

# THE HERALD

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MEMBERS BY EDITOR-STAFF

Phone (334) 264-1837 Fax (334) 834-9292

E-mail: [mchs@knology.net](mailto:mchs@knology.net)

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## David Earle Dunn

Postmaster David E. Dunn  
Chairman, County Commission David E. Dunn  
Mayor of Montgomery, David E. Dunn  
Judge of Probate, David E. Dunn

To quote *Montgomery Independent* writer, **Joe Azbell**, in an article in the *MI*, May 24, 1973, "Dunn is the only man to hold the post of Mayor, Chairman of the County Commission, Probate Judge and Postmaster.

"And probably nobody will ever equal Dunn's record. He is one of a kind. In this day of politics, probably nobody will ever again be able to secure all of these posts in a lifetime."

We recently heard from Mr. Dunn's grandson, **Dr. Wesley Dunn**, reminding us of this unique fact in Montgomery politics. He also furnished this photograph of two of our city leaders. Thank you, Wesley.

Our current mayor, **Todd Strange**, is off to a good start with two of these accomplishments under his belt, County Commission Chairman and Mayor. However, we want no thoughts of him leaving the Mayor's office considering his accomplishments and the visions he has for Montgomery.



The Honorable David E. Dunn,  
Mayor 1944-1946  
The Honorable W. A. "Tackie" Gayle  
Mayor 1951-1959



# Montgomery County Historical Society

# HERALD



VOLUME 19 NO. 3

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

OCTOBER 2011

# The Capitol Saga

by James W. Fuller

Alabama's territorial capital at St. Stephens was located in Washington County in 1817 on the banks of the Tombigbee (Tombigbee) River, in the southwest corner of the state. This site was determined by the Congressional act creating the territory as the temporary seat of government, but only two sessions of the territorial legislature met there. It was in 1819 that Alabama became a state. (St. Stephens is now a ghost town, and the only evidence of its having been a bustling village is the burying place of those who will rest there for an eternity.)

The Congressional enabling act for statehood designated the Constitutional Convention be held in 1819 in the northern part of the state, in Huntsville. The territorial legislature, however, had chosen Cahaba in Dallas County, at the confluence of the Alabama and Cahaba Rivers. The second session met at that location in 1820.

Tuscaloosa had been considered as the possible seat of government at the

time Cahaba was chosen, so it again entered the debate when floods and disease called the choice of Cahaba into question. The 1825-26 Legislature selected Tuscaloosa as the permanent capital.

This decision was in force only until a voter-approved amendment to the Constitution enabled the legislature to consider once again another site for our capital. In January of 1846, the legislature met and considered the following possible locations: Tuscaloosa (Tuscaloosa), Wetumpka, Mobile, Montgomery, Statesville, Selma, Marion and Huntsville. Tuscaloosa led on the first ballot, with Montgomery second and Wetumpka third. By the fifth ballot Tuscaloosa still led with Wetumpka moving to second and Montgomery third. In additional ballots the contenders for second and third swapped back and forth. Finally, after a long and tedious casting of sixteen ballots, the results were Tuscaloosa 39; Wetumpka 9; Selma 11; and Montgomery the winner with 68 for the required 67.

Montgomery's selection was largely due to its advantageous central location and its accessibility to all the people of the

State. Also the fact that the town had grown considerably by the 1840s, and thus provided many more accommodations than the contenders, added to its being an outstanding choice.

The lack of communication, such as telegraph at that time, resulted in several days passing before the word of its selection reached Montgomery. "The news was received with great rejoicing and the City Council voted an issue of \$75,000.00 in bonds for the erection of the new State House. These bonds were quickly bought up by the property owners and local capitalists."

"Efforts began at once to develop plans for construction of the capitol building on Goat Hill, a rise at the head of Market St. (Dexter Ave.) where a goat pasture that had been preserved by Andrew Dexter for that very use, could now serve its purpose. Mr. Stephen Decatur Button of Philadelphia was engaged as the architect, and construction began in 1846. It required over a year to reach completion and the building was presented to the state on December 6, 1847. (The date Nov. 1, 1847 is also stated as being the date the keys were delivered.) "Button credited

much of his architectural inspiration to Minard Lafever's *Beauties of Modern Architecture*."

The building was stucco on brick and there were two floors above a raised basement. The portico on the front elevation consisted of six columns supporting a broad pediment. A dome, 40' in diameter, was situated and centered behind the portico, and was topped with a type of elaborate lantern structure.

"All official and public records of the State were removed from Tuscaloosa, packed in 113 boxes and loaded in 13 wagons. They were brought over land and placed in the offices of the new State House. The first session of the Legislature to meet in Montgomery convened on December 6, 1847.

"The two Houses (in 1849) had been in session in the building, now almost two years old, a month and two days, and were industriously engaged in the dispatch of business, which promised a early termination of the session, when an event occurred, which in the disorder and derangement produced, and the introductions of new questions, extended the session nearly one month longer.

"On the 14th day of December, about fifteen minutes after one o'clock in the afternoon, when both Houses were in session, it was discovered that the Capitol was on fire over the Representative Hall - the volume of smoke issuing with rapid increase. Gen. Frazier, of the Senate, upon the first intimation of such a thing, hurried to the upper story, and into a room leading, by a trap-door, to the top, to see what discoveries could be made, but was met at the door by a dense volume of smoke, which arrested his progress.

(A personal note: I found

no reference to the cause of the fire, however, I seem to remember that it was thought that an exposed timber in the chimney of the House fireplace might have been the cause.)

"The Senate adjourned hastily; but the House broke up its sitting without the formality of an adjournment - such was



"The Burning of the Capitol"

Daguerreotype made by photographer A. G. Park in partnership with S. Swan, Dec. 14, 1849

the panic and confusion that suddenly seized upon the members. The fire extended rapidly from the south end of the building against a pretty stiff northern breeze, and in three hours, that superb, elegant structure - a monument of the liberality of the citizens of Montgomery, and the pride of the State - was in ruins; nothing left but portions of the blackened walls.

"The combined efforts of the members and citizens, with the heads of departments, saved the public property upon the basement and second floor. The State Library on the third floor could not be entered without peril. After the archives of his office were saved, the writer con-

ducted a number of gentlemen to that apartment, to assist in throwing the contents out of the windows; but the heat was so great and increasing that they could not remain, and the large collection of public documents, law-books, manuscript Journals of the General Assembly, historical works, maps of the several

States, and valuable papers, with a variety of publications presented to the State in exchange for similar courtesies, and other volumes constituting a fine collection for public use, were all destroyed.

"The archives and papers of the Executive, of the Secretary of State, the Treasurer and Comptroller, of the Supreme Court, and of the Senate and House of Representatives, including all belongings to the public offices in the Capitol, that were saved, were secured in rooms procured for the purpose in the city, until the Houses could determine the location of the different offices."

