

Montevallo *Historical* Times

Vol. 3 No. 3

Newsletter of the Montevallo Historical Society

Summer 2019

Activities Support Montevallo's Legacy

The Montevallo Historical Society's mission includes the use of its resources to preserve the memory of our city's rich heritage as well as to support the maintenance of surviving buildings and sites that connect us to our past.

One way we are doing this can be found in every issue of the Montevallo Chamber of Commerce's monthly *Chamber Chatter* newsletter. Since the October 2018 issue, MHS director, Marty Everse, has contributed a well-researched, interesting, and educational article about some aspect of Montevallo's history for a page dedicated by the Chamber for this purpose.

A most entertaining example is his June 2019 treatment of the legendary George Kroell house that was a Main Street landmark for nearly 70 years. Marty offers a fascinating account of the mansion as well as the colorful Kroell family who earned a reputation for their entertaining skills that outlived the hosts as well as most

Montevallo Historical Society
Opening the Portals of Our Heritage

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AN ABSENCE OF STIFF FORMALITY
Marty Everse

The Kroell sisters knew how to throw a party. Their father knew how to build an extravagant house. Both talents were blended when in July 1905, Kate and Mary hosted a gala in honor of their friend, Alice Bangerter, recently engaged and called "one of the loveliest occasions in Montevallo's history of girls" by her hometown newspaper. That same evening George Kroell unveiled his newly completed mansion, Owl's Cove, on Main Street Montevallo. Everyone who was anyone was there, and the Shelby Sentinel noted "the house and grounds were brilliantly illuminated and inside the spacious parlors and galleries handsomely furnished with matrons and beautiful young women were attended by chivalrous men in a delightful absence of any stiff formality. Dainty and delicious refreshments were served from a table which the fair sex would say was a 'dream in its loveliness.' A band of musicians helped the hours to glide swiftly away and the stroke of the midnight hour surprised all for it had come so soon."

A friend of Kate and Mary, Christabel Maten of Brimfield, knew the family well. In fact, George Kroell and his wife were her godparents. A few weeks after the gala, Christabel scribbled in her diary, "Mr. K. is a splendid old German. Mrs. K. is a splendid old Irish woman with a penchant for cooking and housekeeping. Her standards are those that everyone except herself is dirty in housekeeping, that all women but her two daughters are breaking their necks to get a man, that any man is worth a half dozen women - and that everybody envies them their 'high estate.' She is charitable and ready to assist any one in trouble. The girls are kind hearted but when arrayed in their silks and satin remind me of Cinderella's two step sisters."

Christabel was impressed with the shindig or "reception" as she called it though there was a slight misunderstanding with the invitations. She wrote, "The Kroells gave a 'reception' party after they moved into the new house. I printed 75 cards for them to which Miss Mary was unwilling to pay me \$2.00. I'd have done them for nothing but they insisted on paying me. I like a jump walked till after the event, to which I walked, to say what I changed. I usually did not and think afterwards. The 'reception' was an event in our lives but as Sonny (Christabel's brother) said of the Kroells, they would henceforth date everything from 'The Party.'"

The fame of the party outlasted the participants and even the house. Montevallo historian Elsie Maroney, in her 1977 history of the town, wrote that the affair was talked about for years noting that society fairs from near and far gathered at Owl's Cove to gaze off "billionaires piled with all sorts of German delicacies to satisfy the most fastidious appetites." Her parents were two of the lucky guests.

The honoree, however, was not so fortunate. Four months after her party Alice Bangerter married her beau, Robert Dickson, in her mother's Greenville home and moved with him to Concord, N.C. Thirteen months later, she died. The local paper lamented, "Bliss and grief were closely allied for the death occasion followed closely on the marriage feast. Mrs. Dickson was a lovable character and wherever she went she carried sunshine."

Please join us for our next general membership meeting on Sunday, July 21 at 2 p.m. at the Parnell Memorial Library

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merchants who once occupied the buildings and retail spaces, many of which still stand today, on Main Street.

Our most recent outreach activity involved an investment of both dollars and sweat equity at Henry Emfinger's Aldrich Coal Mining Museum. MHS directors became aware in the last year that the grounds surrounding the old Commisary and Farrington Hall, both of which house the museum's collections, had not been regularly maintained for some time. Grass needed cutting and some spots had become so overgrown with privet and other nuisance shrubs that an organized assault was in order.

MHS president Susan Godwin enlisted the help of Robert Brantley and John Wagner and director Sherry Vallides brought in members of her painting business crew for a one-time clean-up effort that definitely helped the museum put its best foot forward for the summer.

The articles by Marty Everse can be found in the Chamber Chatter archives on the Chamber's website and they are also collected at www.historicmontevallo.org

Visitors and Locals Enliven Morgan Talk

Montevallo Historical Society members and guests were treated to an entertaining and informative hour of anecdotes and personal experiences regaled in colorful detail by 45 year Montevallo resident and former University of Montevallo history professor, Dr. David Morgan.

