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Baldwin County Genealogical Society
P.O. Box 108, Foley, Alabama 36536

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Baldwin County Genealogical Society Presents

Harry A. King

Preserving the Indian Trade Canal

Saturday, March 9th - 10 a.m Meeting Room – Foley Public Library

A vocational archaeologist **Harry A King** has spearheaded recent efforts to save and study the intriguing **Indian Trade Canal** dug by Native Americans between Oyster Bay and Little Lagoon on Fort Morgan peninsular of Baldwin County, Alabama. He coordinates digs with the University of South Alabama and has co-authored a presentation on the Gulf Shores Prehistoric Canals and Mounds for the Southeastern Archaeological Conference.

The presentation will show his dedication to rediscovering ancient history, as well as serving on the board of the Little Lagoon Preservation Society. A veteran of the U. S. Naval Reserve, Harry King works as real estate developer and enjoys bow hunting and fishing.

Meetings are free and open to the public.

******NOTE: APRIL MEETING DATE CHANGED TO 20TH ******

SAME TIME, SAME PLACE

REFRESHMENT HOSTS FOR UPCOMING MEETINGS

March 9th Janie Trusty and Joni Eula ~ April 20th ? ~ May 11th ~ Tally Burkhead and Jo Ann McKay ~
June 11th ? ~ July 8th ? ~ August 13th Zenobia Hahn and Auriette Lindsey

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

April 20th – Dr. Amy Mitchell-Cook; Women of the Sea-Female Pirates, Sailors and Wives Who Set Sail



Check us out on Facebook and 'like' our page!

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Way Down in Alabama: Finding Old-Time Fiddlers and their Tunes, hosted by Baldwin County Genealogical Society and Foley Public Library **Saturday, June 8, 2019 10 am to 12 pm Foley Public Library Meeting Room**. In 1980s Joyce Cauthen began seeking old-time fiddlers in Alabama who had learned to play by ear and gather them together.

Baldwin County Genealogical Society Minutes (will be printed next month)

Swift Family and Swift-Coles Historic House, Bon Secour, Baldwin County, Alabama



Charles A. Swift (left), Ira A. Swift (right), standing on a logging train locomotive.



The Swift House now known as Swift-Coles House.

Both **Peter Roberts** and **Isiah Swift** immigrated from England to America, settled in Rhode Island and New York City, married and had their own families. It would be several generations later, move to deep south and the marriages of two Roberts sisters to two Swift brothers brought the families together in mid 1880s. Both sisters, **Susan Platt Roberts** and **Louise DuBose Roberts**, began teaching school in lower Baldwin County near “Swift” settlement where brothers **Charles and Ira Swift** had a logging operation on **Wolf Creek**.

In 1885, **Charles Augustus Swift** married **Susan Platt Roberts** settling on **Wolf Creek** in **Mifflin** area near the logging center. The settlement housed a large commissary and several nice homes. A railroad track ran from far into the nearby pinewoods to the water’s edge for the rafts of logs to be towed by water to the mills. There was the school and so many small children that it was known as “Squall Street.”

The last of **Charles A. and Susan Swift**’s thirteen children was born in the home they built near one of the **Swift Lumber Company** mills located on property on Bon Secour River. Their children are **Charles** (died in infancy); **George Robinson**; **Miriam S. Martyn**; **Emily M. Swift**; **Eleanor S Stevens**; **William Henry Swift**; **Isaac** (died in infancy); **Susan Cornelia Marshall**; **Ira Platt**; **John Byard**; **Amelia S. Wakeford**; **Florence S. Williams** and **Edward Gavin**.

The home known today as **Swift-Cole House** was first built as four rooms about 1882, with wings and upstairs added to complete the 16 room house as it stands today. One of the downstairs bedrooms is designated as Brides’ Room as at least nine Swift family brides dressed for their weddings in it.

The large home’s style is characteristic of tidewater Gulf Coast plantations, surrounded by traditional drainage ditch which is generally found around all tidewater plantation homes making the ground where it’s built almost an island in the surrounding low lying land. Galleries and rooms open to allow breeze to cool in summer, fireplaces in numerous rooms to ward off chill in cooler weather. At one time a picket fence surrounded to keep free range cattle out; shell walkways under stately oaks allowed added grandeur only increased by years.