# In House News

## Welcome to New Members

**Mrs. LaNelle P. Douthit**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Thos. T. Gallion**  
**Col. & Mrs. Edward L. Godbold**  
**Mr. McGregor Hodges**  
**Mr. W. Bradley Hale**  
**Ms. Peggy Miles**  
**Mrs. Georganne Newman**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Jack Pickett**  
**Mrs. Paige Sullivan**  
**Mrs. Jeannine Svenson**  
**Mrs. Carolyn Wright**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Edward Xides**

## Honors

**Mr. George L. Beck, Jr.**  
On occasion of his appointment as U. S. Attorney, Middle District of Alabama  
Mr. Charles A. Stakely

**MCHS Board Members, Spouses, and Friends who made the Blue Moon Tasting a Success.**  
James W. Fuller

## Memorials

**Mrs. Billie Ruth Chambless**  
Dogwood Garden Club

**Judge Ira DeMent**  
Mr. Charles A. Stakely

**Judge Richard P. Emmet**  
Mr. W. Marks Harris

**Mr. Michael J. McCorkle**  
Mr. James W. Fuller

**Mr. Eugene McLemore**  
Mrs. Betty Pouncey

**Mr. William H. McLemore**  
Mr. Mac Walker, Sr.

**Mr. Charles R. Bob Owen, Jr.**  
Mr. James W, Fuller

**Mr. Daniel H. Rhyne, Jr.**  
Mr. & Mrs, Richard H. Gill  
Mr. Wm. Marks Harris  
Kitty & Charles Nicrosi

**Mr. John M. Trotman III**  
Mr. & Mrs. T. Bowen Hill III  
Bill & Eugenia McCoy

**Mr. Paul S. Watson**  
Mr. & Mrs. Ewell Green

**Mr. Edward D. Walker**  
Mr. Stevenson T. Walker

Additional Students in  
Miss Gussie Woodruff's  
School Article

Boyd, Ann  
Saffold, Georgia Whiting  
Thompson, Duane

## New Board Members

**Mr. Luther L. Hill**  
**Mr. Seaborn Kennamer**  
**Mr. C. C. Jack Owen, Jr.**  
**Mrs. Helen C. Wells**

## Officers and Board Members

**Executive Director** . . . . James W. Fuller  
**First Vice-pres.** . . . W. R. "Rusty" Gregory  
**Second Vice-pres.** . . . Richard Hodges  
**Secretary** . . . . . Chris N. Setzer  
**Treasurer** . . . . . Ray D. Rawlings  
**Editor - The Herald** . . . . . JWF  
**Directors:**  
Leo J. Drum, Jr. Elizabeth S. Godbold  
Susan F. Haigler Frances H. Hill  
Luther L. Hill Seaborn Kennamer  
Mary Lynne Levy Jo S. McGowin  
Charles C. Nicrosi C. C. Jack Owen  
C. Winston Sheehan Luther H. Waller, Jr.  
Helen C. Wells

**Directors Emeritus:**  
Charles C. Hubbard Henrietta H. Hubbard

**Office and Membership Mgr.**  
Mrs. Betty Pouncey

**Collections Data Processor**  
Ms. Shara Green

**Herald Copy Editors**  
Mrs. Julia P. Oliver Dr. Harold Weatherby

**Archives Volunteers**  
Mrs. Billie Capell  
Ms. Judia Green  
Ms. Jeannine Keener

# Montgomery Museum of History

Continued

## Recent Archival Donations by Mr. & Mrs. Seaborn Kenamer

Auction poster advertising the sale of Pickett real property on Clayton Street on March 6, 1899 at Artesian Basin.

Oak wood club 16 1/4" rounded and handle end and rectangular at other 1 5/8 x 1 1/8" with the following penciled inscriptions: "One's home is his castle," "Anti - parachutist - stick - 1942," "E. R. Barnes , Montgomery, Alabama."

Newspaper clipping from the Montgomery Advertiser of May 27, 1923, announcing the 10 graduates of Barnes School for Boys. The clipping included photographs of each boy and listed their parents.

An invitation to attend the graduation ceremonies for the Barnes School graduates of 1913 on the 3rd and 6th of June for eleven boys.

Closing exercises program for 13 Barnes School graduates in 1941.

Collection of photographs: 3 dated 1943 of the Figh-Pickett Barnes School House; 17 dated in 1918 of students in military uniforms; 2 undated photographs developed at Tresslar Studios of what appears to be "field day" of games and athletic activities held each spring.

Black 3 ring binder containing accounting records for charges, payables and receivables for each student in the period 1920 through 1942 at Barnes School by Professor Elly Barnes.

Numerous donated additional items will be listed in the next issue of the Herald.

Frances Kenamer is the grand daughter of Mr. Elly and has been most generous in donating Barnes artifacts.

### Donor

### Archival Donation

Mrs. Patsy Robertson

Program from the First Annual Meeting, the UDC in Montgomery in 1897.

Mrs. Lenore O. Kirkpatrick

Collection of post cards: Highland Park Sanitarium; First White House; Governor's Mansion (700 Bk Perry); Old Post Office, Dexter Ave.; Old Court House., Washington St..

Mr. Joe Lacey, Jr.

Silver ladle in Kings pattern, made in England.

Mrs. Chris Setzer

A reproduction of the 1776 American flag featuring 13 stars and stripes for the original 13 colonies. (3' x 5')

Woman's Club of Montgomery

Records, correspondence and scrapbooks of the WCM organization since its origin in 1927.

Mr. Oliver Smyth

Two 8'-6+" sections of the Montgomery Streetcar System rails removed from the intersection of Cloverdale Road and Graham St. in 2011.

Mrs. Martha Parker

Ledger from the Dixie Coal Co. beginning Feb. 12, 1917

Mr. Arthur F. Harman

Letter to his grandmother from his grandfather just prior to their marriage in 1900.

Mr. Cecil McMillan

A collection of table cloths used at the Blue Moon Tearoom.

( Next Issue

will list more recent donations )

REPRESENTATIVE B. L. TURNER  
by William Garrett

"Beloved B. L. Turner was elected in 1845, as the successor of Girard W. Creagh, from the District composed of Washington and Clarke counties. He had been several years in the House, and with occasional intermissions, was in public life for near twenty years.

"Mr. Turner was quiet and unpretending, but watchful and vigilant, and generally knew as well how he was voting as any of his peers. His person was well set, with black eyes and dark complexion, and physically he was every inch a man. But I saw him light with his match once. At the burning of the Capitol, he was a member, and no man took a more active part in saving the public property. Everything of a light value was taken out of the Secretary of State's office but the old State seal, with its heavy fixtures of arms, and large lead balls - the whole weighing nearly five hundred pounds. Mr. Turner asked me if I wanted that taken out, and being answered affirmatively, he called a Negro to assist, and told him to get under one of the arms, while he got under the other.

"The Negro was the tallest, and the two straightened with the load upon their shoulders, and started for the door. I saw at once the advantage the Negro had over Mr. Turner in height, but he told the Negro to go ahead, and they cleared the door with the State seal. But the muscular strength of one man was well tested that day, to a degree seldom taxed, if one was to judge from the twisting and writhing of the man. "While I remained in the office of Secretary of State, I never knew Mr. Turner come into it after-

ward without stopping just outside the door, and taking a good look at the old seal and its heavy fixtures, in deep thought, in which recollection appeared to be busy; and once or twice he remarked, half-way to himself, 'That is the heaviest load I ever attempted to carry.' He is a Democrat under the old party organization, true as steel."

### AFTER THE FIRE

The day after the conflagration, the President of the Senate laid before that body several communications. Committees were formed to make decisions as to the location for all of the Departments and where the Legislature might take up the operations of State business.

Numerous offers were made for available rooms, by the Baptists and the Presbyterians, of which Mr. W. L. Yancey was a member. The committee examined the spaces offered and was to give a report on December 17th. An extension of the report date was necessary owing to the pressing need to inaugurate the recently elected new governor, His Excellency HENRY W. COLLIER.

"The two Houses will adjourn at 11 o'clock, A.M., on Monday, the 17th instant, form a procession at the Montgomery Hall (was on the SW corner of Dexter and Lawrence St.) to receive the Government elect, and repair to the Methodist Church where the inauguration will take place. (The location of the Court St. Methodist, South Court at Church St. This ceremony was probably in the frame building that was later donated and moved to become part of the Old Ship AME Zion Church on Holcombe St. at Mildred.)