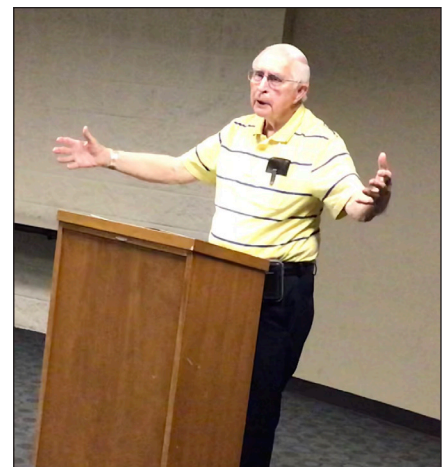
His presentation was focused primarily on famous and well-known individuals he has known who have come to Montevallo, many of whom he was instrumental in bringing to the UM campus. Among them were former President George H.W. Bush, former Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, and noted historians Gordon

Wood and George Tyndall.

One of Morgan's UM colleagues, about whom he spoke highly, Eugene B. Sledge, was not famous when they met, but the publication of Sledge's war memoir brought fame and international recognition to the unsung biology professor Morgan had befriended when he moved to town.

Other colleagues he remembered fondly were Lucille Griffith, Murry Flynn, Charlie Webb, Todd Jeter, and Dorothy Nix.

Among local "colorful characters" earning Morgan's attention and admiration were: Dr. Mike Mahan, "Moon" Thornton, Chuck King, and Doug Morris.



UM emeritus professor of History, David Morgan, spoke on April 28, 2019. A video of his program is available at www.historicmontevallo.org

President's Letter

It was with a sense of exuberance and anticipation that the Montevallo Historical Society formed in response to Montevallo's Bicentennial celebration. Today as we mark the first year of Montevallo's next centennial, and move from our celebration of the past into Montevallo's future, it is clear that exciting times are ahead!

This year, on December 14th, we mark the 200th birthday celebration of the State of Alabama. In recognition of that occasion your historical society is inaugurating the vanguard of our community outreach program. Many members have added their names to specific projects supported by our society and I'm delighted that several of those efforts are already underway with pleasing results. We're looking forward to telling you about some of those projects at our next membership meeting in July.

At that meeting we will kick off committees dedicated to local genealogy and oral histories, improving our local cemeteries, commemorating the old Ashville to Montevallo Stagecoach road, and the recent efforts of our MHS Helping Hands, led by Sherry Vallides and a crew of dedicated workers. Melinda Nix will tell us about several other Historical Properties interest groups that are forming and how you can be involved.

Many of our outreach activities will require extra funding. Fortunately, a group of dedicated MHS members have already volunteered to help us achieve these goals. If you would like to help we still need volunteers for the following programs:

♦ Janice Seaman will tell us about plans for two upcoming fund-raising events. Janice and her helpers have already contacted a *chef-extraordinaire* and are in the process of setting up a festive gala dinner planned for the coming fall season. Many extra hands will be needed to ensure a fun and fabulous time for everyone.

♦ Who doesn't love a Historic Homes Tour? Our members are planning a December Christmas tour showcasing several of Montevallo's historic buildings decorated for Christmas. This event will come complete with costumed interpreters, guides, and carolers to add an especially festive holiday occasion to our calendar.

♦ Anne Thomas and her committee of cooking enthusiasts who have generously provided the wonderful refreshments at each of our meetings have a very special Cookbook planned just in time for Christmas. She is looking for historic recipes from local families to include.



The W. B. Reynolds house, today the Fox and Pheasant Inn, one of several homes planned for the 2019 MHS Historic Homes Tour in December.

We invite you to join us at our next general membership meeting on Sunday, July 21 at 2:00 p.m. at the Parnell Library to sample historic recipes from local families and hear more about our plans.

In addition, Clay Nordan's program will educate and enrich us all as we once again take a walk down Montevallo's memory lane.

Thank you for supporting this community effort. We're looking forward to seeing you soon.

Susan

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Clay Nordan
Vice-President

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Secretary

Janice F. Seaman
Treasurer

Montevallo
Historical Society

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Melinda Nix

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Anne Thomas

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DISTINGUISHED FOUNDING DIRECTOR
Dr. S.M. Mahan, Jr. (1934 – 2018)

The Tower

From the Alabama College campus newspaper, the *Alabamian*, September 2, 1950

ALABAMA COLLEGE'S historic landmark, The Tower, stands tall and stately in the center of the campus reflecting a mysterious air for curious observers.

For years the tall concrete structure has served as the keynote of campus dignity and tradition. It is the most photographed structure at Alabama College, and has been considered by many as more ornamental than useful.

However, the story goes (as was told to an Alabamian reporter in 1940 by the late Mr. W. M. Jones-Williams, superintendent of grounds and buildings for the college at the time) that the Tower is definitely of practical value, as well as a campus eye attraction.

