

# Montevallo *Historical* Times

Vol. 7 No. 4

Newsletter of the Montevallo Historical Society

Fall 2023



## Shelby County Historical Society Hosts MHS at UM

A Tour of Edmund King's handsomely restored 1820 house and the nearby King family cemetery, along with refreshments served from the detached kitchen building, were all enjoyed by historical society members visiting the UM campus.

FOR MORE PHOTOGRAPHS TURN TO PAGE 6



Montevallo Historical Society members were the guests of the Shelby County Historical Society at their quarterly meeting at the University of Montevallo on August 6. SCHS president, David Nolen, welcomes everyone to Reynolds Hall.



Carey Heatherly, University Archivist, gave a brief program on the school's history and the legacy of Edmund King.

## Next MHS General Membership Meeting

Sunday October 22, 2023 • Parnell Library • 2:00 pm

**Program Topic:** Montevallo Study Club – 90th Anniversary Observation.

**Speakers:** Maggie Hall (President), Melanie Poole (Vice-president).

# President's Letter

Dear Friends:

I would like to begin this message to our members by letting you know that in the past few months the Montevallo Historical Society has had the opportunity to collaborate with our friends at the Shelby County Historical Society, whose headquarters, archives, and museum are located in the historic old courthouse in Columbiana.

When we found out that they were seeking matching funds for a grant that would enable them to launch a program to transcribe historic Shelby County court records, our board unanimously approved a \$1000 donation earmarked for this purpose.

The transcriptions involve the laborious process of creating editable and searchable text from often difficult-to-read handwritten records to make the information more usable for researchers and for posterity. We were happy to learn that their goal of raising \$20,000 was reached shortly after receiving our donation.

A second opportunity presented to us from SCHS was an invitation by president David Nolen for our members to be their guests at their summer meeting on August 6, held at the University of Montevallo's Reynolds Hall. Arrangements were made for University Archivist and Associate Professor Carey Heatherly to give a brief program on the history of women's education in Alabama as well as a tour of the two oldest buildings on campus, Reynolds Hall and the Edmund King House, including King Cemetery.

MHS was well represented at the event and I would like to thank Executive Director of the Shelby County Museum & Archives, Jennifer Maier, for the delicious refreshments that were available to enjoy at the King House.

The holidays are fast approaching, and the new tradition that MHS inaugurated last year, sponsorship of wreath laying at Montevallo City Cemetery, will be here before we know it.

The day for the laying of wreaths on veterans graves has been set this year for Saturday, December 16, at 12:00 noon by Wreaths Across America, which supplies the live wreaths to participating organizations all across the United States

and organizes the nation-wide observance.

I congratulate our Wreath Laying committee, made up of Marilyn Donoho, Judy Lien Duda, and Clay Nordan for the time and hard work they have put into organizing this year's event. They were able to identify and locate approximately 340 veterans last year (mostly from grave markers) who are buried at Montevallo City Cemetery.

They are confident that there are more there who have not been so easily identified as veterans, so they have set a goal of selling 375 wreaths for 2023 in hopes that family and friends will honor veterans who were not recognized last year.

If you would like to honor the memory of a specific veteran or contribute to the effort to place a wreath on every veterans grave in the cemetery, go to [www.historicmontevallo.org](http://www.historicmontevallo.org) and purchase your wreaths today. MHS makes \$5 from the sale of every \$17 wreath. You can also sign up at the same page to volunteer to come to the cemetery and provide much-needed help laying wreaths on December 16.

As we approach the end of our fiscal year, I'd like to remind you that November is the month we mail out notices to active members saying that it is time to renew your membership by paying your dues for 2024. I hope that you will consider upgrading your membership to the Patron or Jesse Wilson Society level. Your prompt response will be most appreciated.

I would like to send my condolences to Steve and Patsy Sears who lost their son, Spenser, recently. The Sears have all been loyal MHS members since 2020.

And finally, I send my best wishes for a speedy recovery to members Kirk and Carol Lightfoot who were injured in a serious auto accident in September.

I hope to see many of you at our upcoming general meeting on Sunday, October 22, at Parnell Library at 2:00 pm.

