

MONTEVALLO

THE FIRST ONE HUNDRED YEARS

ELOISE MERONEY

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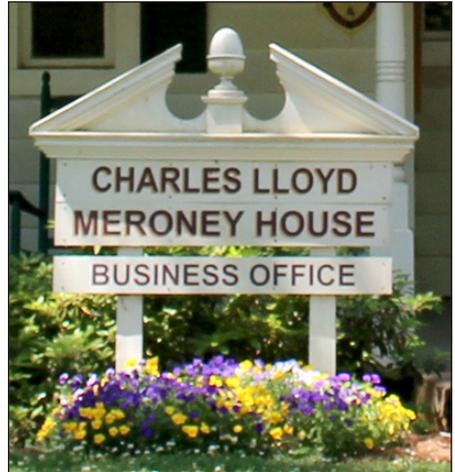
By
ELOISE MERONEY



Today, in 2017, the C. L. Meroney House is owned by the University of Montevallo and, when this photo was taken, was home to the university Business Office. A photograph showing how the house looked in 1897 can be found on page 62 of this volume.



MISS ELOISE MERONEY
Associate Professor



Eloise Meroney became a full time member of the English faculty at Alabama College in 1930. She retired in 1965. Early Meroneys were merchants in Montevallo. She donated the house she lived in on Middle Street to the University before her death in 1996.

FOREWORD

When the Shelby County Historical Society was organized in 1973, the newly elected president, Ken Penhale, called for volunteers to help in collecting information on the history of Shelby County. He suggested that research begin on the history of the various towns in the county. I volunteered to help with research on Montevallo, my home town.

Being a third generation descendant of pioneer settlers, who were here in time for the 1820 census, and having heard from my grandmother (born here in 1828), from my aunts (born in the late 1840's), and from my father (born in 1864) many stories of the early days, and having already passed a long life myself in Montevallo, I felt I knew a good deal of its history. In reading through old records I ran across very few family names with which I was not already familiar. Many of the old landmarks were still around in my youth and a number of the homes where the early settlers had lived. There were many citizens still living whose memories reached back to times before and during the Civil War. Confederate Memorial Day on April 26, splendidly observed throughout my childhood, was a time for old soldiers to put on their uniforms, to gather with the townspeople for services at the church, to go with school children to put flags and flowers on the graves of their companions, and to exchange recollections of those early days.

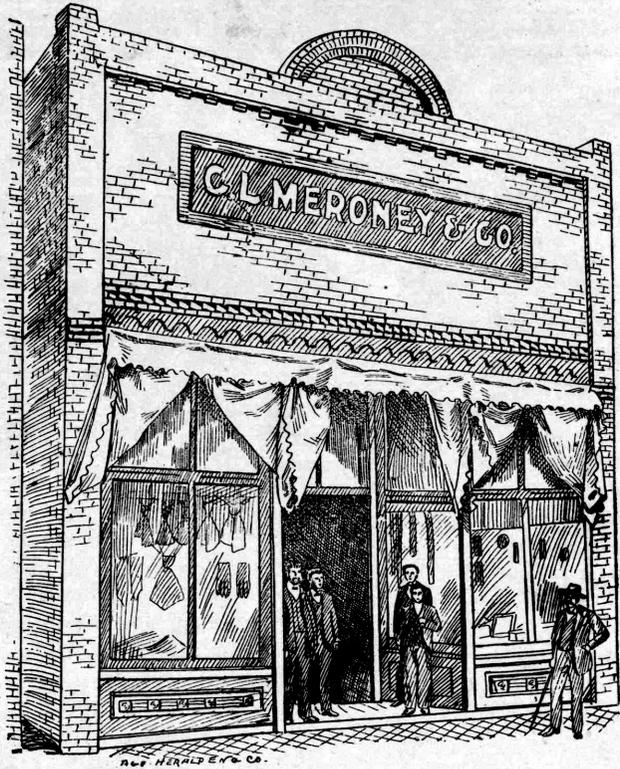
I am greatly indebted to Virginia Hendrick, Gladys Jones-Williams Roudebush, and Lawrence Elliott, all of whom spent their childhood in Montevallo, and have assisted me in gathering material and in recollecting events.

I appeal to any one reading this history to notify me of errors they discover, of additions they can make, of interpretations or conclusions they disagree with. I can then correct and amend one copy of this history and pass it on to the Shelby County Historical Society for use in compiling the history of the county as a whole.

Eloise Meroney

Montevallo, Alabama
June 1977

THE HOUSE THAT STARTED GREATER MONTEVALLO.



The house that wants your cotton and your trade.

They carry every thing in high-grade. Dry Goods, Clothing, Shoes, Hardware and Groceries at price to fit 4½ cent cotton, see us before you buy.

C. L. Meroney & Co.

An advertisement from a December 1898 edition of the Montevallo News.

The poorly printed text of the ad above reads:

THE HOUSE THAT STARTED GREATER MONTEVALLO.

The house that wants your cotton and your trade.

They carry every thing in high-grade. Dry Goods, Clothing, Shoes, Hardware and Groceries at price to fit 4½ cent cotton, see us before you buy.

C.L. Meroney & Co.

MONTEVALLO

The First One Hundred Years

The town of Montevallo has been the subject of several short histories and scores of reminiscent sketches dealing with the early days; but not all of the accounts agree on several specific details, such as the exact year of its earliest white inhabitants. They do agree, however, frequently on the adjectives used to describe it: quaint, historic, charming, colorful, and—especially in the days just prior to the Civil War—flourishing, and important commercially.

Of course, the Indians were here as far back as one can know. They are said to have cultivated the rich bottom lands along the many creek banks hereabouts. Arrow heads, Indian pipes, and various artifacts have been found along Shoal Creek and especially in abundance at an Indian playground located some three miles from the present site of Montevallo near Gentry Springs, where the Indians are said to have played ball and run foot races. Relics of an Indian cemetery close by have been reported. Early settlers learned much from the Indians and used to tell many stories of their resourcefulness and habits. They described, and probably used, an oil made from hickory nuts and chestnuts, which served the Indians instead of lard.

Soldiers coming here after the Creek War found wild horses and cattle roaming in the woods, apparently abandoned by departing Indian warriors. Several miles below Montevallo at the confluence of Shoal, Mahan, and Mulberry Creeks the Indians are said to have had a large colony with a predominance of Indian maidens. The colony, moreover, was well stocked with provisions of hogs, cows, corn, horses, etc.; so it is no wonder that some soldiers from Jackson's army on their way back home after the battle of New Orleans decided to join the Indian tribes and take the maids as wives rather than return to their homes in Tennessee.

History records, moreover, that General Jackson sent five hundred cavalymen into the Cahaba Valley following the battle of Horseshoe Bend to explore and round up any warlike Indians still living in the area. Apparently these soldiers did a thorough job, for there seem to be no stories of problems with the Indians in this part of the county during the early settlement days. Moreover, many of those soldiers dispatched by Jackson liked the looks of the land and returned to homestead in the area. Reverend E. B. Teague in his *Sketches of the History of Shelby County* states that the Montevallo section of the county "was once amazingly fertile to the very tops of the hills," and as a consequence was coveted by early settlers.

Thus it happened that Jesse Wilson, a discharged Jackson soldier, probably became the first white man to lay claim to land in the vicinity. On the hill near the present site of the Black Shiloh Church in an old Indian clearing he built his cabin and planted a corn crop soon after the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814.



View of Town in 19th Century.

At the same time, Jesse's brother, Benjamin Wilson, established himself and family near the present location of Ebenezer Church, some five miles north of his brother's site. One of the latter's sons, Dr. John Wilson, born in Huntsville shortly before the family moved to this area, in time settled in Montevallo and became the forebear of the Montevallo Wilsons, from whom Mary and Ella Peters and John Holmes descended. The Jesse Wilson family evidently died out or moved elsewhere. His name does not appear in the 1830 census. One of the oldest graves in the Montevallo Cemetery, according to Captain H. C. Reynolds in an article written in 1895, is that of "Elizabeth Wilson, born 1807, died 1822," undoubtedly the daughter of the "Elizabeth Wilson, wife of Jesse Wilson, born 1779, died 1830" buried beside her.

Other settlers quickly followed the Wilsons to this area. Judge E. S. Lyman, who knew in his boyhood some of these early inhabitants, has written in his histories of Shelby County and of Montevallo about the phenomenal influx of white settlers into the area. "Historians record the fact," he writes, "that the rapidity with which Jackson's Purchase was settled had never been paralleled. We find that in three brief years, 1814-1817, the country now in Shelby County and especially Cahaba Valley, was fairly swarming with people—the rugged, Jacksonian warrior pioneers of our grand old country."

Dr. Teague, also a very early inhabitant of Shelby County, recalls in his memoirs that a Mr. William Johnson, afterward a famous merchant of Selma, told him that he sold goods in Montevallo in 1816. From that, Dr. Teague concludes "there must have been con-

siderable population thereabouts at that date." The settlement was then known as Wilson Hill or Wilson's Hill. A post office was established there on May 23, 1822, during the presidency of James Monroe, and Mr. John Francis was appointed the first postmaster.

When Alabama was admitted into the Union in 1819 Congress granted in trust to the state seventy-two sections of land (more than 46,000 acres), the sale of which was to provide funds for the establishment of a "seminary of learning." Because much of this land given by Congress lay in and around the site of Montevallo and because the town was so near the center of the state, it was favored by some as the location for the proposed seminary. Enthusiastic citizens went so far as to select a site for the campus and to refer to the hill near the present College Lake as *University Hill*. Dr. Jack Shackelford, a wealthy resident of the town and also a trustee from 1821-1829 of the university-to-be, caused a survey to be made for the town (in anticipation of gaining the university for Montevallo) and the town to be laid off in blocks with streets running at right angles. (The north and east boundary lines of the survey are indicated still by the present names of East Boundary and North Boundary Streets.) In this survey the town is first referred to as *Montevallo*. The word is of Italian origin (not Indian) and means "on a mound in a valley." The name of the town, however, was not officially changed until July 14, 1826, when the U. S. Post Office of the town was designated as *Montevallo*, the postmaster at that time being Leroy S. McCravey.

A complete list of the postmasters for Wilson Hill and Montevallo follows:

Montevallo, Shelby County, Alabama

| <i>Postmaster</i> | <i>Date Appointed</i> |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
|-------------------|-----------------------|

This post office was established as Wilson Hill, Shelby County, Alabama, May 23, 1822.

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| John Francis | May 23, 1822 |
| Bennet Ware | June 2, 1823 |
| Leroy S. McCravey | May 2, 1826 |

The name of this post office was changed to Montevallo, July 14, 1826.

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Leroy S. McCravey | July 14, 1826 |
| Dudley Randall | July 8, 1829 |
| John Francis | January 18, 1833 |
| Enoch D. Rushing | March 9, 1835 |
| Eli Fancher | June 11, 1835 |
| William I. Peters | June 18, 1836 |
| Thomas Smith | January 12, 1838 |
| Robert C. Deason | January 5, 1839 |
| William S. Allen | November 19, 1839 |
| Daniel W. Prentice | March 27, 1840 |

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Hiram Butler | January 5, 1844 |
| Alexander Nelson | February 3, 1846 |
| R. Caldwell | July 6, 1846 |
| Hiram Sumner | September 12, 1846 |
| William McConaughy | October 1, 1852 |
| John C. Riddle | June 6, 1853 |
| Eli T. Robinson | February 2, 1855 |
| Hiram Sumner | November 13, 1855 |
| John A. Campbell | February 3, 1857 |
| Junios J. Pierce | June 2, 1859 |
| Joseph C. McDonough | January 8, 1861 |
| Perry Guthrie | June 29, 1866 |
| Samuel S. Holbrook | December 3, 1866 |
| Edwin W. North | February 15, 1882 |
| William B. Strong | November 15, 1893 |
| Frank F. Crowe | November 6, 1897 |
| Charles E. Hoskin | February 20, 1914 |
| Frank F. Crowe | December 20, 1922 |
| Peyton C. Wilson (Acting) | May 4, 1933 |
| Peyton C. Wilson | April 25, 1934 |
| Mrs. Sears Lee | April-1936 |
| R. A. Reid | June 25, 1936 |
| S. Reece Wooley (Acting) | May 12, 1949 |
| M. F. Watson | August 2, 1950 |
| L. L. Mahaffey | April 3, 1971 |
| W. C. Fowler | April 26, 1975 |

Although the town lost to Tuscaloosa in bidding for the University of Alabama, the fact that it had been surveyed and laid off in neat, symmetrical blocks, not left to grow up in a haphazard manner like most old towns, certainly has contributed to its attractive appearance.

It was about this time, too, that the town suffered another disappointment. Dr. E. B. Teague tells in his historical sketches that Montevallo and Columbiana contested for the courthouse in an election held in 1826. Although Montevallo was the older and larger settlement and the one favored by the population of Cahaba Valley, Columbiana was able to win the votes of the Coosa Valley inhabitants and the populous area around Harpersville. Columbiana, of course, won and celebrated the victory by dynamiting a tree, doing it so resoundingly that the explosion was heard as far away as Four Mile.

From the very first, Montevallo appears to have had its share of spirited and notable characters, men of robust and individual personalities. Following Jesse and Benjamin Wilson, two of the earliest to secure title to land under the land office established for this area recently acquired from the Indians were Edmund King and Edward Powell. They had both come from Georgia in 1817 and both are credited with having had important parts in shaping the early community. Both were wealthy men of considerable influence and both had large numbers of slaves, who, in recounting the deeds of their masters, kept alive for many years stories of their peculiarities and

of the rivalry and frequent antagonism that existed between the two. One of the stories explains the crook in Main Street near its intersection with Bloch Street. Main Street had been surveyed to extend straight to the next section line, there to turn due north to form the Ashville Road. Such a course for Main Street would have taken land on the southeast side from Edward Powell and on the northwest from Edmund King, for the street as projected ran along the line dividing the properties of the two men. But Powell would have no part in granting the necessary rights; so the street had to turn slightly and run entirely on the land of the "more generous King."

Not a great deal else is known about Powell, who was born in 1779, except that his large, two-storied colonial home was situated where the present Presbyterian Church is located and that he owned a great deal of the land southeast of Main Street down to Shoal Creek. Powell died in 1837 and is buried in the family cemetery on the hill overlooking the Milton Orr, Jr. City Park. His wife continued to live in the large house, according to the diary of G. W. Rogan, who had a woodworking shop on the corner of Main and Vine Streets nor far away and who did various odd jobs at the house, including the making of several pieces of furniture for her. The Powell home was finally destroyed in the famous cyclone of 1874. There is no record of a Powell son, but there were at least three Powell daughters, whose descendants are widely scattered in this area. One married Dudley Randall, probably a son of Dr. Wheeler Randall, a physician of much reputation, who had come to the town in the 1820's. Another daughter married into the Hale family, and a third daughter married Alexander Nelson, Jr., who figured prominently in the affairs of the town from the 1840's on. His father, Alexander Nelson, Sr., is said to have come to Montevallo about 1816 and to have owned land across the creek from Orr Park including the Big Spring.

Much more is known and has been written about Edmund King, who outlived Powell by more than a quarter of a century. King was born in 1782 in Virginia, moved thence to Georgia; and still looking for a place to settle permanently, later traveled to New Orleans, to Mobile, up the Alabama River to Selma, and finally by horseback to Wilson Hill. Satisfied at last, he secured a large tract of land in 1817 and built a cabin to which he moved his family and possessions from Georgia in two covered wagons with William Weatherford as his guide. At first he lived in a settlement between Aldrich and Montevallo in the vicinity of what is now Almont. But in 1823 he built his Mansion House (sometimes known as Kingswood and recently as King House) on a prominent knoll on what is now the campus of the University of Montevallo. It was a wonder place when built, and people came from all about to admire the first brick structure in this whole area and the first to have glass windows. (The bricks for the mansion were made by slaves, of clay from the banks of Shoal Creek. This building has recently been completely and authentically restored.)



King House about 1908.



King House as recently restored.

A great deal has been said and written about the generosity and public spirit of Edmund King. He played a major part in most of the enterprises of the town until the time of his death in 1863. He opened the first store, became a charter member of the First Baptist Church, gave the land upon which the church building was erected,

actively campaigned for the building of the railroad through Montevallo and invested a considerable amount of money in stock to finance it. He was a trustee and moving force in the establishing of a male institute in the town for which he gave the land and to a large extent financed the building later known as Reynolds Hall. He was extremely humanitarian and made his home a refuge for many young men, among them French Nabors and the Lewis boys who were wards of his son-in-law.

Another early citizen of distinction was Joab Lawler, who came to Montevallo as a general supervisor for the affairs of Edmund King. He very soon entered into the civic life of the area, became a justice of the peace, represented the county several times in the state legislature, was registrar of the land office for the district embracing the land ceded by the Creek nation, served as county judge for eighteen months in 1825-26, and was sent to the U. S. Congress for two terms. Dr. Teague in his memoirs tells us that he was also a gifted Baptist preacher who served as the second minister of the Shoal Creek Baptist Church organized in 1820. Finally, he was a man "held in high esteem for his integrity in public office."

Doctor or Reverend Joshua West may actually have preceded King, Powell, and Lawler to Montevallo; but our first record of his presence is in 1818 when he participated in organizing the Methodist Church in the town. From his tomb in the Montevallo Cemetery we learn that he was born in Rockingham County, Virginia, in 1771, was licensed as a Methodist minister in 1792, was ordained deacon by Bishop Asberry in 1800, was licensed to practice medicine in 1812, was ordained elder by Bishop Asberry in 1813. He died January 8, 1860, "believing everyone of the doctrines of the Methodist Church." Doctor Teague, who knew him personally, describes him as a "good and able man, by nature and grace a leader of men, connected not only with the founding of Methodism in and around Montevallo before 1820, but soon all over Cahaba and Coosa Valleys . . . He was a physician and preacher. His fame for ability and piety was wide." Through his efforts and work with Ebenezer Hearn, Montevallo became the first location for a Methodist Camp Meeting in 1818. (*Birmingham News*, Sat., Aug. 16, 1975, p. 5.)

Jonathan Ware, a skilled ironmaster, was brought to this area by the Mahan family of Brierfield, to help in the development of the iron industry. Ware was born in Massachusetts in 1782. He built a forge on Shoal Creek about three miles below Montevallo, known as Thompson's Mill Forge, in 1820 (now known as the Gunlock place) and later moved it nearer to Montevallo on Wilson's Creek in 1823. This forge appears to be the first of this primitive enterprise in Shelby County and perhaps in Alabama. Jonathan was the father of Horace Ware, whom he trained in the iron works. This son went on to become, in the words of Senator John T. Morgan, "chief of the early iron-masters of Alabama." His considerable accomplishments both in Alabama and Texas in the iron industry are extensively recorded in Ethel Armes's *The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama*.

