

# ECHOES



The  
Escambia  
County  
Historical  
Society,  
Founded  
1971

**The March Meeting**  
**Tuesday, March 26, 2019**  
**McMillan Museum**  
**Coastal Alabama Community College**  
**Brewton Campus**  
**3:00 p. m.**



**Coach Mike Brock**

**The Program: Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie in the Escambia, Conecuh and Florida Panhandle Areas**

According to longtime friend, Don Sales, Mike has always been interested in the life and careers of Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie.

Mike's introduction on his Facebook Page states: Worked as Retired teacher and Coach; Studied at Florida State University; Went

to Century High School; Lives in Jay, Florida; From Century, Florida; Married to Cynthia McCaskill Youngblood Brock.

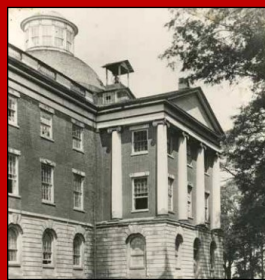
A longtime teacher and football coach at Jay High School, Mike shows a great picture of himself on his Facebook page wearing his first football uniform which he says he wore every day until it disintegrated.

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**The April Meeting**  
**Tuesday, April 23, 2019**  
**Program: TBA**

**"Dues" are Due**  
**\$50.00/person**  
**\$70.00/ family at same address**  
**Lifetime, \$500.00/person**  
**\$100.00/year business**



The Alabama Capitol  
ca. 1900  
Tuscaloosa

Volume 46 No. 3

March 2019



**Mike Brock  
in his First  
Football  
Uniform**

## Our Business Member



## Davy Crockett in the Creek Indian War: A Summary

After the Creek Indians in 1812 mounted an offensive at Fort Mims, many volunteers were needed to defend the area. Davy Crockett volunteered for the Tennessee militia and was quickly assigned to Captain Jones' Mounted Volunteers.

Crockett's first assignment was to conduct reconnaissance from Beatty Springs, across the Tennessee River, and into the Creek nation.

After safely returning, Crockett and another 800 volunteers fought in such battles as Talladega, Fort Strother, and the Florida Expedition. He and his fellow volunteers also became involved in various conflicts with the "Red Coats" (British).

He was not present at the decisive Battle of Horseshoe Bend (March 27, 1814) when the Creeks were defeated. During his second enlistment, begun September 18, 1814, he joined Andrew Jackson's forces at Pensacola, but, discharged again, he returned home, missing the Battle of New Orleans.

Crockett returned to Franklin County with his honorable discharge, to find his wife extremely ill. She died shortly following his return. A year later,



**US Postage Stamp,  
Issue of 1967.**

Davy married the widow Elizabeth Patton. The reconstituted Crockett family lived off the land with Elizabeth's two children and his two boys in Kentucky until 1817, when they built another homestead in newly formed Lawrence County, Tennessee.

Crockett's biography from the History website summarizes his career

in politics and his death:

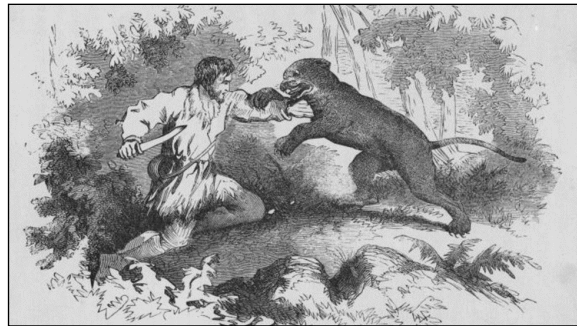
"Crockett was a natural leader. He advanced from justice of the peace to two terms in the Tennessee legislature. He was elected to Congress in 1827 and 1829 as a Democrat. Then he broke with Jackson over a number of issues and was defeated in 1831; in 1833 he returned to Congress, this time as a Whig.

"In 1835 he was again defeated. Disgusted, he is quoted as saying, 'You can all go to Hell and I'm going to Texas.'

"True or not, he did leave Tennessee in November 1835, and subsequently appeared in east Texas, ostensibly looking for land upon which to settle. Controversy surrounds his reason for going to the Alamo. He was there

*(Continued on page 3)*

**Davy Crockett (1786-1836).  
Though not at Horseshoe Bend,  
Davy Crockett, pictured below, was a  
scout for Jackson during the Creek War.  
Perhaps best known for his heroic stand  
(and death) at the Alamo in 1836, he  
became a symbol of the American  
frontier spirit during the Jacksonian era.**



### **Etching of Crockett Fighting a Cougar.**

Crockett's reputation as a coonskin cap-wearing folk hero owes a lot to **The Lion of the West**, a wildly popular play that first appeared in 1831. While the production avoided referencing Crockett by name, audiences quickly identified him as the inspiration for its hero, a swashbuckling frontiersman named Nimrod Wildfire.

