

# THE HERALD

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Montgomery County Historical Society

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Photograph of the Pickett House when it was still a dwelling, pre 1894.



Photograph of the Pickett House in c 1934.



# Montgomery County Historical Society THE HERALD



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## McDONALD'S OPERA HOUSE<sup>1</sup>

BY MR. RICHARD H. ALLEN

The McDonald's Opera House, which opened in 1881, was the creation of Professor George F. McDonald. McDonald was born in Rockford, Alabama in 1839. At the age of 14 he moved to Wetumpka where he developed a talent as a musician and took up the violin as his favorite instrument. In fact, in 1857 McDonald began playing "second fiddle" in the Montgomery theatre orchestra. He also began

studying medicine about this time and had nearly completed his studies at the outbreak of the Civil War, at which time he volunteered his services for the Southern cause and served over three years in the medical service.

After the war, McDonald settled in Montgomery and began giving dancing lessons. He also developed an interest in theatre. In



The McDonald's Opera House was located on Bibb Street between Commerce and Lee Streets, north side.

1875 he leased the Montgomery Theatre and managed that Perry Street playhouse until 1881. It was around this time that McDonald decided to create his own theatre, through a partnership with his brother T.S. McDonald. According to an article in the *Montgomery Advertiser* dated May 15, 1881, McDonald felt that an opera house <sup>2</sup> was needed in Montgomery due to "the growing wants of the city [and] the apparent necessity for a wider field for the

musical and dramatic tastes of our people to find expression." *The Advertiser* predicted that the new opera house "promises to give new tone to the amusement loving circles in our midst."

The three story opera house was built at 214 Bibb Street, which was on the north side of Bibb Street, between Commerce and Lee Streets. Today this site is occupied by the parking deck

<sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank Mr. J .T. McDonald of Rockford, AL for sharing several articles and other materials he has maintained regarding the McDonald family and the McDonald's Opera House. Mr. McDonald is a descendant of Mr. T. S. McDonald, who is mentioned in this article, and his assistance is very much appreciated.

<sup>2</sup> According to William Faricy Condee in his book *Coal and Culture: Opera Houses in Appalachia, in the 19th-century United States*, many theaters were given the name "opera house," even ones where opera was seldom if ever performed. Opera was viewed as a more respectable art form than theater; calling a local theater an "opera house" therefore served to elevate it and overcome objections from those who found the theater morally objectionable.



for the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel and Spa. The theatre was constructed to seat 1000 persons, "a few hundred more can be accommodated without unusual crowding." *The Advertiser* further described the theatre as follows:

At the entrance there will be fifteen feet of clear space, forming a splendid hallway, which leads directly to the Parquette or first floor. This will be handsome, well ventilated, roomy and conspicuous for the taste displayed in arranging for the comfortable seating of guests. On each side of the spacious entrance to the Parquette, there will be short flights of easy stairs leading to the Dress Circle and Gallery. . . . The Orchestra will be large and beautiful. The stage will be of ample dimensions and so complete in all its appointments and accessories that any play can be produced with as good scenic effect as in any place of amusement in New York City. Beneath the stage will be a green room, twelve dressing rooms of ample dimensions, and a room for musicians.

In addition to the theatre, on either side of the entrance to the opera house was a space, large enough for a nice retail business. On the second floor, above these store spaces, were several rooms "for McDonald's private use, as office, sleeping room, etc." On the third floor was a ballroom in which McDonald conducted his popular dancing academy, which he operated until his retirement in 1904. *The Advertiser* proudly announced that the opera house "will be one of the most complete establishments of the kind outside of New York."

Opening night was October 26, 1881, at which Tom Taylor's aesthetic comedy "The Victims" was performed, starring the "eminent American comedian John E. Owens." Owens was a popular and nationally recognized comedian who performed in the United States and England from 1841-1886. The opera house's first season also featured performances of "My Sweetheart", featuring Mont-gomery's own Charlotte Thompson in the role of Mrs. Lorraine Rogers. Other shows that first season included Pete Baker in "Chris and Lena", Frederick Warde in

"Damon and Pythias", Denman Thompson in "Joshua Whitcomb" and Joseph Murphy in "Kerry Gow."

