

THE HERALD

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Montgomery County Historical Society - MCHS

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Montgomery County Historical Society

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Montgomery County
Historical Society

THE HERALD



VOLUME 23 NO. 4

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

FALL 2015

Rotarians Hear History of Montgomery Fair Told by Harry Danziger

Montgomery Advertiser
October 4, c 1917

For the benefit of newcomers to our community, sometime after the "Fair" moved to Normandale Shopping Center, the name was changed to "Gayfers", indicating a business transaction and then once again there was a name change to what we now know as "Dillards".

Secret of Success is Best Goods, Courtesy and Advertising What You Have.

The big feature of the weekly luncheon of the Montgomery Rotary Club at the Gay-Teague hotel yesterday was the story of the Montgomery Fair's rise to great prestige, told most interestingly by Harry Danziger, the manager. Another feature of the meeting was the report of the visit of Alex Rice to Denver and his observations of the Rotary Club in that bustling city. Some of the customs of the Denver Club as told by "Uncle Alex" will be taken up by the board of directors of the Montgomery club.

Mr. Danziger's talk of the history and success of the Montgomery Fair was one of the best business talks made before the club. The chief features of Mr. Danziger's enlightening address follow:

THE HISTORY OF "MONTGOMERY FAIR" IS SYNONYMOUS
WITH THE HISTORY OF THIS CITY.

The business was founded by Sam and Ignatius Pollak in the spring of 1870, two score and seven years past. They commenced in a small way in a little store on Montgomery street. The store was known as the "Dollar Store." And in those days the country trade that came to Montgomery, and from which this store got most of its business was well worthwhile. It was known as wagon trade, and no doubt, some of you can recall this, perhaps as boys.

The store derived its name, "Dollar Store", because no article in the establishment was sold for more than one dollar or less than one dollar. For instance, they sold a good pair of shoes for one dollar, a hat for one dollar, or a certain number of yards of domestic or other fabric for one dollar. To explain if a customer made three purchases he spent three dollars,



Wilson's Nursery

The narcissus bulbs shown above, now in our garden, were rescued from the site of the old Wilson Nursery on Mildred St. See what fertilizer and TLC can do. They had not bloomed in years.

The nursery was there in the 1800's and an earlier article in *The Herald* told of its destruction by Union troops in 1865 led by Gen. James Wilson who bivouaced there while in Montgomery. A living artifact!

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Please do not forget our Year End Donation Gift.

if he made five purchases he spent five dollars, and the chances usually were that he had an arm full of merchandise for his money when he left the store. Absolute honesty and integrity and fair dealings with the customers, white and black, along with the smallest possible percentage of profit was the foundation upon which this business was built.

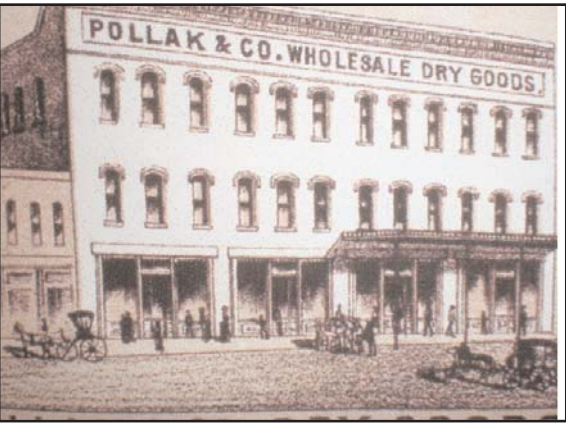
They soon out-grew the small Montgomery street quarters, so the Dollar Store moved to a more pretentious building on Court Square. Their continued success and seeing the possibility of doing a much bigger business encouraged the firm to seek still larger quarters, and a building was arranged for on the site of our present Court Square location.

DIDN'T LOOK LIKE STORE

It was far from being a sightly-looking store! Had no show windows, and when I first saw it, it had more of an appearance of a warehouse than a dry goods store. However, it covered plenty of floor space and that was what was required. Part of this building as some of you know was a two-story brick building, while the other part was 3 stories. The ground floor was used exclusively for retail selling; the upper floor was for wholesale. There was no exclusive whole-sale dry goods establishment in Montgomery at that time, this business being looked after by the larger dry goods firms of Montgomery.

We had a very large store with many clerks, and believe me, they were some salespeople. The clerks had to wait on a customer in any part of the store, therefore, he had to know merchandise mighty well, and at the same time know all of the

stocks. We used cash boys then, and in the busy season, especially during the



Pollak & Co.
South side of the second block of Dexter

Christmas holidays, we had fifteen or twenty boys at work. It would not surprise me if some of our good Rotarians present heard my voice in those days when I yelled "cash." (Cash boys would come to the sale point and take the customers payment to the office for change and a receipt similar to the later cash cylinders that zoomed to the office on tracks or now the suction device at outdoor banks.)

SOME CHANGES

In the summer of 1883, Mr. Sam Pollak, senior member of the firm, was drowned while bathing at Long Beach. Mr. Ignatius Pollak became sole owner of the business.

I came to Montgomery on August 10th, 1884. We had more or less ups and downs. Mr. Pollak's outside investments kept the firm pretty well drained of capital, and made it mighty hard selling for some years, but we managed to keep up the prestige of the business always.

In 1902, John Chaflin took over our business and its organization adding ample capital to operate with, as a per-

sonal investment. We made so good a showing that at the termination of our lease on the old building Mr. Chaflin had sufficient confidence in us and in the city of Montgomery to arrange for the erection of our mammoth store building, with all its equipments up to the minute. He felt that there was nothing too good for Montgomery. About two years ago Mr. Claflin had some very disastrous financial troubles, and is not now connected in a business way with Montgomery Fair.

A GREAT SYSTEM

Mr. Alexander New, president of the Mercantile Stores Corporation, an organization capitalized with many millions, and the present owners of our business, has absolute confidence in the future of Montgomery, as we all have. It may be tough sledding for a while but eventually Montgomery will come into its own. And we know it.

It may be interesting to you to know that our organization operates over 20 large stores in major cities all of the country.

This, of course, makes our buying power much stronger than individually operated concerns on that account. For instance, I was present and a party to the purchase when a contract was made with one of the biggest shirt manufacturers in the country for a purchase, to be exact, of \$52,000 worth of shirts. We received our pro-rata of these shirts. Another purchase was made of men's neckwear for the holidays. This single purchase amounted to \$10,000. I received word yesterday from our New York office

In House News

Memorials

- Mr. Henry Clay**
Mrs. Rae Venable Calvert
- Mrs. Katherine K. Culpepper**
Mr. James W. Fuller
Mrs. Susan F. Haigler
Mr. & Mrs. Dick Hodges
Justice & Mrs. Jim Main
- Mr. Jefferson W. Davis**
Mr. James W. Fuller
Mr.& Mrs. Rusty Gregory
Mr. & Mrs. Dick Hodges
- Judge John Davis**
Mrs. Jo S. McGowin
- Mrs. Mary Varner Dillard**
Mr. James W. Fuller
- Mrs. Elizabeth T. Emmet**
Mr. James W. Fuller
Mrs. Susan F. Haigler
Mr. & Mrs. Dick Hodges
Mrs. Jo S. McGowin
- Mr. Franklin Green, Jr.**
Mr. James W. Fuller
Mr.& Mrs. Rusty Gregory
- Ms. Iva Hawes**
By Ms. Ladine Collins
- Mr. & Mrs. Henry Hobbie Jr.**
Mrs. Priscilla H. Griffin
- Judge Truman M. Hobbs, Jr.**
Mr. James W. Fuller
Mr. & Mrs. Dick Hodges
- Mr. Jim Levy**
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Owen
- Mr. Lewis Hanson Luquire**
Mr. James W. Fuller
Mr.& Mrs. Rusty Gregory
Mr. & Mrs. Dick Hodges
- Ms. Jacquelyn E. Laurie**
Mr. James W. Fuller
- Mr. M. Roland Nachman**
Mr. James W. Fuller
Mr. & Mrs. Wm. I. Hill II
Mrs. Dae Miller