The play helped propel Crockett to national celebrity, and before long, tales of his larger-than-life exploits had appeared in countless newspaper articles, almanacs and unauthorized biographies. Crockett would later clear up a few of the myths—and cash in on his popularity—by publishing his 1834 autobiography titled **A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett of the State of Tennessee.**



# Davy Crockett in the Creek Indian War: A Summary

*(Continued from page 2)*

when it was attacked, however, and he died when it fell" (<https://www.history.com/topics/westward-expansion/davy-crockett>).

*Note: Two articles detailing the Battle of*

*Tallushatchee and the military expedition into the Florida Panhandle during the Creek Indian War can be found in the Journal Section of this newsletter. Crockett participated in both of these events.*

## Jim Bowie

*This biography is from the website [PBS Biographies](https://www.pbs.org/series/american-heroes/bowie) :*

A land speculator and soldier, Jim Bowie (1796-1836) personified the type of adventurer who inhabited the U.S.-Mexican borderlands in the early nineteenth century.

One of the most famous characters of Texas history, Jim Bowie was born in south central Kentucky, relocated with his family to Spanish-held Missouri in 1800, and then moved to central Louisiana the following year. Bowie grew up as a frontiersman, becoming a skilled hunter and a fearsome six-foot 180-pound brawler.

As an adult, Bowie went into the Caribbean slave smuggling business with his brothers, earning a reputation as a deadly knife fighter among the denizens of the lower Mississippi River. By the late 1820s, he began speculating in land backed by financial partners in Natchez.

The land speculation business led Bowie to Texas in 1830. After ingratiating himself with the leading families of San Antonio, he began to work Mexican immigration law to his advantage, amassing grants of thousands of acres under suspicious



**Portrait of Jim Bowie (the only known oil portrait painted from life).  
From [Wikipedia](#).**

**Bowie never talked of his exploits despite his increasing fame. Captain William Y. Lacey, who spent eight months living in the wilderness with Bowie, described him as a humble man who never used profanity or vulgarities.  
From [Wikipedia](#)**

terms.

In 1831, he married Ursula Veramendi, the daughter of a local notable. Rarely at home, Bowie spent the next year traveling to and from Natchez on business, or scouting the frontier for new sources of wealth.

In 1832, Bowie was lured into anti-Mexican government violence at Nacogdoches, and later fought in Mexico for the cause of Monclova. He was rewarded by access to lucrative land deals.

In 1835, Bowie's good fortune ended as the new policies of Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna criminalized most land speculation. As a result, Bowie became a leading proponent of Texas independence.

In the fall of 1835, he led Texan forces in several early engagements with Mexican troops. A natural leader, Bowie held the rank of colonel and was active in planning Texan strategy.

In early 1836, Bowie arrived in San Antonio, where he decided, against orders, to fortify and hold the mission called the Alamo. He died in its defense on March 6, 1836.

### His Legacy

**Bowie is remembered as a rugged frontiersman and an individual bent on bettering his lot, no matter what the costs. He was strong-willed and adventurous. Bowie was highly ambitious and would strive long and hard to see to the realization of his goals. He is most often associated with the knife that bears his name.**

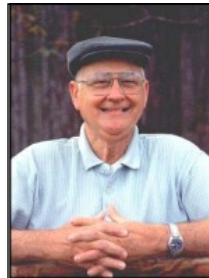


## News and Announcements



**Reception Honoring  
Darryl Searcy  
Thursday,  
March 21, 2019  
3:00-5:00 pm  
St. Maurice Catholic  
Church, Parish Hall  
202 E Jackson St,  
Brewton**

**In Honoring Dr. Searcy, the  
Meadorwood Garden Club  
And Garden Club of Brewton state:  
“Dr. Searcy, Has Generously Used  
His Knowledge and Efforts  
To Considerably Enhance  
the Beautification of the  
Greater Brewton Area.”**



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**Atmore  
Explores  
Establishing  
Downtown  
Historic  
District**

City officials have held a public hearing to discuss the proposed historic district. Officials from the Alabama Historical Commission and the consulting firm of McNair Historic Preservation took questions. Boundaries for the historic district have not been established but the area under consideration is along and either side of Main Street downtown.

If the city moves forward on the idea, it could take well over a year before the historic district could become officially recognized



**Joint Meeting of the  
Ala. Historical  
Association,  
Historical  
Commission,  
Black Heritage  
Council, and  
Trust for Historic  
Preservation  
to Celebrate the State's Bicentennial  
April 25-27, Tuscaloosa, AL**

Pictured is Capitol Park in Tuscaloosa, the site of the Alabama Capitol when Tuscaloosa was the seat of state government from 1826-1846. The ruins of the Alabama Capitol that burned in 1923 can be found in this city park.

The Alabama Historical Association is partnering with these groups to create an extended conference this year to highlight the work the ATHP, AHC, and BHC do to preserve important sites throughout the state.

For further information call 205-561-2500. The Embassy Suites in Tuscaloosa will be the main venue for the meetings and have special room rates.

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**April 26-27  
Confederate  
Memorial  
Park  
Chilton  
County  
Civil War  
Living  
History  
& Saturday  
Skirmish**

Students and the general public will experience outdoor living history demonstrations performed by authentically uniformed & equipped Union and Confederate re-enactors. Activities include infantry drill & firing, cavalry horses & equipment, artillery firing, commissary and wagon, soldier's equipment, uniforms, music, flags, civilian life, and a Civil War Camp of Instruction including tours of the barracks and other buildings.

