



Posters making use of photographs from the 2022 Wreath Laying at Montevallo City Cemetery were on display for interested passers-by to admire.

MHS Sets Up Booth to Promote Veterans Wreaths at “National Night Out”

October 17, 2023 was “National Night Out” in the pecan grove at Orr Park in Montevallo. This early evening event, put on locally by “Impact Montevallo” has become a much anticipated fall get-together in communities nation-wide.

“Night Out” was created to offer localities a meaningful way to thank their police and fire department personnel as well as other first-responders who give so much to keep us safe and provide assistance in emergencies. Grateful citizens can also meet and get to know and personally thank these public servants for all they do.

In addition, about an hour before sundown, vendors and organizations arrive and are soon ready to greet visitors and share information about whatever service or product they have to offer or promote.

The Montevallo Historical Society put up a tent for the event and attracted the attention of a number of people who stopped by to learn about Veterans Wreath laying 2023 at Montevallo City Cemetery.



(Left to right) Clay Nordan, Vice-president and Treasurer; Judy Duda, director; Marilyn Donoho, director; John McCulley, President; Jim Donoho, volunteer; Chris Duda, volunteer.



Dressed in the 1950's-era style their predecessors might have flaunted for meetings and gatherings of the Montevallo Study Club, (L-R) Melanie Poole, Vice-president, and Maggie Hall, President, made a special visit to the Montevallo Historical Society on October 22, 2023, to speak about the accomplishments and rich heritage of this prestigious local women's club that remains very much alive and active in the 90th year of their existence as an organization.

Go to www.historicmontevallo.org and click on the Program Videos tab to view their presentation..

Next MHS General Membership Meeting

Sunday January 28, 2024
Parnell Library • 2:00 pm



Speaker: Noted Local Woodcarver and Artist, Tim Tingle

President's Letter

Dear Friends:

It seems like just yesterday when we were starting 2023 with our first general membership meeting of the year. Now we find ourselves 12 months later beginning another new year and looking forward to all that is ahead for our organization.

But before we dive into what's to come, I would like to reflect a bit on the events and accomplishments we had in 2023 and recognize the MHS members who stepped up to contribute their time, talent, and labor to these endeavors.

First, I would like to recognize and thank Anne Thomas for all she has done not only this past year but in previous years to make sure that the social hour that follows our general meetings offers a tasty variety of good things to eat for all who stick around to visit, talk about Montevallo history, and just enjoy each other's company. Anne recruits several other members to assist with refreshment prep and delivery, and we thank them all for what they do.

Our holiday open house returned this past December following a hiatus of several years due to the disruption in our lives caused by the pandemic. It was pretty much a spur of the moment get-together during the first week of operations at Montevallo's new Indigo Café & Bar, (thanks to Janice Seaman!) but a good showing of MHS members came to town on a Sunday afternoon and enjoyed some good cheer, delectable finger food, and making merry for a couple of hours.

Once again in 2023, the Montevallo Historical Society partnered with Wreaths Across America to honor veterans buried in Montevallo City Cemetery. Thanks to our Wreaths committee, Marilynn Donoho, Judy Duda, and

Clay Nordan, along with their spouses, the number of veterans identified and located in the cemetery increased by nearly 100 from 2022-2023 for a final count that was just shy of 400. And I could not be more proud of our members and local volunteers who participated in the ceremony of recognition at noon on Saturday, December 16, 2023 and the actual wreath laying that followed.

Everything about the day in the cemetery was not only moving but a rekindling of American patriotism and an appreciation to our vets for all they have given in service to their country. Thanks to all who supported this effort by purchasing a veterans wreath.

I hope you know that the Montevallo Historical Society's main source of revenue comes from member dues (which may be tax deductible). We ask our members to renew their memberships by paying dues at the end of each year. Clay Nordan coordinates everything related to membership for MHS and he reports that dues payments have been brisk during this recent cycle.

We have quite a few members who have stepped up to the Patron (\$100) level as well as the Jesse Wilson Society (\$250) level. Thanks to everyone for your contin-

ued support.