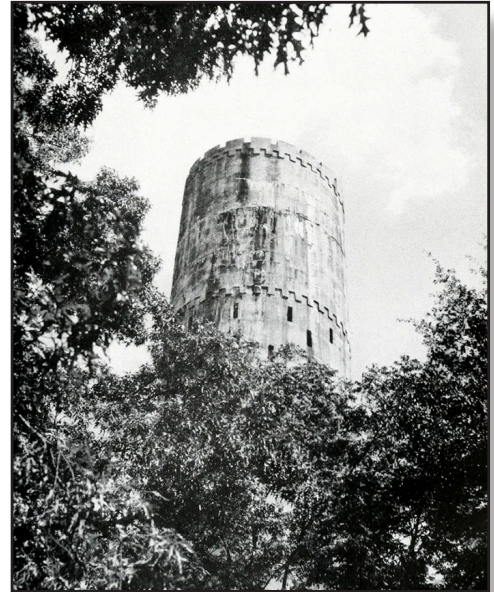
"The Tower was built in 1910 by the Piedmont Construction Company of Atlanta, and serves as the sole means of water storage on the campus. One hundred and twelve feet from ground to top, it supports a water tank within it which is 32 feet deep.

"Capacity of the tank is 109,000 gallons. The water is piped from the filtration plant off campus to the Tower almost constantly to supply necessary water for all college buildings, including the dairy and swimming pool. Approximately 250,000 gallons are used daily."

The reason for occasional overflow of water from the Tower is due to the fact that on days when 250,000 gallons are not used on campus, the surplus escapes from the top.

The fact has also been stressed that the Tower and the more recently construct-

ed water tank behind Main Dormitory have nothing in common – other than that they both hold water, of course. The tank supplies only the sprinkler system in Main Dormitory, and must be kept full at all times in case of fire.



By the early 1960's, the Tower was no longer needed for water storage, so a clever re-use gave it a new lease on life. Architects installed a staircase along the interior walls and the structure was converted for office space for the three student publications. Topping off the project was the addition of an electronic carillon that projected Westminster chimes to the community each hour.

The Historic Village of Hill and Vale

Montevallo in 1886

Clyde Clifton Gives a Charming Story of this Wonderful spot so Rich in Memories of the Past

FROM THE BIRMINGHAM SUNDAY CHRONICLE, DEC. 19, 1886

An unusually interesting account of life in Montevallo in 1886 has been brought to the attention of the Times-Herald by David Ward, formerly of Montevallo and now a college professor in Georgia. Mr. Ward, while doing research at the Department of Archives and History in Montgomery discovered a copy of an article published in the "Birmingham Sunday Chronicle" on December 19, 1886 about Montevallo. We believe that many people will enjoy reading this article. Due to its length, it will be printed in a series of four weeks. The original author is listed as Clyde Clifton. Mr. Ward has tried to locate information regarding this Clyde Clifton but so far has been unable to find anything. He requests that any information about Mr. Clifton be sent to him at 212 South Mulberry, Statesboro, GA.

—W.M. Wyatt, Publisher

In a little valley lies the main village, while here and there cottages dot the Cedar crowned hills that surround it. From a southern window in the room in which I write I can see its spires and roofs, visible through the leafless branches of the oaks — Montevallo, trueful name that so fitly describes these hills and dales. 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.

'Once upon a time' Montevallo was one of the most important interior towns of the state. She had the monopoly of the trade of several counties, St. Clair, Bibb, Chilton, and a portion of Talladega and Jefferson. Lying down here in the corner of Shelby, the boundary of Chilton is but a league away and that of Bibb but little further.

The days that I refer to before the railroads were built through the county may be called the Golden Age of the town, traffic and trade and the spirit of commercial rivalry made it very lively and prosperous. Though her people thrived, for goodly fortunes have been made here in times past, they were not hazardous. They demanded a tangible evidence of gain and were afraid to venture into any sort of speculative enterprises. The first 'faux pas' was when they let the L&N cross the ET&VA at Calera instead of this point. The commercial scepter was then taken from them. Now, Calera to the right of them, Brierfield to the west of them, have each usurped a portion of Montevallo's old trade.

I have heard it said that Mr. Peter has been sorry that he did not locate his company's great enterprises here, the nailing and rolling mills

Editor's Note:

What you see on this and the following pages is a re-creation of an article about Montevallo that was reprinted in 1959 by W. M. Wyatt, publisher of the "Shelby County Times-Herald", a newspaper published in Montevallo

that had been created by the merging of the "Montevallo Times" and the "Calera Herald" five years earlier. The "Times-Herald" was sold to the "Shelby County Reporter" in the fall of 1959.