Bennet Ware, possibly a relative of Jonathan Ware, was the first senator from Shelby County to the newly admitted State of Alabama in 1819. He was also second postmaster at Wilson Hill, serving from 1823-26.

Several men by the name of Mardis figured prominently in the early history of the town. Dr. John W. Mardis was a surgeon in the Creek War and later a practicing physician in Montevallo. He was born in Kentucky, died in 1855 and is buried in the Montevallo Cemetery. He and Edmund King were friends and they are credited with killing the last panther seen in the area, where once they had abounded. The two saw the panther run up a tree near the King House. While Dr. Mardis kept watch, Mr. King dashed home for his gun. After the kill they skinned the animal and proudly displayed the beautiful skin to admiring friends.

Samuel W. Mardis, born in 1800 in Tennessee, came to Montevallo with his father, Reuben Mardis, and family sometime before 1820. The men were early lawyers in the town and very intellectual. Samuel served in the state legislature from 1823-1830 and in the U. S. Congress from 1831 to 1835. Father and son were violent "State's Rights" politicians, one of them naming a son *State's Rights*. This son later became a prominent lawyer in New Orleans. In a paper read before the Alabama Historical Society in 1975 the career of Samuel Mardis as agent for the Land Sales of the Creek Indians was traced from the early days of the office in Montevallo through its transfer to Mardisville in Talladega County.

David E. Watrous, a lawyer from Vermont (or New York) and a bachelor, is said to have led the Shelby County bar for more than twenty-five years and to have trained many of the county's best lawyers. His office on Main Street, long ago demolished, was one of the first brick structures, along with King House, to be built in the county. He represented Shelby and Jefferson Counties for sixteen years in the state senate. "So popular was he," says Clyde Clifton in a newspaper article in 1886, "that his party (Whig) in 1845 put him in the field for Congress against that renowned orator and brilliant politician Wm L. Yancey (a State's Rights Democrat)."

One of Watrous's famous court cases was his defense of a Mr. Wade, indicted for stabbing to death his son-in-law, a Dr. Porter, in the latter's home somewhere near the intersection of Island and Shelby Streets. Because of the intense feeling aroused over the murder of this highly regarded physician the trial was transferred to Jefferson County. The testimony of Mrs. Porter, however, cleared her father, Mr. Wade. Lawyer Watrous is said to have been paid an enormous fee in negro slaves.

From the 1820 census we discover the names of many heads of families who themselves or descendants have lived in or near Montevallo since and whose names appear in the annals of the town. One such family was the Davis family who owned a farm and a big two-



Davis Falls, a favorite recreation spot.

story house about three miles from town, known in its day as "Hollybrook." Davis Falls (sometimes mistakenly called Davies Falls), formed by a creek on this farm, has long been a favorite recreation spot for young people in the area. A son of this family married into the Perry family and built the house on Middle Street long known as the Davis house but now as the Wesley House of the Methodist Church.

Somewhere in the area between Dogwood and Montevallo lived Thomas McHenry, the McLeroys (daughters of this family married into the Perry and Moore families, later referred to), the Thomas Arnolds, and the Harrisons. Nathaniel Harrison, great grandfather of Henry, Frank, and George Harrison, came with his family in covered wagons in 1818.

Near Moore's Crossroads the Joseph Cunninghams and the Samuel Bowdons settled in 1818. In the Spring Creek area were the Frosts and the Alexanders. In the valley where Westinghouse is now located settled the Charles Richardsons, the first to be buried in what is known as the Richardson Cemetery (sometimes called Randall Cemetery) on the hill above the present Lawler homes. The sons of the Richardsons moved out of the county, but one daughter married into the Randall family above referred to (the Randall home, one of the oldest structures about, still stands on Highway 25), and another daughter married P. D. Meroney, who came in the 1830's and settled on the farm north of Montevallo now owned by the McEntees. Near Wilton lived Noah Hazzard, one of the early ministers of the Shoal Creek Baptist Church and charter member of the Montevallo



Randall home, one of the oldest in the area.
Now Rochester's home on Highway 25.

First Baptist Church Early records give the names of others but little information about them. Among them was French Henry, cousin of Patrick Henry and father-in-law of James Nabor. His tomb is in the Woodbury Cemetery. James Nabor, uncle of French Nabor, though not listed in the 1820 census must have come to the county some time for Dr. Tappan lists him as an early resident a great number of years and mentions his name in the state history.



the Mahler. A history of the house and the Perry family has been written recently by Major General Thomas Mahler, great grandson of the builder. It states a good deal of light on facts in the area before floors were laid. The Perry family lived in the house for many years.



There were large barns for the work animals and storage buildings for machinery and produce. A dam was built on Shoal Creek and a mill.

Perry Hall, now occupied by the Mahler family, before and after renovation.

First Baptist Church. Early records give the names of others but little information about them. Among them was Ezekiel Henry, cousin of Patrick Henry, and father-in-law of James Nabors. His tomb is in the Montevallo Cemetery. James Nabors, uncle of French Nabors, though not listed in the 1820 census must have come to the county soon afterward; for Dr. Teague lists him as an early resident, a great temperance fighter and organizer who served in the state legislature. John Prentice was an early merchant in Montevallo and probably lived in the town proper. He owned slaves from whom the Black family of Prentice in Montevallo descended.

Another prominent citizen who owned a great deal of land on both sides of Shoal Creek was T. T. Walker who built a mill on the creek in 1823. Either he or his son, Judge E. S. Walker, built the old house where Dr. Acker had his office for many years at the corner of Shelby and Island Streets. This house was occupied by the Sam Latham family from about 1890 until 1948. The rock wall that once surrounded the house still stands. Mr. Walker, a native of Hancock Co., Georgia, came to Bibb County in 1819 and to Montevallo in 1820. He was in charge of the section of the star route established in Montevallo in the early 1820's.

Just outside the present city limits, where the Ashville (Siluria) Road crosses Shoal Creek, still stands Perry Hall, now occupied by the Mahlers. A history of the house and the Perry family has been written recently by Major General Thomas deShazo, great grandson of the builder. It sheds a good deal of light on farm life in this area before the Civil War. Jacob Perry moved with his friend, William Moore (from whom Moore's Crossroads gets its name) before 1824 to Shelby County; and in 1834 built Perry Hall. Based on information gained from diaries kept by Jacob Perry and other members of the family, General deShazo gives the following details concerning the Perry plantation:

"This was the period of expansion of cotton culture in the South (1840-1860). The Perry Hall plantation expanded and prospered. The number of slaves was increased to twelve. At several points in his diary, Jacob noted that he had twelve plows going in the cotton fields that day. He kept books on farm costs and production. From 1840 to 1850, his net profits ran from \$5,000 to \$8,000 per year. During the 1850's they were higher, and in 1859 and 1860 they were \$16,000 for each year. By the standards of the time, this was high income indeed. Jacob stated his creed as, 'The land must first produce ample food for man and beast, and then produce crops for profit.'

"There were orchards and vineyards, vegetable gardens (diary entrance each spring, "My wife and I sewed (sic) garden seed today"), poultry and dairy barns and hog barns. Quarters for slaves were comfortably built and well located. These were standing into the 20th century and well in the memory of the writer and his generation. There were large barns for the work animals and storage buildings for machinery and produce. A dam was built on Shoal Creek and a mill-

race and a water-powered cotton gin constructed, together with a saw-mill and woodworking shop. Cane fields and horse power mills produced syrup and sugar. Slaves developed talent to operate this machinery, and as Jacob notes repeatedly in his diary, "Perry Hall was nearly self-sufficient."

As would be expected, the churches played an important part in the lives of the early settlers. The present Methodist Church of Montevallo is the oldest surviving church of any denomination in Shelby County, having been formed in May, 1818. Ebenezer Hearn, commissioned to survey the Alabama Territory, to make preaching appointments, and to organize churches, stopped at Wilson Hill, now Montevallo, and attended what he termed "a love feast or sacramental service" at the home of Obediah Lovelady. Four ordained elders, all settlers in Montevallo, assisted Hearn in organizing the new church. They were J. D. Lee, Drewry Powell, Joseph Walker, and Dr. Joshua West. The first church building was erected on grounds now a part of the Montevallo Cemetery. This was also the site of the first Camp Meeting grounds in Alabama — all established by Hearn. Hearn became the first pastor to serve the church and in 1822 married the daughter of Joseph Walker. The early church building was destroyed by fire some records say. In 1855 this church was made a station. Where the church building was located then is not clear but by 1895 certainly there was one on the corner of Island and Middle Streets. In 1911 a new brick building was erected on the corner of Oak and Middle Streets during the pastorate of Z. A. Dowling and the old building converted into a movie theatre. Since that time educational rooms have been added to the church, a very fine pipe organ installed, an elevator added, and recently the entire ground floor redecorated. The congregation has grown a great deal but the sanctuary remains much as it was in 1911, indicating that the Board of Stewards planned well for the future of the church.

Some of the families listed on the membership rolls for the last quarter of the nineteenth century were those of: C. C. Vandergrift, S. H. McCauley, C. W. and W. S. Cary, J. M. Reynolds, James A. Roebuck, T. M. Allen (Bertie, Bessie, and Edgar), Joe Perry, Wm. and W. P. McConaughy, Louis Bowdon, the Ralls, the Stapletons, the Camps, the Steeles, A. M. Cross, Dr. D. L. Wilkinson, the Petersons, etc. Among those on the rolls for the early 1900's were the families of: John B. Randall, J. E. Hendrick, C. H. Mahaffey, the Killingsworths, the Naishs, the Satterwhites, J. T. M. Poole, B. F. Reynolds, the Mulkeys, E. D. Carpenter, C. S. Starr, John T. Wilson, Joe Davies, the Hookers, the Chestnutts, the Garners, J. T. Johnson, etc.

Incidentally, the Montevallo Methodists were first in another respect. The first home for superannuated Methodist ministers was built in Montevallo on East Boundary Street at the instigation of John E. Morris, whose wife was Elizabeth Cleveland, daughter of the Baptist Minister of Montevallo. Mr. Morris endowed this first home for retired Methodist ministers and furnished it complete with his own funds. The home was first occupied by the Pattillo family. After having been

occupied successively by a number of retired ministers, the house was sold in 1969.

The earliest Baptist Church was located near the Ashville Road where it crosses Shoal Creek, not far from Perry Hall and just outside the present city limits of Montevallo. This Shoal Creek Baptist Church, organized in 1820, in time disbanded and no record of its membership is available. Dr. Teague tells in his memoirs that Moses Crowson and Joab Lawler were early ministers. (The Moses Crowson home, declared the oldest house in the area, still stands and has been recently restored by the Jack L. Ward, Jr. family, who now make it their home.) Hosea Holcombe's *History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists of Alabama* tells that "during labours of Mr. Lawler, a large Sunday School was established, which continued throughout the spring and summer, but when winter came on it declined—their house not being suited to the purpose of cold weather."



Moses Crowson home, declared oldest house in the area, now occupied by Jack L. Ward, Jr.

When the Shoal Creek Church disbanded, some of the members transferred to the Dogwood Grove Church and others formed the nucleus of the newly organized First Baptist Church of Montevallo. The following were charter members: Noah Hazzard, Edmund King, P. M. Fancher, Shelby King, Susan R. Woods, A. W. Hawley, Elizabeth Reese,

Mary King, Mariah Mauney, Sarah Hazzard, and Hannah B. Fancher. The first service was held on August 30, 1856, with the Reverend Wm. H. Carroll as the first minister. For a while services were held in the newly erected Cumberland Presbyterian Church, but in 1858 a brick building was erected where the West Wing (Haley Hall) of Main Dormitory stands. The lot had been donated by Edmund King. It contained a balcony for slaves; and the minutes show that a considerable number of blacks became members. They were listed by name as they joined and were baptized into the fellowship. In 1872 the total membership was 73 and 21 of that number were blacks. On October 22, 1878, this building collapsed, the walls falling outward. A local newspaper account theorized that the steeple with its large bell had been too heavy for the supporting timbers. The article lamented the loss of the "tasteful structure, with its frescoed walls and heaven-reaching spire."

Soon thereafter, probably in 1879, the members erected a frame building on Main Street, this time on a lot given by Captain H. C. Reynolds. That building was eventually converted into Sunday School rooms and the main sanctuary built in 1911. Later the original part was brick veneered and in 1963 the Student Center was added. Over the years there have been many gifts to the church, frequently in the form of memorials to earlier members, such as an oboe stop and chimes for the pipe organ in memory of the Lewis and Acker families, stained glass windows and a memorial table in memory of the Lyman, Fancher, Latham, Givhan, Griffin, McGaughy families.

Families connected with the Baptist Church around 1911 were the Ackers, F. F. Crowes, Fanchers, Lathams, Elliotts, Mrs. Henry Lyman, Will Lymans, Meroneys, Palmers, Givhans, McGaughys, Jeters, H. C. Reynoldses, Horns, Baileys, Campbells, deShazos.

The third church to be established in Montevallo was the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in 1854. (There had been some old style Presbyterians around long before that, however; for there is a record of a contribution to missions among the Indians sent by some Presbyterians in 1822 from Wilson Hill.) Mr. G. W. Rogan, father of Fred W. Rogan, kept a diary throughout 1854. On May 6, 1854, he entered: "Preaching in the morning after which a Presbyterian Church (Cumberland) was organized and I was elected one of the Elders." On May 12, of that same year he helped lay the foundation for the church building which stood where the present United Methodist Church is now. On May 16 he "helped Oakes to raise the church." On July 19 at Prayer Meeting he made his first public prayer. On November 27 he worked at church, "putting lock on door, fixing seats, lamps, etc." The resident pastor at that time was Edward Ware. He became ill with fever and died that same year. Mr. Rogan recorded in his diary that he took turns nursing the minister, built his coffin in his woodwork shop, and attended his funeral and burial in the Montevallo Cemetery.

One of the later ministers described the church building for us: "The old church was a large frame building with green blinds, over-



Interior view of Baptist Church about 1900.



Men's Bible Class showing many citizens about 1915.

topped with an attractive belfry. There was an excellent Mason and Hamlin organ — one of the few organs at that time in this section of Alabama. Our regular organist was Miss Sallie Meredith — and an excellent one.

“I had a splendid choir. Among them were the four daughters of Dr. Meredith—Sallie, Mattie, Lucy, and Lydia; also Mary, Laura and Hattie Lyman, De Lora and Myra Gardner, my wife’s sisters, and Miss Kate Ragan.”

In those days churches were centers of social life. Few of them had full time ministers, oftentimes holding services only once a month. As a result there were frequently union services with choirs and congregations drawn from all denominations.

This Cumberland Presbyterian Church exerted considerable influence in the town until well after the Civil War. As late as 1879 Mr. J. H. B. Hall served as pastor and has written of his experiences in Montevallo. However, eventually most of the members moved away or died and the church fell into disuse. In the early 1900’s the building was used as a roller skating rink by the children of the town.

The present Montevallo Presbyterian Church U. S. was organized on February 2, 1897. The Reverend W. I. Sennot, an evangelist, received an order from the Presbytery to organize a branch of the U. S. Presbyterian Church in Montevallo. He was assisted in the organization meeting by Reverend John Barber. The charter members were Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Rogan, Mr. A. J. Lee, Mrs. J. L. McConaughy, Miss Augusta Hendrix, Mrs. W. B. Reynolds, Mrs. Augusta Wilson, Miss Susie Fox, a Mrs. Jones and Miss Jones from Bibb County. F. W. Rogan was elected and installed as Elder, having served as one in the Cumberland Church. In 1900 Reverend D. D. Little was called and installed as the first pastor. Since that time Dr. Dunglison, the Rev. R. T. Liston, and Dr. P. H. Carmichael have served the church as pastors for the longest periods. The church building stands on Shelby Street at its intersection with Alabama Street. The Rogans, the Yeagers, the Percy Lees, the Alexanders, the Jim McConaughys, the Fred Hardys, the W. B. Reynoldses, the McKibbons were members in the early 1900’s.

The fourth church in Montevallo was St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church. In 1860, this parish was formally organized with the Reverend James F. Smith, rector of the St. Peter’s Parish of Talladega, in charge. However, prior to this date, the Episcopalians had held regular services in the Masonic Hall on top of the hill at the end of Main Street overlooking Shoal Creek. Nathaniel Hawkins of Elyton and members of his family, particularly his daughter Sarah, who later became Mrs. French Nabors and lived in Montevallo, were strong supporters of this church in the early days. In 1860 the first church building was erected on Valley Street. This building was destroyed in the storm of 1874 but another was constructed in the same year on Shelby Street opposite the present Presbyterian Church. It is singu-

lar that this building, too, was destroyed by a storm in 1939. In 1953 a third church building was erected on a lot given by Mr. L. N. Nabors. A brick structure of modified English architecture, it now stands on the corner of Oak and Plowman Streets. Beginning in 1972, for the first time in its 111 years' existence, the church has a resident rector. The Ed Lyman, Jones-Williams, Nabors, Morgan, Wills, and Peter families were prominent in the Episcopal Church in the early part of this century.

The Catholic Church has from early days had members living in the vicinity. This area, until the middle of this century, was a mission served by priests from Birmingham. The congregation met for many years in the Kroell home on Main Street, later as the membership expanded, in a room for religious minorities in Reynolds Hall. Then in 1951 the St. Thomas Catholic Church building was erected on Highland Street at Moody. Father Underwood is the fourth pastor to serve this congregation, which includes most of the Catholics in Shelby County except for those near Pelham and Alabaster. The church membership has grown tremendously since the 1950's.

Following the Civil War, the black members of the local churches asked permission to withdraw and to establish their own churches. The first to organize were the African Methodists, who formed Ward's Chapel in 1872. They were presented the bell from Alexander Nelson's Tavern House in Montevallo that had been used to summon the boarders to meals.

Soon thereafter the Baptists created the Shiloh Baptist Church. Their church for years stood on a knoll near the present Brown Moulding Company. Later they built on the Wilton road where the church now stands.

These were the only churches in Montevallo until recent years when several new churches have been organized. These include the Church of Christ (1953), Southside Baptist Church (1968), Universal Baptist (1971).

