

# Montevallo *Historical* Times

Vol. 1 No. 1

Newsletter of the Montevallo Historical Society

Summer 2017

## Calling all Lovers of Local History!

The idea of forming a local Historical Society emerged at the beginning of 2017 as an outgrowth of planning for Montevallo's Bicentennial celebration.

A group of Montevallo residents, natives, and others with personal connections to the town held their first organizational meeting in February and have continued to meet on a monthly basis ever since.

Janice Seaman, local realtor, proprietor of the Fox & Pheasant Bed & Breakfast, and member of the Bicentennial committee, spearheaded the initial meeting of Montevallo history buffs and succeeded in identifying individuals in the group willing to serve as officers.

At the first meeting, the group elected organizational officers and worked out a game plan for gaining non-profit status for the society.

Jim Day, a Wilton native and University of Montevallo History professor was elected president. Clay Nordan, a Montevallo native and retired magazine editor was elected vice-president. Norman McMillan, retired University of Montevallo English professor, was elected secretary, and Janice Seaman was elected Treasurer.

In addition, nine organizational directors were identified and have agreed to serve.

John McCulley, a Montevallo native and Tuscaloosa attorney, agreed to serve as legal adviser for the group. His first assignment was to draw up a set of bylaws as well as articles of incorporation which are

**“To promote, support, and effect preservation of historically significant structures, sites, and other things relating to Montevallo, AL.**



The Montevallo Historical Society gathered at the Fox & Pheasant B&B for its first organizational meeting in February of 2017. (L-R) Clay Nordan, Debbie Pendleton, John McCulley, Jim Day, Janice Seaman, Norman McMillan, Melinda Nix, Marty Everse, Sherry Vallides, Bill Glosson.

necessary for achieving non-profit status from the IRS.

At its meeting in April, the articles of incorporation submitted by John were thoroughly discussed and ultimately approved.

A mission statement for the society was adopted at the Society's meeting in May and the excerpt from the statement that you see on

this page helps explain the purpose and goals set for the Montevallo Historical Society.

The society recently received an “EIN” number from the IRS, so a bank account is now open and the group has begun accepting applications and dues payments.

Dues for single members are \$25 per year. A family membership is \$40 and students can join for \$15.

There is a “Patron” level membership available for \$100 as well as the \$250 “Jesse Wilson Society” membership for those wanting to provide even greater support.

The “Kroell Business Membership” is a one-year membership for businesses that includes a free newsletter ad.

We encourage anyone with an interest in the rich history of Montevallo and surrounding communities to become a member and take advantage of all that's in store. Please use the application inside this newsletter and join today.

At 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, September, 17, we will hold an organizational meeting at Parnell Memorial Library. Author John Sledge is the featured speaker. Afterward, charter members are invited to a party at the Fox & Pheasant Inn on Shelby Street.

## President's Letter

Montevallo's bicentennial celebration (1817-2017) has provided many opportunities to reminisce about days gone by. So, what's your connection to Montevallo?

Did you attend elementary school in the Alice Boyd Building, the Jeter Building, the Almont School, or the "new" school (now more than 50 years old!)? Did you go to King Street Kiddie Kollege? Did you attend Prentice High School or Montevallo High School? Did you see a basketball game or attend your prom in the auditorium? Did you graduate from high school in Palmer Hall? Did you learn to swim at Big Springs, Little Springs, somewhere else on Shoal Creek, or at the College Pool? Did you slide down the fire escapes at Main Hall or down the spillway at the College Lake? Do you remember the old yellow stop signs that were positioned in the middle of the streets? What about the steel-frame Orange Bridge that spanned Shoal Creek or the wooden covered bridge leading to Hidden Valley? Do you remember when the depot sat alongside the railroad tracks? Do you remember the stately Victorian houses on Main and Middle Streets? Did you ride an Alabama Coach Company bus? Did you eat at the Plaza Grill or grab a burger and milkshake at the Dari-Delite Jolly Cholly or Dinky Dine? Did you shop at the Whaley Shopping Center, stopping in at the Food Center, Times Printing Company, the Western Auto, or Rochester's Department Store? Did you shop at Klotzman's, the Elizabeth Shop, or Zane's Men's Shop? Did you watch

a movie at the Strand Theater or buy your penny candy at Ben Franklin's 5 & 10 store? Did your family buy a car from "Rat" Scott, Ron Shafer, Carl Cannon, or Ken Terry's Chevrolet dealership, or did you prefer Lovelady or Sherman Holland Ford or Leach Pontiac/GMC? Did you get prescriptions filled at Kyle McClure's or Greg Eanes's Drug Store on the corner, or did you frequent Smitherman's Pharmacy or Jack Sims's Rexall Drug?