Friday: 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Saturday: 10:00 am to 1:00 pm Skirmish at 1:00 pm. \$2 admission per person, per day. Additional \$2 for museum tours.

(Continued on page 5)

## News and Announcements

(Continued from page 4)

Confederate Memorial Park is located in Chilton County, east of I-65 off Hwy 31, 11 miles below Clanton. For more information call 205-755-1990.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Fort Toulouse/Fort Jackson Annual French & Indian War Encampment April 27, 2019 in Wetumpka, AL Saturday: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm Sunday: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm**



#### **Re-enactors drill at An April Encampment.**

This special event focuses attention on the main protagonists of the French & Indian War - France, Britain and their American Indian allies. Living history demonstrations of military, Indian, and civilian life will take place on Saturday and Sunday throughout the day. Re-enactors will be dressed and equipped as they appeared in North America during the middle of the eighteenth century.

\$4 admission for adults, per day. \$2 admission for children.

For more information call 334-567-3002

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### **"Making Alabama": A Bicentennial Traveling Exhibit In Atmore, May 2019 Location: The Club, a Building North of Atmore on HWY 21 Hours: TBA**



The exhibit, shown above, is an Interactive exhibit which combines visual displays with computer tablets that allow visitors to delve into Alabama history, including how Alabama became a state and each community's part in it. It is presented by the Alabama Humanities Foundation.

The exhibit will be in Monroeville at the Monroe County Public Library April 6 – 23

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### **"We the People: Alabama's Defining Documents" Restored and on Exhibit June 30-Aug, 11, Haws Gallery Huntsville Museum of Art Nov. 3-Dec. 31, Museum of Alabama, Alabama Department of Archives & History**



After a yearlong conservation effort, Alabama's six constitutions and the 1861 ordinance of secession, which declared Alabama's separation from the Union on the eve of the Civil War, will be on view to the public.

(continued on page 6)



## News and Announcements

(Continued from page 5)



### **Alabama Bicentennial Juneteenth Celebration June 1, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Rosa Parks Museum**

This event is an expanded program for Juneteenth, the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States.

The museum is described as "an active memorial to the life of civil rights icon Rosa Parks and the lessons of the Montgomery bus boycott."

The Museum is at Troy University, 252 Montgomery St, Montgomery, Alabama.

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### **Old St. Stephens Days Bicentennial Year Celebration St. Stephens Historical Park Oct. 5. Details TBA.**



**St. Stephens Historical Park  
Facebook photo**

St. Stephens was the first capital of Alabama, back when Alabama was a territory. The Old St. Stephens Days Bicentennial Year Celebration will celebrate and explore the history of what was once one of the state's bustling towns.

"The town site of Old St. Stephens is one of the most important historical and archaeological sites in Alabama. During a brief three decades, begin-

ning in the 1790s to its decline in the 1820s, St. Stephens was the site of a Spanish fort, an American fort and trading post and the Alabama Territorial capital," says the website for St. Stephens Historical Park.

The park is located at 2056 Jim Long Road, Saint Stephens.

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### **"Wade Hall Postcards Exhibit: Historical Scenes of Alabama" Sep. 20-Oct. 31, 2019 Thomas E. McMillan Museum Coastal Alabama Community College, Brewton , Alabama Hours: TBA**



Yes, ECHS has one of the state Bicentennial Exhibits coming to Brewton in September, 2019.

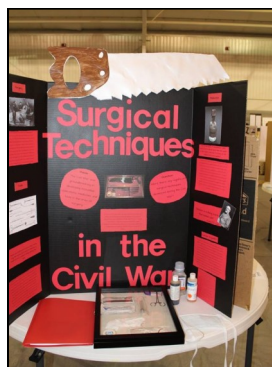
About the Exhibit: Wade Hall collected about 25,000 vintage post cards featuring scenes from the early 1900s to the 1960s in Alabama, which he donated to the Troy University archives. Two traveling postcard exhibits from the collection, focusing on main streets and historical buildings, are touring the state.

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(Continued on page 7)

## News and Announcements

(Continued from page 6)



### **Flomaton High School History Fair April 12, 2019 Times: TBA**

**Exhibit at Left from  
the History Fair  
for 2018**

*From the Flomaton High School Web Page:*

The major focus of the  
Flomaton High School History Fair  
highlights the research of the students,  
but it also  
seeks to spark a genuine interest in learning for  
students of all ages.