Next to the early churches the oldest, proudest, and most influential organization in town was probably the Masonic Lodge. Dispensation was issued on July 10, 1845, for the institution of Central Lodge No. 70, A. W. & A. M. on petition of the following Brethren: John W. Burford, Asa A. Billingslee, Robert W. White, J. B. Smith, James R. Lacey, William Woodruff, and John Summer. The membership increased rapidly and over the years has included most of the worthy citizens of this area. John W. Burford was the first Worshipful Master. By November, 1848, meetings were held in the newly constructed Masonic Hall on Main Street at the hill overlooking the Little (lower) Spring. (As noted above, this Hall was used not only by the Lodge but also at times by the Methodists and later by the Episcopalians as a place of worship and during the week days by various private schools. The building was destroyed by the cyclone of 1874.)

Judging by reports submitted yearly, one would conclude that the Lodge was active as a disciplinary agent. Almost every report listed names of members dismissed from membership for such reasons as "behaviour unbecoming a Mason," intemperance, adultery, incest, non-payment of dues, etc. Those dismissed were often well-known citizens, prominent in the affairs of the community. The reports also show a surprising number (31 altogether) of applications for membership rejected, though reasons for rejection are not given. The Lodge obviously upheld high standards for membership.

The following served as Worshipful Masters of the Masonic Lodge during the years from 1845 to 1916, some for only one term, others for several terms:

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| John W. Burford | Isaac Johnson | James L. McConaughy |
| R. W. White | Jesse W. Mahan | Newton Eddings |
| H. Summer | W. H. Paul | J. A. Moore |
| John Q. Loomis | E. S. Walker | Francis M. Peterson |
| S. M. Doak | Wm. M. McMath | Charles L. Meroney |
| John Acton | George A. B. Smith | E. S. Lyman |
| Rufus W. Cobb | Thomas B. McClusky | G. K. Parks |
| S. M. Doak | Wm. F. Aldrich | T. W. Palmer |
| John P. West | James W. Acker | E. H. Wills |

The town of Montevallo was first incorporated March 31, 1848, the population of the town at that time being less than 1,000. The corporate limits extended "one-half mile in every direction from the tavern house . . . recently occupied by Alexander W. Nelson" (probably the corner of Main and Shelby Streets). Early records have been lost; so we do not know who served as mayor, councilmen, etc.

Several early post roads passed through Montevallo. The first and most important one was the one from Elyton to Montgomery *via* Montevallo. It followed the Salem road toward Dogwood and then toward Jonesborough (Bessemer) to Elyton. The Montgomery end forded Shoal Creek above the Big Spring (the upper spring) and followed somewhat the short-cut toward Jemison. The Ashville road out of Montevallo is still so named. It led to Ashville in St. Clair County *via* Harpersville. The Selma road led from the west side of town. Traces of it can still be seen not far from Almont. Eventually an extension of this road led to Tuscaloosa through Centreville.

In primitive days the roads were very poor and goods were hauled mostly in wagons from river ports like Selma and Wetumpka. Salt was brought in on horse back. Merchants bought goods only once a year and had to wait three months for delivery. Farm families living in remote areas came to market for supplies only once a year.

In 1853 the first 55½ miles of the Tennessee and Alabama Rivers Railroad were completed from Selma to Montevallo. Many people

had contracted railroad fever and worked hard to help finance the enterprise. Many bought stock. Others worked for it in various ways, women knitting socks even to contribute to benefits. Naturally, it was an important day for the people all around when "the cars" finally arrived. They came in great numbers to see the train and enjoy the excitement of the occasion. A barbecue and picnic had been arranged for in the Walnut Grove so much celebrated by early inhabitants and located approximately where the present city park is. One local enthusiast exclaimed upon seeing the train, "God's conventions are great, but man's conventions are greater!"

W. L. D. Johnston presented a paper at the 1977 meeting of the Alabama Historical Association describing the experience of those who came up from Selma to attend the celebration. A part of his account follows:

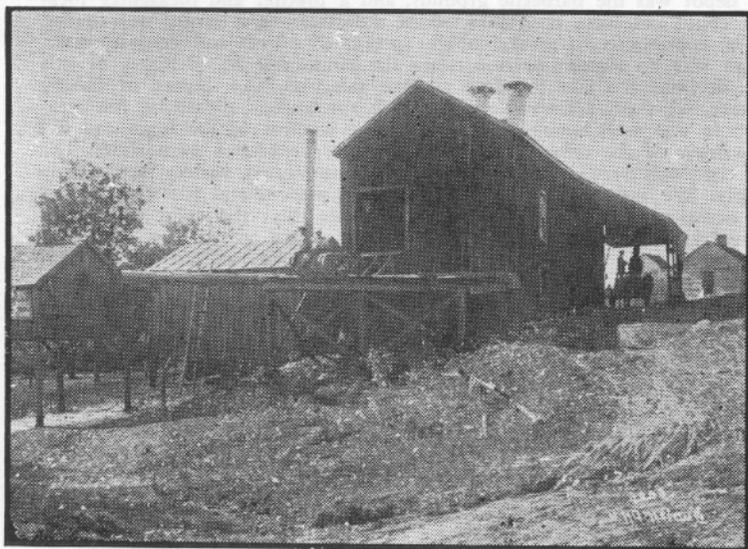
Now, let's take the trip with our friend, the reporter for the *Montgomery Advertiser*. Quote:

"We attended the rail road jubilee at Montevallo on the 4th. (July 4, 1853.) The crowd was immense, comprising about four thousand people, two thousand of which went up in the long train from Selma. The rail road is unquestionably one of the best constructed in the United States. We were, however, five hours on the road, in consequence of the burning out of a flue in one locomotive, and the necessity of drawing the twenty cars by the other. With an ordinary train, the distance, fifty-five miles, can doubtless be made in two hours. Instead of reaching Montevallo by 12 o'clock, we did not get there until two. A half mile from the depot was the barbecue grounds, and a prettier and pleasanter location could not have been selected in the state—in a large, well-shaded grove, contiguous to several noble springs of purest and coolest water. There was no regular oration, since the Honorable M. Hilliard, of this city, declined too late to admit another selection. Col. Storrs, of Shelby County, however, delivered a short, very appropriate speech on the occasion. It was well enough, in view of the lateness of the hour and the hungeriness of the crowd, that the preliminary exercises were short. The barbecue was served up in good style, with great variety and ample supply. We were highly gratified in being present and participating on the occasion. It afforded additional evidence that the right spirit was abroad in our state—the spirit that will yet afford an outlet to the Gulf and the Atlantic for the inexhaustible beds of coal, iron and marble, and place Alabama in her right position. Our trip has confirmed in us the view lately expressed in regard to the necessity of a rail road through that rich section to north Alabama. We have much to say in regard to it when we get a little leisure. Montevallo and Selma deserve a special notice, which we hope to present in due time. We met Col. Winston and Maj. S. W. Harris, both in fine spirits, mixing freely with the people."

Our reporter failed to mention the return trip to Selma. Hopefully, he spent the night at Montevallo. The little engine "Alabama" derailed on the temporary wye track and became ungracefully mired in the mud. There was a late afternoon thunder storm. Fifteen of the cars were open "platform" cars with wooden benches. The red, white and blue bunting looked sad and, of course, provided no protection. John A. Winston and members of the legislature did not forget the trip. As the reporter might say, "The longness of the trip, the wetness of the weather and the darkness of the night," left its mark on the governor and the legislature. The Alabama and Tennessee River Railroad had to wait for another governor and legislature before receiving any more state aid. Winston would not sign the bill that would grant the railroad revenue from land sales and it was June 3, 1856 before land grants were recorded in the deed books

of the county court houses. These lands were used in the settlement of debts after the war. Upon reaching Montevallo, the fortunes of the railroad wavered. Construction was halted for fifteen months. Then the unexpected—happened. The railroad began to make money. The first twelve months, after the jubilee, the expenses were only \$37,149.11, while transportation receipts were \$71,566.59. Thus producing net earnings of \$34,417.48. This gave the road new life but not in time to reach the Tennessee or connect with another railroad to make it a through line before the war broke out between the states.

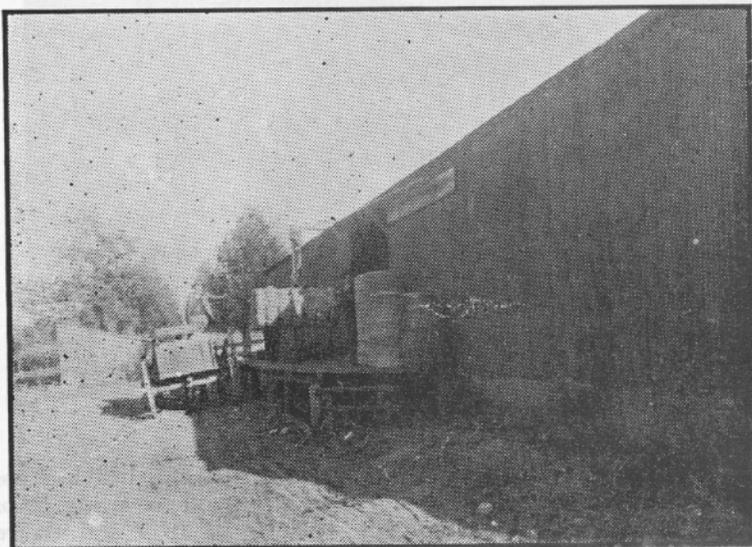
With the railroad came a new population and a new life to the town. It remained the northern terminus of the railroad for several years, and during that time the town reached its greatest heights of commercial importance in the nineteenth century. Judge E. S. Lyman in his history of Montevallo tells that "stage lines and wagon lines ramified in all directions," people coming from far-away counties to trade and ship products and receive supplies. Millinery establishments and fine mercantile stores flourished to attract fashionable customers, even brides, from far-away towns. As a result of the railroad, Montevallo became for a few years the largest market in north Alabama. Captain Reynolds in his account of early days, which he had heard of from older citizens, says that cotton was marketed here from Calhoun, Talladega, Blount, St. Clair, Jefferson, Walker, Bibb, and Tuscaloosa Counties. "In one season," he says, "the old railroad books show a total shipment of 24,000 bales. Cotton brought 50c a pound. A heavy bale was \$300."



McKibbon's Cotton Gin on Shoal Creek near big bridge.

A number of industries flourished prior to the Civil War. There were grist mills, cotton gins, wool carding mills, saw mills, tanneries, brick kilns, iron foundries, all located in or near the town. E. S. Walker owned and operated several of these industries near the base

of Island Street on Shoal Creek. Mr. G. W. Rogan with Mr. George Allen had a wood work shop near by where they made furniture, coffins, etc. with machinery operated by water power. Alexander Nelson had a grist mill and saw mill above the ford on the old Montgomery road. He sold flour and meal to people as far away as Marion, Greensboro, and Selma, hauling it there in wagons.

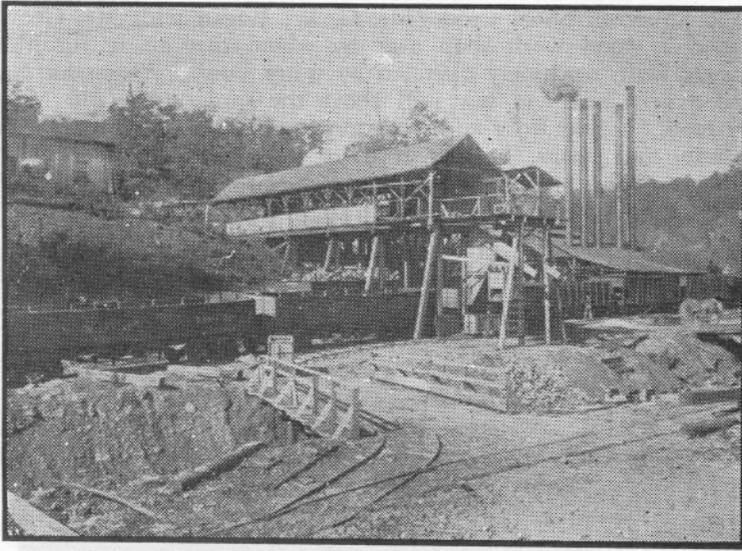


Cotton warehouse near the old depot.

The town had its first newspaper in the early 1850's—the *Montevallo Herald*, edited by a Mr. Norman. The first hotel was the Bell Hotel, located on the corner of Main and Shelby Streets where Leach Pontiac now stands.

Already by the 1820's coal had been discovered in the area around Montevallo and some slight use made of it in households; however, little in the way of developing the mines had been accomplished before the 1850's. "The first regular systematic mining in the State," said Joseph Squire, in his geologic report in 1890, "had been in the Cahaba field, in 1856, at a point in Shelby County, one mile west of the Montevallo Coal and Transportation Company's present shop." The names of John M. Moore of Talladega, Judge Cooper of Lowndes, Dr. Miller of Wilcox, and P. M. Fancher of Bibb County appear as private individuals operating the mines.

William P. Brown was the early owner and operator of the mine later known as the Montevallo Coal Mines at Aldrich. Mr. Brown, a lawyer, was born in Vermont in 1804 and came to Shelby County about 1846. He operated the mines from then until his death in 1868, although he had sold the mines to George O. Baker of Selma at some time during the War Between the States but continued to operate them under lease.



Hoist and tipple of Montevallo Mines.

Joseph Squire, born in 1829 in Lancaster, England, had had considerable experience in coal pits and in underground surveying before he was seventeen. He came to Shelby County in 1859 and figured prominently in the development of the coal industry hereabout. The history of the industry is more fully recorded in the story of Aldrich, as the coal mining town was later named; but the industry, located so near Montevallo, contributed much to the development of the town.

Despite the fact that U. S. Congress had provided when Alabama became a state that a sixteenth section of every township be set apart for school use, Alabama Public Schools were not organized into a system until 1854 and even then there is no record that Montevallo had such a school. Privately financed schools were the practice. Philip Henry Gosse in his book *Letters from Alabama* described the schools thus: "Some half-dozen planters of influence meet and agree to have their children educated together, each stipulating the number of pupils to be sent, and the proportion of the expense to be borne by himself. These form a board of trustees, who employ a master at a fixed salary, and though they allow others to send their children at a certain rate, are yet personally responsible for the whole amount . . . of their stipulated subscription."

Several such schools were conducted in and near Montevallo. The most noted one in this section appears to be the Salem School, located between Montevallo and Dogwood on the Elyton road and near the present Salem Cemetery. As early as 1838, Jacob Perry notes in his diary that he gave a quit claim deed for $2\frac{1}{4}$ acres of woodland to provide wood to heat the Salem School. Other entries in the Perry family letters and diaries tell that Sion Jason Perry, son of Ja-

cob Perry, graduated from the University of Alabama in 1855 and taught in the Salem School from 1856-59 and again for several years after he returned from having served in the Confederate Army throughout the War. No roster of students remains, but from letters and other family records we learn that children from the Perry, Moore, Meroney, Lawley, Nabors, deShazo families were among those in attendance. This school, which continued over a period of thirty to forty years, had from 75 to 150 students frequently in attendance.

Another such school was one located near the Methodist Camp Meeting grounds on Wilson's Branch at what is now the Montevallo Cemetery. This appears to be the school called Cedar Grove. Some references indicate that this school and the Methodist Church located nearby burned sometime late in the 1840's. After that the school was transferred to the Masonic Hall on Main Street. One wag remarked that the Masonic Hall was put to good use: "school all week, big dance Saturday night, and church on Sunday."

In 1851 a private institution for the education of young men was projected, referred to as the *Academy*, and a building was begun, now known as Reynolds Hall on the campus of the University of Montevallo. Edmund King gave the land and was one of the trustees for the new school, along with George D. Shortridge, his son-in-law, John S. Storrs, and Daniel Watrous. The bricks for the building were baked on the grounds and the building "laid off" by General C. M. Shelley. Professor Robert S. Lewis, who came from Howard College, appears to have been the first teacher and an excellent one. He was succeeded by a Mr. Hodson from Massachusetts.

The Academy apparently did not succeed for very long. There is a record that the carpenter for the building, George R. Allen, resorted to obtaining judgment for his fees in erecting the building. Eventually it passed into other hands. However, during the time that Professor Lewis was conducting the Academy, his wife was teaching also. In a letter dated Feb. 19, 1852, Mrs. Henry Lyman tells that "Mr. Lewis's wife has recently opened a female school. She has about twenty scholars, with a few little boys. . . . All appear delighted with the school, and the teacher I think an accomplished and interesting lady, fully competent for her work."

It so happened at this time that two young college graduates became interested in jointly establishing a school somewhere in the South. The two young men were William Carroll Gardner and James M. B. Roach, recently graduated from Bethel College in Tennessee.

"Montevallo, at that time, was one of the most inviting towns for such a project. The fact that it had contended with Montgomery and Tuscaloosa for the capitol of the State had advertised it, and called wide attention to its facilities. After consultation with leading citizens, the young graduates were invited to settle there, receiving the hearty cooperation of the townspeople." So wrote J. H. B. Hall, son-in-law of W. C. Gardner, one of the founders, in an interview with Dolly Dalrymple published in the *Birmingham News*, Sunday, January 21, 1934.



Reynolds Hall as it looked in 1858.

Education and religion going hand in hand in those days, the two young men were aided in founding the institute by the Union Synod of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and the following were named trustees: Joseph D. Nelly, Edward Davis, John P. Morgan, James McAnnis, H. M. Jones, Edmund Cobb, A. S. Woolley, Needham Lee, L. J. Hale, W. L. Prentiss, E. M. Carleton, Samuel Acton, Jr., T. H. Booth. On February 6, 1858, the Montevallo Male and Female Institute, as the school was named, was opened. The young women were taught in the building now known as Reynolds Hall, the young men in the new structure built by citizens of the town, later to be named Lyman Hall (now Saylor House, the property of the University of Montevallo). The school got off to a good start but continued for only a few years, coming to an untimely end when Civil War conditions made it impossible to continue. Money that had been generously subscribed for the school in prosperous days could not be paid. Parents were unable to meet tuition requirements. Moreover, because of perilous times they feared to have their daughters away from home. Eventually, after the slaves were freed, it was necessary for every man, woman, and child to bear his share of work on the farms or elsewhere. Education, accordingly, was sacrificed.



Lyman Hall, now Saylor House.

Thus, the 1850's had afforded the hey day of development for Montevallo. Coal for operations on a more advanced scale than elsewhere in Alabama had centered around the town. The coming of the railroad in the 1850's greatly developed its business activity. Cotton was brought from far and wide to be sent by rail to Selma, thence by steamboat to Mobile. Stage coaches connecting with the trains proliferated in every direction, carrying passengers to Ashville, Elyton, Talladega, Columbiana, Tuscaloosa. Private schools and churches flourished. The town had a large share of prominent citizens participating in the affairs of the community, state, and nation. Crops were plentiful and the farms almost self-sustaining.

