

THE HERALD

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MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

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PASSING OF THE OLD MONTGOMERY THEATRE

Captain Frank O'Brien tells of early days of the Playhouse, Some of the Players and Stirring
Scenes enacted there during War Days

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The Montgomery Advertiser, Montgomery, Alabama
Sunday, November 24th, 1907.

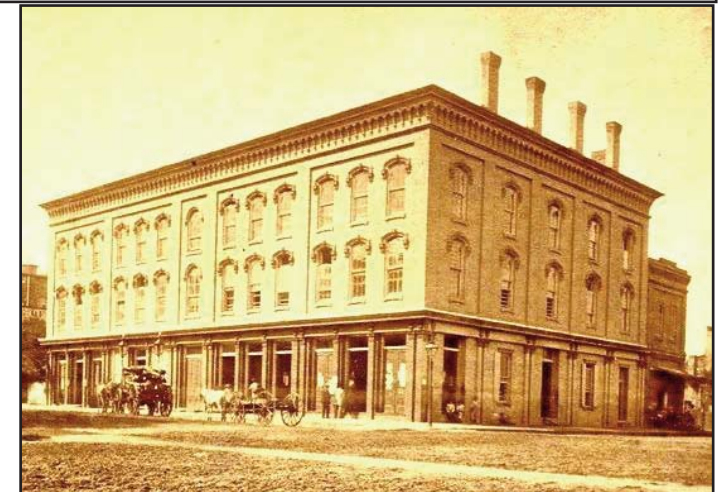
By
Frank P. O'Brien

On invitations of my good friends, Mr. Jake Wells and the Hirscher Brothers, managers of "The Grand"-the new temple of the Drama-in Montgomery, I was present at the opening of that beautiful house Thursday night, November 14.

The almost constant "buzz" of complimentary remarks on all sides, singing the praises of the new candidate for public favor, sounded to me like the death knell of that old favorite on Perry Street, around which clusters the fondest memories of my boyhood days, and still small voices cry out as the stiffening fingers of memory slowly and softly turn back the pages to those stormy days "lang syne", for within its hallowed walls I spent many happy moments as assistant scenic and fresco painter, apprenticed to my dear old friend Peter Schmidt from the first of February, 1860, to the ninth of January, 1861, when with other venturesome spirits, I left for Pensacola, as a member of the Independent Rifles, Captain Bob Farris commanding, under orders from Governor A. B. Moore.

In giving to *The Advertiser* this little sketch I am forced to write in the first person, I can tell the story in no other way.

It has been erroneously asserted by many, among the number of my late friend, Stuart



Montgomery Theatre
Built in 1859

Robson, that the Montgomery Theatre was erected in 1854. The building was started early in the fall of 1859 under the supervision of Colonel Daniel Cram, designer, and architect, and at that time Superintendent of the Montgomery and West Point Railroad. The owner was Colonel Charles T. Pollard, the President of the same railroad. The building was erected by Messrs. B. F. Randolph and A. R. McLelland, doing the wood work and



Photograph of Capitol Building in 1886. Note house on right was on Washington St. across from where the First White House stands today.

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Randolph the brick work and plastering. The joiner and inside wood work was executed by George and Ed. Fletcher, whose shop was on the opposite side of the street. As stated by Wade McBryde, the mason labor was composed entirely of Negro women, of Mr. Randolph, the brick contractor.

THE FIRST PLAY

The theatre was first opened to the public the night of October 14, 1860. The bill presented was Richard Brinsley Sheridan's "School for Scandal," and the "Persecuted Dutchman." The cast of "School for Scandal" was composed of the following, many of whom have written their names high in the dramatic firmament: John Wilkes Booth, (who until that season had played under the "nom de theatre" of John Wilkes), John W. Albaugh (now owner and manager of Albaugh's Washington Theatre), Jimmie Ward, Samuel K. Chester, Harry Watson (who later became an Episcopal clergyman of note in Wisconsin), Frank Keller, Billie Sheldon, Jimmie Lewis, (for many years a member of Daley's New York company), Charles Morton, Harry DeCoursey, Joe Lewis, Mary and Emma Mitchell, sisters of Maggie Mitchell (the former, at present the wife of John W. Albaugh), Mrs. David Hanchett, Mollie Williams, Julia Nelson, and Kate Hafferning. Later on the company was strengthened by the addition of Joe Taylor, his wife and Master and little Miss Ophelia Lewis, as juvenile members.

The following composed the executive staff: Mat Canning, (late of Crisp and Canning), Lessee and Manager William Crenshaw, Treasurer; John Albaugh, Stage Manager; William Lester, Prompter; Peter

Schmidt, Scenic Artist; Frank P. O'Brien, Assistant Scenic Artist; Eli Lewis Properties; Mrs. Eli Lewis, wardrobe woman and Charles W. Pickett, Stage Carpenter.

Montgomery is often referred to - and justly so - as the "Cradle of the Confederacy". The spot on the portico of the State Capitol building indicated by a Star, is proudly pointed out as the place where our illustrious leader, Jefferson Davis, stood when the oath of office was administered, which placed in his hands the destinies of the "Storm Cradled Nation."

An unpretentious two story building on Lee Street is pointed out as the "White House" of the Confederacy, where for a short time Mr. Davis and his family resided; yet I question if there are a dozen people in Montgomery today who are aware of the fact that within the four walls of that old Theatre on Perry street were enacted scenes which led up to the formation of that tempest-tossed Nation, which breathed and burned and after four years of suffering and privation went down at Appomatox surrounded by a history made glorious by deeds of heroism unparalled in the annals of any country.

The old house was the home of stirring incidents and patriotic narrations in those gloomy days when the specter of discontent hovered over our land, and was the anchorage of unrest which preceded the hours that mark the formation of a government which we all hoped would "take her stand among the Nations of the Earth."

From the stage of that old theatre during the latter part of November and December - messages were given out to a storm-torn country by such illustrious men as Alexander Stephens, Howell Cobb, Robert Toombs, William L. Yancey, Ben Hill,

Thos. H. Watts, James H. Clanton, Gen. J. H. Holtzclaw, Col. Seibels and many others whose lives and property were sacrificed on the alter of country and who have long since "crossed the river."

OVERT ACT IN THEATRE

An incident occurred that night of December Nineteenth 1860, in that theatre which was heralded all over the country as the first overt act of treason in the South. (South Carolina seceded the next day). A beautiful flag of blue silk, with a single star in the center, was presented to Sam Harris, a young attorney, by Miss Maggie Mitchell, a member of the company, Mr. Harris, afterwards became Right Rev. Samuel S. Harris, Bishop of the Episcopal diocese of Michigan, Miss Mitchell one of the most renowned actresses on the American Stage; both having reached the top of the ladder in their chosen profession.

The feature which incensed our erst-while enemy - connected with the presentation - was the fact that the young actress dragged the Stars and Stripes from the right hand box and trampeled it under foot as she presented the lone star flag to Sam Harris. She evened up later on, however, by administering the same dose of medicine to the "Bonnie Blue Flag," on a far-



“The Bonnie Blue Flag”

In House News

Memorials

Col. Sam Barrett

By Mr. James W. Fuller

Mr. Forrest Bailey

By Mr. James W. Fuller

Mr. Marvin Carroll

By Ms. Barbara Britton

Mrs. Elizabeth Hobbs Cole

By Mr. James W. Fuller

Mrs. Laura Tresslar “Toni” Cottle

By Mr. James W. Fuller

Mrs. Beverly Hodges Davis

By Mr. James W. Fuller

Dr. Samuel Engelhardt

By Mr. James W. Fuller

Mrs. Susan F. Haigler

Dr. & Mrs. Charles E. Ingalls

Mrs. Jo McGowin

Charlotte & Joe Mussafer

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Sasser

Mrs. Chris Setzer

Col. Edward L. Godbold, Sr.

By James W. Fuller

Mr. Allen Douglas “Dubo” Harper

By Mr. James W. Fuller

Mr. & Mrs. T. Bowen Hill III

Mrs. Jo McGowin

Mr. William Hughes, Jr.

