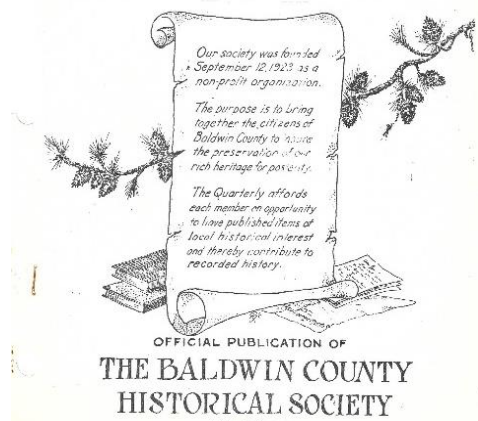


**Baldwin County Historical Society**  
**Founded in 1923**  
8872 County Road 34  
Fairhope, AL 36532  
251-370-3132



## **FALL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER**

Volume 100, Number 4

**OCTOBER 2023**

Email Address: [bchistsoc@gmail.com](mailto:bchistsoc@gmail.com)

Harriet and Perry Outlaw, co-presidents  
Mallory Davenport, Secretary (& Social Media)

Susan Stein, *Quarterly* newsletter editor

Al Guarisco, Treasurer

Tim Russell, Asst. Treasurer

Billie Nardell, Membership Chairman

Co-Presidents *elect*: Joanne Keller and Frances Berga-Rigsby

### **The UPCOMING 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter FALL meeting of the Baldwin County Historical Society (BCHS)**

will be held on **Sunday, OCTOBER 22, 2023**

**2:00 PM** – Sign-in and Social Time

**2:30 PM** – **Grand Centennial Celebration and Dedication of Monument**  
**Historic Blakeley State Park - Hwy 225, Spanish Fort, AL**

**CHECK IN AT THE GATE HOUSE – YOU MUST INDICATE YOUR BCHS EVENT ATTENDANCE**

**FOR NO PARK ADMISSION FEE**

**A PARK MAP WILL BE ISSUED WITH DIRECTIONS TO EVENT LOCATION WITHIN THE PARK.**

The **Baldwin County Historical Society** is proud to be hosting its **Centennial Celebration** and monument dedication at **Historic Blakeley State Park** on **Sunday, October 22**. Registration begins at 2:00, but attendees are invited to arrive early. A large tent with seating will be located within the park. A special park map will be given to attendees at the entrance gate; admission fee will be waived for attendees. Event parking will be designated on the map.

Following two formative meetings earlier in 1923, the first annual meeting of the Baldwin County Historical Society was held on September 12, 1923 at the old town site of historic Blakeley. *BCHS was designated as the first county historical society in the state of Alabama.* One hundred years after its formation, the society continues to hold quarterly meetings at various locations throughout the county, preserve the county's history and promote historical preservation.

At the October 22 meeting, sponsors of the Centennial Celebration will be recognized and a Commemorative Monument will be dedicated, along with an honor roll slab listing lifetime members. A resolution from the Baldwin County Commission will be presented by **Felisha Anderson**; Representative **Jennifer Fidler** will present a Resolution from the Alabama Legislature along with **Sheriff Hoss Mack** and **Rep. Matt Simpson**, Chair of the Legislative Delegation and representative from Alabama District 96, which includes Blakeley.

Much gratitude is extended to Historic Blakeley State Park and its director, **Mike Bunn**, for facilitating the event location and assisting with the ceremonies. Sponsors have graciously helped with the expenses of this Centennial Celebration and will be acknowledged. A commemorative booklet and souvenirs will be available at event; many thanks to **Alan Samry** for his extensive research of the history of BCHS and his generosity in sharing the information he has assembled and documented. Appreciation is extended to **Robert Normand** (sound system) and photographer **Stephen Savage** for providing assistance with the event. Several behind-the-scenes members/organizers include Harriet Outlaw, Tim Russell, Billie Nardell, Alan Samry, Jo Anne Keller, Frances Berga-Rigsby, Daryl and Brenda Haskew, and Susan Stein.

Author Event: Numerous books have been published in recent years that have historical ties to South Alabama/Baldwin County and specifically the local area. We are pleased to host several local authors who will

offer their books for sale. *A Brief History of Baldwin County*, published by the BCHS, will be available for purchase for \$10 each; also a few copies of *Marriages of Baldwin County 1900-2000* = \$5 each. Daryl Haskew, author of *Portersville*, will extend a sale price of \$20 per book and will donate \$10 of each sale to the Baldwin County Historical Society; plus he will download a complete *Portersville* audiobook with each purchase at no charge. *Fairhope, an Arcadia Publishing Past and Present Series*, co-authored by Gabriel Gold-Vukson and Alan Samry, will be available.



