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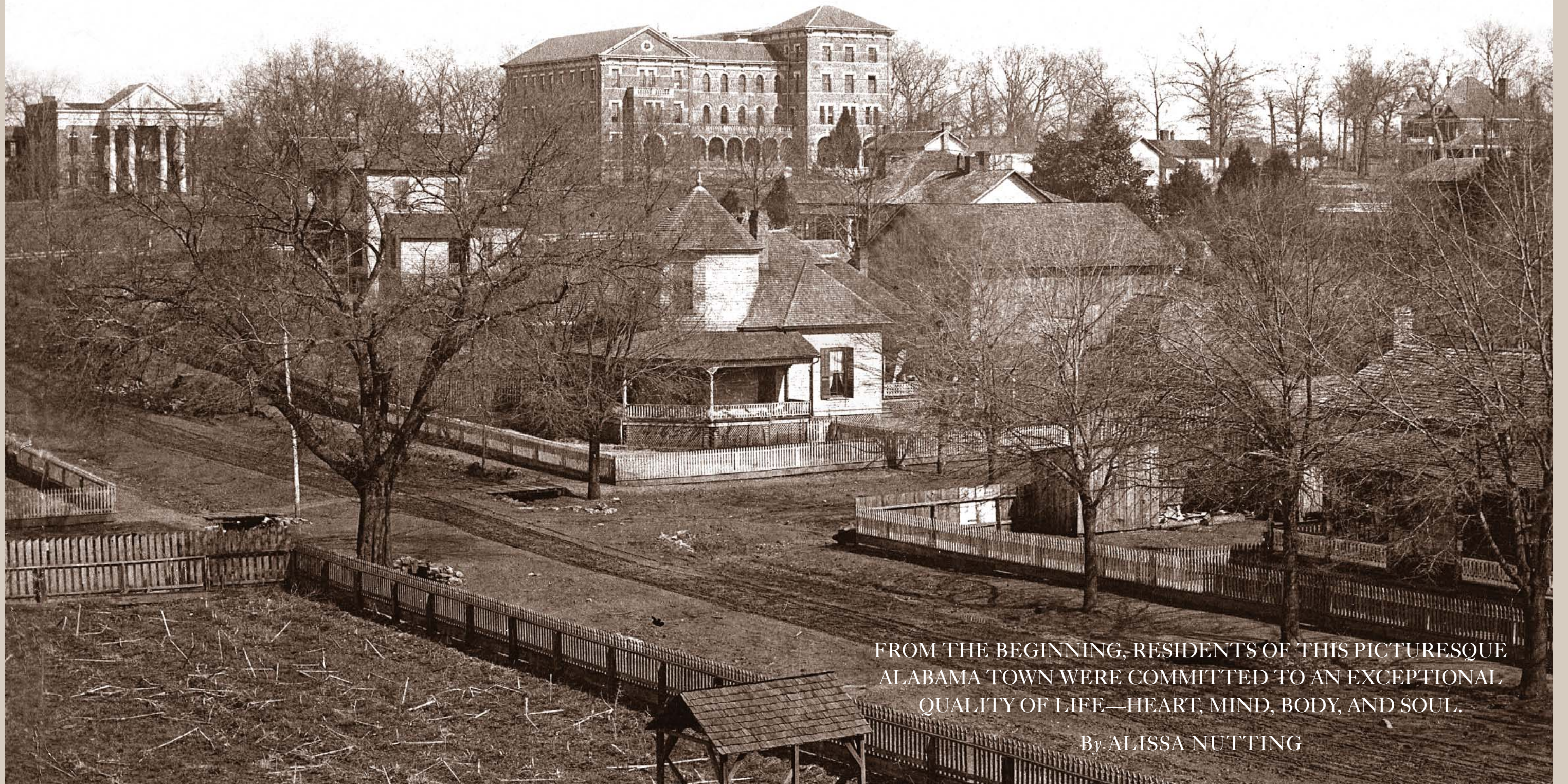


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# M O N T E V A L L O

## MOUND IN A VALLEY



FROM THE BEGINNING, RESIDENTS OF THIS PICTURESQUE ALABAMA TOWN WERE COMMITTED TO AN EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE—HEART, MIND, BODY, AND SOUL.