"The plan of the Committee was carried out in

the ceremonies, and the new Governor, after delivering an address suited to the occasion, took the oath of office in the Sanctuary of the Most High, in the presence of a great multitude, official and otherwise, instead of the Capitol, where his election had been proclaimed one month previously.

"In a few days, rooms and offices were provided and arranged, and the two Houses were again at work. But a new question was sprung - that of rebuilding the Capitol - and from the day of the burning to the end of the session, it was engrossing, if not the controlling one."

The legislature in February of 1850 appropriated \$60,000 with which the central section of the present building was erected upon the foundations of the burned original. Mr. Barachias Holt is credited with designing the new structure.

"The old removal (move Capitol elsewhere) feelings were kindled anew, and on the proposition to rebuild at the expense of the State, there was a close division and count, while the Senate hung on a balance of uncertainty for some time. But the measure at length prevailed, money was voted, and the Capitol was rebuilt in two years, (on the old foundation) in time for the meeting of the Legislature of 1851."

The ruins of the Capitol still had partial walls standing but in March of 1850 work was started on clearing the site to begin the new construction. Mr. John P. Figh was selected as the contractor and in his work of clearing the site of the burned remains, he found that the marble and slate floor, probably from the basement level, was not badly damaged so he salvaged sufficient material and installed it in his personal residence that had been built thirteen years

earlier on Clayton St. at Molton Street.

His ground floor had a brick floor so he placed the marble and slate on top of the brick in his dining room. It is there today in the Figh-Pickett-Barnes School House that has now been relocated to 512 So. Court St. at Mildred and is the home of the Montgomery County Historical Society. This floor is the only existing architectural artifact left from the first Capitol building in Montgomery.

Mr. Figh had been hired by the Presbyterians to build a new sanctuary for them at their location in the first block of Adams Avenue. The original frame building was rolled to the back of the lot and the work was begun on the new brick church. It was completed in 1845 just prior to the fire at the State House. The stairs to the balcony of the church are similar in design to those unique circular stairs in the present Capitol building, both are non-supporting. A free black man, Horace King, a with special engineering talent, built the stairs in the Capitol and probably did the work for Mr. Figh at the church before that.

The floor of the vestibule of the sanctuary is marble and slate in a diamond pattern rather than checkered. The tiles in the Figh-Pickett house are 13" square where the church tiles are slightly less.

The new Capitol building which comprises the central portion of the present edifice was erected at the expense of the State Treasury. As the business of the State grew, the new Capitol was found to be inadequate and the citizens of Montgomery raised a fund of \$25,000 to erect an additional east wing at the rear of the building which was given over to the Supreme Court and its



Capitol Building of 1846

splendid library. Additional property was purchased to the South and in 1906 the South wing was added and in 1911 work began upon the North wing which brought the building very close to the Confederate Monument at an expenditure of \$100,000. The clock was added in 1852.

A restoration of the entire building in 1992 included a remodeling of the East wing.

\* \* \* \* \*

RECOLLECTIONS OF  
A BOY OF NINE,  
AS TOLD WHEN HE WAS 70

*The Montgomery Advertiser*  
Sunday, Apr. 20, 1919  
By Albert Dillard

"Recess bell had just finished ringing at noon, on Friday, December 14, 1849, when nine year old Wade McBryde saw black curls of smoke soaring heavenward from the vicinity of Goat Hill.

"The youngster knew that the greatest sight of his life was being pulled off, and he lost not a minute in getting to the scene, lest it should be over before he could get there.

"The great State House was on fire, and it was the most exciting event the village of Montgomery had ever known.

"Wade had a habit of going into his dinner bucket as



Capitol Building of 1849  
Before Wings

soon as he got out of sight of his mother, and eating on his way to school, leaving the dinner hour to take care of itself.

"On this particular day, Wade had put on the reserve line, a chunk of cake and a leg of fried chicken. These two pieces of edibles he rammed into his pockets with his pieces of colored glass, nails, marbles and other accessories of boys' indispensables, and made one long slide to the scene of the conflagration.

"When Wade got there old Dexter No. 1 was unraveling its hose, and a hundred volunteer firemen were giving orders, each of a different brand, through a kind of fog horn that not even the speaker could understand himself what he was trying to say.

"The firemen wore helmets that weighed about five pounds and had a sloping portico on the rear of their hats that often extended back as far as eighteen inches.

"The old engine that is now stored in the city hall subterranean passage [probably destroyed in the City Hall fire of 1931] did the best it could, but had about as much effect on the fire as if it had been an ear syringe or a cane squirt gun.

"In those days Montgomery did not have a water system, and fire protection came from large under-

# Montgomery Museum of History

A few of the Documents, Photographs, Books and Artifacts donated by members and friends to the future Montgomery Museum of History.  
Should you see an item below that reminds you of something you might like to donate, please give us a call.  
Thank you.

## Donor

Mr. Jimmie Pruett

Dr. Wesley R. Dunn

Mr. Tim F. Maund

Scattered Seeds Garden Club

Mr. Morris Dees

Lankmarks Foundation - Carol King

Mrs. Dot Moore

Mr. W. G. Bill Ward, Jr.

Thomas M. West, Jr.

Mrs. Billie Capell

Mrs. Melissa R. Jackson

Mrs. Ruth Virginia Lidden Seibels

Miss Gaynor St. John Turner

Mrs. Jo Screws McGowin

## Archival Donation

A photograph of the Annual Meeting of the Montgomery Chamber of Commerce in 1956.

A photograph of his grandfather, Mayor David Dunn.

Program for "Forty-First United Confederate Veterans Reunion" Montgomery, Ala. June 2-5, 1931.

Collection of their scrapbooks and yearbooks for their club and their previous club known as the "Carriage Hills Garden Club."

Two copies of a map of Montgomery County dated 1919.

Surplus copies of Alabama Heritage Magazines.

Copy of "Alabama Blue Book & Social Register - 1929."

Copy of "Fifty-Year History - Kiwanis Club of Montgomery, 1919-1969."

Invoice from C. L. Ruth & Son, est'd 1873 for a plated silver pitcher for \$6.00 dated March 1, 1906.

Collection of papers relating to early schools in Montgomery County; a scanned copy of Thomas Woodward's "Reminiscences" 1859.

The following books: "The Church of The Ascension - A Resurrection Story"; "I Just Made People up - Ramblings with Clark Walker"; "I Hope 'You' Like These' Poetry" by Dick Emmet, and a photograph of a painting of Virginia Durr.

Collection of Annuals: Barnes School for Boys 1929; Lanier H. S., 1933, 1941, 1938, 1852, 1937; *History of Edgefield Co., S.C. to 1897* by Jno. A. Chapman; *Sketches of Childhood and Girlhood 1847-1864* by Cornelia Gray Lunt, gift to Fanny Marks Seibels.

Scarf worn by her mother, Lucia Richardson Turner, as she rolled bandages for wounded soldiers during WW I; 2 Department of Public Safety Yearbooks for 40th and 50th year celebrations. Camellia Soc. Yearbook 1975 and 2 Alabama Baptist Women's Missionary Union Handbooks.

Information of her grandfather, Gen. William P. Screws of the Rainbow Division, 4th Ala. Infantry during WW I: Copy of a Citation for Col. Screws for "Exceptionally Meritorious and Conspicuous Services"; newspaper, *Advertiser*; "Welcome Home" edition, May 12, 1919; copy of *Illustrated Review 4th Ala.Inf.*

## CORRECTIONS

We made an error in **Mary Lillian Rosier's** maiden name. She is one of the past students of Miss Gussie Woodruff's School and gave us first hand details about the time she was a student there. She was a Shirley before her marriage and we used the name Clanton which was her mother's maiden name. We sincerely regret this error, Mary Lillian.

