



The March Newsletter

The Meeting will be
Tuesday, March 25, 2025, 3:00 pm
 in the Meeting Room of the McMillan Museum
 on the Brewton College Campus.



**Walter R.
Parmer**

The Program: Early Settlers in South Central Alabama.

Using material from his book Wagon Train Friends and Relatives (2024), our speaker, Walter R. Parmer, will create the world of these early settlers. A description of the book from the Amazon website, "A 400 year history of migration of the Palmer, Rhodes, Waller, Bolling and related families from the Eastern Shores of Maryland

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Refreshments

Plan on again bringing your favorite finger foods for the March Meeting. The Society will provide drinks.



**Old Depot in
Georgiana -
Sadly Gone.**

**Butler County
Courthouse, was
constructed
in Greenville, the
county seat, in
1903.**



**Greenville
Grammar
School in the
1920's.**

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The Program

(Continued from page 1)

and Virginia to South Central Alabama, to the Pacific West Coast.”

Mr. Parmar emphasizes that the book is not just about Butler County. He points out that Chapters 28 and 41 trace the family in Escambia County. “Foster Roan Parmer and his son William ‘Bill’ Parmer were in the Huxford area for many years. Frances Rachel Abigail Parmer and her husband, Moses Hiram Davidson, raised a large family in the county.”

From an article in the Greenville Standard for July 2024, “Greenville, and many Butler County families, play a large role in the pages of the work. The included family stories provide a glimpse of life for ancestors who lived through the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, the Great Depression and two World Wars with personal determination.”

Mr. Parmar hopes the book will become a source document for future generations of researchers. He is

the Vice-President and Program Chairman of the Butler County, Alabama, Historical Society.



**Front Cover for
Wagon Train Friends and
Relatives.**

News and Announcements



77th Annual Meeting of Alabama Historical Association Opelika, Alabama April 9-11, 20

Full Registration (\$175) includes Wednesday reception, Thursday lunch, Thursday banquet, Friday luncheon, and sessions.

Single day registration options are available at the following rates: Wednesday reception (\$30); Thursday lunch and sessions (\$60); Thursday awards banquet (\$75); Friday luncheon and sessions (\$60).

Pre-registrations must be received by Monday, March 31.

Events at the Alabama Department of Archives and History Commemorating the Bicentennial of the Marquis de Lafayette's 1824-1825 Tour of the United States.

Previously: March 20

**A Food for Thought Presentation
“Lafayette: The Nation’s Guest,”**
presented by Dr. Edwin C. Bridges,
former director of ADAH (Alabama
Department of Archives and History).
In-person and Online at Facebook and
YouTube.

Upcoming: April 3

**Alabama Department of Archives and
History’s series *History/Now:*
Conversations on the Past + Present
“The Legacy of Lafayette’s Tour.”**
5:00 pm—Reception, Lobby of ADAH.
6:00 pm—Program, Farley Auditorium,
ADAH. Four Presenters.
In-Person Presentations -
Online at Facebook and Youtube.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Continuation of A Brief History of Escambia County

By Henderson Potter

In 1894 there was a church twenty-three miles from Brewton, and out and across McGowin's Bridge. I, Henderson Potter, went up there one Sunday to church. Israel Channel, an elderly man, was the preacher. His text was "The Palm Trees Bear Fruit Every Month in the Year." He could not read or write.

The pulpit was in the back part of the church and back of the pulpit was a window. There was a mule tied to a dogwood tree about six or eight feet from the window in back of the pulpit. The mule was pawing and attempting to get loose; he pawed up a yellow jacket's nest and the yellow jackets swarmed into the church and one stung old man Israel and most of the members were stung and all made a break for the front door.

The church had a front gallery and a man had a wagon backed up to the gallery selling peanuts, and he was selling whiskey at a nearby spring. When the yellow jackets poured out there, they stung the ox that pulled the wagon. He ran away and turned the wagon over.

A few years later, the man who had been selling the peanuts and the whiskey was digging a well and it caved in and killed him. Sin was the cause of it for he had been using God's House for merchandising and selling whiskey at the nearby spring.

Back in the early nineties, the members did not have a preacher at the Universalist Church, so Mr. Uriah Blacksher, Mr. Dave Blacksher, Mr. Jeppie Blacksher, Mr. Alex McGowin, Mr. Pad Foshee, and Mr. Charlie Sowell asked an Afro-American preacher by the name of Harris to come and preach for them.

The preacher was an old man and rode an old clay colored horse. So he came on Sunday to preach and the usual members and Afro-Americans, also, went to the Universalist Church and there wasn't standing room in the church and others on the outside. The preacher's text was These Are They That Follow Me."

