

## As if Talking to a Friend

ASHS Column for March 27, 2008

Jerry Simmons

I often think about you readers, having so many “historical” columns on one page. One column is supposedly about genealogy, but it’s more than that. The writer does a lot of history, too. But genealogy and history go hand in hand, so you can’t really separate them. I’ve been thinking maybe I should write a few columns on genealogy myself, but I wouldn’t be any good at it. No one is interested in my ancestors – they were all boring. I probably had a couple of chicken thieves, but no big-time robbers that I know of.

Another column is about Civil War history, but often, history other than Civil War is presented. The thing is, the War Between the States had repercussions far beyond just the years between 1861 and 1865. I’ve written a couple of stories about WBTS but they weren’t nearly as good as the current writer does them.

Then you have this column. My co-columnist, Margaret Collier, has lots of great information in her writing about the doings at the Historical Park and various other “plunder,” as she says sometimes. Margaret’s been the mainstay of the ASHS since its inception. I called her our “mother” at least once, since she was one of the co-founders.

The other part of the dynamic duo for this column is me. I was told the other day by a young lady that I write just like I talk. I didn’t know how to take that at first, until she said that wasn’t a bad thing. When I thought about it, that perception may be precisely on the mark. I try to write this as if I’m talking (or writing) to a friend. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t. I really want it to be informative, entertaining, and above all, interesting.

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Sometimes I hardly put anything in here about history. Today’s work is a good example of that. Besides, the other two fellas constantly beat me to the punch – I think of a topic and lo and behold, one of them writes about my future topic the same week!

Sometimes I write this column and fail to give credit for something I quoted. I don’t do that because I like to plagiarize, but because I just forget. I sure hope there are no copyright police out there. In my last column, about Kayo Stanton and the CHS football field, a lot of the facts were taken from an early nineteen-nineties article in the PNJ. Although I mentioned that fact, after I went back and reread the column in the paper, I saw that I wasn’t clear about it as I should have been.

Even the pictures I send to the Ledger—I got my chops busted a few weeks back when I asked for a picture from one of the members of the ASHS. He told me jokingly (I hope) he might not let me have it, because I “don’t give credit.” You see, the week prior, I’d used a picture that he’d taken and failed to tell give him proper credit.

The book for the history of Flomaton that I’m working on compiling has a couple pages of credits, but they are general and not very specific. I owe a lot to a lot of people and I just hope I haven’t left anyone out. Invariably one does leave things out when they try too hard not to. But I sorta figure that since I am putting a lot of effort to compile it, for no compensation, with pictures that someone is eager to share, it shouldn’t matter if they aren’t singled out on each use of their contributions. I may be wrong there.

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Speaking of wrong, I must apologize openly to Don Sales. At the ASHS meeting in Feb-

ruary he made a statement about we might see Old 100 running down the tracks to Pensacola “like it used to do.” I said, rather loudly, that I didn’t think that ever happened. He replied that he had read it somewhere. I said that I’d like to see it in writing. Well, he produced it in writing. There was an article in a national railroading magazine some years back that told about a yearly trip to Pensacola to have the boiler checked to make sure it was up to standards. So I stand corrected. Sorry, Don. Now it’s your turn.

The 108<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party is on at the Historical Park on Jefferson Avenue in Century the weekend of March 29 (that is day after tomorrow). It sounds like it should be a great time. They’ll have WBTS reenactors and a mock battle down in the valley behind the park. All sorts of entertainment, displays and exhibits plus some tasty treats and food will be available. Touring the museums should be of great interest to local – and not-so-local – history and antiques buffs. I won’t be there, but I wish I could. My nephew is getting married in Destin at 11 a.m. that morning, and the bride and groom failed to ask if we had anything that their wedding would conflict with.

Make sure you get to the Park and join in all the fun. It starts at 9 a.m.

Y’all come.