Mary Lillian now lives in Hope Hull and was for some time a volunteer here at the Historical Society and accomplished a great deal of archival cataloging into our computer, for which we are most grateful.

**Steve Walker** called to say that he thought it might have been Fats Domino we heard on the juke box at the Green Lantern rather than Louie Armstrong with "On Blueberry Hill." He is absolutely right.

Thanks Steve, I can hear him now.

## COMMENTS

We were also pleased to hear from **Dorothy Swaringen Pipkin** of Knoxville about the article on Miss Gussie. She kindly furnished many details about her memories of that grand ladies' school.

**Tom West** of Birmingham has located a better photograph for us of Miss Gussie that his father had when he was a student.

**Bubba Patton** called to say how much he enjoyed reading and rereading past copies of the *Herald*.

**Bob Hill** stopped by to pick up an original brochure written by **Dr. Robert Sommerville Hill** in April 1914 that we purchased for him on Ebay on the practice of the medical profession regarding patient referrals. **Drs. R. S.** and his brother, **Luther Leonidas Hill** practiced medicine together at their hospital known as the Laura Hill Hospital in the 700 block of South Lawrence.

Bob also picked up an extra copy of the *Herald* issue that contained **Milo Howard's** article on "Court Square."

Some years ago a very nice Virginia gentleman stopped by the Figh-Pickett House while he was passing through Montgomery and was most complimentary of the work we were doing in the restoration. He said he would like to become a member and since that time he has continued to be a loyal supporter. It is an honor to have **Mr. Harold B. Meyers** as a member from that center of historical restoration, Williamsburg, Virginia.

When we were designing a picket gate here, we needed the dimensions of a concrete, made to look like wood, gate post exactly like so many in Williamsburg. A phone call to him furnished the sizes and our gate posts are the proof. Thank you, Mr. Meyers.

We sincerely appreciate the kind comments made by our readers of their pleasure in reading about the past of Montgomery in our issues of the *Herald*.

Those who think otherwise have been kind enough to not say so.

## MONTGOMERY'S GROWTH

(continued from page 13)

entertained as to the possibility of steaming up the river so far, owing to sand bars, islands, and narrow channels.

"The population of Montgomery at the date of the boat's arrival was estimated at 1000.

"The boat's arrival was the signal for a new growth. Warehouses were erected on the river bank and commercial trade was given a steady impetus."



## "Blue Moon Tasting" A Big Success

On August 25th the MCHS held its first "Blue Moon" event at the Figh-Pickett. Delicious dishes were served, all from recipes in Cecil McMillan's *Blue Moon Cookbook*. It was a sell-out crowd with plenty of good food and Cecil was there autographing and selling copies of his book.

Jo McGowin was the general chairperson and did an excellent job of organizing the event and lining up volunteer cooks to prepare the dishes.

Sincere appreciation is extended to all cooks and workers who helped make it a big success.

The Board of the Society has promised to repeat the event in a few years.

ground cisterns that were built of brick, stone and cement. These were scattered all about the town, and the fire engine sent down a long snout, the end of which was made of perforated brass which prevented the sucking up of fish, reptiles, rocks and garbage. The water got into these receptacles from the street ditches and would often remain confined for years until pumped out to quench a neighboring fire.

### THE OLD CISTERNS

"Such storage reservoirs as these, if in Montgomery now, would surely kill all the men, women and children in half an hour, but the folks then lived to a very great age, no doubt due to their ignorance of the horrible germs that infested the village and which have been found in such deadly quantities in this region in the past two years by U.S. experts.

"Wade played hooky on this eventful day, but this fact was lost sight of in the excitement of the hour, but toward night Wade began to realize that "Old McDougall" was going to beat him good and proper, and that his father would finish the job, so the boy decided that he would get his money's worth and spend the night at the fire, and he did not leave the scene until noon of the next day.

"That Wade got two terrible whippings is undisputed history. The demerit system then was undiscovered punishment.

"Among others whom McDougall did not overlook were Leon Wyman, Wm. S. Wyman, Nimrod Owen, Jim Wilkinson, Sam Holt, John W. Powell and Henry Ponder, all of whom have passed to the great beyond, except Wade McBryde.

"One of the strange

things about this State House fire was the great length of time it took to wear itself out. It was burning four or five days, the burning wood work of the windows resembling an old pine tree that has been known to burn a month.

"The wood work of the building was from the heart of great pine trees and the smoke from the fire looked as though it came from a thousand tar kilns. The slowness of the fire enabled the villagers and slaves to save a large number of valuable records and a great deal of the furniture.

"It is a strange coincidence that the fire caught in the same place where Dr. Thos. M. Owen has stored now almost priceless treasures that tell the history of the state.

"Governor Reuben Chapman was the State's chief executive at this time and the legislature was in session.

"The burning of the building created some little talk of moving the Capital but this only proved a flash in the pan, and soon died out.

"The legislature moved to the Exchange Hotel, the house resuming its sessions in the dining room of the hotel, while the Senate found a new home in the reading room of the hostelry. This reading room was the second floor of the building now occupied by George P. Haardt.

### HAD 4,000 PEOPLE

"Edward Harris, a wealthy cotton factor, was mayor of the town. The population of Montgomery then was close around 4,000 souls, including slave servants.

"Thomas A. McDougall was a Scotchman and taught the leading town school in an old two story building on the lot

now occupied by the Thompson hotel. The building stood for many years after the Civil War and served as a city public school. The old house stood until the present structure was erected by the O'Connell family." (The O'Connell house was replaced by the Shephard Building which was demolished in 2011.)

"The best recollection of the boy of 70 years ago is that the building in which LaFayette was entertained was at this time the home of Judge Bugbee, and in later years a man by the name of Vigas taught school on the upper floor.

"Bob Davis was the town marshal and wore an insignia of rank in the shape of a huge silver star.

"On the site of the Hobbie elevator stood an old frame shack and served as a station for produce, poultry and eggs that were sold to the boats. The place was conducted by a free Negro whose name was Parry Johnson.

"The old Negro did a thriving trade and was well thought of by the white people.

"When it is recalled that frequently as many as a dozen big side wheel steamers were nosed in at the local wharf at one time it can be seen what a big business Parry carried on.

"In 1849 there were four residences on Commerce street, the most notable of which was the home of Col. Gindrat, which stood on an elevation on the lot now occupied by Harry Scheuer, and it stood for ten years after the Civil War. In its last years it was occupied by a number of Negro families as a kind of apartment house.

"At the Imperial Hotel corner, Colonel Murphy had his cotton warehouse. [It is now the location of the Greystone Hotel/Hampton Inn.] A few years later he built his home on the NE corner of Bibb St.

and Coosa." (After his death it became a boarding house known as the Murphy House. It later was the location of the Elks Club followed by the home of the Montgomery Water Works and continues to be properly preserved by that facility.)

#### RIVER COMPETITION

"While freight rates then were a matter of competition on the river boats, there was a feature of graft just as it is today. When the boat's steward came up town to make a purchase, no matter how small, he expected and always got his 'rake off.' At this time there was an old Dutchman by the name of Eckmurzel who had a bakery and cake shop on Court street, and "Old Eck", as he was called, was pretty liberal in his "discounts" to the boat stewards, but he would not stand for one of his customers to get a commission at any other place and always had the stewards "shadowed" by one of his clerks to see that he was coming clean with him.

