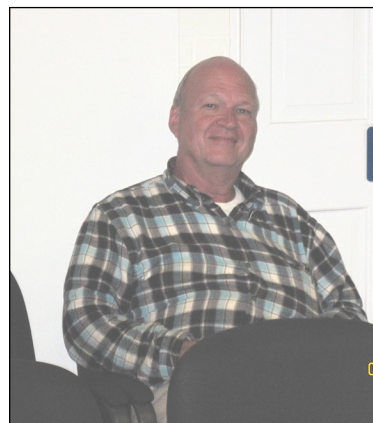


## Snapshots of ECHS March 27, 2018 Meeting (Continued)



**At the Left, Sherry Johnston Answers a Question.**

**At the Right, ECHS Treasurer John Angel**



**June Martin and Paul Merritt at the Refreshment Table**



**Ranella Merritt with Jimmy Barlow, a former student from her days as an English Teacher when the Coastal Alabama Community College, Brewton Campus was Jeff Davis.**



**Enjoying the Program, Front Row Left to Right, Charles Booher, Jo and Robin Brewton. Second Row, Jacque Stone, Barbara McCoy, and Carolyn Geck. Last Row, Susan Blair.**



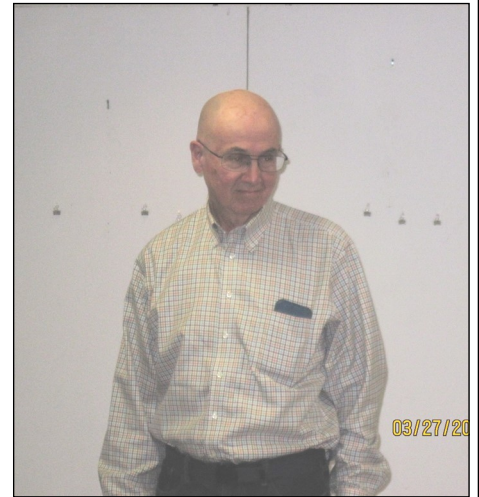
**Charlie Ware and Tom McMillan Help Sherry Adjust the Equipment for the Power Point Program.**



## Snapshots of ECHS March 27, 2018 Meeting (Continued)



To the Right,  
Don Smith.  
To the Left,  
Artifacts  
Collected from  
local site.



Enjoying Refreshments in the Elvira Parlor



At the Left Don  
Sales and a Guest  
in the Alabama  
Room.  
At the Right, Al  
and Carol Jokela  
with Jacque  
Stone in the  
Elvira Parlor.





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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Indian Water Route from Mobile to Pensacola



**Map of Perdido, Wolf Bay, Soldiers Creek, Portage Creek**

### **By Paul Merritt**

Once upon a time in the late 1940's, an old man we all called Uncle Aubrey lived on Soldier's Creek off of Perdido Bay. I believe Uncle Aubrey was a Suarez of the Spanish land grant Suarez family of south Baldwin County. One afternoon we happened to be talking about the tugboats and barges we could see crossing the south side of Perdido Bay as they transversed the Intercoastal Waterway. Uncle Aubrey told me this section of the waterway was built in the 1930's and connected Mobile Bay to Pensacola Bay. Then he mentioned something else that really raised my interest. He told me that long, long ago, the Indians had a route from Mobile Bay to Pensacola Bay. He said they could paddle the whole route in their canoes without ever having to carry the canoes across dry land. Uncle Aubrey was not sure what, other than people, the Indians carried in those canoes but he suspected it was skins and pelts to trade.

In the late 1940's and 50's, my family had a place over on Soldier's Creek which empties into Perdido Bay. I had a heavy wooden, locally made boat, 16 feet long and powered by a 10 horsepower Johnson outboard motor. In this boat, I pictured myself as a Conquistador as I explored Perdido Bay. There was little civilization in that part of the world, mainly just a few houses from place to place. And, there was

almost nowhere to buy gas for my motor. So, I learned to set sail on my adventures with my four gas cans. The cans were metal and held five gallons each of gasoline. Even so, I was always aware of my fuel situation and concerned that I could make it home. To save on gas consumption, I usually ran at a little more than half throttle. I figured that gave me a speed of 8 to 9 miles an hour. .