Please note that our first general membership meeting of the year is scheduled for Parnell Library on January 28, at 2:00 pm. Our speaker will be artist and woodcarver Tim Tingle, so be sure to put this special program on your calendar. As usual, refreshments will be served.

Happy New Year!



MHS Holiday Open House 2023.

More photos from the Holiday Open House may be found at www.historicmontevallo.org.

Officers

John E. McCulley
President

Clay Nordan
Vice-President / Treasurer

Susan Godwin
Secretary

Montevallo

Historical Society

Opening the Portals of Our Heritage



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Montevallo, AL 35115

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

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Judy Lien Duda

Martha Eisenberg

Marty Everse

Billy Mack Lee

Bill Nathews

Melinda Nix

Anne Thomas

Sherry L. Vallides

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Norman McMillan • Debbie Pendleton • Janice Seaman

Montevallo Historical Society Roster of Active Members – October 2023

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Sherry Vallides
Central State Bank
Mitt Schroeder
Fox & Pheasant B&B Inn
Shoal Creek Realty
Janice Seaman
JP Building Co.
Jason Picklesimer
Smitherman's Pharmacy
Sammy Shunnarah



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Karen Czeskleba
Bill Denson
Judy Lien Duda
Helon Everse
Marty Everse
Catherine Griffin
Clay Nordan
Sally Sears
Adelle Simpson



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Sharon Anderson
David Bennett
Patricia Bennett
Charlie Binion
Laurie Binion
Beth Jeter Bishop
Linda Cicero
John Cox
James Day
Renè Day
Patty DeBardeleben
Marilynn Donoho
Timothy Dollins
Sara Dollins
Paul Doran
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Charles Kaiden Kroell
Marijean Kroell
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Gene Lightfoot
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Lynn Rotenberry Moran
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Melinda Nix
Rusty Nix
Laurie Gene Orr
Mildred Bolton Orr
Sara Pankaskie
Emily Pendleton
Debbie Pendleton
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Libby Rodgers
Randie Sears Rosenberg
Molly Sears Rosenberg
Andrew J. Rosenberg
Sandra S. Small
John W. Stewart, Jr.
Kathy Stewart
Anne Thomas
David Thomas
Daniel Thornton
Jonne C. Thornton
Becky B. Thornton
Barbara Vance
Clare Vance
Sid Vance
Barry Woodham
Dee Woodham
Peggy Davis Woods



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

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Deanna Anderson
Ellen Andrews
Mary Arledge
Steve Arledge
Phyllis Bailey
Veronica Bailey
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
Martha Eisenberg
Judy Robinson Feagin
Barclay Fisher
Priscilla Fisher
Bryan Fowler
Nancy Fowler
Bruce Fraser
Danny Gamble
Sarah Garcia
Mae Glosson
William Glosson
Ann Nathews Griffin
Hershel Hale
Margie Hardin
Carey Heatherly
Jim Hermecz
Barry Hocutt
Cindy Howard
Clark Hultquist
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Karen Kelly
Peggy Hurt Kent
John Kirby
Carolyn Kirby
Jimmy Lawley
Linda Lawley
Susan Ledbetter
Billy Lee
Brenda Lewis
Carol Lightfoot
Kirk Lightfoot
Eddie Lovelady
Kathleen Lovelady
Luci Lovelady
Elizabeth Chism Ludwig
Peggy Marshall
Scott Martin
Bruce McClanahan

Jane McClanahan
John McCulley
James McDonald
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
Bill Nathews
Michelle Pawlik
Joan Pickett
Mike Pickett
Bill Plott
Atticus Plott
Steve Sears
Alma Sears
Madeleine Sears
Bobby Joe Seales
Diane B. Seales
Nancy Simmer
Don Simmer
John Simmer
Luke Smith
Eddie Spears
Maureen Spears
Plesia Spears
John Starks
Jackie Starks
Carolyn Frost Turnbull
Scott Turnbull
Marilee Turnbull
Hubert Van Tuyl
Susan Wilder-White
Bill White
Andrew Wilson
Nancy Wilstach
Bobby Wyatt
Jan Wyatt
Julia Youngblood
Gary Youngblood