1923 - Photograph of the first meeting of the Baldwin County Historical Society at Blakeley in 1923. Lydia J. Newcomb Comings, president and one of the founders of the organization, is shown seated on the ground in the white dress at the far right. (Nearly 200 were recorded in attendance.)



#### Recent Event:

### October 3, 2023: Baldwin County Commission Honors the Baldwin County Historical Society



On Tuesday, October 3, 2023, a Resolution of the Baldwin County Commission to commemorate the BCHS Centennial was presented to members of the historical society at the Baldwin County Commission meeting in Bay Minette, AL. The resolution will also be presented at the October 22 centennial celebration at Historic Blakeley State Park.

*L. to R.: Jo Anne Keller, Al Guarisco, Frances Berga-Rigsby, Billie Nardell, Tim Russell, Commissioner Honorable Charles F. (Skip) Gruber, Chairman, and Felisha Anderson, Baldwin County Director of Archives and History/County Archivist.*

## BCHS MEETING MINUTES: 3rd Quarter Meeting – July 16, 2023

**Location:** Fairhope Campus of the University of South Alabama (St. James at S.Summit St.)

**Speakers:** Alan Samry and Willie G. Taylor

Our gracious hosts were **Daryl and Brenda Haskew**

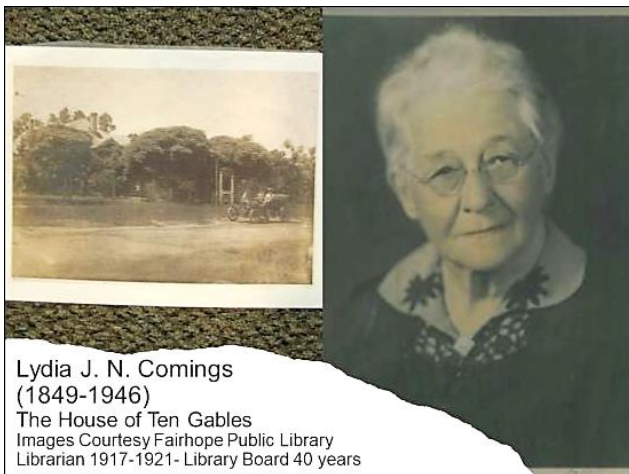
**Topic:** “History Nerds 100 Years Ago: The faces and places of our Society Founders” and “Willie Taylor’s African American descendants in Baldwin County”

Local author, librarian, and public historian, **Alan Samry** shared the results of his extensive research for his presentation on the early years of the Baldwin County Historical Society – both educational and entertaining, Samry took us on a journey back in time.

In April of 1923, two librarians and a few kindred spirits gathered to set the wheels in motion to organize a Historical Society – these few leaders were passionate about preserving the history, historical sites and the legends of Baldwin County. At the second meeting on June 21 at the Christian Church, Fairhope, there assembled a representative group to organize permanently. The Hon. Peter A. Brannon, curator of the Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, was the orator. With the adoption of a constitution and the election of officers, the BCBS was recorded as the first county organization of its kind in the state of Alabama.



Alan Samry, speaker, Harriet Outlaw, BCBS President and Susan Stein. Refreshments provided by Brenda and Daryl Haskew.



Lydia J. N. Comings  
(1849-1946)  
The House of Ten Gables  
Images Courtesy Fairhope Public Library  
Librarian 1917-1921- Library Board 40 years

A designated Annual Meeting and an official signing of Articles of Incorporation was held on September 12, 1923.

With the visual images provided in a slide show, Samry put the founders into perspective as he traced the organization and its early leaders from 1923 until the publication of the society’s book, *A Brief History of Baldwin County* (first published in 1928). Yes, the society was comprised of history nerds...they were librarians, lawyers, judges, doctors, educators, bankers, retirees and armchair enthusiasts with names like Comings, Albers, Bowen, Cross, Stapleton, Holmes, Winberg, Gaston, McCall, Coleman, Earle, McIntosh, and Rickarby, to name a few. The afternoon was a *who’s who* and *who’s where* of early Baldwin County in portraits and images of member homes, and local history sites which connect the present society members and guests with their

doppelgangers from 100 years ago.

The formative years of the Baldwin County Historical Society proved to be the basis of a strong foundation. “The Value of a Historic Past” was stressed. The early BCBS annual meetings were held at interesting sites throughout the county, which Samry reviewed:

**1923** Old town location of Blakeley – 1<sup>st</sup> inaugural meeting of BCBS; speakers included Peter A. Brannon, S.C. Jenkins, David Holt & Dr. George C. Marlette. Nearly 200 in attendance.