Weather was always a concern but fortunately Perdido Bay is never very wide so it was never far to shore should a storm suddenly come up. As time went on, I learned to carry along a spark plug wrench and a small wire brush for cleaning fouled spark plugs. I also carried some extra shear pins for the propeller should I have a prop strike. Of course, I carried some drinking water and a few Coke bottles filled with motor oil. I carried the oil to put in any gas I might acquire along the way. In those days, there was no so-called outboard motor oil. The standard was a six ounce coke bottle of 30 weight motor oil to one five gallon can of gas. We used small corks to seal the coke bottle until the oil was needed. Some gas stations sold Coke bottles already filled with oil and corked.

The old Johnson motor had no recoil starter rope so you had to wind the rope onto the flywheel each

*(Continued on page 13)*



# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Indian Water Route from Mobile to Pensacola

*(Continued from page 12)*

time you pulled on it. If I happened to have a passenger along, he or she would cower in the bow of the boat as I pulled on the rope. As the rope was released by the flywheel, it would fly forward in the boat like a bull whip and the knot on the end of the rope could be dangerous to life and limb.

My early trips were to swing around Innerarity Point and go east between the point and Ono Island. In those days, there were very few signs of civilization on either Interrarity Point or Ono Island. They were just happy hunting grounds for a boy. Ono Island was absolutely full of Indian relics. One can only wonder how developers were allowed to build on that island.

Anyway, on this route I was soon in the Intercostal Waterway sharing my water with tugboats pulling lots of oil filled barges. Another ten miles or so brought me to the bridge where the road to Old Gulf Beach crossed the Intercostal. That was one place I could buy some gas, a candy bar and a coke.

Another few minutes brought me into the Big Lagoon which eventually runs into Pensacola Bay down by Fort McRee. I seldom went as far as Pensacola Bay because my grandparents lived on the north shore of Big Lagoon. That was a good stop if my grandparents were home. And, there was a fish camp near there that sold gasoline.

I could see no signs in the area between Perdido Bay and Grand Lagoon where the Indians may have traversed the area in their canoes. But, it is not that far between the two bodies of water. I figured they must have used some creeks and maybe opened up a small canal between some of them. In the 1930's the barge canal was dug and that kind of obliterated any clues to the Indian route.

One of my other great adventures in those days was to leave Soldiers Creek on a southwest course across the bay and swing up past Bear Point and the pass to the Gulf. There was a bit of civilization in that area and one could sometimes beg a bit of gasoline at Bear Point. There was no bridge across the pass to the Gulf and no road on either side. Two memories of that pass stand out in my memory. One is venturing too far out into the Gulf.

Very early in the morning the Gulf was as smooth

as a mill pond, but by 9:00 in the morning, the waves would start to build as the wind built up because the sun was heating up the air. So, I always made sure I got back through the pass before it got rough. Not sure why, but one day I stayed in the Gulf too late and had a heck of a scare getting back through the pass. I wound up with that old skiff riding the top of a wave. By adjusting the throttle, I was able to ride the crest of the wave. The wave carried me through the pass and violently dumped me into the quiet water inside the pass. I was safe but the boat had about four inches of water inside. I managed to keep the water out of my reserve of gasoline by sitting the cans up on the seats and then I went to bailing. A half hour later I was high and dry and ready to start on the hour and a half trip back to Soldiers Creek.