Memorials

- Mr. William H. McLemore, Sr.**
Mr. & Mrs William Joseph
- Mr. Bonner Patrick**
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Sweatt
- Miss Jamie Pettigrew**
Mr. James W. Fuller
- Mrs. Alice Murrell Sanderson**
Mrs. Rae Venable Calvert
- Judge Rodney R. Steele**
Mr. James W. Fuller
- Gen. Will Hill Tankersley**
Mr. James W. Fuller
Mrs. Warren Goodwyn
Mr.& Mrs. Rusty Gregory
Mrs. Susan F. Haigler
Ms. Lida I. Hill
Mr. & Mrs. Dick Hodges
Mr. & Mrs. Wm. I. Hill II
Mrs. Jo S. McGowin
Mrs. Dae Miller
Mrs. Burke K. Schloss

New Members

- Mr. & Mrs. Ben Causey**
- Ms. Erin Cunningham**
- Dr. & Mrs. Joseph E. Davis, Jr.**
- Mr. & Mrs. Zac Gibbs**
- Mr. Andy Graydon**
- Mrs. Ann Hubbert**
- Mrs. Paula J. Litton**
- Ms. Bailey McKell**
- Father Michael J. Sreboth**

Honors

- Mrs. Christy Anderson**
- Rev. Gary Burton**
- Mr. Zac Gibbs**
New Board Members of MCHS
Mr. James Fuller
- Rusty Gregory**
James Fuller
Mr. William G. Thames
- Mr. James W. Fuller**
Dr. & Mrs. Sam Engelhardt
Mrs. Carolyn N. Fuller
Mrs. Betty Keyes
- Mr. Edward Pattillo**
Mrs. Elizabeth Pennewill
- Mrs. Ann Lewis**
- Mrs. Judy Rhyne**
Dr. & Mrs. John Ashurst
- Mrs. Jo S. McGowin**
Mr. James L. McGowin
- Mrs. Ruth C. McLemore**
Mr. & Mrs William Joseph
- Dr. Duncan McRae**
Mr. Charles Stakely
- Dr. David C. Montiel**
Mr. Charles Stakely
- Mr. George West**
Mrs. Fairlie Haynes
- Mrs. Sophie Exides**
Mrs. Susan F. Haigler
- Mr. Robert A. Young**
Mrs. Betty Keyes

Special Donations

- Mrs. Sallie W. Millsap**
- Mrs. Trissa O'Conner Orange**
- Mr. William G. Thames**

History Archives Collections

Thank You For Saving These Bits of Montgomery Memorabilia.

Mr. Forrest McConnell has donated a collection of archives regarding the Montgomery Country Club.

Mrs. Lee Beck has donated two Lanier annuals that had been her mother's for the years 1938 and 1939.

Mrs. Jane Jordan Barganier donated the following books: *The Pomp of the Lavillettes* by Gilbert Parker, 1896; booklet, *The Alabama State Capitol*, by John H. Wallace, Jr., 1917 that belonged to Jennie Sistrunk Jordan; *Up From Slavery*, An Autobiography By Booker T. Washington - (1900) 1937 that belonged to W. M. Jordan; *Wilhelm Tell* by Robert Waller Deering, dated 1894 - a student edition in German that belonged to J. Morris Baldwin when he attended Prof. Starke's School and *The Red Eagle, A Poem of The South*, by A. B. Meek. This book had belonged to Kate Sistrunk Baldwin and dated April 13, 1931.

Judge Ed Carnes shared his photographs of the art pieces in the recent exhibit of the works of Mrs. Warree LeBron at the Figh-Pickett.

Mr. & Mrs. Seaborn Kennamer donated a silver punch bowl, cups and tray as well as items of archives from the Barnes School.

Mr. Ed Webb donated a copy of The First White House of The Confederacy dated 1930; Certificate from Lehman Durr & Co., 1878; Statement from Joseph Jonas, October 1874; Letter from Edward A. Graham, with Graham & Steiner, Attorneys, August 1903;

Mr. Sam Butner donated a copy of a menu from the Elite Cafe. The "King of Seafood" was just that, dating from 1911. It was operated by the Exides family until it closed on Montgomery Street. The menu design work was done by Jay Leavell.

Mr. Gerald Thompson gave us a brochure produced by the Chamber of Commerce in 1915 advertising the excellent opportunities for industrious farmers.

Gen. John H. Napier III donated his collection of clippings from the *Montgomery Advertiser* during the time he was the editor of the column, "From The Advertiser Files - 100, 50 and 25 years ago", as well as the complimentary acknowledgements from his readers.

Cloverdale Properties donated a 58 inch TV for use in programs and talks, replacing one that was stolen.

HELP

Several months ago someone gave us a very nice collection of Daguerreotype (tintype) family photographs. We labeled them with the donor's name, the date and information regarding the collection. The information has found itself separated from the pictures. Will the kind person please identify himself so that we might properly catalog and credit this nice gift. 264-1837

Thank you.

Rebinding Montgomery City Directories

We had a number of our valuable City Directories that had become quite fragile and were sent to a book bindery for repair.

They have now been returned and are in much improved condition thanks to the generous members below.

THE DONORS AND THE
DATE OF THEIR DIRECTORY:

Mrs. Billie Capell 1909
In Memory of:
Clifton Powell Capell
Ms. Ladine H. Collins 1912
Mrs. Becky Doe 1903
Mr. James W. Fuller 1900
In Memory of:
Paul Burkhead Fuller

Mr. Charles Humphries 1906
Dr. Marti A. Lamar 1814
Mrs. Harold Nicrosi 1928
In Memory of:
William Nicrosi, his
birth year.

that a contract had been let for Palm Beach suits for next summer and Panama hats had also been purchased at an attractive price for special sale, and Montgomery gets the advantage of all these opportunities of our being able to buy at a lower price on account of our affiliation.

Our main building fronts on Court Square with entrances on Dexter Avenue and Monroe Street. In other



Montgomery Fair
Main building on No. Court

words, we go through from block to block from Dexter Avenue to Monroe St. I am very happy to say that I notice quite a good many of our citizens taking advantage of the short cut using our store as a thorough-fare, and I can assure you that they are very welcome to it.

HELP TO NEWLYWEDS

We use about 110,000 square feet of floor space or about two and one-half acres, not taking into consideration our big warehouse. This warehouse is in the Western freight yards, and is used mostly for furniture.

Speaking about furniture, I must tell you about our household club home furnishing plan, which has been such

a success with us, because it appeals to good people. It means a start for its member. Many times in life, we are forced to stand still from the lack of a start - the need of a little push of some kind - and this is especially so of those desiring to start and furnish a home and begin life's pleasures together, but who lack the necessary capital for the start, but who deserve a better fate. This is their chance. This applies also to those who desire to replenish, or refurnish a room, an apartment or a house. It is an honorable, preferred charge account.

It is not an installment plan, simply a regular charge account, except that time payments are permitted. This enables many worthy persons to buy through one of our "Household Clubs" at the same prices as our regular cash or charge customers, receiving the same courteous service and the same right to buy at our great sales and thus save the money these great events offer.

DEPARTMENT DIVISIONS

We have about 900 of these accounts in operation. Its characteristics are simple, practical, economical. It is free from all mortgage embarrassments, all extortionate overcharges, in fact free from all the objectionable features that generally attend installment purchases. Its principles are based on the broad Montgomery Fair liberality that has made the store famed for square dealing.

We have our store divided into thirty departments and a great many of them under individual management.