By Mr. James W. Fuller

Mr. Forrest McConnell

By Mr. James W. Fuller

Mr. Frank W. Riggs

By Mr. Robert J. McCreary

Mrs. May Handey Smith

By Dr. & Mrs. M. Bonner Engelhardt

New Members

Mr. & Mrs. Pete Cobb

Mr. Jacob Cook

Dr. Wynne Crawford

Mr. & Mrs. Bo Daniel

Mr. Weldon Doe III

Mr. W. Wardlaw Lamar

Mr. & Mrs. L. Daniel Morris

Special Donations

Mrs. Shirley McKensie

Honors

Mr. James W. Fuller

By Mrs. Betty C. Keyes

Unity Club

celebrates their
100th Anniversary

Recently the Unity Club of Montgomery celebrated their 100th anniversary at the Figh-Pickett-Barnes School House with a delicious dinner prepared and served by Jennie Weller Catering followed by a program with antidotes remembered about some of the founding members, all outstanding and influential gentlemen in 1917. Among those remembered were:

Prof. Ellie Barnes, Headmaster of Barnes School For Boys
Dr. Clark Hilton Rice, Pediatrician
Mr. Jesse B. Hearin, Chair. Cham. of Comm., Board of Ed.
Judge Walter B. Jones, Montgomery Co. Circuit Court
Mr. Grover Cleveland Hall, Sr. Newspaper Publisher
Mr. John P. Figh, Prominent Contractor incl.State Capitol

The Unity Club meets monthly to hear a paper of general interest presented by one of their members followed by a critique and frank discussion which may or may not be complimentary.



Knight of the French Legion of Honor **** Nimrod T. Frazer

Our own Rod Frazer has brought recognition, truly deserved, to the 3,677 men from Alabama who 100 years ago embarked by train on an adventure taking them to France in World War I, 168 of them to end their adventure on and their lives at Croix Farm, site of a fierce battle. Rod has made a great contribution to this story in his book, "Send The Alabamians" and has personally had sculptured duplicate monuments, one at Croix Farm and the most recent at our train station in Montgomery.

He commissioned Jim Butler, an outstanding English sculptor to create both works in bronze, depicting a soldier carrying the body of his fallen comrade; the result certainly without hesitation brings tears to the eyes of the beholder.

The French President Emmanuel Jean-Michel Fred'eric Macron signed a decree in May, 2017 that made Rod a Knight of the French Legion of Honor, recognizing him in his promotion of the close relations between Alabama and France.

The ceremonies the first week of September were attended by Mr. Butler, the French Consul General, Louis de Conrail and World War I Cenntennial Commissioner, Dr. Monique Seefried who pinned the medal to Rod's jacket.

The activities and recognition began with a gathering at the Montgomery Museum of Fine



Nimrod T. Frazer, Sr.

Arts to hear word from all of those involved. Next was a cocktail supper at the Maxwell Club attended by the Commanding Officer and other dignitaries as well as those mentioned above, and it was there that the honor medal was presented to Rod.

On Monday afternoon a sizable crowd gathered for the unvailing of the handsome sculpture at Union Station followed by refreshments to round out a weekend of tribute to the memory of those who so valiantly gave their lives.



Sculpture honoring the men of the 167th Infantry Regiment located at the Union Station.

Landmark Foundation
continued from page 11

archival depository for Montgomery's city and county history. Renting a room first in the Dexter Avenue Methodist Church, the MCHS became an important addition to the community. It, too, soon needed more space as papers, documents and photographs poured in from grateful donors.

The grand adventure of house moving began when news spread about the expansion of the Federal Court House with the threatened loss of the historic Figh-Picket-Barnes School House, then nestled on Clayton Street at Moulton Street where it served as a paint store and lastly a convenience store. This highly significant structure with its rich history needed to be rescued. After many months of preparation for the move, the task began in June of 1996.

The size of the brick house and the weight of almost 600 tons required the efforts of two house-moving contractors. After a three day journey, and a size wider than Court St., the house arrived at its new address of 512 South Court Street, the corner of Mildred. The lot was a gift of the family of Bobby Arrington. When it finally arrived on its new site, the sad truth was that the MCHS had no money to hire a contractor. Since James had construction experience, they retained him to handle the job as a volunteer. The rest is history -- but it is living history -- one of which we are all highly appreciative. James, through all of his work and perseverance, demonstrates a commitment and dedication to the highest ideals of historical preservation.



away northern stage.

After the presentation of the flag and the dismissal of the audience, the stage was cleared and the company and a few guests were invited to a magnificent banquet given by the resident Manager, Mat Canning. Among the invited guests as I remember them how, were Mr. Harris, Mike L. Wood, (Mr. Harris' brother in law), Charley Virgin, Ed. J. Lee, Dana Hubbard, Wade McBryde, Bob Bass, and Harry Mettenheimer; Col. Mike Woods, Ed. J. Lee, of that number including the writer alone survive.

The war ending early in sixty-five and with hundreds of others I returned to Alabama determined to make the best of the situation. While - micawber like - waiting for something to turn up, Col. Charles T. Pollard, still owner of the theatre, employed me to paint out several scenes on the stage and two or three designs in the front of the auditorium - painted there by Harry McCarthy, a "rebel" actor and embryo scene painter - which our would-be masters and so called conquerors designated as of a treasonable character.

When the house was ready for use I was again employed by the Colonel - to manage it for him, in which capacity I served him until the close of the season of 1867-8, when other engagements forced me to resign and the theatre was leased to Messrs. J. A. Diaz and Jim Wells (of Soda Water fame,) who were succeeded by the late George F. McDonald who in turn was displaced by Jake Tannenbaum, now a citizen of Mobile. Mr. McDonald erected the theatre known as the Bijou on Bibb Street.

FIRST AFTER WAR

The first company to appear at the old house at the

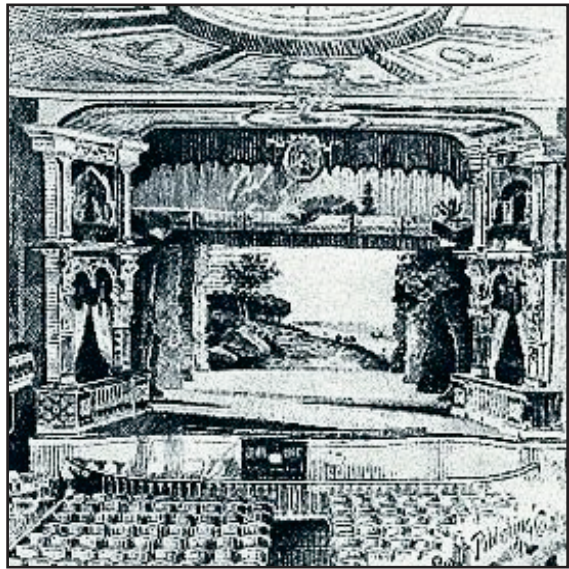
close of the war, was organized in New York by Frank Bates and Col. A. B. Tidmarsh, Bates was the husband of Ella Wrenn, a once famous English comedienne. The company was composed of the following clever people: Frank Bates, Oliver Wrenn, Fred Wrenn, James Keith, Ned Thorne, George Stuttz, Eliza Wrenn, Ella Wrenn, Martha Wrenn, Kate Slocomb, and Harriet Custar.

Again the old theatre became a storm centre; as from the initial opening late in September, 1865, until the removal of "Steele's Army corps," late in October, scarcely a night passed that did not witness a clash between detachments of the army of occupation and small bodies of returned paroled Confederates. There are several citizens living in Montgomery today, who will remember that it was a very rare thing to see a woman in the theatre parquette floor under any circumstances whatever.

I remember that on one occasion a difficulty was started on the parquette floor by a detachment of Indian members, if I remember correctly, of a regiment commanded by General Healy and Billie and Henry Porter and a number of their friends. The combatants commenced shooting at each other, and I turned the interior lights out and immediately the audience hastily left the house. The theatre was quickly emptied and, in a measure, order was restored.

FIGHT WITH INDIANS

The Porter boys were so incensed at the cowardly attack made on them, that they quietly located their enemies, from sundry remarks, and followed them when they started to camp which was located in a portion of



Interior of Montgomery Theatre

Wilson's grove and on the large "Sayre" lot adjoining the residence of Mrs. Ann R. Thiess the mother of Wade McBryde. As the Indian soldiers reached the old "Belshaw" corner, the shooting began. Several of the Indians were wounded and scattered, several running down Commerce street. [Belshaw's Corner was the same location at Court Square as was Region's Bank.] Just in front of Hall, Roses and Roberts old store, a stand was made by three or four Indians and an officer who seemed to be in charge, and here it was that Billie Porter shot at the Yankee officer - missed him - and killed his own brother Henry Porter. After this sad affair the trouble between the "yankees" and our boys became less frequent.