By ALISSA NUTTING



## MONTEVALLO'S EARLIEST NATIVE AMERICAN SETTLERS WERE DRAWN TO THE AREA BY ITS BEAUTY AND FERTILE SOIL.

**I**N 1886 REPORTER CLYDE CLIFTON WROTE OF Montevallo, “None can gainsay that she is placid and picturesque, and has complete mastery of the art of growing old gracefully.” Clifton hedged this flattery, however, by stating his belief that Montevallo had not answered “the bugle call of progress other Alabama towns had.” The Civil War had dealt a crippling blow to the town’s social and economic life, and recovery could not come fast enough for Clifton.

But Montevallo did indeed go on to answer the “call of progress,” restoring its vibrant community. Clifton indicates that, even as early as 1886, there were signs that Montevallo would advance and strengthen without falling into the trap of overdevelopment. In fact, when examining Montevallo’s heritage and the intentions of its founders, it becomes clear that Montevallo’s hometown feel is no accident.

Located in central Alabama, Montevallo remains a tranquil town, whose five thousand residents have resisted the commercial inundation of nearby metropolitan areas while embracing cultural enrichment. A drive down its Main Street, where local merchants thrive in historic storefronts, confirms Montevallo’s pride in doing twenty-first-century development a little bit differently. Throughout the city’s history, generations of citizens have carefully cultivated a delight in Montevallo’s quaint, vintage charm, passing this passion down to their children. The town has a unique spirit, one that seeks to *restore* rather than *replace*, to integrate the past into the present.

The spirit of Montevallo is personified in one of its most famed founding residents, Edmund King, who found success on Montevallo’s soil and generously poured his fortune back into the town. King scouted land in New Orleans, Mobile, Selma, and other locations before

choosing Montevallo (then known as Wilson’s Hill) in 1817. In *The Lives and Times of Kingswood in Alabama*, author Golda Johnson writes, “Edmund King liked what he found at Wilson’s Hill. The area seemed to be especially favored by nature. . . . No doubt a man of King’s vision and determination could see the beauty and advantages of this available land and could profit by his decision.” King saw something exceptional in Montevallo, and history has proven that his loyalty and devotion to the city was warranted. Since its settlement, Montevallo has grown into a unique Alabama city, one shaped by industry, education, faith, and recreation.

*The picture of affluence, Kingswood came to symbolize wealth in Montevallo. Slave labor allowed for each brick to be made from local clay. (Photo by Robin McDonald.)*



## BEGINNINGS

MONTEVALLO’S earliest Native American settlers were drawn to the area by its beauty and fertile soil. A late nineteenth-century *Montevallo News* article reported that “the health-giving springs and pure mountain air were discovered and sought after long before the State of Alabama was admitted into the Union.” In fact, the land that would become Montevallo was revered by the Creek Indians. They favored Montevallo “because of its refreshing and life-giving springs,” reported a Shelby County guidebook from the mid-1940s.

Montevallo’s first recorded white resident, Jesse Wilson, arrived shortly after 1814. He had served as a soldier under Andrew Jackson, one of many veterans to settle down in Alabama. He arrived as part of a wave of new inhabitants: “In three brief years, 1814–1817, the country now in Shelby County . . . was fairly swarming with people—the rugged, Jacksonian warrior pioneers of our grand old country.” These early settlers came with little; a June 16, 1859, *Alabama Baptist* article describes them as people who “began their fortune with a bag full or two of goods as their stock in trade.”