In the 1860's all was changed. The Selma, Rome, and Dalton Railroad, which had had its terminus in Montevallo for a number of years, had been extended to Shelby Springs, to Columbiana, and beyond, thus decreasing the importance of Montevallo as a shipping center. About 1860 the North-South Railroad (the L. & N.), which had been originally surveyed to connect with the Selma, Rome and Dalton Railroad at Montevallo and which the town had counted on, was shifted to pass through Calera instead. The establishment of iron foundries in Shelby and Brierfield developed those towns, drew workers, and further diverted business that had hitherto fed into Montevallo.

Then the threat of war grew ominous. As early as 1854, Mrs. Henry Lyman, who had come from Connecticut, in a letter to her sister wrote: "On Sunday we all went to camp meeting. The children behaved as pretty as they looked but 'Here come the *Yankee babies*' was our salutation! One man picked up his great-gawky of a boy, and said, 'Let them bring on their Yankee babies by the dozen, here's one that will beat them all.'" Perhaps there was nothing sinister in this gibe. But she goes on to observe: "By the way, the people in this place seem to have come to the determination to exterminate the Yankees. It is reported that Mr. Butler is an abolitionist, and all sorts of talk that could be made up. Various efforts are made to pull down this firm (Lyman-Butler), and now they are trying to get a law passed to do away with the cotton yards in town, our people's being the only one that is permanently fitted up. The pretense is to prevent fires, and ours is so out of the way, it does not endanger the town in the least. I cannot tell whether they will injure our firm or themselves most. Our southern clerks they call fugitives."

When the Secession Convention of Alabama was called, John McClanahan of Columbiana and George Shortridge of Montevallo, son-in-law of Edmund King, represented Shelby County. They voted for and supported the Ordinance of Secession. The telegraph at the Montevallo depot gave news of the firing on Fort Sumter on the day it happened—April 12, 1861. The young men of the town forsook their farms, their businesses, their offices and the classrooms of the University to volunteer for the army. In May, 1861, Rufus W. Cobb, a young lawyer of Montevallo, later to become governor of the state, organized the early volunteers into Company C of which he became

captain. Throughout the war they were known as the "Cahaba Valley Boys." Feelings ran high. The young girls of the town in "a beautiful and impressive service in front of Reynolds Hall presented these boys with the stars and bars of the Confederacy." On the day of their departure 10,000 people are said to have gathered in the beloved Walnut Grove to bid the boys goodbye and to see them march away to join the Tenth Alabama Regiment being organized in Montgomery under the command of Col. John H. Forney.

The *Confederate Military History* has this to say about the Tenth Alabama Infantry: "Throughout its whole career this regiment was singularly distinguished for its dash and courage, and the great losses that it sustained in every battle." It fought at Drainsville, Yorktown, Gaines Mill, Frayser's Farm, Second Manassas, Harper's Ferry, Sharpsburg, Hazel River, Fredericksburg, Salem, Gettysburg, Cold Harbor (Vol. VII, p. 87.)

As the war continued, many others from Montevallo, not of this first group of volunteers, joined the ranks. Sion Jacob Perry supervised collection camps for CSA volunteers in the county and notes here and there in his diary through the spring of 1862 that several companies of volunteers left Montevallo for Training Camp at Selma where they were shipped to Richmond in time to oppose McClellan's Peninsula Campaign. On June 29, 1862, the diary notes, "We heard today that the big battle commenced yesterday at Richmond." This was later called *Seven Days Battle*. A number of Montevallo boys were of the 44th Alabama Infantry Regiment that fought there—George W. Cary, William and Jack Perry, Jo Harris, and many others. On July 5, 1862, Sion Jacob Perry noted in his diary, "William Moore, William Harper, and John Fancher left yesterday for Richmond to look after their sons wounded around Richmond." (The Fancher son wounded was later the father of Henry and Cassie Fancher.) Eli Shortridge (grandson of Edmund King), we learn from his tomb was killed at the Battle of Seven Pines, Virginia, on June 30, 1862, aged 18 years. Frank Forrester Shortridge, brother of Eli, was killed in the Battle of Atlanta on Aug. 24, 1864. Lieutenant George W. Cary was wounded near Richmond.

From records of the Masonic Lodge we learn that during 1861-63 forty-two of the seventy members volunteered for service in the Confederate forces. Of that forty-two, the report goes on to say, five were killed in battle, two died of disease contracted in the army, one had his foot shot off, another his arm, four others were wounded, and three deserted.

On the home front, too, there were problems. With reduced manpower, crops were limited, food was scarce. Confederate General Lowell's Brigade spent several weeks in camp on the King plantation and drained the countryside of supplies. Joseph Squire, early coal operator, writes that in August 1864 he went with a crowd of Montevallo's citizens "to protect the women and children on the west bank of the Coosa River from a gang of robbers that were stealing what

little their husbands at the front had left for them to live on." In the town there was fear of a negro uprising. A letter from Montevallo, dated Sept. 5, 1864, to Governor Watts from John P. West, reported that a company of seventy-six volunteers, men too old for active service in the army, had been organized for duty within the limits of Shelby County as a kind of home guard for a period of six months, said company being mounted. West asked in the letter when and where he could get arms, for there was immediate work for the company to do. Then on March 4, 1865, at the expiration of the six months' service period, he wrote again to the Governor saying that the company had been "affective." In the last three weeks before writing they had got in from the woods one hundred deserters. At this date a majority of the company wished to continue in service, and West assured the Governor that he could muster a good company for service within the county. The following were certainly volunteers from Montevallo for this Home Guard, perhaps others, too, whose names are not so easily recognized: Morgan, Alex Nelson, John Allen, Dr. Henry Bachus, W. A. Cary, Jr., James Cobb, Ed Davis, J. M. Frost, James Lucas, McConaughy, P. D. Meroney, French Nabors, W. L. Prentice, Geo. D. Shortridge, G. M. Randall, Dr. John Wilson.

Finally on March 30, 1865, Federal troops under Major General James H. Wilson, known as Wilson's Raiders, approached Montevallo. The troops were on a destroying mission through the mineral section of Alabama with Selma, the site of the great arsenal and naval foundry, as their principal target.

An official report describing the movement of the units gave this account: "Long's division, with LaGrange's brigade of McCook's division, crossed the Cahaba at Hillsboro on the railroad bridge and arrived in Montevallo. Upton, in advance reached Montevallo the evening before, destroyed Red Mountain Iron Works, Cahaba Valley Mills, Bibb Iron Works, Columbiana Works, and much valuable property." Still another unit reported: "Arrived at Montevallo having crossed Buzzard Roost Mountains, forded the deep and rapid stream (Black and Little Warrior) and crossed the Cahaba on narrow railway bridge. Our progress was slow, being much delayed by pontoon train . . . and the heavy roads over which we traveled." Twenty-four prisoners were captured and seven deserters received. An extensive foundry in Montevallo was destroyed and much other valuable property thereabout.

Mary Gordon Duffee in her *Sketches of Alabama* tells us, "I was in Montevallo when the invading army entered. . . . About sunset rolling drums and prancing horses in a long column approached Montevallo. All night we waited, knowing a battle was imminent, as the forces of Forrest, Buford, and Roddy were on the southern outskirts. Firing began at the depot, and a heavy skirmish ensued."

Federal General Wilson filed this report: "I arrived at Montevallo at 1 p.m., March 31 where I found Upton's division ready to resume the march. Directly after, the enemy made his appearance on

the Selma road. By my direction General Upton moved his division out at once, General Alexander's brigade in advance. After a sharp fight and a handsome charge General Alexander drove the rebel cavalry, a part of Crossland's (Kentucky) brigade and Roddy's division, rapidly and in great confusion, toward Randolph." Upton captured one hundred prisoners.

The Confederate Military History records that Alabama's 4th, 5th, 7th, and 8th cavalry divisions had been ordered to Montevallo by Confederate General N. B. Forrest in an apparent effort to arrest the progress of the Federal troops toward Selma. However, it appears that it was principally the 4th cavalry division under General P. D. Roddy's command that engaged Upton's division at the depot in Montevallo, where in the words of the Confederate version "it repelled Wilson's raid, fighting all the way from Montevallo to Selma."

It has long been said that Reynolds Hall served as a hospital during the war. So far, no official record supporting that claim has been found; but Miss Duffee tells us, "Two days afterwards (after the skirmish at Montevallo) Miss Emmie Bailey and I organized a band of women and children to go down the railroad to Briarfield to search for the wounded and dying." It is probable that such wounded soldiers, both Federal and Confederate, who needed nursing may have been taken to Reynolds Hall, since the school was not in session and space was available. Thus, it may have been for a period used as a temporary hospital.

While the Federal troops were in Montevallo they made free with everything they found. The Raiders camped on the King plantation; the General made Kingswood his headquarters, and from there issued his orders. Cavalry detachments went hither and yon, some bent upon destroying valuable property, others seeking food and forage. One such group visited Perry Hall. "Mounted troopers dashed through the flower gardens decapitating chickens with sabers. As the young officer attempted to search the house, Joseph Harris's young wife stood on the steps and threatened to box his ears."

After the invading army marched toward Selma, some troops were left in Montevallo. Minutes of the Montevallo Baptist Church record on April 1, 1865, "The enemy being in possession of the town, there was no meeting of the church." Finally, the 8th Iowa Cavalry occupied Montevallo from 1866 to 1876, camping on the grounds now a part of the University of Montevallo campus. A receipt for 1800 bushels of corn levied on the Perry plantation for forage is still in the possession of the Perry family, but no evidence of payment.

Throughout the War the casualties were high, of course, but some did survive and returned to tell of the glories and hardships experienced. Captain John T. Wilson, grandson of Benjamin Wilson, one of the earliest residents of the town, was one of those famous Cahaba Valley Boys to serve throughout the War. He commanded a company at Gettysburg and passed through all of the battles without a scratch, and finally surrendered with his regiment at Appamatox.

Judge E. S. Lyman, writing in the 1920's, tells of stories he had heard of early wars as they affected citizens of Montevallo, especially of the Civil War, as follows:

The Civil War in Montevallo

The United States in 1833, or thereabout, was at war with the Seminole Indians. Several young men of Montevallo volunteered for that war, among them Peyton King, Wm. Stinson and Dr. John W. Mardis, the latter as a surgeon. Some ten years later, Peyton King also volunteered for the war with Mexico.

Then came the War Between the States when practically all the young men of the South volunteered for service.

One cavalry company and five infantry companies were organized in Montevallo. The cavalry company first, organized by Jno. P. West who became the captain and afterwards Lieutenant Colonel of the regiment—the 2nd Ala. Cavalry, organized at Montgomery, May 1, 1862. This company was first called "The Mary B. Powell Guards", because a lady of that name furnished the company with some equipment—saddles and blankets, I think. When Capt. West was promoted to be Lt. Colonel, Frank R. King became Capt.

The first Infantry company was formed by R. W. Cobb, who was a young lawyer here. He afterwards became Governor of the State, and died only a few years ago. His company joined the 10th Ala. Regiment which organized at Montgomery in June 1861. Capt. Cobb resigned shortly, and Lieut. Capt. John T. Wilson, who still lives in Montevallo, commanded the company until the war ended. It was in the Army of Virginia, fought at Gettysburg, and suffered severely.

Junius J. Pierce organized a company, which went with the 24th Ala. Reg. He was its captain until promoted, then his brother Hubbell Pierce became captain.

Jno. W. Davis formed a company which joined the 20th Ala. Regt. He, too, was promoted to be Lt. Colonel, and R. M. DeShazo (a brother of "Uncle Joe") became captain.

George W. Cary organized a company for the 44th Ala. Regt. He, likewise, was promoted. In this same regiment was another company organized by its captain Wm. T. King, and Thos. L. Morrison afterwards succeeded him.

There may have been another company organized here in 1864. A number of boys were organized into what was called "The Boys' Company." They came from several counties.

Montevallo, of course, saw very little fighting. Just before the end of the war, General Wilson of the federal army marched into Elyton with over 13,000 picked troops, most of them mounted. There he sent a brigade to Tuscaloosa, where it had a skirmish with the University cadets, and burned the University. Wilson with his main force came on to Montevallo, probably March 30, 1865. There was in this community a small force of confederates under command of an officer named Blackwell, who claimed to be detailed to capture deserters. They made themselves very obnoxious to the people by their overbearing conduct and blackmailing schemes, and came to be known as "Blackwell's Gang."

There was a captain in this "Gang" however who was well thought of. His name was Higginbotham. The Confederate General, N. B. (not Napoleon Bonaparte, as you might surmise but) Nathan Bedford Forrest, a very famous cavalry general, was hoping to get reinforcements to enable him to give battle to Wilson at Selma, and his tactics were to harass and delay Wilson as much as possible and Blackwell had orders to this

effect. His "gang" therefore met Wilson's advance guard between here and Elyton and retreated before them skirmishing. Somewhere near Maylene, Capt. Higginbotham was wounded severely and afterwards died from the wound at the house of Ed Davis, near Aldrich. He is buried in Montevallo Cemetery in an unmarked grave.

Forrest's Advance Guard reached Montevallo, as Wilson's arrived. There was some skirmishing on Section Hill—the one on which Mr. Coles and Mrs. Nix live, north of town—possibly by Blackwell's men.

What might be called the "Battle of Montevallo" was fought at the railroad. Wilson's men formed a line just beyond Mr. Sam Kendrick's house, while Forrest's men were in the woods on the slope south of there, where the path to the cemetery leads through the pine thicket now. While this "battle" was on a locomotive pushing a flatcar, on which was one little old cannon, came from Calera and a few rounds from this puny "battery" were shot at Wilson's line and then the "battery" hurried back up the road. Forrest's men had to retreat, but they went skirmishing all the way to Selma. Forrest had to fight Wilson there with about 3000 men, one-fifth of them raw men. The battle was short, but bloody. Wilson lost 500, killed and wounded. This battle was fought on the 2nd day of April 1865, three days before Lee's surrender.

So far as we know, no one was killed in the "Battle of Montevallo", though the citizens say the bullets were whistling everywhere.

General Wilson, while he was here, made his headquarters at the "King Mansion", now the Model Home of the A. T. I. C. for W. This was the birthplace of Capt. F. R. King, above spoken of, and also of his posthumous son, F. R. King, Jr., who in the late World War was in the Navy of the United States, and engaged in convoying transports. After the armistice he commanded a mine-sweeper, and while engaged in clearing the North Sea of mines, was drowned.

A few years ago a confederate veteran, who came from Arkansas to the reunion in Birmingham, came to Montevallo to revisit the place where he was captured by Wilson's men. He belonged to Forrest's Advance Guard. He pointed out the positions which the lines occupied. He recognized the Hendrick house as the place where he and his comrades captured a yankee captain. A man named Alex Nelson, who built that house, lived there then. Forrest's men retreated down the road that leads by the cemetery and this veteran said they caught him just opposite where Mr. George Kendrick lives. He sat on a fence as a prisoner and witnessed the Battle of Selma. He was soon afterwards paroled, at Montgomery, on his 21st birthday, and says he walked all the way to his home in Kentucky. He said he had for many years wanted to come back to see the place where he was captured and which was so vividly in his mind's picture gallery. After his capture he was brought back to Montevallo and spent several hours under guard in the house where the meat market now is.

It is said that Col. Jno. P. West, above spoken of, was home on furlough when Wilson's Raid arrived. He got up a few elderly men from the community, armed with shot guns, to offer some resistance, he having only a pistol. They stationed this little "army" on the corner where Mulkey's garage is. One of Wilson's officers came dashing in on a horse and the Colonel's "valiant" army disappeared, pell mell; but he stood his ground, fired on the officer, wounding him in the leg and his horse in the shoulder, and compelled him to skerdadle. He soon came back, however, with other men, and, of course, the Colonel had to "melt away."

It is said also that Col. West had men in his company who did not know the right from the left foot. So he tied a wisp of hay about one foot and straw on the other, and in drilling he would say, instead of "right, left; right, left," "hay-foot, straw-foot; hay-foot, strawfoot, etc."



Hendrick house, which was burned in the 1950's, was built by Alexander Nelson before the Civil War.

Mr. E. D. Carpenter, grandfather of the present Carpenter brothers, though not a citizen of Montevallo at the time of enlistment, later made this his home. When he died of influenza in 1918, R. W. Hall, editor of the *Montevallo Advertiser*, had this to say about him: "Away back in those trying days of the 60's he as a youth was a follower of the immortal Stonewall Jackson. To have belonged to Stonewall Jackson's brigade was an honor equal to if not greater than that of decorations for bravery bestowed on our beloved soldiers in France today."

Another citizen of Montevallo, Dr. J. W. Acker, served in the Confederate Army. He himself was twice wounded during the war, but recovered to live until age 86 in 1923, and to practice medicine for many of those years. He never tired of telling of his Civil War experiences, such as performing many leg and arm amputations with a carpenter's handsaw and no anesthetic. After the war he achieved an enviable reputation as an obstetrician in the homes of the town and most of Montevallo's citizens born in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century owe the first breath to Dr. Acker. In his late years, no longer able to practice, he was still a familiar and beloved figure about the town, his woollen muffler drawn across his cap, over his ears, and tied under his chin. His cane waved about to crack a crony on the shoulders or to emphasize some remarkable detail in the story he related concerning his "fifty-seven years in the saddle."

Dr. Acker's grandson, Paul Lyman, recalls the old doctor's activities: "I have some vivid memories of the old doctor, who had a buggy but did most of his ministering on horseback. He was a great bird hunter and standard equipment attached to his saddle was a shotgun case containing a double-barrel, ten-gauge Parker Gras gun, which he prized highly because it was a gift from Mr. Pratt of New England, who came down during the season for a hunt. Don (his horse) was steady to shot and Dr.'s liver-colored pointer was an excellent retriever. So it was common practice for the good doctor to kill a mess of quail and put them in the bag without leaving his saddle. He controlled his dog with a whistle. When I was a little boy, I recall hearing that whistle in front of our house and running to the street to have Grandpa hand me six or eight quail.

"He loaded his own shells and I stood in amazement as he ejected the old cap from a spent shell, measured out the right quantity of black powder which was inserted along with wads, then the shot, final wad and the crimping. He was expert at it and his final shell looked like a new one.

"Another thing Grandpa did in the little room off the porch, which served as a shop, armory, and drug store, was to mix his own medicine. I don't recall that we had capsules in those days; anyway, Grandpa mixed the ingredients, then put each dose in a little paper jacket. Well do I remember, when sick, the command to 'stick out your tongue' and out of one of these little folded jackets would slide a powder guaranteed to have you up and running soon."

