

THE HERALD

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Montgomery County Historical Society

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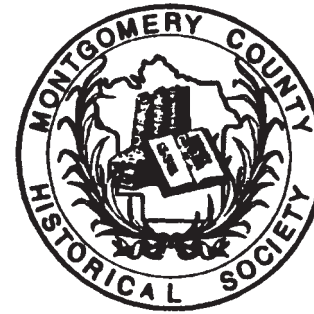
Ray Davis Rawlings

Our Board is mourning the passing of our friend and fellow Board member, Ray Rawlings.

Ray had served most efficiently as the treasurer of the Society for almost twenty years.

He had a love for history and shared fragments he had collected in his memory of events happening so long ago. He has left a void that is going to be difficult to fill.

Our sympathy is extended to his family and friends.



Montgomery County Historical Society THE HERALD



VOLUME 26 NO. 4

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

ISSUE 4 - FALL 2018

THE EARLY HISTORY OF STEAMBOATS IN ALABAMA

ALABAMA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
HISTORICAL STUDIES, THIRD SERIES
BY MELL A. FRAZER
AUBURN, ALA. 1907

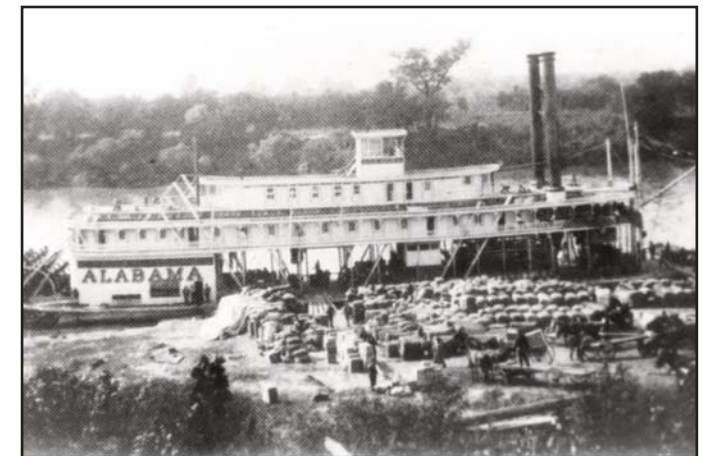
The present inhabitants of Alabama with their great railroad and steamboat facilities can hardly realize the hardships and difficulties encountered by their early predecessors.

The earliest commerce on the rivers of Alabama was on flat-boats and barges, or keel-boats. These loaded with up-country products floated down the river; then they changed cargoes and were slowly and tediously poled back by hand from whence they came; or they were sold for lumber and their owners returned home by land. In time this commerce increased until it gave employment to many rough and hardy men - rude, uneducated, yet brave, honest, trustworthy, and faithful to duties and promises, and often picturesquely magnanimous.

For several years after the appearance of steamboats, these men continued to run their flat-boats downstream, the steamboats doing all of the upstream business. The flat-boatmen would sell their boats for anything they could get for them and return home as deck passengers on the steamers.

Gradually, however, the steamboats increased in number and in speed until they were able to absorb the entire commerce; and then keel-boating died a permanent death. The keel-boatman became a deck hand, a mate, or a pilot on the steamer.

A barge trip from Mobile to Montgomery usually consumed from fifty to seventy days. "In 1819 Mr. Henry Goldthwaithe, then a young man, trav-



Steamboat delivering goods for Montgomery merchants and loading cotton for return trip to Mobile.

eled on a flat-boat from Mobile to Montgomery, and three months were occupied on the voyage - a journey that can now be made in six hours".

Occasionally boats came from East Tennessee, passing down the Holston River to the Tennessee, and finally down the Coosa into the Alabama. "A boat arrived March 1st, 1821; the history of which," says the *Montgomery Republican*, "will no doubt seem almost incredible to strangers. She was a keel-boat fifty feet long, six feet beam, six feet deep, with a capacity for carrying 100 barrels. She was built at West Point, Tennessee, and was launched on

the Tennessee river. She proceeded 100 miles down this river to the mouth of the Hiwassee, and then 65 miles to the Ocoa; up the latter some distance, where she was transported with her cargo 10 miles by land to the Connussowga; thence to and down the Eastonville, and through the Coosa into the Alabama, a distance of nearly 1,000 miles from the interior."

About a month later, Captain Cox with a keel-boat 51 feet in length came a greater distance by 150 miles than the one above mentioned. Her cargo consisted of flour, whiskey, apple brandy, cider, dried fruit, feathers, and a four-wheel carriage. After coming to the headwaters of the Coosa, Captain Cox built a flat-boat, for the purpose of lightening his boat before passing the falls. This flat-boat was capable of carrying more than 100 barrels.

In the summer of 1819 several boats descended the Coosa from within 10 miles of the Tennessee, and at a time when the river was lower than ever before.

But these daring voyages only emphasize the natural difficulties in river navigation in Northern Alabama. The fertile valley of the upper Tennessee was almost cut off from communication with the lower Tennessee and the Mississippi by the long and dangerous Muscle Shoals. Nor could its produce easily reach the Coosa and thence the Alabama river because of the intervening chain of broken highlands. The Coosa itself was by no means a practicable channel for transportation, being obstructed by a series of falls and rapids. Plans were proposed for a canal around Muscle Shoals, and for another connecting the Tennessee and the Coosa.

Government help was sought, and the Coosa Canal became the chief issue in more than one congressional election. Meantime the bargemen made the best they could of a bad situation.

As has been said, prior to the year 1818, all river travel was by means of barges and flat-boats. Mobile at this time was still a small place, the population being only 6,000. It was destined, however, to grow and become one of the principal cities on the Gulf, for in the early part of the year 1818 there appeared on the Alabama River one of the chief causes of her subsequent prosperity, the steamboat. This boat had been built at St.