Another memory of that pass is the tarpon. Just inside the pass along the east side over by the west end of Ono Island, I used to troll for fish. Once, using a silver spoon type fishing lure, I had a strike by a huge tarpon. That beautiful, huge fish must have come a dozen feet out of the water as he leaped up and spit out my silver spoon. It would not have done me any good had I hooked him because my light fishing gear would have never landed him. Over the years after that, every time I went down to the Gulf pass, I would spend some time trolling in that area. Three or four times I got a strike by a big tarpon. I never landed one, but I never ceased to enjoy the beauty of seeing those huge fish jump high out of the water. With all the civilization in that part of the world today, I wonder if there are still tarpon around. Likely not.

Now onto the Indian water route. Until I explored it, I had no idea that Perdido Bay extended so far west. Steering south west out of the entrance to Soldiers Creek and past the entrance to Palmetto Creek, I would pass between Mill Point and Hatcher Point through Arnica Bay and into Bay La Launch. This was also the route of the tug boats I had to give way to from time to time. Next, I'd pass an area on my left that was called Orange Grove where there had once been some big orange groves in the early 20th Century. There were just a few remaining signs of civilization along there but it was mostly abandoned. And then passing a point on the north side called something like Seaplane Point, I would enter a big

*(Continued on page 14)*

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Indian Water Route from Mobile to Pensacola

(Continued from page 13)

shallow bay called Wolf Bay.

The tugs and barges would continue west across the lower part of Wolf Bay and enter a creek called Portage Creek. I knew the word portage meant to carry boats or canoes across dry land between bodies of water. That term was confusing to me because if the Indians could get through here without leaving the water, why would they call it Portage Creek. Made no sense but I ran up that creek until it became apparent that I was no longer following a creek but instead a man-made canal, a canal that looked to me beyond the capabilities of the Indians to build in times gone by. I believe this was the canal dug in the 1930's as part of the Intercoastal Waterway. Of course it could have been a smaller canal way back when.

Over the years, I spent many hours exploring a couple of creeks that ran northwest off of Portage Creek and also I explored two or three creeks that ran northwest off of the north end of Wolf Bay. After shearing a lot of propeller pins, I carried along a long pole to push my boat up these creeks when they became too shallow for the motor. I went as far as I

could up each of these creeks but never came to a pass to Mobile Bay. Trying to find the Indian passage to Mobile became a bit of an obsession. I never found it but I did have a lot of fun exploring. I caught a lot of fish and crabs and bringing them home took some of the sting off of the questions about where I had been all day.

When I retired in 1996 and returned to this area, as soon as I got settled a bit, I took off in my Piper Cub airplane and surveyed from the air the areas of Perdido that I had wondered as a boy. A Piper Cub only goes about 75 mph, but that was much faster than was my childhood boat and motor. I didn't like what I saw.

To say the least, I was most shocked and very disappointed to see that my childhood playground had been developed with roads, houses, buildings, bridges, businesses and lots of people, I suppose those who instigated and executed this development think they made a big contribution. Certainly they made a lot of money. The Perdido Bay of the 1940's was much the same as it had been since the beginning of time. But then came the hordes. They like to call themselves developers; I tend to think of them as spoilers. €

## Native American Trails and Trade Paths in the Southeast

*The following material is taken from "An Introduction to Alabama's Early Roads," "The History of Alabama's Road System," and notes from the Baker, Florida Museum website.*

Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton spoke before the U. S. Senate in 1850 describing what he called a class of topographical engineers "older than the schools and more unerring than the mathematicians. They are the wild animals-buffalo, elk, deer, antelope, bears-which traverse the forest not by compass but by an instinct which leads them always to the right way-to the lowest passes in the mountains, the shallowest fords in the rivers, the richest pastures in the forests, the best salt springs, and the shortest practicable lines between remote points. They travel thousands of miles, have their annual migrations backwards and forwards, and never miss the best and shortest route" (from "The History of Alabama's Road System" at <<http://alletting.dot.state.al.us/>

[OfficeEngineer/Docs/IndianTrailsChapter1.pdf](#)>).