As mentioned above, young students attending the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa had dropped their studies and hurried to volunteer for service when war was declared by the Confederacy. Among these students was William M. McMath, a member of a prominent Montevallo family. He survived the war and returned to practice law in Montevallo and Columbiana for a number of years. He was serving in the state legislature and as a member of the Executive Committee of the Democratic Party at the time of his death in 1878. He and other cadets who had left the University to serve in the army were awarded posthumous degrees in the early 1900's.

Two Lewis boys of Montevallo, Burwell B. and Paul H., nephews and wards of George Shortridge, were both in the service. Burwell B. Lewis was an officer in the 2nd Alabama Cavalry. He later became president of the University of Alabama, from which he had graduated earlier.

The war and its consequences certainly brought about a decline in all of the affairs of the town. Poverty was widespread as in the rest of the South. Industry had been destroyed and manpower was limited. Nevertheless, the town, crippled as it was, shuffled along.

The *Montevallo Star*, a newspaper published in the town in 1866, gives news of various activities taking place. Schools were reviving. In one of the issues the L. M. I. Institute announced the opening of its second session with Mrs. C. S. Rowley as principal, Miss Emma K. Bailey in charge of music, and M. J. Sexton as teacher in the male department. The tuition was as follows:

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Primary Classes | \$35 per session |
| Higher Classes | \$60 per session |
| Drawing and Painting | \$25 per session |

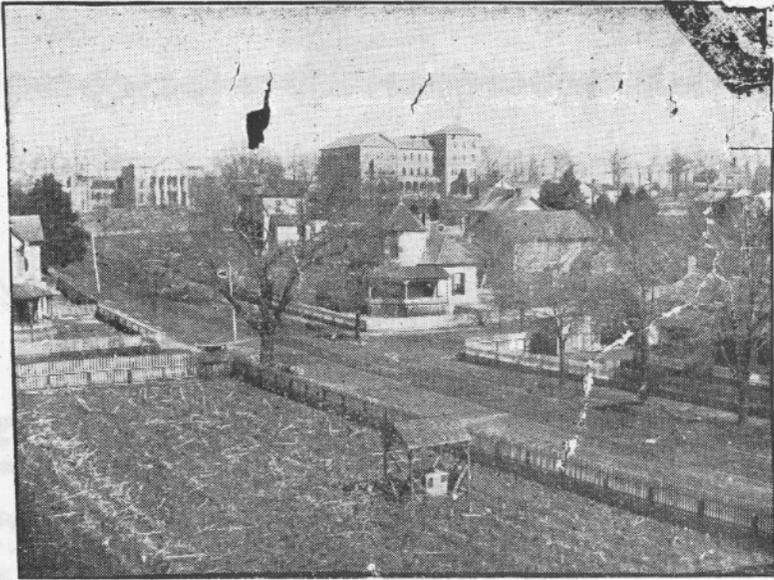
On July 3, 1866, *The Star* carried this notice: "The school exercises at the institute today and this evening gave general satisfaction. Everyone seemed pleased with the instructresses and the progress of the pupils. Tomorrow night, July 4, the school will give a concert free and the next night there will be an exhibition, consisting of Tableaus, Pantomime, Funny Performances, etc."

On July 17, 1866. R. M. Humphrey, A. M., Principal, announced that the Examination Exercises of the Cedar Grove Male and Female Academy would take place on August 15-16.

The same paper gave notice that Mrs. P. W. Sherwood and Miss Carrie Perry proposed to open a joint school teaching all branches including French, Latin, Music, etc., in the Masonic Hall.

There were two hotels in Montevallo at that time, indicating a good supply of transients into the town: The Hirondale Hotel, operated by Mrs. S. Bailey, and the Shelby Hotel.

Advertisements and professional cards indicated a number of businesses in the town: Lyman & Davis, Adams & Brown, Reynolds & Harris, H. C. Reynolds, A. C. Lemmon, McConaughy & Co., all



View from Middle Street in 1900.

dealing in dry goods, groceries, and general merchandise; R. A. Moseley & Bros., Fowler & Davis, drugs; Wm. P. Schultz, geologist and mining engineer; Drs. Davis and Backus, a partnership in the practice of medicine and surgery; Dr. John Wilson.

In November 1866 the paper carried a call for a meeting of the Cemetery Committee by J. P. Morgan, Chairman. Five hundred dollars had been raised to purchase land and to clear it for the cemetery. (This was evidently to be an addition to the existing cemetery, which seems to go back to about 1820.) Other members of the committee were J. Adams, A. R. Broune, J. P. West, R. Dennis, Isaac Johnson, Wm. McConaughy.

Major Jacob Perry requested a meeting of the people in the area on August 11, 1866, to consider means of raising funds for a jail.

In October, 1866, there was a notice of "A Mysterious Disappearance" as follows: "The mails from Ashville to this place, which have generally been conveyed on horseback by a small boy, came in and left on time last Tuesday, but had not reached Ashville yesterday morning. The boy who brought the mail today was instructed when he left Ashville to make inquiry for the missing mail, which he did, but could learn nothing concerning it, only that when last seen it was about twenty miles from Ashville going on in that direction, on Wednesday last. Neither boy, horse, or mail has been heard from since. What has become of them?"

Gas lamps (acetylene) were advertised for sale in the drug store. Moreover, oil had been discovered on water of a spring about a mile

MONTEVALLO

Female Collegiate Institute

SHELBY COUNTY, ALA.

Miss Hattie Lyman

Receives this Testimonial that she has
completed the Regular Course of Study prescribed
in this Institute and has attained such proficiency
in the several branches of

Science and Literature

taught therein as entitles her to the Final Honors
of this Institute. June 1st 1882

W. H. Meredith D.D.

Principal

Miss Hattie Lyman's Diploma.

away. The paper reported that an experienced geologist found "the indications very encouraging."

The Male and Female Collegiate Institute was reopened by 1869, not under the aegis of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, but in the private hands of Dr. and Mrs. Wm H. Meredith. All grades from the first were taught. A diploma granted Miss Hattie Lyman in June 1882 is reproduced. Inasmuch as Miss Hattie was only seventeen at the time of her graduation she had about eleven years of schooling. The Collegiate Institute, then, was probably comparable to our present high schools.

Dr. Meredith died in 1885, but his wife and daughter continued to conduct the institute for several years. A Mr. Howard Griggs had been a teacher in the Male Institute before Dr. Meredith's death and he continued there under Mrs. Meredith's supervision. Eventually he took over the school for boys himself and conducted it well into the nineties. In his earlier years he taught boys contemporary with E. S. Lyman, C. L. Meroney, George Morgan. He remained long enough to teach boys a generation later, Willis Lyman, Jo Peters, etc. Mr. Griggs was a stern disciplinarian and hard taskmaster; but his students agreed that he was an excellent teacher and drilled them thoroughly, especially in Latin and Mathematics.

Captain Reynolds in an article on the early days in Montevallo tells about another strict disciplinarian who preceded Mr. Griggs by a number of years: "Among the many teachers who have held sway in the old town was quite an oddity in the person of 'Old Man Murrell.' 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 on the children, as he held the parents accountable for the conduct of their children and would whip them if they disputed his authority or interfered in the discipline of the children."

Dr. J. H. B. Hall, referred to above as pastor of the Montevallo Cumberland Presbyterian Church, tells us that he delivered the commencement address at the Institute in 1879. His subject was *Man—God's Seed Bed*. He recalls that "the leading theme was chosen to dignify and amplify the meaning of education as against a student's merely being able to read aloud nicely, answer a few questions, and quote quotations of graceful poetry. . . . I stressed the value of physical education, called attention to the lack of paintings in the college and in Montevallo homes; and complimented the citizens upon having bought several pianos."

A sample of the type program that accompanied graduation exercises of that period is given below:

CONCERT!

MONTEVALLO Female Collegiate Institute!!

Thursday Eve, June 24, 1875

PROGRAMME:

PRAYER.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| AWAKE MY TREMBLING LYRE..... | Class |
| RIPPLES OF THE ALABAMA..... | Miss L. Morrow |
| EARLY IN THE MORNING..... | Juveniles |
| LOTTIE LEE..... | Miss T. Morrow |
| ESSAY..... | Miss Ella Wilson |
| WEDDING BELL POLKA..... | Misses M. and L. Meredith |
| THE MERRIEST GIRL THAT'S OUT..... | Juveniles |
| WAVES OF THE OCEAN..... | Miss Ella Wilson |
| ONLY A DREAM OF HOME..... | Miss L. Morrow |
| ESSAY..... | Miss Laura Lyman |
| ECHO..... | Class |
| SPARKLING SCHOTTISCHE..... | Miss T. Morrow |
| O, RESTLESS SEA..... | Trio |
| BLACK REY MAZURKA..... | Miss L. Meredith |
| ESSAY..... | Miss Carrie Meredith |
| ERNANI..... | Misses C. Meredith and E. Wilson |
| PUNCHENELLO..... | Juveniles |
| HAPPY SWALLOWS..... | Miss M. Meredith |
| LILY OF THE VALLEY..... | Miss C. Meredith |
| ESSAY..... | Miss L. Morrow |

GRADUATING EXERCISES.

LINGER NOT, - - - CLOSING CHORUS

Besides all of the other trials that the years of Reconstruction brought, Montevallo had other troubles. About 1873 the Calaboose, located near the Little Spring, burned, cremating a prisoner to the horror of the citizens. On November 23, 1874, a terrible cyclone swept down the area along Shoal Creek. Three people were killed, the Episcopal Church located on Valley Street, the residence built by Edward Powell on Shelby Street, the Masonic Hall on the hill were all destroyed and several other buildings and homes were severely damaged. E. G. Walker's tannery, wool-carding mill, grist mill, saw mill, and cotton gin located on the banks of Shoal Creek were completely destroyed. Freak events caused by this tornado lived on in the memory of citizens and were told for years afterward. For instance, a sharpened pole, several inches in diameter, that had been used to suspend a slaughtered hog, was driven through the body of a dog, pinning his body to the ground.

Many of the coal miners lived in Montevallo, and after mining coal all day, trudged home from Aldrich, their faces and clothes black with coal dust, only the whites of their eyes gleaming in the shadows. On short winter days, when dark came early, they trooped by with the oil lights in their miner's caps burning brightly and bobbing with their heads.

In the days before Prohibition throughout the state, local option prevailed and Montevallo seemed to have saloons off and on. For a while there was one near the present location of the Holland Ford place at the corner of Main and North Boundary Streets, where drinks were served up in a dipper from a barrel behind the counter. Many of the miners, as well as others, celebrated on Saturday nights by getting drunk and behaving in a riotous manner. Citizens, asleep in their homes, were startled late at night by the raucous voices of drunken men yelling and swearing as they rode by in wagons returning after midnight from their drunken revelry. "Oh, Montevallo was tough then," said Mr. George Harrison recalling his boyhood. Street brawls and acts of violence were not uncommon.

One of the worst ever recorded in Montevallo was the lynching of two negroes on Main Street in 1889. A young business man and recent bridegroom, Mr. John T. Lawrence, had been shot and killed by two men robbing the store of his father-in-law, Mr. Sam Latham. A newspaper account tells that the citizens of Montevallo and all of the surrounding country turned out almost to a man to search for the murderers. When two suspects were captured and brought to Montevallo, dozens of men gathered and swore that Mr. Lawrence's death should be avenged. The paper states that a number of influential men cautioned against violence and hurried the negroes off with guards to board the train and to be jailed in Columbiana pending trial. However, at the Montevallo depot the guards were confronted by men with shotguns and ordered back to town with their charges. A large crowd of unknown persons took the two negroes—Big Six and Little Six as they were called—to a tree about fifty yards from the scene of the crime and hanged them from a limb of the

tree and later burned the bodies. Ever after, as long as the tree stood, it was known as "the gallows tree," and one citizen, at least, declares that as late as 1907 the ropes still dangled from the limb.

Another tragic event occurred in 1901. Mr. Walter Cary, a prominent lawyer and father of a large family, got into an argument with a young man who operated the local livery stable. The dispute developed over the price charged for the hire of a team of horses. Tempers flared. In the end, Mr. Cary was shot and killed instantly in broad daylight on Main Street near his office, which was on the corner of Main and Vine Streets, where Zane's store now is. The event was a traumatic experience for the entire town, for both men were well known and had many friends. Great sympathy was felt for the family of the murdered man and for that of the murderer, who was tried and sentenced to the penitentiary for life.

However, there was a lighter side of life. In 1875 the newspapers tell us a brass cornet band was formed and offered to play for barbecues, picnics, entertainments of all kinds. In 1876 a ball game between Columbiana and Montevallo, played in Calera, ended in a victory for Montevallo: 27 to 26. The Montevallo line-up contains names still familiar to many living in town today: Cary, pitcher; Meroney, third base; Grace, catcher; Reynolds, rightfield; Large, 1st base; Wells, centerfield; McConaughy, shortstop; Purviance, leftfield; McConaughy, 2nd base.

There was much comraderie and merry making among the young people of the town. Dr. Hall, above mentioned, in an article written in his old age, comments, "Oh, but there used to be fun in that old Montevallo. I shall never forget its happy gaiety. The young people of the town never seemed to go about singly, but in drifting, happy groups."

The newspapers carried such raillery as:

Mr. Fred Davis has been elected President of the Bums. He now fills the place left vacant by Jack Dill, who went to work and was suspended from the order.

Uncle Lolly has not recovered from the effects of St. Valentine's day yet. I should think not from the remains of the beautiful caricature posted on his door, which time alone can efface.

A. J. Sweety or better known as "Hitty" has gone with the Gypsies. I doubt not, with his two string guitar, and "ox-calling voice" he will make a fortune, if he doesn't lose his voice crying for bread.

In time business conditions improved. In 1873 Truman H. Aldrich, born in 1848 in New York, leased the already famous Montevallo Coal Mines. "His name heads the list of the first big coal operators of Alabama . . . a jolly, vigorous, robust, and constructive make up, that has been good for the times and the place in which his lot has been cast." So said Ethel Armes in her book *The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama*. He recognized that the mineral wealth of this area was the real hope for resuscitating the economy of the area after the disastrous effect of the war. Jokes were made of his

digging coal in the summer and piling it up in stacks. Nevertheless, when winter came he was in good supply and "shipped coal all over the state, drove out the English coal, and sold Montevallo coal in larger quantities than ever before." Miss Armes goes on to tell us, "The Montevallo mines, so long the main point of coal operations in the state, now began to take on the genuine professional aspect, became the one real coal mines of Alabama in 1875."

Eventually William F. Aldrich took over from his brother and operated the Montevallo mines; a division of the railroad was built to pass close by; the settlement was named *Aldrich* and acquired its own post office. Details of its development are told by Henry Emfinger in his *Story of My Home Town*. However, the people and the mines continued as an important adjunct of Montevallo.

Mr. W. F. Aldrich built a beautiful Victorian home (perhaps *mansion* would better describe it) there, naming it *Rajah Lodge*, and developed about it spacious and artistically landscaped grounds, greenhouses, etc.; so that it became a show place for all of Alabama. A Sunday afternoon walk to Aldrich and through those magnificent grounds was a favorite diversion for the young people of Montevallo.

Various members of the Aldrich family stimulated the curiosity of the townspeople, to whom these New York Yankees seemed quite strange. Mrs. Aldrich, dressed in flowing, silken garments of pastel shades, not the drab customary waists and skirts of the local women, frequently rode into Montevallo on a shopping expedition with her small granddaughter beside her. They came in a glass-enclosed coach hitched to beautiful spirited horses caparisoned in ornate harness and plumes, the driver in livery, seated aloft. Children rushed out to swing on front gates and gaze at the passing show with envy of the little princess who rode within, seated sedately by a grandmother with a golden wig.

Extraordinary stories, maybe altogether fictitious, were circulated about Mrs. Aldrich's Theosophical beliefs. It was said that she had pictures of herself and husband made in costumes appropriate for various incarnations she believed they had experienced in the past, as for instance, as the rulers of the lost Atlantis and of a long-ago China. There was the story, too, of a donkey that she took to be her reincarnated nephew and as such was fed on choicest hay and allowed to nibble his time away in lush pastures.

But most exciting of all was the story of a grandson-in-law who went away to seek gold in the Klondike and who was not heard of for many years in Montevallo. Eventually he did return long after he had been declared legally dead and his wife had been remarried. The town was aghast at this unexpected and back-from-the-grave appearance of this dashing fellow full of tales of rare adventure.

As times began to quicken, many new people came in to add their talents to those of native sons spared by the war or reaching manhood later in the century. Captain Reynolds came to Montevallo,



George Kroell home (The Owl's Cove).



Home of Captain Reynolds

along with several of his brothers, after having served in the Confederate Army. He entered into the mercantile business and later his son, W. B. Reynolds, after graduating from Howard College, joined him as a partner. The business prospered and Captain Reynolds became a large landowner. Frank Willis Barnett praised him as "one of the men who since the Civil War has left an indelible imprint upon the social, religious, political, and commercial life of Montevallo." Mr. Reynolds built a beautiful home on the southeast corner of Main and Middle Streets. Only recently it was torn down to make way for the Whaley Shopping Center. He was active in securing the location of the Girls Industrial School in Montevallo and became its first president as will be told later. His biography, written by his grandson, Bruce Rogan, has recently been published.