To me it is almost incomprehensible and to the theatre-goers of the present day it will sound improbable, that Montgomery with a population of less than twelve thousand inhabitants could sustain companies for an entire season, and at prices that would be considered ruinous to the traveling manager of the present day. Such is a fact, during the season of 1856-66, 1866-7 and 1867-8, the following Opera companies played weekly engagements to crowded

houses and at profits that would delight the souls of the average syndicate manager of the present day.

During the season above named the following companies played weekly engagements every year. The Susinii and Ghionii Italian Opera Company - Piere Bernard and Caroline Richings English Opera Company. The Franz Himmer-Frederici German Opera Company, and the Alice A. Oates Opera Bouffe Company. Those companies would average fifty people in the cast exclusive of an orchestra of usually fifteen pieces augmented by from five to eight local musicians, and in those days the local musicians of Montgomery were artists in their various lines, as witness the names, Etora Barilli, Eliadora Camp, Joseph Schmit, Emile Karsh, Henry Meyer, Salli Dreyer, and though not least Fritz Hille, for organist at the Catholic and Baptist churches of Montgomery.

SOME FAMOUS ACTORS

On the old stage the year of its opening there appeared the following celebrated actors and actresses: Edwin Forrest, Edwin Booth, Lester Walleck, Mr. and Mrs. James Walleck, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Waller, in their celebrated play - "The Duchess of Malfi", Kate and Alice Bateman; Charlotte Cushman, Maggie Mitchell - in the ever popular drama, "Fanchon, the Crickett," and the great melo-dramatic English actor, Charles W. Roberts, in his spectacular production of the "Corsican Brothers." Since the close of the war, Jefferson, Booth, Forrest, Salvini, Mansfield, Lawrence Barrett, McCulloch, Ristorii, Bernhardt, Juanacheck Rose and Charles Coghlan, Emma Abbot, Annie Pixley, Robson and Crane and many other dramatic lights known to fame, have delighted Montgomery audiences.

Wednesday night, November thirteenth, the curtain was "rung down," in the old playhouse to give way to one of more modern construction. The soft glow of unforgotten scenes alone is left to me, and many whose hearts have throbbed with hope for the future years, as nightly we ascended the broad stairs from the street to listen to and witness scenes of comedy, music and tragedy. Thus is marked the passing of the glory of the old Montgomery theatre. It was erected at a time as shown herein when this Union was in the throes of uncertainty, it closes at a period in the history of our beloved State which marks and era of prosperity an development gratifying to the heart of every citizen who claims Alabama as his home.

A cursory reading of a dear, departed old friend - Lucian Walker, - gives me an idea in closing this sketch which saddens me as no doubt it does every man to whom the old house has brought joy unalloyed. In the sight of many of us a rainbow will span the old playhouse in those quiet hours, and hope and cherish treasures of sweet recollection soothe. There is not one of us who has not gone up the wide stairs loving and come down them loving, the more. There is not one of us who has left some weight of the soul there and never returned to claim it.

Vale! old house, the ghostly shadows of scenes long to be remembered will continue to hover within thy hallowed walls 'till the inevitable march of progress hastens thy destruction.

The author seems to have had a feeling that the day was coming when "the old house" would fall to the "mark of progress".

Editor

Success and Tragedy, Hand in Hand

By C. M. Stanley
Editor, *The Alabama Journal*
(*Montgomery Advertiser*)
OCTOBER 28, 1948

SOMETIMES, over in the vicinity of the Shepherd Building in Montgomery, a street marker bearing the words "Molton Street" turns the mind back to one of the pre-Civil War families of Montgomery County, and especially to Thomas Hunter Molton whom I knew personally for so many years. The Moltons were from "The Fork." In those days The Fork was in Montgomery County, but it is now in Elmore. It embraced the triangle bounded by the Coosa River, the Tallapoosa River and the line of the Indian country on the east of the region of Line Creek.

The Moltons lived near where the present Dave Johnson home is located, the original home of the Ware family, a notable representative of that family being Dr. Robert J. Ware.

THE THREE wealthiest and most prosperous portions of Montgomery County in those days were "The Fork", the Mt. Meigs section and the Line Creek section. The planters living in The Fork were more isolated than the others because of the rivers on two sides of them, and the Indian nation on the other. They were responsible for the growth of Wetumpka though they maintained their contacts with Montgomery by boat and by numerous ferries across the Tallapoosa, which included within a few miles Gray's Ferry, Ware's Ferry, Campbell's Ferry, Mitchell's Ferry, Augusta Ferry and Judkins Ferry.

Men and women went everywhere on horseback and all of

in New Philadelphia, with the solitary exception of a man by the name of Campbell, with a few goods, among a few private families; they being his only customers, he soon abdicated, either for want of goods or patronage.

The business of locating a site for a Court House came, and commissioners were appointed for that purpose. Public opinion had given the Court House to New Philadelphia, whose citizens, generally wide awake to their interest, by way of inducement, entered into a bond of \$20,000, payable to the Commissioners for the purpose of building a Court House and Jail, if they would locate the buildings in the last mentioned town, on the hill, where a public square had been laid off for the purpose. This bond was signed by Dexter, J. C. Farley, John Falconer, Harris & Carpenter, and myself, taking a mortgage of the lots around the square as an indemnity in case the proposition had been acceded to by the Commissioners.

From some cause or other, (I will not say prejudice or interest,) "Yankee Town," as it was sometimes called, did not get the Court House, with all its offerings, but it was awarded to Alabama Town. Up to the fall of 1819, no Court House had been built; a log building resembling an ordinary corn-crib, was used as a Jail; Justice's Court was held in Judge Bibb's house, and first Circuit Court was holden in Mrs. Moulton's house, by Judge Martin, if the name be correct.

The residents of Alabama Town, as far as I can now recollect, (in the fall of 1819) were Capt. John Goss, (Gause?) and family, William Goss, James Goss and family, old lady Goss and her daughter, Eliza (who that fall married Willburn,) Major Peacock and family, Mr. Ashley and family, Mr. Jones and family, Mr. Perry, Judge Bibb, Major Johnson, (Mail Contractor) Edmondson, Clerk of the Court, and his mother-in-law, Mrs. Moulton - an entire military and civic population - no merchant or trader in town.

Such as I can now name of the inhabitants in Montgomery, (now called,) are Dexter, Loftin, first Justice in town; James Vickers, innkeeper, Thomas and William Lewis, merchants; Major Wood, planter; Stone, (son of Judge Stone, and son-in-law of Esquire Loftin;) Eades, merchant; Drs. Gullett & Co.; J. C. Farley, merchant; Carpenter, merchant; John Falconer, merchant, and first postmaster; Dr. Morrow; J. Goldthwaite, merchant; John Hewett; Widow Hewett and family; Mr. Larkin, inn-keeper and farmer; Henry Farley, brother of J. C. Farley; A. M. Reynolds and family; Mr. Baker;

John Belew, carpenter; R. Mosley, and a number of other families of same name, on the Hill; Nimrod Benson, Esq.; Esquire Sims, attorney; and a dense population - I cannot recollect names.

It will be well to mention how the town happened to change its name. As early as January, 1819, Dexter came to me after I had held a conversation with one of my other friends on the subject, and told me a proposition had been made by the interested in Alabama Town, (the Scott Company,) to annex the Bluff fraction to Dexter's quarter section, which they had forfeited and since entered, and were willing to locate the Court House on the line of fraction and section, each holding their own territory. Well, believing it not a very hard matter to move a Court House which had never been built, but a right which that company had to pick it up and set it down wherever they pleased, I concluded it might be more to our advantage to have one in which they were interested, than one entirely our own. All was agreed, and the union took place. Now for the name: What shall be done? It will never do to call it "New Philadelphia," nor "Yankee town;" either scent too strong for "Georgy." I have it - we will call it Montgomery, after the county; it was settled upon with out a dissenting voice, and to the great satisfaction of all concerned - the name being equally dear to every American throughout the land. Thus, by the unity of interests and joint fellowship, has this town continued to grow ever since, in wealth and population.

I could speak, if I had time, of the many pleasing associations of that day and place; but must conclude, by insisting that the palm of its early time and prosperity belongs to Andrew Dexter and his then associates.