On Monday morning the old preacher was on the street downtown. Many gentlemen gathered around him; they were asking him questions about how he could preach that way without an education. He answered them and said: "All these things were handed down to me from Goid; none of you all have any

religion and don't know what religion is and have never been 'Born Again.'"

Mr. Bryars Byrd started in the retail grocery and market business in February, 1938, went to war in the U. S. Navy as a Naval Aviator in February, 1943, closed his store in September, 1943, while in service of his country, He reopened his business in January, 1946, and has a thriving business, conducting two stores, the two being Byrd's No. 1 and Byrd's No. 2. He married Miss Hazel Simmons, December 1941, and they have two children.

The populace of Brewton had overcome the darkest days of the depression and had begun to adjust themselves to normal days again when the most tragic event that has ever happened to the city came almost without warning. In March, 1929, the dam at River Falls broke, wasting its waters throughout South

Alabama, and Brewton, being located between two creeks, fell victim to a great portion of the water. The whole business section was practically under water, houses floated like boats and rescue parties worked unceasingly aiding people who became trapped or marooned.

As a result of the good work of rescue parties, nobody was drowned. In fact, a set of twins was born to a family in the loft of their house as it floated down stream. When the water receded, the job of cleaning the city was at hand, since the streets and elsewhere were blocked with logs, limbs, snakes, lizards, frogs and all sorts of filth and dirt.

Since the flood, Brewton has been fortunate in growing rapidly and it still continues to grow. If the city grows in the future as it has in the past seventy-three years, it will a great city in seventy-three years hence.

This is the end of Mr. Potter's "Brief History."

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Lafayette's Visit to Alabama

By Herbert J. "Jim" Lewis

This article is taken from the Encyclopedia of Alabama at <<https://encyclopediaofalabama.org/media/marquis-de-lafayette-2>>.

In 1825, Alabama was honored by a visit from Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de la Fayette (1757-1834), the last surviving general of the Revolutionary War. The former aide to Gen. George Washington was in the midst of a tour of all of the U.S. states in honor of the nation's 50th anniversary in 1824-25.

Lafayette had first come to America from France 47 years earlier to support America's war for independence from Great Britain. At the age of 20, Lafayette was made a major general and served with distinction on Washington's staff, fighting in important battles at Brandywine in Pennsylvania and Yorktown in Virginia.

Upon returning to France after the war, Lafayette became embroiled in the French Revolution and ultimately had to flee France because of his opposition to the excesses of the revolutionary Jacobin Party.

Lafayette served in the 1787 Assembly of Notables, an advisory group to the king of France that worked for governmental reform, and served as commander-in-chief of the French National Guard from 1789 to 1791. After raising the ire of the French government, Lafayette attempted to escape to the United States but was captured by Austrian authorities and imprisoned until September 1797.

Lafayette returned to France in 1800. In 1818, he was elected to the French Parliament, where he served until 1824 as a leader of the opposition party and promoted such liberal



Gilbert du Motier, the Marquis de Lafayette. He is shown in his French military uniform in this 1791 painting by Joseph-Désiré Court.



The Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834), In an 1873 engraving commissioned by Johnson, Wilson and Company Publishers for the book *Portrait Gallery of Eminent Men and Women of Europe and America* by Evert A. Duyckinck

measures as freedom of the press and religious tolerance.

After losing his seat in Parliament, Lafayette accepted an invitation from Pres. James Monroe in 1824 to make a grand tour of what were then the 24 U.S. states. The invitation was extended not only to honor Lafayette's service to America but also to expose a new generation of Americans to the "Spirit of 1776."

Lafayette's extended tour began on August 15, 1824, when he arrived at Staten Island, New York. The Alabama General Assembly passed a joint resolution officially inviting Lafayette to Alabama, and Gov. Israel Pickens issued a formal invitation in late December 1824.

The announcement of Lafayette's visit created great excitement in Alabama.

The legislature authorized the payment of entertainment expenses out of public funds and Governor Pickens selected planning committees for lavish festivities to be held in Montgomery, Cahaba, and Mobile. To ensure Lafayette's comfort during his travels, refreshments and supplies were cached along the route for the entourage.

Lafayette and his party, which included his son George Washington Lafayette, toured the northern and eastern states in the fall of 1824, including stops at Monticello to visit Thomas Jefferson and Washington, D.C., where he was received at the White House by Pres. James Monroe.

Lafayette began his tour of the southern states in March 1825, arriving at the Fort Mitchell crossing of the Chattahoochee River on March 31. His entourage was met in Alabama by a military escort and a welcoming party that included former congressman

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Lafayette's Visit to Alabama

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Bolling Hall, John Dandridge Bibb (brother of Alabama's first two governors), and Gen. Sam Dale, hero of the "Canoe Fight."