Wilson built his log home at the top of a hill, granting himself a vast view of undeveloped land. The town was therefore called “Wilson’s Hill” until July 14, 1826, when it was rechristened “Montevallo,” Italian for *on a mound in a valley* by Alva Wood, one of the committee members who surveyed Montevallo as a possible site for the University of Alabama. This hill, already steeped with history, was the site of an old Creek Indian clearing. It was not uncommon for residents of the early 1800s to encounter and trade with the Indians. A news article from that time reports that “we have found no instance of disturbance between them during their joint occupancy of the country.”

When settlers first began living in the area around the 1820s, acquiring provisions could often be a challenge. A *Montevallo News* article from July 25, 1895, reported that “In the primitive days goods were hauled in wagons from Selma and Wetumpka, and it is said salt was brought from Tuscaloosa on horseback, the roads being so bad. The merchants of that day and time generally made purchases but once a year, and the goods were on the road from one to three months.” The need for more



*Reynolds Hall, built in 1851 on land donated by Edmund King, served as Montevallo’s first school. It was in front of this building that local troops were mustered for the Civil War. (Photo by Robin McDonald.)*

readily available supplies fortunately coincided with a rush of incoming residents who saw Montevallo as an opportune place for commerce.

## INDUSTRY

MONTEVALLO supported a population of less than one thousand when it was first incorporated on March 31, 1848. The town’s population boom in the next few decades depended in large part on the influx of early entrepreneurs, including Edmund King.

After arriving in Montevallo via two covered wagons, King built his first cabin with the help of local Creeks, including, legend has it, “Red Eagle” (William Weatherford)—a man of Creek and Scottish ancestry who was famous for his bravery at the Battle of the Holy Ground. King planted corn and became one of Montevallo’s first business owners, opening its first general store, which also served as a Creek Indian trading post.

Success came quickly for King. By 1820 he owned sixteen slaves, and by 1823 he was ready to build the home that would forever establish him as Montevallo aristocracy. His mansion, which came to be known as Kingswood, was the first home in central Alabama to be



“ONE LOCAL ENTHUSIAST EXCLAIMED UPON SEEING THE TRAIN, ‘GOD’S CONVENTIONS ARE GREAT, BUT MAN’S CONVENTIONS ARE GREATER!’”

made of brick and have imported glass windows. King shared his successes and soon gained a strong reputation for generosity among the townsfolk. In *Montevallo: The First One Hundred Years*, Eloise Meroney writes that a prominent bend at the intersection of Main and Bloch Streets is a testament to King’s altruism and civic-mindedness. A proposed road had to run through the property of either King or fellow Montevallo businessman Edward Powell. Powell refused to forfeit his land to road space, but King granted permission; the road was therefore curved to fall on his property.

King was not the only successful businessman in Montevallo. Other early entrepreneurs included Jonathan Ware, who built Thompson’s Mill Forge—possibly the first forge in Alabama—in 1820. Despite the personal successes of many, the town of Montevallo suffered two major economic blows in the early 1820s. First, the city contended with Tuscaloosa to be the site of the state university and lost by one vote. Next, when Montevallo tried to secure the county courthouse, it lost out to Columbiana. (It should be noted that the residents of Columbiana celebrated the victory with great zest. In honor of being awarded the courthouse, they are said to have dynamited a tree.)

Still, in the next few decades Montevallo would emerge as a fine center of commerce in Alabama. The introduction of a railroad around the mid-1800s truly brought Montevallo to what Meroney labeled the “heights of commercial importance.” The entire community came together in a fundraising campaign to raise the capital necessary to make a railroad possible. “Even the women all through the county knit socks” to be sold to raise funds. Edmund King once again displayed his generosity, donating over twenty thousand dollars in stock and a fifteen-thousand-dollar engine.

On July 4, 1853, the first fifty-five and a half miles of the Tennessee & Alabama Rivers Railroad was completed, and a reception was held near the area of present-day Orr Park. There, one out-of-town attendee raved, “A prettier and pleasanter location could not have been selected in the state—[the reception was] in a

large, well-shaded grove, contiguous to several noble springs of the purest and coolest water.” In addition to the natural beauty, the man-made attraction of the day drew great raves as well: “One local enthusiast exclaimed upon seeing the train, ‘God’s conventions are great, but man’s conventions are greater!’”