Stephens, Alabama, by the "St. Stephens Steamboat Company," which had been organized in February, 1818. This boat was called the "Alabama." An engine was put in her; but, unable to stem the current, she went to New Orleans, and finding even greater difficulties there, she was suffered to decay. Very soon, however, another vessel appeared. She came from Philadelphia, and was rigged as a three-masted schooner, but was also supplied with machinery. She shared the fate of her predecessor. In the same winter another vessel came to Alabama from Boston. She was named the "Mobile," and had more powerful machinery than the others. In May, 1819, she started for Tuscaloosa. Her passage was necessarily long, for she was obliged to lay by at night and spend much time in procuring

fuel, as there were no wood yards along the river at this time. On the 18th of May she reached Demopolis, to the wonder and delight of the citizens, and then started on her way to Tuscaloosa. The Warrior, as is usual at this time of the year, had too strong a current for the little steamer, and she was compelled to retire to Demopolis. She forwarded her goods by barge to their destination. Freight on this boat was \$3.00 a barrel.



River boat loading cotton bales for return trip to Mobile, note Union Station shed on the hill.

Until October, 1821, no steamboat had come up as high as Montgomery on the Alabama River. Grave doubts had existed as to the practicability of steaming up so far in consequence of sand bars, islands, and narrow channels. Hence, prior to this time, all navigation was still confined to barges and pole-boats, which, of course, was a slow and tedious process. The feasibility of steam navigation had been fully established, however, and it was only reserved for the steamboat "Harriet," commanded by Captain Morril, to solve the question of its practicability as far as Montgomery. This steamboat arrived at Montgomery on the afternoon of October 22, 1821. She had been ten days on the trip from Mobile, including three lost at

County Archivist, Dallas Hanbury Spoke at the MCHS Membership Meeting on November 4, 2018

A sizable group of members and guests enjoyed an interesting talk and power point show by Dr. Dallas Hanbury, County Archivist, on Sunday afternoon. He talked about his role at the County Archives and availability of the records to researchers. He believes digitization is the wave of the future which will properly preserve the records of the past of our community. He showed us with his power point photographs the fine facilities available at his office. They include a state of the art method for the storage of archives that utilizes that space to the best advantage. The general public interested in a search do not realize the advantages that his office has available.

The assembled membership enjoyed refreshments following his program and some discussed with him their individual interests. ♦

Lend Your Support To Our Historical Society

Benefactor	\$1,000
Sponsor/Corporate	\$500
Sustaining	\$250
Contributing	\$100
Supporting	\$50
Family	\$35
Individual	\$25

We sincerely appreciate our members who make it possible for us to collect and preserve the records of our past as well as presenting programs with speakers that share their knowledge of our past.

P. O. Box 1829
Montgomery, AL 36102

WATCH WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT

A New Web Site Design

Member Email Addresses

More Events You Gonna Like

Stablizing History

History Contests

New Student Intern Program

Events Reflecting Activities of the Past

Hatted and Gloved Ladies Teas and Recitals

Montgomery County Tours & Picnic

Memorials

- Mr. Sam Burges Barrett**
By: Mr. & Mrs. Eddie Hails, Jr.
- Mr. Sam Butner**
By: Mrs. Ann C. Lewis
- Judge John L. Capell**
By: Dr. Valerie E. Lee
- Mrs. Marion Oates Charles**
By: Mr. James W. Fuller
- Mrs. Betsy Copeland**
By: Mr. James W. Fuller
Mrs. Dorothy Hawthorne
- Dr. Winston T. Edwards**
By: Mr. James W. Fuller
- Mr. John Foshee**
By: Anonymous
- Mr. W. T. Griffin**
By: Tom F. Griffin
- Mr. & Mrs. Henry Martin Hobbie**
By: Mr. & Mrs. Raymond C. Griffin
- Mrs. Sally Hodges**
By: Mr. Richard Hodges
- Mrs. Carol Hodges**
By: Mr. Richard Hodges
- Mr. James Hodgson**
By: Mr. James W. Fuller
- Mrs. Josephine S. McGowin**
By: Anonymous
Mr. J. A. Screws
- Ms. Stannie Lamar**
By: Dr. Martie A. Lamar
- Mrs. Ruth C. McLemore**
By: Mr. & Mrs. T. Bowen Hill
Mr. James W. Fuller
Mrs. Alice H. Tyson
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Mitchell

- Mr. Mike Moore**
By: Anonymous
- Mrs. Mary Ann Neeley**
By: Mr. Clarence H. Brannon, Jr.
Mr. Michael L. Falzone, Jr.
Mrs. Ruth Ott
- Ms. Lois Ann Price**
By: Mr. James W. Fuller
- Mr. Ray Davis Rawlings**
By: Mr. & Mrs. Thornton Clark
Dr. & Mrs. M. Bonner Engelhardt
Mr. James W. Fuller
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Mrs. Susan Haigler
Dr. Charles Fletcher Hyde
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Mrs. Mary Lynne Levy
Mr. & Mrs. Seabie Kennamer
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Owen
Mr. & Mrs. Robert E. Seibels III
Dr. Tommy Wool & Dr. Laurie Weil
- Mrs. Mary Jane Attaway Robinson**
By: Mr. & Mrs. Thornton Clark
- Mrs. Mary Lillian Rosier**
By: Mr. James W. Fuller
- Mr. Bob Thorington**
By: Mrs. Nancy Thorington
- Mr. John Trotman**
By: Anonymous
- Clara and Nathaniel Julian Venable**
By: Mrs. Rae V. Calvert
- Mrs. Edwina and “Tillie” Walker**
By: Mr. Stevenson T. Walker
- Mr. Rupert Wilson**
By: Mrs. Joyce L. Wilson

Claiborne, Cahaba, and Selma. The presence of this boat caused profound excitement in Mont-gomery. The entire popu-lation, men and women, old and young, turned out to see the wonder. On the next after-noon the "Harriet" took a party of ladies and gentlemen up the river about seven miles, making nearly six miles per hour against the current. As a result of this trip a company was at once formed in Mont-gomery to put on a line of steamers to ply between Mobile, Montgomery, and Blakeley.

Hardy, in his history of Selma, also mentions an early boat. This boat was named the "Tensas," and was under the command of Captain Roman. She landed at the Selma ferry on Aug. 5, 1822, and was con-sidered a wonderful sight. Many people who had never seen a steamboat before, stood upon a high bluff, and looked down at it with a strange min-gling of fear and astonishment. But few could be persuaded to go aboard and examine the machinery of the "belching craft." It had been 23 days from Mobile to Selma; and when it landed, Captain Roman "jumped up and cracked his heels together and offered to bet that he would make the trip in less than 14 days." It is interesting to note that this early boat was a stern-wheeler, for nearly all the boats prior to 1861, with a few exceptions, were side-wheel boats. Now most of the boats have stern wheels. The pilot stood on the deck of the "Tensas" and guid-ed her with a long lever instead of a wheel. She was covered like a shed and could carry about 200 bales of cotton.