P. S. - The foregoing alludes to Dexter's quarter section alone, up to the time stated. Walton Lucas and Mr. Allen were both doing business on the Bluff fraction, in 1819, close to the river.



From *Montgomery Mail*,
Nov. 24, 1858

LETTER FROM J. G. KLINCK, OF TENNESSEE.

Eds. Mail: - Having lately read some sketches of the Creek Indians, in the early history of Alabama, from the pen of the well remembered Gen. Tom Woodward, I have dared to presume that a few facts in relation to the first settlement of your town will not prove uninteresting to some of your readers. At the time of the great influx of emigration from the States, in the early part of 1817, I left the old South State, with the intention of proceeding to Fort Claiborne; but after a tedious journey of twenty-two days, I crossed Line Creek and made a halt at the fork of the road leading to Fort Jackson, and occupied a tenement belonging to Mr. Evans, who was then keeping public house. One hundred yards from this spot, and on the Federal road leading to Claiborne, was the firm of Meigs & Mitchell, and one mile on this road, East, on Milly's Creek, was James Powers, who did a large business in groceries and provisions; further East was Major Flanagan, (small trader,) then came Arterberry, and Denton, or Dent, who occupied the land and owned the ferry on Line Creek. With myself, the above were the only traders nearer than Fort Jackson. While here, and immediately after the first land sales in Milledgeville, the same summer, Mr. Andrew Dexter, of Massachusetts, and a Mr. Spears, of Oglethorpe county, Ga., came to Mr. Evans', both being attacked with bilious fever, (Dexter slightly,) - they were in route to view their purchases at the time. Mr. Spears occupied a bed in the same room in which I had my goods, and never left it until his death, which was about two weeks after his arrival. He was prescribed for by an eminent physician (Dr. Dabuy) from Virginia, and had every attention paid him by Mr. Dexter and the family of Mr. Evans.

After this occurrence, Dexter proceeded to examine his purchase, and soon returned, being much flattered with the prospect of its advantages for a town site, and its central position for the Court House, when the county became sub-divided. He communicated all his plans to me - that we were jointly to use our influence in drawing all the traders to the place intended for the town, which would necessarily draw the trade to that point, except from those on the road near Line Creek. I advised him to visit J. C. Farley, Carperter & Harris, Laprade, (traders) and Dr. Morrow, a practicing physician, offer each a lot gratuitous, and proceed immediately to lay off the town.

My then locality was an unenviable one, so I immediately removed my goods to James Vickers', who lived on the bluff above the intended town. Dexter soon obtained the services of a Mr. Hall, surveyor, who laid off the town. As soon after this as I could have the center pointed out to me, I selected my lot, which was a privilege of first choice, and to name the place, which I called New Philadelphia - and the name was

never changed until 1819. I employed a Mr. Bell to build me a cabin - and in showing him where, we found on the corner a post or black oak in the way of laying the ground sill, when I immediately seized the axe and felled it, remarking to Bell, "this is the first tree - future ages will tell the tale." The house was built, and a well dug close by, at the junction of Market and Pearl streets. Dexter, before I could occupy the house, wishing to place it upon a more elevated portion of the quarter section employed a Mr. John Blackwell to resurvey it, which he did, and I took my first choice again, built another cabin and occupied it. After I built the first, and a little before I had occupied the last, J. C. Farley had a frame store house put up, which was weather-boarded with clap-boards, but never occupied until after I had completed and was doing business in my second tenement.

Next came Carpenter & Harris, John Falconer, John Goldthwaite, Eades, Dr. Gullett, James Vickers, 'Squire Loftin, John Hewett, Teague - the first five were merchandizing. During this time the Scott & Bibb Company, as it was called, from Milledgeville, in Georgia, had bought largely of lands, and among others the fraction that was situated on the bluff between Dexter's quarter section and the river, for which they were to pay, as I understood, \$50 per acre - if so, it accounts for their having tried to build a town below then New Philadelphia, called Alabama, to rival the former or possibly impede its growth; but it was no go, as all the traders were

the ladies were accomplished riders. They found ways to spend some of their time each season at Harrogate Springs and the sons and daughters of The Fork married from time to time into other parts of the county. The two Ross girls for example married Chas. Commelin, a Wetumpka merchant, and Henry Lucas, wealthiest man in the county in those days, and their descendants are among us today.

THOMAS H. Molton experienced tragedy and success during his long life. He was born in the Fork of Montgomery County in 1853, and the old Molton cemetery across the river is frequently visited by historians. Mr. Molton's father and mother both died when Thomas was a boy, and the youth was accustomed to farm lime. But he attended school in Montgomery and at Dr. Henry Tutwiler's famous old school at Greene Springs in Hale County.

Birmingham made early appeal to him and in 1886 he left Montgomery to grow up with the new city. He made a fortune in the real estate and insurance business. He served in the legislature. He was a builder and was a moving spirit on the Jefferson County Sanitary commission which supervised the construction of the county's sewerage system. He built the Hillman Hotel and the Bijou Theater. He built numerous business homes and residences and finally the Molton Hotel, which is named for him.

PERSONALLY, Mr. Molton was a jovial company. Most of his life he wore a beard, and he had a twinkling eye that lighted up at a good story, especially when told by some such wag as his nephew Capt. Cot Henley or his other nephew John Henley, then a newspaper reporter and now a Birmingham publisher.

He suffered severely from asthma. So greatly did it bother him that he carried in his pocket

much of time an atomizer with which he could get relief when the attacks came. After he had achieved great financial success and security he found on a visit to Fairhope in Baldwin County that his asthma did not bother him when he was down there. It was a revelation to him and gave him new joy in life. Much as he loved Birmingham, and attached as he was by so many ties, he built a home in Fairhope and made that his residence until his death. There he enjoyed life in his own way, much of it horseback riding, for he loved to be on a horse whether living in the Fork, or in Birmingham, or in Fairhope or anywhere else.

MR. MOLTON married in 1888 a very exceptional lady, Mrs. Lizzie Linn Scott, a young widow who as a bride had lost her husband in a tragic drowning. Mrs. Molton was the daughter of another Montgomery man whose life was like a movie scenario. Chas. Linn was a seafaring man born in Finland, who crossed the Atlantic more than sixty times, and came to Montgomery in 1838. He was a man of means and went to Birmingham in 1872 where he became founder of the First National Bank of that city. He built a three-story home for the bank on the corner where the Brown-Marx office building now stands. It was the tallest and biggest structure in town and was such an outlandish venture that it was dubbed "Linn's Folly." But Mr. Linn's foresight was better than that of his critics. He also founded the Linn Iron Works, which were afterwards absorbed and became a part of the Tennessee Coal Iron and Railroad Company.

MR. AND MRS. Molton had two daughters and one son. The son's name was Thomas Hunter Molton, Jr., and he was the pride and joy of his parents. On Christmas Day of 1911 the little boy was being taken by his nurse to a matinee performance at the old Jefferson Theater in Birmingham, located on Second Avenue between

17th and 18th Streets. The nurse had him by the hand walking on the sidewalk along the north side of the street when the boy suddenly collapsed at her feet and was dead.

THROUGH one of those mysterious visitations of fate that nobody can understand or explain a bullet coming almost straight down had struck the boy at the very center of the top of his head. It was supposed to have been a spent bullet fired in the air at some distant point. Mayor George Ward once told me that measurement of the angle at which the bullet entered taken together with the boy's position indicated that it had been fired in the air somewhere on Red Mountain south of the city. Its source however was never learned.

SOME time ago to clear up a rumor that the source of the bullet had been learned I wrote Mr. Molton's nephew and my longtime friend, John C. Henley, Jr., president of the Birmingham Publishing Company, and he replied:

"Birmingham, Ala.,
July 6, 1946

Dear Cash:

Mr. Molton was an uncle of mine, and of course I was pretty close to this affair all the way. I never heard from him, or from any member of the family any statement justifying the rumor. We all accepted it as a stray bullet, coming from the direction of Red Mountain, and obviously from a great distance, because the rifle ball hit the boy on the top of his head. Of course it was an accident, and we took it as such. ...This was Uncle Tom's only boy, and with him the Molton name ceased. He was Uncle Tom's pride and joy, and his death literally broke his father's heart."