As a stop on a prominent railroad line, the city and its commerce flourished. Coal mines, grist mills, cotton gins, tanneries, and trade stores buzzed with local industry and exported goods. Montevallo soon became a popular stop for business and recreation alike, drawing in all types: industry prospectors, tradesmen, even brides-to-be. A September 5, 1895, *Montevallo News* article reported, “Goods were sold on open account to any one and it is said that very little money was ever lost until after the war. Notes and mortgages were unknown and every man was put on his honor and very few ever went back on it.” The influx of spending further sparked the economy, and Montevallo’s first hotel, the Bell Hotel, opened in the 1850s.

But in the 1860s, Montevallo’s red-hot economy began to cool drastically. The Selma, Rome, and Dalton Railroad extended its line, so that Montevallo was no longer its terminus. Rail travelers who would have stopped and made purchases now spent their dollars in other cities. In another blow to local businesses, the developing L & N Railroad, which was expected to pass through Montevallo, instead was routed through Calera.

The Civil War, which drew away many of Montevallo’s male citizens, greatly accelerated this economic decline. The lush groves by modern-day Orr Park served as a send-off spot for local soldiers headed to join Confederate troops. In 1861 over ten thousand well-wishers came together to “bid the boys goodbye and to see them march away to join the Tenth Alabama Regiment being organized in Montgomery.” Several local companies were organized. Montevallo resident Rufus W. Cobb, who would go on to serve as governor of the state from 1878 to 1882, organized eligible Montevallo males to join the battle and head to Virginia as Co. C., Tenth Alabama Infantry Regiment, Forney’s Brigade.



In the spring of 1865, Gen. James Wilson’s army passed through Montevallo on the way to Selma. Kingswood became the temporary dwelling of the federal troops, much to the chagrin of Edmund King’s daughter, Elizabeth Shortridge. King had passed away on June 25, 1863, and Shortridge’s husband, George, was off at war, leaving Elizabeth as head of the busy household. A weary Shortridge had previously opened her home to care for wounded men and allowed General Lowell’s Confederate troops to camp on the property. Now, as Union troops arrived, she feared for her home.

The beauty and history of Kingswood kept it safe, however: “Wilson’s keen interest in Kingswood prevented harm to the plantation as well as the family. It was anything but pleasant, however, to put up with the enemy, and [Shortridge] soon grew weary of the imposition.” But the soldiers seemed happy with the situation. Shortridge was, perhaps, one of the women Wilson’s troops referred to when they later reported that Montevallo had “some good looking women and contrary to the prevailing fashion they were dressed well.”

It was from King’s mansion, a pillar of southern pride, that Union Gen. Emory Upton passed down orders to “destroy all iron works in the vicinity” in late March. Fear gripped the town and most activities were suspended; the Montevallo Baptist Church’s minutes recorded that there were no services on April 1, “the enemy being in possession of the town.”

Minimal fighting actually happened on Montevallo soil. Resident E. S. Lyman reported that the event

*The Montevallo First Baptist Church, shown in the late 1870s, was rebuilt in 1858 on a lot donated by Edmund King after the original building collapsed. (Courtesy Marshall Goggins.)*

known as the “Battle of Montevallo” was fought with the modest resources on hand, including “a locomotive pushing a flat car, on which was one little old cannon.” Despite much shooting, there were no known fatalities.

Yet what the town lacked in an arsenal, its residents made up for in spirit. A local man, Colonel John P. West, was a clever problem solver; he “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, straw-foot,’ etc.” The colonel, despite being home on furlough at the time of Wilson’s Raid, could not sit idly by. He gathered up elderly male residents who owned rifles and fired on a Union officer he spotted—in Lyman’s words, coercing the officer “to skerdaddle.”

