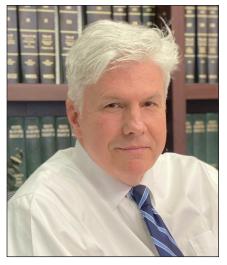


Vol. 7 No. 2

Newsletter of the Montevallo Historical Society

Spring 2023



New MHS president, John McCulley.

John McCulley **Elected President**

At its first meeting of the year on January 15, 2023, the Montevallo Historical Society board of directors elected one of its founding directors, John McCulley, to succeed Susan Godwin as president.

The election was prompted by Susan's decision last year to step down as president, effective with the naming of her successor. She served as president for three years, having taken office in the spring of 2019 at the conclusion of founding president, Jim Day's, two year term in office.

Before John's election, Jim was asked to chair a committee charged with nominating a worthy successor to Susan from the slate of currrent board members, which is a bylaw requirement. Jim was joined on the committee by Susan Godwin, and vice-president Clay Nor-

At the January meeting, which was attended by 11 of the 12 currently serving directors and presided over by Susan Godwin, Jim Day presented a motion on behalf of the committee recommending John McCulley as its choice to follow Susan as president.

The motion was seconded by Bill

Glosson. After extensive discussion related to how and when future board meetings might be held if John were elected, Susan then called for the board to vote yea or nay on John McCulley as our new president. The vote to approve was unanimous.

John was among the 15 original Organizing Directors of the Montevallo Historical Society who came together in February of 2017 to gauge the level of local interest in establishing an organization devoted to the study and preservation of Montevallo's historical

John was instrumental in writing the bylaws that stipulate how the society governs its affairs and he also facilitated its incorporation with government entities as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

Born to Montevallo residents Tea-

mon and Ella Mae McCulley, John attended Montevallo public schools with his sisters Mary and Becky.

His roots have always remained in Montevallo and he continues to own his childhood home, which his parents built in Arden Subdivision in 1955 for their growing family.

John's father opened the popular Mc-Culley's Grocery Store on Main Street in 1938 and faithfully served the town from that location for the next 33 years.

During and after completing undergraduate study at the University of Montevallo, John worked with various local law enforcement agencies, eventuall serving as jail administrator for the Shelby County Sheriff's Office.

John received his law degree in 1990 from the University of Alabama School of Law and has practiced law and lived in Tuscaloosa ever since.



In a touching ceremony at which Mike "Doc" Mahan was present just before his death in July of 2018, he was presented by then-state-Senator Cam Ward and state representative April Weaver with resolutions proclaiming the bridge over Mahan Creek in Brierfield the Mike "Doc" Mahan Bridge. The gesture by these state officials couldn't have been more appropriate since Doc's beloved residence, Montebrier, adjoins the bridge on its west side while his dental clinic across the road was close by to the east, overlooking the picturesque waterfall on the creek. Signs have recently been installed at both ends of the bridge by the Alabama State Department of Transportation that now designate "Doc" Mahan as the official namesake for the bridge. The bridge is a short distance from the Shelby/Bibb County line on AL Highway 139 and traverses Mahan Creek approximately 5 miles south of the Montevallo City Limits. Dr. S.M. Mahan, Jr., grew up in Montevallo and was a founding director of the Montevallo Historical Society. He was known as a true authority on local history and historic preservation, and was instrumental in the establishment of the historic Brierfield Ironworks State Park nearby on AL Highway 25. MHS director, Marty Everse, assisted the Mahan family in bringing to the attention of local legislators the idea for this memorial.

President's Letter

Dear Friends:

I would like to begin my first letter for the *Montevallo Historical Times* in the role of president of the Montevallo Historical Society by thanking the board of directors for the confidence and support for me that they demonstrated in January by nominating and electing me to lead MHS for the next year and perhaps beyond.

In short, I'm glad to be here and humbled to be asked to lead this impressive and prestigious organization.

I realize that I follow in the footsteps of a most effective and dedicated predecessor in Susan Godwin. Susan stepped in and accepted the MHS presidency three years ago when no one else was willing or able to do so, and we are a much better organization now as a result of her work and efforts while in office.

At the same time I'm taking office as president, I am sorry to be saying goodbye to our able Secretary, Bill Glosson, and his wife and fellow director Mae Glosson. The Glossons have seen the need to do some pretty deep soul searching about their priorities and they concluded that the most important thing to them at this stage of life is devoting time and attention, as best they can, to their growing extended family.

