# ECHOES



## The July Newsletter

The Meeting will be Tuesday, July 22, 2025, 3:00 pm in the Meeting Room of the McMillan Museum on the Brewton College Campus. There Will Be No Meeting In August



Our Speaker Alex Luttrell Shown with the Historic Marker in Front of Butler High School in Huntsville, Ala.

# The Program: Luttrell Hardware & the Families Behind the Firm.

Thanks to Alex we have this introduction to the program:

F. Alex Luttrell, III is a Brewton native, the son of the late Frank and Kitty Luttrell, who has enjoyed a lifetime fascination

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### Refreshments

Plan on again bringing your favorite finger foods for the July Meeting.



Robert Henley -First Mayor of Birmingham No Meeting in August
Because of the state elections on
August 26, the meeting room in the
Museum will be used for voting.



"Mother and daughter" houses on Cedar Street in Montgomery, Alabama. Time Period 1960-1969.



Beauvoir House Home of Jefferson Davis, Biloxi MS.

> Volume 52 No. 7 2025

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# The Program

(Continued from page 1)

with family genealogy and local history. Most branches of his family arrived in

Alabama in the decades following statehood. His paternal Luttrell and Padgett ancestors moved to the Brewton area in the 1880s, beginning a long association with the business, civic, and social affairs of the Community.

In his youth, Alex participated in all school activities and attained the rank of Eagle Scout. He graduated from T.R. Miller High School in 1979 and received a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering degree from Auburn University in 1983.

Immediately following graduation, Alex joined Dynetics, Inc., a Huntsville, AL-based, employee-owned, aerospace and defense contractor where he spent 38+ years working in radar and missile systems analysis, technical project management, program finance and execution, and retirement plan administration.

He retired from Dynetics in 2021 and currently serves as an advocate for employee ownership. He works with several Alabama companies in their employee ownership journey as they establish and maintain Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs).

Alex and his wife, Shelaine, reside in Madison where they are members of Asbury Church. They are both active in their community but enjoy traveling to the Gulf Coast and around the world. Alex and Shelaine are the parents of two sons, Ford and Rob, both recent engineering graduates of Auburn.

Alex was previously involved in his sons' activities serving as school volunteer, Cub Scout Den Leader, and little league baseball coach in Madison. He is a graduate of Leadership Huntsville/Madison County and is a charter member of the Madison Rotary Club.

His passion has always been family genealogy and Alabama history, fostered by his father and both grandmothers who loved to share stories of their Alabama roots. Alex began writing and publishing articles and short historical sketches while in college and since that time he has continued that practice of documenting his family's and Brewton's rich history through research, writing, and photograph preservation. He is author or editor of a number of works:

- History of the Padgett Rabb Families of Conecuh
   & Escambia Counties, Alabama (1980).
- Early History of What is Known as the Evergreen Beat (1981).
- Early Acts and Orders of Incorporation of Brewton, Alabama (1981).
- Elected Officials of Brewton, Alabama (1981).
- Brewton Events of 1883 Recalled (1983)
- 1884 A Year of Growth for Brewton & Escambia County (1984).
- Brewton Centennial Pamphlet Government Section (1985).
- First High School Established in Brewton in 1885 (1986).
- Brewton First Methodist Church History (1989)
- Luttrell Family History (1991).
- Alabama Roots Brief Historical Sketches of Our Alabama Ancestors (1998).
- T.R. Miller High School Class of '79 History (1999).
- Brewton Government (2000).
- Brewton Ordinances (2000).
- The Origin of Escambia County (2000).
- Escambia County Courthouses (2000).
- Escambia County Governments (2000).
- Historical Markers of Madison County, Alabama (2001).
- Luttrell Hardware Company (2006).
- Red Rock Bottling Company (2015).
- Pomp & Circumstance: Classes of 2020 & Year in Brewton (2020).
- Memories of Destin's Silver Sands / Jay Villa Cottages (2022).
- Ripped from the Headlines Assorted Stories from 143 Years of Brewton Newspapers (in progress).

Alex is a lifetime member of the Escambia County Historical Society and a member of the Historic Huntsville Foundation, the Alabama Historical Association, and the Alabama Genealogical Society. He is also the Historical Marker Committee Chair of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society.