"Among the greatest boats in the Alabama river trade of this period, the boy of then recalls the 'Louise Hopkins', 'Orlene St. John', 'Wm. Bradstreet', 'Southern Republic', 'St. Charles', 'Cuba', and 'St. Nicholas.'

"It was about this time that the Cuba was burned and John W. Hughes, father of Henry Hughes, [Henry Hughes became the Clerk of the Circuit Court followed by John R. Matthews, Sr.] was a passenger and had a narrow escape from death. A high wind was blowing and the "Cuba" was a mass of flames almost in an instant. Mr. Hughes was locked in his stateroom and escaped by tearing down the door.

## Historical Society to Honor Society Members Who Are Military Veterans

On November 11th, 3:00 to 5:30

In the afternoon of November the 11th the Historical Society will hold an open house to honor veteran members of the military service and their guests. The honor is restricted to those who are members of the Historical Society. Chairman of the event is Mr. Seabie Kennamer.

Any veteran who can and would like to wear their uniform is invited to do so. The Society is so pleased to recognize those who have devoted so much to keep our country free and safe. Refreshments will be served.

"Capt. McBryde, in talking of scenes of childhood, always refers to himself as "the last leaf on the tree", but can not understand how a man can feel old. He spends his leisure hours at the Elks home where the boys a few years ago unanimously voted him a life membership card which he treasures as among the most precious relics of his long life.

"The veteran who came with an era that can be none other than its own is in hourly association with those who came into being three generations removed from his, and he says the contact keeps him a boy in his thoughts of passing events.

"It is the most ardent wish of this boy of 70 years ago that when the "last leaf has fallen", it shall be taken to the parlors of the Elks Home, and from there borne by his beloved "Bills" to its little spot of earth."



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## Montgomery County Historical Society JUNE MEMBERSHIP MEETING

On June 26, 2011 a membership meeting was held at the Figh-Pickett house with a sizable group in attendance to hear **Mr. Bill Stone** speak on : "George Washington and the Alabama Boys and the Secret Treaty of 1790 Which Opened the West."

He was introduced by **Rusty Gregory** who presented Bill with a CD of five histories of Alabama or Montgomery.

His talk was received with much enthusiasm. **John Westcott** opened the meeting with prayer and **Gen. Jim Drummond** led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Those attending were given a report on the activities of the society which included a presentation of recently created historical displays covering various segments of Montgomery's past.

#### COMPLETED EXHIBITS

Newly completed exhibits include World War I, displaying artifacts such as uniforms, canteens, binoculars, military text manuals, and photographs that feature **Lt. John W. Durr, Jr.** who was the recipient of the French recognition, Croix de Guerre for bravery. The artifacts that belonged to Lt. Durr were graciously donated by his children, **Mrs. Anne Durr Palmer and John W. Durr III.** Some of the artifacts in these displays, blanket, canteen and foot locker, were used by your editor's father. **Paul B. Fuller.**

Another display case depicting Camp Sheridan and Taylor Field, both training

camps here in Montgomery in the first World War and Taylor Field that was reactivated during WWII. This exhibit includes a video and audio facility to instruct the visitor on these two military camps.

**Miss Gussie Woodruff** operated an outstanding grammar school for children for 60 years in Montgomery. An article about her appeared in the previous issue of the *Herald*. Artifacts in her exhibit include two original hand-made children's desks and a pump organ that she played each morning as children marched into school singing "Onward Christian Soldiers."

The **Abraham Mordecai** jug displayed is probably our oldest artifact and was supposedly used to sell whiskey to the Indians at his trading post near Line Creek. He was the first white man to live in the county dating from 1785.

The structure representing the cabin of **Arthur Moore**, the first white man to live in what would become the city limits of Montgomery, includes an audio telling of his life here on the bank of the Alabama River in 1814 near where the train station is now.

Many more exhibits are planned as soon as space permits. There will be a series of displays each depicting a period in the history of our community. These will be excellent tools to teach children as well as adults the story of how our development progressed.

One special display will tell the saga of the Figh-Pickett-Barnes School House, its history, its move and restoration.

Also at the meeting nominee Officers and Board Members were presented by the Chairman of the Nominating Committee, **Winston Sheehan**. The following new members were elected to the Board: **Luther L. Hill, Seaborn Kennamer, Jack Owen and Helen Wells**. We are most pleased to welcome these additions and look forward to the strength and council they will lend to this body.

Re-elected Board members are **Luther Waller, Winston Sheehan, Jo McGowin, Charles Nicrosi, Mary Lynne Levy, Frances Hill, Susan Haigler, Betty Godbold and Leo Drum**.

Officers who were re-elected were: **Ray Rawlings, Chris Setzer, Dick Hodges, Rusty Gregory and James Fuller**.

This combined group represent a highly qualified body that I am sure will lead to an outstanding future expansion for this organization.

Appreciation is extended to the following who assisted with the refreshments, interpreting the historical exhibits or operating our elevator: **Chris Setzer, Raye Gregory, Charles Nicrosi, Rusty Gregory, Betty Pouncey, Shara and Judy Green**.

THE NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE IN NOVEMBER.

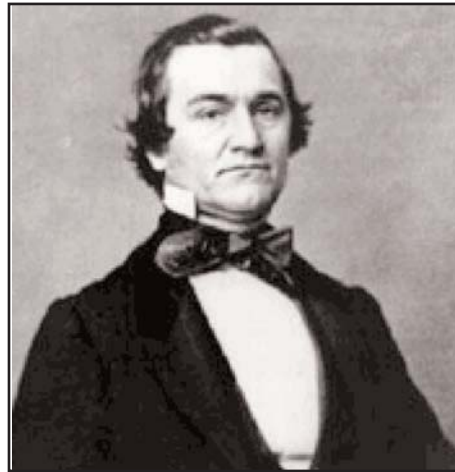


# A Neglected Relic of History

## William L. Yancey

April 7, 1926  
 Writer unknown

"It is a shame that in indifference our people ignore some of our valuable historical relics. Our people do not know, for instance, that William L. Yancey died at the little farm house on the Upper Wetumpka road, a half mile the other side of the dairy of Kilby prison," said Mayor William A. Gunter. Thousands of people pass along that road daily without knowing that in that clump of dignified oak trees the great statesman, and at one time, the great national figure, died in the little farm house. I have been told that the house is the same as that in which Yancey died. Yancey, you know, had a commodious city house, which stood in the block north of the present governor's mansion, on Perry street, between the Sabel house and the Henry M. Hobbie home. (This would have been the house just north of the Sabel/Cantey house in the 600 block of Perry, west side. Ed.) He lived in this home when he practiced law in Montgomery, and as an outstanding public figure, he entertained lavishly. It was torn down a few years ago. He also lived in the summer months at the little house on the Upper Wetumpka road, and also in what is now the Ledyard home on the Mt. Meigs road (Atlanta Highway). "Yancey died a dispirited and heart-broken man. When he returned to Montgomery, in 1863, he real-



WILLIAM LOWNDES YANCEY

ized that his dreams had been illusions, and that the South would not be able to establish itself as an independent nation. He came to Montgomery from his trip to London, where he had been sent as the personal representative of President Jefferson Davis. Yancey and Mason of Virginia came very near winning recognition for the Confederacy. Napoleon III was practically ready to accord recognition. "The British government was about to make an agreement with Napoleon that the Confederate States should be recognized. Lord Palmerston, Prime Minister of Great Britain, and his Foreign Minister, Lord Russel, had agreed that "Jefferson Davis had created a nation of the seceding States." A resolution to this effect had been drawn for introduction in the British parliament. Before it could be introduced and passed, the tide of war

changed. News came in July 1863, of the Confederate defeat at Gettysburg, and the Union victory at Vicksburg. Recognition, which would have enabled the South to win a victory, was denied. The British government could not afford to back a loser; but if it had carried out its purpose the official-recognition would have broken the Union blockade of Southern ports, which was slowly crushing the South to death.