All my best,



## Officers

John E. McCulley  
*President*

Clay Nordan  
*Vice-President / Treasurer*

Susan Godwin  
*Secretary*



**Montevallo**  
**Historical Society**  
*Opening the Portals of Our Heritage*

 **P.O. Box 411**  
**Montevallo, AL 35115**

**[www.historicmontevallo.org](http://www.historicmontevallo.org)**  
**email: [montevallo1817@gmail.com](mailto:montevallo1817@gmail.com)**

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## Directors

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Judy Lien Duda

Martha Eisenberg

Marty Everse

Billy Mack Lee

Bill Nathews

Melinda Nix

Anne Thomas

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DISTINGUISHED FOUNDING DIRECTORS: Dr. S.M. Mahan, Jr. (1934–2018) • Dr. James S. Day • Kenneth Dukes • Mae Glosson • William Glosson  
Norman McMillan • Debbie Pendleton • Janice Seaman



## Montevallo Historical Society Roster of Active Members – October 2023

### **KROELL BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS (\$250)**

C&V Painting, Inc.  
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

.....

### **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  
Beth Jeter Bishop  
Linda Cicero  
John Cox  
Patty DeBardleben  
Marilynn Donoho  
Timothy Dollins  
Sara Dollins  
Paul Doran  
Judy Lien Duda  
Mike 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  
**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  
Ed Czeskleba  
Karen Czeskleba  
James Day  
Rene Day  
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 Hermez  
Barry Hocutt  
Cindy Howard  
Clark Hultquist  
Ben Ingram  
Debbie Ingram  
Kitty Keener  
Karen Kelly  
Peggy Hurt Kent  
John Kirby  
Carolyn Kirby  
Jimmy Lawley  
Linda Lawley  
Billy Lee  
Brenda Lewis  
**Eddie Lovelady**  
**Kathleen Lovelady**  
Luci Lovelady  
Elizabeth Chism Ludwig  
Michael E. Malone  
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  
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  
Jackie Starks  
Jonne C. Thornton  
Becky B. Thornton  
Carolyn Frost Turnbull  
Scott Turnbull  
Marilee Turnbull  
Hubert Van Tuyll  
Susan Wilder-White  
Bill White  
**Andrew Wilson** (Student Member)  
Nancy Wilstach  
Bobby Wyatt  
Jan Wyatt  
Julia Youngblood  
Gary Youngblood



## A Home Run for Tinglewood 2023

Once again, thousands of visitors came to Montevallo for the city's unique festival that recognizes and honors the work and contributions to the city's Orr Park by local woodworking artist, Tim Tingle.

It's no wonder that so many people put this great early fall celebration on their calendars for the Saturday after Labor Day each year. There is so much to see and do that they are hard pressed to get to everything during their day at the park.

This year there were vendors of all kinds set up under the shade trees on the creek bank, and a fleet of food trucks made the decision of what to eat anything but easy. It was a warm day and cool drinks of every description were plentiful to help keep the heat at bay.

Several excellent bands provided a rich variety of live sounds from a centrally located performance stage, and 160 classic cars made their way to the annual "Cars by the Creek" car show and vintage automobile beauty contest. For the first time, impressively restored antique tractors were brought to Montevallo for a well received new feature, "Tractors in the Trees".

In keeping with the

**The Montevallo Historical Society reserved space for a Vendor booth at Tinglewood to encourage new members to join the society and to make visitors to the festival aware that they could honor the memory of a veteran by purchasing a wreath to lay on a grave at Montevallo City Cemetery on December 16, 2023. MHS director Marilynn Donoho was on duty to greet visitors who came by and expressed interest in MHS and Wreaths Across America.**

theme of the festival, the signature event, wood carving using chain saws, was a favorite for visitors. A large open air tent shaded the chainsaw artisans' work area and their gasoline powered saws roared to life soon after the festival opened at 9:00 am.

Large freshly cut cedar logs were propped up on their ends so that the chainsaws could coax fascinating and whimsical carved figures out of the fragrant and colorful wood. Shavings flew, exhaust fumes blew, and saws whined off and on for several hours. After a time, when all the commotion was over, the creations resulting from all this hard work and artistry were put on display for everyone to see. They were then auctioned off with proceeds going to local non-profits.

Visitors still on hand at the conclusion of the festival were able to cheer on their favorites in a miniature wooden boat race on Shoal Creek that wrapped up another home run for festival organizers and the Montevallo Chamber of Commerce.







# TINGLEWOOD FESTIVAL

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 9TH, 2023

9:00AM TIL 5:00PM

ORR PARK MONTEVALLO AL. 35115







The simple but elegant dining room of the Edmund King House at UM.