Veterans from all branches of service came to Montevallo City Cemetery on December 16, 2023 to participate in a solemn ceremony honoring fellow veterans buried there. (Above left to right) Major Lauren McAnally, United States Army, retired; Corporal Wendy Urbancic Wright, United States Marine Corps; Chief Petty Officer, Alan



Photographs by Art Meripol



Broadhead, United States Navy; Staff Sergeant David Thomas, United States Air Force; Petty Officer, 1st Class, Leon Turner, retired; HM1, Hospital Corpsman 1st Class, Carolyn SeEVERS, U.S. Navy, retired; Colonel Tommy Baker, United States Army, retired; Senior Airman, Tiwynn Dove, United States Air Force.



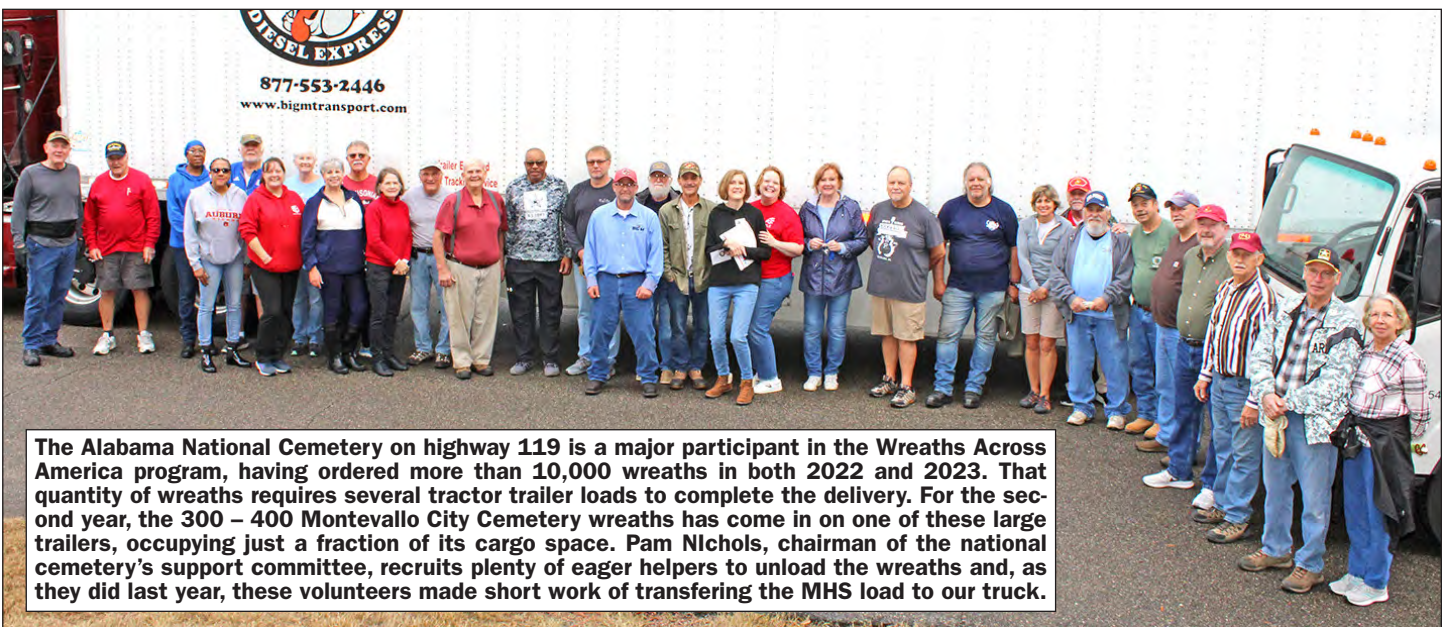




2023 was the 10th year that veterans from American Legion Post 122 and VFW post 1349 from Prattville, AL have been coming to Montevallo for wreath laying at both the national cemetery and Montevallo City Cemetery. They travel on motorcycles no matter the weather and lay a wreath and conduct a special tribute to Staff Sergeant Robert Farrington who is buried in the city cemetery. The bridge on highway 119 that spans Shoal Creek near Montevallo city hall is named for Farrington.