Alex's presentation to the Escambia County Historical Society highlights one of Brewton's landmark businesses and the two families involved in that enterprise.

# **Luttrell Hardware: A Brief History**

By Lygia Cutts (August 1998)
Established in January,
1893, Luttrell Hardware
Company was owned and operated by Chester M. Luttrell and W.E. Foshee. It was first known as Luttrell & Foshee and located in a 25 X 90 foot building near Willie's
Restaurant, now closed (in the Mason Drug building, closed in late 1970's-1980's).

In 1894 Captain J. H. Fuller and R. E. Mollett purchased Mr. Foshee's interest in the company. The company operated under the name Luttrell & Foshee until 1897 when Chester Luttrell's brother, Elston Luttrell acquired the Fuller - Mollett interest. At this time the business was known as Luttrell Hardware Company and that was the name until they closed their doors in 1969.

Luttrell Hardware Building. Notice
Antique Georgia Stock Plow on the
Front Edge of the Roof. It Was
Placed on the Roof by the
Company to Advertise the Business.
Photo from Flicker
<a href="https://www.flickr.com/">https://www.flickr.com/</a>>.

in 1930 following the death of Elston Luttrell. H.H. Luttrell and R.B. Luttrell took over Elston's interest as Secretary - Treasurer and Assistant Secretary - Treasurer, respectively. J.W. Adkisson, Sr. died in 1964, leaving the management of the company to his son, J.W., Jr. At this time H.H.

Luttrell was elected Vice President and C.R. Luttrell was named Secretary - Treasurer.

On November 26, 1969, Luttrell Hardware Company closed its doors, bringing an end to 76 years of a hardware enterprise owned by the

Luttrell and Adkisson families. Pensacola Mill Supply purchased the Luttrell Hardware building. Source: JDCC; Alabama Room; Vertical file; Luttrell Hardware Company.

A clerk for the company, J.W. Adkisson came to Brewton from Columbia, Tennessee in 1900. In 1901 he bought one-third interest and was made Vice-President and Assistance Manager. Luttrell Hardware company was incorporated on May 29, 1901 with a capital stock of \$30,000. At the time of corporation, the following officers were elected: Chester M. Luttrell - President, J.W. Adkisson - Vice President and Elston Luttrell - Secretary and Treasurer.

Chester M. Luttrell, President and General Manager, retired in 1906 to become head of Merry Hardware of Bradford, Pennsylvania. His stock was divided between Elston Luttrell and J.W. Adkisson, who was elected President and Manager.

Expansion was made once again in 1912 and a 45 X 110 foot, three story building was erected on St. Joseph Avenue close to the L&N Station since many orders were shipped by rail. The company was also the sole owner of 'Cedar Creek' brand tools. Along with Robbins & McGowin Co., Hainje's Home Furnishing, Luttrell Hardware Company drew customers to Brewton from all over South Alabama and Northwest Florida.

In the early 1920's Mr. Adkisson's son, J.W., Jr. entered the business and was elected as Vice President

In addition to the store in Brewton, Luttrell Hardware Company also owned controlling interest in Florala Hardware Company from 1904-1908.

### **Time Line**

- **1893:** Luttrell & Foshee founded by Chester M. Luttrell and W.E. Foshee.
- **1894:** Captain J.H. Fuller and R.E. Mollett purchased Foshee's interest.
- **1897:** Elston Luttrell bought out Fuller and Mollett, renaming the business Luttrell Hardware Company.
- 1901: The company was incorporated with a capital stock of \$30,000, with Chester M. Luttrell as President, J.W. Adkisson as Vice President, and Elston Luttrell as Secretary and Treasurer.
- 1902: The company moved into a new building and warehouse.
- 1912: Luttrell Hardware moved to a larger location at 220-222 St. Joseph Ave.
- 1969: The company began liquidation and was dissolved on November 26, 1969, bringing an end to the 76-year-old enterprise.

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# **Luttrell Hardware: A Brief History**





Throughout its history, Luttrell Hardware was known for its role in serving the community, utilizing advertising, catalogs, and buying trips to New York to bring in new merchandise. It was a significant part of Brewton's history, particularly during its period of prosperity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The company's closure in 1969 marked the end of a long and successful era for the Luttrell and Adkisson families.