The steamboats at this early period had no whistles, possibly because they had no

steam to spare. They had instead heavily charged guns, which were fired when they approached a landing, that the freight and passengers might be ready. In time the gun gave place to the whistle, and some of the later and larger boats even had a sort of steam organ, commonly called a calliope, which was played on approach-ing or leaving the landing.

Other boats began to fol-low in rapid succession. On the 16th of August, 1822, the "Cotton Plant”, Captain Chandler, arrived at Mont-gomery from Mobile with a large cargo in tow. She was the third boat to reach Mont-gomery. On the 22nd of January, 1823, the "Osage," Captain Bond, arrived upon her first trip, making the fourth boat to reach Montgomery, and on the 16th of the same month, the "Elizabeth" had the honor of being the fifth boat to Montgomery.

The "Elizabeth" was a very fine steam vessel as to capacity, appearance, and inte-rior accommodations. It was a matter of public congratulation that this river which had wound its way silently and unprofitably to the ocean for centuries, through one of the most fertile regions on the globe, now bore on its bosom the products of every quarter of the world and scattered them profusely among those who lived thousands of miles away from the countries where they were produced.

The cargo of the "Elizabeth" alone a short time before this would have amply supplied the demands of the territory; and although there were now five boats, still the people were not satisfied.

Up to this time the "Osage" held the fastest record. She made the trip from Mobile

to Montgomery in ten days, two days of which were lost in procuring wood. Her passage from Mobile to Claiborne was twenty-six hours, during which she stopped twice and landed freight, a run, which, at that time, was unprecedented on the Alabama. This boat afterwards made the trip from Mobile to Montgomery in five days, but had the advantage over the other boats of the period, in that she was not retarded by towing barges. In January, 1823, the "Harriet" made a round trip between Mobile and Montgomery in eleven and a half days. She made twenty-two stops, and was detained very often in procuring wood. This was considered a very fast trip; but later in the same year, Dec. 20th, the "Henderson," com-manded by Captain Hayden, made the trip from Mobile to Montgomery, a distance of 450 miles, in three days and ten hours. Twelve hours were con-sumed at the different landings. The "Henderson" had on board 850 barrels of merchandise.

The people of Mont-gomery began at once to rely upon the steamboats from Mobile for dry-goods, groceries, hardware, and stationery. On the down trips the boats trans-ported cotton in exchange. In December, 1822, for example, the steamer, "Cotton Plant," was delayed, and the people of Montgomery grew uneasy. Ladies wanted new gowns; and gentlemen new coats. A ball came near being postponed, because the town had no loaf sugar or flour. "Captains of steamboats ought always to think of these things, and remember there is a tide in the affairs of boats, which taken at the flood leads on to wherever they are bound; omitted, they are liable to sand bars and con-sequent vexation.”

NEW STEAMER TO PLY FROM MOBILE TO MONTGOMERY

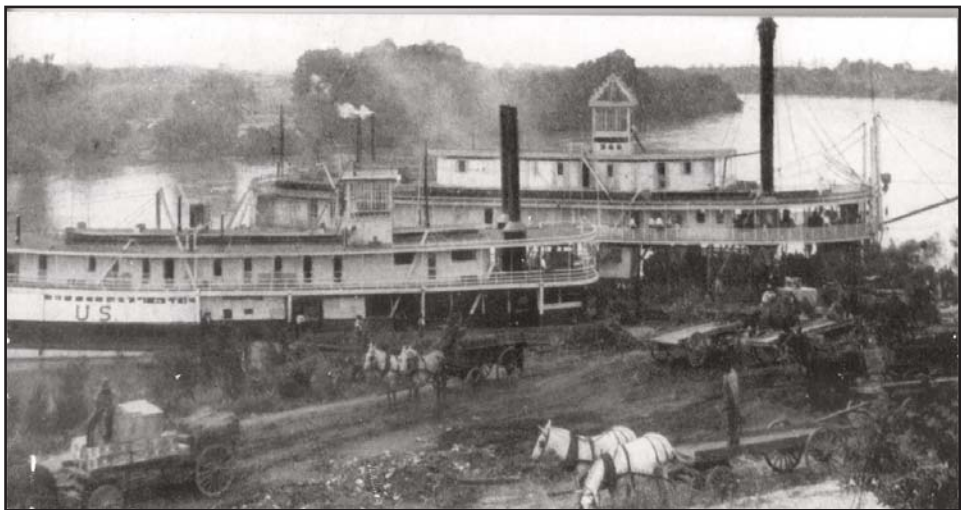
Purchased From Vicksburg Parties the “J. H. Menge”
Will Replace the “City of Mobile” on River

—*Montgomery Advertiser*
Wednesday, July 26, 1916
(Special to the *Advertiser*)

MOBILE, ALA. JULY 25 --- The steamer, “J. H. Menge” had been purchased by Captain Owen Burke of Mobile, and George H. Glover of New Orleans, from parties at Vicksburg, Miss. A crew headed by Capt. G. M. Quarles, left Mobile today for Vicksburg to bring the new steamer to Mobile. She will replace the steamer, “City of Mobile,” wrecked in the recent storm.

The new steamer will operate between Mobile and Montgomery, Ala., on the Alabama river. The “Menge” had been plying the Mississippi between New Orleans and Vicksburg and is one of the biggest and best equipped steamers on that river. The vessel cost \$42,000, when built about five years ago. The price paid by the Mobilians was not made public.

The “Menge” is of 300 net tonnage, 188 feet long, 50 feet beam with 5 to 10 feet depth in the hold. The steamer is equipped with 250 horse power tandem compound engines. ❖



Steamship “US” arriving with consumer goods for merchants in Montgomery. You can see the wagons picking up the new merchandize.