(Above left) Pam Nichols (right) visits with Marilyn and Judy while a volunteer moves a box of wreaths from the delivery truck to a storage trailer. (Center) Truck driver David Holmes and his wife show off a gift bag presented by the MHS wreath committee. (L-R) Chris Duda, Jim Donoho, Marilyn Donoho. Judy Duda is at far right. (Above right) the wreaths came 12 to a box in larger and more substantial boxes than were used in 2022. The total sold and received by MHS for 2023 was 34 boxes containing 408 wreaths.



The Alabama National Cemetery on highway 119 is a major participant in the Wreaths Across America program, having ordered more than 10,000 wreaths in both 2022 and 2023. That quantity of wreaths requires several tractor trailer loads to complete the delivery. For the second year, the 300 – 400 Montevallo City Cemetery wreaths has come in on one of these large trailers, occupying just a fraction of its cargo space. Pam Nichols, chairman of the national cemetery's support committee, recruits plenty of eager helpers to unload the wreaths and, as they did last year, these volunteers made short work of transferring the MHS load to our truck.

To see an extensive slide show of pictures from Wreaths Across America at Montevallo City Cemetery on December 16, 2023 as well as a video of the ceremony that same day honoring the memory of veterans buried there, go to www.historicmontevallo.org

MONTEVALLO NEWS.

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NO. 24.

EARLY DAYS IN AND AROUND MONTEVALLO

Among the many notable men who have been reared in our historic old town, may be mentioned Judge George D. Shortridge. He was a son of Judge Eli Shortridge who lived in Tuscaloosa. Judge George Shortridge was born near Lexington, Ky., and moved to Montevallo from Montgomery in 1844. His father was one of the first circuit judges of the state.

His mantle seems to have fallen on his son George who also became a circuit judge presided in Bibb, Jefferson and other counties. He was the know nothing candidate for governor before the war and was defeated by John A. Winston. He married a daughter of Edmond King and his daughter, Mrs. R. R. Gaines, now lives in Palestine, Texas, the wife of the chief justice of the supreme court of that state.

Mrs. Lou Gaines and W. W. Shortridge died in 1870 and lies buried in the family burial ground on the King place.

It is said that in the early history of the town panthers were very common and sometimes came within the corporate limits. The last one killed here was by Dr. Mardis and Edmond King. They had been out in the country and coming back they saw a large panther run up a tree near the Vandegrift place. Dr. Mardis stayed near by while Mr. King galloped up to his house and got his gun and killed it. It's skin was said to be a beauty and was displayed for many years at the King homestead.

Along in the fifties the railroad fever sprang up and created great excitement for a while. It is said that even the women all through the county

knit socks and turned them over to the committee for the benefit of the railroad. Edmond King gave \$20,000 in money and an engine worth \$15,000. In 1855 the Alabama & Tennessee River railroad laid its first iron in our town. And for several years this was the terminus.

With the road came a new population and new life – making it for a few years the largest market in North Alabama. Cotton was marketed here from Calhoun, Talladega, Blount, St. Clair, Jefferson, Walker, Bibb and Tuscaloosa counties

In one season the old railroad books show a total shipment of 24,000 bales. In that day and time cotton frequently brought as much as 50 cents a pound. We find in old cotton books kept by merchants then where a heavy bale of cotton brought as much as \$300.

Among the inhabitants the railroad brought to the town were the Riddle Bro's. who built the road from Selma to this point. They built the storehouse now belonging to George Kroell where for several years they carried on a large and lucrative business. Robinson & DeJarnette built the Vandegrift house. They came from Autauga and Lowndes. Harrison & Gregory were also large dealers and did business in a storehouse between Morgan & Meroney's and Latham & Co's. places of business.

Cunningham & West were also merchants, having bought out Dan Prentice. Goods were sold on open account to any one and it is said very little money was ever lost until after the war. Notes and mortgages were unknown and every man was put on his honor and very few ever went back on it.