This portrait of Edmund King hangs in the parlor.



Archivist Carey Heatherly explains that the King Cemetery on the UM campus was first used for King family burials decades before the founding of the College.



Refreshments offered to visitors touring King House. (L-R) Marilynn Dohoho and Toni Nordan.



Buried in King cemetery on the University of Montevallo campus are Edmund King, (d. 1863); his first wife Nancy King, (d. 1842); his second wife, Susan King, (d. 1850); three of King's sons: Lytleton, Nathaniel, and Frank; one of King's daughters, Elizabeth King Shortridge, along with her husband George Shortridge and three of their sons. An infant son born to Frank King is also here.



The staircase leading to two bedrooms upstairs was carefully restored to its original condition.



# MONTEVALLO NEWS.

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VOL. I

MONTEVALLO, ALA., THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 1895.

NO. 19.

## EARLY DAYS IN AND AROUND MONTEVALLO

Montevallo, as our readers all know, was originally called Wilson's Hill. It took its name from its first citizen who was named Wilson, an uncle to Dr. John B. Wilson, and a great uncle to Henry, Frank and John Wilson. He moved here from Georgia and settled at this place where he built a log house on top of the hill near the large spring on Shoal creek. This was in 1817, and before the state was admitted to the Union.

He was soon joined by Edmond King, who also came from Georgia and settled on the King place. He first built a log house near the dry branch on the Tuscaloosa road, about a hundred yards to the right of the road.

It was here that Mrs. Judge Shortridge, the mother of Webb Shortridge, was born. King built the brick house, known as the King house, soon after this and it was the wonder and admiration of the country for miles. Great numbers came to see it and it was considered the finest house they had ever seen.

He then built a brick store on the

Reynolds lot, where their warehouse now stands. He traded with Indians, shaved notes in after years and gradually amassed a fortune. The creek Indians lived here and cultivated rich spots in the King, Steel and Morgan bottoms. Even now arrow heads can be picked up in those fields. Beyond the place now owned by Jackson Gentry was their ball ground, known as the "Indian Field." Indian pipes and other curiosities could be found there up to time of war, also foot race tracks could be seen there.

The Indians made an oil from hickorynuts and chestnuts which they used in place of lard. They always raked the leaves from under the chestnut trees so they would not be injured by fire in the woods.

Among the early settlers were the McHenry's, who settled the Harrison place. The creek now known as King's creek was formerly called McHenry's creek. On a beach tree near the Davis falls can now be seen the name of McHenry cut there in 1821, seventy-four years ago. About this time,

1825, the Bowdons moved here and settled the Killough place. It was there the talented Frank Bowdon, Sr., of Talladega was born. The Killough mill was built by Robert Bowdon, a great uncle of Lewis Bowdon of this place.

Thomas Walker, the father of Judge Walker, who died a few years ago, settled what is now known as the Lawhon place and built a saw mill and grist mill just above the ford of the Montgomery road. This was in 1835.

Old man Powell moved here from East Tennessee and settled on the land now owned by H. C. Reynolds where he has his orchard.

Alex Nelson then moved here from East Tennessee and married Powell's daughter. He bought the Walker property, now known as the Lawhon place, and then built a merchant mill near the large spring at the head of the pond and made flour and meal in large quantities. He sold his flour as far south as Selma, Marion and Greensboro and hauled it there in wagons. Previous to the erection of this mill wheat was carried from this section to Prattville,

### Editor's Note:

The *Montevallo News* was a weekly newspaper published in Montevallo from 1895 to 1899. The newspaper was originally owned by local merchants and entrepreneurs, Capt. Henry Clay Reynolds and his son, William Boyd Reynolds. H.C. Reynolds was an energetic advocate for locating the Alabama Girls Industrial School at Montevallo and was appointed its first president following the sudden resignation of Julia Tutwiler just before the school opened its doors in 1896.

Later owners and editors of the newspaper included A. S. Caruthers, Clifton Newton and Thomas N. Freeman. Actual printed examples of the newspaper, extending from December of 1895 to December of 1898 are archived at the UM Carmichael Library and may be easily viewed online via the library's W.M. "Mack" Wyatt digital newspaper collection.