Another steamboat of prominence at this time was the “Arkansas.” She was a handsome boat in appearance, and was able to make the trip from Mobile to Cahaba in six days. She was a fine boat, carrying from 400 to 600 barrels. Another boat soon followed. On the 1st of January, 1824, the “Columbus” arrived at Montgomery from Mobile in seven days. She had a large cargo, 1800 barrels, and discharged goods at every town and landing between Blakeley and Montgomery. She ran very little at night. On her arrival she fired a salute which was answered from the shore. She returned to Mobile with 300 bales of cotton, the rest of the cargo being made up at Selma and other places. ❖

Random Reflections

You can tell a lot about a woman’s mood just by her hands. If she is holding a gun, she’s probably angry.

Last Year I joined a support group for procrastinators. We haven’t met yet. . .

Old age is coming at a really bad time.

Year End

Without the added support that these faithful members have given to this fund, the Society would find our work somewhat deminished due to lack of funding. The entire membership, their officers and board are most appreciative of these donations to the benefit of the preservation of knowledge of the past of our community going back to shortly after 1814.

We sincerely appreciate those who by their gift have given us the encouragement that we are doing something right.

Thank you for that compliment.

In House News

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By: Mrs. Chris Setzer

Mr. Bill Stancik

Mr. James W. Fuller

By: Mr. & Mrs. Marvin H. Campbell II

Mrs. Carolyn N. Fuller

Mrs. Chris Setzer

Mr. & Mrs. Winston Sheehan

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By: Mrs. Susan F. Haigler

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Mr. Donald M. Martin

By: Mrs. Rita Martin

Ms. Guin Nance

By: Mrs. Caroline Slawson

Mrs. Betty Pouncey

By: Mrs. Chris Setzer

Mr. Robert A. Young

By: Mrs. Betty C. Keyes

Apologies are extended to members and readers for the delay in publication on this issue of *The Herald*. A number of excuses could be given, some truthful and some otherwise. So what you get is (SORRY.)

History Quotes

“He who doesn’t understand history is doomed to repeat it.”

Pitticus Lore

Study the past if you would define the future.”

Confucius

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

Golda Meir, My Life

Year End Contributors

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Mrs. Helen C. Wells
Mrs. Rupert Wilson
Anonymous: 5

FORD SEES TIME WHEN FLIVVER PLANES WILL SELL FOR LESS THAN FORD CARS

Fort Myers, Fla. March 4, 1928 - AP

Henry Ford who gave the world more than 15,000,000 low priced automobiles, today dipped into the future and saw a time when small air-planes would sell at about the same price as the Ford car.

The automobile manufacturer said the fate of Harry Brooks, Ford chief test pilot, who fell to his death in a flivver Ford plane off the Florida coast recently, had not shaken his faith in the commercial practicability of small airplanes. Brooks flew one of the small planes from Detroit to Florida and was on the last leg of his flight when he fell into the sea.

At the end of a two weeks vacation, Ford, tanned by the Florida sun and feeling fit, discussed the future of airplane manufacture before his departure for Detroit.

In his first public comment on the Brooks accident Ford spoke affectionately of the Detroit boy whose tinkering with airplanes won him a place in the Ford organization.

He praised the courage and ability of the young flyer and expressed deep regret at the mishap. Mr. Ford said he believed the accident was due to the stoppage of one of the gasoline tanks on the plane and lack of time for the pilot to switch the fuel supply to another tank.

PROFIT BY EXPERIENCE.

"We have learned from Brooks' experience," Mr. Ford said, "and will take advantage of it in carrying on the work of this brave and brilliant man." Steps have already been taken, he said, to eliminate some of the troubles Brooks encountered in his attempted flight to Miami.

Mr. Ford said tests similar to the Detroit-Florida jaunt which ended fatally for Brooks will be undertaken as soon as another plane of similar design is ready. He said "One of the airmen," of the Ford organization would be promoted to the post in which Brooks lost his life.

Ford engineers, the manufacturer announced, are at work on a Diesel engine to motor a huge passenger plane capable of transatlantic service. He said he intended to fly to Europe in one of the huge planes "some day," but did not "think it will be this year." He said the

date of an airplane trip he proposed making to Brazil had not been determined.

"If I go to Brazil," he said, "it will be by air-plane. I would never spend 20 days making the trip by boat."

While Mr. Ford admitted his one experience in the air had been limited to a flight with Col. Charles Lindbergh last Summer, he said he was "strong for air travel" and would "take a plane



"Next year's model is going to have a seat in the back, I'm calling it a rumble seat for lovers."

whenever necessary to get anywhere."

Then the manufacture of the new Ford car, he said, was proceeding at the rate of nearly 1,000 a day and he expected production to reach a maximum of 5,000 a day by mid-summer.

TELLS EDISON GOODBYE.

Ford told his next door neighbor, Thomas A. Edison, goodbye before departing for Detroit. Edison assured the automobile man he looked "one hundred per cent better than when you arrived." Ford reiterated that he favored Herbert Hoover for president. Ford said he was a "Republican because I was born one."

He would not venture an opinion as to the result of the experiments of his crony. Edison, in an effort to find a practicable rubber plant in Florida, other than to say: "If anything can be done about it, Edison will do it."

Continued on page 15

Rankin File Oldest City Directory On Record Turns Up

By Fields Varner

Pitch-hitting for Allen Rankin

RECENTLY *Journal* Reporter Katherine Tyson wrote a feature about an 1880 city directory. Now City License Inspector Cecil Davis comes forth with what he believes to be the first city directory ever published. It dates back to 1859-60, and gives vivid information concerning Montgomery almost a century ago.

Compared to the new city directory just published, it looks like a Blue Book Speller and an Encyclopedia Britannica. At that time the city had only 64 named city streets, and only 1,484 citizens and businesses listed. The southern border of the city, appropriately enough, was South Street, which runs along side the Governor's Mansion. [This mansion was lost to the interstate highway.]

Familiar Names

Scattered throughout the book are names which are still prominent in local present-day activities. Some included are: Abraham, Baldwin, Bibb, Braham, Chilton, Durr, Elmore, Engelhardt, Farley, Fuller, Gayle, Gunter, Hardaway, Holt, Kirkpatrick, Lanier, LeGrand, Levy, Marks, Saffold, Sayre, Screws, Seibels, Thorington, Virgin and Weil. The Bibb home, on Moulton Street, still stands and is adjacent to the Blue and Gray Bowling Alleys.