Obviously, my memory goes back only so far. But each of us has fond memories of growing up in Montevallo or in the surrounding communities of, Aldrich, Almont, Boothton, Brierfield, Dogwood, Dry Valley, Marvel, Pea Ridge, Underwood, Wilton. So, what's your connection to Montevallo? Certainly the commemoration of 200 years of history offers many opportunities to share your experiences.

Also, the founding of the Montevallo Historical Society provides a means for preserving the past and for recording our history as we move into a third century of small-town life in central Alabama. I hope that you'll learn more about this new organization and that you'll consider joining as a charter member.

Exciting times are ahead, and I hope that you'll join us in celebrating both the history and the future of Montevallo!



James S. Day

### Organizing Officers

James S. Day  
*President*

Clay Nordan  
*Vice-President*

Norman R. McMillan  
*Secretary*

Janice F. Seaman  
*Treasurer*

*Montevallo*  
**Historical Society**

*Opening the Portals of Our Heritage*

540 Shelby Street  
Montevallo, AL 35115

[www.historicmontevallo.org](http://www.historicmontevallo.org)

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### Organizing Directors

Kenneth Dukes

Marty Everse

Bill Glosson

Mae Glosson

Susan Godwin

Mike Mahan

John E. McCulley

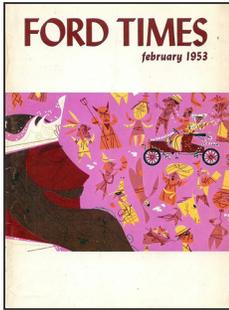
Melinda Nix

Debbie Pendleton

Anne Thomas

Sherry L. Vallides

# “My Favorite Town” Inspires Bicentennial



For many decades, the Ford Motor Company mailed to its customers a *Reader's Digest* style publication called the *Ford Times*. They told their readers that “The *Ford Times* comes to you through the courtesy of your local dealer to add to your motoring pleasure and information.”

The February 1953 issue contained a story entitled, “My Favorite Town, Montevallo, Alabama” written by Virginia Hamilton. Mrs. Hamilton was the wife of Lowell Stuart Hamilton who was, at the time, the Director of Public Relations at Alabama College.

Mrs. Hamilton was an instructor in the Social Sciences department at AC and later became a noted professor, scholar, author, and expert on the history of the state of Alabama. Among her publications were biographies of the noted Alabamians, Sen. Lister Hill and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black. Her short history of Alabama has been considered the standard primer on the subject since it was first published in 1984.

The *Ford Times* accepted submissions from freelancers from all over the U.S., so that is how she came to write about Montevallo.

The *Ford Times* often included original illustrations to add interest to their stories, and in this case, Richard Brough, an accomplished artist and professor at the University of Alabama was enlisted to make watercolors of various scenes around Montevallo. What you see here are Brough's fanciful illustrations matched with corresponding camera photos of the same locations. Some of these

places look essentially the same today as when Brough painted them.

In fact, the teenage Emily Vest (later Pendleton), who lived at the time with her grandparents in a simple wood frame house adjacent to the bridge over Shoal Creek, witnessed from the front porch Richard Brough working with his paints, brushes, and easel to create the image, later printed in the article, depicting the dramatically curved bridge as it leads to the top of the bluff where the Kelly house, Deluxe Cleaners, the City Hall, and the Chevrolet dealership were all located.