In addition to offering theatrical performances, the opera house also presented the citizens of Montgomery the opportunity to hear notable lecturers. For example, on March 24, 1885, Henry Ward Beecher delivered a lengthy lecture at the opera house. Mr. Beecher was the brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe (author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), and in the years proceeding the Civil War was one of the most well-known abolitionists in the nation, likely making him one of the more unpopular men among those in the Old South. Nevertheless, Mr. Beecher was well received in Montgomery. According to *The Advertiser*, Mr. Beecher began his lecture by stating that he "cannot but be impressed with the great and beneficent changes that have taken place in the South of late years." Mr. Beecher went on to state:

In my younger days I may have looked upon the bravery of the South as being largely composed of air, but its immediate past has aroused in me unstinted admiration. Since time began there has been no spectacle like the good conduct of the South after the war closed. I don't believe any people on the face of the globe ever manifested as much fortitude and patient endurance as the people of the South.

Mr. Beecher's kind words certainly had their intended affect. After delivering his lecture on the origin of man and the world, "Mr. Beecher was enthusiastically cheered" by the crowd.

A lecturer who may have received a slightly less enthusiastic reception at his appearance at the opera house was famous American socialist/communist Eugene V. Debs. *The Advertiser* reported that Mr. Debs would speak at the opera house on May 17, 1896, on the subject of labor. *The Advertiser* predicted

<sup>3</sup> *Wilde had already become particularly well known for his role in the "aesthetic" and "decadent" movements. He wore his hair long, openly scorned "manly" sports, decorated his rooms with peacock feathers, lilies, sunflowers, blue china and other objets d'art and was reported to have "paraded down Piccadilly in London carrying a lily, with long flowing hair". Wilde's advocacy of the aesthetic movement caused considerable comment and criticism when he arrived in the United States for his speaking tour. For example, Harper's Weekly put a sunflower-worshipping monkey dressed as Wilde on the front of its January 1882 issue. Perhaps this reputation explains a rather cryptic reference in a June 24, 1882 Advertiser article reporting that Wilde would be speaking in Montgomery, and oddly noting that "although many people dissent from his views of the sunflower, the lily meets with general favor."*

# Reconstructed Web Page

By Pat Clark

The MCHS Collections have grown considerably since its inception in 1992, with the addition of books, both history and genealogy; photographs of homes, citizens, businesses and historical sites, records of numerous churches, institutions, social, garden, civic clubs and plus artifacts with Montgomery connections. They are now housed in the historic 1837 Figh-Pickett-Barnes School House and the new website will make many of those archives available to you at [www.mchsal.org](http://www.mchsal.org). An improved PayPal is included so you will be able to pay your dues and donate by credit card if you wish. We will have a new email address system where you can reach any of us via our name [@mchsal.org](mailto:@mchsal.org), our domain.

The archives and collections are outgrowing our space, software, and hardware, reaching the point where digitization and social media demand on-line access for research and space consolidation. *The Herald*, which is not available on-line anywhere and therefore not available to many scholars, future historians, etc. will ultimately be searchable, plus we plan online access to Oakwood Cemetery Records, and ultimately, we hope, *The Independent*.

We hope you will help us reach out to a much wider and younger community by getting your families to interface online with or for you, and to suggest items that would interest you and yours via the website, Facebook and Instagram, the formats used most frequently by our future (It is hoped!) membership demographic. We plan to ultimately provide games and content to pique curiosity, with children utilizing their cell phone capabilities to learn new and interesting background to help develop their critical thinking skills through recognition of past experiences and how they relate to current trends and future decisions within the community. We also want to capture our members' history tidbits to share with each other so stay tuned for new features and assume that each button or tab will be more helpful as we add to each and continue to grow.

The Society will be able to make many of its records and literally thousands of photographs that may have never been seen, available and searchable providing numerous opportunities for education, research, new books and articles, and community engagement. This will help meet the goal of preserving Montgomery's history through succeeding generations and fostering interest in teaching history as a profession. We hope you will let us hear from you that way too, it is as simple as [patclark@mchsal.org](mailto:patclark@mchsal.org).  
End

## THE BAR-B-QUE THIS YEAR WAS FANTASTIC

This year's fund raiser Bar-B-Que was perfect and if you missed it you shouldn't of. The food was delicious, the band was cool, and the people were the friendliest.

