



The
Escambia
County
Historical
Society,
Founded
1971

The December Meeting
Tuesday, December 11, 2018
McMillan Museum
Coastal Alabama Community College
Brewton Campus
4:00– 6:30 p. m.



The Program:
Our Annual Christmas Party

To Quote from the Invitation to the
ECHS Christmas Party in 1988

**Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells,
Aren't our spirits bright?
We're going to have a party
This coming Tuesday night!**

ECHS will furnish a ham and drinks. Come, bring a side dish or dessert, and, if you wish, bring a guest.

After the meal, our speaker will be the Rev. Father Patrick Madden of Saint Maurice Catholic Church. Rev. Madden will speak on the true meaning of Christmas.

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The January Meeting
Tuesday, January 19, 2019
McMillan Museum
2:00 p. m.
Program TBA

Change in Dues

The ECHS Board has approved the following
schedule of dues beginning in January 2019:

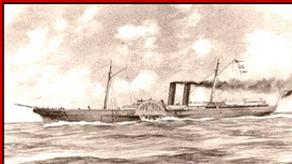
- Single: \$50.00
- Family: \$70.00 (same address)
- Lifetime: \$500.00 (per person)
- Business: \$100.00

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Blockade Runner
The Advance

Volume 45 No. 11-12

Nov./Dec. 2018

ECHS Christmas Parties from the Past



The ECHS Christmas Parties of the past have varied in locations, themes, entertainments, programs, food and music. Included in the variety have been Santa and gift giving where members brought tree ornaments as gifts, provided gifts representing a Christmas memory, provided gifts for patients at Searcy mental hospital, enjoyed programs with guest speakers and guest singers, participated in an old fashioned costume contest, applauded the presentation of awards to members from state organizations, and participated in a game of identifying famous and popular songs and tunes.

Locations have varied from the Brewton Public Library to the Woodfin Patterson Auditorium, with the McMillan Museum meeting room being an often used location. Other locations include a former downtown Antiques Mall, private homes, and public buildings with historic interest, such as the Leigh Place, and a former theatres, such as the Ritz.. Food has varied from sweets and finger food served in the afternoon to catered dinners and luncheons.

Various homes have been opened for the Christmas Party including those of Donnie and Catherine Finlay Fountain; the William W. Weaver, Jr. home, restored by Dave and Wilellen Elliott; the Gerome and Donna Brackin home; Double M Farms, the home of Ann and Ed Leigh McMillan, II; the T. R. Miller-Hart home, home of Carolyn and Jim Hart; the Ashley and Michael Feeley home; Tom and Jane McMillan's home; Suzanne Kirby's home; the Lindsey-Fitzgerald house in Pollard, restored by Sally Finlay; and Judy Purnell's home in Burnt Corn, her husband Wayne's family home.

One of the early parties was that for 1973, an Old Fashioned Christmas celebrated in the "new" Woodfin Patterson Auditorium on the Jefferson Davis Community College Campus. Old fashioned refreshments included Syllabub, a whipped cream drink or dessert, sometimes flavored with white wine or sherry.

To greet guests, the outgoing ECHS officers formed receiving lines at the two doors to the auditorium. There were ninety members and guests in attendance.

Entertainment included a contest for the best yesteryear costume, the contest held on the stage of the auditorium, story-telling of funny stories of

"things past" and "riddles of long ago," as well as the singing of favorite Christmas songs and carols.

The 1974 party held in the regular meeting room of the McMillan Museum included First Christmas Reminiscences by society members and small historical mementos or souvenirs brought by members to serve as gifts to be distributed by a drawing.

Gifts brought to this 1974 party included jars, bottles, paper weights, butter molds, books, postcards, chimes, and ash trays. Rita Jane Boykin served as Master of Ceremonies and introduced in verse the speakers who recalled Christmas memories.

The 1975 Christmas Party held at the Brewton Public Library included a new element, a "Do Unto Others" effort to be carried out by joining Operation Santa Claus which organized gifts for a particular group of patients at Searcy Hospital, those called the Forgotten Ones. These were the patients forgotten by family and friends, patients that would not receive any gifts at Christmas.