BEAUTIFUL TEA ROOM

We have recently added a beautiful Tea Room which I am glad to say is a success. I have always found that Montgomery patronizes things that are first class and worthwhile. Hardly a day goes by but what a pleased customer compliments the menu, the delightful surroundings and excellent service, not forgetting to add that they don't see how we do it so cheap. I will let you in on this. We do not expect to make any profit out of our Tea Room.

PRINCIPLES AND CONVENIENCES

We have on our pay roll at the present time, to be exact, 197 employees.

We have no fines or penalties for any shortcomings among our force. In fact we know that the honor system operates better with our employees. Of course, every now and then we have to take some of them to task, but the examples set by loyal people who have been with us many years is sufficient to keep the others in line.

In delivering our merchandise we use eleven Montgomery Fair delivery wagons and one motor truck.

For the convenience of ladies and children a splendid rest room and toilets looked after by a colored maid. Out of town ladies frequently leave their children in care of this maid while they do their shopping.

Continuous flow of ice water is dispensed on each floor and I notice that during

the summer months especially this convenience is appreciated by the public, and patronized very extensively.

The store is absolutely and thoroughly equipped with sprinklers, so that a fire that would amount to anything would be almost impossible. However, to safeguard our employees and customers of the store we have in our main building a fire escape with fire doors that is built exclusively of iron, brick and concrete. Any child that can walk can get down from floor to floor without any risk.

We operate four electric elevators, two in the main store, one in the Dexter Avenue Arcade direct to our Tea Room, and the other is a freight elevator used in our Grocery Department on Monroe Street.

THE RIGHT METHODS

A store cannot succeed with merchandise alone no matter how fine the goods or how large the assortment or how low the price. The store would be a failure unless it was advertised properly to attract customers, and unless the customers were served properly after they came to the store. Good service rendered by cheerful, courteous salespeople attracts more customers, creates more business, than any thing else; at least that is my opinion. Since the service of selling is the most important part of store services, sales people are the ones that have most to do with perfecting the service. They come in direct contact with the customers hundreds of times every day, and our success and our future depends largely upon the manner in which they serve the customers.

Speaking about our organization, I will mention here, and I am proud of this fact, that there are fifteen members of our organization who have been with the concern from fifteen to thirty years and twenty-three others have been with the firm continuously for five to fourteen years. Mr. Leon W. Ashley, our vice-president, had been with the store twenty-two years, starting as a bundle wrapper. Our superintendent, Mr. Joe Minnis has been with the concern thirty-four years, and on August 10th, it will be thirty-two years since I came to Montgomery.

Mr. Harry Danziger was the president of Montgomery Fair and his son, John Kennedy Danziger, joined his father there to serve as assistant manager. Following his father's death in 1934 he became the president of the firm.

In about 1936 Mr. John decided to open his own business, an exclusive ladies apparel store at 120 Dexter Avenue in the middle of the second block where Mrs. Tang had her alteration business, and now it is the home of Hodges Commercial Real Estate. As the movement away from downtown began Mr. John Danziger relocated his popular "John Danzier, Inc." to Normandale Mall.

Also of note regarding facts of this family are the offspring of Mr. John Danziger: Anne Danziger King (Rufus) lives in Montgomery and her brother, John, Jr. and his wife were living in Montgomery and both died in December. Their sister, Rebecca Danziger Snell (Dillon) lives in Boeme, Texas.

End

Membership Meeting of the Montgomery County Historical Society on November 15th

An outstanding and well attended meeting of the membership was held, not at the Figh-Pickett, but in the building that first housed a new department store downtown, Pizitz.

The building now belongs to **Marjam Supply Co.** and was kindly offered to us by Zac Gibbs for the meeting since the walls there display the landscape drawings of a group organized by **Mrs. Cathy Gerachis.** She is a Landscape Architect with Goodwyn Mills & Cawood, Inc. and it was Cathy who presented a most interesting program on the little known, **Cypress Creek Park.**

"The Park is rich in native flora and fauna. To date 125 species of birds, 68 species of trees, 30 species of moths and butterflies, 15 of ferns and 5 of salamanders have been identified."

The park is comprised of "260 plus acres of undisturbed wetland and upland habitat minutes from the center of downtown."

"The goal of the **Montgomery Nature Conservancy** is to restore and preserve the Tupelo and Cypress wetland in its native state."

Watch for announcement of tours this spring. Bill Campbell and Bob Cope are the two individuals who have been the leaders in this project.

End

Long time Board Member Retires After Nearly Twenty Years of Devoted Service.

Recently **Mrs. Elizabeth Godbold** retired from the Board of the Montgomery County Historical Society after her service of almost twenty years, fifteen of those as the Recording Secretary for the organization. Betty is the widow of Judge John C. Godbold of the Federal Bench in Montgomery.



She was present at probably more meetings than any other member and she has faithfully attended always with a full collection of the minutes of all of the past meeting in hand.

She faithfully assisted in many projects and at one time a few years ago when a large stump was being disposed off on the property both she and Charles Hubbard manned an ax in the effort.

Betty will join **Henrietta Hubbard** and **Charles Hubbard** as a Director Emeritus.

New Board Members Elected

Three new board members have been elected to serve on the Board of the Montgomery County Historical Society. Those elected were:

Christy Anderson who is the Land Use Preservation Coordinator in the Department of Planning, City of Montgomery. Formerly she was with the Alabama Historical Commission. She is married to Rich Anderson and they are very much involved in the Capital Heights Neighborhood Association. She has also served on the Montgomery Historic Structures Committee with regard to the Dexter Avenue revitalization project.

Gary P. Burton has been the minister at the Pintlala Baptist Church for a number of years and is an authority on the history of Montgomery County, particularly the southern part of our county. He is a member of the Montgomery County Library Board and a popular speaker on historic topics in our area. He is to be one of the featured speakers at the Landmarks annual speakers program, Cultural Crossroads, in January.

Zac Gibbs is the Product/Business Development Manager at Marjam Supply Co. and ELSAJA Dexter LLC. He coordinates and manages the rehabilitation of historic properties along Dexter Avenue and Court Square. He graduated from Auburn University in Business Administration and moved from his home in Anniston to Montgomery and established the Montgomery Wholesale Lumber Co. He and his wife Jennifer live at The Waters in Waugh.

The Society is indeed fortunate to have the acceptance by these three outstanding and industrious individuals who possess a love of history and we hope will give us some youthful ideas and enthusiasm for the future of the Montgomery County Historical Society. During the years that the restoration of the Figh-Pickett-Barnes School House was in the works, we found it advantageous to keep the members of the Board stable for continuity. Now is the time for the Board to include younger minds for our future.



Anderson



Burton



Gibbs

the City of Birmingham was born in the rear of this bank. On a spring day in 1871 seven gentlemen met to take up the option on Jones Valley and to incorporate the 6,000 acres into the city named Birmingham and such natural resources as there were in and near that city which would be beneficial to and help the growth of Birmingham.

CITY OF 12,000
In 1882 it was a city of 12,000 and in another year it became a city of 17,000. Josiah Morris was a good friend of my father's and after a few months he would come to the front door of my father's furniture store, which was a few doors below the bank, and raise his hand showing a check which announced a \$30,000 dividend, and a few days later it would be a \$20,000 dividend. It was in 1884 that the merchants of Montgomery, especially those on Commerce Street, began speculating in lands in North Alabama. After my father's death in 1888, I found that he had in his vault many worthless stocks, as did all the other merchants who had invested in the land in North Alabama. I destroyed such stocks as Sheffield Land Company, Calera Land Company, Anniston Land Company, Jasper Land Company, and many others.