Pensacola Mill Supply operated a hardware/mill supply business in the Luttrell Building until May 2005.

At that time, Terrence Breckenridge purchased the building and remodeled it for commercial space including for his construction company, Turning Leaf.

In a meeting of the Escambia Historical Society held on the second floor of the building, Mr. Breckenridge noted that in the remodeling he had found a diary written by one of the Luttrells while he served in WWI.

He also pointed out rows of tacks in various places, which represented the flood heights over the years.

Most recently the building is the location of a restaurant, "Camp 31," and an "Event" space.

Look for the Old Plow on the Top of the Tall Building

Elaine Smith Crews writes on her Facebook page: "I may have posted this before, but it is so special to me. I always point out the antique Georgia stock plow on top of the building, original building for Luttrell Hard-

"Some may not notice this landmark, but years ago people would give directions to out-of-town folk with the suggestion to look for,' The old plow on top of the tall building.'

ware.

"No GPS needed when we had the Georgia Stock Plow on the tallest building in Brewton."

Lygia Cutts writes: "Located in the Alabama Room of the Jefferson Davis Community College (now the Coastal Alabama Community College, Brewton Campus), which houses the Escambia County Historical Society Archives are the Cash and Day Books and other ledgers of the Luttrell Hardware Company. I have thumbed through some of these ledgers of the Luttrell Hardware and it is interesting to read what items were bought by whom. Maybe some of your ancestors did business with Luttrell Hardware. Chances are that if they lived in Escambia County and surrounding areas, they probably did at some time!"

Source: Coastal Alabama Community College; Alabama Room; Vertical file; Luttrell Hardware Company.

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# Lucille Luttrell Howell Loved Dancing to the Music

By Staff Senior Living (This week <u>The Atmore</u> <u>Advance</u> spotlights Lucille Luttrell Howell. She just celebrated her 97th birthday.)

Q: When and where were you born?

A: I was born July 9, 1909 in Brewton. I was born in my grandmother's two-story house. It was where the new First Baptist Church of Brewton sanctuary is now. The old church was on one side and the grammar school and courthouse was on the other side of the house.

Q: Who were your parents?

A: My grandparents were Elston and Lucy Luttrell who owned Luttrell's Hardware in Brewton. My father, Randolph Luttrell, was from Georgia and my mother, Binion Luttrell, was from Evergreen. My daddy worked for L &N railroad. My brother Randy and I used to ride the trains during the summer to visit relatives and friends.

Q: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

A: I had three brothers, Randy, Joe and Clarence and one sister, Anna. I was the oldest and Anna was the youngest. I am the only one left living now.

Q: Where did you attend high school and college?

A: The school, Brewton Elementary, was right next door to our house. My daddy had gone to school there and later my daughter would go to school there. I enjoyed school so much. I had the best teachers. They were all so good. I loved my home economics class. I learned how to cook. I was a pretty good cook. I went to Brewton Elementary through sixth grade and then went to T.R. Miller for high school. I graduated in 1928 from there. After that I went to business school in Montgomery for a year. That was my first time to leave home. I lived with my aunt and uncle. They had a daughter my age. I went to so many dances when I was in school. We had a lot of entertainment back then. I just can't tell you how many dances I went to. A boy from out of town always carried me to them. We went to T.R. Miller's home in Brewton. He had a ballroom between the first and second floor. We did all kinds of dances. I just loved to dance. When I hear music now, I just wish that I could get up and dance.

Q: How did you travel when you were younger?

A: We walked to school and church because they were right by our house. My daddy had a car. I can't remember what kind other than it was red. I had a car later on, but don't remember what kind it was. I didn't care what kind of car it was. I just liked to drive it. I do know that it had a rumble seat in it.

Q: What jobs did you hold?