Now we come to the location, it is like the "Secret Garden" from your childhood. It is a beautiful spot close to the river with a garden, chickens, a duck, a train caboose and a outdoor kitchen. It is known as the E.A.T. South Farm located just west of the train station and behind the *Advertiser* building. It belongs to the city and the city officials were extremely generous and cooperative in the arrangements.

We even made some money but next year we just might have the BAR- B-Que there again because there is plenty of room for lots more people and lots more fellowship, eating and drinking at the farm. Hit sho was fun.

# In House News

## Honors

**W. R. Rusty Gregory and James W. Fuller**

By: Mr. William Thames, Jr.

**Mr. William F. Joseph, Jr.**

By: Mr. James W. Fuller

Mr. & Mrs. Ewell Green

**Rev. John D. Reese III**

By: James W. Fuller

Mr. & Mrs. Ewell Green

**Congratulations to Bill and John D. on  
the occasion of their 90th birthdays.**

## Memorials

**Mr. Thomas Chapman**

By: Mr. & Mrs. William F. Davis

Mr. Richard Hodges

Mr. & Mrs. Charles C. Nicrosi

Mrs. Anne M. Richardson

**Mrs. Dora S. Haas**

By: Ms. Gibbs C. Davis

Dr. & Mrs. Miller B. Engelhardt

Mr. James W. Fuller

Mrs. Mary Ella Marshall

Mr. & Mrs. Charles C. Nicrosi

Mrs. Burke K. Schloss

Mr. & Mrs. James H. Walter

**Mr. Murfee Gewin**

By: Mr. & Mrs. Charles C. Nicrosi

**Mr. Robert Kennamer**

By: Mr. Richard M. Kennamer

**Mrs. Frances Kitty Marks**

By: Mr. James W. Fuller

**Mr. Dimitri Polizos**

By: Mr. James W. Fuller

**Mr. Ray D. Rawlings**

By: Mr. & Mrs. Ronald C. Brown

Mr. & Mrs. Chris Echols

Mrs. Burke K. Schloss

Mrs. Anne H. Tidmore

## Year End Donations

**Mr. & Mrs. Mac McLeod**

**The Hon. & Mrs. Todd Strange**

### Bar-B-Que Fund Raiser Special Donations

Rev. Gary Burton

Mrs. Alice Carter

Mrs. Carol Goodwyn

Col. & Mrs. Robert S. Phillips

Mr. Jimmy Sellars

Mrs. Laura Sullivan

Mr. Robert H. Young, Jr.

Mr. & Mrs. Seaborn Kennamer

Mr. Jack Owen

Mrs. Susan Haigler

Mr. & Mrs. Rusty Gregory

Mrs. Mary Ann Gould

Mrs. Anne H. Tidmore

And all the others who sweetened the pot

## DONATIONS

Mrs. Phyllis Armstrong

Mrs. Mary Helen Mehan

Montgomery Genealogical Society

Mrs. Ruth Ott for the

Montgomery Genealogical Society

P. E. O. Chapter for archival materials

## NEW MEMBERS

Chapter O, P.E.O. Sisterhood

Mr. Richard M. Jordan

Mr. Richard M. Kennamer

Ms. Barbara Kummel

Lt. Col. & Mrs. David H. Morganstern

Mr. & Mrs. John (Scott) Pierce

Mr. & Mrs. Neal Westbrook

that "it is probable that the play house will be filled to overflowing, because the lecture is free and every-one knows who the speaker is. Mr. Debs needs no introduction." The author of this article was unable to find any follow-up articles or other information describing the reception Debs received, although I suspect it was interesting.