In that year the most prominent drug store ad was displayed by Glackmeyer and Hillard, who were advertised as "Apothecaries and Druggist." The store was located at Perry and Market (now Dexter.) Items advertised were Dupy's "Kiss-Me-Gently" (presumed to be perfume). Burnett's flavoring extracts and cocaine for the hair, quinine for two dollars an ounce, and tobacco, "segars" and snuff.

M. Pepperman was a "practical watch-maker" and Charles A. Virgin, a dealer in pianos, harps, sheet music and strings.

G. Giovanni and P. M. Nicrosi were candy manufacturers and had their business establishment across from the Exchange Hotel. William W. Screws, who later became editor of *The Advertiser*, was a law student and boarded at the corner of Alabama and Union.

Four Hotels

The city offered the traveler four hotels, the Exchange, American, Madison House and Montgomery Hall. There was only one hairdresser, C. P. Sparrenger, but milady had 11 milliners from which to choose her chapeau. Four restaurants accommodated diners, and the same number of dealers in liquors and wines were open for business. Four dancing teachers gave dancing lessons and there was one portrait painter.

The Montgomery Advertiser and *State Gazette* was owned by Cloud and Short and advertised itself as a "a Southern Rights Democratic Journal," published daily and weekly. Also the ad read "the *Advertiser* and *Gazette* having the largest circulation of any paper published in the state and having the ear of the people is decidedly the best advertising medium in the South."

Another local newspaper, *The Daily Mail*, advertised as "the largest circulation of any political paper in the interior of the state by six or seven hundred copies, with one exception. It has a circulation larger than any other American newspaper in the interior - 1,200 to 1,500 larger - and is not equalled by more than one Democratic paper."

Train Stage or Boat

If a Montgomerian in that year wanted to travel away from the city, he could go by train, stage or boat. The Montgomery and West Point, Ga., was 88 miles in length. The



One of our favorite volunteers at the historical society was a very special lady, **Mary Lillian Rosier**. For several years she faithfully gave of her time in assisting us in our archives management. She was very clever and as up-to-date as any young person on a computer. We have missed her and miss her even more now that we cannot speak to her as we did only a week before she left us. ❖



With regard to our late friend, **Sam Butner**, we failed to properly identify his drawing above in our last issue.

When we lost the wonderful old Montgomery Theater, Sam had the idea of constructing a column approximately 10 or 12 feet square with one of the original windows and brick of the theater on each face as a memorial from a time of culture in this small town. This unfortunately also failed to happen.❖

Ford Sees Flivver
continued from page 5

Before leaving, Ford made a round of junk yards and other places seeking Edisonania for his Dearborn museum. On the Ford private car was a quantity of old machinery used in the Edison laboratory here. The equipment was brought here during Edison's experiments with incandescent lamps and the phonograph and subsequently was sold to various plants in Fort Myers. One of the historic pieces was rescued by Ford from a junk yard. ❖

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MISSED AN ISSUE ?

Several of our members reported not receiving an issue of *The Herald*. We never know if the post office has slipped up in delivering almost 600 copies.

Our preceding issue had a picture of our new Executive Director on the cover. If you did not get it please let us know.

Editor

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

THERE WERE TWO DELEGATES FROM
MONTGOMERY COUNTY AT THE
CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION IN HUNTSVILLE
HELD IN 1819.
JAMES ARMSTRONG FROM MT. MEIGS
AND JOHN D. BIBB ALSO FROM
MONTGOMERY CO. .

A convention was held in Huntsville, Ala.
and the first constitution and the Ordinance
signed Aug. 2, 1891. The state was admitted
into the Union, Dec. 14, 1819.
Jas. W. Armstrong and John D. Bibb,
were the elected delegates to represent
Montgomery Co. at this Constitutional
Convention. The original parchment with the
signatures of the forty-four delegates, is in the
Department of Archives and History,
Montgomery, Ala.
Dorothy (Dolly Tucker) Armstrong died in
Montgomery Co. Ala. Her death was recorded in
the Bible of her husband's sister, Mrs. Green B.
Pinkston, in the following words: : "Dorothy
Armstrong, wife of J. W. Armstrong, died the
28th of May 1827."

Donated by:
Robert Armstrong to JWF 11-2018

*Robert's great great grandfather's brother was
the James Armstrong who was a delegate.*

FROM THE DESK OF OUR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Getting to work among all the won-
derful artifacts and archived memories from
the many pioneer families, writers, histori-
ans and genealogists here at MCHS bears
no resemblance to work - it is so interest-
ing. We hope you will avail yourselves of
the MCHS permanent collection and con-
nections, to research your own artifacts
and histories and possibly tell us your sto-
ries to share with like-minded history buffs.

Our Spring 2019 Membership
Meeting will feature a highly qualified and
interesting historian, so mark your calen-
dars for 2:30 PM April 7, 2019 and May
2nd for the 2019 Annual Barbeque at a
new exciting place. Several other events
are in the planning to include you members
and occasionally the public, in learning
about and appreciating new collections
such as the old bottles that have recently
been donated and curated by volunteer
Doug Simms and VP Rusty Gregory.

I look forward to getting to know each
of you and your stories, especially about
your home place and families and sharing
those in the *Herald*, and soon the new and
improved Social Media and Website. Thank
you all again for the opportunity to realize
my "old house" dreams. *Pat Clark*

The Annual Spring Bar-B-Que
Will Be On Thursday,
May 2, 2019
at a Very Historical Location

River Boat May Return
To Traffic

The Montgomery Advertiser
Monday, July 16, 1917

(Special to the *Advertiser*.)
MOBILE, ALA., July 15.
It is understood here that
owners of the steamer
"Peerless" are negotiating
with the Montgomery
Chamber of Commerce in
respect to re-establishing
boat service for passengers
and freight on the Alabama
River between Montgomery
and Mobile, stopping for
freight and passengers, of
course, at Selma.
The "Peerless" was put
out of commission some time
ago through an accident to
her wheel, which necessitat-
ed the boat laying up for
repairs. The repairs are now
finished and the "Peerless"
is in condition to begin regu-
lar trips between Mont-
gomery and Mobile, if the

business men of two cities
can make satisfactory
arrangements with the own-
ers of the steamer.
CONFERENCE IS HELD
A conference recently
was held in the Montgomery
Chamber of Commerce
between M. M. Clarke, the
traffic manager of the cham-
ber, business men of Mont-
gomery, and representatives
of the Peerless, in regard to
putting on a river service at
an early date, but no definite
arrangements were made at
that time.
It is said that the own-
ers of the "Peerless" are now
ready to put on the service if
it can be established that the
service would not be a losing
proposition.