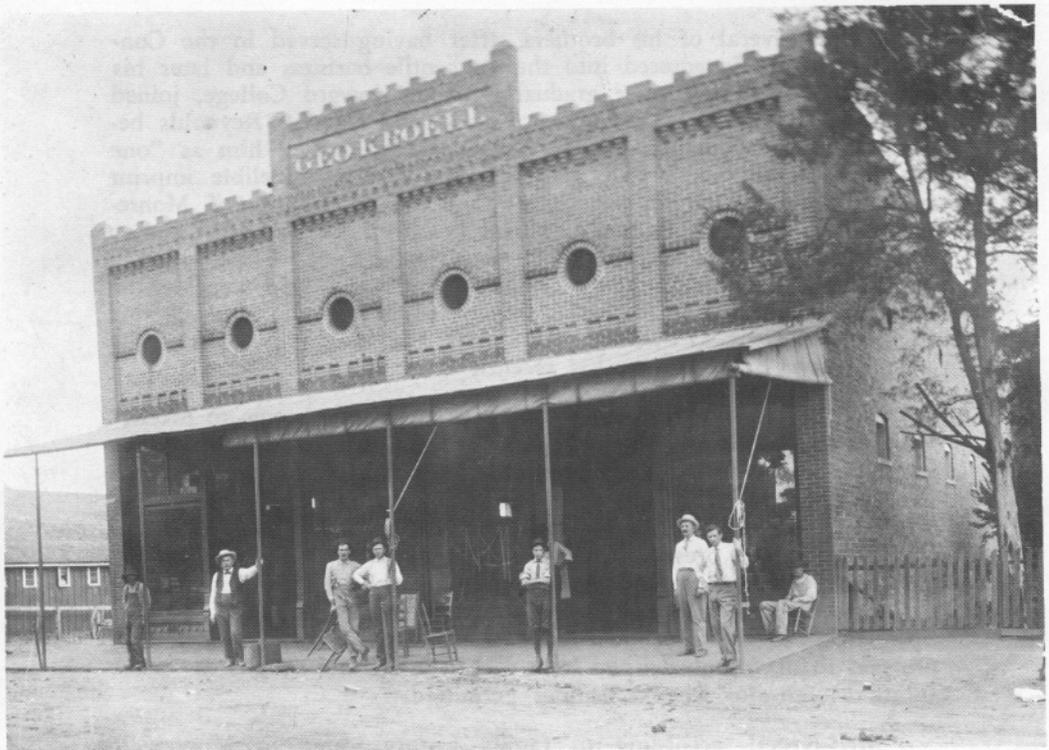
Mr. George Kroell was another business man to come to Montevallo in the post Civil War era. His big general mercantile store was located where Don Lovelady now has a business on Main Street. His livery stable (a very important institution in pre-automobile days) was on the corner next to his store. In 1897 he built the St. George Hotel where the present Merchants and Planters Bank now stands. This hotel achieved a great reputation for excellent meals and service through the years of its operation, especially when the J. T. Johnsons operated it in the first quarter of this century. Traveling salesmen are said to have looked upon it as a real haven and sought to "make it" to Montevallo when schedules permitted.

Mr. Kroell, according to family history, came to Montevallo afoot, newly arrived from Tyrol, Austria, with all his worldly pos-

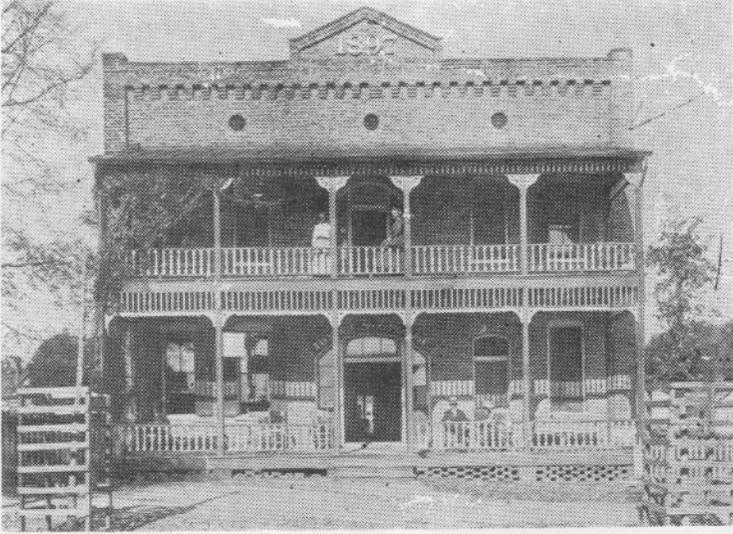
sessions in a sack on his back. He achieved remarkable success and reared a large family, all of whom contributed much to the life of the town.

The Kroell home, recently demolished, built in the late 1890's, was located on Main Street where the Alabama Power Company is building. It was a large Victorian house with balconies, gables, stained-glass windows, etc., characteristic of the most popular architecture of the period. The same architect, a German named Pulls, designed both it and the somewhat similar Reynolds home. The Kroell home was first painted red and named "Owl's Cove." When it was completed, the family entertained at a gala affair talked of for years. Society folks from near and far rode thence in their carriages. Tables were piled with all sorts of German delicacies to satisfy the most fastidious appetites.

The Latham brothers, Henry and Sam, with their families moved to Montevallo in the early 1880's and conducted a general mercantile store and drug store. They and their descendants were prominent in all of the affairs of the town. Only with the death of Howard (Tommy) Latham in 1971 did the family name pass from the annals of the town.



George Kroell Store.



St. George Hotel.

Two of the old homes here were long associated with the Latham name. Henry Latham lived in the house built earlier (about 1880) for Henry Wilson, a prominent lawyer in Montevallo and son of Dr. John Wilson already referred to. Henry Latham added an annex to the house at right angles to the original structure, and operated what became known as the Magnolia Hotel. Later the hotel became a rooming house for young women attending college. The annex was torn down but the original house still exists, but moved from its location facing Main Street to its present site facing Shelby Street.

Sam Latham occupied a house built for E. G. Walker, son of T. T. Walker, one of the first settlers. E. G. Walker later became a judge. (At the time the house was built, Walker operated a tannery, wool-carding mill, grist mill, gin, etc., located on the banks of Shoal Creek. His house was at the corner of Shelby and Island Streets. A part of the old rock wall that once surrounded the house still stands.)

The Vandergrift family, too, figured prominently in the life of the town. Mr. Vandergrift had a store on the corner of North Boundary and Main Streets. He also had extensive investments in the coal mines of the area and thus the little mining towns Maylene and Imogene came to be named for his twin daughters. His house, somewhat altered from the original design, still stands on Valley Street, presently occupied by Mrs. Ollie Ambrose.



Henry Latham house, built by Henry Wilson about 1880.



Magnolia Hotel, built by Henry Latham as addition to old house.

An interesting account of the buildings on Main Street in the 1880's was written for the local paper in the 1920's by Mr. John Allen of the Spring Creek Community and is reproduced below:

Montevallo 47 years ago
this article is written from memory
Corrections will be appreciated

Fifty seven years a generation nearly
half a century - I can count the residents
of Montevallo on the fingers of one hand
who live in the houses they did 47
years ago let's see Miss Hattie Lyman
Grand ma and Dr Acker Mrs Newton and
Howard Wells the country around has fared
as badly B. J. Randle B R Alexander and
B F. Cunningham all live in the houses they
lived in 47 years ago At that time there
was three general stores to wit C E Wandegrett
George Howell & H C & W B Reynolds - H Fox
and B Boxhorn had a dry goods store there
was two saloons there was no drug store
no Hotel no Barber shop Brookie Brazier
run the mill and wool carder for Colonel
Walker ~~Dr J. W. Acker was~~ Ed Vest had
a black smith shop Rogan and Allen
done wood work and made coffins
in a building where the corner building
now stands Dr J. W. Acker was in
active practice of medicine Dr Ralph Davis
and Dr Will Meredith was partners

2 Mr Allen Aug 1937

Buildings on the South Side of
Main Street were the Williams house
where Mr Elliott lives Kroell's Store where
Crosby's garage stands Dr Danner's residence
where Kroell Store is now H L Reynolds
residence the Baptist Church Judge Lyman's
office a Negro house later on used by
me as a market and destroyed by fire
Kogan's Store and the Henry Wilson House
owned by the Latham heirs

Main Street North Side a Two room Negro
House on which Dorcas Johnson told me she
paid \$500 rent at \$4⁰⁰ a month then Mr
Nandegutt's Store a Small Building where
the Hotel now stands the Hensler residence
later the McLeonnaghy home the Harris house
where Mrs J M Reynolds lives the only one
on either side of main street which was
standing at that time next the
Pugginstun residence where the Kroell
residence now stands then an old
building on the corner where P G Brown
is building his Store

3

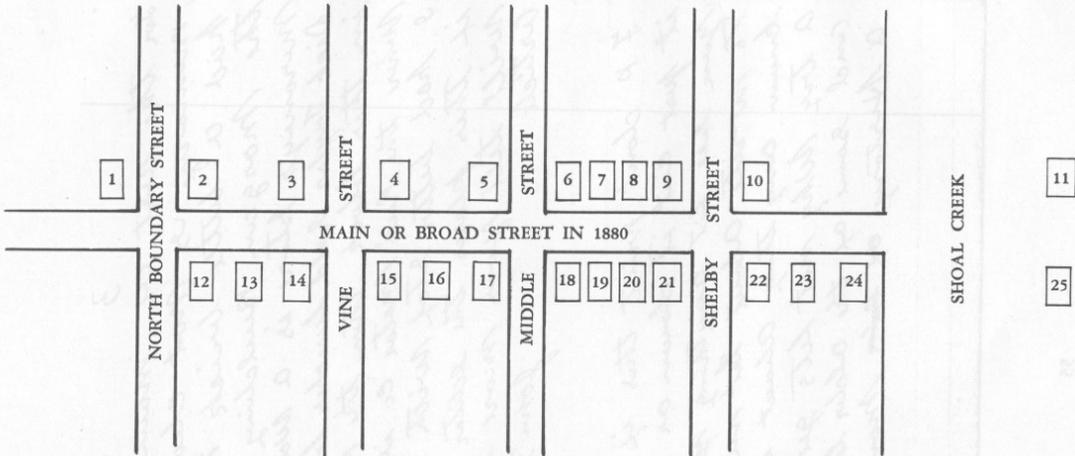
For the rest of main street my
memory is not clear W S Carey
had a little brick law office
The Morgan Building near where
Meroney's Store is a Wooden Store where
Dick Taylor sold lunches both Saloons were
in this block then the Reynolds store
where the Red Motor Co is now. I guess
I had better stop with main street
if this pleases the editor and readers I
will tell you more in another
article

John F Allen

I p dont print this if you dont like
it just cut it down or correct it as
you see fit anything you want me
to write about let me know if I
know any thing about it I will make
a try Why not lets get Judge Lyman
and some of the older citizens compile
a History of Sta Montevideo

MAIN STREET ABOUT 1880

(According to recollections of John Allen)



1. Williams House (later Killingsworth then Elliott house).
2. First Kroell House (later livery stable).
3. Dr. Davis's House (later Kroell brick store).
4. Rogan and Allen's Woodwork Shop (later Comer Building).
5. Captain H. C. Reynolds home.
6. Montevallo Baptist Church.
7. Office building.
8. Negro house.
9. Latham's Store (later Rogan's).

10. Henry Wilson's house (later Henry Latham's house).
11. Mrs. Newton's house.
12. Vandergrift's Store.
13. Small building (later Hotel St. George).
14. Henders home (later J. L. McConaughy house)
15. Harris house (later Mrs. J. M. Reynolds's house)
16. Reggenstein residence (later Kroell home).

17. House (later Carpenter's Meat Market and Shoe Shop).
18. Brick office of W. S. Cary.
19. Saloon.
20. Store building.
21. Saloon.
22. H. C. Reynolds Store.
23. Store building.
24. Photo Shop.
25. Dr. Acker's house.

The righthand assistant to Captain Reynolds in his work in securing the college for Montevallo was Mr. E. S. Lyman, a prominent lawyer in the town. Mr. Lyman's parents had come to Montevallo in the late 1840's from their home in Connecticut and entered actively into the social and business life of the community. Their children and grandchildren in turn helped to develop the town. E. S. Lyman served in the state legislature and over a period of time was Circuit Judge of this district. He loved history and has supplied much of the information about early days. A younger brother, William Lyman, was for many years cashier of the local bank. The three Lyman homes are still standing and serving as homes for University professors, two facing Oak Street just off the college campus and one facing the Jeter Building.

Mr. John Storrs came to the town from Vermont well before the Civil War. He studied law under Daniel Watrous and served the county in the legislature. His beautiful colonial home, set in a grove of trees was located near the spot where Palmer Hall now stands. It served at a later time as the High School Home Economics Building. Finally it was torn down and the lumber, windows, doors, etc. used to build the Faculty Club at the Lake.

The McConaughy family likewise has played an important part in the history of the town from before the Civil War to the present. William McConaughy I, born in Delaware in 1806, came to Alabama in the 1840's, living first in Dallas County and then moving to Montevallo where he became a merchant and drayman and where he married Harriet Lacey, a member of an old Shelby County family.

James L. McConaughy, oldest son of William McConaughy, was long associated with the Aldrich family in the coal mining business. In 1895 he married Conradine Skaggs, a woman of strong person-



Home of J. L. McConaughy.

ality who achieved a state-wide reputation as a literateur. She had graduated in 1893 from the University of Nashville and early became associated with the Federated Clubs of Alabama. She organized the Studiosis Club in Montevallo on October 11, 1895. It became one of the first and largest Federated Women's Clubs in the state, at times having over eighty women on its membership roll. Until it was discontinued in 1966, it contributed much to the social, educational, and cultural life of the community.

A grandson of William McConaughy I, Walter Pat McConaughy, Jr., born in Montevallo in 1908, has distinguished himself in his long career in the diplomatic service of the United States. He has served in Mexico, Japan, Brazil, Burma, Korea, and Pakistan. In 1961 he became Assistant Secretary of State for Eastern Affairs and in 1966 was named Ambassador to the Republic of China.

Other grandchildren of William McConaughy I still residing in Montevallo are William McConaughy III, Frank Morgan, Louise Morgan Burgess, and Georgia Morgan Angelkorte.

Clyde Clifton, writing of Montevallo in 1886, censured her for slumbering soundly while other towns of Alabama "roused to the bugle call of progress." He admits to a Golden Age for Montevallo in the past when the town was lively and prosperous, when it had distinguished citizens and prospects for a glorious future. "Now however," he lamented, "she is not enterprising, she is not pushing, she is not plucky, but none can gainsay that she is placid and picturesque, and has complete mastery of the art of growing old gracefully."

If such a description of the town characterized it fairly in 1886, certainly it did not apply in the 1890's when the prospect of a new school for girls was conceived in the state legislature and a suitable location was being sought. Montevallo, realizing her advantages, summoned tremendous effort to win the prize.

"Very earnestly did the citizens cooperate," said C. L. Meroney, in describing the part Montevallo played in the founding of the Alabama Girls Industrial School (the earliest name for the college that is now the University of Montevallo) on the twenty-fourth anniversary of the institution. "Before the business meetings held to plan the work of securing the school for Montevallo, devotional exercises were conducted in which God's blessings were invoked. Committees were appointed to raise funds. The campus and the chapel building (Reynolds Hall) were bought for an extremely low price from citizens eager to contribute. Everyone gave liberally in money, time, and support. Committee members went to large cities—Birmingham, Cincinnati, Louisville, Nashville—to ask business houses for contributions. Sometimes the committees received money, sometimes furnishings, even food. I recall that a packing house in Cincinnati gave a barrel of lard; another firm supplied stoves to heat the classroom buildings. So thoroughly was the work done that when the central committee went to Governor Oates it gave not vague promises of what Montevallo would do, but certified checks showing actual cash in hand

May 7.

1895.

GRAND PATRIOTIC CONCERT

GIVEN BY THE

Montevallo Choral Society,

ASSISTED BY

Prof. EGE and PICKENS,

AT

LYMAN HALL

For the Benefit of the Industrial School.

NOTE.—Prof. Pickens is a graduate of the Boston Conservatory of Music.

The Shelby Sentinel Print,

Program for Concert.

and deeds to property." (Among those gifts were four city blocks on one side of which stood the historic building now known as Reynolds Hall, plus seven acres to the rear of the building, plus the Big Spring and land adjoining to furnish water for the college, plus \$5,000 and a year's supply of coal.)

The movement to obtain the college for Montevallo was ably organized and directed by Captain H. C. Reynolds. One has only to read newspapers of that day to realize the effort that went into the enterprise. The Governor had already appointed trustees before the site was selected, each trustee then as now being from a different congressional district. Each one seems to have had desires of his own for the college to be located at one place or another. At every meeting of the Board, even after Montevallo had been tentatively selected, the fight for relocation was renewed. Perhaps for that reason, the citizens decided to add to their already extensive gifts to the cause a large slice of flattery for the trustees themselves and named streets in Montevallo for these same trustees—Bloch, Plowman, Moody, Wadsworth. Even Miss Julia Tutwiler, who had been selected to be the first president, agitated for the school to be located elsewhere and eventually resigned before actually taking office.

Several others were considered for the office of president but no one actually accepted. Time ran short. The announced date for opening drew near. Captain Reynolds, a business man and not an educator,



First Board of Trustees.

had nonetheless identified himself so completely with the efforts to win the college for Montevallo, that in the emergency he was pressed into accepting the presidency and the responsibility for preparations for the opening of the school.

He appealed to the citizens for further support. They rallied admirably, and until adequate dormitory space could be provided opened their homes to room and board the students for \$9 a month.

On October 12, 1896, the college opened, a proud day for all the citizens. The stage was attractively decorated in oats to honor His Excellency William Calvin Oates, Governor of Alabama. There were 226 students enrolled on the opening day including the following from Montevallo: Bertie and Bessie Allen; Ella Mae Davis; Kate Kroell; Della, Eunice and Rhoda Latham; Bessie McCary; Lois McCauley; Ethel McMath; Anna Nabors; Lena Nichols; Kathleen, Lucy, Maude and Ruby Reynolds; Bessie Steele; Ethel Strong; Imogene Vandergrift; Lucile Wilkinson.

Montevallo took the school to its heart and through the years it has been a great source of pride and pleasure. In the early days a great deal of the social life of the residents centered around the activities of the college; and the faculty and students became an integral part of the community. Recitals, lectures, plays, and programs of various sorts were attended by many of the citizens. One of the sights eagerly looked forward to on Sundays, especially by the young men of the town, was the line-up of the girls in their gray uniform suits and mortar boards marching in well disciplined lines to the various churches.

Commencement at the college was the high light of the year. It was looked forward to and enthusiastically prepared for. It became the occasion for new spring clothes, for out-of-town guests invited to enjoy the various programs and parties provided, for reunion with beloved alumnae who returned year after year to renew friendships with townspeople.

After the lull of summer vacations (there were no summer terms before 1917) the return of the students in the fall quickened the life of the town. Eager citizens formed a welcoming committee; Mulkey's and Kroell's hacks (horsedrawn vehicles with long seats on each side carrying about twelve passengers) met the students at the depot and conveyed them to the dormitories or to the homes in town; mules hitched to wagons piled high with trunks and packing boxes strained their way over dusty roads to deliver their cargo. Students then came to stay from September to Christmas and from January until May with no week-ending as now.

Meanwhile, the town, awakening to a greater sense of its own responsibilities, was reincorporated in the early 1900's. (The former incorporation of 1847 had lapsed during Reconstruction days and the town had shuffled along with no organized government.) Mr. E. S. Lyman became the first mayor in this new day. Councilmen elected



Home of C. L. Meroney, with early college girls in 1897.