**1924** Jackson’s Oak (Daphne) – statesman Frank Stone of Bay Minette shared memoirs

**1925** Under the oaks that border the Bay at Bon Secour (perhaps near the Swift-Coles house?) – Samuel C. Jenkins presented the results of his research in a paper about 400 years of the fortunes of the section.

**December 1925** - Beach Hotel (Battles Wharf) - dinner celebration to commemorate Alabama’s 106th birthday; oratory by several distinguished speakers, including Judge Hall and Marietta Pierce Johnson.

**1927** Baptist Church (Tensaw) – interest in the BCBS continued; oratory by Lister Hill, Congressman & Jesse M. Smith of Bay Minette. Speakers were introduced by Ernest B. Gaston of Fairhope & Frank Earle of Blacksher.

**1928** – Daphne Methodist Church (now the home of the Daphne Museum)

Early preservation projects of BCBS included the restoration efforts at the neglected cemetery at Blakeley; the desolate site was cleared and broken tombstones were repaired, plus signage was placed on the road from Stapleton. The Jackson’s

Oak plot was cleared and the Society ordered bi-annual inspections of the stately live oak. At one time various historic relics were displayed in a glass case in the Fairhope Library on N. Summit St., which became the BCHS's temporary headquarters. (Some of the historic collections and items may have been loaned to the Fort Morgan Museum, but accurate information is not available about this.) The difficult project of erecting the William Weatherford monument was directed by BCHS member Frank Earle, who donated the land to BCHS.

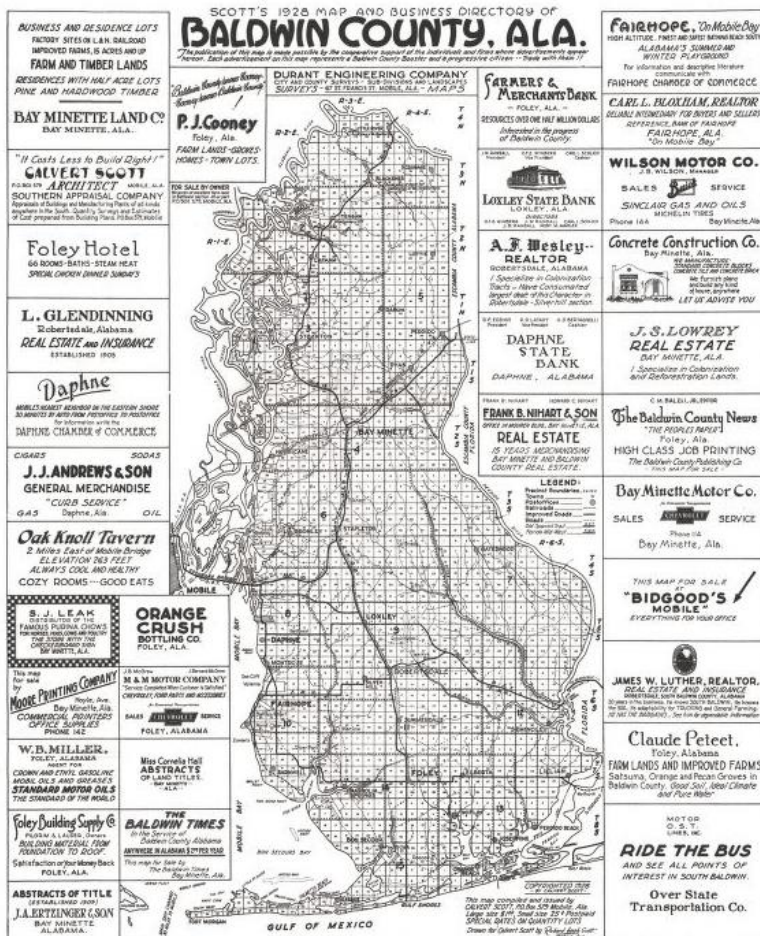
Alan Samry's latest book, *Fairhope, an Arcadia Publishing Past and Present Series*, co-authored by Gabriel Gold-Vukson, is now available for sale. Copies will be available at the Centennial Celebration on October 22. Each page features a pair of images, one past and the other present, with a brief detail about the photographs. Samry is the author of *Mapping Fairhope*, *Clay City Tile*, and *Stump the Librarian*, a memoir and history of leg amputees. Alan is a part-time librarian on the Fairhope campus of Coastal Alabama Community College. Alan and his wife Susan, a National Board-Certified Teacher at Daphne East Elementary, have called Fairhope home since 2005.