The program for the party also included a series of awards. State Representative Brooks Hines gave citations and presented Merit Awards on behalf of the Alabama Historical Commission to Ed Leigh McMillan—historian; Thomas E. McMillan—preservationist; and The Escambia County Historical Society for its significant group efforts.

Carolyn McLendon, editor of ECHOES, wrote of these awards from the state historical commission:

"So far as we know, no awards of this type have ever been presented in this county, and we can be justifiably proud that the efforts of this young society brought about this recognition to two people who have been preserving our area's history for many years—Mr. Ed Leigh McMillan with his voluminous history records and enviable museum collection of this area's Indian artifacts, fossils and early American tools; and Mr. Thomas E. McMillan who has preserved and restored our first Brewton courthouse built in 1885, and the Jay Villa plantation house and barn in Conecuh County.

Both are charter members of this Society and have steadfastly backed all of this Society's endeavors with their moral and financial support. We could not have accomplished as a society what we have, had not Ed Leigh McMillan and Thomas E. McMillan been our fore-runners" (*ECHOES*, Jan. 9, 1975).

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ECHS Christmas Parties from the Past

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That year, 1975, was also the first year the society entered a float in the Brewton Christmas Parade, one carrying a parlor scene with a tree, pump-action organ and society members singing Christmas carols with the background of Museum Curator Roger Anderson playing the organ.

The society has participated in several Christmas Parades since then using as floats, antique cars and once a World War II jeep, restored by Alan Robinson.

The Invitation to the 1987 ECHS Christmas Party

Meeting: Tuesday, December 1, 1987

Time: 7:00 p. m.

**Place: Thomas E. McMillan Museum Jefferson
Davis Junior College, Brewton**

Program: Our Annual Christmas Party

Jingle Bells, Jingle bells, jingle all the way,

Our Society Party is sure to be bright and gay!

A Real Live Santa is coming – just for you and me,

And a present with Your Name on it is underneath the tree!

Goodies will be bountiful – Belinda makes us proud:

She'll have plenty of refreshments – enough to please a crowd:

If you have attended all this year, or haven't come at all,

Please don't miss the party – we're sure to have a ball!

Don't bring a present – Santa's elves take care of all that biz

Just bring yourself, and guests, and Remember when it is!

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ECHS Christmas Parties from the Past

(Continued from page 3)

2004

The William W. Weaver. Hosts for the Party, Dave and Wilellen Elliott.



The Announcement/Invitation for the 2004 Christmas Party at the William W. Weaver, Jr. House, contained a history of the house.

Wilellen and Dave Elliott welcomed guests. Dave had restored the house which was the family home of Wilellen. It was built around 1916 and is typical of the homes of the period. It has a pyramid roof and the original design had four large rooms, two on each side of a central hall, with a porch across the front and the back.

The outside is covered in tin siding and the house has a tin roof. The interior rooms have been painted in colors close to those original to the house. Throughout the house, Wilellen and Dave have placed pictures that bring back Brewton and East Brewton's past: the Escambia County Court House, the early East Brewton City Hall, the train depot, and photos of Wilellen's family.

2005

The Home of Donnie and Catherine Finlay Fountain.



Donnie and Catherine Finlay Fountain welcomed ECHS to their home for the 2005 Christmas Party.

Sixty members and guests enjoyed the visit to this home built in 1903. Many family members who had lived in the home returned for the event.

This was originally the home of Bob and Mary Finlay. Bob was Norvelle Robertson Finlay, one of the sons of J. E. Finlay, founder of Robins and McGowin Department Store.

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ECHS Christmas Parties from the Past

(Continued from page 4)

2006

Home of Gerome and Donna Brackin. Originally built for and occupied by Oscar and Mollie Luttrell.



Gerome and Donna Brackin were hosts for the 2006 Christmas Party at their home on Belleville Avenue.

The house was ECHS member Frank Luttrell's childhood home. Built for and occupied by Oscar and Mollie Luttrell, the home was designed by noted Montgomery architect Frank Lockwood sometime around 1905 to 1911.

Notable architectural features of the home include coffered ceilings, original pine floors, seven fireplace mantels of tiger oak with colored tiles, a dining room china cabinet which is period to the home, an original glass window (noted for being wavy and having bubbles), original doors, and walls, three bricks thick.



At the left, the refreshment table at the Brackin Christmas Party.