Both Bill and Mae will remain as regular members of MHS, but their future involvement will now be limited to maintaining their interest by way of our newsletter and attending quarterly general membership meetings.

While our board meetings will not be the same or as entertaining with the Glossons no longer in attendance, we should not let their decision be too disappointing. Instead we should view their vacant chairs as an indicator of a great opportunity to inject new blood into the leadership and governance of the society. It now falls to the remaining ten directors to identify and approve from our existing membership roll two new directors who can bring much needed youth, energy, creativity, and commitment to the

board. If you, as a member of the Montevallo Historical Society think you have something to offer and are willing to take on this special kind of responsibility, please get in touch with any officer or director and you will be given full consideration for becoming a new member of the MHS board of directors.

As I mentioned before, the departure of Bill Glosson is a double-edged sword. In addition to losing a director, we are also losing our Secretary. Serving as secretary for an organization is not everyone's cup of tea, and in this instance we were not able to identify anyone among our current board members willing to assume these duties (per our bylaws, officers must come from the line-up of serving directors).

After considerable introspection and a much appreciated reality check by Susan Godwin, I was delighted to learn from her that she is willing to postpone her planned resignation from the board and take on the duties of Secretary for the time being. The job entails, primarily, the compilation and distribution of minutes to officers and directors following each board meeting, and collection and preservation of the society's records and documents. Hopefully, with the addition of new directors to the board, someone will come forward to relieve Susan and allow her to step down as she originally intended.

I hope you enjoy all that you find in this edition of the *Montevallo Historical Times*. In addition, our newsletter editor, Clay Nordan, has also recently updated our website, www.historicmontevallo.org, so be sure to see what's new there as well.

As your new president, I see only unlimited potential for our organization and look forward to working with you all to set productive goals for us to pursue and accomplish together as we go forward.

All my best,

Directors

Officers

John E. McCulley President

Clay Nordan Vice-President

Susan Godwin
Secretary

Janice F. Seaman Treasurer

Montevallo Historical Society

Opening the Portals of Our Heritage



540 Shelby Street Montevallo, AL 35115

www.historicmontevallo.org email: montevallo1817@gmail.com

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Marilynn Donoho

,

Marty Everse

Billy Mack Lee

Melinda Nix

Anne Thomas

Sherry L. Vallides

Montevallo Historical Society Roster of Active Members – 2023

KROELL BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS (\$250)

C&V Painting, Inc. Sherry Vallides

Fox & Pheasant B&B Inn Shoal Creek Realty Janice Seaman

JP Building Co. Jason Picklesimer

Smitherman's Pharmacy Sammy Shunnarah

JESSE WILSON SOCIETY (\$250)

Bill Denson Lois Doyle Robert Doyle Helon Everse Marty Everse Catherine Griffin Clay Nordan Adelle Simpson

PATRON LEVEL (\$100)

Richard Anderson Sharon Anderson David Bennett Patricia Bennett Charlie Binion Laurie Binion Linda Cicero John Cox Patty DeBardeleben Marilynn Donoho Timothy Dollins Sara Dollins Paul Doran Judy Lien Duda John Galloway Mike Galloway Sarah Galloway Yvonne Kroell Graham **Hud Heaton** Miki Mahan Heaton Cecily Orr Hullett Margie Scott Jones Bill Keller

Jeanetta Keller

Missy Ketchum
Charles Kaiden Kroell
Marijean Kroell
Carol Lightfoot
Kirk Lightfoot
Bob Lightfoot
Gene Lightfoot
Guy Milford
Jack Moran
Lynn Rotenberry Moran
Barbara Morris Nabors

Melinda Nix Rusty Nix

Mildred Bolton Orr Sara Pankaskie Emily Pendleton Debbie Pendleton Douglas Rodgers Libby Rodgers Sally Sears John W. Stewart, Jr.