Link to Alan Samry's presentation: <https://archive.org/details/bchs-100>

"Willie G. Taylor is an African American female who grew up in lower southeast Alabama east of Mobile Bay in a village sandwiched between Daphne and Fairhope who has experienced a life surrounded by family, friends, and neighbors who have lived productive, prosperous, and equitable exemplary lives comfortably, peacefully, and safely. Her immediate family members were/are highly respected and positive participating builders of and the growth of the best of what her community has offered due to their leadership, ingenuity, professionalism, prosperity, and impartial sharing with their neighbors. Taylor is a professional educator and researcher revered with receiving degrees and certificates of completion from several different esteemed colleges and universities in the United States. She has dedicated her life to learning, sharing, and caring so as to be able to be of service to her Creator and fellow human beings."

Taylor's grandmothers: Florence D'Olive Scott was born in 1895; her great-uncle was Percy Walker Morris. She attended Baldwin County Training School. Many places with African-American heritage existed on the Eastern Shore before Fairhope was founded: Week's Bay, Zundel's, Tatumville, Houstonville (where Anna T. Jeans school is located), Bromley, Spanish Fort, Daphne, Montrose with associated family names of Quincy, Yuille, Morris, Valrie, Hunter, Stanton, and Thompkins.

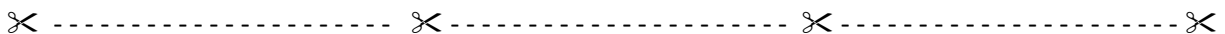
Taylor's book, *Reaching Reality East of Mobile Bay, Focusing a Triumphant Spiritual Purpose*, proudly celebrates her heritage and her African American descendants in Baldwin County.



Map of Baldwin County in 1928

Title/Description:  
Calvert Scott's 1928 Map and Business Directory of Baldwin County, AL

Note that the newly constructed (1927) Mobile Bay Causeway /Cochran Bridge connecting Mobile and Baldwin Counties is included on this map.



**MEMBERSHIP – BALDWIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**MEMBERSHIP INFO:** The **Baldwin County Historical Society** is an organization of persons who are dedicated to the preservation of our history through quarterly programs held at various venues and featuring a variety of topics.

**Membership is \$10.00 per year/per person, with each year beginning in October.**

*Membership is not required for attendance at programs and meetings. All are open to the public.*

**2023-2024 Annual Dues - BALDWIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - \$10 per year  
LIFETIME Membership - \$100 per person.**

Check one box:       New Member    or     Renewal                       Lifetime Member

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Paid: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

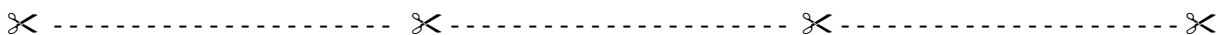
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email (*please print*) \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: **Baldwin County Historical Society (BCHS)**

MAIL: Harriet Outlaw  
8872 County Road 34  
FAIRHOPE AL 36532

Note: Membership dues are always accepted at meetings; please submit to **Al Guarisco, Treasurer**.



**100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
BALDWIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
1923 - 2023**

**A Historical Monument with HONOR ROLL of NAMES for the Centennial Celebration  
will be dedicated at Historic Blakeley State Park on October 22, 2023.**

An upright slab will list the Centennial Honor Roll, the names of people who were confirmed by August 1, 2023. There were 40 donors for this first slab; the \$100 per name donation has been used to purchase the monument. Several have requested an additional opportunity to have names engraved. **An extension of listing of names is being offered and a Second Marble Slab is planned, with an extended deadline of January 15, 2024. ~ Installation will be announced later in the Spring of 2024.**

For those who would like to be included on a second **Commemorative Monument at Blakeley**, a \$100 donation per 25-space line is required.

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Donations may be made by check to Baldwin County Historical Society and mailed to:

**Billie Nardell 603 N. Elm St. Foley, AL 36535**

**DEADLINE: JANUARY 15, 2024** or by the JANUARY BCHS MEETING (Date to be announced)

Your Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address \_\_\_\_\_

Your Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) you would like to have engraved...PLEASE PRINT – NOTE: 25 SPACE LIMIT PER LINE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**You may give a Centennial Honor Roll Membership to another person, living or deceased. If so, please complete the following:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Use back of page if needed)

Address of Honoree (or Family contact if deceased)

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 202 \_\_\_\_

TOTAL NUMBER OF NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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