Like many southern towns, Montevallo suffered a recession after the Civil War. By the 1870s, though, the scaled-down Montevallo began to get back on its feet. With Alabama’s readmission to the Union in 1868, a spirit of renewal infused the town and its residents with new life. By 1875 the Montevallo Coal Mines at Aldrich were booming. After hours, boisterous town residents and Aldrich miners poured into local taverns, filling the night air with laughter and song—a matter of frequent complaint for fellow residents wishing to sleep. Local brawls



## MONTEVALLO'S COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION NEVER FLAGGED, FOREVER SHAPING THE TOWN'S LANDSCAPE AND CHARACTER.

were common; an issue of the *Montevallo News* from July 18, 1895, reported of earlier years, "When people in the county had a falling out they would make an appointment to meet each other in the town the following Saturday and fight it out." But a little notoriety now and then could only help a town recovering from war.

One boost to the post-war economy came in the form of new blood. Businessman George Kroell, for example, moved to town and built a Victorian home with stained-glass windows, balconies, and gables—a glorious dwelling that became known for miles around. In addition, he opened a mercantile store and built the St. George Hotel, a classy getaway very popular with traveling salesmen. Spurred in part by such commercial improvements, the moral atmosphere of the town likewise received a face-lift. *The Shelby Chronicle* reported of Montevallo in 1887:

*The churches and schools are well maintained, and a high moral atmosphere prevails. The compulsory abandonment of the saloons has been a God-send to the place. . . . while intoxicating liquors are denied the miners, peace prevails on Saturdays, and cash freely flows into the merchants' coffers.*

By 1896 Montevallo was its old self again—but even better. It boasted eight general stores, two livery stables, two drug stores, two "fine" hotels, a newspaper, a lime kiln, a brickyard, a saw mill, and a sash, blind, and door factory. Six passenger trains were moving through the town each day. Eventually, the town grew to fit its description in the *Montevallo News*: "Montevallo, the Hustling, the Bustling, the Rustling. The most enterprising little city in the state."



### EDUCATION

THE EBB AND FLOW of Montevallo's economy reveals itself in the fates of its educational ventures. But the commitment to education, which originated with prominent founding residents, never flagged, forever shaping the town's landscape and character.

Edmund King was one such resident who held schooling in high priority. In 1851 King donated land and funding for Montevallo's first school, the Montevallo Male Institute. The school's next permutation came on February 6, 1858, when it became home to the Montevallo Male and Female Institute, established by William Carroll Gardner and James M. B. Roach from Bethel College, Tennessee, with financial backing from the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. On this co-ed campus, men were housed separately in Lyman Hall (the modern-day Saylor House on the University of Montevallo campus), and the women were put into Reynolds Hall, donated by King. Sadly, many schools, including this one, were hit hard financially by the Civil War and were forced to close.

But after the war, when the town began rebuilding itself, schools once again opened their doors. In 1869



*Above: Seeking inspiration from the world around them, this class of A.G.I.S. art students (c. 1900) take their canvases and pencils to the field. (Courtesy Marshall Goggins.) Opposite page: The first faculty of the A.G.I.S. posed for this photo shortly after the school's opening in 1896. They had the support of an entire town that was elated to be home to an institution of higher learning. (Courtesy the University of Montevallo.)*

the Male and Female Institute reopened under the private ownership of Dr. and Mrs. William H. Meredith. Due to emancipation, however, many former students were no longer able to attend, needing instead to help their families work the land. Other schools sprouted up as well. In 1866 an edition of the *Montevallo Star* ran an ad for the L.M.I. Institute, which offered primary classes for thirty-five dollars, higher classes for sixty dollars, and drawing and painting classes for twenty-five dollars.