A Silk Hat, A Mule And Some Other Stories

By C. M. Stanley
Editor, *The Alabama Journal (Montgomery Advertiser)*
c. 1958-59

WILLIS CALLAWAY, who as a boy grew up on his father's farm out at Snowdown, spent much of his life with the Coast Line Railroad. He spent many years in Jacksonville, Florida, but is now retired, lives in Montgomery, and is trying to catch up on his golf. He loves to spin yarns, and his friends love to hear them.

One of his tales is to the effect that on an upper shelf in a box in the closet of his home there reposes a handsome silk hat that he has carried around with him during most of his married life, expecting that possibly there might be an occasion sometime for wearing it. His story of how he acquired the silk topper goes like this:

IN HIS younger days he was in the lobby of a big hotel in Jacksonville talking to a friend when an attractive lady and her attractive daughter passed through.

"Willis," said the friend, "if you will get me an introduction to that beautiful girl and her mother I'll give you a silk hat."

The ladies had gone upstairs and Willis strolled over to the clerk and made inquiries about them. He was told that they would be back downstairs in a few minutes and Willis said he would certainly like to be introduced. That's the way he got acquainted. He motioned to his friend to come over and he introduced them.

That's the way Willis won his silk hat, but the unique part of the story is that his friend married the girl.

EARLY in his railroad career Mr. Callaway had the responsibility of opening an office in Jacksonville for the Norfolk and Western Railroad. Though it was something unusual to find in a railroad traffic office Mr. Callaway bought and installed in a prominent place a big dictionary resting upon an ornamental stand. He didn't feel the need of the dictionary especially in his business but thought it would make a favorable impression on visitors.

One day the line's vice president from the Norfolk headquarters came in on an inspection trip and noticed the dictionary the first thing. He was duly impressed, but Mr. Callaway wondered what his reaction would be.

"I'm glad to see you are an ambitious young man eager to learn," said the big boss. "That's the kind of young men that go places."

WILLIS CALLAWAY was one of a large family that grew up on their father's extensive farm in the Snowdown region of Montgomery County. A spur of the Plant System Railroad ran by this farm and Mr. Callaway remembers as a boy that the president of the system in a private car accompanied by office cars making up a special train of officials made an annual inspection of their lines. They usually stopped for a brief visit at the Callaway cotton and cattle farm, frequently making photographs of the livestock and building that were later published in the Plant System's magazine.

Upon one occasion Mr. Callaway's father sent Willis on a hurried errand to Montgomery. It was before the days of automobiles and just about the time electric streetlights had been installed in Montgomery. The boy made the trip to town on a mule and it was late afternoon when he started. By the time he reached Montgomery it was dark and the electric lights were on.

Approaching Court Square the mule didn't seem to pay much attention to the electric light, but as he passed under it with the light shining behind him, the mule suddenly beheld his own shadow right in front of him. The animal was badly scared. The harder the boy struggled to get the mule past the shadow the bigger the shadow got and the more scared the mule became.

Mr. Callaway insists that was one of his early experiences with electric lights that he will never forget.

JUDGE WILL HILL carried a cane as a young man and also in his later years. When a friend Louis Ruth asked him in front of the courthouse why he was carrying a cane he said: "When I was young I carried a cane; now a cane carries me."

JUDGE W. M. Brunson of Elba once told me while he was employed as counsel for the Public Service Commission during the Graves second administration that he went to the University of Alabama as a youth without a cent of money. He got a job waiting on tables, and this led to other things. The point of his story was that he worked his way through the four-year course at the University and at the time of graduation had \$1,000 in cash in the bank.



OAK PARK

Open Air Service Will Begin on Sunday

Patriotism to Be Emphasized at First of Series of Meetings Scheduled for Every Sunday

July 2, 1916

The rectors of the Episcopal churches and all of the committees of arrangements are anxious to urge the attendance of the general public upon the open-air services which begin Sunday afternoon at 5:30 o'clock in Oak Park. The entire service will last just one hour and is designated to be popular in character. The speaker Sunday afternoon will be the Rev. E. E. Cobbs, rector of St. John's Church. Speakers for the following Sundays will be announced from time to time.

Special attention will be given to the music. The choir of twenty voices will be under the direction of Frank Lockwood, whose gifts as leader and vocalist, insure excellent singing. The band with twelve pieces which will play not only during the service but for a few minutes before the service begins. Some of the most prominent and expert band men in Montgomery have volunteered their services for these occasions, which is a guarantee of helpfull and inspiring music.

Ample seating accommodations have been provided and the location chosen to suit the convenience of those who come either in automobile or street car. Entering on Forest avenue the cars may be driven around the natural amphitheatre reserved for the services or proceed through the park. the seats are only a few steps from the same entrance. Every provision has been made to meet the needs of the general public, regardless of church affiliation, and a large attendance is looked for.

Promptly at 5:30 o'clock the vested choir, headed by the crucifix, carrying a processional cross and a flag bearer holding aloft the flag of the nation, will march to the improvised stalls, singing that familiar and appropriate hymn,

"Onward Christian Soldiers." During the service other well known and familiar hymns will be sung.

At an earlier evening in the summer, the Rev. Stuart McQueen, rector of the church of the Holy Comforter preached the sermon. At a service on the second Sunday, the Rev. F. DuM. Devall preached and Rev. E. E. Cobbs read the service.

As stated the service lasted just one hour which makes it possible for women to come unattended and still have ample time to reach home before dark. Two car lines pass near the entrance to the park, the Highland avenue and the Oak Park lines. Leaving the Square, one at 4:45 o'clock and the other at 5:05 o'clock and every fifteen minutes thereafter, give ample time to reach the park in ample time for the services.

Besides lending a pituresqueness to the scene, the Boy Scouts of Troup 2 render a splendid service in providing seats for the congregation. In addition to the two hundred orchestra chairs there are two hundred camp chairs which are furnished by the Scouts.

The entrance on Forest avenue both for automobiles and those who come by street cars is very convenient as the service is held under the magnificent grove of trees in the northeast corner of the park. The location besides being convenient, is most attractive as the hillside forms an almost perfect amphitheatre.

END

Do you suppose that this is an event that might be re-enacted in this time at Oak Park in assoociation with the great plans currently for the Botanical Garden?
Editor

ice cream for dinner every Sunday! In the winter, we had boiled custard, or "clotted cream," oh, you don't know how good things were in those days, we had a-plenty of everything, and there was no reason to stint in the making. These are times when everything has to be counted as to the cost, and things taste "stingily!"

Every now and then, Mrs. Abercrombie would have the livery stable send up a great, handsome omnibus, almost as big as our first street-cars, to which were hitched six magnificent bay horses, and all the lay-boarders and the children were taken for a drive. We went everywhere, all over Montgomery, and out on the few good roads, but not very far. We would go out the Mt. Meigs road, for so many prominent citizens had plantations out there, and it was a good drive, we had no dangerous bridges as you have now, for the only railroad Montgomery had in those days was the line from Montgomery to West Point, Ga., then you staged it to LaGrange where you boarded the Western for Atlanta; it was fifteen miles by stage, from West Point to LaGrange.

But I was talking about our rides around Montgomery. You can scarcely realize that South street constituted the southern corporate limits of our city, and Perry Street ended right there, while a mere thread of a county road went winding down the hill, through a heavy woodland, which covered all the slope where so many handsome homes on Perry now stand. The Widow Goldthwaite, mother of Judge George Goldthwaite, lived on all the block that corners on Perry, and the gates to her wonderful gardens was right where Colonel Troy's home now stands. This was the show-place of the town, for it was laid out

in true English fashion, with winding walks bordered with well-clipped box; every flower and shrub that would grow, grew there, I think! Mrs. Goldthwaite's gardener lived across the road from her home, and the whole place was enclosed in a high fence that produced a sense of mystery about a man, who it was said, had come over from England by being shipped on board the vessel in a barrel; anyway, he was always called "Old Man Barrel," and Mr. W. K. Pelzer's house stands now just where his quaint English cottage used to stand. The road wound down the hill, crossed into what is South Court street now, and kept on out for about two blocks when the avenue to the Hutchinson home turned to the left and wound up to the terraced entrance. This home was a bower of flowers, and Mrs. Hutchinson, a frail invalid, always loaded us with flowers and fruits. My mother afterward bought this place and it remained in our family until sold in 1897 to Dr. Charles Thigpen, who erected the handsome home now occupying the



Home of Dr. Charles Thigpen
crest of South Perry Hill.