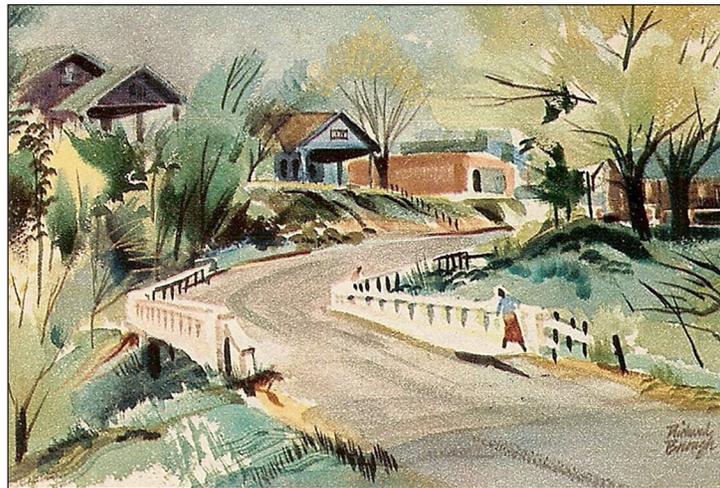
When the issue of *Ford Times* came out in 1953, Emily made sure to get a copy and she managed to keep it among her possessions all these years. When the Montevallo Bicentennial Committee was formed in 2016 to organize the 2017 commemoration and celebration of

the town's 200th birthday, Emily made its members aware of the *Ford Times* story and her connection to it.

As the committee explored ideas for making the bicentennial celebration one to remember, they included, along with their other efforts, the reproduction and sale of Brough's illustrations, from Emily's copy, as handsome commemorative note cards.

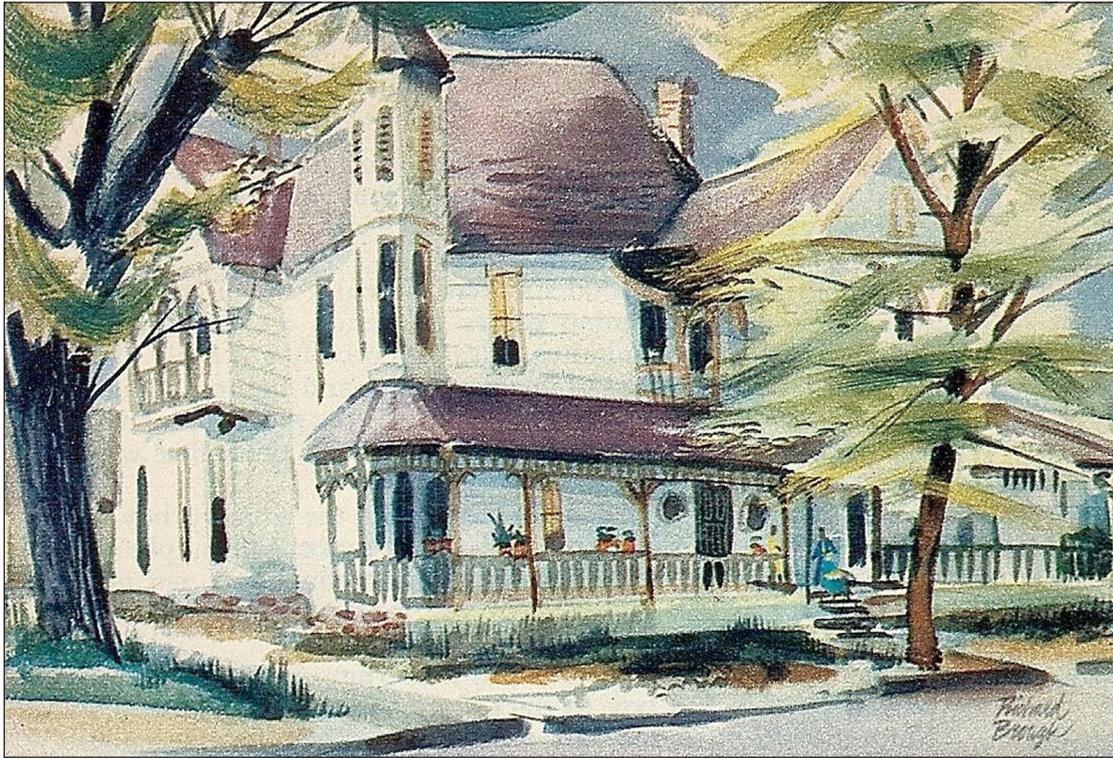
The cards have been available for several months now and sets can be purchased for \$15 each at the Montevallo City Hall. They can also be purchased through the Bicentennial Committee by contacting Janice Seaman at the Fox & Pheasant Inn, 540 Shelby Street, (205) 665-3080.