2007

Double M Farms. Ann and Ed Leigh McMillan, II, Hosts.



In 2007 Ann and Ed Leigh McMillan, II hosted the Christmas Party at their home, Double M Farms. Above is the group picture taken on the back patio and the beautiful view of the farm from the patio.

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ECHS Christmas Parties from the Past

(Continued from page 5)

2008

**The T. R. Miller/Hart House.
Home of Carolyn and Jim Hart.**



Hosts for the Christmas Party for 2008 were Carolyn and Jim Hart in their home which was originally built by T. R. Miller.

The T. R. Miller, now the Hart house, was built in 1905-1906 when Thomas and Alice Miller used a Montgomery, Alabama architect to supervise the building of their new home on Belleville Ave, on the site of the first house which Thomas Miller had built.

The first house had been occupied by Miller and his first wife, Mary Elizabeth Foshee Miller, and their children. After her death in 1889, he married Alice Collins of Milton in 1890. By 1905, the couple had decided to build a bigger and finer house which is the house shown above.

To the far right, ECHS members and guests at the 2008 party and at the near right, the Christmas tree in the front parlor of the Miller/ Hart home.



2009

**The Feeley House
Home of Ashley and Michael Feeley**



Ashley and her mother, Dr. B. J. Low were hosts for the party.

Paul Merritt and Darryl Searcy at the refreshments table at the Feeley party.



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ECHS Christmas Parties from the Past

(Continued from page 6)

2010
The Home of Jane and
Tom McMillan.



Tom and Jane McMillan were hosts for the 2010 Christmas Party at their home shown above.

2011
The Home of Suzanne Huxford
Kirby.



Suzanne Kirby was the host for the 2011 Christmas Party at her home shown above.



Group Picture at the 2010 Christmas Party on the patio of Jane and Tom McMillan's home.



Left to Right, Barbara Page, Darryl Searcy, and Carolyn Butts enjoying the Christmas Party of 2011 at the home of Suzanne Kirby.

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ECHS Christmas Parties from the Past

(Continued from page 7)

**2012
The Leigh Place
Jane and Tom McMillan
Hosts.**



Jane and Tom McMillan were again hosts for the Christmas Party in 2012. The Party was held at the Leigh Place, shown above, Brewton's first courthouse.

Below, a group portrait of members and guests at the Party in the Leigh Place.



**2013
The Lindsey/Fitzgerald
House
Sally Finlay Host.**



Sally Finlay was the host for the 2013 Christmas Party at the Lindsey/Fitzgerald house in Pollard, shown above. At the right above, the Christmas tree in the front parlor, below the tree, a close-up of the toys under the tree, and at the upper right is shown, a Nativity, an 1886 Bible, and a one-hundred-year-old candle.

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ECHS Christmas Parties of the Past

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2014, 2015, 2016 The L-House Host Sally Finlay



ECHS members shown here enjoyed food, good company, and a good parade at the 2916 Christmas Party at the L-House.

At left, guests enjoy the catered dinner at the 2016 party. Above, a beautiful cake and the desert table.

2017 McMillan Museum Host Sally Finlay



Shown to the left, guests enjoying the good food and good company. At the right, the desert table.



News and Announcements

Alabama's Genealogy & History Journals Digitized!



The Alabama Genealogical Society makes this Announcement:

AGS Magazine 1967–2002 back issues are online and searchable! AGS was proud to be one of the first organizations to contribute back issues to this exciting digitization project of the Alabama Bicentennial Commission.

In this database, housed at the Alabama Department of Archives and History, you will find back issues of fourteen (and growing) state genealogy and history organizations representing 25 counties, with two publications (including ours) representing statewide coverage.

Counties include: Autauga, Blount, Calhoun, Clay, Cleburne, Colbert, DeKalb, Etowah, Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Lowndes, Marshall Montgomery, Morgan, Randolph, Shelby, Talladega, Tuscaloosa, and Winston.

Report on Members Susan Crawford and Willeen Elliott

Ann Biggs-Williams reports that Susan is now in the Evergreen, Alabama nursing home for recovery from hip replacement surgery but no idea of how long she will be there.

Ann also reports that Willeen was in Westgate here in Brewton in November where she was receiving therapy as a result of a fall. No word as to when she will be at home.