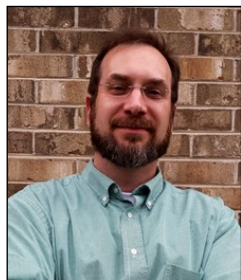
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### **Upcoming Events Archaeology Museum University of South Alabama**



**Alfred and Lucile Delchamps  
Archaeology Museum  
University of South Alabama**

**March 2019**



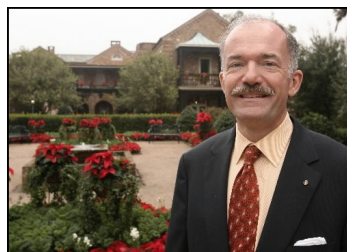
**Mike Bunn**

Alabama Humanities  
Foundation Bicentennial  
Scholar Lecture: "From  
Territory to State: The Story of  
Early Alabama," Mike Bunn,  
Tuesday, March 26, 2019,  
6:00pm

Alabama's territorial and early  
statehood years represent a crucial  
formative period in its past,  
a time in which the state both literally and figura-

tively took shape. This history is rich with stories of  
charismatic leaders, rugged frontiersmen, a dramatic  
and pivotal war that shaped the state's trajectory,  
raging political intrigue, and pervasive sectional ri-  
valry. In this fast-paced and richly illustrated presen-  
tation, historian Mike Bunn introduces one of the  
most consequential, but little understood, eras of  
Alabama history.

**April 2019**



**"Lost Mobile: The  
Houses,"  
Tom McGehee,  
Thursday, April 11,  
2019, 6:00pm**

Over three centuries Mobilians have lived in a  
variety of structures. Houses were considered some-  
what disposable in eras when preservation was non-  
existent. Sadly this idea only accelerated in the 20th  
century as some of the city's most unique houses  
became victims of non-stoppable "progress."

Join Tom McGehee as he shares images of  
Mobile's lost residential architecture.

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### **ECHS Has Received the Historical Marker which the Society Will Place at Catawba Springs Baptist Church**



The second oldest church in Escambia County  
(Ala.). Catawba Springs Baptist Church, located at  
5101 Old High Way 31 celebrated its 200th  
Anniversary in October 2018.

(Continued on page 8)

## News and Announcements

(Continued from page 7)



### Upcoming Events at the Alabama Department of Archives and History

#### Friday, March 29, 2019

Program: Meet the Producers of Ken Burns' Documentary "Country Music," Julie Dunfey and Dayton Duncan

Times: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Joseph M. Farley  
Alabama Power Auditorium  
At the Department of  
Archives and History

The documentary, "Country Music," by Burns, is a history of country music. The eight-part, 16 hour film will premiere on Alabama Public Television in September, 2019.

At the Program "Meet the Producers," Dunfey and Duncan will present excerpts from the film which focus on Hank Williams. After the screening, they will lead an informal conversation with attendees. Artifacts related to Hank Williams' music and life from the ADAH collection will be on display.

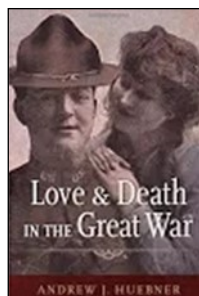
Admission is free. Refreshments will be served. For more information call (334) 353-4689.

#### Thursday, April 18, 2019

Program: Food For Thought:  
Andrew Huebner  
Love and Death in the Great War

Time: Noon

Place: Joseph M. Farley  
Alabama Power Auditorium  
at the Department of Archives and History



This discussion of Huebner's book comes from Amazon:

Americans today harbor no strong or consistent collective memory of the First World War. Ask why the country fought or what they accomplished, and "democracy" is the most likely if vague response. The circulation of confusing or lofty rationales for intervention be-

gan as soon as President Woodrow Wilson secured a war declaration in April 1917. Yet amid those shifting justifications, Love and Death in the Great War argues that there was a more durable and resonant one: Americans would fight for home and family.

Officials in the military and government, grasping this crucial reality, invested the war with personal meaning, as did popular culture. "Make your mother proud of you/ And the Old Red White and Blue" went George Cohan's famous tune "Over There." Federal officials and their allies in public culture, in short, told the war story as a love story.

Intervention came at a moment when arbiters of traditional home and family were regarded as under pressure from all sides: industrial work, women's employment, immigration, urban vice, woman suffrage, and the imagined threat of black sexual aggression. Alleged German crimes in France and Belgium seemed to further imperil women and children. War promised to restore convention, stabilize gender roles, and sharpen male character.

Love and Death in the Great War tracks such ideas of redemptive war across public and private spaces, policy and implementation, home and front, popular culture and personal correspondence. In beautifully rendered prose, Andrew J. Huebner merges untold stories of ordinary men and women with a history of wartime culture. Studying the radiating impact of war alongside the management of public opinion, he recovers the conflict's emotional dimensions--its everyday rhythms, heartbreaking losses, soaring possibilities, and broken promises" (<https://www.amazon.com>).