Kathy Stewart
Anne Thomas
David Thomas
Daniel Thornton
Barbara Vance
Claire Vance
Sid Vance
Barry Woodham
Dee Woodham
Peggy Davis Woods

SINGLE & FAMILY LEVEL (\$25 OR \$40)

Delores Adkins Ellen Andrews Mary Arledge Steve Arledge Phyllis Bailey Veronica Bailev Cathy Barber Brenda Bates Rebecca Beaty Wayne Beaty Gary Bell Lee Binion Cheryl McClure Blackmon Becky Holcombe Bolton Jim Brown Jane Watson Bullock

Janet Rotenberry Burnett
Tad Cairns
Glenda Terrell-Cairns
Pam Campbell
Pat Clark
Jennifer Combs
Marshel Roy Cunningham
Ed Czeskleba
Karen Czeskleba
James Day
Rene Day
Judy Robinson Feagin
Barclay Fisher

Barclay Fisher Priscilla Fisher Bryan Fowler Nancy Fowler Bruce Fraser Danny Gamble Mae Glosson William Glosson Ann Nathews Griffin Hershel Hale Margie Hardin Carey Heatherly Jim Hermecz **Barry Hocutt** Cindy Howard Clark Hultquist Ben Ingram Debbie Ingram Kittye Keener

Karen Kelly

John Kirby

Peggy Hurt Kent

Carolyn Kirby
Jimmy Lawley
Linda Lawley
Billy Lee
Brenda Lewis
Luci Lovelady
Elizabeth Chism Ludwig
Michael E. Malone
Peggy Marshall
Scott Martin
Bruce McClanahan
Jane McClanahan
John McCulley

James McDonald

H.G. McGaughy

Jerry McGaughy

Larry McGaughy
Nancy McGaughy
Susie McGaughy
Jan McKinnon
John McKinnon
Joan McMillan
Norman McMillan
Jeannie Meigs
Laurie Middaugh
Barb Milstead
Herb Milstead
David T. Morgan
Judy Morgan
Bill Muehlbauer
Courtney Parker Murphy

Michelle Pawlik
Joan Pickett
Mike Pickett
Bill Plott
Atticus Plott

Randie Sears Rosenberg Molly Sears Rosenberg Andrew J. Rosenberg Mitt Schroeder Steve Sears Alma Sears Spenser Sears Nancy Simmer Don Simmer John Simmer Sandra S. Small Luke Smith **Eddie Spears** Maureen Spears Plesia Spears John Starks

John Starks
Jackie Starks
Jonne C. Thornton
Becky B. Thornton
Carolyn Frost Turnbull
Scott Turnbull
Marilee Turnbull
Hubert Van Tuyll
Susan Wilder-White

Bill White Nancy Wilstach Bobby Wyatt Jan Wyatt Julia Youngblood Gary Youngblood

183 Individual Members



A 2017 view of the creek as it widens and gently flows through Orr Park just behind Montevallo Elementary School. From written descriptions and oral histories about the old "John Dock" swimming hole we know that it had to be somewhere close by.

Swimming in Shoal Creek, A Tradition for Montevallo Kids

This article was first published by the *Shelby County Reporter* on August 19, 2013. It was written by Montevallo area Community Columnist, **Catherine Legg**.

Most any day you visit Orr Park you'll find kids wading or swimming in the cold water of Shoal Creek just as they have for more than 85 years. J. A. Brown, who grew up in Montevallo, likes to tell that, as an eight-year-old, a bunch of friends and he would slip off and go skinny-dipping at John Dock, their favorite swimming hole. (John Dock was located maybe 300 feet above the current wide walking bridge.)

Brown tells a little about the name and history of John Dock. It seems that in the late 1800s and early 1900s, for a number of years, a fellow whose name was John Dock had a gristmill (one of three in Montevallo) on that site.

Below the mill dam was the place to wash a Model T if you were lucky enough to have one. "In order to get to John Dock to swim," Brown said, "we had to go through Mr. Mulkey's sugarcane field, and because the old man knew that we would snitch some of the sweet cane, he would take out after us with his shotgun.

Well, we knew it was only filled with peas, so it didn't stop us, but we were surprised when the peas caught my buddy, Walter Weems, in the rear end; he cried, we laughed, and forever called him 'Crip' Weems."

The John Dock swimming hole was perhaps 30 feet wide and only five or six feet deep, so it was assumed pretty safe for older children, but it lost popularity in the late 1940s when two young boys drowned there.

To provide a place for children to swim in the 1950s, the City built those steps down to the creek (in front of the gazebo) and for many years Coach Theron Fisher supervised the kids swimming there. He was coach, lifeguard, and fight-breaker for all the town's kids.

That program ended, too, due to economics or water quality, so we jump to today and we find the town's children, unattended or watched over by their parents, still enjoying splashing in the cool water of beautiful Shoal Creek.