The Indians often followed the paths of animals in search of food and water. Their trails assured plentiful game and offered the least resistance to travel. These trails promoted communication and commerce between tribes. Indians met along the waterways and the well-known trails in peaceful and hostile conditions. In war they would take the paths that would make it hardest for their enemies to detect their presence. In peaceful interchanges, they would barter their goodies on these established routes with tribe members and settlers from even the most distant areas. A Jesuit priest in 1710 identified items bartered as "grain, porcelain (wampum), furs robes, tobacco, mats, canoes, work made of moose or buffalo hair and porcupine quills, cotton beds, domestic utensils-in a word, all sorts of necessities of life required by them" ("The History of Alabama's Road System").

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Native American Trails and Trade Paths in the Southeast

*(Continued from page 14)*

The History of Native Americans posted on the Baker, Florida Museum website, suggests that there were many paths, old Indian trails, animal migration routes, stagecoach supply routes and hunting paths. They changed as they came into prominence and use, then fell into disuse, or took different forms and connections over time. The paths did not exist at the same time and they were often renamed or combined with other routes. Thus there can be confusion about the right time and usage of a particular path name.

In spite of these complexities, the article “The History of Alabama’s Road System” points out that the Indians residing in parts of Alabama and the southeast had among themselves some well-defined trails for trade, travel, and communication.

The Great Southern Trading and Migration Trail crossed the Apalachicola and Mobile rivers between the St. John’s River in Florida and the Red River in Louisiana. It was the migration trail used by the tribes that moved to Louisiana from south Alabama and Florida when the French lost control of Mobile.

The Great Pensacola Trading Path, also known as the Wolf Trail, was a Creek horse path between the Alabama towns in the central part of the state and Pensacola, Florida. The railroad from Montgomery to Pensacola later retraced the old Wolf Trail, on which the Battle of Burnt Corn was fought.

The Shawnee Chief Tecumseh, arousing “Red Stick” support against the Americans in 1811, traveled the Upper Creek – Vicksburg Path from north Alabama to the Mississippi River.

Extending from Fort Hawkins near Macon to the Arkansas River in the Chickasaw Nation, the McIntosh Trail was another route important to travel by the Chickasaw Indians through the Upper Creek country to the Atlantic coast.

The Big Trading Path ran from Mobile to the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nation in eastern Mississippi. This same trail was traveled in part by Henri de Tonti in 1702, and was later used as a post road by the Federal government. [Wikipedia](#) notes that Henri de Tonti was an Italian soldier, explorer, and fur trader in the service of France. In 1702 he was chosen by Pierre Le Moyne d’Iberville as an ambassador to the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes and con-

ducted several negotiations between the settlers at Old Mobile (the French settlement north of today’s Mobile) and these Indian tribes. Iberville and his brother Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville are considered co-founders of Mobile.

The Apalachicola-Alibamo Trail led from the Alibamo towns southeast to the Apalachicola crossing of the Great Migration Trail. This path was the principal route of communication between the Seminoles in north Florida and the Creeks in Alabama.

*Note: Alibamo is an alternate spelling of the Alabama Tribe. Many sources suggest the tribe was located in what today is Montgomery.*

From Mobile another trading path ran northeast to the Indian village Tuckabatchie in central Alabama. The railroad from Mobile to Brewton later followed this Mobile-Tokabatchie Trading Path.

The Alamuchee-Creek Trail crossed the Tombigbee River in Marengo County before continuing eastward to the present site of Montgomery. De Soto traveled a portion of this route between Montgomery and Cahaba. The Federal Road, which opened in 1805, followed this prehistoric Creek migration route much of the way.

Another path joined Savannah, Georgia with Milliken’s Bend of the Mississippi River. The Great Savannah-Mississippi River Trail was one of the longest used by Indians in the South.