LEHMAN COMPANY
Leaving the bank, Offult's News Stand came next and on the corner was Alex Rice, merchant tailors, in a little two-story building that had three gables. Around the corner facing the Square was Joseph Jonas Cigar Store. Lehman Durr Company was the largest commission and

cotton concern in the South until they moved up North to New York where they are known as Lehman Brothers today. Herbert Lehman is now a U.S. Senator and a former governor of New York. Kress Dime Store was followed by Thornton and Welborn Clothing Store on the corner.

FAIR'S PREDECESSOR
Directly across the street was the big store of Pollak & Co., now known as the Montgomery Fair, where I was employed for seven long years. I want to pay Mr. Pollak special tribute because he was responsible for bringing the electric light system to Montgomery. The electric lights used the carbon arc system while previous to that time only gas was used. I can well remember Mr. Foster, who lived on Holcombe Street, standing in the saddle on a big bay horse riding over town lighting the lamps.

DAVE FLEMING'S
Coming back to Pollak & Co. on the square, going north was H. Abraham's delicatessen. David Abraham, grocery and china store came next. Young's Restaurant, next to Abraham's was known as Dave Fleming's and was famous all over the South as a wonderful place to get a good meal. Traveling men coming South would always stop at Fleming's, Kloskey's in Mobile, and Antoine's in New Orleans as they were known as the best eating places in the South. Next to Fleming's was J.P. Burkes drugstore on the corner of Court and Monroe Streets. Across the street on Monroe Street was Hines Five and Dime Store, and next was the Sutters Fish and Oyster Store. The jail occupied the next 100 feet of space and it

was later moved to its present site. Price's beer saloon came next. Nearly everyone stopped for a glass of cold beer. To partake of the fresh, cold Cook's draught beer and the tidbits that went with it took the place of a good substantial meal and not many men passed up the chance to drink beer and play dominoes at the many side tables.

End

Warree LeBron Art Show A Big Success

The art show held on the October 11th for the late Mrs. Warree LeBron was a big success because of the planning and preparation of the co-chairmen, Bonner Engelhardt and Rusty Gregory. Many thanks go to them and those art owners who were kind enough to lend pieces by Warree from their collections .

There were over 50 pieces on display; some of her work was available for sale and it was sold in the first fifteen minutes - an indication that her work, reflecting the style of her cousin, Kelly Fitzpatrick, is also very much in demand. They were both founders of the Dixie Art Colony of the 1930s and 40s.

Her daughter, Sally Holland, spoke for a few minutes about her mother and her life, painting growing up there on the very beautiful and remote, Hatchett Creek in Coosa County.

End

The Park Question

THE PEOPLE ARE NOW DISCUSSING IT FROM EVERY STANDPOINT

There is Quite a Division of Sentiment Among All Classes of People - There Are Many Who think the Purchase of the Park is in the Line of Progress and Development.

Montgomery Advertiser
June 22, 1893

The Advertiser's editorial and the interviews printed yesterday with a number of leading citizens on the subject, put the people to thinking, and the proposed purchase of the Highland Park property was the main topic of conversation in the city all day.

There was quite a difference of opinion, and it is still very difficult to tell which side has a majority. The arguments pro and con take quite a wide range and they would all make very interesting reading. They show how people will reason from entirely different standpoints and how widely divergent are the many theories advanced.

An Advertiser representative talked to a great many people yesterday, and while it is impossible to give all of their views and expressions on the subject, enough are produced to show the direction the arguments and gossip is taking.

President M. B. Houghton is always on the side of progress and advancement and at the head of the Commercial and Industrial Association has given much of his time and talent to that end, in the city of Montgomery. When asked to give his views regarding the purchase of the Highland Park property, he said: "The objec-

tions thus far urged to the purchase of a park by the city do not seem strong and valid. The main one is that all spare revenue of the city is needed to extend the public school system. Montgomery has gone faster in this line than any other. Its too rapid growth engendered weaknesses and crudities. It is not as perfect as it should be. Time should be taken to look to its defects, and make it more worthy of its great cost. Besides, the city is preparing to issue \$25,000 in bonds to extend the school facilities. We are going as fast in this line as is compatible with safety. The people want the public schools, and they also want some other things. The hot climate of Montgomery renders the necessity greater here. The authorities of nearly every town of any importance have provided a breathing place for its people. It should have been done here twenty-five or thirty years ago. It was not done and the city has been the loser. It is in line now with Montgomery's progress to have a park owned by the city. It would prove a stimulus to the pride of the people in their city, give them a healthful resort, promote social life and acquaintance, which in itself is a

factor in building up the city. If the city authorities want to see their town grow and develop symmetrically, they will provide a place for the recreation and enjoyment of the people. They are under as much obligation to do it as they are to do any other work absolutely necessary. Just as much to grade and beautify the streets and sidewalks, or to provide a school system of free education. Besides, if they fail to do it now, the mistakes of the past will be repeated and the opportunities for a desirable place greatly lessened. People live in a city for its additional comforts and advantages, and the greater number draw more people, and have a more thrifty and contented population."

Captain W. B. Jones said: "I have given the matter very little thought, and pretty much all I know about it I have read in the papers. It strikes me that there are other things to do just now more important than buying a park. Let us first pave more of our streets and sidewalks, this it seems to me is very important and should be done. It might be a good idea, as suggested by someone else, to make a park up the middle of Dexter Aveue from the postoffice to the Capitol, and otherwise beautify and improve that street. Let the Highland Park matter stand a while and think about it."

Mr. W. D. Brown said that, "generally, he had an innate aversion to interviews, but having voluntarily imposed upon himself the task of consulting the Aldermen (in company with another citizen) with the view of inducing them to purchase Highland Park, he would not hesitate to express his astonishment that any serious opposition to the movement

continued on page 9

The Lady of The Old Arm Chair

No. 11
Yellow Fever in 1853

By Hannah McIntyre Cozart
The Montgomery Journal
Sunday, September 10, 1916



Hannah Cozart
and daughter,
Toccoa

"Who'd have thought it," someone used that expression the other day, and instantly my mind went back to the old, old days, when many things in Montgomery were very, very "low." That expression quoted above was used most mischievously by some waggish young wretches - but I'll tell you the story. You know the quaint brick house up on the corner of Monroe and Ripley where Col. and Mrs. E.P. Morrisette lived for so many years? Yes? Well, that house created a great sensation when it was built, not only because of its peculiar construction but because its builder was a baker whose success had been phenomenal. He had come "unheralded" and notwithstanding the obstacles of that day placed in the way of the "self-made" man by the aristocratic slaveholders, he baked bread, cakes and pies, sold them, grew rich, built his house, furnished it beautifully and set up a very handsome carriage and pair of fine horses. The boys of the town bought his ginger cakes and enjoyed them thoroughly, but joked over his social aspirations; finally their joking took rough form, they wrote on a great card and hung it on the

back of his carriage.

Of course the thoughtless laughed, "Who'd a' thought it!"

But the real, good citizens were very indignant over the insult, and threatened dire punishment to the boys, who skillfully concealed their identity until the storm blew over.

But Mr. Montague was nothing daunted by the "joke"; he soon was ready to build another fine house and bought the greater portion of the square north of him, bounded by Monroe, Ripley, Union and Madison Avenue - not all of it, but quite a lot. On this he built a wooden house, but graceful, and as southern as the other had been northern in its plan.

Wide verandas gave on pretty terraces that dropped down toward the city. The gardens were artistically laid out and the winding walks were box-bordered, while evergreens of many varieties, cedars, arborvitae, euonymus (euonymus) and mock-orange provided screens from the passersby. I do not remember how long the Montagues lived there; I only remember that it was sold to Judge Sam Rice and he brought his family from Talladega to live there. Judge Rice had a brilliantly beautiful

daughter - Miss Vin, as everyone learned to call her - whose wit was inherited from her father. Very soon every young "beau" in Montgomery was smitten and those same evergreens must have witnessed many a love scene between the gay girl and her relays of suitors. Among the funny things she did was to persuade her father to paint the house a brilliant pink; the young men admired it enthusiastically and called it "The Pink Palace." But the Montagues lie in Old Oakwood Cemetery; so does beautiful Vin Rice, "and I alone am left to tell the tale."