Catherine Legg who passed away in January of 2023 was a lifelong resident and promoter of Montevallo. She was a mother, a friend, a business owner, a church leader, Chamber of Commerce Director, City Councilwoman, Zoning officer, and much more throughout her 95 years of life. She had a great love for her family and for her hometown of Montevallo and had been a member of the Montevallo Historical Society since 2017. Among her many interests, she also served for years as the Montevallo Community Columnist for the Shelby County Reporter. You can find a collection of her Reporter articles on Montevallo at www.historicmontevallo.org.



Catherine Bridges Legg 1927-2023



Two Boys Drown In Swimming Hole

The old swimming hole known as "John Dock," down on the creek above Big Spring, has been the source of much fun for the youth of Montevallo, present and in years past. The placid, inviting friendliness of the place suddenly changed into grim, turbulent tragedy last Thursday afternoon when Buddy Foshee and Steve Rogan, each 10 years of age, lost their lives by drowning in the deep clearblue waters that had enticed them in the manner so well known to all who have been boys with a swimming hole to beguile.

The only witness to the tragedy

was little Wheeler, the younger brother of Buddy. From his story it is deduced that Steve, who could not swim, got into deep water, and Buddy, being able to swim some, went to his rescue. Both went down.

Wheeler ran all the way to his father's place of business and told him what had happened. Mr. Foshee went to the scene and with others who had arrived, rescued the bodies. Artificial respiration was administered promptly and faithfully by many volunteers. A pulmotor was brought by Ridout from Birmingham. All efforts at

resuscitation were to no avail.

Buddy was the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Foshee. Steve was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Rogan. Each was 10 years of age and had been companions all their lives.

Funeral services were held for Buddy at Montevallo Baptist Church Saturday at 10:30 a.m. Burial was in Montevallo Cemetery. Steve's funeral was at Centreville Methodist Church Saturday at 1:30 p.m. Burial was in Centreville Cemetery.

The many friends of the families grieve with them at this great and irreparable loss.

Swimming at John Dock

It is absurd to think of prohibiting swimming at John Dock because of the recent drowning of two inexperienced swimmers.

John Dock is a good place to swim, if you can swim. It is a place that must be avoided by those who cannot swim. Parents of children who cannot swim should keep such children away from there. It is our duty and responsibility to do so. We can see no right or reason why we should wish that boys and girls who are good swimmers should be denied.

All of us have a duty to join in

a movement to provide a suitable community playground for the smaller children so they can have a place to go and not be in danger. Then let the bigger ones go on to John Dock when they wish.

That, we think, is the sensible approach to the question.

This news item and commentary about the drowning appeared in the June 21, & June 28, 1945 editions of the Montevallo Times.



There are Tears in Things

by Ed Givhan

It's another one of those hot muggy afternoons right in the middle of dog days. We probably won't get to go swimming at the college this afternoon because every day about 2:00 it starts to thunder and they close the pool. We have a thunderstorm almost every afternoon during dog days. I'm gonna get my cousin Steve to go with me down to the creek and swim at John Dock. Mother and Daddy would have a fit if they knew we were down there swimming, but Miss Finger at the college says I've become a strong swimmer this summer and anyway, what they don't know won't hurt them. Wheeler wants to go with us, he always wants to go everywhere with me. I won't let him swim and will tell him I'll bore him with the hollow horn if he tells.

The creek is up a little from all the rain so that when we dive off the high bank into the deep water we are swept quickly and easily to the sand bank on the opposite shore. There we play in the soft sand and cool water for a while until Wheeler starts hollering that he wants to go home. Better take him so he won't cause trouble; I'll never bring the brat again. Normally the swim to the concrete steps on the steep bank is short and easy, but this time the current keeps sweeping me downstream and I have to swim real hard before I finally make it. My limbs feel like jelly when I finally climb to the top of the bank.

"Help!" It's Steve. He's floundering in the deep pool unable to make the steps. He screams and thrashes then goes under only to come back up to the surface in a sec-

ond or two. I have to help. Once I reach him he won't let me help him; he only grabs onto me and fights me. A flash in my brain from the Boy Scout Handbook reminds me that I should sock him to knock him out then tow him by the chin on his back to the nearest shore. When I draw back to sock him he locks his arm around my neck; my sock doesn't knock him out. Then we go under and I panic and struggle toward the light of the surface. I gasp air and try to break his grip on my neck. Now I am so tired. Can't get loose. Cool water closes over my head. Steve lets go. My arms won't move. Must breath. Lungs are bursting. Dark. Cold. Dark. Nothing.