We did not always stop at Mrs. Hutchinson's, but drove on out across the beautiful levels southeast, to the Norman Bridge Road and out to the fine new mansion of Mr. Peter Mastin, called Fairview, the avenue leading up to the house

was a quarter of a mile long and set with cedar trees. Sometimes we went on down the Woodley Road to the home of Mr. Percy Gilmer, the brother of "Aunt Sophie Bibb." They tell me that the old home is still standing, right across, south of The Woman's College.

Then, again, we would drive out west on the bluffs by the home of Judge Mays, who lived up on the heights back of the Cowles house.

Coming back to The Hall, we were ready for that good supper; for the water-ground grits, or hominy as we called it then, for the brown fried chicken and waffles, for the big biscuit made of home-raised flour, for the peaches and cream - such cream as a separator never saw - I'll never believe it!

Then in the ballroom, there were many receptions offered to distinguished visitors, and such celebrations of national holidays! Oh, we were very patriotic in those days, and Fourth of July, and The Battle of New Orleans were already great occasions for the people to assemble and use the ballroom of The Hall.

My mother came home, and after awhile we went to housekeeping, and my happy experience at Old Montgomery was over. Yet, I always regarded Mrs. Abercrombie as another mother. The Hall always held a tender place in my memory. I am so glad to learn that Dr. Thomas M. Owen at the capitol, has a painting of the Old Montgomery Hall, with the True Blues marching by; I would like to see it, but that is impossible. The Old Arm Chair and I are stationary now.



Two Interesting Articles From “I Remember Montgomery”

By Lida Hill
Woman’s Staff Writer
Advertiser-Journal
1963-64

For those who might not be able to place the name, Lida Hill, she is the sister of Bettie H. Scott.

Mrs. Mizell Recalls Fashionable Hats, Dresses, Afternoon Strolls, Sunday Streetcar Rides

Advertiser-Journal
Febuary 23, 1964

"I grew up in Snowdown about 10 miles south of Montgomery," says Mrs. M. L. Mizell of 91 W. Southmont Dr., "but some of my most memorable days were my visits in Montgomery. I stayed with my aunt, uncle and cousins, the Charles Allens. They lived on Sayre Street near Jeff Davis Avenue.

"In the mornings young ladies didn't dare get out of the house unless it was for a trip to town. Then we wore shirt waists with high collars and small rim sailor hats," Mrs. Mizell recalls.

After lunch, Mrs. Mizell, who was then Miss Mattie Lee Smith, and her cousins all undressed and had meditation in their rooms. They had a rest, then got up and put on pretty dresses and leghorn hats.

"Our leghorn hats were big and droopy and very colorful. In the Summer they were decorated with flowers, violets or big roses. Some had little tiny plumes and sheared chif-

fon or velvet trimming. In Winter, hats had long plumes that curled down under the chin. They were real snazzy things. I remember one hat I had with little tiny pink plumes, pink chiffon and a band of black velvet around it with a bow in the back," says Mrs. Mizell.

This was back in about 1903 when she was about 17 years old. "Ruffles on dresses were very, very good then," she says. "Some of the prettiest dresses had ribbons and deep ruffles on the skirts and round necks trimmed in beading. By this time hoops were out and skirts fell to three inches from the floor.

All dressed up, Miss Mattie Lee Smith and her cousins joined their friends and went "strolling down the avenue." As they walked they admired the homes along the way. The N. J. Bells' home on the corner of Grove and Court and the W. F. Vandiver's home on Wilson and Court were two of her favorites. The lovely

Thigpen home was the one farthest out on Perry at that time.

"By 1908, the year I was married, there was still very little paving except right in town, but we never walked except on the paved streets," Mrs. Mizell recalls.

Sometimes on Sunday afternoons four or five couples would get together to ride the streetcar belt. "For only a nickel we could go from one end to the other," says Mrs. Mizell.

"I remember one day we were out in the northeastern part of Montgomery riding toward Pickett Springs. About 3 o'clock a big storm came up. It lightened, thundered, the wind blew and buckets of water came down. Pretty soon the electricity went out and the streetcar was stranded. We climbed up and sat on the backs of the seats with our feet on the benches, but even in this elevated position, we got drenched. The electricity finally came on early in the evening, but it was 7 o'clock before we got home."

Mrs. Mizell got to know and love Montgomery through her visits here as a child, and in 1912 she and Mr. Mizell moved into town to make their home here. For the past 51 years this month, she has

been a busy seamstress making pretty evening dresses, wedding dresses and all other kinds of dresses, She doesn't need a pattern to make a dress. "Give me a picture and a pair of scissors, and I can make the dress," she says.

Through her sewing she has met many, many Montgomerians. Among them are Mrs. Fanny Marks Seibles, Mrs. John James, Miss Haden Harris, Miss Cornelia Ellis, now Mrs. John Snively of Florida, and Miss Kitty Walter Garrett, the first Dairy Princess of Montgomery County, now Mrs. Sam Dawson. About Montgomerians, Mrs. Mizell says, "They are lovely people and I have enjoyed sewing for them."



Beauvoir Club
Christmas Balls Were
Gala Events At
Turning Of Century
Advertiser-Journal
December 22,1963

"The big event of the Christmas season around the turn of the century were the Christmas balls held in the old Knox Home on S. Perry Street," says Shepherd H. Roberts, 27 W. Jeff Davis Ave.

The Joie de Vie, the social club which used to be on the second floor of what is now Greens, consolidated with the Beauvoir Club. This club was in the old Murphy Home on the corner of Bibb Street and Madison Avenue until the two clubs together bought the old Knox Home.



Knox Home on Perry St.

"It was the prettiest old antebellum home in this whole section of the country," Mr. Roberts exclaimed. "When the two clubs bought it and fixed it up, a very artistic architect named Weatherly Carter designed a beautiful ballroom. This is where the Christmas Balls were held. When the decorating committee had filled the room with smilax and flowers, it made the loveliest place for a ball you can imagine."

"Other than our big ball, Christmases back then were not so elaborate as the Christmases youngsters know today," Roberts explained. "In those days it wasn't too long after the Civil War and this part of the country was in a terrible way financially. We had to get along the best we could."

Mr. Roberts recalls that on Christmas Eve children would hang their stockings by the side of open-grate fireplaces. "They were real stockings too, clean, of course, but each child would try to find the largest stockings to hang up. There was no such thing as buying a stocking in a store to hang up for Santa to fill.

The best present you got was in the toe of your stocking all tied up," Mr. Roberts remembers. "It might be a dollar gold piece or even a five dollar gold piece, depending on

your family's finances: Stockings would be filled with little presents, fruit and exotic nuts. "Fruit could not be kept during winter like it is today, so it was a rarity and exciting to get," he adds.

FEWER GIFTS THEN
Mr. Roberts says downtown Montgomery wasn't all decorated and stores didn't have Santas and

stocks of toys, bright paper, ribbon and boxes back then. In fact you couldn't buy boxes at all. When stores had them, they saved the boxes to give to little girls for making doll beds.

"Presents were fewer then, but children were concerned with giving as well as getting," says Mr. Roberts. One Christmas the Roberts children gave their father a fancy necktie for a present. He put it away never wearing it. The next year the children asked each other, "What are we going to give Father?" Someone suggested the necktie he had never worn. "That's just what we gave him," laughed Roberts. "He didn't remember it, so year after year that same old necktie served as a Christmas present! In those years money and presents were really hard to come by."

"A big part of Christmas excitement for little boys was in the anticipation," Roberts reflects. Young girls and their mothers were busy for weeks making preparations. Young ladies embroidered presents while mothers were in the kitchen baking fruitcake and other Christmas goodies.

Mr. Roberts thinks Christmas trees and caroling came to Montgomery much later. "In the 1880's folks just didn't have money for Christmas trees," Mr. Roberts explained, "and it was too cold

kindly that not a word was ever spoken to her except in deepest courtesy. Before she left Montgomery she had gotten her lesson.

I found the people deeply interesting, as they came and went. There was Col. James Powell, who owned and operated the stage coach line from Montgomery to Mobile and from Montgomery to Columbus, Mississippi. I did not know that later in my life, as a married woman, I would go in one of his stages to make my home in that very Columbus, crossing all the great rivers that Lucy Bell and I had studied about, on the scary ferryboats. Col. Powell took a great fancy to Lucy and me, and asked the privilege, of Mrs. Abercrombie, to call on us, now, we were regarded as nothing but little schoolgirls, and our amazement was great that such a "grown up" should desire our acquaintance! You know, he was afterward known as "The Duke of Birmingham," as he sold his cotton patch for the site of the now great city of Birmingham.