Proceeds from the sale will be used to defray expenses incurred for the city's community-wide “Bicentennial Bash”, to be held at Orr Park on Saturday, September 9, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.



**The bridge over Shoal Creek just below the Montevallo City Hall. It was named for U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Robert L. Farrington of Montevallo who died in service in a plane crash in Croatia in 1996. The inset shows the porch from where Emily Vest observed the artist.**

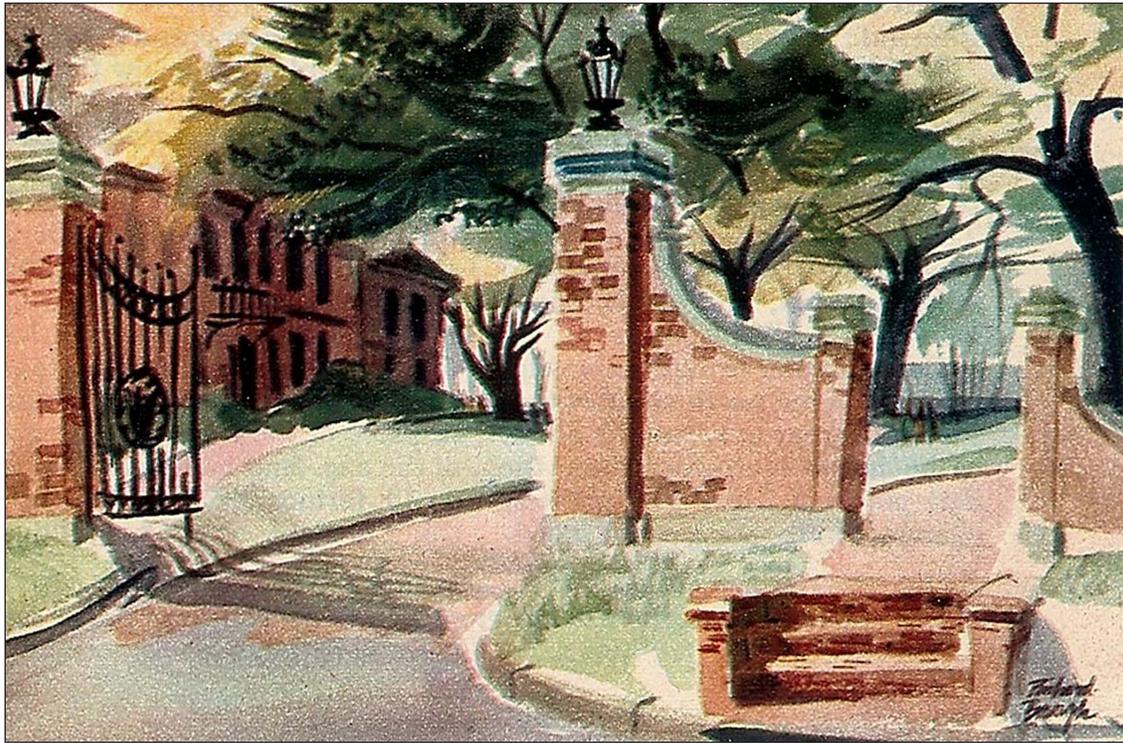
Color illustrations excerpted from the **Ford Times**, February 1953, pages 2-7.  
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**McGibbon House at Shelby and East Boundary Streets, just a block from the J.A. Brown bridge over Shoal Creek. McGibbon, the original owner of the house, operated a cotton gin on the south side of the creek close to the railroad near the location of J.A. Brown, Sr.'s saw mill and ice house.**