About the time the railroad came, the town got on what is now known

as a “boom.” The female college was erected and the Baptist church, a brick building, was erected near the residence of Mr. G. G. Vandegrift. The college was built by general subscription. The lot was donated by Edmond King, who, as usual, took the lead in all public matters pertaining to the advancement of the town. The house was built by Gen. Charles M. Shelly and his father and stands a monument today of their skilled workmanship. The school was first taught by Prof. Robert S. Lewis who came here from Howard college. It eventually developed into a sectarian school and Professor Lewis was disposed of.

Lewis was succeeded by Hodson a gentleman from Massachusetts. It was then purchased by the Cumberland Presbyterian church who were at that time in the ascendancy and changed to a female college. It finally was placed in the hands of Dr. Meredith who lived and taught school in it for many years. When it was changed to a female college the citizens got up money and built what is now known as Lyman's Hall where a male and female school has been taught ever since. Among the many teachers who have held sway in the old town was quite an oddity in the person of “old man Murell” as he was familiarly known. He was a large, stout Irishman and believed in the free use of the rod – so much so that he frequently used it on the parents as well as the children, as he held the parents accountable for the conduct of his children and would whip them too if they disputed his authority or interfered in any way with his discipline of the children. He was a terror to the boys and there are no doubt many who read these sketches who have vivid recollections of his skill in the use of the rod.

Editor's Note: In the Fall 2023 edition of the *Montevallo Historical Times*, we reprinted what was thought to be a four part series entitled: “EARLY DAYS IN AND AROUND MONTEVALLO” from the *Montevallo News* editions of July 18, 1895, July 25, 1895, August 1, 1895, and August 15, 1895. Since then, some additional online archives research has revealed that this fifth installment had concluded the series on September 5, 1895.

He Also Served:

Walter Patrick McConaughy

Possibly the most personally successful native son Montevallo has yet produced.

The basic concept behind the placement of wreaths sponsored by the Montevallo Historical Society in Montevallo City Cemetery is that they are intended to honor the service and memorialize the memory of all military veterans buried there. By December 2023, nearly 400 had been identified and located in the cemetery and they all were recognized and symbolically thanked with a holiday wreath laid on or against their burial markers.

However, there is a single individual buried at Montevallo Cemetery who also devoted his life to serving his country, not in a military capacity, but in the U.S. Foreign Service. When the time came this past year to mark veterans graves for wreaths, the MHS Wreaths Across America committee decided to make an exception for Walter Patrick McConaughy.

Walter was one of four children born to Walter and Claude McConaughy. His father was a successful salesman and Birmingham businessman who was also a director of the Merchants & Planters Bank in Montevallo. The McConaughys were among the earliest settlers and citizens of this area and the oldest grave in their plot in the cemetery is



Walter Patrick McConaughy was appointed as United States Ambassador to Pakistan by President John F. Kennedy in March of 1962. (Above) McConaughy meets with the president in the Oval Office at the time of his appointment.

the final resting place for William McConaughy, (1806 – 1883) and his wife Harriet McConaughy (1827 – 1919).

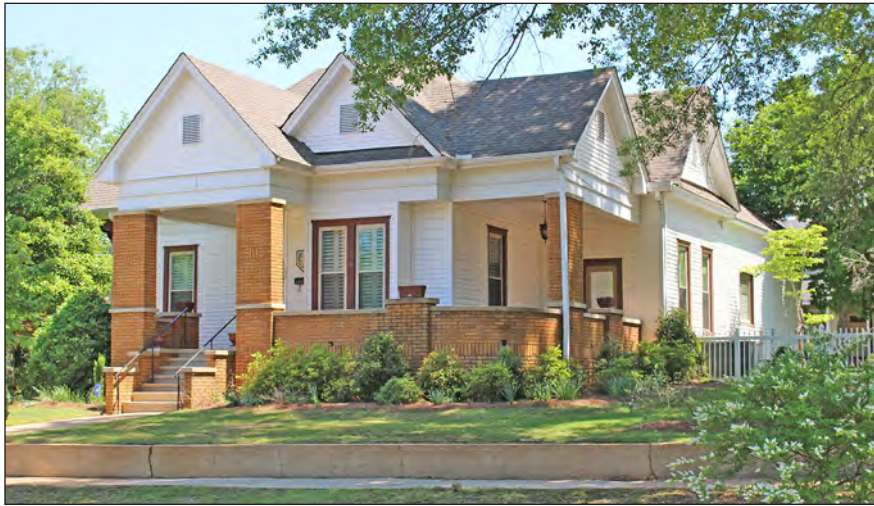
Another of Walter's ancestors was James L. McConaughy who joined William F. Aldrich when he took sole ownership in 1880 of the coal mines in Aldrich, two miles west of Montevallo, and became Secretary/Treasurer of