Then, there was great excitement and preparation concerning the coming of Mr. Malcolm Chisholm with his "Northern bride." Everybody loved Mr. Chisholm, he was so genial and cultured, then his accent was so quaint, you see, he was born on the Isle of Skye, in Scotland, and he always spoke with the Scotch accent. He had taken a fancy to me and his effort to pronounce my name - Hannah - was very interesting; always managed to put two h's to begin with! It was very musical. Everybody had read Caroline Lee Hentz's book "The Planter's Northern Bride," and that made us think to thus name Mr. Chisholm's bride. She proved a beautiful young woman from Meriden,

Connecticut, and we fell in love with her immediately, and the friendship made then went through life. Mr. Chisholm, as comptroller of the state, occupied a high position in the official world of the capital, and both were popular in society. Then there was another bridal couple, who began their long life in Montgomery from The Hall; Dr. and Mrs. J.B. Gaston. She was as pretty as Mrs. Chisholm, but of a distinctly different type; he was a young medical student, just starting out to be a doctor, and everybody knows what a success he made of it.

Then there were Col. and Mrs. J. J. Seibles and their little daughter, "Sis," as everyone lovingly called her; of course, yes, 'tis she who is now Mrs. Charles Ball. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Noble and her sister, Miss Nimmie Cook, who afterward married Dr. Tichenor, the celebrated Baptist divine.

But to tell you about The Hall itself, for it was quaint and interesting. It was not only a hotel, but it was a home and partook of the characteristics of a great residence of that day, with its Negro quarters, for the slave-servants. You know that The Hall stood where the post-office now stands; the front of the building was three stores high; the office was on one side of two steps that led from the sidewalk to the main floor, while the reading-room was on the other.

To the right of the main hall, were the drawing rooms, two immense rooms; on the left side, were bedrooms for public use. This arrangement constituted the main body of The Hall; then an immense porch close to the south end of the main corridor, that led to the ballroom. In the corridor, were the main staircases leading upstairs. Just behind the left-hand bedrooms

was the dining room, a great apartment about seventy-five feet long, and wide enough to accommodate two tiers of tables; this room ran along the edge of Lawrence street, just as the postoffice does now; it had two rows of great windows, one on the street and one on the west side, next to the ballroom. Just behind the drawing rooms, were private apartments of the Young and Abercrombie families; here played the little Young girls, Emma, Clara, Mollie and Fannie; they were pretty little things, not one so old as Lucy Bell and I; they grew up and as you know, Emma became Mrs. Glazier, Clara married Mr. Virgin of Macon, Ga., Mollie married Billie Westcott - Dr. Westcott is her son, and Fannie married John Clisby - you remember she was killed by those magnificent horses she would insist on driving to her carriage. To resume my story: The ballroom was in between the dining room and this private wing where we all lived. As the land slopes up Lawrence street, the building conformed to this fact, so the level of the ballroom floor was about four steps up from the level of the main corridor; it had a "promenade gallery," where the dancers could flirt and escape for a moment from the eyes of the vigilant chaperones. Out of doors were the great kitchens and store-rooms, while on the south side of the big interior yard - a regular courtyard - were the servants' houses, whose outside walls ran along Lawrence street and then down Washington street to the icehouse. Yes, we had an icehouse in those days. I do not know how the supply was obtained in the winter-time, but it was stocked so as to last from one year's end to another; and in the summertime we had

The Lady of The Old Arm Chair

No. 6

The Old Montgomery Hall

By Hannah McIntyre Cozart

The Montgomery Journal
Sunday, August 6, 1916



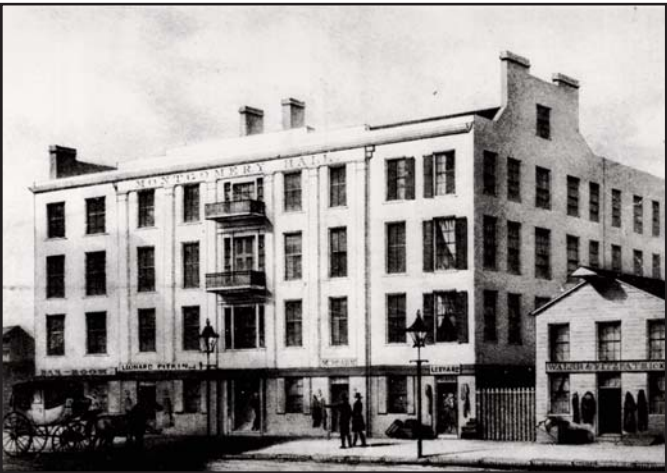
Hannah Cozart
and daughter,
Toccoa

As I told you, when the capitol burned, I was boarding with the Punch family - by the way, their name was not Punch, but Poynts of South Carolina, vulgarized into Punch - and they lived away up by the Presbyterian church. My mother wrote us that she intended to prolong her visit to her father and family, as they had not met in years, so for another six weeks I was to be a motherless schoolgirl. My father was a practicing physician with a heavy clientele, and forced to be often absent when I needed his presence at our apartments. He concluded, as Aunt Punch had no room in her home for me, to board me with Mrs. Charles Abercrombie at the Montgomery Hall. The Hall was the select "family hotel" of this city, then; the Exchange seemed to be selected by the commercial traveling element, while at

The Hall, Colonel Young and Colonel Charles Abercrombie devoted their talents to making The Hall a veritable home for those who preferred hotel life, or, in coming to Montgomery to make their homes, had not decided on the location of a home. Thus a delightful social circle was established and friendships formed that have lasted down all these years. You cannot understand how simple and direct were the lives of the people of Montgomery; in those days there was no snobbishness, everybody knew everybody else's people back for generations, or soon did, and after adoption into the Hall family, every one was happy. Mrs. Abercrombie and Mrs. Young were "socially select," and thus established in The Hall an atmosphere, in which only the highest ideas could exist; if anyone got in, who proved uncongenial, he or she soon made the discovery for

himself, and made other arrangements, there was never any such cruel thing as social ostracism, not in those happy, wholesome days! I was loath to leave Aunt Punch, but very happy to be with dear Mrs. Abercrombie, so good and gracious was she; and as she had a niece, Lucy Bell, from Bell's Landing, away down the Alabama River, I was doubly happy; Lucy and I were of the same age and attended Dr. Lipscomb's School together, so my recollections of life in The Old Montgomery Hall are necessarily rosy. I was well chaperoned, for my father, after the fashion of that day, must have asked every married lady in The Hall "to have an eye for me," and they did most sweetly. I remember most distinctly the distress of these gracious women

over the airs and pretensions of a newcomer from North Carolina; she evidently thought she had imported with her the only "manners" to be found in so out-of-the-way place as Montgomery, well, I presume she did, but they were not the sort of "manners" the Abercrombies, Youngs, Bibbs, Taliaferros, Gilmers, Holts, Meriwethers, and a host of others had always been accustomed to! Her husband was to be one of the important citizens in later days, so he promptly realized the critical social situation for his wife, and must have finally persuaded her to change her attitude. It was years before she learned the extent to which the people she had scorned knew more than she would ever know! This she learned by observation, for they were so well-bred and



The Old Montgomery Hall
Corner of So. Lawrence and Market Sts.
Court House seen on left in background

to go around caroling outdoors". He was in a little singing group, however, which went around serenading when the weather was pleasant.

EVENING CALLING

"We did a lot of calling in my day," Mr. Roberts tells. "We'd go to friends homes in the evening and be served fruit-cake or blackberry cordial and sillibub. Sillibub was wine with cream and milk. We didn't have movies or other commerical places to go, of course, so we made our own entertainment".

Christmas was a big time for servants, too, he recalls, for they looked forward to getting presents just as the children did. It was a big thing on Christmas morning when the children hid from the servants and then jumped out to suprise them and try to say "Christmas gift" first.

When Shepard Roberts was 6 years old, his family moved to their new home "out in the country", on West Jeff Davis. He spent the past 74 Christmases in that same home.



Mr. Roberts' house is still standing amongst its neighbors in the first block of West Jeff Davis, all are empty and hopefully awaiting saviours for the neighborhood block. His is the two-story in the center. He was a successful business man in the building supply business.