The great Charleston-Chickasaw Trail ran through the upper Creek country, crossing the Savannah River at Augusta and the Black Warrior River in Alabama at Cotton Gin Port. Licensed fur trader, Colonel Welsh first traveled this road in 1689, and many English traders soon followed.

The great Cumberland River War Trail led from the Cumberland settlements in Tennessee south to Hickory Ground on the Coosa River. This was the same route as Jackson Trace, the road Andrew Jackson’s soldiers followed to Horseshoe Bend during the Creek Indian War.

Also associated with Jackson, the Red Ground/Jackson Trail took its name from Jackson and his travels in the area. However, it was also known as the Red Ground Trail because it was a supply route between the Creek Indian Village of Econ-

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Native American Trails and Trade Paths in the Southeast

(Continued from page 15)

cate (meaning, Red Ground), near the Apalachicola River and Pensacola, FL.

Several trails converged at the Great Tombigbee War Crossing at Black Bluff. This was a strategic river crossing for both the Creeks and the Choctaws in their wars. Black Bluff is in Sumter County.

High Town Path proceeded south from east Tennessee to Flat Rock in Franklin County, and then went to the Chickasaw Nation.

Another Indian Trail led from the Creek crossing on the Tennessee River to Tellico in Munroe County in Tennessee. The portion of this trail between Larkin's

Landing in Jackson County and the Tennessee River was later the first public road on which the mail was carried in Marshall County.

All of these trails and many more became roads, railroad lines, or improved highways. Hobuckintopa was an old Choctaw village that later became St Stephens, the first territorial capital of Alabama. A trail connecting it to Mobile is now for the most part, along the same route as U.S. 43.

Alabama Highway 14 between Wetumpka and Tallassee is approximately the same route as the Fort Toulouse-Lower Creek path. €

## The Natchez Trace

*The following article by Thomas V. Ress, Athens, Alabama is from the Encyclopedia of Alabama*  
(<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/m-6471>).

The Natchez Trace is a prehistoric route that extended 440 miles from Nashville, Tennessee, through Alabama to Natchez, Mississippi, and provided a link between the Tennessee and Mississippi rivers. The Trace ran for about 30 miles through the northwestern part of Alabama in Lauderdale and Colbert Counties, passing through the state west of Sheffield near the town of Cherokee.

The trail became commonly known as the Natchez Trace in the late eighteenth century, but it has a long history dating back thousands of years. It was used for untold years by herds of bison and other grazing animals to move between salt licks located near Nashville and the verdant southern grasslands along the Mississippi River. This ancient trail meandered between high ridges and deep valleys, avoiding steep terrain and providing a relatively level and easy northeast-southwest route for herds migrating through the region.



**The Natchez Trace Parkway**

Native American hunting parties took advantage of the well-worn trail and followed the "traces" of the herds. Early French explorers undoubtedly used the trail on their forays into the fertile hunting grounds along the Mississippi River. In the eighteenth century, European settlers further improved the trail, widening the foot path enough for horses and wagons to pass, and used it as a trade route and an

easy passage between the Tennessee, Cumberland, and Mississippi rivers. The Natchez Trace came into more formal use in the late eighteenth century, when Pres. Thomas Jefferson, in an attempt to forestall French dominance along the Mississippi River Valley, authorized the establishment of a road through the wilderness beginning in Tennessee and ending on the banks of the Mississippi River. In 1801, the U.S. Army began improving the route, making it wide enough to be navigable by wagon.