Without question, however, the most significant personality to grace the stage of the McDonald's Opera House was Oscar Wilde on June 29, 1882. Wilde had not yet attained the international stardom and acclaim that would come with later publications such as *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, but he was already known internationally as an advocate of the "aesthetic" movement. Wilde's stop in Montgomery was part of a year-long tour he was making of the Untied States promoting the "aestheticism" movement, in which Wilde sought to transpose the beauty he saw in art into daily life.<sup>3</sup> On the evening of the 29th Wilde gave a one hour lecture entitled "Decorative Art" in which he generally described his opinions regarding proper interior design of homes. The following day, *The Advertiser* described Wilde's performance as follows:

A select audience, and a very good one in number, was present last night on the occasion of Oscar Wilde's lecture on "Art Decoration." The lecturer walked on stage alone, advanced to the table in front and, was received with a round of applause. . . . Mr. Wilde entered at once upon the subject of his lecture without introductory remarks of any kind. The lecture was one of that peculiar nature that should be heard to be appreciated, and a synopsis or even a brief sketch will not be attempted. . . . Mr. Wilde spoke about one hour, and at the conclusion of his lecture bowed, and retired amongst the applause of the audience.

Similarly, in its June 30, 1882 edition, *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans) described Wilde's appearance in Montgomery as follows:

Mr. Oscar Wilde lectured tonight to a fairly good audience and was very well received. His compliments to the South as the home of beautiful flowers and beautiful women were much cheered. He spent the day in reviewing the place, and was curious at the capitol to see the exact place where Mr. Davis was inaugurated as the President of the Confederacy.

Interestingly, on the same evening Wilde was giving his lecture, the Alabama convention of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity was conducting its annual "hop" in the third floor ballroom of the opera house. After his lecture, Wilde joined the festivities. *The Advertiser* stated that "Mr. Wilde himself graced the occasion with his presence and showed that grace in practice which he so beautifully teaches in the principle. The young ladies were charmed with his splendid figure, polished manners and pleasing speech, and he was charmed by the beauty, wit and taste of Montgomery's lovely daughters."

Professor McDonald managed the opera house until 1904 when, due to declining health, he was forced to retire. In June 1904, McDonald leased the theatre to Jake Wells, who was a representative of a regional theatrical syndicate. Sadly, Professor McDonald died only a few months after this, on December 28, 1905. It was reported that McDonald's personal motto had long been "The Lord Will Take Care of His People", and this motto was printed on programs, playbills and stationary produced by him. In an article written by Ed Mahoney that appeared in the *Advertiser* on April 21, 1941 containing many of Mr. Mahoney's memories of Professor McDonald, Mr. Mahoney stated that if that motto did not appear on the playbill, then Professor McDonald did not write it. However, Mr.

Religious?. . . I guess the Professor was, but cuss you he would . . . you and everyone else he took a mind to. He cussed everthing and everybody and mad some people would get with him. "You damned little flop-eared hounds" was the Professor's favorite expression. That went for ladies too.

Mahoney went on to recollect about Professor McDonald:

Under the new management, the opera house was renamed the Bijou Theatre. An article in the *Advertiser* reported that "Mr. Wells and his associates do not aim to invade the so-called high class business dominated by Klaw & Erlanger of New York. It is their purpose to provide popular attractions at popular prices." The new Bijou Theatre opened for business on September 26, 1904. The new



Bijou operated only for a short time. However, during it's relatively short life, the Bijou experimented with a new form of entertainment in order to attract theater goers-motion pictures. In an article dated February 14, 1906, it was noted that "the Britt-Nelson prize fight moving pictures scored another decided success at the Bijou Theater last night. They are quite realistic and have never been surpassed in Montgomery, in the way of a scientific spectacular performance." Despite this innovation, in an article dated August 26, 1909, it was stated that the Bijou theatre "has of late years been deserted, since the old Montgomery Theatre has been displaced by the Grand, and the theater-goers betook themselves to the new house on Dexter Avenue for their amusement."

In that same article, however, it was announced that the owners of the existing Majestic Theater had agreed to lease the Bijou for a period of seven years. The new owners announced that, after extensive renovations, the new Majestic Theater would cater to vaudeville attractions, "and that steps were being taken to book a number of the most popular plays that are now on the comic opera stage." The new Majestic theater was also to feature motion pictures. In an article dated May 2, 1915, the management of the Majestic promised the people of Montgomery vaudeville and motion pictures every day (three shows every day). The management announced "a four piece orchestra has been procured and a thorough musical program by the best musicians in the city will be offered at every performance." It was also proudly announced that the Majestic's new slogan would be "Go to the Coolest House in Town." In 1916, the Majestic Theater building was the temporary home of the Empire Theater. The old Empire Theater building (on Commerce Street) closed its doors in mid-September of that year and construction then commenced on the new Empire Theater on Montgomery Street. The Majestic building housed the Empire during this construction period.