A: When I finished business school, I moved back to Brewton and went to work at Alabama Power as a secretary/bookkeeper. I worked there until I got married in 1930. I also worked at my granddaddy's hardware store in Brewton for a while. When we moved to Atmore I worked for C.E. Bachelor in Canoe keeping the books for his diary farm. Mrs. Bachelor always had me in for lunch everyday. She was so sweet to me. Then I worked doing the books for Atmore Truckers and then finally ended up at Bateson's Furniture doing the bookkeeping. My brother Randy had opened Bateson's and wanted my husband to come work with him. I worked there until I retired in 1986.

Q: Did you ever marry?

A: I married William C. (Red) Howell. He was from Evergreen. He organized dances all over the place and I met him at a dance he set up in Brewton. Our first date was at a high school dance. I loved to dance. We had so much fun that night. He worked as a foreman on the night shift at T.R. Miller mill company in the box factory. We dated for about four months before we got married at First Baptist Church in Brewton on Mother's Day in May of 1930. My mother was very fond of him. He continued to work at the mill in Brewton until we moved to Memphis, Tenn., where he worked civil service for three years. We moved to Atmore when WWII was over and we were able to leave Memphis. We moved to Atmore in May of 1947.

Q: Do you have any children or grandchildren?

A: We had a son and a daughter, Barbara and Billy. Billy was seven years younger than Barbara and he recently died from cancer. He was a forester with Container Corporation and had two children. I have three grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

# **Lucille Luttrell Howell Loved Dancing to the Music**

hugging everybody. They say that I was always the last person standing. I love people.

Q. What keeps you busy these days?

A: I am not able to do a lot of anything anymore. I do still go to church and go with my daughter to the grocery store and shopping at Walmart. The prices are good and they have good merchandise. I used to cook a lot and I still would if I could. I have been classified as legally blind and can't cook anymore. My daughter lays out my make up for me every morning so that when I get up I can get a bath, fix my hair and put on my makeup. It just makes me feel better. I feel good all the time. The Lord has really blessed me.

Q. Have you traveled much?

A: I belonged to a Travel Club in Mobile at one time. I don't remember exactly how many trips we took, but I remember going to Hawaii and Canada with them. Hawaii had some really good dancing.

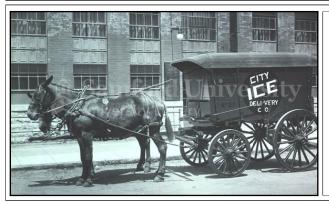
Every trip I took people would say 'She's the best dancer I've ever seen.' Everybody wanted to dance with me. I always told them to plan the best trips after the tenth of the month because I had to collect electric bills at Bateson's until the tenth. There were a lot of people from Atmore in the travel club. I think that I am the only one left from this.

Q. What's your favorite television show?

A: I liked the 'Lawrence Welk Show'. I can't see it anymore, but I can still listen to it. I liked some of the games shows at night and Auburn football and the Atlanta Brayes.

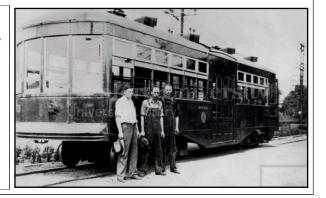
Q: What advice do you give to people on staying healthy?

A: Don't smoke or drink. Always go to church. That was always my favorite thing. We just had good preachers and always went to church. Be congenial to people.



City Ice Delivery. City Unknown.

Last Street Car Run in Gadsden



### **Beach House Vacation**

By Robert B. Smiley

Crystal fountains of the sea Rushing, Gushing lithe and free.

Barefoot feet upon the sand Chasing wave and crab around.

Giddy laugh with sunburned tan Called too soon on porch to stand.

Dripping clothes with sullen faces Gazing seaward to far off places.

### Let's Go to the Creek

### **By Charlie Ware**

On those steamy, hot summer days back in the 1950s, nothing brought joy to us kids more than hearing the words "Let's go to the creek." Going to the creek meant driving eight or nine miles out one of several dirt roads into the woods and finding the ole swimming hole at one of the clear, cold streams that flowed through the area. This was before the days of air conditioning and swimming pools and the best way to beat the summer heat was to go to the creek and take a swim.

Escambia County has a number of clear, spring-fed creeks that wind their way through the area. These creeks are dotted with sugar-white sand bars, shallow pools with sandy bottoms, and occasionally, deep, dark holes which invite diving boards and rope swings. The water is fast flowing and very COLD. Another thing I remember is the water seemed to have a sweet smell. There was even a creek named Sweet Water.