The public is invited to bring a brown bag lunch. Complimentary beverages are provided. Admission is always free

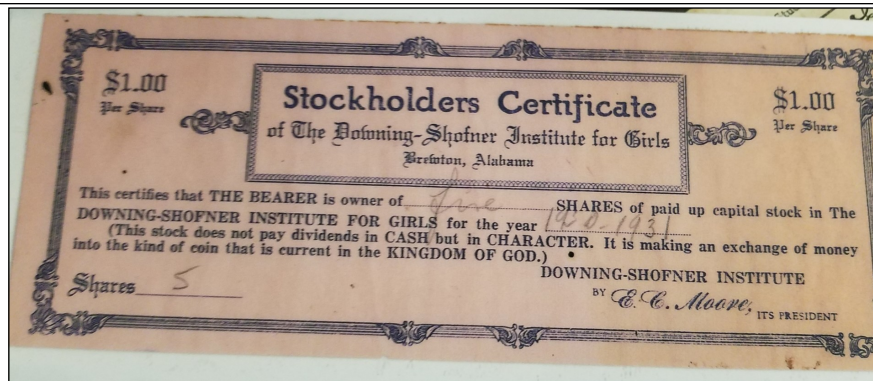
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### Digitizing Alabama Room Collection

ECHS is exploring digitizing materials in the Alabama Room. Having material stored on CD's would make information easily accessible and available to the public.



## Snapshots from the ECHS February 2019 Meeting



**On Display as Part of the Program on the Downing/Shofner School Presented by Jimmy Adkisson this Stockholders Certificate for \$1.00.**



**Photographs and other artifacts of the Downing/Schofner School**



**Pictured at the left, starting at the left, are Charlie Ware, Robin Brewton, and Jimmy Adkisson. Dr. Adkisson is showing Robin one his collection of artifacts of the Downing/Shofner School.**

**Above, Mike Edwards shows a family heirloom, a class ring from the school.**

# The ECHS *journal* Section

## The Battle of Tallushatchee

*The following article "Battle of Tallushatchee" by Herbert J. (Jim) Lewis is from the Encyclopedia of Alabama:*

The Battle of Tallushatchee, which took place on November 3, 1813, in present-day Calhoun County, was America's first military victory in the Creek War of 1813-14. The battle was initiated when an overwhelming American force attacked the Creek town of Tallushatchee, resulting in its complete destruction and the death of 186 Creeks, including women and children.

In October 1813, Gen. Andrew Jackson had led a group of approximately 2,500 Tennessee volunteer infantrymen and joined up with Brig. Gen. John Coffee's 1,300 cavalrymen in Huntsville. After leaving forces to establish a supply base near Huntsville, the remainder of the troops crossed Raccoon Mountain to establish a supply base near Huntsville; the remainder of the troops crossed Raccoon Mountain and began constructing Fort Strother on the Coosa River at a site known locally as Ten Islands about 30 miles south of present-day Gadsden. Jackson's plan was to launch strikes from this rendezvous point against the Red Stick towns.

Upon learning of the presence of a sizeable Red Stick stronghold nearby, Jackson dispatched Coffee and 900 mounted troops to destroy the Creek town of Tallushatchee, 13 miles east of Fort Strother. Early on the morning of November 3, 1813, Coffee's troops had progressed to within a mile of Tallushatchee, at which point they split and completely surrounded the Red Stick village. Two detachments of scouts were then sent into the heart of the village in an effort to draw the warriors out of

their houses.

In response, the Red Sticks rushed to the outer perimeter of federal soldiers, where they were driven back by a hail of lethal gunfire. Fighting lasted until the last warrior fell. In all, 186 Red Sticks were killed, including a number of women and children. The remaining women and children were taken

prisoner. Coffee's troops, by contrast, suffered only five killed and 41 wounded.

The lopsided American victory was the result of an overwhelming disparity in the size of the opposing forces, as well as a shortage of

**Crockett said of the battle "We shot 'em down like dogs" (<https://www.nps.gov>).**

**Coffee commented that "the enemy fought with savage fury, and met death with all its horrors, without shrinking or complaining: no one asked to be spared, but fought as long as they could stand or sit" (*the Columbian Phenix newspaper*).**

### Significance of the Victory at Tallushatchee

**The outcome at Tallushatchee was significant not only because it was the U.S. military's first victory of the Creek War but because it helped to sway leaders of many Creek towns to the American side. It also boosted the confidence of the American forces and addressed the clamoring among frontier citizens for revenge after Fort Mims (<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-2350>).**

gunpowder among the Red Sticks, many of whom were forced to defend themselves with only bows and arrows. Legendary frontiersman Davy Crockett, among the attacking Tennessee volunteers, reported that 46 warriors were shot and the house in which they had sought refuge was set ablaze by Coffee's troops.

Coffee later defended the loss of life among Creek women and children by blaming the warriors for seeking refuge in houses with their families and claimed that the killing of noncombatants was unintentional.

One of the Creek children orphaned by the fighting was taken from the battlefield to Fort Strother, where he caught the eye of General Jackson. The ten-month-old boy, named Lyncoya, was the same age as Jackson's adopted son, Andrew Jr.

When Creek women prisoners refused to care for him, Jackson arranged to have the baby sent to Huntsville and provided financial support for his immediate care. The boy later was adopted into the Jackson family and lived at their home near Nashville, Tennessee (<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-2350>).

# The ECHS *journal* Section

## Davy Crockett in the Florida Panhandle

*This article by historian/author Dale Cox, is from the website for Two Egg, Florida (<https://twoegg.tv/2018/07/davycrockett/>).*

*Dale has been a guest speaker for ECHS:*

### **Part One: Attacking Parties of Red Stick Creeks on the Escambia River and at Garcon Point Where Escambia and Blackwater Bays Come Together**

Crockett is not usually associated with Florida. In the winter of 1814-1815, however, he took part in a military campaign that carried him deep into the woods of the Panhandle.