There was a queer circumstance connected with that block. On the northeast corner, away from merry Vin Rice, in a tiny cottage hidden amid much shrubbery, lived a free Negro woman and her family. I have forgotten her name but I'll never forget her appearance. She was a regular doctor; think of it, a Negro woman, and recognized by the white physicians as worthy to "practice." It was always queer to me, she was large and brown, a typical Negro, quiet and dignified and held in high esteem by the white people. She owned three immense

City of Birmingham Born In Rear of Montgomery Bank

MONTGOMERY ADVERTISER-ALABAMA JOURNAL
OCTOBER 15, 1950

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second in a series of articles on Montgomery during the period of 1882-85. The author, Morris M. Wolff, is a 79-year-old Montgomery civic leader who is a retired furniture dealer.

The old Exchange Hotel occupied the site of the present Exchange Hotel.[now Servis 1st Bank] It was a classic building set at the foot of Market Street (now called Dexter Avenue) with the Capitol looking down at it from the hill. Both buildings had the classic Corinthian style of architecture and the two together formed a beautiful setting very much like Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington. I was very sorry when they tore the hotel down.

Watt and Lanier were proprietors and their hotel became the gathering place for the politicians and other groups which always met there to discuss the different candidates for conventions that were held in Montgomery, and any other subjects of interest at the time.

MET DAVIS

I was one of the privileged people who shook hands with Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, when he visited here in 1886. The reception took place on the second floor of the Exchange Hotel. The hotel floor was literally covered with flowers and there was not a dry eye in the assembly. This was the great

man's last visit to Montgomery. He died three years later and was buried in Richmond, VA.

Next door to the hotel where Metcalf's is now located, the downstairs was closed but the printing establishment of Barret and Brown occupied two upper floors. Going North on Commerce Street we came to Barry Tatum Wholesale Grocery Store, which was flanked by D.M. Snow and Co., wholesale and retail hardware. Their store extended through the block. Next came W.M. Jones Brothers, wholesale and retail grocery. They were followed by the Merchant and Planters Bank. Mr. Robert Goldthwaite was president and Mr. Sam Marks was vice-president. Two wholesale groceries, establishments of George Cook and Co., and J.W. Hardy and Co., came next, with Schloss and Kahn followed by A. Moog and Co., wholesale liquor store, and Western Union Telegraph Office.

WHOLESALE FIRMS

Across the street on the east side of Commerce on the corner was J.R. Warren and Co., wholesale grocery, Hobbie

& Teague, wholesale grocery, Greil Brothers, wholesale grocery, Teague-Barnett Hardware, and H. Simon & Brothers, followed by J. Loeb Brothers, wholesale and retail grocery, and Joseph Manegold, confectioners. Two closed stores came in between, followed by B. Wolff & Brother, wholesale and retail furniture, which extended through the block to No. 1 North Court Street; the Alabama National Bank now occupies the site.

A. M. Dennedy, paints and varnishes, was followed by J.R. Adams Dime Savings Bank, situated on the corner of the alley.

1ST NATIONAL BANK

Across the alley was the First National Bank in a three-story building. Dr. O.M. Baldwin was president and Mr. Dimmick was vice-president. Next was the Commercial Fire Insurance Co., with E.B. Joseph and J.S. Dowdell as manager and cashier respectively. The Josiah Morris & Co. Bank was in the present location of the Joseph Real Estate office. This bank was very influential and one of the largest in the South. In fact

cities for the best-drilled companies. The drills were held in New Orleans, Philadelphia, Louisville, Washington and other cities. There were three companies from the South that almost always carried away the prizes - the Montgomery Grays, the Houston Light Guard, and the Chickasaw Rifles. If I remember correctly the Blues under Captain Bibb brought home the grand prize one time. They had a grand ball in celebration in the Montgomery Theater and many of the beautiful young women of the South were there.

"New Year's Day was also an important event in the city. The principal society homes were open to New Year Callers, who were usually close friends and the society gentlemen of the city. Refreshments were served and the night ended up with a grand ball given by the different social organizations of the city."

END

History Quotes

“One cannot and must not try to erase the past merely because it does not fit the present.”

Golda Meir, *My Life*

“If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten.”

Rudyard Kipling,
The Collected Works

Activities for the Future of the Historical Society

Helen Wells, one of our Board members, had been thinking that we should involve a younger age group as members of the Society. During our spring annual meeting, in talking with Zac Gibbs and Golson Foshee, two of the speakers for the event, they said that there is a keen interest among young adults in Montgomery to learn more about the past of our community.

As a result Zac and two of his associates, Clara Lasseter and Brandon Hunt, gathered a group of younger Montgomeries together for an "after work get together" at the Figh-Pickett. Helen and Rusty Gregory and James were there to introduce the gathering to the Figh-Pickett House and to the Society with a bit of local history.

Everyone was very enthusiastic and hopefully they will be the basis for a group that would form a separate associate board. We look forward to the further development of this new phase and we appreciate Helen striking the match and Zac fanning the flame. Zac has coined the phrase, “**New Energy Initiative**” to fit this major effort toward the Society’s future.

END

PROGRESS ON OAKWOOD CEMETERY PROJECT

As I am sure you have heard, we are in the process of digitizing the records at Oakwood Cemetery, Montgomery’s oldest burying ground, so that these records will be readily available for researchers on the Internet.

We are now over half way through the alphabet. If you would be interested in assisting, we can give you a demonstration of the process on the computer to see if it appeals to your interest. We would suggest that you might begin the work here at our office and then after you are comfortable with the process, you could transfer it to your home computer.

Volunteers working on letters are:
Preston Phillips
Ken Upchurch
George Howell
Claire Fordham
Alice Carter

Shara and Judia Green are working on the Excel program that will contain all of the information. After that point we should be seeing the near completion of the project

END

houses, one a huge dappled grey, a large black, and a fine bay. She rode splendidly, but she was a conspicuous figure, in a wide brimmed hat from which three long plumes waved frantically, one red, one black, one a whitish gray. One might laugh, but one felt comforted to be nursed by her when sickness laid one low. I never knew what became of her; I would certainly like to know.

Speaking of physicians and sickness reminds me of the first epidemic of yellow fever that struck Montgomery in 1853.

I had spent the summer in Georgia visiting friends in the old home from which we had moved to Montgomery. My father wrote me that there was "a queer sickness quite prevalent among the better class of citizens" and he thought I had "better come home." How queer to bring me into the danger zone of contagion! How little anyone knew of the horrid disease then! Why, the sick were "visited", the corpses were "viewed" by friends and relatives, and so the disease spread. It was fortunate that so many were away from home; many were at their plantations looking after the cotton crop; ginning time was in full swing for it was September. Many were at the Virginia Springs, or Saratoga, and when the panic really seized the citizens they fled by carriage, wagons, trains or horseback! Yet many remained and bore the brunt of the affliction. Nobly did they assist the physicians in caring for the helpless stricken ones; they buried the dead, fed the hungry, [and] used what little knowledge then they pos-

sessed to stay the dread plague. How little we suspected the rascally mosquito then! He sang and stung and spread death and destruction and no one dreamed of him! Everyone, however, used nets to their beds and some even sat under nets in the daytime; few houses were screened in those days.