Sallie and Gene Millsap, early in their marriage, lived in the house in the same block closest to Sayre St. that had belonged to Mrs. Maggie Opp, whose husband's family's name was given to the town in Covington County.

Editor

History of St. Peter's Parish in Montgomery Covers Over Century

First Records Dated 1825 - First Church Dedicated in 1834
Late Monsignor Savage Was Pastor Nearly Half Century -
Very Rev. P. Turner, D. D. Now Pastor

The history of St. Peter's parish of Montgomery, is to a certain extent the history of the Catholic Church in Central Alabama.

The first record of the death of a Catholic in Montgomery seems to be that of William Nibbis, which occurred November 30, 1825. About that time, probably before, Mass may have been said for individual Catholic families, by the missionaries who passed back and forth through Alabama, but the first public Catholic service in Montgomery that we have authenic history of was that celebrated by a Father from Mobile, in the Masonic Hall, in the year 1831. From this time on until the erection of the Church, Mass was said regularly at the residence of a Mrs. Gardner at the corner of Church and Moulton, at the space now occupied by an automobile salesroom.

In 1833 the Catholics of Montgomery acquired a corner lot on Adams and Lawrence, through the generosity of Mr. Handrick. Aided by generous donations from many non-Catholic citizens and from Catholics of Mobile, the few Catholics of Montgomery were enabled to build a neat frame building, which was completed in 1834 and dedicated by Bishop Portier of Mobile. Rev. Father Gohelong was first pastor, and the name of the church was that of St. Peter, in honor of the first Pope. Father Gohelong had charge of the newly established church for three years, and his pastorate seems to have been very fruitful. He opened a school for the benefit of Catholic parents, he being the entire faculty himself.

After Father Gohelong was transferred to Mobile, St. Peter's was without a regular pastor for several years, Mass being said occasionally by priests from Mobile, among those whose names occur being that of Father Hackett of Mobile, who seems to have been much for the little flock of Montgomery. He was succeeded by Father Rampo, who seems to have succeeded in bringing back many of the flock who had grown careless for want of the regular ministration of a priest.

It might also be said that the first real stride of St. Peter's parish began with the appointment of Father Peleicer as pastor, in the year 1850. He was a man of wonderful personality and his

memory and good works have come down to the present day. He not only was beloved by his own flock, but he made also many friends among the Protes-tants, who, however much they may differ from in religious views, all admired his high character, as a man and a priest.

He soon found the little frame edifice too small, and anticipating the growth of the city, he was convinced that it was absolutely necessary to begin the erection of a new church. As the little flock was unable to supply the funds necessary for a church, according to his design and idea, he determined to seek help elsewhere. He first visited Mexico, where he received many donations, which, however, he lost on his return trip, the stage on which he traveled



St. Peter's Catholic Church

being attacked by bandits.

This edifice, built upon the site of the first church, upon the corner of Lawrence and Adams, was completed in 1852 and consecrated by Bishop Timor, first Bishop of Buffalo, on September 10, 1852. During the following years the parochial residence and boys school, the latter also being used as a parish hall, were built.

Father Pelecier was transferred to Mobile in 1864 and was consecrated Bishop in 1874. He was succeeded by Father Manucy who labored in St. Peter's parish with marked success, for ten years, and succeeded Bishop Quinian as Bishop of Mobile. He died in 1884.

Father Manucy was succeeded as pastor of St. Peter's by a man whose long pastorate and successful work identify him with St. Peter's parish in a manner that will perhaps never be equaled. Rev. Dennis Savage, a native of Queenstown, in Ireland, after five years as pastor of Eufaula, came to St. Peter's Church in Montgomery. He added to the the church and enlarged it by erecting the towers and entrance in 1881 and 1882. To him we are indebted for the altars, organ and pews in present use in the church. He added to the residence and in 1897 purchased the Jourdan mansion on the corner of McDonough and Adams, to be used as a parochial school for boys. His influence and advice did much to develop Loretto Academy and

establish in the city St. Margaret's Hospital. Father Savage fostered friendly relations between all classes of citizens and to the present day his familiar figure, his kind smile and gentle words are sadly missed. In 1915, the work of Father Savage as pastor of St. Peter's was noticed and rewarded by Our Holy Father the Pope, who appointed him Domestic Prelate, with the title of

Monsignor. Among the other works of Father Savage, which were mentioned in the document appointing him, was his heroic service to the sick in the epidemic of Yellow Fever, his zeal for Catholic education and his all-embracing charity.

In October 1919, Father Savage celebrated his Golden Jubilee as priest, an event which aroused great interest not only in Montgomery but also throughout the whole state, and all classes of the population, including the highest civic officials as well as rich and poor of the city, were glad of the opportunity to show Father Savage honor. Soon afterward, Father Savage's resignation as pastor was accepted by Bishop Allen, who appointed the present pastor, Very Rev. P. Turner, D.D., who had but recently returned from France, where he had served as Chaplain in the United States Army, having previous to his service in the Army been the first pastor and founder of the Blessed Sacrament Church in West End, Birmingham, and first pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Pensacola. As a part of the celebration of Father Savage's Jubilee, many improvements were made in the church property. These improvements have been continued during Father Turner's pastorate and at present. St. Peter's is regarded as one of the most beautiful churches in the diocese.

Father Savage died amid mourning of Montgomery citizens on November 19, 1922. He was laid to rest in St. Margaret's Cemetery and his last resting place is marked by a beautiful Celtic

Cross, bearing the simple inscription (Father Savage) and an Irish inscription asking for prayers and the repose of his soul.

Other improvements made in St. Peter's since Father Savage's Jubilee have been the removal of all the old buildings on the church lawn proper. The grounds surrounding the church now form one of the beauty spots of Montgomery. St. Peter's Church is also equipped with a most beautiful set of stained glass windows, given as a memorial by some of the members of the congregation. At the present writing, plans are being completed for a new altar rail and a new floor in the Sanctuary.

St. Peter's is the Mother Church of Montgomery and now boasts of three healthy children, St. John the Baptist for the Colored, St. Andrews' and St. Bedes'. The history of St. Andrews' and St. John the Baptist is given elsewhere; the history of St. Bedes' is still in the making. It is a Mission Church, attended from St. Peter's, and is situated on Madison Avenue in Capitol Heights. The cornerstone was laid April 25, 1925, and it was dedicated November 28, the same year. It was built as a memorial for the late Father Savage and many donations were received from non-Catholics because of their respect and veneration for the memory of Father Savage.



Landmark Foundation Presents Historic Preservation Awards

By Carol King

The two recipients of the inaugural Landmarks Foundation Preservation awards were honored on Thursday evening, September 7, 2017 in a reception at the Ware-Farley-Hood House at Old Alabama Town. The goal of the Historic Preservation Awards is to acknowledge individuals and businesses who have made important contributions to preserving Montgomery's historic resources and heritage.

The James L. Loeb Preservation Award was awarded to a corporate or organizational entity that has supported Historic Preservation in the city. The 2017 Loeb Preservation Award went to Edwin Landon Crane of Jackson Thornton Asset Management Co. Lanny is a life-long Montgomerian who grew up in Cloverdale, graduated from Lanier High School and finished in accounting at Auburn University. His grandfather's firm of H. C. Crane CPA had influenced his direction as a profession and he became a principal in the firm of Jackson Thornton. As a young businessman, he became increasingly more involved in the community.

In 1977, Jackson Thornton, with Lanny's direction, was the first company to purchase an 1880s warehouse located in the Lower Commerce Street Historic District for restoration and use as office space. The building he selected was formerly occupied by Teague Hardware as their mill store on the corner of



James Fuller, Lanny Crane

Tallapoosa and Commerce Streets. Their leadership in the historic preservation industry has served as a shining example for other restorations. There were 17 members of the staff then and today there are over 170 members in three buildings.

Lanny has been involved in many civic organizations such as United Way, Leadership Montgomery and Montgomery Area Community Foundation. As Montgomery continues to progress and flourish, it has taken the hard work, vision and faith of citizens like Lanny to make it happen. Both in his private and his professional life, Lanny Crane has a lot to boast about but he is quite humble.

The Mary Ann Neeley Historic Preservation Award was awarded to James W. Fuller as an individual who has been instrumental in innovative and progressive thinking in supporting the Historic Preservation movement in Montgomery. James has always had a deep concern with Montgomery's history and architecture. As the State Archives continued to outgrow room for local materials, the Montgomery County Historical Society was organized as an

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