The War of 1812 was then underway and Crockett was a soldier in a regiment of Tennessee mounted riflemen. Rumors were afoot that the British planned an attack somewhere along the Gulf Coast and there were confirmed reports of Redcoats drilling in the streets of the Spanish city of Pensacola.

To wipe out the Red Sticks before they could reach the Apalachicola and then, if conditions warranted, destroy the British Post itself, Jackson unleashed a large force under Maj. Uriah Blue of the 39th U.S. Infantry. Among the soldiers making up this command was David Crockett of Tennessee.

The frontiersman's account of Blue's raid is included in his autobiography, A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett of Tennessee (published in 1834), and reads like one of the tall tales that he was famous for telling. Unfortunately, this story was as true as it was brutal.

According to Crockett, Blue's column left Fort Montgomery, near the Tensaw Community in Alabama, and crossed the line into Spanish Florida. When the army reached the Escambia River north of Pensacola, he was sent with a small detachment of Tennesseans and some allied Choctaw, Chickasaw and Creek warriors to scout ahead for signs of Red Sticks:

"...We camped on the opposite bank, and early in the morning we set out. We had not gone far before we came to a place where the whole country was covered with water, and looked like a sea. We didn't stop for this, though, but just put in like so many spaniels, and waded on, until we reached the pine hills, which made our distance through the water about a mile and a half. Here we struck up a fire to

warm ourselves, for it was cold, and we were chilled through by being so long in the water" (A Narrative).

Crockett's party moved north along the east side of the Escambia River in what is now Santa Rosa County, Florida. After warming themselves, they continued on for about six miles. Scouts that had been sent out to the left to examine the river banks suddenly came running in with news that they had found a Red Stick camp:

"...Here we paused for a few minutes, and the prophets pow-wow'd over their men awhile, and then got out their paint, and painted them, all according to their custom when going into battle. They then brought their paint to old Major Russell, and said to him, that as he was an officer, he must be painted too. He agreed, and they painted him just as they had done themselves. We let the Indians understand that we white men would first fire on the camp, then fall back, so as to give the Indians a chance to rush in and scalp them" (A Narrative).

The allies approached the Red Stick camp. Russell and his 16 Tennesseans – Crockett among them – forming the center of a line of battle. A force of Chickasaws formed to their left and the Choctaws to the right. Before long they heard the sounds coming from the Red Stick camp. Moving forward to attack, however, they soon found that their enemies were camped on an island. They were pondering this situation when suddenly the sounds of war whoops and gunfire could be heard in the distance.

Russell rushed his men forward to find that two of his scouts had killed two Red Stick men after obtaining information from them:

"...When we reached them, they had cut off the heads of both the Indians; and each of those Indians with us would walk up to one of the heads, and taking his war club would strike on it. This was done by every one of them; and when they had got done, I took one of their clubs, and walked up as they had done, and struck it on the head also. At this they all gathered round me, and patting me on shoulder, would call me 'Warrior-warrior'" (A Narrative).

Russell's warriors then scalped the two battered heads and the force continued its advance, soon coming across a trace that led down to the river. The Tennesseans, Choctaws and Chickasaws followed this path and soon discovered a slain Spanish man, his

*(Continued on page 12)*



# The ECHS *journal* Section

## Davy Crockett in the Florida Panhandle

*(Continued from page 11)*

wife and their four children. Red Sticks had scalped all six. Crockett recalled that he “began to feel mighty ticklish along about this time.”

The troops reached the river without seeing any more Red Sticks, however, and followed it back down to a point opposite the island where the Creek camp was located. A canoe was found and about 40 of Maj. Russell’s warriors crossed over and captured the camp. There they found only one Red Stick warrior, two women and ten children. The warrior escaped, but the women and children were taken as prisoners.

The captives from both incidents were sent back to Fort Montgomery, although Crockett believed that some were killed by their captors and never reached the post.

His operations along the Escambia complete, Maj. Blue turned the main column east for the Choctawhatchee River where a Red Stick chief named Holmes was believed to be hiding. Crockett took part in this march, which soon proved to be the most difficult of his military career.

### Part Two : The Choctawhatchee

According to Crockett, who described the raid two decades later in his autobiography, the men had been in the field for more than one month when they neared the Choctawhatchee.

“...At the start we had taken only twenty days’ rations of flour, and eight days’ rations of beef; and it was now thirty-four days before we reached that place. We were, therefore, in extreme suffering for want of something to eat, and exhausted with our exposure and the fatigues of our journey. I remember well, that I had not myself tasted bread but twice in nineteen days. I had bought a pretty good supply of coffee from the boat that had reached us from Pensacola, on the Scamby [i.e. Escambia], and on that we chiefly subsisted” ([A Narrative](#)).