Going to the creek could sometimes be just a family thing, but often my mother would call a bunch of my friends, and we would end up with a carload of excited kids on our way to a good time. We couldn't wait to get there and as soon as the car door opened, we would run down the trail and plunge into the water. It took a while to get used to the cold, but it felt so, so good. We would swim, dive, frolic, and play games until the sun was going down and our skin was wrinkled and turning blue. One game we were not allowed to play though, was "Marco Polo." My mother said that it got on people's nerves. I think she was referring to herself.

Going to the creek was an event for all ages. My mother loved the creek and would often be right in there swimming with us kids. Many other adults would often be there enjoying a good swim or lounging on the sandbars. Older kids usually sought out the deeper holes and would compete at more daring sport, such as diving off the steep banks of jumping out of trees into the water. On those summer days at the creek, you could always depend on being part of a crowd.

Occasionally, several families would get together and go to the creek for a picnic. We would stake out a bridge. spot on the sandbar, spread blankets, and maybe put

up an umbrella. Sometimes we would have watermelons which were put in burlap sacks that were anchored in the creek to keep the melons cold. Lunch usually consisted of some of the best fried chicken and potato salad that I can ever remember. I think coming out of the cold water made the food taste even better. Now and then we would build a fire and roast hot dogs. The kids had to go out into the woods, usually barefoot, and gather wood for the fire. Sometimes we would sit around the fire until well into the night.

Access to the swimming holes was usually at a location where a bridge crossed the stream. Over the years, access roads and parking areas had been hacked out at these spots. An unwritten rule, that it seemed all parents had adopted, was you could not go back into the water for one hour after eating. I think the parents came up with this so they would have at least one hour of peace where they did not have to keep an eye on their kids. They told us that if we went back in the water too soon, we would get cramps and drown. The rule was enforced right down to the minute. I remember yelling to my parents, asking if we could go back in the water, only to be told, "You have three more minutes yet." I don't remember anyone ever drowning or even getting a cramp.

Actually, we didn't even know what a cramp was. All the favorite swimming holes on private property, but nobody ever seemed to mind. People who used these areas were always careful to pick up after themselves. There were never piles of garbage lying around.

Of the ole swimming holes, Sardine Bridge was probably the most popular. Sardine Bridge was located where the Robinsonville Road crossed the Big Escambia Creek near where the entrance to Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve is today. Remnants of the old bridge can still be seen just west of the current bridge. The road to Sardine was still dirt at that time, and the old wooden bridge was just for one lane of traffic. There was plenty of room for parking on both sides of the bridge and it was an easy walk down to the creek. On a favorable day, parking could be backed up for hundreds of yards on each side of the bridge.

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### Let's Go to the Creek

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The swimming hole at Sardine contained everything that you could ask for. Just under the bridge was a huge sandbar surrounded by shallow water where young kids could safely play. On the other side of the creek was a deep hole that was said to be so deep that no one had ever reached the bottom. If anyone had gone to the bottom, the water was so swift that they would have emerged at least fifty feet downstream. There was a big tree hanging over this area that was a perfect spot to hang a rope swing. You could swing from the high bank all the way out to midstream. I have seen some of the more daring boys take a long swing, let go, and do two flips before hitting the water

Rumor had it that a little way upstream from the bridge was a sand bar where bathing suits were optional. I never went up to that area, but I have heard some wild tales of things that took place up there.

Another great swimming hole along the Big Escambia Creek was called Moye Bridge. It was sometimes called the "Steel Bridge" because the framework was constructed of steel while all the other bridges in the area were wood. Moye Bridge was on a road that connected the Little Rock community with the Moyeville community. There is no bridge at that location today. The Moye Bridge swimming area was similar to the Sardine Bridge area except that someone had constructed a heavy-duty diving board that stood about four feet above the water and had enough spring to it to make diving a real challenge. This was a favorite location for my parents because it was always less crowded than Sardine