"EARLY DAYS IN AND AROUND MONTEVALLO" was a

four-part series printed in the *Montevallo News* on July 18, 1895, July 25, 1895, August 1, 1895, and August 15, 1895. It is a loose collection of generally accepted knowledge from that time about the origins of the town and an account of early settlers who migrated into the wilderness of central Alabama. The only clue as to whose words we are reading is found at the end of part 1. It is simply signed with the initials: "J.S.T."

The series was discovered during a random perusal of the *Montevallo News* in the Wyatt digital archives. Technology has allowed us to capture the original newspaper text from the digitized files without re-typing, and modern technology has also enabled us to present it to you in a much more accessible and readable format than what otherwise might be the case. We hope that you find this to be a revealing and valuable record of this perspective on the settlement and early growth of Montevallo from nearly 130 years ago.

Autauga county, where it was ground into flour. ,

The oldest house now standing in town is the two story house near the negro church. It was built by Fred Watrous, who afterwards moved to Texas.

It has always been understood here that this place came within one vote of being the state capital. We are reliably informed that this is a mistake. It did come within one vote of getting the state university away back in the thirties. Alva Wood came here from Tuscaloosa on a committee to select a site, and seeing the great natural advantages of this place reported back to the legislature in favor of Wilson's Hill. In the meantime he gave it the name of Montevallo. When left to a vote our opponent got it by one vote.

Shoal creek will be seen on the old field notes in the original survey of 1819 as Wilson's creek.

The Mardis family were also among the early settlers. They were all intellectual people and great believers in state's rights; so much so they, named one of the boys "States Rights," who afterwards became a celebrated lawyer in New Orleans.

W. W. King, a son of Edmond King also, moved to New Orleans and became one of the first lawyers there. It is said he had many cases in the United States supreme court and never lost a case. In one case he received a fee of \$75,000, but eventually died a poor man.

The house in which church was first held was the old masonic building which stood on the bluff above the big spring. It is said school was taught in this building all the week and a big dance on Friday night and Sunday school and church on Sunday. The first church and school house, however, was built near the center of the Montevallo cemetery, down near the Wilson spring.

Daniel Watrous also came here in the early dries of Montevallo. He emgrated from Elmira, N. Y. He was the first lawyer ever in the town. He ran against William L. Yancy for

congress. Watrous was the whig candidate, and Yancy the state's rights democrat, commonly called "fire-eaters."

The first hotel was in the building now occupied by H. C. & W. B. Reynolds as a store house. It was known as the Bell hotel.

Horace Ware was reared near the Thompson place, now known as Birmingham Junction. He read law under Judge Shortridge. He afterwards ran an iron works at Thomson's mill.

Old man Jimmy Nabors, an uncle to French Nabors, was also one of the "old-timers," and represented the county in both branches of the legislature. Jimmy Nabors was known as a great temperance man, and organized a temperance club here. At that time whisky was worth twenty cents a gallon. It is said when people in the county had a falling out they would make an appointment to meet each other in town the following Saturday and fight it out.

One of the first and best teachers in the early days was Prof. Livingston, a fine Greek and Latin scholar, who afterwards moved to Talladega and married Miss Willis, a cousin of General Morgan's wife.

The most noted school in all this section, however, was at Salem graveyard. It was kept up there for three years and very often had from 75 to 150 pupils in attendance. One of the first teachers there was Prof. Billy Peters, the father of J. L. Peters, Esq., of Columbiana – a kind gentleman and a good teacher. J.S.T.

## NO. 2

In our last chapter the type made us say that the school at Salem graveyard continued only three years. This was an error; it should have said thirty years. It was a noted school in that day and time and was patronized from miles around. One of the old settlers of the country was Jerry Lolly, who came here with several of his brothers and settled the Wilton Allen place, at the crossing of the Tuscaloosa and Elyton roads. This was

in 1820. They were the ancestors of the Lolly family, who have since that time lived within a few miles of the spot where old man Jerry Lolly first struck camp seventy-five years ago.

Along with the Lollys came Daniel and Hiram Holsomback, two sturdy old pioneers. They too settled near Dogwood church, and their numerous descendants still occupy that portion of the country. About 1825 Mose Johnson came along, and at one time lived on the McMath place, near town. His children moved to Texas.

It is said that the father of our town had quite a weakness for a good old fashioned game of poker, and at one time in a game of cards with a Tennessean on the bluff above the spring he won in one sitting five thousand bushels of corn.