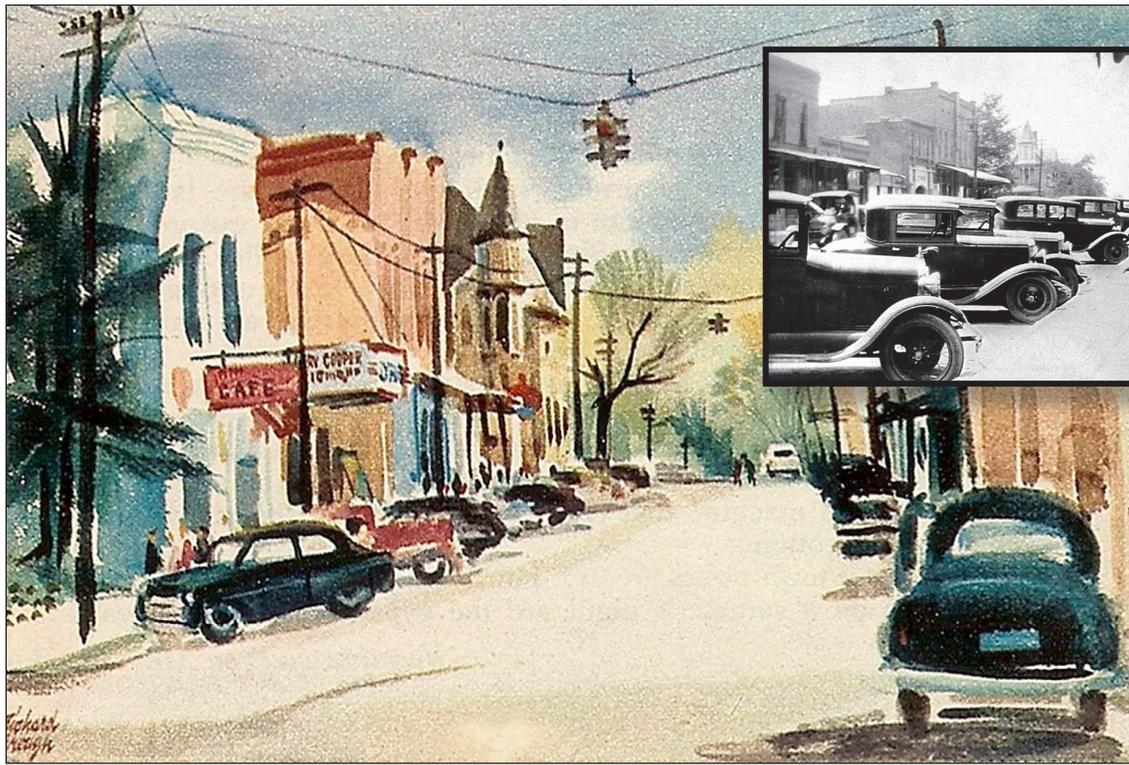
**Shoal Creek as it runs through Orr Park. This scene is very near Big Springs and just upstream from the foot bridge and old swimming hole. In the 1950's and 60's there was a rope swing tied to a big tree close to here that local children and teenagers used to plunge into the deepest part of the creek. Submerged rocks kept everyone alert to dangers below.**