Education was held in high esteem by those who could afford it. Though often subsidized by wealthy donors, these schools of the mid-1800s were private, requiring tuition. One of the longest running and most renowned, the Salem School, was open for over thirty years and had between seventy-five and a hundred stu-

dents, many from out of town. The *Montevallo News* writes of one notorious teacher known as Old Man Murrell, who 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 their children. He was a terror to the boys and there are no doubt many who read these sketches who have vivid recollections of his skill in the use of the rod.*

The paper also published a tributary rhyme to Professor Billy Peters, one of the first teachers at the Salem School, hinting at his disciplinary side: "Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught / The love he bore to learning was in fault."

In 1892 Sol Bloch of Wilcox County prepared and introduced a bill to fund an Alabama Girls' Industrial School (A.G.I.S.). Bloch stated, "The bill at first met with considerable opposition, because of the then-novel idea of establishing a school that would educate the girls of Alabama in studies that would enable them to earn their



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own livelihood.” Lucille Griffith, a former Alabama College professor, wrote of the A.G.I.S., “We must not think that Alabama Girls’ Industrial School was like all other schools. [It] was unique—unique in purpose. For the first time in the history of the state, Alabama was doing something for the education of its daughters.”

Having lost out on the University of Alabama some seventy years earlier, residents saw the Industrial School as their second chance to be home to a major educational institution. In May of 1895, hopeful that the school would find a home in Montevallo, the *Montevallo News* published “Industrial School—A Poem,” whose lines included, “Montevallo with her beauties of nature/ Two

*Below: In 1908 construction was underway on Main Dormitory for the A.G.I.S. The campus, including the home of Dr. Thomas Waverly Palmer, the school’s president, can be seen in the background. (Courtesy Bobby Joe Seals and the Shelby County Historical Society, Inc.) Left: Main Hall is still the largest dormitory on the University of Montevallo campus. (Photo by Robin McDonald.)*



*Wearing regulation wool bathing suits, these A.G.I.S. students enjoy a swim in the school pool circa 1920. At 30 x 65 ft., the pool was one of the largest in Alabama. (Courtesy Bobby Joe Seales, the Shelby County Historical Society.)*

springs with their water so cool/ With her minimal wealth and culture/ Is a place for the Industrial School.”

This time, Montevallo did win its bid to host the school. On October 12, 1896, with the excitement and support of the entire town, the former Male and Female Collegiate Institute reopened as the A.G.I.S. The Aldrich mines donated a year’s supply of coal, and citizens let students rent rooms in their houses—for the manageable sum of around nine dollars a month—until dorms were available. The Second Annual Catalogue of the school stated that the citizens of Montevallo “take great interest in the comfort of the many girls who come here to seek an education.” After the first year, the A.G.I.S. had roughly 225 to 250 students—an impressive number considering that the entire population of Montevallo was less than six hundred.

A decade later, Montevallo residents finally got their first public school. It started in 1901 as a one-room school house, but a second room was added in 1902 and a third in 1907. *The First One Hundred Years* describes how the students performed all the cleaning and maintenance—girls swept floors and cleaned windows and chalkboards; boys kept the fires going and hauled fresh buckets of water.

A.G.I.S. bought the Kingswood home and property of 43.4 acres for eight thousand five hundred dollars on July 21, 1908, perpetually incorporating the former mansion of the beloved founding resident into Monte-

vallo’s educational system, where it functioned as an infirmary, home economics building, and classroom throughout different time periods.

As the Institute grew and received further accreditation, it became Alabama College, a women’s school able to grant degrees beginning in 1923. Keeping the past a part of the present, Reynolds Hall, which had served as the one building for the A.G.I.S. for over twenty years, stayed a vital element of the new college’s campus. Grants from

the Public Works Administration allowed Reynolds Hall to be converted into the College Union Building in 1939.