Alabama Historical Association Annual Meeting, April 25-27, 2019 Tuscaloosa, Alabama



Street in Downtown Tuscaloosa

Snapshots from the ECHS October 2018 Meeting



**Guest Speaker,
Dr. Phillip Carr of the
University of South Alabama
Archaeology department.**



**Dr. Carr with Don Sales,
McMillan Museum Coordinator.**

Snapshots from the ECHS October 2018 Meeting (Continued)



Darryl Searcy is shown talking with Mike Edwards and Charlie Ware who is seated on the back row. To the far right is Dr. Jimmy Atkisson,



From left to right, back row, Jimmy Atkisson and Tom McMillan. From left to right, front row, June Martin and Judy Purnell.



Left to Right Front Row, Judy Purnell, Robin Brewton, and Jo Brewton. To the far right, Pam Ethridge and Andrew DeVilbiss. Left to Right on the second row are Burrell and Sue Jerkins and Dr. Deidra Suwanee Dees.



Left to right, front row, Carol Jokela with Al looking over her shoulder. Carol and Al are talking to Robin and Jo Brewton in the second row.

Next to Al on the front row is Jacque Stone and Ann Biggs-Williams.

Andrew DeVilbiss is shown on the second row. In the back is Robert Smiley.

The refreshments table with delicious food and a very nice flower arrangement.



The ECHS *Journal* Section

Civil War Blockade Runner Uncovered in Fort Morgan Surf

This article by Ben Raines, the illustrations and commentary are taken from <<https://www.al.com/news/2018/11/civil-war-blockade-runner-uncovered-in-fort-morgan>>.

The wreck of the Ivanhoe, a Confederate blockade runner, has been uncovered in the surf along Fort Morgan.

The Ivanhoe dates to the Civil War. It was an iron hulled paddlewheel steamer built in Scotland in May of 1864. The ship was sunk on its maiden voyage just seven weeks later as it attempted to steam into Mobile Bay, past the Union naval blockade set up between Fort Morgan and Fort Gaines on Dauphin Island. At the time, the Confederates still controlled both forts. The Union ships patrolled the mouth of the bay just outside of the reach of the cannons in the forts.

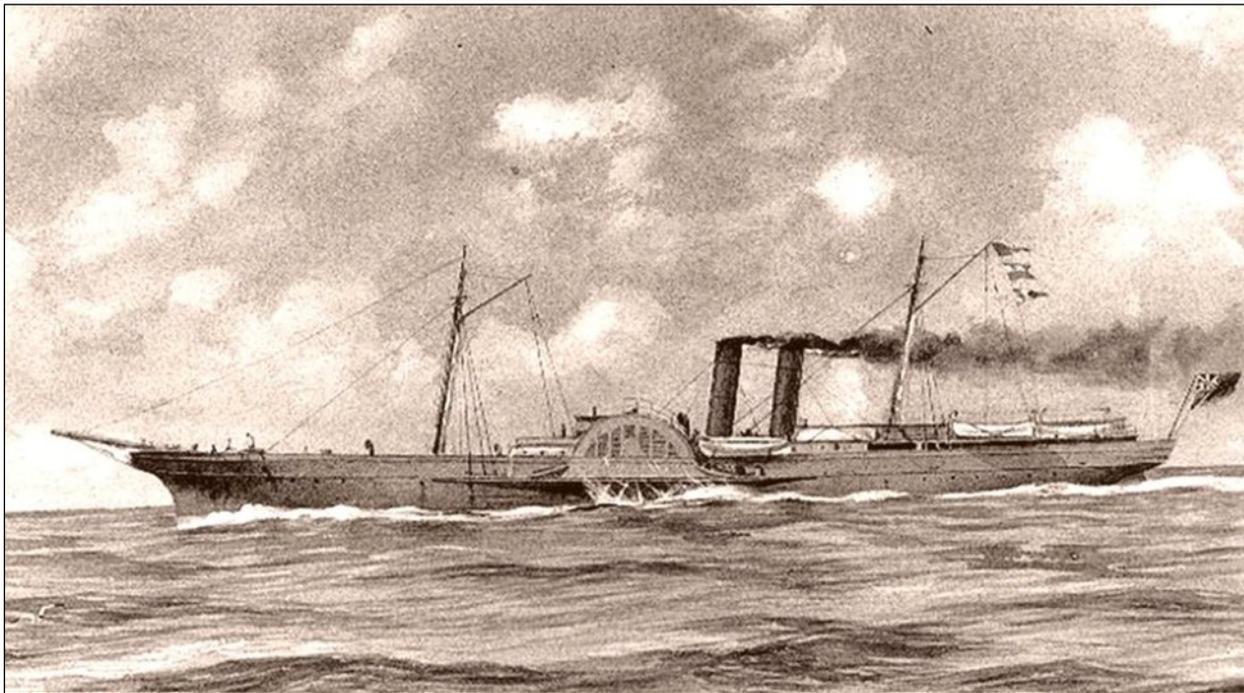
According to historical accounts, the Ivanhoe came under heavy fire from Union ships and was