Noah Haggard was a well known character in his day. He was a Baptist preacher and lived near the French Nabors place, below Birmingham Junction. At the many camp meetings he was noted for always finding the best dinner on the grounds. He was the father of Mrs. Almoth Woods.

The first church he had was on the creek about a half mile above the Perry place. It was built of logs in 1820. In 1846 Judge Shortridge bought the house and moved it to the Davis place, near Aldrich. In the primitive days goods were hauled in wagons from Selma and Wetumpka, and it is said salt was brought from Tuscaloosa on horseback, the roads being so bad.

The merchants of that day and time generally made purchases but once a year, and the goods were on the road from one to three months. The first newspaper that the town had was back in the early fifties. It was edited by a man named Norman and called the Montevallo Herald. In an old copy of this paper can be seen an article on the culture of apples and pears, written by the father of L. B. Musgrove, the present United States marshal. It is in the form of a letter



written to Judge Shortridge. Norman sold the paper to Dr. Hale and Nat King. They in time sold to Howard Shortridge, who is now living in Cisco, Texas, where he is engaged in the paper business.

Along in the forties Hubbell Pierce came here from Montgomery. He lived in the Fowler house, which stood in front of the Methodist church. He died here. His sons bought the lot and house where Pat Kroell now lives and cut down the famous weeping willow. This was a noted tree, being over three feet in diameter and covered more ground than any tree ever known in this county. It was known far and near and was considered a great curiosity. It stood at the rear end of the Kroell lot.

The Pierces moved from here to Montgomery. Wash Wooten first settled the Wm. Lovelady place in 1840. He was the father of Mary, Bob and Ben Wooten and Mrs. Jack Caldwell. "Buck" Lawler, the father of Levi Lawler, who died last year, was one of the early settlers also. He lived on the Perry place, where his son Levi spent his boyhood days. "Buck" Lawler, as he was familiarly known, was elected to congress at one time over Judge Eli Shortridge. He was buried at the graveyard on the Perry place.

Robert Caldwell, an Irishman, lived on the Wilson lot, near the Latham hotel. He came here in 1835, and afterwards went to Nashville, where his three sons, who were all born here, became distinguished men. One went to congress, one a professor in the largest school there, and one was city attorney. Caldwell's wife was sister to Judge Sam Rice's first wife and came from South Carolina.

Among the many distinguished men whom Montevallo claims as citizens in past years was Gen. John T. Morgan, our United States senator. He built a house on the Vandegrift place, near Aldrich, and lived there for a while.

Ex-Gov. Rufus W. Cobb came

here from Ashville, Ala., along in the fifties and practiced law for several years.

John Large, father of Samuel J. Large of Calera, was among the early merchants here. His store stood just below the depot in the "bottom," where the row of houses now stands. He carried on quite a successful business for some time. The first two stores, however, in the history of the town were kept by Edmond King and Seth Randall. We have made mention before of the King store, and Randall's store was at the northwest corner of the Latham hotel lot, in a little frame building that formerly stood there.

We suppose that very few of the younger generation know that on the corner of the lot now owned by W. B. Reynolds there once stood a brick dwelling. In this dwelling there was a murder committed that created much excitement at the time. Dr. Porter, a promising physician, the father of Judge Porter of Birmingham and grandfather of Wm. A. Walker, lived there.

Having had some misunderstanding with his father-in-law, - Wade, they met at Porter's house and a difficulty took place in which Wade stabbed Porter with a dirk and killed him. Wade's daughter, Dr. Porter's wife, was the only witness to the tragedy, and when it came up for trial in Jefferson county her evidence cleared her father of the murder of her husband. Daniel Watrous represented Wade and was paid an enormous fee in negro slaves for his services. He secured a change of venue to Jefferson County on account of the prejudice against him in this county.

### NO. 3

The more we write the more we discover can be written of the early days of this historic town. The healthgiving springs and pure mountain air were discovered and sought after long before the State of Alabama was admitted into the Union. Many strange names appear on the

headstones in our cemeteries, and many graves go unmarked and will probably never be known.

*"Each in his narrow cell forever laid,  
the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."*

From Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard by Thomas Gray (1716-1771)

One of the most striking epitaphs that we have seen is that of Rev. Joshua West, who lies buried in the Montevallo cemetery. From the History of Methodism in Alabama we gather much information regarding this remarkable man. He was born in Rockingham County, Virginia, in 1771, and was licensed a Methodist preacher in 1792. The following is a verbatim copy of his license to preach:

"This may certify to whom it may concern, that Joshua West is permitted as a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Given under my hand this 17th day Oct., 1792."