David Ward, who found the article and brought it to Mr. Wyatt's attention,

later wrote "Lamar and Me", a small volume of stories about growing up in Montevallo. He also edited a collection of local remembrances entitled "Time Has Made a Change in Me" and was a contributor to the definitive text "Alabama, History of a Deep South State".

of Brierfield, the very life-blood of that stirring manufacturing village. It seems that somebody always fails to point out the superior advantages of this place which has wonderful natural endowment, until capital has been invested elsewhere. Almost every other Alabama town has roused to the bugle call of progress except this one – she has been fitfully dozing for a number of years, now she slumbers soundly, a sleep that does not resemble that of Rip Van Winkle so much as it does that sleep that knows no waking. Yes, once more the Angel Opportunity taps Montevallo on the shoulder. Will she awaken at the touch? One of the numerous railroads centering at Birmingham is reaching an arm down the valley in this direction. It will cross the ET&VA ‘at or near’ Montevallo. Is Montevallo doing anything to bring it at Montevallo, or is she going to let it, like the other, cross ‘near’ here, and build up a rival below here that will steal from her the last vestige of her pristine commercial glory? Time, and a very short time, will show.

But did I not promise something locally historic for this letter? A drive today carried me by ‘Altara’, just outside the town on a steep hill, on the road to the Aldrich Mines. ‘Altara’ is now the home of J.D. McMath, Esq., but was once the residence of one of Alabama’s most eminent men of the old era, Judge Geo. D. Shortridge, purist, politician and literateur. He was the first mayor of Montgomery, and after returning to Shelby, he was for nine years a circuit judge, resigned it to be the candidate of the American party for governor in ’55 and was defeated by bluff old

John Anthony Winston, democrat. He represented Shelby in the Constitutional convention of ’61 and was one of the signers of the famous Ordinance of Secession of Alabama. From private letters from politicians at the time, I see that Judge Shortridge was quite prominent as a candidate for the presidency of that historic body, but that honor fell upon the shoulders of another distinguished lawyer, Judge W.M. Brooks, lately become a citizen of Birmingham. Two of Judge Shortridge’s sons, brilliant youths, mere officered boys, but full of patriotism and chivalry, died wearing the gray on battlefields. Gay and handsome, bright and brave, Eli and Frank – their beautiful lives and grand deaths are not forgotten.

Lieut. Geo. D. Shortridge, another son, died shortly after the war. Judge R. Gaines of the supreme court of Texas, is a son-in-law of Judge Shortridge, having married the beautiful Miss Lou Shortridge, now a social leader in the highest circles of the Texas capitols. The handsome wife of Dr. Sedberry, of Jefferson, Texas, is the younger daughter. Mrs. Shortridge, the Judge’s widow was recently on a visit to her old home in Alabama. She is an interesting chronicler of the past and with the key of memory unlocks rich

treasures of personal narrative in which the heroes that now shine on the pages of our state’s history are familiar, everyday personages – the Tom, Dick, and Harry of her school days in Tuscaloosa fifty years ago.

Lovely Lizzie King was no less a beauty and belle in those days than was her grand-niece and

“[Montevallo] is not enterprising ... not pushing ... not plucky ... and has complete mastery of the art of growing old gracefully.”

– Clyde Clifton
“Birmingham Sunday
Chronicle,” 1886.

“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.”

– Eloise Meroney
writing in “Montevallo,
The First One Hundred Years”
in response to Clyde Clifton’s
1886 assertion.

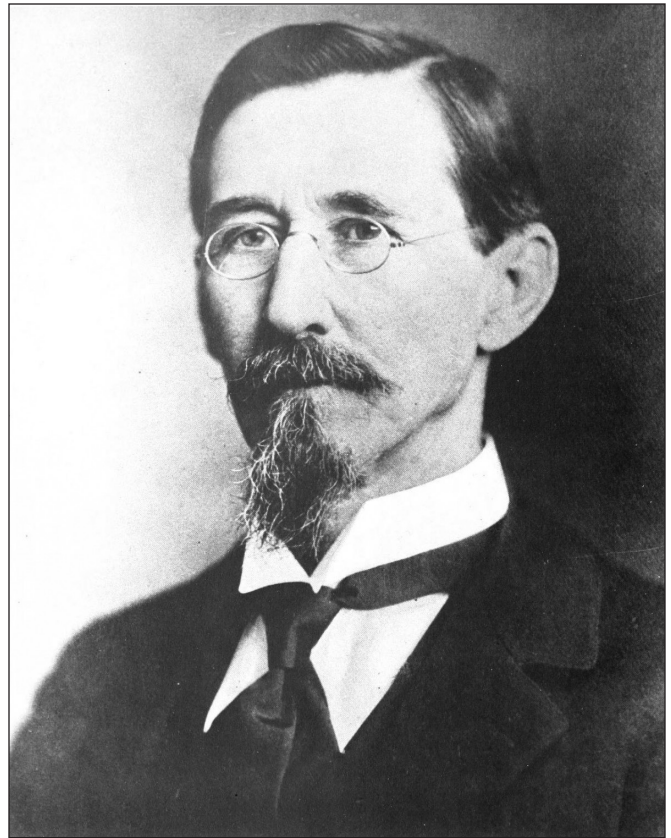
namesake, pretty Lizzie Lewis, a half-century later. George Shortridge was one of the most promising young men of his period, and like Lewis Bradford, had to win his bride from a host of rivals.