The Swift family lived in the home until 1976 upon the death of last Swift resident, **Mrs. Susan Nell Swift Marshall**. At that time, **Nik Coles** of **Gulf Shores** purchased and preserved the home he appreciated. Heritage plants seen in walks around the gardens, flower beds and walkways are being restored with help of **Master Gardeners of Baldwin County**. A collection of **Nik Coles**’ antiques are displayed in the home. Before his death in 2007, **Nik** bequeathed the home to the **Baldwin County Historic Development Commission**. In 2009, the home was opened to the public and is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Swift Lumber Company still exists today under management of Swift descendants.



This circa 1882 historic home is located on the Bon Secour River under 120-year-old Southern live oak trees. Knowledgeable docents lead tours of the home with visitors. If you would like to volunteer as docent contact Sandy Email swiftcoles@outlook.com or (251) 949-5550 17424 Swift-Coles Ln., Bon Secour, AL 36511

Technology Tip of the Month--Props, Backgrounds, and Chairs – Oh My! by Kay Spears

When collecting clues in photographs, don't forget to look at the studio props and backgrounds that the photographer used to enhance his images. As with clothing, just remember that photographers used some objects longer than they were popular, and some could not afford the latest whizzy objects in their studios.

In the early photographs taken in the 1860s, photographers used chairs - some ornate and some with high backs. In most cases the people in those photographs are leaning against them. These chairs had a couple of purposes. First, they added a bit of decoration to the image. Second, they could be used so the people in those photographs could retain their balance. Other objects besides chairs were used during this era, including tables, balustrades, tile floors, and drapes.

In the 1870s close-ups became increasingly popular, so other objects were seen less often in photographs. The 1880s saw bricks, stones, trees, fences – all mostly fake – added frequently to images. Painted backgrounds that could be rolled up also became popular. These were features of the so-called rustic or Arts and Crafts movement that swept both Europe and North America at this time and influenced all of the decorative arts. Cabinet cards, which had become popular in the 1880s, were larger sized, requiring photographers to find ways to fill them with objects or backdrops.

When going through tin-types you may notice a fringe chair. These chairs, with fringe on the arms, were made specifically for photographers. They came in a variety of sizes and could be purchased from \$12 to \$75. While I've seen numerous fringe chairs in tintypes, I've only seen a few in cabinet cards, and they are pretty rare in photographs dating from the late 1870s. By the 1880s they were replaced by other objects, such as wicker furniture. Wicker chairs and tables can be found in photographs from the 1890s. Fur rugs also became popular for photographs of babies at this time.

These are just a few of the objects one should take into consideration when trying to solve a mysterious photograph.

GENEALOGIST'S NIGHTMARE

“Our Mountain Home” newspaper (Talledega, Alabama) Wed. Apr 22, 1896 page 8

John H Green, a mining man, told an attorney a remarkable story of his matrimonial experience with a handsome woman whom he married last September under the name of Gladys Southard, and who deserted him about three weeks ago, taking \$500 of his cash. Before leaving she had dropped frequent remarks which led Green to think that she had another husband living, and after she left he started an investigation and discovered that he was her eighth husband, and that she was divorced from none.

The first trace he found of her was back on a farm near Des Moines, Iowa, thirty-two years ago, when she was fourteen years old, where she married a widower named Ammerman, with several children. In six months she deserted him and went to Des Moines, and married one Gossage, with whom she lived for a year, and then ran away with a traveling man named Lassell, to whom she married in Helena, Montana. He left her, and she went to Portland, Oregon, and married one Dayton, and subsequently, in the same city, married a man named Davenport. A few years later she turned up in Albany, Or., as the wife a man named Ryan, and later as the wife a sewing machine agent named Nelson, at Portland.

She next turned up in Butte as a devout attendant at the Baptist church, where Green met her, and after a short acquaintance they were married. Green is seeking to have his marriage annulled.

FORT PIERCE, Baldwin County, Alabama

FORT PIERCE. This small fort was 2 miles southeast of Fort Mims in Baldwin County erected by John and William Pierce in 1813. On the day of the Fort Mims massacre on August 30, 1813, the Fort Pierce settlers trembled with fear as they heard the gunfire, but were unable to go to the aid of their neighbors. When the Red Sticks did not attack Fort Pierce, the settlers fled to Mount Vernon abandoning the fort. The Fort remained unoccupied until November of that year when General Claiborne placed Lieutenant Colonel Henry Nixon there.

Sources: *DEAD TOWNS OF ALABAMA* by W. Stuart Harris; “Historic Sites” XIV, p 260; “Woodward’s Reminiscences of the Creek, or Muscogee Indians”