His memories apparently grew over the decades that passed before he wrote his account, as Maj. Blue reported that his command neared the river on Christmas Day, December 25, 1814. Only seventeen days had passed since the soldiers left Fort Montgomery, not the thirty-four remembered by Crockett. The frontiersman, however, was right about

the condition of the troops. Their supplies were exhausted and they were heavily caffeinated, hungry and in a foul mood.

Blue’s command was making camp when scouts came in to report the discovery of the village of a Red Stick chief named Holmes. Darkness was falling, but the men formed ranks during the night and started out, hoping to raid the town’s food supplies:

“...We arrived about sunrise, and near the place prepared for battle. We were all so furious, that even the certainty of a pretty hard fight could not have restrained us. We made a furious charge on the town, but to our great mortification and surprise, there wasn’t a human being in it. The Indians had all run off and left it. We burned the town, however; but, melancholy to tell, we found no provision whatever. We then turned about, and went back to the camp we had left the night before, as nearly starved as any set of poor fellows ever were in the world” ([A Narrative](#)).

The site of the town destroyed by Maj. Blue on December 26, 1814, has not been found. Available reports indicate only that it was on the margin of the floodplain swamps of the Choctawhatchee River. The most detailed of these accounts was provided many years later by a surgeon in Blue’s command. He said that Holmes’ town was about two days march west of the Yellow River and the description he gave of the attack strongly suggests it was on the west side of the Choctawhatchee. Like Crockett, he made no mention of crossing a large river before reaching the village.

“...After rapidly marching about four hours, they came in view of the Indian huts on the margin of a heavy swamp. The Major ordered one part of his army to move to the left, the 2nd Column to the right of the supposed town. The main body he charged to go to the head of the center of the main part of the town. The Indians got news of the approach of the Army & fled in the swamp with the exception of some 4 or 5 hunters packed with venison who had just come in and were captured with their plunder.” \*

Barring the future discovery of its archaeological remains or a more detailed account of the raid, all that can be said about the location of Holmes’ Town is that it was probably on the west side of the Choctawhatchee River in either Walton or Holmes County. Numerous springs such as the beautiful ones at Vortex Spring Resort, Ponce de Leon Springs State

*(Continued on page 13)*

# The ECHS *journal* Section

## Davy Crockett in the Florida Panhandle

(Continued from page 12)

Park and Morrison Springs Park feed the river from the west and would have provided good sites for a large village.

One of the hunters mentioned was killed and scalped and three others were taken prisoner.

Their supplies exhausted and finding nothing to eat but the venison taken from the Red Stick hunters, the men turned back to their camp of the previous night. Realizing that he could not feed his entire command, Blue ordered Maj. William Russell to take 500 Tennesseans – Crockett among them – and march cross-country for Fort Jackson at present-day Wetumpka, Alabama. These men suffered intensely over coming days. The main body retraced its route to the Escambia River, likewise suffering from hunger, sickness and exposure.

So far as is known, Davy Crockett never returned to Florida.

Notes:

1. \*Material in this paragraph taken from A.J. Pickett, "Interesting Notes upon the History of Alabama," Section 25, Pickett's "Notes of Doctor Thomas G. Holmes of Baldwin County, Ala. In relation to the "Burnt Corn Expedition. . . the Massacre of 553 Men, Women & children at Fort Mims and other things which happened in the trying times of 1813.1814."
2. ECHS on a Field Trip to Northern Baldwin County visited Fort Montgomery which is on private property in Baldwin County.

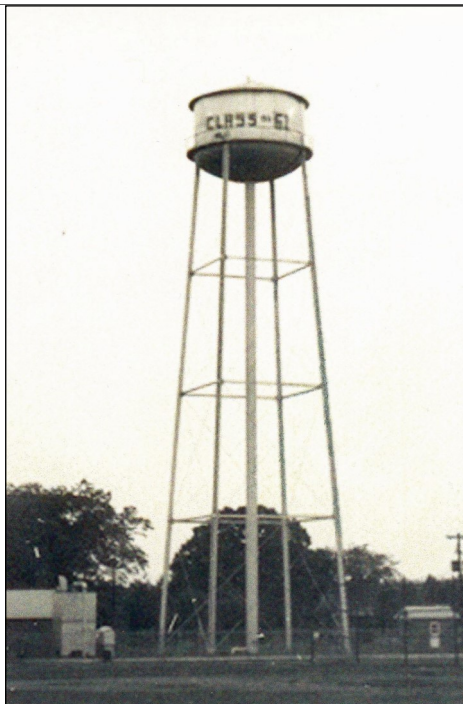
## Climbing the Tower

**By Charlie Ware**

I think the statute of limitations has passed sufficiently that now this story can be told. As with many of my stories, it comes with a warning: DON'T DO THIS. I realize now that it was dangerous, dumb, and probably a little illegal.

It was the spring of 1961 and my class, the class of 61, was preparing for graduation. We were the first class to begin a school year at what was then the brand new Escambia County High School. The school had opened in January of 1960, so technically the class of 60 was the first to graduate there, but our class would be the first to start the school year in the new building and then graduate there.