Judge Shortridge was a student all his years, and collected a costly and rare library. This man of letters yielded a forcible pen and ornate, it seems a great pity that all this knowledge should perish with him and the world be none the wiser for his erudition. The manuscript, poems, magazine articles, legentic stories, memoirs, etc., of Judge Shortridge, who died in the very room in which I write in '70, were for several years in the hands of the Hon. Burwell B. Lewis, his nephew, who intended to have them published, but in his busy life Col. Lewis never completed the work.

After leaving Altara and passing along the road through the estate lands of the late Capt. Frank King, your scribe came to an old house that is always pointed out as one being the summer home of Alabama's grandest statesman, that great and lovable man, Senator John T. Morgan. Shelby loves him and always votes for him, and feels a particular claim upon him, as he once lived here. To 'such vile uses we come,' the home that once had this distinguished statesman and family as inmates, and it was an ideal summer place, amid the shade trees, and the merry crystal brook of the poets gurgling over its pebbly bottom and its banks moss and fern-fringed right in front of the door, but it is now a – barn! "Caesar dead and turned to clay may stop a crack to keep the wind away." This house passed into the hands of the nabob of Montevallo, Mr. C.C. Vandegrift, the banker merchant, and no doubt utility and pay demanded its conversion into a barn.

Just a few yards on beside the barn, embowered in myrtle, honeysuckle and Baltimore belle roses, is the cottage built by the only man that Shelby has given to the state as governor, plain Rufe Cobb. Gov. Cobb lived here many years, and Shelby still has him as one of her most honored and useful citizens. The Cobb cottage and farm is now owned by Mr. Vandegrift.

On the opposite side of the road, is also an historic cottage half hid from view by climbing jessamine and honey suckle. It was here that young Burwell Lewis brought his brilliant bride whose maiden name was that completest floral one Rose Garland. Here they spent their happy honey-



Capt. H. C. Reynolds, prominent Montevallo merchant, newspaper owner, and the first president (1896 – 1899) of The Girls Industrial School of Alabama.

moon, romantic 'love in a cottage' amid the roses. As lawyer, legislator, congressman and president of his own Alma mater, the State University, Shelby was very proud of this favorite son of hers and now dead in his prime, she mourns him.

Turning back into Montevallo there is scarcely a house that has not sent into the world at least one man who has made his mark, and it would take one as patient as Mary Gordon Duffie to write their biographies and it would take a volume, not a letter, to contain them.

Standing unoccupied and just ready to topple into ruins, reminding one of the 'Last of the Mohicans', is the Watrous house. Home of Daniel Watrous, who for twenty-five years led the bar of Shelby and sixteen years represented Shelby and Jefferson in the state senate and so popular was he that his party in '45 put him in the field for congress against that renowned orator and brilliant politician, Wm. L. Yancey. Though the Watrous house is in ruins, not so the old land that adjoins it. Last year Mr. H.C. Reynolds, a citizen of Montevallo of remarkable energy and enterprise, bought the three acres belonging to the Watrous heirs, and being a convert by Free-man, he put it in proper cultivation, used fer-

tilizer, and this fall it has yielded him two bales of cotton to the acre. This land adjoins the famous guinea grass bottoms belonging to the heirs of Capt. Frank King. Wonder tales are told of the remarkable yield of hay to the acre of these lands when in proper cultivation. A geographer in putting down the staple products of Montevallo, a few years ago, would have said, pretty girls and guinea grass. It has now added to the list, cotton, pears – and perhaps in the future may be added – pecans!

About nine years ago some of the Powell lands, a gullied red waste of hillsides, was purchased by Capt. H. C. Reynolds. This year fifteen acres of that same land once called “worn-out” yielded sixteen bales of cotton – more than a bale to the acre. Can there be a stronger proof of the wonderful recuperative powers of red clay sub-soil? Mr. Reynolds has a rival orchard to that of the celebrated Calera pear man, Adams. It is a goodly sight. 800 beautiful pear trees, the orchard on the left bank of that picturesque stream, Shoal Creek, and his fruit will yield Capt. Reynolds a richer return than ever [sic, even] his cotton, under the intensive system of farming. On the opposite side of the road going to the depot, from his pear orchard, Mr. Reynolds intends planting a large grove of pecan trees, it having been demonstrated that pecans thrive and mature its fruit, a favorite nut in this latitude. Your scribe has gathered ripe, wild filberts growing near “Hollybrook” – the Davis place – three miles

from Montevallo. I have cited the example of Mr. Reynolds to prove how much “life there is in the land yet.” Across the street in front of the pretty home of Col. E.G. Walker, one of the village potentates, was pointed out to your scribe as the site of the residence in which was born one of the [sic, the] Magic City’s most eminent citizens, Judge Porter. Not a stick or stone marks the spot, but it is in cultivation in the Reynolds field.