forced to run aground on Fort Morgan before it sank. The crew survived the incident, and most of the cargo was removed by Confederate forces stationed in Fort Morgan. The Union ships were kept at a distance by the big cannons of Fort Morgan as the cargo and engine were pulled from the Ivanhoe.

Union troops managed to slip in under the cannons in a small boat and set the Ivanhoe on fire about a week later.

Today, the Ivanhoe lies 50 yards from shore, in six feet of water at low tide, roughly a mile to the east of the tip of Fort Morgan. Its location has been known since the Civil War, but most of the time, the wreck itself is covered beneath several feet of sand. That changed this summer, as waves associated with tropical storms and hurricanes, swept the sand away and revealed the outline of the hull, its ribs, and two

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The Advance

This sepia wash drawing of the blockade-runner, the Advance was rendered by R.G. Skerrett, in 1899. This is what the Ivanhoe would have looked like under power. Courtesy of the U.S. Navy Art Collection, Washington, DC.

Picture and text from <<https://www.al.com/news/2018/11/civil-war-blockade-runner-uncovered-in-fort-morgan>>.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Civil War Blockade Runner Uncovered in Fort Morgan Surf

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giant smokestacks. The stacks themselves are always visible above the sand, but they remain underwater even at low tide.

If you hurry, before the water gets cold, you can actually snorkel over the wreck right now. I swam on it a few days ago and the water was still warm enough that I didn't need a wetsuit. You will find a scene very much like what you see in Dreas Andreasen's aerial photos accompanying this story. Andreasen, captain of the Fort Morgan Fire Rescue, saw the wreck was uncovered during a training flight on a helicopter and shared the news via Facebook.

Much of the 201-foot length of the big iron ship is exposed and swarming with schools of small fish.

Be careful if you swim out to the Ivanhoe, as the smokestacks are festooned with hooks and fishing lures, and the wreck itself is composed of jagged and rusting iron. Your best bet would be to visit on a day with a north wind, so the Gulf will be flat. Otherwise,

breaking waves will make snorkeling over the ship most difficult, and dangerous. The water will also be much cleared on a calm, north wind day.

The day I visited, there were a number of small schoolmaster snapper on the wreck, an unusual sighting for our area. There were also spadefish, hand-sized sheepshead, a few flounder, and lots of little mangrove snapper. Brian Jones of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab found two octopus on the wreck and a big electric ray. If you are unfamiliar with the electric ray, I have this advice, don't touch one! I got shocked by one a few years ago while diving. It definitely gets your attention. Like being hooked up to three or four car batteries at once.

Another word of caution about historic shipwrecks: It is illegal to remove anything from the site, dig for relics, or disturb the wreck in any way.

"The Ivanhoe is protected by the Alabama Underwater Cultural Resources Act," said Stacey Hathorn, Alabama State Archaeologist. "It is important for

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The Ivanhoe at Rest

The ship was a steam-powered paddle wheeler built in Scotland. The round shapes you see are the remnants of the smokestacks for the boilers. It came under heavy fire and was forced aground on Fort Morgan during its maiden voyage as it tried to break through the Union naval blockade at the mouth of Mobile Bay. Image courtesy of Capt. Dreas Andreasen.

Picture and text from <<https://www.al.com/news/2018/11/civil-war-blockade-runner-uncovered-in-fort-morgan>>.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Civil War Blockade Runner Uncovered in Fort Morgan Surf

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people to understand they are welcome to view the wreck, but it is illegal to remove anything from the site as well as damage, destroy, salvage, excavate or alter the wreck in any way. The Ivanhoe is a nonrenewable cultural resource, meaning that if it is damaged or destroyed, it is gone forever, and that piece of history is lost.”