Aldrich's newly formed Montevallo Coal and Transportation Company, which they operated for the next 25 years.

As a young man, Walter was something of a local prodigy. In a newspaper article about him from 1931, he is described as an honor graduate of Montevallo Elementary and High Schools and was credited with the high-



Walter Patrick McConaughy is buried in the family plot in Montevallo City Cemetery. Buried next to him is his wife, Dorothy Davis of Andalusia, AL whom he met the year she graduated from Alabama College in Montevallo in 1937.



Walter McConaughy grew up in this handsome house that still stands on Vine Street next to the Post Office. It was known as the McConaughy house until his brother William's death in 1979. The house has had several owners since then including Minnie Lou Warnke, John and Carolyn Kirby, and currently, Jeannie Meigs.

est scholastic record maintained in the Montevallo Public Schools. He was also a talented clarinetist.

In the spring of 1928, after two summers work at Alabama College, he received a degree from Birmingham – Southern College. While at Southern, Walter's studies of economics, political science, and diplomatic history kindled in him an interest in a diplomatic career.



Following two years of teaching in Pike County, AL schools while completing focused graduate work at Duke University, Walter passed the U.S Foreign Service examination and received his initial appointment in 1930, at the age of 24, as Vice-consul to Tampico, Mexico. At the time, he was among the youngest ever given such an appointment.

From that auspicious beginning, Walter built an enviable

career in the U.S. diplomatic corps, accepting postings around the world for the next four decades and becoming one of the country's most experienced and noted authorities on foreign affairs of all stripes.

His final foreign posting came in 1966 as envoy to Taiwan, an assignment that lasted an unusual eight years until 1974 when he retired after 43 years.

In his obituary, which ran in the *New York Times* in 2000, Walter McConaughy was described as having been, at the time of his retirement, one of the State Department's "dwindling cadre of 'Old China Hands'."

In death, he returned home to Montevallo, the place where it all started. Hopefully, Walter's years of dedication to his country will be remembered and commemorated for years to come by those who appreciate his career of sacrifice and patriotism.

**43 Years in Service to His Country
1931 - 1974**

**Vice Consul – Tampico, Mexico
1931 – 1933**

HOOVER ADMINISTRATION

**Consul – Kobe & Osaka, Japan
1933 – 1941**

ROOSEVELT ADMINISTRATION

**Second Secretary U.S. Embassy
Beijing, (Occupied) China – 1941**

(Interned by Japanese for 18 months)

ROOSEVELT ADMINISTRATION

**Commercial Attaché
Bolivia & Brazil
1943 – 1948**

ROOSEVELT/TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION

**Consul – Shanghai, China
1948 – 1950**

TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION

**Consul General – Hong Kong, China
1950 – 1952**

TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION

**Director, Office of Chinese Affairs
Washington, D.C.
1952 – 1957**

EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION

**U.S. Ambassador to Burma
1957 – 1959**

EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION

**U.S. Ambassador to South Korea
1959 – 1961**

EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION

**U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan
1962 – 1966**

KENNEDY/JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION

**U.S. Ambassador to
Republic of China (Taiwan)
1966 – 1974**

JOHNSON/NIXON ADMINISTRATION

Visit www.historicmontevallo.org to see a more in-depth exploration of the life of Walter McConaughy, his family, and his Montevallo roots. You will also find in the same location a link to a video that contains a recording done at Alabama College of an interview with then serving United States Ambassador to South Korea (1959 - 1961), Walter McConaughy, moderated by the director of the AC News Bureau, and future mayor of Montevallo, Ralph Sears.

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