The last newspaper that Montevallo had, The Guide, was edited by Mr. D.B. Grace, an attractive and forcible writer, now successful manager of the Evening Chronicle. “And another young man who stands so high in business and society,” continued my guide, “in Birmingham used to live here, Clyde J. McCary.” One of the favorite families of the town, the Lymans, so much loved and honored here, have given to Birmingham a son, young Mr. Henry Lyman. Wherever there is Lyman blood there you will find true manhood and



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--- Third General Meeting of 2019 ---
Sunday, July 21, 2019 • Parnell Library 2:00 pm

This meeting will begin with a discussion and information session about the results of the committee assignment questionnaires and sign up sheets that were recently mailed to every member. MHS members interested in becoming involved in specific historical society activities should be sure to attend.

Following this opening session and discussion will be a short local-history based program led by vice-president, Clay Nordan.

TOPIC: A Famous Biographer Comes to Montevallo in 1939 and is the Toast of the Town.

--- Social Hour and Refreshments to Follow the Meeting ---

true womanhood, and there is never an exception to this rule.

Mr. Charles Rowley is another clever son that Montevallo has entrusted to the Magic City to build up in a business way. A fair sample of the youths that the Montevallo high school trains, now under Prof. Howard Griggs, is young Walter Cleveland, in Copeland and Stone's book store. A wiser, brighter young gentleman will not be found the world over. Walter is the older son of Rev. Dr. Cleveland, pastor of the Southside Baptist Church. This eminent divine has accepted a call to the Baptist Church of Montevallo, one of the most prosperous and beautiful churches in the state. The artistic interior of this sacred edifice would do credit to a city church. Dr. Cleveland will reside at Kingswood, the King homestead belonging to the widow and children of Capt. Frank King.

In writing of historic houses in this vicinity this one should not be passed in silence. It was begun in 1815, and perhaps was the first brick house in the county.

The late Rev. Dr. Meredith once told your scribe that when it was first built it was the school house of the neighborhood, that people came from miles around to see it, and thought it a grand mansion, modest and old-fashioned, and unpretending as it now seems. Although it has buffeted the storm of seventy years it remains solid, for it belongs not to the era of Sham and Buddensick. In its solid simplicity it is a reminder of the character of the old Virginia gentleman who founded this homestead.

Edmund King is [was?] a just man, who loved God and his fellow man. He was one of the pillars of the Baptist Church in this state for fifty years. At one time he had amassed what was called in these infant years of the state a magnificent fortune, and he gave to his children every educational advantage. One of his daughters [L]ouise the elder married Hon. Wm. J. Acklen of Huntsville, a prominent lawyer and office holder, and who lost a son at Gaine's mill. They were the parents of Corine Acklen, now Mrs. Goodman of Memphis, one of the most admired women Alabama has ever known, and who, under the chaperonage of the famous Mrs. Clem Clay, became a belle of national repute in Washington. Mr. King's second daughter, Elizabeth became the wife of Judge Shortridge, a sketch of whom is

given in the first part of this letter.

Of the six sons of Mr. Edmund King, four received a classical education and were given a tour of Europe, an advantage very rare at that period. Wm. W. graduated at the University of Alabama, one of the first seniors, and went to New Orleans, where for many years he led the bar, being the senior member of the famous firm of King & Elmore. Mr. W.W. King's sons are all doing business in New Orleans and his eldest daughter, Miss Grace King, has become the rival of Geo. W. Cable as a writer of Creole stories. She is pronounced by the critics one of the most original and ablest story writers of the day. Edmund King's second son, Thomas, who was one of the first students at the Auburn college, also went to Louisiana, where he is a planter in the beautiful Teche country. He married Miss Marsh, and Henry A. King, who was one of June's graduates of the University of Alabama, is the younger son of this worthy pair.

Col. Peyton King, one of Birmingham's most prominent citizens, was the third son, and the only one now living in Alabama. He graduated in Rhode Island and has travelled extensively, is thoroughly versed in literature, and is a charming raconteur. Col. King has ever been a child of fortune, for at his birth she showered upon him her best gifts of mind, and a handsome person, and the goddess has never deserted him yet. He married the beautiful Miss Ala M. Tarrant of Jefferson county and Misses Rosa and Marietta, well known in the society of the Magic City, are their daughters. If Miss Rosa was the daughter of a poor man, she would win her way to fame and fortune with the pencil and brush for she is an artist of undoubted genius. Some of her canvasses are masterpieces in amateur painting. Nat R. King, the fourth son, graduated at University of South Carolina, and after a foreign tour, married Miss Selma Sibley, of Mobile a lady of rare intellectual attainments.

In '55 Nat King represented Shelby in the legislature and afterwards was in business in Mobile. He died when only 32 years old here in this old homestead, and on the stone that marks his resting place is the inscription placed there at his own request: "He was a reliable man."