The Natchez Trace became the major trade route between the eastern states and the southern frontier. It was the only reliable land link between the eastern United States and the trading ports along the Mississippi River in Mississippi and

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

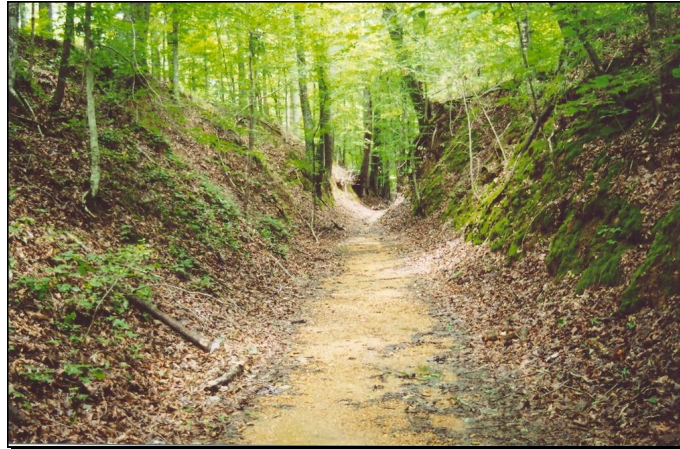
## The Natchez Trace

(Continued from page 16)

Louisiana. As travel and trade increased, a series of inns and trading posts sprang up along the route and settlements quickly followed. Near the current town of Cherokee, the Trace crossed the Tennessee River at the mouth of Bear Creek, and Chief George Colbert, who was half Chickasaw and half Scot, operated a commercial ferry there for years. For a short period of time, the Natchez Trace was a vital part of the commerce and trade that opened the area up to settlement, but its star quickly faded. The advent of steamboats on the Mississippi River and the completion of Andrew Jackson's Military Road in 1820, which offered a shorter route between Nashville and New Orleans, doomed the ancient route, and by 1830 it was essentially abandoned and reclaimed by wilderness.

Despite its brief life span, the Natchez Trace enjoyed a lively and colorful history. This main thoroughfare to the new frontier brought all sorts of people into the area. Fur traders, shopkeepers, pioneer families, and hunters all traveled along the route, as did more unsavory characters. Worse dangers lurked on the Trace itself. Highwaymen held up travelers along the Trace and robbed nearby stores. Small bands of bandits terrorized travelers along the length of the Trace. At least two large organized gangs, one of which became known as the Mystic Clan led by John Murrell, operated for years from hideouts along the length of the Trace, and Murrell was once arrested in Florence.

One of the most famous travelers of the Trace, Meriwether Lewis of the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition, came to a mysterious and ignominious end on the Trace. Lewis was spending the night at Grinder's Stand, an inn near the present day town of Hohenwald, Tennessee. During the night of October 10, 1809, shots were heard by the innkeeper's wife



**The "Sunken Trace"  
From Wikipedia**

and in the morning Lewis was found dead in his room. The details of what happened that night are murky and an investigation into his death returned a verdict of suicide. His family remained convinced that he was murdered and that the innkeeper was somehow involved.

In the 1930s, the federal government began construction of the Natchez Trace Parkway, a limited

access two-lane scenic road between Natchez and Fairview, Tennessee, near Nashville. Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt signed legislation to create the parkway on May 18, 1938, and construction began in 1939. The current parkway encompasses more than 45,000 acres and is managed by the National Park Service, which maintains numerous historical sites along its length, including the Meriwether Lewis Museum, the Meriwether Lewis Memorial, and a visitor's center in Tupelo, Mississippi. The route closely parallels the original Natchez Trace, and in some locations remnants of the original route may still be seen. These sections are marked with National Park Service signage and are used by modern-day hikers. The short period of time that the Natchez Trace was heavily used by settlers meant that no major cities developed along the route. As a result, the Trace remains to this day relatively undeveloped and closely resembles its original configuration.

The Natchez Trace in Alabama, although short, is rich in natural beauty. It encompasses Freedom Hills Overlook, at 800 feet the highest point of the Trace in Alabama; Rock Springs, a natural spring that attracts thousands of hummingbirds on their annual migrations; Buzzard Roost Springs, which features an exhibit telling the story of Chickasaw chief Levi Colbert; and Colbert Ferry, where George Colbert reportedly charged Andrew Jackson \$75,000 for ferry services. €

**ECHOES**  
THE NEWSLETTER FOR  
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