But what a fun piece of history to have revealed to us for even just a moment.

Blockade runner ships were purposely built for evading Union ships then patrolling Confederate ports as part of a massive naval blockade. Steam-powered and designed for speed, hundreds of blockade runners were employed during the war, mostly to sneak cotton out of the Confederate states to Europe, and then return with the cannons, guns and gunpowder vital to the war effort.

Further adding to the romance of the blockade runners is that Rhett Butler, Clark Gable’s character in *Gone with the Wind*, made his fortune as owner of four blockade running ships. Like the real-life profiteers his character was based on, Butler’s fortune was based on the desperation of the Confederacy in the face of the Union naval blockade. As nearly all of the nation’s manufacturing apparatus was in the north, once the war started, the Confederacy had no access to guns, gunpowder, or other vital supplies. Likewise, the wealthy in the south suddenly found themselves cut off from everything Europe and New York had to offer, including wine, fine clothing, and other luxury goods.

Meanwhile, the southern farmers had lost access to the markets of Europe, which typically purchased all of the cotton coming out of the southern fields. With the Union blockade in effect, no cotton could make it out of the country to provide income for the Confederacy, and no weaponry could make it into the country to equip the Confederate army.

Answering these twin needs, was the blockade runner. There were thousands of privately-owned ships employed to sneak cargo in and out during the war. As it turns out, the blockade runners were mostly very good at evading the much slower Union ships. And the Union ships, at least in the early years of the war, were lousy at catching what

amounted to steam-powered speedboats. Even so, by wars end, the Union Navy had reportedly captured more than 1,000 blockade runners, and sunk another 355.

Jim Delgado, a celebrated marine archaeologist with Search Inc., said that most of the Civil War era wrecks known today were actually blockade runners, not warships.

“The largest group of Civil War wrecks are the blockade runners. There were some smaller craft. But then there were also these high-speed greyhounds of ocean steam power. That’s what the Ivanhoe represents,” Delgado said. “It was a ship designed purely for speed.”

A look at its measurements suggests as much. According to records from Clydeships.co.uk, a website that documents ships built in Scottish shipyards along the River Clyde, the Ivanhoe was 200 feet long and 20 feet wide, or a 10 to 1 ratio for length to width. That is an exceptionally long and narrow vessel. Such ships were built to be fast, not seaworthy. A more typical ratio for length to width for a ship of the era would be roughly 4 to 1, meaning an 80-foot-long vessel would be 20 feet wide.

“The wreck is important because while you are always talking about different Civil War wrecks, and how much of the southern coastline is littered with them, each presents a unique story,” Delgado said. “In this case, the Ivanhoe speaks powerfully to the importance of Mobile to the war effort. As the Union kept continually tightening the blockade, and worked on this powerful push to take the ports, Mobile, given the strength of the fortifications, and the shallowness of the bay, it stayed open.”

Indeed, Mobile was the last major southern port to remain open, finally falling in August of 1864. Highlighting the importance of the trans-Atlantic trade coming through Mobile, the war was over just a few months after the Union Army captured the port. Unable to get goods in or out of Mobile, the Confederacy was simply starved of income and guns.

The Ivanhoe was one of the last blockade runners to attempt to enter Mobile Bay, sinking in June of 1864. It fell victim to an effort to tighten the Union blockade in preparation for the Battle of Mobile Bay that summer. It was in that battle that Admiral

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

Civil War Blockade Runner Uncovered in Fort Morgan Surf

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Farragut famously uttered the phrase, “Damn the torpedoes! Full steam ahead!”