In August 1917, Strand Amusement leased both the Majestic and Grand Theaters, and

announced that the Majestic would be the home for "tabloid musicals".<sup>4</sup> The management of Strand Amusement noted that "soldiers from Ohio cities have been accustomed to high class vaudeville at certain theaters and to popular tabloid musical shows at various other theatres.

In coming to Montgomery it is considered natural that they would prefer to be able to enjoy the same class of shows as they did at home." Strand decided that the Grand would be the home for the high class vaudeville, while the Majestic would host the less sophisticated tabloid musicals that the Ohio soldiers (who were training at Camp Sheridan) apparently desired.

In a December 1919 article, it was announced that another company had purchased the Majestic and that it "will be conducted in the future as a high class colored vaudeville and picture house, catering exclusively to colored patrons." As late as August 1922 the Majestic was still operating as a vaudeville and picture house "catering exclusively to colored patrons." It is unclear exactly when the Majestic finally closed its doors.

In an article dated June 14, 1925, it was announced that the Frank Tennille Company (sellers of home furnishings) had agreed to lease the former McDonald Opera House/Bijou/Majestic building, and further noted the theater had been closed "for a number of years." Interestingly, Frank Tennille's granddaughter, Toni Tennille, would herself become a well-known performer of both stage and screen, and gain worldwide fame as a singer and performer, most notably while teaming with her husband as The Captain and Tennille. Unfortunately, the building that once housed the McDonald Opera House, along with much of the

*Richard H. Allen is an attorney with the Department of Commerce, State of Alabama, formerly a member of the Capell Howard PC law firm in Montgomery. He has a fondness for history, particularly Montgomery history. We hope this will be the first of many articles he may present for publication in the Herald. Thank you, Richard. I am certain our readers will find this article on McDonald's as interesting as I have.*

*Editor*

<sup>4</sup> According to Wikipedia, "tabloid shows" or "tab shows" were shorter and cheaper versions of full length popular shows. This was accomplished by eliminating much of the dialogue, plot and chorus of the parent production, reducing the scenery, and retaining only the hit numbers and the principal characters including the love interests and the chief comic. With this shortened format, tab shows did not usually serve as an entertainment form in themselves but were usually adjuncts for at least three other forms of major entertainment. First, they could be the featured act of the second half of a vaudeville bill. Second, they were often performed in conjunction with silent films for a half hour performance either before the film came on, or as a vaudeville act between films. Third, tab shows were closely related to the early, non-stripper versions of burlesque.

# News on First Presbyterian Church

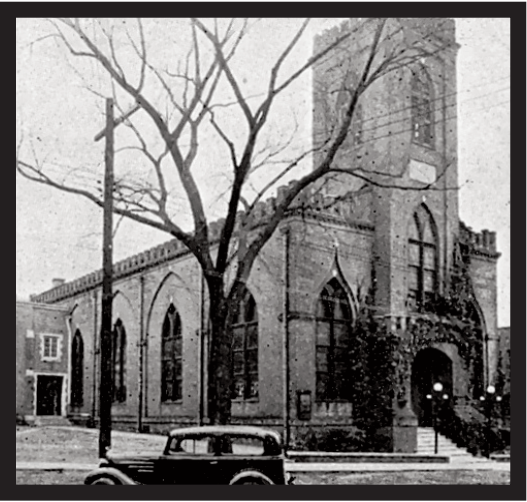
The Montgomery County Historical Society along with Landmarks Foundation are working together to find a solution to the problem between historic preservationist and The First Baptist Church, owners of the First Presbyterian Church building. The First Baptist purchased the property some years ago and now would like to demolish the property that included the sanctuary that was built in 1845, making it the oldest house of worship in the city. Its design represents a very few church buildings left representing the Gothic design.