There's Wheeler crying, screaming, running up Main Street. "My brother's drowning at John Dock." The old men of the town left behind by the war are running down to the creek. Mr. Bob Reid, the postmaster, takes charge as they strip to their pants or underpants. "There's a rock ledge down below the steps." For a long time they dive and dive. They find Steve floating in a deep pool below John Dock. Finally they find my body trapped beneath the ledge. They drag me to the sandy bank and attempt artificial respiration. Then my mother holds my blue head in her arms and her tears fall on my face.

My frightened friends in Montevallo learn what has happened that afternoon. Their mothers warn them never to go to John Dock. For the first time in their life they feel the hollow ache that comes with the loss of a friend. My mother's face has become a dark mask of mourning. She will never smile again.

My Memories of Summers at "Big Springs"

¶When we speak these days about how life used to be not so long ago, we often hear, "those were just different times". When it comes to the era when children, teenagers, college students and adults alike cooled off in the summertime by swimming in Shoal Creek at Big Springs in Montevallo, that phrase certainly applies.

I have childhood memories of swimming in the creek at what is now Orr Park and my mother and uncles had done the same thing when they were young, so it seemed perfectly natural to everyone at the time.

It was accepted without question that every kid who planned to swim in the creek when school was out would go to one of the local doctors beforehand and endure a painful injection to innoculate against Typhoid! They usually gave a Tetanus shot at the same time just to be sure.

At least Montevallo's physicians had become mindful that there were two dairy farms only a short distance upstream that the creek ran through and knew that potentially disease causing pollutants, the waste products of grazing cows, would inevitably be washed downstream by summer showers.

When swimming in the creek was finally officially banned by the city, questions about the quality of the water was considered generally to be the culprit for the decree.

¶A great attraction at the city sanctioned Big Spring swimming hole was a rope swing attached to a tall tree on the east bank. More than one overly ambitious swinger/swimmer discovered that lurking below the surface close by were some large and very hard rocks capable of inflicting serious injury.

The trick was to drop from the swing while avoiding the rocks. Inevitibly, one or two teenage boys each summer would miscalculate their airborne entry and suffer the consequences. It is a miracle that no one was killed.

¶My next door neighbor, Dudley Pendleton, was a long-serving member of the Montevallo Volunteer Fire Department, and one warm day when I was eleven or twelve years old, he asked me to join him and another helper at Big Springs to perform an annual chore that needed to be done each spring.

At the city hall, Dudley brought out the little Chevrolet fire truck the city bought in 1938 and headed for Big Springs. Our purpose that day was to wash off the mud, debris, and who knows what else that had accumulated on the concrete walls lining the creek during the past winter.

A steady supply of water was pumped from the creek by the truck while Dudley and his helper waded out lugging a fully loaded and active fire hose. They did their best to keep the hose under control and seemed to be getting the job done, at first.

I was told to stand by the truck and remain vigilant while the cleaning was underway. I literally had my finger on the switch and was instructed that at the first sign they had lost control of the hose, I was to immediately disengage the pump.

It didn't take too long before one of the "firemen" lost his footing on a submerged slippery rock, resulting in the high-pressure hose going absolutely berserk.

I'm proud to say that I was "Johnny-on-the-spot" and quickly hit the switch. Thanks to my quick thinking, neither man was beaned by the out-of-control hose nozzle waving through the air like some kind of demon and we were able to soon recover and complete the task.

"Those were just different times."

-Clay Nordan











The young girls in these photos were two of local merchant Pat Kroell's eleven children. The photography was done in 1916 at John Dock by their older sister, Dionetta Kroell, who pasted the prints into one of several photo albums she kept and that have survived in good condition.

January Program Featured Beloved Montevallo Artist

On January 22, 2023, Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Montevallo, Catherine Walsh, Ph.D., presented an informative program on Mrs. Virginia Barnes to the Montevallo Historical Society's first general membership meeting of the year.

Mrs. Barnes (1895-1984) taught, worked, and lived in Montevallo for much of her life. She was born in Livingston, AL and attended the Normal school there before coming to Alabama College where she earned an A.B. degree in 1939. She was also awarded the M.A. degree from Columbia University.

Mrs. Barnes became a member of the Art Department faculty at Alabama College in 1942 from which she retired in 1965.