BURKE NOT APPROACHED.

There is one other line
that might put a boat in serv-
ice between this city and
Montgomery, which is the
Burke Transportation compa-
ny's line, but Captain Burke
has not been approached
regarding the matter, he
says.
"We have no represen-
tative in Montgomery confer-
ring over rates incident to
inaugurating a steamboat
service between that city and
Mobile," said Captain Owen
Burke, manager of the Burke
Transportation Company,
today, when asked as to the
proposition.
"Our boats are operat-
ed to Selma, and with the
exception of one trip we made
to Montgomery about a year
ago, for a load of fertilizer, we
have confined our operations
to Selma. The Peerless has
heretofore made to Mont-
gomery service up to the time
of the recent accident. I know
nothing of the plans of those
operating the 'Peerless'." ♦

RANKIN FILE - CITY DIRECTORY
Continued from previous page

Columbus branch of the same railroad ran for only 28 miles. The Alabama and Florida Railroad
was 160 miles long. On this line ran two daily trains to Greenville.
Jemison, Flicker, Powell and Co. operated four horse post coaches to Selma. One could leave
in the afternoon at 5 o'clock and arrive in Selma the next morning at 6. Steamers ran from
Montgomery to Mobile and the trip took from 36 to 40 hours. One hundred passangers could be
accommodated. A person would go all the way from Montgomery to New York by boat and the fare
was \$26.00.
James Buchanan was president of the country at the time and his annual salary was
\$25,000. A. B. Moore was sitting in the Alabama governor's chair, and was given a \$2,500 yearly
salary. M. A. Baldwin was attorney general with a yearly salary of \$425, plus fees. ♦

Montgomery Guarded in 1897 As Yellow Fever Toll Climbed

By Maxie D. Pepperman
Montgomery, Alabama
Dec.10, 1950

Editor's Note: This is the last in a series of articles by Maxie D. Peppeman, Montgomery insurance man who has contributed several articles in the Advertiser-Journal. The series which his article completes is about the yellow fever epidemic in 1897.

The belief was that the germ floated around more at night then in the day. Every night, citizens in different sections of the city would light huge wooden bon fires in the middle of the streets to run the germs away. I recall passing these bon fires with smoldering wood making clouds of smoke. The gloom of that smoke in one's heart made it most depressing.

All mail from New Orleans and Mobile was fumigated. That is, each letter was perforated until it had many holes and the vapor was blown into the envelope to kill the germs. I remember that a man named Stebbins, who was employed at the local post office and who handled mail, died of the yellow fever. After that, very few people would touch a letter which came from an infected area even if it had been fumigated.

About that time my mother decided to come home to leave the younger children with the relatives while she stayed at home with my father.

AREA QUARANTINED

Adjoining counties quarantined against Montgomery County. At each county line were stationed armed guards to prevent any one from leaving the county. An arrangement was made for my mother to be brought by horse and buggy to the Pintlala Creek bridge on the Selma Highway as that was the boundary line between Montgomery and Lowndes County. My father

met her there. Under an escort of armed guards my father was allowed to go to the center of the bridge and my mother coming from an opposite direction, met him. She came home with him but she could not go back to Lowndes until frost came.

WORK OF THE MINISTERS

As I recall every minister in Montgomery except one remained in the city and visited the sick and buried the dead. The most common statement made on meeting some friend on the street, was: "Well, I am surprised to see you, I thought you had fled with the rest of the people." You did not meet many friends, however.

But one day I met the Rev. Dr. George B. Eager who was pastor of the First Baptist Church. Walking up to him I very foolishly asked him that stereotyped question and he promptly replied, "Why Maxie, sure I am here and have been here through it all visiting the sick and burying the dead. I place sulphur in my shoes and fumigate my clothing and am getting on very well."

Never was I so embarrassed. I loved Dr. Eager, he baptized me in the old First Baptist Church which was then where the Goodyear Tire Co. is on Bibb St. [between North Court and Coosa Sts.] I grew up in that church and was the church clerk for 14 years. I spent many happy hours in Dr. Eager's home and then to pull such a boner, I will never get over it.

Now as a prelude as to what is to follow let me digress a bit. There lived here a certain embalmer and assistant funeral director connected with one of the leading funeral parlors here. I knew him as did nearly everyone here but he was the most unforgettable character I ever knew. He always wore a thick black suit with a long double-breasted coat that reached to his knees and a large black hat with flat brim all around.

SINISTER SMILE

He really looked like those pictures in the "old flicker" movies. He had that sinister smile and such eyes! They were not like the proverbial story of the banker who had the glass eye stare of an undertaker but he had most penetrating eyes. When you saw him coming up the sidewalk and when about 10



Church of the Nativity in Huntsville, Alabama was demolished some years ago.

Huntsville's Episcopal Church of the Nativity was built shortly after Montgomery Presbyterians completed their church on Adams Avenue. The two near look-alike structures ushered into Alabama a new architectural style - the "Gothic Revival" - and with it a new look in church buildings. Six years after the above 1864 photo was made, the Huntsville church was torn down, adding to First Presbyterian's significance today as the oldest Gothic-style house of worship in the state.



The photograph above was a part of the "Artwork of Montgomery" a portfolio publication of Montgomery buildings in 1907.