Reynolds Hall in 1896



Reynolds Hall in 1977.

at the same time were C. M. Cross, George Kroell, C. L. Meroney, and H. C. Reynolds. The town clerk was J. M. McCullough and the town marshal R. T. Newton. A complete list of the mayors is given below:

MAYORS OF MONTEVALLO

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| E. S. Lyman | 1901-1903 |
| J. M. Reynolds | 1903-1904 |
| H. C. Reynolds | 1904-1905 |
| E. S. Lyman | 1905-1909 |
| C. L. Meroney | 1909-1910 |
| L. N. Nabors | 1910-1912 |
| J. M. Reynolds | 1912-1914 |
| P. J. Kroell | 1914-1916 |
| W. H. Lyman | 1916-1918 |
| E. G. Givhan | 1918-Aug.-Oct. |
| L. N. Nabors | 1918-1920 |
| J. A. Brown | 1920-1924 |
| R. A. Reid | 1924-1926 |
| J. R. Johnson | 1926-1932 |
| J. I. Reid | 1932-1934 |
| E. S. Lyman, Jr. | 1934-1936 |
| C. T. Acker | 1936-1940 |
| F. P. Givhan | 1940-1944 |
| C. G. Sharp | 1944-1952 |
| W. M. Wyatt | 1952-1966 |
| M. L. Orr, Jr. | 1966-1972 |
| Ralph Sears | 1972- |

In May 1901 it appears telephones may have come to Montevallo. At least the town minutes show that on May 20 the Alabama and Georgia Long Distance Telephone Company was granted permission to install telephone poles along the streets of the town. By 1907 Southern Bell Telephone Company, however, was in charge as shown by their tax assessment of \$620. Throughout the years until about 1937 when dial telephones were introduced, the telephone central was an important asset to the town. She collected and dispensed information to the citizens concerning fires, crime, funerals, socials, meetings, and personal vagaries. She has been sorely missed as a source of community information.

Before the days of the telephone, citizens had learned of intended community gatherings through notices carried from house to house by small boys. The written notice was fastened to a thin board with hand hold (smaller but shaped somewhat like a tennis racket) and, in the case of funerals, draped in black ribbon or crepe paper.

In 1906 a franchise was allowed H. C. Reynolds to erect power lines for electricity. However, there is no evidence that the town had electricity before 1912; so the plan for electricity may not have gone forward at that time.



First dormitory in 1897, West Wing of Main, Haley Hall.



Main Dormitory in 1901, showing addition of Central Wing or Kennedy Hall.



Main Dormitory completed, showing addition of East Wing or Stallworth Hall.

In 1905 an ordinance prohibiting wooden buildings within sixty feet of Main Street was passed. In 1908 another ordinance was passed prohibiting cows from running at large. The town minutes tell the story of a serious dispute between the mayor and a prominent citizen when the latter insisted upon letting his cows out at night to graze. (An earlier ordinance had already prohibited horses and mules.) The speed limit for autos was set at eight miles in 1914 but raised to twelve by 1920. (Mr. Joe Davies owned the first automobile, a Stutz, in Montevallo in 1908 and he caused helter-skelter scattering of livestock and chickens when he drove by in his horseless carriage, sometimes resulting in exciting runaways of horses and mules hitched to vehicles.) Thus the town was accustoming itself to city-like ways.

At the time of reincorporation the town began to develop a public school. Following the Civil War numerous small private elementary schools consisting of a handful of pupils existed, taught by various local teachers. Mention of a Montevallo High School was made in the local newspaper in 1896; but since the town had no organization and no board of education, these schools must have been altogether privately operated and financed.

A bona fide public school must have been started about 1901 and a one-room, clapboard school house built where the Alice Boyd Building now stands. On October 23, 1902, according to the town minutes, the city council voted to add a room to the existing build-

ing. At that time Miss Bertie Allen was the principal. When the new room was added a second teacher was employed. By 1904 Miss Alice Pettus of Selma was listed as assistant teacher. The principal was paid \$60, the assistant \$40 per month. Tuition is listed as \$50, \$75, \$100 per year, depending upon the grade the pupil was enrolled in.

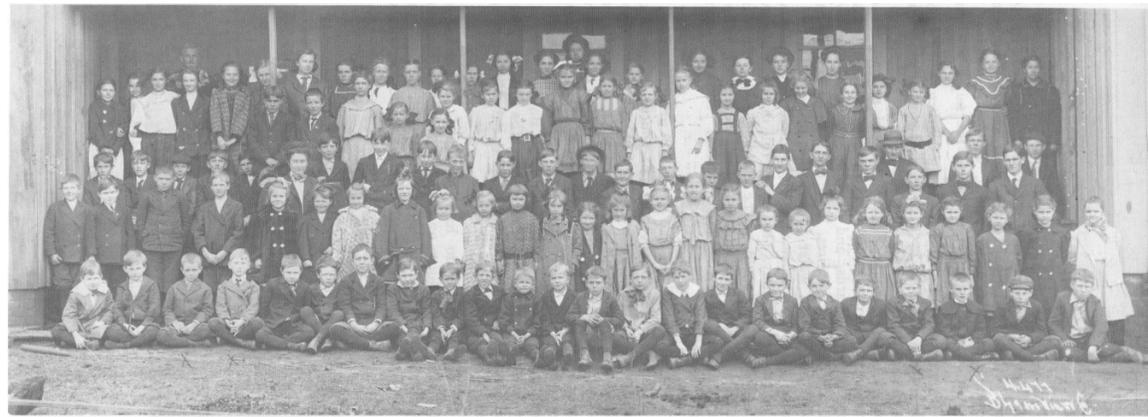
This school building was a frame structure with no underpinning. Each room was heated by a pot-bellied stove that furnished too much heat nearby and not enough in remote corners, so that students changed locations to keep warm or cool enough for comfort. There were no maintenance employees. The girls took turns sweeping the floors, erasing boards, and washing windows, the boys bringing in fuel and feeding the fires. Two small boys were dispatched at intervals to bring fresh water in a bucket suspended from a pole carried between them. The water came from an old-fashioned well with windlass about a block away. The bucket full of cool water was then placed on a shelf on the porch of the building and a tin dipper hung conveniently nearby. Two fingers waved in the air, followed by a nod from the teacher, gave a thirsty student permission to refresh himself at the bucket.

By 1907 the school had expanded to nine grades, a third room, and a third teacher. A city board of education was in charge. Salaries were better; the principal received \$100 per month and the assistant teachers \$45 each. Property tax had been increased, producing more revenue for the county, which in turn helped finance the schools. Tuition was lowered to \$1, \$1.50, and \$2.00 per month. Besides Miss Allen, other principals who served at various times were Mr. Ellenburg, Miss Nannie Shivers, Mr. Norton, Mr. Boswell, Mr. H. G. Dowling; early teachers were Miss Ida Horne, Miss Clarkie Purcell, Miss Irma Ellis, Miss Claude Patillo (later Mrs. Pat McConaughy), Miss Mary Peters, Miss Mary Winn Withers.

By 1915 Montevallo had developed an eleven-year school and built a new brick building on North Boundary Street (now Jeter Building). Both elementary and high schools continued to grow and expand into outlying buildings. In 1922 the high school grades were moved to



Hacks that met the daily trains at the depot.



Montevallo Public School students 1908.

Reynolds Hall. Dr. M. L. Orr was brought in as Professor of Education in the college and Superintendent of City Schools. It was at this time that the Montevallo school system became a laboratory school for the college and continued to be such until 1963.

In 1929 a new high school building was erected; in 1940 four classrooms and an auditorium were added through a WPA project; in 1963 a gymnasium was added and at the same time a modern football stadium and field were constructed off campus behind Crowe Village on Island Street.

The Alice Boyd Building on Valley Street at the original site of the Montevallo Public School was built in 1939 to house the Junior High School. In 1948 the Vocational Building was constructed for the Home Economics and Agriculture Departments. In 1964 a new elementary school was built for grades one through six just off Island Street and the old building (Jeter) reverted to the college and now houses the Department of Social Sciences.

During these years the town Blacks had their own separate schools. In 1902 their teacher was H. G. Walker. Later Mrs. Anna Peoples had charge. In 1954 a brick building was constructed. By 1966 the building had been added to as many as five different times and a separate agriculture department built. The building was named Prentice High School.

In 1970 the dual system of schools was abolished and the former Prentice High School Building became the Montevallo Middle School. Grades five through seven are presently housed there.

Another evidence that the town was achieving a more mature status was the establishment of the Merchants and Planters Bank on September 1, 1902. (There had been for a short period around 1897 another bank in Montevallo called the Shelby County Bank. One of the officials, however, absconded with the money and the bank closed after a short duration.)

Because many of the citizens had lost money in the Shelby County Bank, great care was put into the financing and organizing of the Merchants and Planters Bank to give investors complete security. W. E. Holloway of Montgomery, C. L. Meroney and William Lyman of Montevallo were elected president, vice-president, and cashier respectively. Early records indicate that the new bank did have the confidence of the community and that by the close of the opening day deposits totaled \$11,417.03. At the end of 1902 total assets were \$28,987.59.

The growth of the bank was steady until the depression years of the early 1930's. C. L. Meroney, who had been elected president in 1905, indicated that the outlook in 1930 appeared favorable. In his report to the stockholders in the annual meeting in January 1930 he stated, "The building expansion which has taken place in Montevallo during the past year has brought new and increased business to the bank . . . The prospects for a continuation of the prosperity



Main Street looking south (1905).



Main Street looking north.

which we have enjoyed during the last year are excellent . . ." Assets by that time had surpassed \$225,000.00.

M. P. Jeter, Sr., was elected president in February 1930 upon the death of Mr. Meroney but served only through March when he was succeeded by Dr. E. G. Givhan.

The depression years, of course, brought disaster to banks throughout the country and severe measures were taken to prevent failure for M. & P. By August 1932, assets had dropped to \$166,478.24 and to \$141,831.80 by August of 1933. The salary of one employee was cut from \$2,500 in 1931 to \$720.00 in 1932 and, as problems continued, the employees were "given extended vacations without pay." Apparently the lowest point was reached in the spring of 1933 when the board of directors passed a motion "to reduce the force of the bank to two employees."

During this period Dr. Givhan had served as president and E. S. Lyman, Jr. as cashier and chief executive officer. J. P. Kelly succeeded Mr. Lyman as cashier and chief executive officer in 1933 and remained in that capacity until his death in 1960. Dr. J. Alex Moore, a charter member of the Board of Directors, was elected president in 1935 and served until 1937, when he was succeeded by Dr. T. H. Napier who served until his death in 1961.

During this period, the bank again experienced a steady growth as indicated by the following year-end asset totals:

| | |
|------|---------------|
| 1934 | \$ 232,408.65 |
| 1944 | 1,134,756.33 |
| 1950 | 1,660,132.56 |
| 1960 | 2,906,606.73 |

F. P. Givhan was elected Chairman of the Board and James A. Kelly, President and chief executive in 1962. During the next decade the rate of growth again was steady. Assets by the year end 1965 were \$4,549,564.45; 1970, \$8,152,125.59; 1975, \$14,320,841.26.

Even before the establishment of the bank, other business firms were finding Montevallo an attractive market. Two native sons—George Morgan and C. L. Meroney—established business firms on Main Street in the early 1890's. Later, about 1900, Joe H. Davies and M. P. Jeter came to Montevallo and started a mercantile business with separate dry goods and grocery departments, somewhat more modern than the old-fashioned general stores that had prevailed. Mrs. Woolley's Millinery Store was likewise a very flourishing business.

Many other families moved into Montevallo or the surrounding area about this time, attracted by the promising outlook following the establishment of the college. Among those were the Crowe family, the Farrington, Hendrick, Cross, Hooker, Strong, Shivers, and Mahaffey families. Two young doctors appeared on the scene, too; Dr. E. G. Givhan and Dr. D. L. Wilkinson. The college likewise was

growing and hiring new personnel. Dr. Francis Marion Peterson became the second president of the college in 1898 and with his large family became an integral part of the community. He brought to the campus Mr. W. M. Jones-Williams, a skilled engineer, who did much to improve and modernize the college buildings and grounds.

By 1908, T. W. Palmer had succeeded to the presidency of the college, upon the resignation of Dr. Peterson. The college prospered and new faculty members were added, who with their families influenced the town: Mr. E. H. Wills, Mr. Samuel Chestnut, Mr. Luther Fowler.

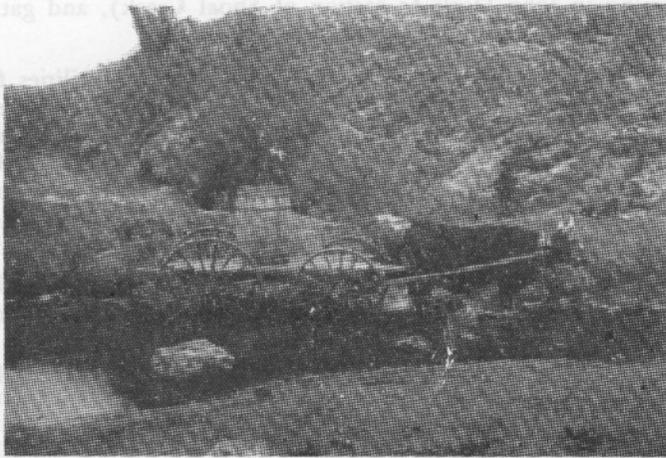
The Brown brothers (Charlie, Will, Jadie) and their sister, Mrs. Carl Houlditch, arrived in Montevallo in 1911 and in a sense helped to step the town up into the twentieth century. They were responsible for a great many *firsts* in Montevallo. They built the first ice plant and distributed ice to Montevallo and to other towns in the county. Mr. A. J. Wood, for years, rode the truck, sawed the ice, rushed through back doors to place the ice in ice boxes, all the while delivering the latest local news to families assembled around breakfast tables.

Even before coming to Montevallo the Browns had succeeded in the sawmill business. This they transferred to Montevallo, then expanded their investments into a planer mill and cotton gin. They went on to provide in 1912 the first electricity for lighting the town. They introduced the first soft-drink bottling company, which later developed into the local Coca-Cola business. For a while they operated a vegetable canning factory and later, when automobiles became numerous, a wholesale oil and gasoline company.

In 1913 they financed the first motion picture business to come to Montevallo. It was operated in a building located where the Leach Pontiac business is and became at once a popular attraction. *The Perils of Pauline* kept a large crowd on the anxious seat for many a Saturday night. On one evening, sometime around 1919, the spectators, absorbed in the excitement of the show, were startled by the cry of "Fire." And indeed the building was in flames, having been ignited from the electrical wiring. The patrons escaped without serious injury, but much shaken from the experience. The building was completely destroyed.

The Brown franchise for electrical service was for lighting only. Power was turned on in late afternoon and continued until midnight. The charge was 15c per kilowatt with a minimum of \$1 per month.

On December 21, 1916, Alabama Power Company was granted the electric franchise. In February 1917 the Browns sold their electric properties to Alabama Power which began operation of the system March 1, 1917. *Powergrams* from Alabama Power Company show that not until July 1920 was the construction of the power lines into Montevallo completed and not until that decade was there much extension in the use of electricity beyond simple lighting.



Ox-cart driven by Charlie Webb, Sr.

Only a few families had running water in their homes before 1915. Wells and cisterns were the main dependence. The two "gushing springs" supplied water to those otherwise without. For years Charlie Webb's father, and maybe others, peddled water along the streets of Montevallo. He drove his faithful oxen hitched to a crude cart into the creek close to the place where Little Spring empties into Shoal Creek, dipped the water up into large barrels and, covering them with croker sacks fitted over hoops, delivered water to his customers throughout the town for a small fee.

In the early part of the century, before radio, television, and a plethora of automobiles, people amused themselves in various ways. Picnics, barbecues, watermelon cuttings, ice cream socials, oyster suppers, church bazaars were frequent events. Various circuses and street fairs with merry-go-rounds, kewpie dolls, pop corn stands made annual visits. Lyceum courses and lecturers at the college, traveling attractions such as Chautauqua programs, came occasionally to the town and were well received.

Montevallo always had a good baseball team. The rivalry with nearby towns was keen and enthusiasm ran high. Business houses closed for the games and attendance was good. At times there were two or more rival teams within Montevallo. The young women took sides, decorating floats, and otherwise vigorously supporting the team of their choice.

Serenading was also popular. A group of young people organized themselves into a club called *The Frogs' Convention* and went about

singing at various homes and enjoying refreshments hastily provided. Their younger brothers and sisters, designating themselves as *Crickets* followed the example and indulged in "surprise parties," sometimes to the consternation of parents. In between there were tennis games, swimming in John Dock (a section of Shoal Creek), and gathering at the drug stores for milk shakes and ice cream.

There was no fire department then—or other facilities for fighting fires. And fires were frequent, breaking out oftentimes in the middle of the night to the terror of the townsfolk. Church bells were rung, pistols fired, and most of the citizens flocked to the scene. Bucket brigades were formed to carry water from any available source and pour it on the burning building. Windows were broken through and furniture or merchandise brought out by many helping hands.

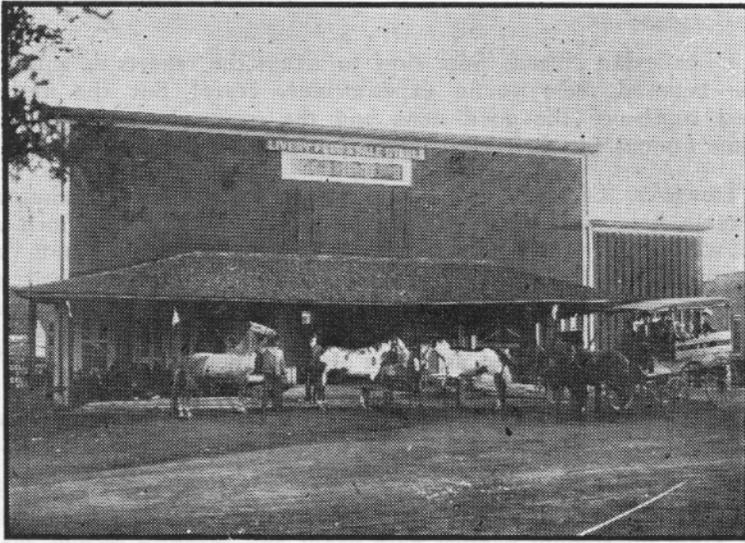
One of the most horrible of the fires was that of Kroell's Livery Stable about 1912. More than a dozen horses were housed in the wooden stable. When discovered, the fire had advanced so far that rescue of the animals was impossible. They could be heard pounding their hooves against the walls and whinnying in their distress. Mr. Cassie Fancher, whose high-stepping, thoroughbred horse was housed therein, had to be forcibly restrained, so great was his anguish, from risking his life to rescue his beloved horse from the burning building.

A group of business men, about 1912, organized and held a Shelby County Fair in Montevallo. The Fair buildings and grounds were located between Shoal Creek and Morgan Street. The Fair stimulated a great deal of interest, was prepared for and looked forward to every fall for several years; but was discontinued at the time of World War I.