An online video of Professor Walsh's complete presentation can be viewed at www. historicmontevallo.org





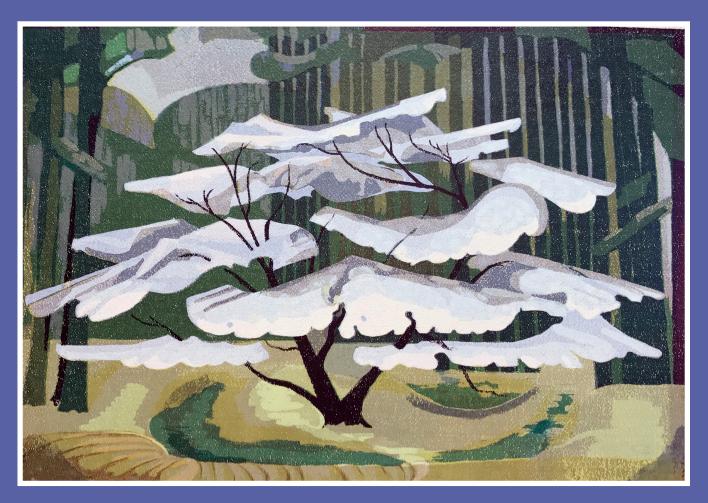
Virginia Barnes as an active artist and Associate Professor of Art at Alabama College in 1960. She was photographed with her oil painting entitled "Horses" for the campus newspaper, *The Alabamian*.

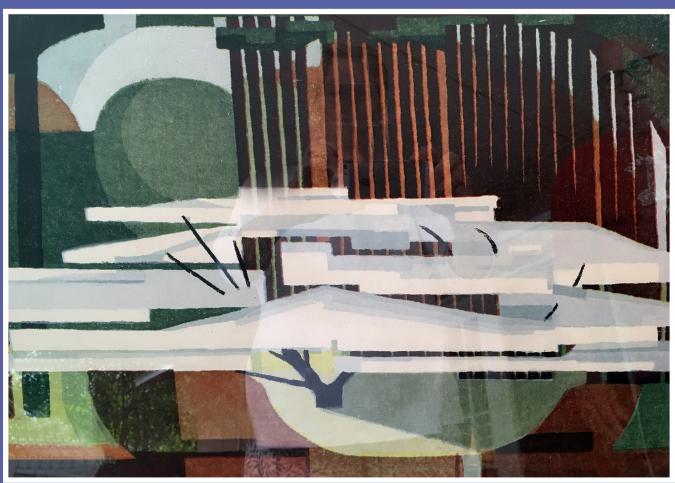


Professor Catherine Walsh began her presentation on the life and work of Virginia Barnes by explaining that Mrs. Barnes began her career as a portrait painter. She became known regionally and nationally for her exploration of abstract subjects and themes as she developed and gained experience and maturity as an artist.

Virginia Barnes' series of prints based on the sculptural form of the familiar Southern dogwood in springtime bloom was a favorite among her friends and patrons in Montevallo during her most productive years. It was common to find these Barnes prints proudly adorning sitting room walls all over town.









Flutter of Butterflies



Frances Nybeck



White Roses



Peach



Leaf Shapes



Yellow Trees



Flower



In the aftermath of the Holiday Wreath Laying event, sponsored by the Montevallo Historical Society this past December, Birmingham photographer, Art Meripol, returned in January to launch his airborne drone and make an impressive video of the Montevallo City Cemetery just before the wreaths were removed. The video is available for viewing at www.historicmontevallo.org.

VETERANS WREATHS FOR 2023 MAY BE PRE-ORDERED AT WWW.HISTORICMONTEVALLO.ORG

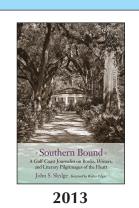


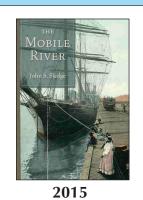


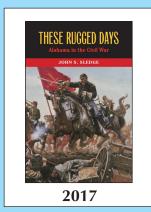


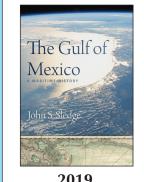
The Next MHS General Membership Meeting is Scheduled for Sunday, April 23, 2023 at 2:00 pm at Parnell Library.

Our speaker will be Noted Alabama Historian and Author, John Sledge, of Mobile who Grew up in Montevallo.









2019

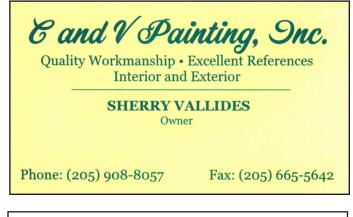
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Next MHS General Membership Meeting
Sunday April 23, 2023 • Parnell Library • 2:00 pm









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