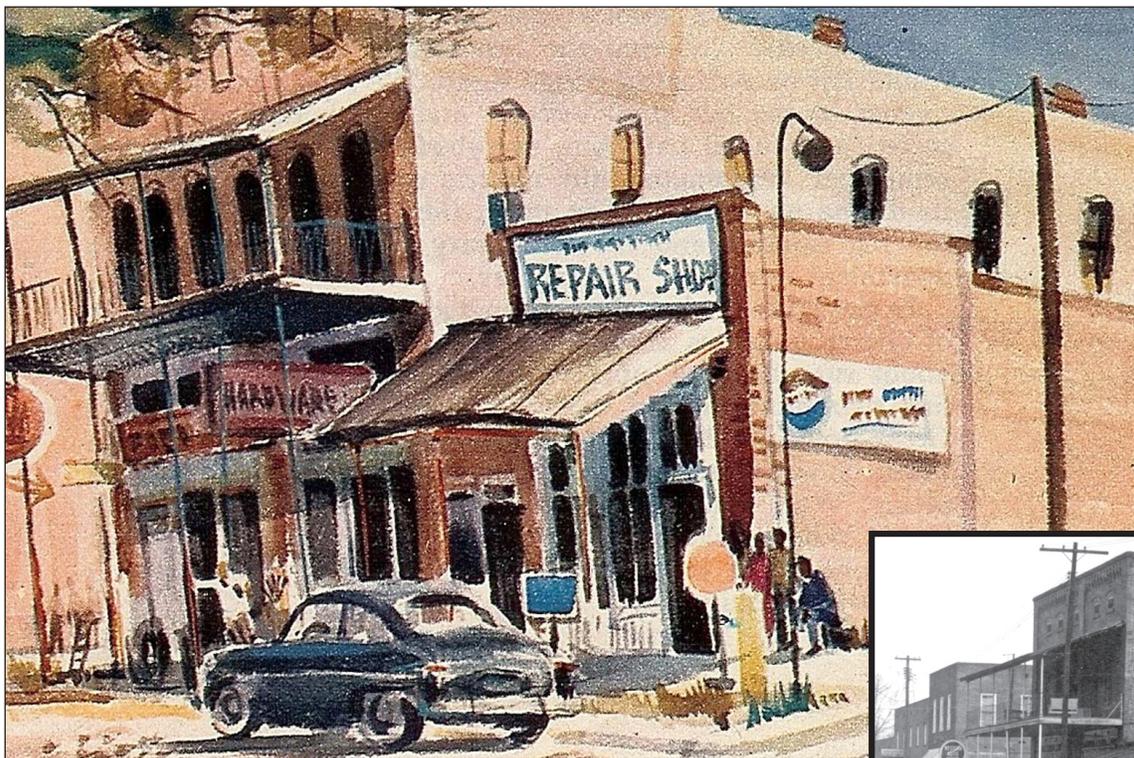
Vine Street entrance gate to the University of Montevallo near Calkins Hall, one of at least a half-dozen entrances to the campus constructed in this same style. The first of these elegant gates was built in 1915 at the North Boundary Street entrance that gives access to Palmer Hall (const. 1930) today.

You can read **“My Favorite Town”** at [www.historicmontevallo.org](http://www.historicmontevallo.org)

Black & white photo courtesy Carey Heatherly, Carmichael Library, University of Montevallo.



The illustration shows Montevallo's Main Street looking south in the 1950's. The Plaza Grill, Strand Theatre, and Rogan's store and mortuary are on the left side of the street with a turreted Victorian house on the next corner. The black & white photograph is probably from 20 years earlier but the buildings and Victorian house are essentially the same.



The two story building was known as the Albright building and sat on the lot where the Pizza Hut is today. In the 1950's two ladies lived in the upstairs apartment. Western Auto was on one side of the ground floor and Nordan Hardware occupied the other. The small building on the right housed Tom Fancher's Radio & TV Repair shop. While in this location, Fancher's wife, Marie, started her gift shop in a small annex.



..... Ads From the Archives .....

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Further, we wish to express our appreciation for your past patronage and invite you to continue to see us.

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**Stone Jewelry Company**  
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Between  
Montevallo, Calera, Columbiana, Harpersville, Coosa River Ferry, Vincent, Pell City, Ashville  
Beginning  
**Wednesday, Feb. 11, 1942**  
First eastbound schedule will leave Montevallo Wednesday at 3:30 p. m. for Ashville  
First westbound schedule will leave Ashville Thursday at 5:30 a. m. for Montevallo

**Ride The Bus**  
Safe - Convenient - Economical

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Everything from the "Bus" to the Swift-footed "Gyp," the envy of every horseman in Montevallo

Food you can Eat at prices you can pay **PLAZA GRILL**  
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Chicken Dinners, Fresh Strawberry Shortcake, Home Baked Pies, Fancy Steaks, Plate Lunches, Sandwiches, Southern Dainties, Cherry Ice Cream Pie. Open after performance College Night.

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**STRAND THEATRE**  
Monday May 9, at 10:30