Part of the house to the left is the side and back of the home of Dr. W. O. Baldwin who must have been quite an outstanding man in that aside from being a physician, he was also the president of the First National Bank. His house on the corner of Perry and Adams was after his death the home of the YWCA. followed by the Massey Draughn Business College. It was bought by the Presbyterians and used for their offices until in 1959 the chapel addition replaced the house. The side of the house can be seen in the picture below. ♦

A view of the "Big Brothers Bible Class" below
at ~~First~~ **First Presbyterian Church**
The largest Sunday School class in the World
Average attendance was 811 in 1922
One Mother's Day on Capitol Grounds there was 2500.
Taught by Judge Leon McCord and
Dr. Robert H. McCaslin
photo in Adams St. - April 9, 1922
The Dr. W. O. Baldwin house in background





One of the pair of the graceful self-supporting curving stairs in the vestibule of the Presbyterian Church very similar to the ones in the State Capitol.

The plans called for the curving stair leading from the vestibule to the balcony that was used by slave members during that period. After the Civil War the now freed Blacks continued to attend regular worship services in the balcony after the war.

It was not until November of 1888 that the Black members of the church requested dismissal to form their own church in a building that the First Presbyterians purchased for their use on Cleveland Avenue (Now Rosa Parks). That building is now moved and preserved on the campus of Old Alabama Town. ♦ *Photo shows building ready to move.*



Photo graciously furnished by Landmarks Foundation

THE CHURCH BELL

In the tower of the First Presbyterian Church is the bell installed at the time of the building's construction in 1845. Very few bells manufactured in the 1840s - not only church bells but town bells and bells for public buildings (to strike the hours) - have survived the wrecking ball of time. Their rarity makes the preservation of this bell the more important. Unfortunately there is not any written record of the manufacturer of this bell and to reach it to attempt a study of any markings of the foundry that originated it have not been successful. One must climb a ladder that is straight up the interior wall to get close to it and this has prevented us from securing a proper photograph that might shed light of its provenance. One would assume, however, that its quality is commensurate with that of the building which houses it and foundries of that time. Moreover, by now it is a part of Montgomery's history. Until very recently, for 174 years, it rang calls to morning worship and weddings and tolled the arrival and departure of the remains at services honoring the loss of members of the congregation and distinguished citizens. ♦



A view of the balcony of the Sanctuary in the Presbyterian Church during the 50th Anniversary Celebration in November of 1897.

A later alteration enlarged the balcony, probably to accommodate the Big Brothers Sunday School Class.

feet away he would focus those eyes on you. As he got closer, with fixed stare, his eyes simply penetrated all through you. When he shook hands your hand would get clammy. I would resent how he would ask how I was feeling. He also wore a brown mustache and when he smiled the ends would curl up like Mephisto. Well, to get back to the yellow fever.

I had learned stenography and was looking for a job. On a Friday I had an interview with a railroad official who gave me several dictations and offered me a job. I was to report for work the following Monday morning. On Sunday afternoon following my interview, and one day before I was to start to work, my father and I took a buggy ride around the deserted city. Suddenly I saw a terrible sight. We were passing the home of the man for whom I was to start work the next day and I saw a lone hearse parked in front of his house. Then the front door opened and out walked my friend the undertaker, all dressed in deep black. He eased across the porch and looked in both directions as though to warn any passer by to hasten on. Then he went back to the door and stooped down and took hold of the front end of a casket and dragged it across the porch. He then walked backward down the front steps, holding up the end of the casket till it reached the edge of the porch and then dumped it down step by step to the sidewalk. he finally got it in the hearse and quickly mounting the driver's seat, he drove away to the cemetery. No friends allowed - not even any pallbearers. People were buried almost immediately after they died. And the man in that casket was the man whom I had talked with on Friday and was to start to work the next morning. He had died of the yellow fever. Well, I was everything but paralyzed with fear. I was at first hot and then had chills all over. I just knew I had the yellow fever. I could not sleep that night, neither could I eat. My father decided that I should go away and in a day or two he sent my brother and myself to Nashville, which city, like Atlanta, said the germ could not live in their climate and those two cities opened their gates to the refugees.

REFUGEE TRAINS

The L. & N. was still operating refugee trains. Just before a train left the station my brother went up to a front car to see who was aboard. The very minute the train started the guards locked the doors and they remained

locked until we reached the Tennessee line, except for fuel and water for the locomotive. My brother and I were separated all the long day run to Tennessee.

Well do I recall passing through Birmingham which city was practically founded and built up by Montgomerians. In those days of such intense fear there was no sentiment and the train did not hesitate any more for Birmingham than the crack L. & N. Humming Bird does for Fort Deposit.

ARMED GUARDS

Armed guards were stationed at the depot and if any one attempted to get off he probably would have been shot down.

I still felt and was sure I had the yellow fever after that terrible picture but my brother suggested that we go down town in Nashville and mingle with the thousands of refugees on the streets. We met many home folks, for in those days everybody in Montgomery knew each other. I soon forgot about it and the next day felt O.K. and went to church to hear the Rev. J. B. Hawthorne, who formerly was pastor of the old First Baptist Church here and who then had a pastorate in Nashville, preach a sermon in which he welcomed all Alabamians to Tennessee.

After I had stayed my prescribed 10 days in Tennessee I dropped down to Birmingham and remained with relatives until frost when I came home and soon got a job as cub reporter for *The Advertiser* where I worked for several years and resigned to enter the general insurance business over 45 years ago.

In conclusion let all of us pay tribute to Dr. Walter Reed and his brave soldier volunteers who risked their lives in proving the test that yellow fever was not a floating germ in the air, but could only be transmitted through the sting of a certain breed of mosquito known as the stegomyia and all honor to Gen. William C. Gorgas, an Alabamian, who was then surgeon general of the Army who proved these by cleaning up the pest holes in Panama and completely exterminated this breed of mosquitoes and made the building of the Panama Canal possible. I firmly believe that some time, some how, some where a most unthought of discovery will come to light and other scourges of the yellow fever, be banished from the face of the earth. ♦

A Montgomery Landmark: The Old First Presbyterian Church

Built 1845-47

**Montgomery's Oldest Sanctuary
and one of a few structures of that time still existing.**

Presbyterianism officially came to Montgomery in 1824, when both the city and the state of Alabama were only five years old. It was then, according to an early history of First Presbyterian Church published in 1897, that the Rev. Mr. White organized a congregation (there not being a sufficient number of communing members to organize a church) which was taken under the care of the Presbytery. "In the year 1825 the Presbytery held its spring session [in Montgomery], and used the court house on this occasion." The newly built court house was located at the dividing line between the two adjacent towns, New Philadelphia and East Alabama, where the fountain at court square is now located.