The Baptist would like to erect a building more suited to their needs in reaching the underprivileged in our community by way of food and clothing. Those interested in the saving of relics of our past have been diligent in presenting the Baptist with ways that the sanctuary might be used as it stands with the refurbishing of the interior to fit the needs of their valuable program. One of the valued features of the sanctuary is the curving stairs that are unique in that they were designed and built similar to those in the State Capitol. Both buildings were built by prominent contractor, John P. Figh in the same decade and the talented stair designer was a slave by the name of Horace King. King had an inbred understanding of how to build a curved stair that is self-supporting, a talent was rarely found in the 1800s.

The Society and Landmarks are working diligently to arrive at a solution to this important threat to a historic landmark in our city. There is to be research, examination and surveying by recognized experts in the field of antiqued structures. This work will require funding! Anyone who would be so moved as to assist us in this important endeavor with a donation, would be pleased in their future passing on Adams St. to see still standing that sanctuary that served so many of the earlier generations of Montgomery families with a beautiful house of worship. It is interesting to think that this church was built only twenty years of the founding of our town. Think how many prayers were offered in desperation and appreciation since then.

For those interested you may make donations to the Society at P. O. Box 1829, 36102 or to Landmarks Foundation at 301 Columbus, St., 36104-2624, earmarked for First Presbyterian and know that your contribution is tax deductible. **Time is of essence in the matter.**

Thank you.



First Presbyterian Church  
Erected in 1845

## Montgomery County Historical Society

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# The Man Who Started the Civil War in Montgomery

By Dr. Richard Bailey

Several weeks ago your editor had a visit from our good history-minded friend, Dr. Richard Bailey. Most of our conversations deal with all sorts of things, generally centered on something that anyone short of an advanced age would have harbored no knowledge. I, speaking of the Civil War, asked Richard if anyone had any idea who the fellow was who took the message from the Exchange Hotel, where the Confederate States' offices were located over to the telegraph office in The Winter Building. This important message was an order to Gen. Beauregard to fire on the Union held, Ft. Sumter in South Carolina. Richard replied that he had learned who the messenger was several years ago. I asked where he learned it and he replied that he had read it in an article I wrote a few years ealier. So I asked him to send me a few details of the event.

Thank you, Richard.

Several persons played critical roles in the early stages of the Civil War, yet many of them have remained essentially anonymous. Examples are not limited to Phillip Gayle, who in Leroy Pope Walker relied on to carry conditional orders to fire on Fort Sumter. Gayle embarked on one of the most historic journeys in American history as he walked from the Exchange Hotel across Court Square (before the fountain was in place) to the second floor of the Winter Building and the offices of the telegraph company, where he undoubtedly delivered the unprecedented message either to the manager, D. H. Crum, or the chief operator, F. Hubert. When conditions outlined in the telegram went unheeded, J. C. Lacoste entered the annals of history for having mounted the first gun and firing the first shot at the embattled fort. Major LaCoste died in Birmingham in 1905 at the age of 68.

End



THIS PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN A FEW YEARS EARLIER BUT IT PROBABLY LOOKED THE SAME WHEN PHILLIP GAYLE CROSSED IT.


The notoriety coming from a 30 minute activity of fame and even for that not very much, it makes one wonder what became of Mr. Phillip Gayle. Betty Pouncey was kind enough to do a bit of research and she found that Phillip married a girl named Mary A. and they lived at 221 Moulton St. His initials were P. H. S. and in 1903 or earlier, one of his business partners was W. A. Gayle (sound familiar?) and together they were partners in Montgomery Warehouse and Alabama Fertilizer Cos., businesses known as Marks & Gayle. The Marks boys were S. C. and W. M. and the business were located on Lee St. near the NW corner of Montgomery St. W. M. was William Mathews Marks married to Janie and S. C. was Spencer C. Marks married to Laura H. I am guessing that the two Marks and the two Gayles were brothers. Phillip died in May 1903 at the age of 70. That means he was young man when he carried the message. He obviously moved on up the ladder from that historic duty to become a prominent business owner only a block away.