Bennet Maxey. E. M. E. C.

Maxey was the preacher in charge of Bottetourt Circuit, Virginia.

His license to preach, his credentials to the orders of deacon and elder and his certificate to Bishop Asbury with his own signature, certifying to his belief of Methodist doctrine, etc., are all in a good state of preservation, clean and legible, and are on file in the archives of the Methodist Conference.

Dr. West was also a physician and did an extensive practice. He came to Alabama in 1816, and spent most of his life at Montevallo.

He practiced medicine as far south as to where he and the physician from Cahaba met, there being no such place then as Selma.

Soon after he came to Alabama he, assisted by Lovelady, Lee, Powell, Walker, and others, established camp grounds about a mile from Montevallo, just below the cemetery on the Wilson Banch. Meetings were held here for some years. After this camp ground was abandoned another named Ebenezer, for the Rev. Ebenezer Hearn, was established about five miles north of Montevallo.

He brought up a family of eleven children, five sons and six daughters. Rev. Sam P. West is one of his grandsons. John P. Morgan, the father of Sam and George Morgan, was also one of his grandsons. Dr. West died in 1860, being 91 years of age.

Among the early settlers were the McElroys, who came from South Carolina in 1821. Maj. Jacob Perry and Wm. Moore married two of the McElroy daughters and the remaining members of the family moved to Louisiana.

The father of Thos. Harrison and grandfather of the Harrison boys, Henry, Frank and George, came to this section of the country from Tennessee in 1818 and settled on the Ad. Griffin place. He brought his corn with him and had to make frequent trips back to Tennessee after more corn, owing to the fact that the country was all woodland and no open land for cultivation.

Between 1825 and 1830 Dr. Wheeler Randall emigrated from South Carolina and settled the Meroney place. He was a physician of much reputation, and had two sons who afterwards became celebrated physicians in Galveston, Tex. This family were not related to the ancestors of the Randall family now living here, of whom we make mention later on in our sketches.

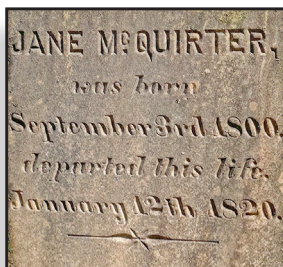
Dudley Randall, representative of another Randall family, was a man of large property and married a daughter of Mrs. Powell and lived in the house on Main street south of Kroll's store.

Daniel Prentice was one of the original and striking characters who lived here previous to the war. He was a man of much influence and merchandised here for many years. His name as justice of the peace ap-

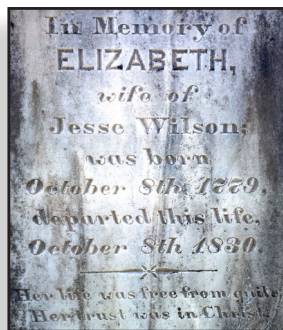
pears on many old papers.

The first Methodist preacher on this circuit was named Powell. This must have been in 1820. His circuit extended from Cox's Chapel, below Randolph, to the Isaac Johnson place at Highland.

The oldest known grave in the Montevallo cemetery is that of Jane McQuirter, whose tomb bears this inscription: "Sacred to the memory of Jane McQuirter, born in the year 1800, died 1820." We fail to get any information whatever of such a family and will be under obligations for facts concerning them.



We notice another tombstone which was erected to Elizabeth Wilson, who was born in 1807 and died in 1822. She no doubt was a daughter of the founder of our town. Her mother, Elizabeth Wilson, also wife of Jesse Wilson, lies buried by her side. She was born in 1779 and died in 1830.



There are no doubt graves in this cemetery nearly a century old, but in the early days but few tombstones were used and the last resting places of many are no doubt now lost to view.

#### NO. 4

In the year 1815, just 80 years ago this fall, there might have been seen a company of men, women and children leaving Edgefield District, South Carolina, for the country now known as the State of Alabama. For months they journeyed through practically a wilderness until they reached the vicinity of Montevallo. There they rested, and there they and their descendants have lived up till this good hour. This party had in it Abram Holsomback, the father of John Holsomback, who lived for some time near Thompson's mill. There his son John was born on

March 28, 1818. This makes him one of the oldest citizens in this section.