"Yancey, who had been so near victory, was dispirited at this turn of fortune. He was a sick man when he got to his home in Montgomery. Forty years previous to this, he had led a strenuous life. He had been in the center of things. And had been the leader who had forced a division in the Democratic party, which paved the way for the election of Lincoln. He took to his bed on his return in 1863, and died after a few weeks illness.

"His funeral was a great public occasion in Montgomery. He was escorted to his grave in Oakwood by several companies of Confederate soldiers who were training in Montgomery at the time. His monument in Oakwood remains a venerated relic to the people of the city."

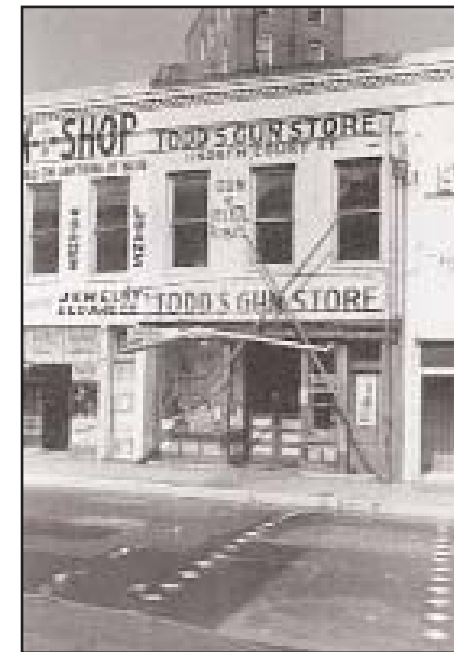
*His country home on the Wetumpka Highway just across from the main gate of Gunter AFB was moved to Old Alabama Town some years ago.* Editor

# MR. GEORGE TODD AND MR. KENNETH CAMPBELL

Sam Adams was kind enough to donate the old gun sign that had hung outside one of Montgomery's oldest business establishments for so many years. The gun has a length just short of 15 feet and a weight of almost 200 lbs.

Sam's donation prompted a search for the history of this business and it produced the name of the last owner, Mr. Kenneth Campbell. The store moved further to the North on No. Court at the corner of Jefferson. The writer found that the widow of Mr. Campbell was my friend and classmate, Mrs. Pat Campbell. A call to her produced the loan of a scrapbook compiled by the long time owner, Mr. George Todd. He used an old ledger and pasted clippings from newspapers, many about the old days in Montgomery. The clippings date from the mid 1920's and many relate to the introduction of the automobile in Montgomery.

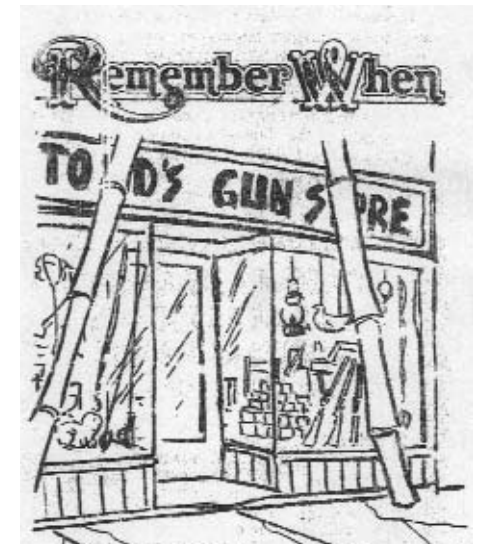
Mr. Todd was, with his mechanical ability with guns, one of the first automobile mechanics in Montgomery. The first owners or drivers of the new horseless carriages were not exposed to much training in the operation of these vehi-



Todd's Gun Store  
 11 North Court  
 facing up Monroe Street

cles and as result, as you might imagine, caused numerous accidents. Mr. Todd found he had a considerable increase in business as a result and so his scrapbook is full of clippings of wrecks, injuries and deaths, not that just happened here, but anywhere there was an accident occurring.

**There is an article on page 10 of this issue that goes into more detail on early automobiles in Montgomery.**



... Just about every boy in Montgomery was a regular customer of Todd's Gun Store? Normally your first purchase was a sack of marbles or Nickel box of B-B's. Then as you grew older, your needs became more sophisticated, and turned toward shotguns, hunting togs, decoys; just about everything to rig you up for fishing and hunting. It was Montgomery's own version of Abercrombie & Fitch, located for nearly a century, on North Court, at the end of Monroe Street, before moving to its present location on Court between Madison and Jefferson. It all began in 1822 as The Little Gun Store, operated by a Prussian immigrant named Becker. His daughter married Mr. George Todd. When young Todd took over in 1848, he was the first of three generations that would operate the business until 1953; when his grandson died a bachelor. Mr. S. A. Beaird bought Todd's, ran it until his death in '71. It's still a going concern, under the direction of Kenneth Campbell and Ken Campbell, grandson of Mr. Beaird. Todd's is Montgomery's oldest business concern, having started operation 6 years before the Montgomery Advertiser.  
 TOM CONNER

This is one of Tom Conner's articles from his "Remember When" dated Sept. 28, 1980.

"George H. Todd, Sr. was born at Hyde Park, N.Y. and came to Montgomery in 1848 and he succeeded his

brother-in-law, Nicholas Becker, a Prussian Gunsmith who started the business in 1822. Mr. Todd owned and operated Todd's Gun Store until his death in 1912 and was succeeded by his son George H. Todd, Jr. until his death in 1942. His other son, David Todd took over the business until his death in 1952.

"Todd's Gun Store is the oldest establishment of its kind in Alabama. The business was first operated on Commerce Street, later moved to a shop on Dexter Avenue and then to its present location at 17 North Court Street in 1888. The business is now owned and operated by Samuel Audrey Beaird who had been actively associated with Todd's Gun Store since 1921.

"The late George H. Todd, Jr. .... started the Museum's (Montgomery Museum of Fine Art) collection of guns, gun accessories and military equipment with a gift of the majority of the pieces in the present collection. Many of these guns were originally among the collection of guns and military equipment of his father, George H. Todd, Sr."

At the time that the Board of the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts determined to devote their interests entirely to art and eliminate the history element of their collections, I suppose that this collection was either returned to the Todd family or sold. Today it

probably would be a difficult collection to display considering the constant threats and required security prevailing.

#### BILL OF SALE

On July 30, 1970 Mr. S. A. Beaird sold to Mr. Kenneth Campbell, his then son-in-law, his 1/2 interest in the firm and business commonly referred to as Todd's Gun Store for the sum of \$7,200.00. These two men had been partners for some time and this transaction made Mr. Campbell the sole owner.

This transaction occurred at about the same time as the move we have mentioned to the SW corner of Court and Jefferson. Mr. Campbell closed this store about 1986.

#### SHOOTING GALLERY

There is a receipt signed by Mr. Todd for the lease of an alley between two buildings in the 100 block of South Decatur. The lease was for the purpose of operating a shooting gallery, probably for customers to try out a gun they were considering. This would, I think, be a bit of annoyance to have this activity next door.