My father was a physician and a very scientific man; he required us to stay at home out of the sun and also out of "the dew" - really out of the reach of myriads of mosquitoes! He also made us drink, all through the day, lemonade with salt in it; this, as you know, is a fine liver tonic. We did not know enough even to burn tar. We were horrified to learn that Carrie Chisholm was dead with the fever; they were then living in that quaint brick house that stood until a few years ago just opposite the old market, in the city hall, on Perry Street. None of us dared go; by that time everyone was ordered to "stay indoors" and only the men went abroad, this grieved me terribly, as I was so fond of the Chisholms and wanted to go to them in their distress. Then came the shocking news that every member of the McCarn family was dead, except Mrs. McCarn. Their home was on Perry Street, and the house is now owned and occupied by Mr. J. Kirk Jackson; the house has been moved from its original position. Then, Miss Fannie McGuire died; she was the stepdaughter of Mr. Moore, the portrait painter, and they lived in the quaintest house just up the hill on Perry Street above the McCarn home. The house was two-story with the gable-end toward the street

and verandas on both sides. It stood where the Alex Rice house now stands, [It was next door to the Teague House on Perry, now a vacant lot.] and Major W.W. Screws lived in it after the war.

Then our neighbor Mr. Pond the postmaster died; he lived on McDonough Street just south of the corner of Monroe Street. Before we had recovered from that shock, the news came that Judge Saffold was dead; he was one of the beloved citizens; he had married Frankie Bibb, sister to Col. Joseph Bibb. She afterward married Dr. Walter Jackson; you know the Saffold and Jackson children as well as I do. Then we were grieved to learn that the plague had claimed Charles Goldthwaite, a nephew of Judge George Goldthwaite and a brother of our friend John R. Goldthwaite of Troy; you know he named his only son Charlie for this brother. I forgot to say Mrs. McCarn afterward married Col. George Harris of Columbus, Miss., brother of Mrs. William Crawford Bibb of this city. Her niece, Mollie Harris, you know, married Peter Mastin after the war. Dear, dear, how I am gossiping of the days gone by!

Frost came at last and stayed the plague. The city took up its old routine, but many a home was desolate; many a place empty and many a useful citizen cut off in his prime - all for ignorance - if we had but known! Now - how we have grown!

End

A Night Of Tragedy And A Day Of Humor

By C. M. "Cash" Stanley
Editor, *The Alabama Journal*
July 8, 1956

HERE IS a story of tragedy when two sons of Gov. Thomas Bibb, second governor of Alabama, fell in love with two first cousins in two of North Alabama's most distinguished families.

One of the girls was Mary Chambers, daughter of Senator-elect Henry H. (Hal) Chambers, of Madison, who became engaged to William Dandridge Bibb.

The other was Mary Betts, daughter of Elisha Betts, also of Madison, who became engaged to David Porter Bibb, also a son of Gov. Thomas Bibb.

EVERYTHING was ready for the two weddings. They were to be gala events in the Tennessee Valley. The wedding trousseaus had been ordered from Paris. Parties were being given. Friends were all preparing for unusual festivities.

Shortly before the great event Mary Chambers and Mary Betts were to spend a night together. They were not only first cousins but [also] lifetime friends. As they were preparing to retire an old and trusted and loved mammy nurse came to them and told them she was going to fix a little Epsom salts for them. When she brought the glasses she said, "Drink this for your complexion."

WHAT the nurse and the girls did not know was that when Mammy reached to a shelf for the package of Epsom salts she had taken down a package of oxalic acid, a deadly poison used much in those days for cleaning silver and glassware. The crystals of sulphate of magnesium were very similar in appearance to those of oxalic acid.

Mary Chambers took her glass first and swallowed the dose. Immediately she fell to the floor with spasms of pain. Mary Betts didn't taste her potion.

Mary Chambers lingered for about three months. Her fiancé William Dandridge Bibb, in the hour of tragedy agreed with Mary that they should be married on schedule. With her beautiful wedding gown spread over her as she lay stricken on her bed, the marriage service was pronounced and they were man and wife.

THE OTHER couple bravely went through with their own ceremony. Mary Betts became Mrs. David Porter Bibb, and they have left in Alabama a distinguished group of descendants.

Such a tragedy would be eventful in any case, but it was a great sensation happening in families of such prominence in

the South.

Gov. Thomas Bibb at his estate, Belle Mina, was one of the wealthiest men in the state. He was a brother of William Wyatt Bibb, first governor of Alabama and himself president of the state senate and thus succeeded to the governorship when his brother met death in a riding accident.

DR. HENRY H. (HAL) CHAMBERS was a distinguished practicing physician in the prosperous community of Madison in Limestone county. Interested in public affairs he had been elected a member of the state's first constitutional convention. He ran for governor and was defeated in 1821 and in 1823 by Israel Pickens.

In 1825 he was elected to the United States Senate from Alabama, and died in January 1826 in his old home county in Virginia where he had stopped on his way to Washington to take up his new duties.

THE OTHER family involved in this tragic occurrence was the Betts family. The father of Mary Betts, one of the girl cousins, was Elisha Betts, and his descendants have been men of affairs in the state for many years. Senator Chambers had married an aunt of Edward C. Betts. Edward C. Betts born 1820, died 1891, was a commissioner of agriculture of Alabama and his wife was Virginia Augusta Swope of Courtland. Their children were:

Rostan Betts, who married Mattie Minor Meriwether.

Tancred Betts, circuit judge of Madison County who married Maude Minor Broun, daughter of Dr. William LeRoy Broun, who was for many years president of Alabama

Covered Wagons And Volunteer Firemen Are Recalled By Wolff

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the fourth in a series of articles on Montgomery from 1883 to 1888. The author, Morris M. Wolff, is a 79-year-old civic leader and retired furniture dealer.

"On the third block of Montgomery Street on the Southwest corner was the residence of the former Mayor, John H. Clisby, and across the street on the site of the present Shepherd Building was the only public school in Montgomery with the exception of a girls' school at the corner of Sayre and Mildred streets called the Chilton School. There was a school conducted at Hamner Hall on Holt and Clayton, and Mrs. Faunsby had a school for girls up on McDonough Street. Prof. Thomas had a boys' school at Washington and Union Streets.

"There was a school for the Negroes called Swayne's College near the corner of High and Bainbridge. All in all the only school which was entirely public was the one where the Shepherd Building now stands. I shall remember Robert Goldthwaite, Richard Arrington, John and Langston Haygood, Hubbard Goldthwaite, Bibb Graves, Will Gunter, Burr Ferguson, Pat White, Gaston Gunter, retired Admiral George and Temple Seibels, with affection.

"All these childhood schoolmates have passed beyond except Admiral George and "Temp" Seibels and yours truly. We never could get out of school quickly enough to get to the river. How we did take chances in that river! At the place we called **Bemus' Bluff** and below was Chicken Hole, and across the river in the so-called Cat Holes many of us came near drowning and many were saved by the different boys. We'll never know how many times we came near death. I know I have three rescues to my credit, and how many "Temp" Seibels has to his I don't know. It was not deemed exceptional in those days to save a boy from drowning because it was an everyday occurrence.

"At that time the city limits were the Red Bridge Road, Bugahomme, and the Mobile Road. The wagon roads and the approaches to Montgomery were nearly impossible in the winter rainy months. The streets inside the city were not paved either and most of the winter months the wagons and the city drays would bog up in the mud around the square.

"We had covered wagons in the city constantly. They would reach Montgomery about night and park in the wagon lots around the city for the night. The next day they would do all their trading and at the end of the day would park again for the

night. They left early the next morning for home. It took four hours to go to Magee's Switch, which was eight and one-half miles on the Mobile Road and which now takes only nineteen minutes to drive by car.

"In 1882 the city had a very good fire department composed of volunteers. I can remember the names of the different companies very well. The Dexter Company on Lee Street, the Alabama Company and the Lomax Company in the City Building, and the Mechanics Hook and Ladder on Madison Avenue. All of the members of these companies were volunteers except the drivers and the engineers. We also had a Negro fire company which had a pumping wagon. This wagon was manned by eight or 10 Negroes on each side of the wagon who pumped away for dear life trying to raise the pressure of the water. I've seen them faint away one after the other when overcome by the strenuous exertion.