Shelby King who married a Miss Woodfin, while he was at Howard College, became a Baptist minister, and now lives in Texas.

Of Mr. Edmund King's half dozen sons, Frank Ragan was the youngest. He was a student of the University of Alabama but graduated at the University of Virginia and then went abroad to spend two years in travel. When he had been in Europe fourteen months the toc-



Historic "Kingswood", also known variously as "The Mansion", "Nabors Hall", and "King House". Local historians agree that the house was completed in 1823. It was restored to its original Federal style in 1973-74 and remains a landmark on the University of Montevallo campus.

sin of war was sounded in his native south, and he hurried across the seas full of youth's fire and patriotism. He went out as 1st Lieutenant of a cavalry company and fought to the close of the war. After the war Capt. King graduated from the law department of the University of Louisiana and practiced law a few months in that city. He was [a] social favorite, gifted in mind and of handsome person and fascinating manners. It was in Louisiana that Capt. King had his public career, the people honoring him with the offices of District Solicitor, State Senator, and member of the last Constitutional Convention. In '79 Capt. King married Miss Fannie Snodgrass of Alabama. His health failing him two years after, he came to this old homestead, which he had purchased and after weary months of suffering here, died.

Aside from the personal interest, "Kingswood" was Wilson's headquarters when he stopped here on his way to Selma, and the room in which I write was where the Yankee general wrote his orders. His whole army camped on this farm which had already suffered at the hands of the Confederate general Lowell's brigade which had spent several weeks in camp on this farm.

Nearer town and just outside the fine old oak grove that makes the policy of Kingswood, as the surroundings are called in Scotland, is the lovely old home, that is the property of the wife and children of the late Hon. John S. Storrs, a prominent lawyer, and for ten years representative of Shelby and Jefferson in the lower house, and one

term representing Shelby and Jefferson in the senate of our state legislature. The former Mrs. Storrs, now Mrs. Holbrook, a lady of superior intellect and attractiveness, resides here, with her interesting daughters. Mr. John Storrs, of Shelby Iron Works,

who married that winsome social favorite Miss Lulan North, is his only son. Capt. Chas. Storrs, who married Miss Houghton of Brooklyn, and who struck it rich in Birmingham real estate, is a nephew of Mr. Storrs.

The right hand neighbor of Kingswood is Mr. C. C. Vandegrift, whose wife was a daughter of Mr. S. Steele, a merchant of the Magic City, and A. Vandegrift his partner, is Mr. Vandegrift's brother. Miss Mayline, a dashing little brunette, not unknown in Birmingham, is his older daughter.

A few yards below the Vandegrift residence is the imposing old institute, from which have gone forth so many maidens, equipped with learning and taught all gracious Christian virtues, by Rev. Dr. Meredith and family. The good old man has gone to his reward, but Mrs. Meredith and their youngest daughter, Miss Lydia, have a flourishing school. In Prof. Howard Griggs she has one of the foremost educators in the state. He is winning golden opinions, and the training that he gives the youths entrusted to his care and guidance speaks loudest in his praise. Lyman Hall High School will train some of the leaders of the future Alabama. Mark the prediction!

On a bluff overlooking Shoal Creek, from the rear of the neat cottage, is the home of Mr. Henry Wilson the leading attorney of Montevallo, and who is well known over the state. Miss Leta Wilson, who lately became Mrs. Slaton, of the Magic City, is his sister, and Miss Mamie Allen and Mrs. S. Steele, are his sisters-in-law.

Montevallo Moves Historic Depot

By Clan Phillips

From the Shelby County Reporter
Thursday, May 17, 1973

Everything was ready. Before the weekend came, crews had prepared the foundation in the city park, placed giant steel girders under the depot, freed the structure from its old foundation, attached the powerful tractor to the building and made arrangements to have all obstructions moved from the path of this depot on wheels. Crews from the railroad and the power company were standing by for the last minute removal of signals and power lines. Everything was ready but the weatherman.

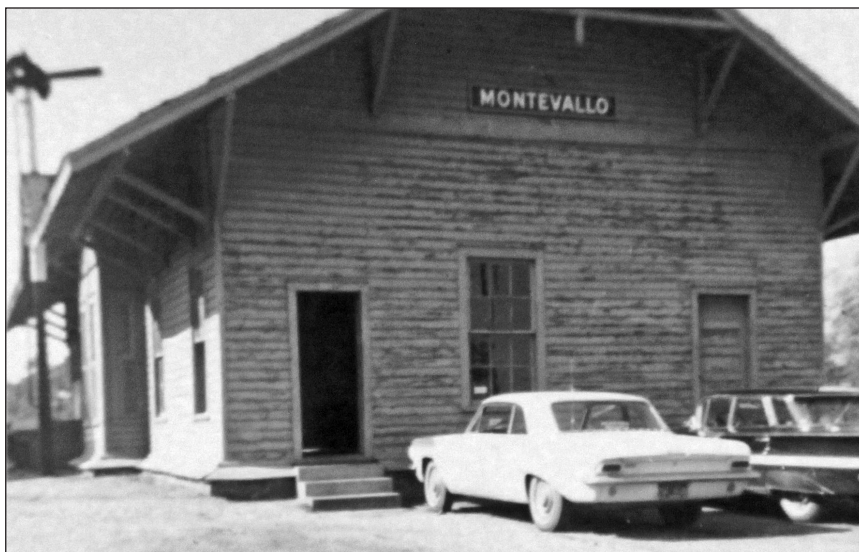
People began arriving at the old depot about 7:30 Saturday morning. Some came because they were to help with the move in one way or another, and some came just to watch the 75 ton structure roll. But nobody did anything, because everything was ready but the weatherman.