The building they were in on Lee St. was also known for housing a cotton business and that building was standing until not too many years ago when it was demolished to make room for a parking lot for Troy University.

It was rumored that that cotton business shipped more cotton than any place in Alabama or maybe the entire country. Of course, it was more important that we needed another parking lot.

Editor

**Elite Cafe**  
119 Montgomery St.



**DINNER TODAY**  
— For 60c —  
French Purley or  
Fresh Vegetable Soup  
Roast Chicken with Dressing  
Home Style  
Barbecued Lamb  
Cauliflower in Cream  
O'Brien Potatoes  
Shrimp Salad, Mayonnaise  
Vanilla Ice Cream  
Coffee, Tea or Milk

Try Our Big Special 25c Dinner

**Palace Cafe**  
113 Commerce Street. Phone 3936.

**Sunday's Menu**

SOUP.  
CHICKEN A LA CREOLE.

FISH.  
TENDER LOIN OF TROUT WITH CREOLE SAUCE.

MEATS.  
CHICKEN STEW, WITH RICE  
LEG OF VEAL WITH DRESSING

VEGETABLES.  
BOILED STRING BEANS WITH BACON.  
STEAMED MASHED POTATOES. FRIED EGG PLANT.

SALADS.  
LETTUCE OF TOMATO SALAD.

DESSERT.  
CHAMPAGNE ICE CREAM WITH LADY FINGERS.

DRINKS.  
COFFEE. MILK. ICED TEA.

Outrageous  
prices  
early in 1900s

**PICKWICK CAFE'**  
Table D'hote Luncheon  
**50 Cents**  
Sunday, July 23  
From 12:00 to 3:00 P. M.

CHICKEN GUMBO  
QUEEN OLIVES SWEET MIXED PICKLES  
BROILED SPANISH MACKEREL  
JULIENNE POTATOES  
BREADED VEAL CUTLETS, TOMATO SAUCE  
ROAST CHICKEN, CELERY DRESSING, APPLE JELLY  
DUCHESS POTATOES CORN ON THE COB  
STEAMED RICE STRING BEANS  
COMBINATION SALAD  
ALMOND ICE CREAM AND CAKE  
COFFEE . TEA MILK

Meet Me At **Fitzpatrick's Cafe**  
No. 8 Dexter Ave.

Try Our Hot Waffles and Cakes.

We serve hot biscuit and corn  
muffins with all orders, morning  
and evening. You won't be dis-  
appointed.

"We Never Sleep."

Only Hotel in the City with Elevator and  
Grill Room.



**The New Windsor**  
REMODELLED  
& IMPROVED  
J. F. WEST, PROP.  
MONTGOMERY, ALA.

OPPOSITE UNION DEPOT  
EUROPEAN PLAN

**Ladies and Gentlemen's Restaurant on  
Ground Floor.**

**Harrison's Cafe,**  
37 Commerce Street,  
Montgomery, Ala.  
Sunday, March 5th, 1905.  
**Merchants Lunch,**  
From 12 M. to 3 P. M.  
**35 Cents.**

MENU:

Soup. Cold Slaw.  
Cream of Celery. Dill Pickles.

Fish.  
Broiled Spanish Mackerel, Drawn But-  
ter Sauce.

Entree.  
Smothered Western Goose, Oyster  
Dressing.

Roasts.  
Prime Rib of Chicago Beef, Au'jus Sauce  
Roast Pork, Brown Sauce.

Vegetables.  
Steamed Rice. Stewed Tomatoes.  
Candied Yams. Sugared Corn.  
Corn Bread and Milk.  
Wafers and Cheese.

Green Apple Pie. Mince Pie.  
Baked Rice Custard, Wine Sauce.

At the eleventh hour Oyster Loaves-  
Peacemakers served with care.



# CLOVERDALE

## Greater Montgomery Becomes Reality As City Takes Suburbs

Six and Half Million Values Added;  
Cloverdale Comes In With Official Ceremony

*Montgomery Advertiser*  
October 1, 1927

Cloverdale became formally a part of the city of Montgomery at 11 o'clock Friday morning, when Mayor W. B. Nelson of that town literally turned the keys of the town over to Mayor W. A. Gunter and associates of the city commission of Montgomery.