"Every year in May there was an exhibition drill on Court Square and prizes were awarded for the best companies and exhibitions. I can remember one time in particular when all the companies were assembled on Jefferson Street and paraded up to Mrs. Doran's home to pay tribute to the woman who was called the mother of the Montgomery Fire Department.

"The militia holds a very important spot in my memories. We had the Montgomery Grays under Captain Amerine, the Montgomery Blues under Captain Bibb, and the Independent Rifle under Captain Fitzpatrick. All of these were crack companies in the early [1880s]. A great many prizes were offered in different

were made and resolutions adopted requiring these gamblers and ruffians to leave the town within twenty-four hours never to return on peril of their lives. While a register was being prepared of the names of all who were to be expelled, a messenger came into the assembly and announced that the gamblers, some thirty-five or forty in number, had gathered in a body in front of the courthouse door and were breathing out threats of vengeance and slaughter. At the same time a note was handed to the Chairman which he read in silence and laid aside on his desk. After the list of names of those who were to be exiled had been prepared and announced, committees appointed and plans completed for carrying into effect the purposes of the meeting, the assembly was now ready to be adjourned. Then the Chairman rose from his seat and read aloud to the citizens the note that had been delivered to him. It was addressed to the Chairman and informed him that the gamblers did not intend to molest the good people of Montgomery for this invasion of their civil rights; but they proposed to hold him personally responsible, because they recognized him as the instigator and promoter of the day's doings. This note bore the signature of one of the most daring and desperate of these fellows, probably a self-appointed ringleader for this occasion, whose name, real or reputed, was Swords Williams.

Clearly this was a shrewdly contrived and audacious scheme to frighten the Chairman and break up the meeting. If only the Mayor could be cowed, the rest of the good people, being without a leader, would abandon their purpose to drive out the lawless members of community. But the

Chairman was not a man to be easily intimidated. After he finished the reading of the note Colonel Thorington addressed himself to the assembly saying in substance this: "I do not beg of you, citizens, to protect me. I shall try to take care of myself. I may be killed either in open battle in the streets or by a secret assassin or in some other way. All that I ask of you, in case of my death, is to see that the decree of this day is carried out to the end. Let the safety of the people be for this crisis the supreme law."

When the assembly as adjourned and the men led by the Chairman went out, it was thought that there would be a bloody battle in the street. But it was not so. When the crowd poured out from the courthouse, Colonel Thorington went forward to the gamblers who were gathered in a knot in front of the door and told them in his cool, calm way that it would be best for them to accept the decree to submit quietly and make their preparations to leave the town at once. After a brief consultation among themselves, the desperadoes retired to the Montgomery Exchange, the doors of which they proceeded to barricade with the determination, as they declared of resisting by force and arms any attempt to expel them.

At this point the traditions vary. Some say that a band of citizens headed by the mayor brought out the six pounder brass cannon that belonged to the town or to some volunteer military company of the town, loaded it with slugs, dragged it into Court Square, and trained it on the Montgomery Exchange, with the purpose of battering down the walls of the detestable establishment and, if need should be of killing the occupants. Another story is

that a determined band of men, all heavily armed, under the leadership of Edmund S. Dargan, a young lawyer, marched up to the Exchange and broke down the doors with axes. As these two versions of what took place at that crisis are too inconsistent with each other, I am inclined to believe that both are true. It is probable that while Thorington and his men stood ready with slow match in hand to open fire on the building, Dargan and his followers advanced and broke down the doors. However this may have been, the outcome was a great surprise to the besiegers, for Mr. Swords Williams and his bloody-minded swash-bucklers surrendered without firing a shot. They gave up their guns, pistols, bowie knives, and sword-canes, but pleaded for more time in which to arrange their business affairs preparatory to their final departure from the town. At this juncture some wise citizen, whose name has not been transmitted, offered a suggestion which, it was thought, would bring a happy solution of all the trouble.

The suggestion was made that they volunteer to join Captain Isaac Ticknor's company and go to Texas and aid the colonists in their struggle for independence. The offer was gladly accepted and in a few days the ranks were filled up, officers elected, and the means of equipment provided by a popular subscription of money. In due time Ticknor and his men took passage on a steamboat bound for Mobile and then on to Texas.

All of Captain Ticknor's company perished in the Massacre at Goliad in 1836.

End

Polytechnic Institute at Auburn.

Victor Betts, who married Lucy Lee Winston.

Augusta Ada Betts, who married Judge Charles Kortrecht of Memphis.

PARMELIA THOMPSON BIBB, who was the wife of Thomas Bibb, second governor of Alabama, must have been a very proper lady in her day. Her husband, one of the very wealthy planters of the Tennessee Valley had built a great home in Limestone County which he called Belle Mina. He also built a handsome home for each of his children, one of them in Huntsville, being for Adaline who had married James Bradley.

Upon one occasion in the early 1850's Parmelia, then a widow, was in Huntsville at her daughter's home, and her daughter Adaline Bradley was out at the Belle Mina home. Two of Parmelia's grandchildren were visiting her in Huntsville. One of them was Hal Chambers Bibb and the other was Sarah Adaline Bradley. They were first cousins, and both were grandchildren of Gov. Bibb.

MRS. PARMELIA BIBB saw something happen between the two cousins who were still in their teens. She wrote a hasty message to little Adaline's mother, called a trusted Negro slave, had him saddle a horse, told him to ride fast to Belle Mina which was twenty-five miles away and give this letter to Mrs. Bradley.

The Negro, after a hard ride came up to Mrs. Bradley at Belle Mina in a state of great excitement telling her, "Ole Miss sent me with this letter for you."

Mrs. Bradley knew something terrible had hap-

pened, but managed to get the letter open. It consisted of one short sentence:

"Come quick; Hal has kissed Adaline."

End

The Park Question

continued from page 5

If you have not guessed by now they are auguing about the purchase of Oak Park.

should have developed. It is a question of transcendent importance, not only to ourselves, but to our posterity, and a few thousand dollars should not intervene to prevent the carrying out of the project. That the property is cheap, accessible, and adaptable, cannot be denied. What nature has done for the location, would require art several decades to accomplish. The civilizing and health-giving influences of parks, situated near populous towns or cities, are not questioned. Why, then, should the city hesitate for one moment in purchasing so magnificent a piece of property? The poverty of the city is pleaded in justification of their course in opposing the measure but it seems the stockholders of the park have obviated this difficulty by proposing annual payments running through a series of years. By this means, it would be paid for without creating the slightest financial rupture - almost imperceptibly. I hope, therefore, that our excellent Board of Aldermen will see their way clear to a consummation of this much needed public enterprise, and thus erect a monument to their memory in the hearts of the whole people."

Captain J. M. Falkner thinks the city ought to buy the park because it is the only available place left for the purpose and every one would agree

that the city ought to have a park.

Mr. Joseph Goetter favors the purchase of the park and thinks it would be a safe investment, but he does not know that the city is ready to do so now.

Mr. C. A. Lanier was outspoken in favor of the purchase and improvement of some property for a public park, but he was not ready to commit himself to any particular place as there were a number of eligible localities splendidly adapted for the purposes of a park.

Col. A. B. Garland is decidedly in favor of the purchase, believing that now is the accepted time.

Mr. James Gallagher thinks the city will never have a better opportunity of obtaining desirable park property. He says the poorer people who can't go off to the springs will need the park for themselves and their families on hot summer days, and that the matter of distance and cost of getting there will be an inconsiderable trifle. "By all means buy the property," is his opinion on the subject.

Mr. E. G. Fowler was opposed to the proposition.

Mr. Ben Jones says his opinion would be to make the purchase without jeopardizing other interest. If the present financial situation does not warrant the outlay the purchase should not be made.