Because Lafayette entered Alabama in what was technically Creek territory, and owing to a recent treaty controversy, Pickens placed Gen. Thomas S. Woodward, who was himself part Creek, in charge of an Indian escort through the region. Woodward included a detailed account of the visit in his *Woodward's Reminiscences*, a collection of his personal observations of events in the history of early Alabama.

As Lafayette's Georgia escort arrived along the east bank of the Chattahoochee River, they were met by Chilly McIntosh, son of Creek leader Gen. William McIntosh, leading 50 Creeks who later ferried the party across the river and carried members to the top of the bluff.

When Lafayette arrived, the Creeks greeted him with a war whoops, and McIntosh introduced him to Bolling Hall, who delivered a short official welcome. Dandridge Bibb then delivered a more formal and lengthy welcome, and the Creeks entertained Lafayette with a game of stickball. After the game, Lafayette's party traveled just a few miles before spending the night at a tavern run by Haynes Crabtree.

The next morning, the party set off down the Old Federal Road en route to Montgomery. In a grand procession through Creek territory, cavalry troops and 100 Creek horsemen escorted Lafayette, who rode in an elegant carriage. That night, some of the party stayed at Kendall Lewis's Tavern, but Lafayette traveled several miles further west to Warrior Stand, the homestead of the recently deceased Creek leader Big Warrior.

The next day, the procession continued to Line Creek, the boundary between Creek territory and



Fort Mitchell, Russell County
This reconstructed block-house demonstrates the type of building that would have served as a storage facility for valuable items and as a guard house during the years of the fort's use from 1812 to 1840. The fort was reconstructed in the 1990s and is now a National Historic Landmark.

Alabama state land. At this point, the Creek horsemen departed the entourage, and the remainder of the party lodged at Walter B. Lucas's tavern just across the creek.

Lafayette entered Montgomery on April 3 to the serenade of bugles and French horns and was greeted by a crowd of some 3,000 people at Goat Hill, now the site of the current capitol building but on the outskirts of the city at the time. A band played "Hail to the Chief," and Lafayette was introduced to the official Montgomery delegation, led by War of 1812 veteran Col. Arthur Hayne, and welcomed in an address by Gov. Pickens.

After the official welcome, Gov. Pickens reported that any

further celebrations would cease owing to the fact that it was Sunday. Lafayette then enjoyed a private dinner, attended church service, and spent the night in the home of John Edmondson. The following day, he was feted with a public dinner and then a ball at Freeny's Tavern, located at the corner of present-day Tallapoosa and Commerce streets. Exhausted from his travels, Lafayette left the ball early, and his party boarded two steamboats, the *Balize* and the *Henderson*, which would carry members down the Alabama River to their final stops in the state.

On April 5, the flotilla made a quick stop at Selma so its citizens could meet the legendary figure. The party next stopped at Cahaba, then the state capital, where Lafayette was treated to another lavish reception. A band played "Lafayette's March," and Alabama's attorney general Henry Hitchcock delivered a welcome address.

Interestingly, Hitchcock was a grandson of Lafayette's wartime friend, Gen. Ethan Allen of Vermont. Lafayette and his party enjoyed a formal reception and public barbeque dinner at the state house and met some of the French settlers of the Vine and

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

Lafayette's Visit to Alabama

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Olive Colony, located near present-day Demopolis in Marengo County.

