MONTEVALLO

Main Street *Memories*

The Derby Hotel

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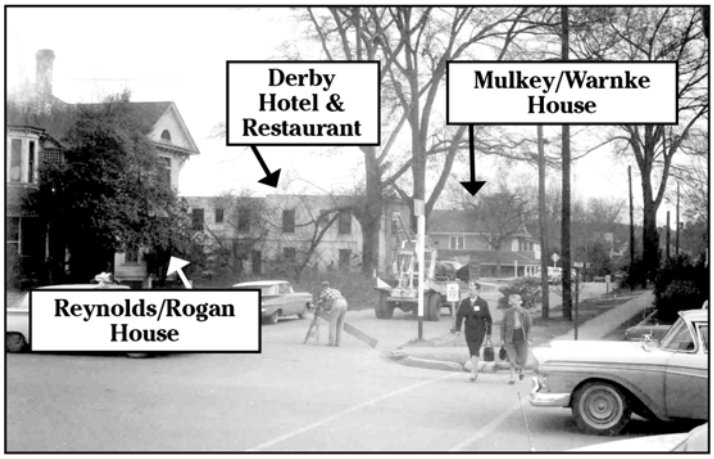
Evidence of the arrival of the Derby Hotel and Restaurant on Middle Street in Montevallo first appears in local advertising in 1947. Construction of the building in close proximity to the elegant Reynolds/Rogan house was an intrusive harbinger of changing times and the beginning of what would become total commercial domination of the entire block along Main Street between Middle and Vine streets by 1964.

While the idea of a hotel/restaurant combination right in the center of a college town would seem to be an obvious need, the Derby got off to a rocky start and experienced a change of ownership within the first year. As can be seen from this selection of ads from 1947 to 1957, the name of the hotel changed frequently, as did its owners and operators. Unlike its competitor a few blocks east on Main Street, the St. George Hotel, which thrived for decades, this little hotel was viewed locally as something of a dive and was never able to earn a reputation for service and desirable accommodations which successful lodging requires in order to succeed.

The Alabama Hotel and Cafe, the final incarnation of this hotel/restaurant combo, was visited by the wrecking ball at the beginning of prep work for the new shopping center around 1962. The St. George soon made way for a new bank building. So, visitors and travelers have not been able to check into a hotel within the city limits of Montevallo for 50 years or more. That should all change in a few months when the new Cobblestone Hotel at the corner of Main and Shelby opens for business.



The character of Middle street changed dramatically after 1964 with the advent of the Whaley Shopping Center. This photo from 1960 shows clearly that this block off Main Street was primarily residential, with the exception of the Derby Hotel and the Baptist Church. There had been another two story house between the hotel and the Mulkey house on the corner of Middle and Island, but it was torn down a few years earlier.

MONTEVALLO'S NEWEST
Derby Restaurant
AND
Hotel
• • • •
Sandwiches that are different
Fountain Specials
Short Orders
The College Girls' Choice
• • • •
Try our real Hickory Smoked Pit Bar-B-Q
• • • •
Phone 6511
1947

1953
•
Mrs. Paul Cox Is Back Again At The
Bama Restaurant and Hotel
Rooms For Your Guests and Food For You
•
GIVE US A CHANCE

Jim's Hotel and Restaurant
Formerly The Derby
Student Specials
Hot Dog.....10
Hamburger.....15
Soup.....15
Call Jim's Restaurant and Hotel for your Homemade Cakes Pies and Doughnuts
1949 Telephone 6511

1956
EAT
&
SLEEP
at
ALABAMA HOTEL and CAFE

The City Restaurant and Hotel
•
GIVES YOU
BETTER FOOD AND BETTER SERVICE
1953 (Formerly the Derby Hotel)

When you have out-of-town guests
ALABAMA HOTEL AND CAFE
CALL
PHONE 9133
1957

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MONTEVALLO MAIN STREET MEMORIES is adapted from the series, THROWBACK THURSDAY, a **Montevallo Historical Society** and **Montevallo Main Street** partnership started in 2018. Each installment revisits commercial and residential life on Main Street and in the downtown area in the early to mid-twentieth century. The series remains available online and may be viewed at **www.historicmontevallo.org** under "Local History".