As graduation approached, we



**Water Tower Showing  
"Class of 61"**

were trying to think of things we could do to memorialize our class; to leave a reminder that we had been there. I don't remember exactly what it was my class presented to the school. I think it may have been a clock with a little plaque inscribed "From the Class of 61."

This was nice and was in keeping with what other classes had done, but some of us guys felt we should do something on a little bit grander scale. We needed to boldly mark our territory for one and all to see. We decided to climb the new water tower that had just been erected behind the school, and paint "CLASS OF 61" in giant letters on the tank.

(Continued on page 14)

# The ECHS *journal* Section

## Climbing the Tower

*(Continued from page 13)*

My good buddy, Gene McNeil, and I volunteered for the job. Gene and I had been classmates since kindergarten and had shared numerous adventures over the years, so this was no big deal for us. We were both somewhat artistic (he much more than I) so we were determined not to do a second rate job and just scribble something that could not be read. We were agreed that it would be done right and look good, something we could be proud of. We carefully planned the shape and size of the letters and even decided to take a ruler along with us so we could get the spacing just right.

On the appointed night we drove out to the school in Gene's car and rode around the area for a while to

insure the coast was clear. When we were satisfied it was, we parked on a little side road and loaded our paint cans and other supplies (including Gene's camera) in a back-pack and made our way toward the tower. A couple of times we had to drop down into the bushes when we saw the lights of an approaching car.

After scaling the six foot chain link fence that enclosed the tower, we were ready to start our trip to the top. The ladder on the tower didn't extend all the way to the ground. I suppose the designers thought nobody would try to climb the tower if they couldn't reach the ladder. We had to climb on the diagonal supports for the frame in order to reach the ladder, but after that it was smooth sailing.

*(Continued on page 15)*



**Charlie Ware**  
**Author of the Story**



**Gene McNeil**  
**the Photographer**



# The ECHS *journal* Section

## Climbing the Tower

*(Continued from page 14)*

I headed up first and it was not long before I discovered I had a terrible fear of heights.

I can strap myself into an airplane and climb to 30,000 feet and do spins and loops and you name it, and it doesn't bother me in the least. But if I'm climbing a ladder above about ten feet, I start thinking about the ladder breaking, my hand slipping, a strong wind coming up, or any number of bad things that could happen. Needless to say, by the time I was half way to the top of the tower, I was petrified. Several times I stopped and just hugged the ladder with a death grip, too frightened to take another step. I considered giving up and going back down but I didn't want Gene to see my fear, so somehow, I managed to keep going. I later learned Gene was just as terrified as I was.

A few times during our climb we spotted headlights of vehicles coming down the road. We would hug the ladder so we presented the smallest silhouette possible. One of those vehicles turned out to be the police and we waited anxiously when they stopped and looked around. Apparently they didn't see us and soon continued on their way as we resumed our climb.

The scariest part of the climb was the last ten feet. At that point the ladder started to tilt out as it got near the ramp that ran around the tank. For the last few feet we were actually leaning backward. My stomach still tingles today when I think about it.

When we finally climbed off the ladder onto the ramp atop the tower I began to relax somewhat. I could literally feel the tension draining from my body. We walked around the ramp, pausing occasionally to enjoy the view. It was a beautiful, clear night and we could see the glow of the lights of Mobile and Pensacola in the distance. I could have taken a seat and just hung out and enjoyed the view for a while, but there was too much work yet to be done.

The first job was to measure the size and spacing of the letters. We marked an outline and when we were satisfied that it was just right, began to fill it in with blue spray paint. This was not as easy as we had anticipated because each letter was four feet high and a foot wide. That required a lot of paint, but fortunately we had brought along some extra. We used it all.

After we had finished, we stood back (not very far)

and admired our work. Then Gene brought out his camera. Gene was one of the few of us who had a real camera in those days, and he carried it everywhere he went. This night was no exception. After we had taken each other's picture, Gene remarked, "You know, I'll bet we're the only high school kids in the country who have had their picture taken on top of a water tower in the middle of the night." Gene has many pictures from our high school days, and we all still enjoy going through them whenever we get together.

The next morning when we arrived for school, there it was for all to see. "CLASS OF 61" in big, bold, neat letters atop the tower. Students were standing around all over the parking lot appreciating the work and speculating as to who was responsible. Though there were a few who had an idea as to who may have done it, it was not admitted to for a long time. Mr. Black, our principal, was not at all amused and if he had known who the guilty parties were, there is a good chance we would not have graduated with our class.

Our class logo remained undisturbed on the tower for a couple of years but then a group from a later class went up and painted over the 1 and painted in their own class date. Of course, this was not going to stand. Within days, someone from our class went up and changed it back to 61. This happened several times, but no other class date ever lasted for very long. My friend, Glenn Waldrop, and I climbed the tower to make a correction over three years after we had graduated.

Many years later, when the old tower was finally torn down, it still proudly bore the markings of the "CLASS OF 61."

I'm often asked by people who see the picture of me on the tower, "Why are you wearing that silly straw hat with a big flower on it?" I can only answer that it just goes to confirm how goofy I was back then.

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

P.O. Box 276  
Brewton, AL 36427  
Phone: 251-809-1528  
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