In housing a women’s college, the town of Montevallo was in a unique position to help further the cause of women’s education, employment, and suffrage. A July 1937 bulletin prepared by Alabama College and the Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs quotes Arthur Fort Harman, then-president of Alabama College, as saying, “It is our conviction that the offerings of a woman’s college should be directed constantly toward the education of women for every phase of life.” Bulletins and literature from the college encouraged women to register to vote and examined polls studying the obstacles Alabama women faced at the polling booths and in the job market. Griffith wrote of the viewpoint of women’s suffrage at the time, “Traditionally, the ‘Southern Lady’ needed to be shielded and the prospects of her participating in sordid, contempt[ous] politics was not inviting. The polling place during an election, with drinking, drunkenness, fighting and brawling, was an unthinkable place for a woman to be.” Likewise, many men of the time were against suffrage “to the extent that while they accept it generally, they do not approve of it in ‘their’ women: wives, sweethearts, mothers, and sisters.” By encouraging women to enter fully into the freedoms allowed to them, officials at the school elevated the role of women in Montevallo and throughout the state.

In 1956 Alabama College began to admit male students as well. It blossomed into the University of Montevallo in 1969, a logical next step for a town deeply committed to education since its earliest days. The spirit of Edmund King also remains with the school. Kings-



## MONTEVALLO HAS NOT LOST ITS SERENE, SMALL-TOWN STYLE, NOR ITS GREAT COMMITMENT TO FAITH AND EDUCATION.

wood today is a guest house for officials visiting the University of Montevallo. His family burial plot remains on the campus, overseeing its advance into the twenty-first century.

### FAITH

MANY OF THE FIRST community buildings in Montevallo were churches. The first congregation in Shelby County was the Methodist Church of Montevallo, established in May 1818, followed by the Shoal Creek Baptist Church, organized in 1820. When the Baptist church disbanded, a more permanent structure, a brick church on a lot donated by Edmund King, was opened on August 30, 1858, as the First Baptist Church of Montevallo. This establishment still stands as a portion of the modern-day First Baptist Church building.

Many of the early churches were unable to remain in their original buildings—the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, for example, later became a roller rink. But the amount of religious organization throughout Montevallo's first century is a clear indication of the faith and spirit of the townsfolk: St. Andrew's Episcopal Church was built in 1860, and Montevallo Presbyterian Church was organized in 1897. After the Civil War, many black citizens established their own churches, the first being Methodist Ward's Chapel in 1872.

For local residents, churches served as far more than just places of worship. *The First Hundred Years* reports, "Churches were centers of social life. Few of them had full time ministers, oftentimes holding services only once a month." Before the telephone came to the town in May of 1901, information about church activities often passed 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." Funerals aside, residents were grateful whenever the opportunity to gather and chat presented itself, and they held group assembly in high regard. This emphasis on social community and faith, of such great importance to early Montevallo resi-

dents, would grow with the city, seeing its neighborly charm blossom throughout the decades.

### RECREATION

CLEARLY, FUN is something Montevallo has never lacked. Residents knew what they liked and were not shy about touting it. One bold lawyer in Montevallo felt so passionate about state legislative power that he named his son "State's Rights." In *The First One Hundred Years*, early resident Dr. Hall stated, "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."

Even the newspaper of the time, which occasionally included teasing remarks between the early residents, reflects the jovial sensibility of the time. Ribbing on someone who was apparently enjoying too much leisure time, the "news" one day jokingly informed citizens that "Mr. Fred Davis has been elected President of the Bums. He now fills the place left vacant by Jack Dill,



*Above and opposite page: While Orr Park has long been popular for its recreation areas, the figures carved into dead trees by local resident Timothy Tingle also charm visitors. The park currently hosts around thirty carvings and counting. (Photos by Anderson B. Scott.)*

who went to work and was suspended from the order." A *Montevallo News* article states that founding resident Mose Johnson "had quite a weakness for a good old fashioned game of poker, and at one time in a game of cards with a Tennessean on the bluff above the spring he won in one sitting five thousand bushels of corn."