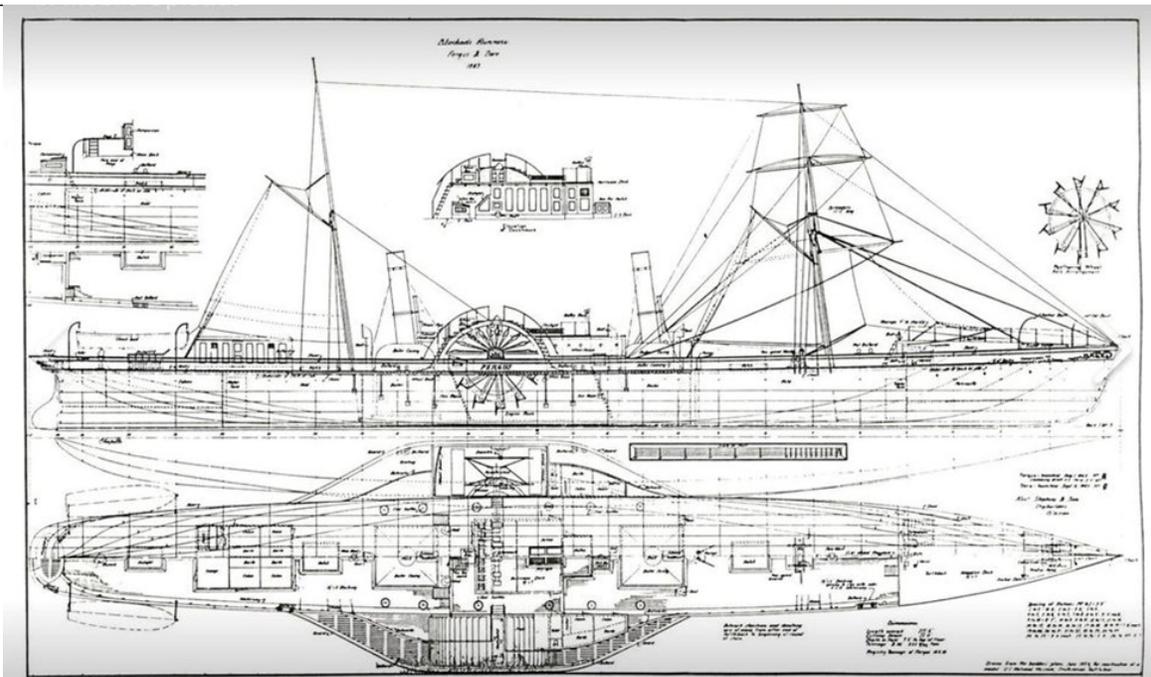
“I recall that the number of cotton bales shipped out of Mobile was over 850,000, that’s a 500-pound bale,” Delgado said. With cotton fetching more than a dollar a pound in Europe during the war years, the cotton exports were crucial. “Basically, the economics of the situation are such, that if you are in the blockade running business, you could make a really good living if you could make at least one run.”

Though the Confederacy passed laws toward the end of the war that prohibited the blockade runners from importing anything other than necessities, like guns and gunpowder, they were never really enforced. There remained a lucrative and illicit trade in luxury items brought in by blockade runners throughout the war.

“The Ivanhoe really underscores the importance of the port of Mobile and all of that throughout history,” Delgado said. “We are seeing more storms, and more and more ships are becoming exposed. I’m seeing this nationwide. With sea level incrementally rising, we are going to see more and more of this.”

With more ships becoming exposed, state officials encouraged people to exercise care.

“The Alabama Historical Commission encourages the citizens of our state to enjoy our cultural resources, but they should do so responsibly,” said Lisa D. Jones, Executive Director of the Alabama Historical Commission. “It is important to protect and preserve the Ivanhoe, a significant piece of our state’s Civil War history, so that future Alabamians can experience it. Anyone wishing to explore or scientifically survey the Ivanhoe or any other wreck in Alabama waters can apply for a permit through



Ship Design

These plans were for a sidewheel paddlewheel ship like the Ivanhoe. The plans make a lot of sense looking at the aerials of the wreck of the Ivanhoe.

Picture and text from <<https://www.al.com/news/2018/11/civil-war-blockade-runner-uncovered-in-fort-morgan>>.

ECHOES
THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 276
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| Escambia Historical Society Cookbook | \$10.00 | \$15.00 |
| Wildflowers of The Conecuh/Escambia River Basin CD | \$10.00 | \$15.00 |
| History of Brewton and E. Brewton (sc) | \$35.00 | \$40.00 |
| Flomaton Centennial Scrapbook | \$30.00 | \$25.00 |
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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
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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 escambiahistoricalociety@gmail.com or call 251-809-1528.

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