TODD'S GUN STORE ONE OF  
OLDEST CONCERNS  
Clipping from *Advertiser*  
c-1920's

Todd's Gun Store, 11 North Court street, was omitted from the *Journal's* list of enterprises which have been in operation for a quarter of century or longer. This was an oversight. For 37 years Todd's Gun Store had been in business at the North Court street stand. It is one of the oldest firms in the city. George H. Todd is proprietor. He became proprietor in June 1888 but the original business started back in 1838 (or 1922) under Nicholas Becker, Prussian gunsmith. The location was then on Commerce street.

#### ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE

Many articles in this issue of the *Herald* were taken from newspaper clippings found in the scrapbook of **Mr. George Todd**, longtime owner of Todd's Gun Store.

Over the years we have depended on clippings from similar scrapbooks in our archives that were donated by members of the Society. They present an excellent source on bits of history of Montgomery that might not otherwise be found.

If you have such a scrapbook kept by a relative containing photographs or clippings, we would be most pleased to add it to our collection.

## MONTGOMERY'S EARLY GROWTH IS PICTURED

Probably *Montgomery Advertiser*  
June 16, 1925

"When the first settlers began erecting houses in Montgomery, lumber was very scarce, most of the early buildings were then built of hewn logs.

"In the fall of 1817, the first frame store house and dwelling to be erected here was built by **Jonathan C. Farley**.

"The store house stood on the northeast corner of Dexter (then Market street) avenue and Hull street, with the dwelling on the adjoining lot.

"The first lumber mill to be established in this vicinity was built on **Eight Mile Creek**, then called Spring Creek, by **Messrs. Pinkston and Allen**. From this mill a supply of excellent lumber was obtained for many years. (The Pinkston family continue to reside on the original home site.)

"When the new village began to grow, early merchants established a number of stores, and the sites selected were on the first four blocks west of Capitol Square (now site of capitol).

"The selection of these blocks was in order that sales would be available to travelers into and out of the village, from Line Creek road, and from the Tallapoosa river, along which were the chief county settlements.

"The elevations of Washington and Adams

avenues (then streets) were chosen as the most favorable for building homes, as they were both healthy and convenient to the business portion of the city.

"Many frame and log houses were built and by 1821 there stood 49 frame and 38 log buildings.

"The first postmaster was **John Falconer** (who was a great uncle of **Mrs. E. W. Stay, of this city.**)"

[Mrs. Stay was the former **Mattie Henry**, daughter of **Dr. John H. Henry**. Her home is the fine Victorian brick home still standing at 631 South Hull Street now occupied and so well kept by **Walter McKee**, Architect.

Please excuse a personal note, but at the time of the sale of the contents of "Miss Mattie's" effects, I inquired of a magnificent roll top desk thinking that it surely would be one of the "items not for sale." I knew that it had belonged to Dr. Henry, one of Montgomery's early physicians and had been in his earlier home on North Perry where the City Hall now stands. It was with the shock of losing the War that I heard that it had been sold to someone from Maxwell who planned to take it away to some foreign place up North. Even pleas to the new owner had no effect, just one of the things in the list of disappointments of lost efforts.]

Editor

"At this time, the principal mail came once a week from the east and was brought first on horseback, later the carrier rode in a "sulky" [type of buggy].

"The first hotel to be built was a log building on the north side of Dexter avenue, near Capitol Square. Board and rooms were furnished at \$3 per day, and accommodation for horses could be secured.

"When merchants first began operating here the goods were brought by wagon from Savannah and Charleston, or transported over the roads of the Creek Indian nation, and many bridges were necessary to be crossed; at each one exorbitant tolls were exacted by the Indians.

"Soon afterwards goods were transported by barge and by pole boats up the Alabama river from Mobile, when it was necessary to travel from 50 to 70 days in order to come from the Gulf City here, on account of the odds in traveling against the current.

"Boats first arrived from Tennessee, passing from the Holston river down the Coosa and finally to the Alabama.

"It was in 1821, on October 21, that the first boat, the **Harriet**, arrived from Mobile, for previous to this time grave doubts had been

(continued on page 16)



# Municipal Pool Said Built on Historic Site

Probably, *Montgomery Advertiser*, 1925

"On the south side of Bell street, between Holt and Dickerson streets where the municipal swimming pool now stands, is a historic spot, which will always be one of the interesting landmarks of Montgomery, for it was here that the old lighthouse stood, whose beacon lights guided the boats up and down the Alabama river in the early days, when its waters furnished the chief means of transportation.

"It must have been sometime after 1825 that the old lighthouse was builded, for the original frame and brick structure was once the home of **John Edmondson**, and was the home in which the **Marquis de LaFayette** was entertained on his memorable visit to Montgomery in April, 1825.

"The house, then a fashionable residence, was situated on the east side of Commerce street, between Bibb and Montgomery streets, and LaFayette was domiciled therein as a guest of Mr. Edmondson when visiting Montgomery.

"With the encroachment of businesses on Commerce street, the residence was torn down and moved on Bell street, to become a lighthouse.

"The old lighthouse was three stories high, with a round tower above from which

lights were flashed up and down the river.

"At the time it was built, Bell street was on a level with the street, which has been graded, leaving the former lighthouse site on a high terrace.

"The site of the lighthouse was an ideal one, commanding as it did a view of the river, both up and down stream, being on one of the highest points of west Montgomery.

"The property was afterwards acquired by **Henry Hennemuth**, a native of Germany, who resided on the corner of Bell and Holt streets (southwest corner) in a building which continues to stand at the present time.

"Mr. Hennemuth loyally allowed the use of the property as a lighthouse, which contin-

ued operations until the war, when a beacon light on the Alabama would have been a dangerous signal.

"The lighthouse keeper lived in the ground floor of the lighthouse, which stood for many years after its usefulness was ended, unoccupied, except for the bats, who fairly haunted its belfry. It was later torn down, within the recollection of a few of the citizens today.

"**Mrs. Alice H. Murphree**, a daughter of the late Henry Hennemuth, continues to reside on a part of her father's original homesite, adjoining the former lighthouse site.

"**Mrs. T. M. McDonough**, 112 Holt street, is also a daughter of the late Mr. Hennemuth, who continues to reside here." ❖



THE OLD BELL STREET SWIMMING POOL

# LANDMARKS ON THE ALA- BAMA NOW NO MORE

PROBABLY *MONTGOMERY ADVERTISER*  
c-1925

"Many attractive sites may be found on the banks of the Alabama river near Montgomery, and it has often been a cause for speculation that no pleasure resorts are situated there.

"Leading out from Montgomery toward the west, on the southern bank of the river, are many bluffs where the view of the hills beyond provide a picturesque view.

"In the days when the paths of commerce did not outline the banks of the Alabama, and no railroad tracks were visible, there was a pleasure resort for early Montgomerians, known as **Bemer's Gardens**, a rendezvous and picnic ground, remembered by few of the citizens today.

"The gardens were situated on the southern bank of the Alabama river, the entrance to them being at the foot of Whitman street. A high fence protected them from the eyes of passers-by.

"Within were terraced gardens and old-fashioned shrubs, as japonicas, etc., flourished. Boxwood lined a labyrinth of beds, in which brightly colored flowers bloomed during the warmer months. Here were walks winding in and out, and benches, where a view of the river and the hills beyond could be secured. There were ten pins (later called bowling) alleys, a pavilion, where dancing (always square), was

enjoyed, and from 4 in the afternoon to 10 in the evening, during the summer months, the strains of music (by Colored musicians) could be heard while boys with longing eyes, lured by the music, would congregate on the outside to glimpse a sight of what they believed was "fairyland."