Residents worked hard to maintain a serene town, though it was not always easy. Local laws of the time reflect dynamic personalities at work. One mayor, involved in a feud with a prominent citizen who liked to let his cows graze at night, made it illegal to let cows run at large in 1908. That same year Joe Davies, the first automobile owner in Montevallo, "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." Possibly as a result of such excitement, the in-town speed limit, a mere eight miles per hour in 1914, was not raised to twelve miles per hour until 1920.

Indeed, the slow streets of early Montevallo were quite colorful. It is said that Mrs. Aldrich, wife of the wealthy owner of the coal mines, would cause quite a stir when she rode into Montevallo to shop with her small granddaughter. "They came in a glass-enclosed coach hitched to beautiful spirited horses. . . . [Children watched] with envy of the little princess who rode within, seated sedately by a grandmother with a golden wig." It was rumored that Mrs. Aldrich posed with her husband in photos depicting their past-life incarnations, including their lives as the King and Queen of Atlantis.

THE VERDANT SPRINGS AND GROVES THAT FIRST drew settlers to the town provided wonderful shade for outdoor events and play. One favorite spot of early residents, a preserved area that became Orr Park in the 1970s, is still a cherished recreation site. Though popular for its trails, springs, and shade, the tree carvings done by local resident Timothy Tingle are what have brought this sleepy treasure most of its publicity. Tingle's artwork, combined with Orr Park's natural beauty, brings the park more acclaim every year.

Today, Montevallo has not lost its serene, small-town style, nor its great commitment to faith and education. The city currently boasts twenty-eight churches. In addition to its thriving liberal arts college, Montevallo is also home to the American Village, a civic education center where guests can learn about the eighteenth-century roots of American independence and visit the Pettus Randall Miniature Museum of American History, housed at the Village. Here, numerous dioramas depict historical leaders and events from the country's founding onward.

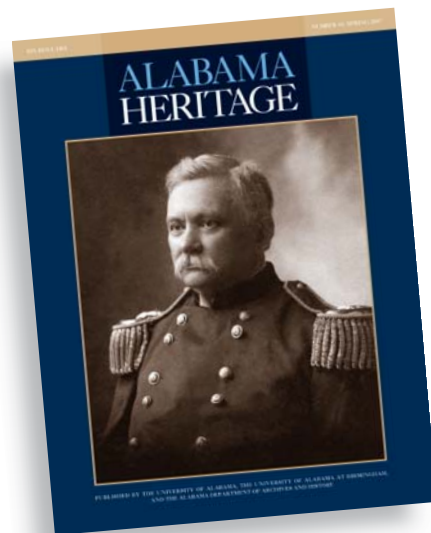
The vision of Montevallo's settlers has undoubtedly been realized. Coming with little but hoping for much, the founding residents of Montevallo knew that they wanted their tract of Alabama to set itself apart from the rest. The historic texture of the city speaks greatly to the residents' continued commitment to preservation. And, as it did nearly one hundred and seventy-five years ago, Montevallo still attracts students seeking education and tourists seeking recreation. True to its earliest days, Montevallo has retained the shape and style its founding residents set for the city. **AH**



THIS ARTICLE FEATURING MONTEVALLO ran in the Spring 2007 issue and was reprinted with the permission of *Alabama Heritage*, a quarterly magazine published by the University of Alabama, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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#### ABOUT THE COVER

FORMER ALABAMA GOVERNOR WILLIAM C. Oates served as a brigadier general in the Spanish-American War. (Photo courtesy the Alabama Department of Archives and History.) The spring 2007 issue of *Alabama Heritage* includes an article by Dr. Glenn LaFantasie entitled “Captain Oates and His Red-Shirted Boys,” which recounts Oates’s service in the Civil War.

#### ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

EACH ISSUE OF *ALABAMA HERITAGE* brings to life the people, places, and events that helped shape the history of Alabama and the South. With its lively articles, handsome design, and generous use of illustrations—including rare archival photographs—the magazine takes you back in time, where you’ll meet aviators and architects, fiddlers and fashion-designers, bank robbers and blacksmiths, and many others.

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