A swimming hole that was popular until the early 1950's was on Sizemore Creek where Highway 21 crosses the creek, about midway between Atmore and I-65. There was a large sandbar with a big area of shallow water with a sandy bottom. It was a perfect swimming area for small children. Until 1951, the Brooks Memorial Baptist Church conducted baptisms in this creek. I remember that, after a baptism ceremony, all of us kids wanted to play in the creek. We would have jumped in and gone for a swim if our parents hadn't held us back. One day the preacher gathered all us kids together and told us that we should behave ourselves at baptisms and we shouldn't want

to play in the creek because sins had just gotten washed away in it. That got our attention and dampened our desires to play in the creek. There may have been something to what he said, because shortly after the church stopped having baptisms in the creek, the sand bar disappeared, and ugly weeds choked up the stream.

Shortly after the founding of the Atmore Country Club, members decided they needed a swimming area. They built the equivalent of a swimming pool in Brushy Creek, just down the hill from the clubhouse. This pool had four concrete walls and a concrete bottom but no plumbing. Water from the creek flowed through an opening in the wall at one end and out of the pool through the wall at the other end. This eliminated the need for pumps and filters and ensured a constant flow of fresh water. So, even though swimming took place within the walls of the pool, technically, it was basically the same as going to the creek. I remember this pool in operation until about 1953.

The lake at Little River State Park was almost like going to the creek. The lake was formed when the CCC damned the creek in the 1930s. The water was darker and warmer than the fast-moving creeks, but Little River did have a pier with a diving board and was another great place to go to escape the summer heat. The attractions of Little River were its many amenities which included a bath house, picnic areas, dances during the summer months, and the famous spillway, which was an ideal place for little kids to play or for cars to be washed. But these are subjects for another story.

There were many other great swimming areas in the county. There were spots around Brewton on Murder and Burnt Corn creeks that rivaled Sardine as the ideal swimming hole. I remember a swimming hole on Murder Creek in the Kirkland area where there were huge boulders protruding from the bank on both sides of the creek. I've never seen that anywhere else in the area.

My grandmother often took me to a place near Brewton where water flowed directly out of a spring and across a dirt road forming a crystal clear pool of water about two feet deep in the sandy road. There was no bridge and cars had to slow to a crawl to ford the stream. It was a great place for little kids to play.

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### Let's Go to the Creek

(Continued from page 8)

We just had to keep an eye out for traffic.

With all the hazards, including swift currents, deep holes, hidden obstructions, the possibility of snakes, and no lifeguards, I don't recall anyone ever being seriously injured at the creek. The nearest I ever came to disaster was one day I was attempting to take a picture of a group of friends on a sandbar and as I backed into the water, I stepped into one of the deep holes. I sank in over my head taking my new camera with me. When I came up, everyone was having a good laugh, but my camera never worked again.

Even after the city of Atmore built the municipal swimming pools and more people began to get air conditioning in their homes, many folks still continued to go to the creeks to socialize and for a cool swim. As teenagers, we often took dates to the creek for a swim and picnic. I remember when I was playing high school football, in August we would have a practice session in the morning and another in the afternoon. Often the temperature would be near 100

degrees and I remember how good it felt to finish the morning practice and then go out to the creek and jump in. Sometimes most of the team would be there doing the same thing.

People don't go to the creeks anymore and I'm afraid they are missing out on one of life's little pleasures. I have driven around all the old swimming holes, and other than through Magnolia Branch, I haven't been able to find access to any of them. All the old access roads and parking spots are either grown over or have been gated. I'm going to keep trying though, and come next summer, I'm going to find a way to get to the creek, dive in, and enjoy that cold, clear, sweet water that I have such fond memories of from my youth.



Old Sardine Bridge
The Sardine Bridge area with the remnants of the old bridge in the foreground.

# THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 251-809-1528 or escambiacohistoricalsociety@gmail.com We're on the web! www.escohis.org The Museum is on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com. McMillan Museum>.

## FIRST CLASS MAIL DATED MATERIAL Address Correction Requested

"Donations and contributions that are not for books or membership dues may now be made online through PayPal to <<u>escambiacohistoricalsociety@gmail.com</u>>. Please continue to use the form shown for book requests and membership dues, by mail, as your complete name and address are needed for our records. Thank you again for your support!"

	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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