"Bemer's Gardens were kept by an old German of that name, it is said, who made his home there-in. He is said to have been an excellent cook and to have brewed his own beer, which was partaken of freely in those days, when prohibition was a thing little dreamed of.

"Barbecues were held almost invariably at Bemer's Gardens, when the Metropolitan Guards, captained by **Col. Joseph Winter** (father of **Mrs. S. G. W. Thorington**) held a wonderful prestige and the Montgomery Greys, afterwards achieving immortality, were commanded by **Capt. Green Andrew**, and the True Blues had not begun "to write history."

"At the beginning of the war there was no need for pleasure resorts of any kind. The doors of hotels were in most instances closed, and homes themselves became desolate, so Bemer's Gardens disappeared, and not since that time has there been a pleasure resort on the banks of the Alabama at Montgomery.

"Years afterwards there

was a small pavilion built on the bend of the river, known as **Scott's Bend**, which was called **Dugan's Landing**, where boats stopped and pleasure seekers enjoyed moonlight picnics in the days following the war which is the nearest approach to a pleasure resort since 1860.

"Although Bemer's Gardens went as did other landmarks of the old south, it was a long time afterwards that all the flowers grown there had entirely disappeared.

"Within the recollection of many Montgomerians today are Sunday afternoon walks through the once beautiful kept hedges, where a stray flower or two might be picked. However, the flowers vanished, one by one, and what shrubs were not killed with neglect were uprooted and transplanted in flower gardens around and about, and now the bluff, once known as Bemer's Gardens, is not distinguishable from the rest of the lands over looking the Alabama river, between Whitman street and the Bell bridge." ❖

Prior to the expansion of the railroad tracks and addition of the new Union Station of **1898**, there were located some of Montgomery's finer homes below (Bell Street) Maxwell Blvd. The area was cut down to accommodate the additional tracts and fine homes like the Cowles House were lost.

*Perhaps with Mayor Strange's plans for making the Alabama River front more attractive and appreciated, might be included a version of Mt. Bemer's Gardens.* Editor.

# TWENTY YEARS HAVE ELAPSED SINCE FIRST AUTO ROLLED ON CITY STREET

MONTGOMERY ADVERTISER  
Monday, Feb. 27, 1922

"The twentieth anniversary of automobiles in Montgomery has arrived, and brings with it some amusing memories of the early days in this city. It is indeed a far away call from the day in 1902 when **Chief of Police Adolph Gerald** arrested **George Todd**, one of Montgomery's pioneer autoists, and released him from custody after threatening prison bars if he should ever "run that thing down Commerce street again." Yet it is a little less than twenty years ago that this particular incident occurred; and the conditions have changed, for the horse and buggy that carried the chief of police when he made the first arrest of a chauffeur would find it hard going were an effort made to navigate Commerce street today by horsepower.

"In discussing the early history of the auto here, it is stated that the first automobile of any kind to be owned here was a Locomobile steamer, purchased by **B. S. Griel** early in 1902. George Todd has a record in an old ledger where a repair job was done on this car, the account being dated April 20, 1902, and it is stated that the car had been bought a month of so before. The particular job consisted in repairing the boiler and the charge was \$100. The boiler contained 100 half-inch copper flues, with a gasoline torch

used to generate the steam.

"At **Todd's Gun Store**, one of Montgomery's historic institutions of its kind, a visitor can still see where the door was cut away in order to allow the entrance of Montgomery's first automobile for repairs; and in the repair room there is still visible the outline of the spot where a concrete pit was dug in order that the mechanic might stand up under the car while doing the job. The art of lying down underneath had not then been learned.

"In speaking of the repair jobs in these early days, Mr. Todd stated that they were sometimes profitable, and at other times not. One of the other times was when one of the early Locomobile steamers



1900 Locomobile

"got aloose" inside the store, and practically destroyed most of \$200 worth of bicycles before it could be subdued. The autos of these early days were refractory machines, and man had not yet learned their devious ways; so the consequences were often painful and sometime disastrous.

"The second auto in Montgomery, according to Mr. Todd, was another Locomobile steamer owned by **Julian Gibian**, and purchased very shortly after Mr. Greil's first car arrived.

"In July, 1902, the third automobile, and the first gasoline propelled machine was located in Montgomery. It was an Oldsmobile and was owned at first by the late **Jim Cook**, of the firm of **Cook and Laurie**. George Todd purchased the car for Mr. Cook in Atlanta, the price being \$625. Mr. Laurie at that time was engaged in wharf construction in New Orleans, and loaned the car to Mr. Todd on condition that he meet its owner upon his arrival in Montgomery each Sunday and take him to and from the depot.

Mr. Todd was wont to take the Olds out into an open field near the city, and there practice and experiment until he became proficient in handling it; that is, as much so as he could under the circumstances.

After five or six months, Mr. Cook learned to handle a White steamer in New Orleans, where he was at work, and later donated the Olds to Mr. Todd. It was sold by Mr.

Todd to a prominent resident of Greenville for the original cost of \$625; and it was afterwards bought by **Louis Hutchinson** of Montgomery for \$100, and sold by him for \$25. It is believed to still be in existence.

"In 1902, **Dr. Strum** of Montgomery owned a machine which was a duplicate of Mr. Todd's first love. These Oldsmobiles were one cylinder, six horsepower runabouts with horizontal engine. The maximum speed if which they were capable was 15 miles an hour. They were temperamental creatures, and often acted in an unexpected manner. Mr. Todd recalls vividly when his machine went wild on the Mobile road and resulted in him being in a state of unconsciousness for two days. On another occasion, while turning the corner near where Hamrick's drug store now is, with "**Dutch**" **Sidell** and **Sam Johnson** as passengers, considerable diversion was created when Mr. Johnson tumbled off his uncertain seat and rolled gracefully the greater part of Dexter avenue.

"**Louis Hutchinson** had an experience where he stooped to adjust a parcel in the bottom of his car, while on a drive in

the country, and the next moment found himself in a nearby cotton patch, and had to be towed out by a farmer.

"Many accidents of these early days were doubtless to be ascribed to the unfamiliarity of the pioneer chauffeurs with their machines, but they claim that the machines were unique means of locomotion, which went astray without it being necessary to have your arm around a girl.

"In 1902, **Joe Kennedy** purchased a Searchmont four passenger car second hand at St. Louis. It is described as a crude and troublesome affair. The first "real automobiles," according to Mr. Todd, which were owned in Montgomery were Cadillacs, which came in in 1904. These cars looked like the modern automobile, being five passenger cars equipped with steering wheels, which were lacking on the earlier cars, where a rod took its place. The first three cars were sold to

**General Barry L. Holt**, on the staff of the Governor of the state, **J. M. Kennedy** and **Dr. Louis Robinson**. "The distinction of being the first automobile repairing firm in Montgomery is claimed by **Dave Todd**



1904 CADILLAC

and **Joe Keller**, who formed a partnership at about the time of the arrival of the first Cadillacs. Mr. Todd is now with his brother, George, at Todd's Gun Store, while Mr. Keller is a member of the firm of the Alabama Auto Co."

*We have access to a scrapbook kept by Mr. George Todd who was the early mechanic for the horseless carriage rage in Montgomery. In the scrapbook are untold clippings of various automobile accidents, many with the demise of the occupants, both local and all over the country.*

*He must have been fascinated with the large quantity of wrecks encountered by all of the untrained drivers in undependable vehicles.*

*Many will not remember that new cars all came with a tool kit consisting of a jack, lug wrench, a monkey wrench, shown at left, ball peen hammer, screw driver and a few other items all wrapped in an oiled canvas bag, almost everything you needed for a breakdown on a lonely country road.*



Monkey wrench