Henry Lolly, the father of Joe and Lewis Lolly, was also of the same party. Jesse Lolly, the father of William Lolly, also came at the same time. The oldest one of these pioneers, however, is Andrew Lolly, who is hale and hearty and is now approaching the ripe old age of 90.

Among the others were Vince Garner, grandfather of Lewis Garner; George Lucus, father of Wm. and John Lucus; John Walker, the father of Elias Walker; Abner Pickett, the father of Braz Pickett, and John Lolly, the father of Mrs. Fronia Lucus.

The descendants of these early settlers recollect the Indians whom they found here on their arrival and, strange to say, we have found no instance of disturbance between them during their joint occupancy of the country. Mr. John Holsomback remembers while a boy to have seen an Indian bring a large fine deer to his mother's house and sold it to her for a gallon of meal and a pint of salt. At that time salt was very scarce and high. Cotton was sold in the seed to merchants, who had it ginned and shipped.

Maj. Jacob Perry and Wm. Moore were two early settlers of the country. They came here about 1825. Major Perry first lived near the Salem grave yard. Both of these old patriarchs lived to a ripe old age and died honored and respected by all who knew them.

Maj. Abner Wells came to this place along in the early forties. He was major of the militia. The mustering of the troops known as "Muster Day," was a gala day. Very often, in the absence of guns, they used cornstalks and sticks for drilling purposes.

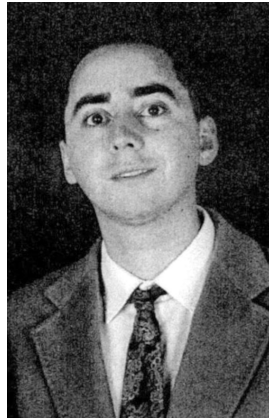
Major Wells kept the "tavern" on the Walker corner for a long time. He married the daughter of Joseph Cunningham and left a large family, some of whom still live in our midst. The old tavern bell which he used, now hangs in the colored church.



# Spenser Ross Sears

1989 – 2023

Spenser Ross Sears, age 34, of Montevallo, Alabama died of cardio-circulatory complications on Sunday, September 3, 2023. He had been member #194 of the Montevallo Historical Society since joining in 2020. He lived on Crestview Drive with his parents Steve and Patsy Sweeney Sears, also MHS members.



He was born March 7, 1989, growing up in the Sears family homes of grandparents Marcia and Ralph Sears on Ashville Circle and his parents' earlier home on Highland Street just across Bloch Street from Carmichael Library.

Spenser attended Montevallo High School, Indian Springs School, and the University of Alabama. He would cheerfully admit to being an indifferent scholar but never passed a bookstore or library without picking up a volume he would read in depth.

His life was full of joyful conversation and generosity. Neighbors recall frequent extended conversations with Spenser over the yards, fences and driveways of Montevallo on subjects ranging from war stories to the latest political scandals. His gregarious nature included talks with John Kennedy Jr., Senator Joseph Lieberman, and the coach of the New Orleans Pelicans. His gifts for pickup basketball were well known among his peers.

He loved spending time with his family, often traveling to visit cousins Will Sears Belcher in Atlanta, Molly Rosenberg in Bloomington, Indiana and Andrew Rosenberg in Richmond, Virginia. Spenser was always prompt when good food was to be shared, regularly contributing favorite additions of beef jerky and popcorn.

One cousin remembered his gifts with this description: "Spenser was generous with his attention to the lives of his friends and family. One way he showed you he loved you was by tracking closely your interests. He remembered the sports teams you support, your favorite band, and your hobbies. He would use them as points of connection. He also kept tabs on loved ones across the country by faithfully reading in full their local newspapers. 'I was thinking about you today when I read this story about ...' was a typical way he started a conversation. It felt like love."

Spenser took particular pleasure in watching football, especially the Crimson Tide. He also liked watching boxing and visiting bookstores, libraries, and art galleries. He was a member of the Montevallo Presbyterian Church and volunteered at Shelby Emergency Assistance.

He is survived by his parents and his younger sister Sarah Madeline Sears of Huntsville.



**Veterans Wreaths will be laid at Montevallo City Cemetery on Dec. 16, 2023 at 12:00 noon.**

**Wreaths may be purchased for \$17 each and you can volunteer to help at**

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

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