And so it goes. You meet one person who is enthusiastic in favor of the project and the very next one you find is just as decided on the other side. The City Council is to pass upon the matter at its next regular meeting and in the meantime the people will have an opportunity of letting them know their wishes in the premises.

END

HOW THE GAMBLERS WERE BANISHED FROM THE TOWN IN 1836

(From *Times Gone By*)
Exact newspaper of original unknown
By W. S. Wyman

I was living in Montgomery in 1836 when the people rose in their might and drove out the gamblers; but as I was then a little child only 5 years of age, I, of course, was too young to have any personal knowledge of the dramatic scenes then enacted. I retain but one personal reminiscence of these gamblers and desperadoes which I may as well relate here as a fitting prelude to the story I have to tell. It is just a single gleam from what the poet calls "the dewy dawn of memory" that left a permanent impression.

One evening after nightfall the Wyman family, consisting at that time of father, mother and three children, were seated on the front porch of the old Wyman residence, recently torn down, which stood on the south side of Washington Street, not far from its junction with Court Street. I cannot fix the exact date of this incident, but it must have been in the summer of 1835, which [when] I was about 4 years old. The stillness of the summer night was broken by sounds of revelry and riot. We heard loud shouting mingled with blasphemous oaths, and snatches of ribald song and laughter. Now and then there was a crash of broken glass, as if window panes were being smashed. All the air was full of noise. My mother asked my father what was the meaning of the uproar. He said in reply, as I well remember, that the gamblers were having a champagne supper down on Court Street and that the rattle of broken glass on the floor that we heard was caused by the gamblers striking off the necks of the champagne bottles with their heavy table knives. They were so eager to drink that they would not wait the tedious process of drawing the cork.

It may interest some of the readers to know the exact place where this revel rout was held. It was in the upper room of a two-story frame building that stood on the east side of South Court Street not far from the corner of Washington. There were on the lower floor two apartments used as shops. The upper story was one long room over the shops with a stairway leading up from the street. I am able to give an accurate description of this old tenement, because it remained standing for many years after the gamblers were driven out, and was often pointed out to me afterwards as the place where the gamblers held their carousal that summer night. It must have been a show establishment, when it was first erected, with its broad windows and elaborate wooden pilasters. I remember it in after years as presenting the shabby-genteel appearance of a storehouse that had seen its best days and was fast going into decay. On one side stood the medical office of Dr. Silas Ames, a leading physician, on the other side was the cake shop of Aunt Venus Hassell, a free woman of color. Aunt Venus was a quadroon with complexion so light and hair so black and straight and glossy that she might easily have been

taken by strangers for a white person of South European blood and lineage.

In this long room over the shops, the gamblers were holding high carnival on that summer night in 1835. This place, however, was not a regular resort of these ferocious fellows of the blackleg fraternity. They had rented this upper room for this occasion only.

On the east side of Court Street, between Monroe Street and Dexter Avenue, just where Court Street begins to narrow into North Court Street, there stood for many years a wooden tenement of two stories. The mercantile establishment called "The Fair" now occupies the very spot. Of this building I am able to give an accurate description, because it remained standing for some twenty years after the happenings chronicled in this story. It was built in 1832, named the "Montgomery Exchange," and opened to the public with considerable flourish, for the Montgomery newspapers of that time made special mention of its opening on the 31st day of July, 1832, as if that were an event of great importance. The Montgomery Exchange was a long, low, two-story building, with one side standing sheer on the edge of the street, and gable ends facing north and south. The first store front was the barroom with two broad doors of entrance from the street. The bar, where distilled damnation was dispensed over the counter at 12 1/2 cents a drink, was on the long side of the room facing the street. A wooden awning supported by posts extended over the sidewalk along the whole front to shelter the loafers from sun and rain as they sat in their split bottomed chairs, and droned, and dozed and slept off fumes of whisky.

In the upper story over the bar-room were the gambling rooms. Standing in the rear at right angles with this front building there was a two-story annex with a dining room on the lower floor and sleeping rooms for the boarders above. The Montgomery Exchange was a combination of boarding house, gambling hell, and grog shop. It was a disreputable place from the beginning and soon came to be occupied exclusively by lewd fellows of the baser sort - professional gamblers.

The Montgomery Exchange soon became a nuisance to the better people of the town. Here the gamblers drank and quarreled and fought and slept by day, and spent the live-long night in gambling. Artless and inexperienced countrymen and even some townsmen who must have known something of the dark methods of the professional gamester, were treated with liquid refreshments at the bar of the Exchange, and, when they were well under the influence of the strong waters, were invited as jolly good fellows to try their luck in the rooms above with poker and roulette, but especially with that seductive game of chance which, an unauthentic legend declares, was invented by one of the old Pharaohs of Egypt several thousand years ago.

It was worse than a nuisance. Often four or five of these roisters, with arms interlocked, would march abreast up and down the sidewalks of Market Street, trolling bacchanalian songs and jostling peaceable citizens off the sidewalk into the street, just for the fun of the thing, as they said. They backed the proprietor of the Exchange, John Tittle, in his refusal to pay the license fee fixed by law for the retailing of spirituous liquors. When the town marshal came to collect the license

money, they chased him away with drawn pistols. The Mayor of the town at this time was John H. Thorington, a prominent lawyer. The whole police force consisted of one man, the town marshal, whose name has not been handed down. Quiet, law-abiding citizens were sometimes assailed in the streets by these rascallions for little or no cause.

One well-remembered incident may be related here to show the lively circumstances under which good people maintained existence in those exciting times. One of these gamblers had grossly maltreated Squire Robert Parker, a quiet and inoffensive gentleman, by striking him with his fists. There was a young merchant, named Jack Thorington, a younger brother of the Mayor, and a member of the mercantile firm of Wyman & Thorington, who kept a store in the old wooden building on the southwest corner of Perry and Market Streets, where now stands West's brick drug store. Jack put a pair of pistols in his pockets and went out in search of the ruffian who had maltreated his kinsman. He found the bully standing in front of a grog shop, assailed him with his fists, and administered to him a much stronger dose of the same bitter medicine that the rowdy had given to Squire Parker.

The property of good citizens was destroyed at night, sometimes in a spirit of wantonness and pure deviltry; sometimes as a warning that their madcap pranks, overbearing insolence, and constant violations of law and order were not to be interfered with. The Mayor who had tried by all lawful methods to suppress the disorders but with small success, at once became the object of their bitterest resentment.

One night they went secretly to his stable, brought out his fine carriage, dragged it down Commerce Street, and threw it from the top of one of the high bluffs near the steamboat landing and demolished it. A few nights after this the Mayor was sitting after supper in the back part of his law office, a small one-story frame building that stood on the west side of Perry Street between Washington and Market, just below the alley. He was engaged in writing. Suddenly there was a flash from the outer darkness of the street in front, a pistol shot rang out; but the bullet that was intended for Colonel Thorington missed its mark and imbedded itself in the wall just behind his head. It was a narrow escape. At the moment when the shot was fired, it is said, he had bent forward to pick up a pen which had fallen on the floor, and this slight movement of his body at the critical moment was all that saved his life. Exact dates are lacking, but this must have happened about the last of December, 1835, or in the early days of January, 1836.

After this attempt to assassinate the Mayor, the good men of Montgomery, who, unfortunately for themselves, had long impatiently submitted to these evils not from want of natural leaders, but from lack of organized effort for united action, were now at last thoroughly aroused. The time was come, they plainly saw, for quick and decisive work. After hurried consultation by some of the leading citizens a call was issued for a meeting of all the law-abiding men of the town to be held in the courthouse which occupied at that time the spot where the fountain now stands in Court Square.

Soon the courtroom was filled with angry citizens all armed to the teeth. John H. Thorington was made Chairman of the meeting. Fiery speeches