"It is proper to state here," notes the 1897 history, "that soon after the organization of the church the Rev. Lee Compere, of the Baptist denomination, organized a church in this place, and that the three denominations, Methodist [founded about the same time], Presbyterian and Baptist, all using the same church for public worship, walk and worship together as disciples of the Savior, bound for the same kingdom, heirs of the same promise, brethren of the same family, in great harmony and kindly feeling toward each other, showing to the world that Christians love each other."

For the next few years Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists met for services in the same building, the "union church," a plain frame structure completed in the late 1820s. But with their growth in numbers, the Presbyterians felt it their duty by 1830 to build a church for their own use. On July 15th of that year, seven trustees were elected to select a site and superintend the church's construction (frame building). One

of Montgomery's founders, Andrew Dexter, is credited with donating the lot on Adams Avenue that would become the location of First Presbyterian for the next 170 years.

At the death of Rev. Finley under whom the 1847 brick church was built, the Rev. George H. W. Petrie succeeded to the pulpit – leading the congregation through the Civil War and the years that followed. Interestingly, his grandson of the same name was the founder of football at Auburn University in 1892, and became the school's first football coach. During the pastorate of the Rev. Mr. Petrie, musician and poet Sidney



The Old First Presbyterian Church
#52 Adams Avenue
photo c1930s

Lanier was organist at First Presbyterian.

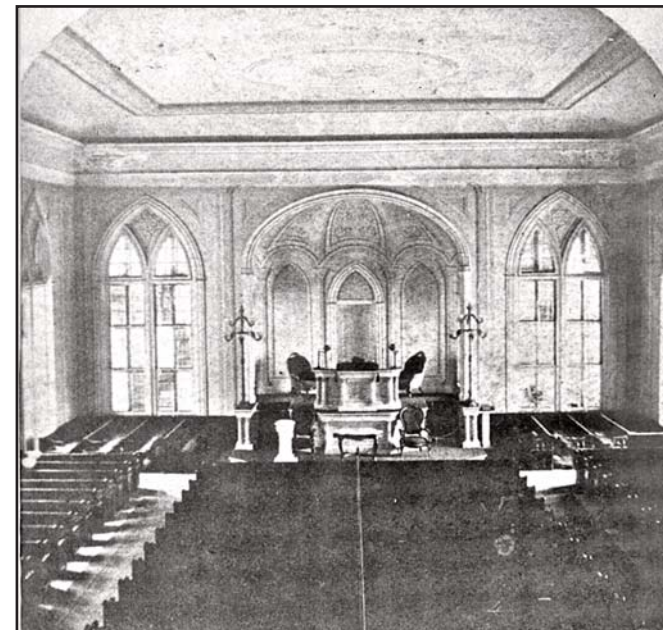
An educational building was added to the rear of the original church in the early 20th century. By the 1940s a wing was extended to Perry St. and in 1959 an annex and chapel, designed to be architecturally compatible with the 1840s structure was built to the east side of the sanctuary at the corner

of Adams and Perry Streets.

But with the steady eastward expansion of Montgomery and a declining membership especially after 1980, the congregation voted by a slim margin of 13 to relocate to the suburban community of Mt. Meigs in 2000. Purchased by its longtime First Baptist neighbors, the former First Presbyterian complex has since served as a facility for the Baptist's outreach program. For a time the historic sanctuary also housed several church groups including a Korean Baptist congregation.

Today, the building is Montgomery's oldest intact house of worship. A statewide inventory of pre-1865 religious architecture by the Alabama Historical Commission has also determined that the church is among the dozen oldest intact sanctuaries of worship, of any denomination, still remaining in Alabama.

The history of this sanctuary is extensive and it is impressive that this building and its



Interior view to the front of the sanctuary prior to the moving of the church organ from the balcony. It is believed to be the earliest interior.

congregations grew together with Montgomery from the earliest times. Many of its members were the fathers of our community and were responsible for achieving what we have here today. This is a Sanctuary that should live on intact so that it might be appreciated by those that follow after us, preserving the sacred place where so many generations of our early citizens were baptised, married and buried.

HISTORY MYSTERIES

In 1878 Montgomery's first historian, Matthew Blue, stated that Alexander McKenzie, "a wealthy member of the church," was the architect of old First Presbyterian. The "church has ever been an ornament to the city," Blue went on to say, "and a model of church architecture."

But who was Alexander McKenzie? That remains a mystery. As far as we know, he was not a professional architect - a label used loosely in those days. And where did he get his idea for what was then a groundbreaking design in Alabama church architecture? Engravings of America's first full-blown Gothic Revival-style church, New Haven's Trinity-on-the-Green, were available by the 1840s. And the Rev. John Henry Hopkins' 1836 Essay on Gothic Architecture, complete with generic drawings of Gothic-style churches, had introduced the mode to a wider audience of American church-goers and clergymen. But could McKenzie have consulted directly with Ithiel Town, the renowned architect of Trinity-on-the-Green - just as some 60 years later Montgomery contractor Algernon Blair traveled to New York to confer with another famous architect, the legendary Ralph Adams Cram, about the design of today's Church of the Ascension? Town died in June 1844, but Montgomery Presbyterians had begun planning for their new edifice in 1841, plenty of time for McKenzie to have sought his advice.

John P. Figh, builder of the church in 1845, was also contractor for the State Capitol, the Central Bank of Alabama, (known now as the Klein building) and other notable structures in Montgomery. Starting out as a brick mason who had successfully risen in the trade, Figh relied largely on a work force of enslaved craftspeople - some of them occasionally women as well as men, who skillfully dug foundations and laid up brick walls. The handsome "blind" Gothic arches adorning the side walls of the church today are probably a testament to their skill, as was the stately brick facade of the Montgomery Theatre a few years later (demolished in 2017).

Figh also worked in occasional partnership with the free black builder, Horace King, who was a talented finish craftsman and did work for the reconstructed State Capitol following the catastrophic fire of 1849. He was a specialist in self-supporting structural systems from circular stairs to covered bridges. Did King have a hand in the beautiful curving stair in the vestibule of the church?

Another history mystery. ♦