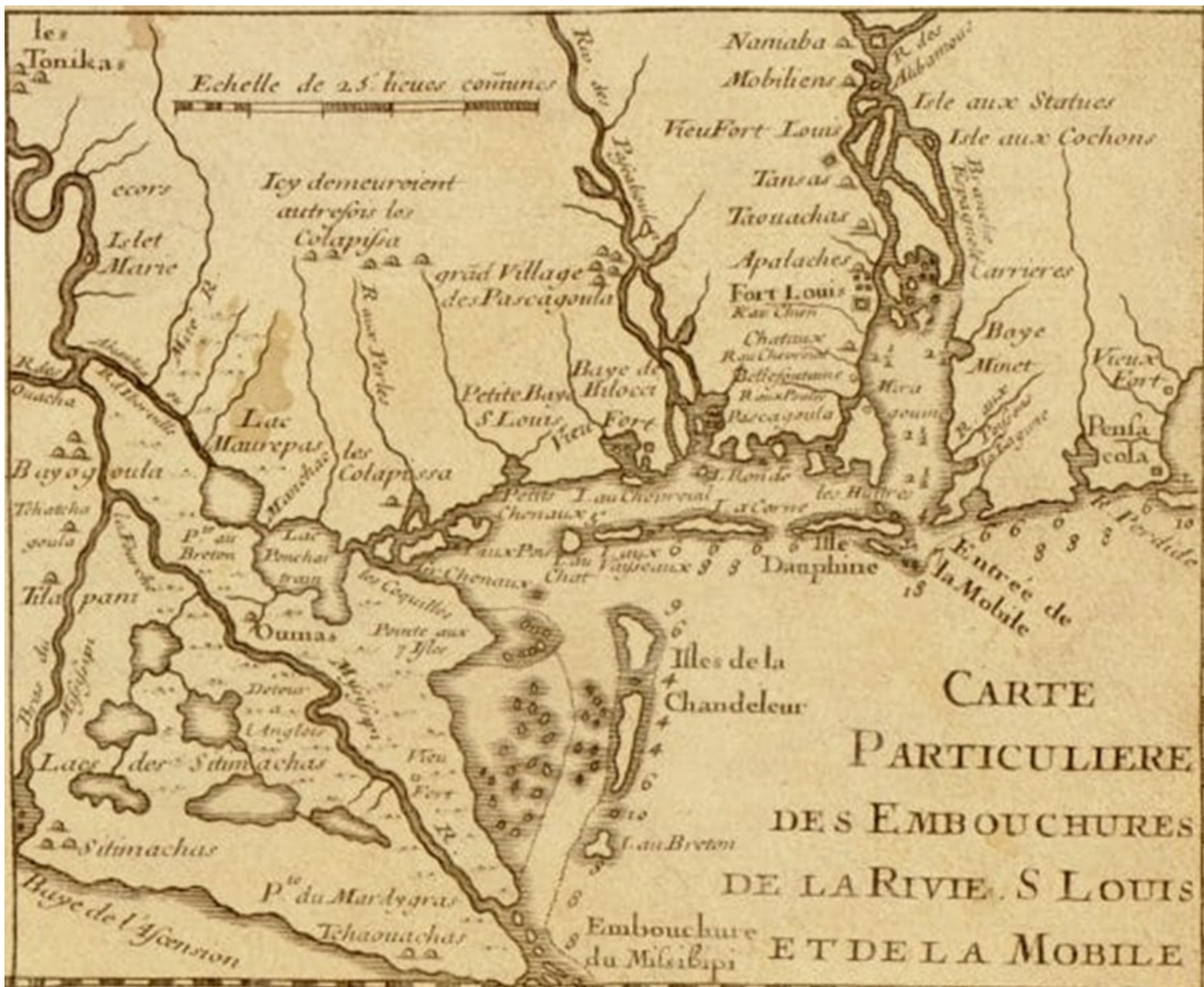
After a brief stop at Claiborne in Monroe County, where the party attended a public reception at the courthouse and the laying of the cornerstone for a Masonic Lodge, Lafayette and the others pressed on to Mobile, arriving there on April 7, 1825. Lafayette was just as regally received and extravagantly entertained in Mobile as he had been elsewhere on his journey through the state; a banquet and ball held that

evening at a hotel on Royal Street drew more than 600 spectators.

The next morning, Governor Pickens accompanied Lafayette by steamboat down Mobile Bay to Mobile Point, where he joined an official welcoming party from Louisiana. He boarded the luxurious steamer *Natchez*, which took him to New Orleans to continue his tour of America.

Although Alabamians treated Lafayette's visit with enthusiasm and fanfare, the visit was in fact a severe financial burden for the state. The total cost

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Map of French Louisiana

This detail of Mobile Bay and environs is from a map of the French territory of La Lousiane created around 1718 by French cartographer Guillaume de L'Isle. The detail shows the location of what are now Dauphin Island and Bay Minette.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Lafayette's Visit to Alabama

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approached \$17,000, which was quite a strain on the limited resources of the new state considering it only spent \$10,000 to build the capitol building at Cahaba. The state's bill would have been even greater had the members of the military escort not paid their own expenses.

Nevertheless, Lafayette's visit to Alabama exposed its early citizens to a world beyond the confines of its frontier borders. The excitement it generated

prompted numerous inhabitants of isolated areas of the state to travel hundreds of miles to Montgomery, Selma, Cahaba, Claiborne, and Mobile, to see America's most prominent foreign dignitary. Among these were a few veterans of the American Revolution, who came to pay respects to their old comrade in arms.



Photograph of the Simmons Hotel in Monroeville, Monroe County, Alabama in 1894. Notice the woman on the front steps of the hotel playing the guitar.

From the Digital Collection of Samford University <<https://digitalcollections.samford.edu/our-collections/alabama-history-digital-collections/historical-alabama-photographs-collection>>.

ECHOES
THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY
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Books Available by Contribution

	Regular	Mailed
History of Escambia County, Alabama	\$90.00	\$96.00
Headstones and Heritage	\$20.00	\$26.00
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)	\$40.00	\$46.00
Flomaton Centennial Scrapbook	\$30.00	\$36.00
Addendum to Headstones and Heritage	\$20.00	\$26.00
Headstones & Addendum Together	\$40.00	\$52.00

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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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