At one time, about 1915, the town was organized with a president, secretary, committees. A big community day was scheduled.



Horse and buggy of early 1900's.



Kroell's Livery Stable. See hack at right.

Wagon teams were volunteered; chert was hauled in; men put on their work clothes and spread the chert on Main Street from Middle to Shelby Streets. The women provided basket lunches in an empty building for all the workers. Blocks were assigned to groups of young people to clean—Blacks and Whites alike. Weeds were cut, trash collected, and the town greatly improved as a result of a massive community endeavor.

Back in those halcyon days citizens gathered at the post office (located then on the northwest corner of Main and Shelby Streets) to chat and wait for the morning paper. The *Age-Herald* from the fast growing city of Birmingham furnished the earliest news of the outside world. Front-page stories of the War being fought in Europe gave the townspeople much to talk and worry about.

Therefore there was considerable eagerness in 1916 for the re-election of Woodrow Wilson to the presidency. He was a Southerner and a Democrat! Besides, he had kept us out of war! However, the election odds were certainly against him in favor of Hughes!

Frank Peterson, a young teacher in the local high school and son of a former president of A. G. I. S. (University of Montevallo), had developed interest and skill in wireless telegraphy. In an abandoned chicken house in the yard of the Peterson home on Middle Street, he set up the first wireless station in the area. Frank, his helper (now Colonel James T. Johnson of Montgomery), and his Boy Scout troop (many of whom still live in Montevallo), using their self-fashioned equipment, experimented with receiving and transmitting messages by radio to and from Arlington, Virginia. Thus it was that they were the first to flash the news, after the vote from California was received, that Wilson had won.

Disbelieving citizens were slow to accept the reports as authentic. Some believed these young experimenters crazy! But the morning papers confirmed the good news and the scoutmaster and his crew became famous for their early radio expertise!

However, the war came soon after, despite Wilson's election, and the town became absorbed in the war effort. The young men and boys volunteered or were drafted into the service. Some young boys were so eager to get into the conflict that they falsified their age. The women banded together to knit socks and sweaters, to roll bandages for the Red Cross, to observe meatless and sugarless days in their kitchens. All worried and kept alert for news of the front. Fake rumors were rife. No reports were too far-fetched or absurd to be believed and circulated, such as the one that claimed Germans were roaming our country putting poison in turnip green pots.

When the Armistice finally came to pass, on November 11, 1918, the jubilation was tremendous. Holidays were declared; whistles blew; bells rang; impromptu parades with bands and cheering crowds sprang up. Train loads of students and citizens went to Birmingham to join in prolonged celebration.

Eventually, many of the soldiers from Montevallo and nearby communities returned with stories of war experiences. Some of the local men had died in camp of disease; some had been injured in combat, two had been killed outright at the front. The town and the college both held memorial services for the dead and also honored those fortunate enough to return.

The two local men who had been killed in battle were Cliett Hendrick, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Hendrick, and Albert Hudson, brother of Mrs. M. P. Jeter, Sr. When, in 1924, application was made for a charter to establish a post in Montevallo of the American Legion, the request was made that the charter be issued in the name of Hendrick-Hudson Post, to memorialize the two young men of Montevallo who had given their lives in the war.

The charter was granted, the Post so named, and Cage Head was elected the first commander. The following were charter members: George Kendrick, Max Kantor, Robert Hendrick, Carl Brill, Knox Woolley, J. L. Appleton, L. E. Shaw, John Robert Hall, John B. Gallagher, Paul Rogan, Herbert Elliott, Emmet Shaw, Cage Head, G. A. Logan, J. N. Logan.

On January 25, 1926, the Hendrick-Hudson Auxiliary Unit was formed. Mrs. O. C. Carmichael became the first president. Other charter members of the Auxiliary were: Mrs. G. L. Cleveland, Mrs. Max Kantor, Mrs. M. P. Jeter, Miss Sallie Hooker, Mrs. H. J. Payne, Mrs. Glennie Nybeck, Mrs. P. D. D. Pendleton.

Both the Post and the Auxiliary have been very active in the following years, keeping in close touch at all times with the national and state programs.

During most of the first one-hundred years of its existence, the style of life in Montevallo changed very little. Prior to the First World War the town was a remote, self-contained, small village, whose population rarely reached one thousand. There were no street lights, nor paving. The red clay roads were muddy and sticky in wet weather and very dusty in summer. The sidewalks were graveled paths, along which grew bitter weeds and Johnson grass in abundance. Yards and vacant lots were usually fenced in. There were very few houses beyond the originally incorporated area, which roughly extended from Plowman Street to Shoal Creek and from East Boundary Street to the rear of Reynolds Hall.

Some of the houses still standing that date back to the nineteenth century (listed by the names of present occupants) are homes of:

On Middle Street: Ivey Sims, Sarah Puryear, Eloise Meroney, R. C. Eason, Glen Lien, Clyde Winslett, Morris Watson.

On Oak Street: John Van Valkenburg, H. Van Tuyll.

On North Boundary Street: Saylor House.

On Valley Street: Glennie Nybeck, C. H. Chism, Willie Mae Ambrose.

On Vine Street: Forbes House, Minnie Lou Warnke, Kennerly Apts., Roberts Apts.

On Island Street: Atchison house.

On Shelby Street: Latham house, DeSear, Bridges, Carpenters.

East Boundary Street: Dan Harrell, Merijanian Apts., Howard McGaughy, Leonard Lawley.

Across Shoal Creek: Acker house, Newton house.

Beyond Highway 25: Hooker, Kermit Woolley, W. E. Robinson.

Ashville Road: Gormley, Bearden, Reece Woolley.

By the early nineteen twenties the town had stepped up its progress wonderfully. With the coming of electricity, telephones, radio, motion pictures, and especially war, the horizon of the town expanded considerably. The citizens were made much more aware of the wide world beyond their borders. The educational institution within its territory had become a full four-year college, granting degrees by 1923. Faculty members with advanced training were brought in, sometimes from distant states. Altogether the life of the town seemed to quicken and prepare for a greater day in the future. The horizon was expanding.

WHY NOT TRY A CAN?

A big can of fine dessert peaches for 35 cents at

C.L. MERONEY & COMPANY.

Recreated From a 1919 edition of the Montevallo News.

C. L. MERONEY
& COMPANY

Merchants

MONTEVALLO, ALABAMA

ATTENTION!

YOUNG LADIES!

A CZAR ORDER HAS GONE FORTH!

You Are Not Allowed to Buy Your Uniforms from Us!

But We Are the Undisputed and Acknowledged Leaders in

⇒ **FIRST-CLASS DRY GOODS, NOTIONS, RIBBONS** ⇐

FANCY GOODS AND VELVETS!

A Beautiful Line of Shoes That Will Bear Inspection and Please You!

We want your trade, and promise genteel and courteous treatment, but coerce no one to trade with us.

YOUR FRIENDS,

Morgan Bros. and C.L. Meroney & Co.

From an 1896 edition of the Montevallo News.

HOUSES BUILT IN NINETEENTH CENTURY STILL IN USE



The Jim Reynolds home (later Kennerly Apartment House).



The Charles W. Cary home (later the Calkins house).

HAMILTON BROWN SHOE CO'S
AMERICAN
LADY
SHOE.



Isn't It
 A
 BEAUTY ?

**IF THERE IS ANY BETTER SHOE
 IT IS NOT IN ALABAMA.**

C. L. MERONEY & CO.

From a 1902 edition of the Shelby Sentinel.

**Every Kind of Candies,
 Fruits, Dolls,
 AND OTHER
 Christmas Goods**

We are too busy to quote prices,
 Yours to please,
C. L. MERONEY & CO.

From an 1896 edition of the Montevallo News.



The Henry R. Lyman house (now owned by the University).



The John Wilson house (later owned by Mrs. Ruth Atchison).

ALWAYS :- LEADING!

C. L. MERONEY & Co.

Are the First in Public Improvements.

First in Lowering Prices to meet the Poor Man's Dollar!

And the last to raise prices on an advancing market.

We sell everything you want with but one motto :

Full Value for Every Cent You Spend With Us.

WE WANT YOUR TRADE

~~Remember We Are in Our Handsome New Brick Store.~~

Yours to Please,

C. L. Meroney and Co.

From an 1896 edition of the Montevallo News.

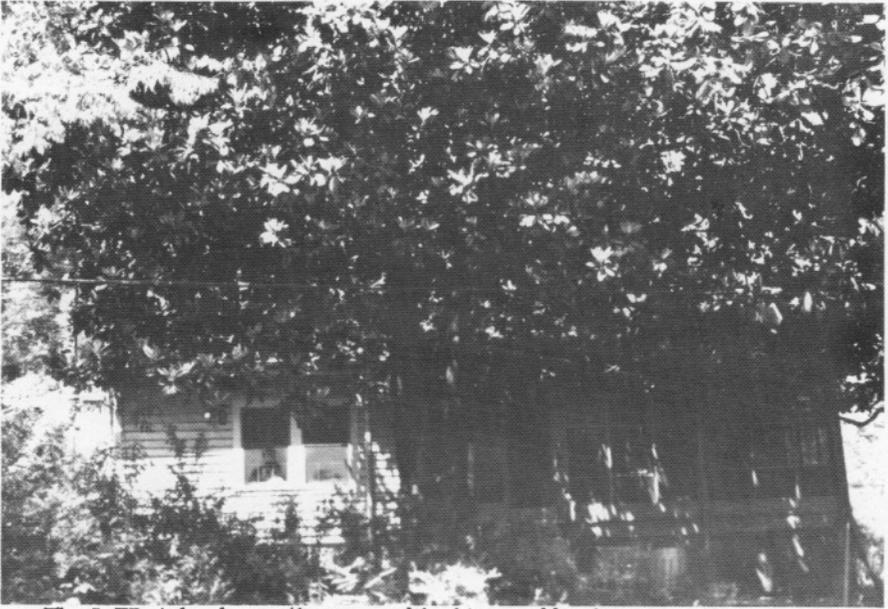
STRAW HAT SALE.

**A Good Dresser Always
Wears a Stylish Hat.**

We are making a Special Sale of Stylish Straw Hats for a few days only. The stock will not last long, and you had better get one now.

C. L. MERONEY & CO.

From a 1902 edition of the Shelby Sentinel.



The J. W. Acker house (later owned by his granddaughter, Mrs. Kate Cook).



The G. W. Rogan house (later owned by the Hooker family).



C. L. Meroney & Co.,



MERCHANTS

MONTEVALLO, - - ALABAMA.

Lead all others in the Cut from **HIGH PRICES.**

Their Large and Well Selected Stock of Goods,
of Every Description, Demonstrates the Fact

THAT THEY ARE UP TO DATE,

—AND—

Their Prices Defy Competition!

 They Sell Everything you Want, and Give Full Value
for Every Cent. 

Go to see them in their

Handsome New Brick Store

THEY HUNT YOUR TRADE and GIVE YOU A COR-
DIAL INVITATION to VISIT THEM.

 Don't Forget the place!

C. L. MERONEY & CO.,

Montevallo, Alabama

From an 1897 edition of the Shelby Sentinel.

C. L. MERONEY & CO.

MERCHANTS

MONTEVALLO, ALABAMA

Invite you to inspect their lines of Dry Goods and American
Lady Shoes and Slippers

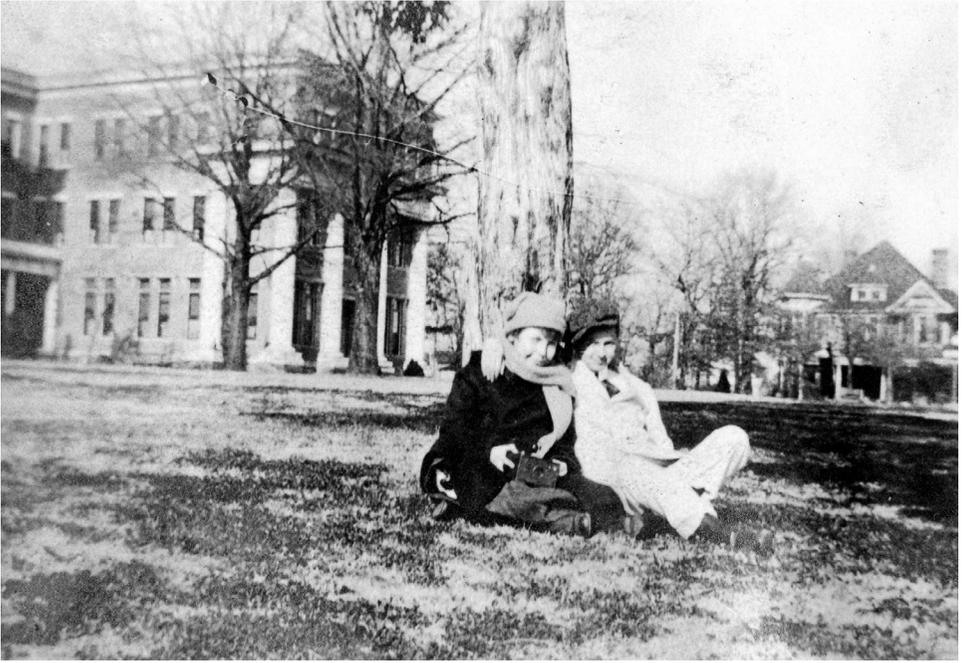
This advertisement for Meroney's store appeared in the 1910 edition of the *Chiaroscuro*, the yearbook of the Alabama Girls' Industrial School in Montevallo, Alabama.



The R. T. Newton house (later owned by R. F. Miller).



The McKibbon house (later owned by Leonard Lawley).



In front of Main Dormitory, Alabama Girls Technical Institute, Montevallo, Alabama. President T. W. Palmer's home in the background. From a Kroell family album circa 1915.



The A.G.T.I. campus around 1915. (Left) students gathered around the sun dial on Main Quad. Bloch Hall and the president's home are in the background. (Right) The recently constructed Vine Street entrance gate (1915) provided two students dressed in their Sunday best with an unusual place to perch for the camera.

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Eloise Meroney Remembered

The following is the eulogy presented in 1996 by Dr. John B. Lott at Miss Meroney's funeral. It is reprinted from the Spring/Summer 1997 issue of the Golson Newsletter, a publication of the English Department at the University of Montevallo.

In one of the most puzzling passages in Genesis, sandwiched between the list of Adam's descendants and the story of Noah's flood, is the statement "In those days there were giants upon the earth; they were the heroes of old, people of renown!" That passage could be applied to a group of women who were the giants upon Montevallo's earth, who were the heroes of old, the people of renown: Hallie Farmer, Eva Golson, Sarah Puryear, Lucille Griffith, Katherine Vickery, Martha Allen, Lois Ackerly, Bernice Finger, and, of course, the one who outlasted them all: Eloise Meroney.

It was my privilege to know and work with Eloise Meroney for almost forty years, even though I actually came to know her late in her teaching career. And yet I had never gotten to know her as well as I have in the past two years, visiting her with my wife Sandra, one of her former students, to get her to reminisce about the history of the English Department at the University of Montevallo and about her personal history – which was so much a part of the history of both school and town. Miss Meroney, who wrote a history of the town of Montevallo, had vivid memories of just about everyone who had ever been associated with the English Department. Earlier in her life she probably would have been too respectful and reticent to talk freely about personalities – unlike some of the other ladies I have mentioned. But in these latter days she seemed willing to open up and speak warmly of Miss Dilla or in awe of Dr. Dennis. She would weep upon recalling the sudden death in 1948 of Dr. Arthur Vaughn, long time chairman of the department; and



she could laugh about her participation in Robert Payne's attempt to make the English Department more creative and exciting in the 1950s. She could laugh at herself as well in other contexts. When she escorted us to the door on our last visit, she left her cane behind. She said, "I don't really need it I just use it because it makes me look distinguished."

What came through in these conversations was that Eloise Meroney loved the town of Montevallo, the University, and the English Department. She was a loyal and committed citizen who supported those who worked here, both in the past and in the present. I will always be grateful for her support of me when I suddenly found myself chairman of a department in which I was the junior member. The fact that she gave to the University the house that her beloved father had built is an indication of that kind of loyalty. She had returned to Montevallo in

1930, following the sudden death of her father, to care for her mother. In all of the intervening years, she lived in that house, caring for her mother and later for her sister. She could give no more valuable a gift to the University than her own heritage.

Upon hearing of Miss Meroney's enthusiastic participation in events at the Galleria Woods Retirement Home, Sarah Puryear remarked, "Eloise always did like organized fun". And indeed she did. From her enthusiastic participation in the literary clubs of the 1910s and 1920s to her loyal attendance at alumni gatherings in the 1980s and 1990s, Eloise was an involved woman. She supported the groups she associated with and enjoyed being absorbed in their activities. On the last visit I made to her, with my wife Sandra and Norman McMillan, to deliver her copy of the history of the English Department, only days before she fell, she

wanted to take us around to be introduced to other former Montevallo students in the nursing home. She even insisted on paying for her copy of the history, because she wanted to be a part of the department's project.

In that history several of her former students are quoted. Mary Frances Tipton, one of her students in the 1950s, wrote, "How exciting it was to be in Miss Meroney's class! She didn't sit behind her desk, but in a chair near the front row, with her legs crossed and a foot swinging when she was pleased. The ex-

citing part was that you could say anything in her class, have any opinion, any interpretation – provided you could back it up in the poem, story or whatever. A friend and I sat on the back row (it was a big class, which meant over twenty in those days) and would quietly plot how we would disagree with each other. Her eyes would sparkle and that foot would swing". When we read her that tribute a few weeks ago, her eyes sparkled and her foot swung. Sandra Ward Lott wrote that

"in my first semester of graduate school, I realized how solid and up-to-date Miss Meroney's instruction had been."

That instruction was, of course, in American Literature. When we think of Eloise Meroney we think of her American Literature course. Others might aspire to teach these works, but to Eloise's former colleagues and students, they will always be guests in her territory. She was a scholar who

loved what she taught. She slipped away from the scholarly confines of Columbia University to attend performances of all of the new plays, not because she intended to incorporate the information into her classes, but because she loved the theater. One of her favorite authors was Walt Whitman, the quintessential American poet, the poet of large vision and wide inclusiveness. I would like to close with a passage – one of her favorites – from Whitman, the concluding section of his *Song of Myself*, which could be Eloise's song of herself as well:



*The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me,
he complains of my gab and my loitering.*

*I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the World.*

*The last scud of day holds back for me.
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadow'd wilds,
It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.*

*I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drill in lacy jags.*

*I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love.
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles,*

*You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.*

*Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.*