According to the movers, Saturday was just not the day to move the Montevallo depot to its new location in the city park.

But everything comes to him who waits, and by Tuesday the ground had drained sufficiently to support the mobile depot. Again, people began showing up about 7:30. Again, the power company crews, the telephone company crews, and the city police were ready. And this time, even the weatherman was ready.

It was a tight squeeze in spots, and some very sharp turns had to be negotiated. When the depot reached the viaduct, the movers were forced to raise the building several inches to clear the guard rails. All in all, however, things went very smoothly, and the depot is in position above the previously poured foundation, waiting for the finishing touches on its new home.

The Montevallo city park now sports a new attraction, and the people of Montevallo have preserved a little piece of yesterday to pass on to the citizens of tomorrow.



HISTORIC BUILDING CLOSES – Workmen moved out the last of the furniture and equipment from the Montevallo depot of the Southern Railway before it closed last Saturday. Interest is gathering in saving the depot and moving it to a new location in the new city park.

(Shelby County Reporter, March 1, 1973)



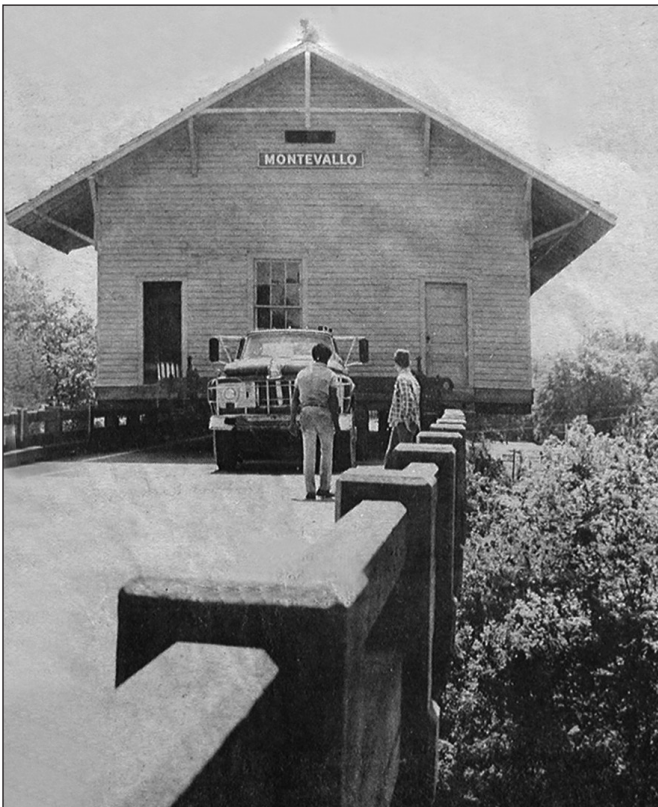
PARADE – Montevallo's depot is shown here several hundred feet from its original location, crossing the tracks on the way to highway 25. With the police cars, power and telephone company vehicles, and the winch truck used by the movers to remove road signs, the procession had some of the characteristics of a parade. According to the movers, however, it was no picnic.



SHARP CURVE – If you have ever made the turn from Highway 119 to 25, going north, you know its not very easy to negotiate in a car. How would you like to try it with a 75 ton depot hanging on your bumper?



RIDING HIGH – Montevallo's historic railroad depot was moved Tuesday morning to its new home in the city park. Here the 75 ton structure is shown being towed across the Middle Street viaduct toward town. (Photo by Jerry Hamilton)



ROOM TO SPARE – The depot had to be raised several inches to clear the guard rail of the Middle Street viaduct. Even so, the only room to spare was the one hanging over the side.



SUCCESSFUL SOD – Bruce McClanahan and Dr. Mike Mahan, co-chairmen of the Save Our Depot committee, smile with satisfaction as the depot rests, finally, on its new foundation. The structure will now be renovated for use as a library and recreation center in the park.

Despite the bright future envisioned by the Save Our Depot committee and the heroic efforts of all involved in the successful move to Orr Park, the old depot and its contents were destroyed by fire in 1978 after being given a new lease on life as the home of the Montevallo Public Library.

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