Cloverdale came into Montgomery in good financial condition according to the audit of the town's books, which were also turned over to the Montgomery authorities. "And here is the key to our strong box in the Union Savings Bank and Trust Company," said Mayor Nelson. While that strong box held little cash, less than \$200, it did hold the town's tax records and evidences of its assets and liabilities.

The transfer of Capitol Heights takes place today. [Not having all of their financial records ready, Capitol Heights came into the city a week later, regardless of the previous sentence.]

Mayor Nelson of Cloverdale gave to former Mayor W. A. Graves the lion's share of the credit for the development of Cloverdale and for the improvement of Cloverdale. Mayor Nelson told of the unselfish service former Mayor Graves rendered. He told how former Mayor Graves personally supervised the surfacing of streets, the paving



The home of Mayor & Mrs. William A. Graves on the corner of Felder and Cloverdale Road was remodeled a few years ago.

of streets, the laying of sewers, the construction of sidewalks and gutters. He said this service was rendered by Mr. Graves without a single cent of cost to the taxpayers of Cloverdale. He pointed out that Mr. Graves was familiar with building construction and other forms of construction before he took over the mayoralty reins. He said the people of Cloverdale owe Mr. Graves a debt of gratitude for his services to the municipality and that now likewise the whole people of Montgomery owe him that debt of gratitude.

Cloverdale comes into Montgomery with a very small floating indebtedness, not over \$20,000. This includes a \$5,000 note due in December and the final cost of the improvement of the park, work now being done by a contractor and which obligation the city of Montgomery takes over.

A number of Cloverdale alderman were present at the formal ceremonies of turning over the municipality to the city of Montgomery. They included Jackson Hobbie, B. A. Taylor, Dr. George Wheeler, W. T. Savage and city clerk and treasurer, Grover Keyton.

Mayor Nelson expressed the hope that the city of Montgomery would carry on the improvements in Cloverdale and make it the very fine residential section it deserves to be. He said that the people of Cloverdale as well as the retiring officials of Cloverdale will cooperate with the city authorities of Montgomery in every way possible to keep things moving.

Dr. George Wheeler and B. A. Taylor, aldermen of Cloverdale, spoke following Mr. Nelson's talk. They told the members of the city commission of their desire to cooperate and be of service to the city authorities of Montgomery.

Mayor Gunter expressed the pleasure of the city of Montgomery in welcoming Cloverdale to the family. He said the annexation had become necessary because the fire underwriters complained that the city of Montgomery was furnishing water and fire department service to out-lying municipalities when there was only enough water and firemen for the city proper

now a partner at Rushton, Stakely, and for a while they lived in the guest cottage behind the house, which opened onto Rose Lane. The guest cottage was later removed during renovation.

Shadowlawn suffered a major fire in 1971, so bad that only the four exterior walls remained. Wells sold the property to Carl Bear. Carl was one of the many Bear brothers. He practiced law until he joined the family business, Bear Lumber Company and Bear Brothers Construction Company. The Bear family performed major restoration. The house was described as "one of the city's finest examples of the Greek Revival style." The Bears lived at Shadowlawn for nine years, opening the house for many social events. The interior featured elaborately carved paneling, mantles and door and window molding. One remarkable feature was the solarium at the base of the floating staircase. Shadowlawn appeared on the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts home and garden tour in 1973 and 1974.

In 1980, Winton Blount III, son of Winton (Red) Blount, bought Shadowlawn. Red Blount served in President Nixon's cabinet as Postmaster General, and was the founder of Blount Construction Company, which he built into a multi-national, billion-dollar organization. Red was instrumental in endowing the Montgomery arts community, in addition to countless other charities. He donated the land and his striking Vaughn Road estate for the Montgomery Shakespeare Festival, Museum of Fine Arts and Blount Cultural Park.

Winton, III, also worked with Blount Construction, and was co-owner of Blount-Strange Motor Company, together with now-Mayor Todd Strange. Winton was also Chairman of the Alabama Republican Party, and ran for Governor in 1994 and 1998.

The Blounts made several renovations to Shadowlawn during their 35-year ownership. Between 1994 and 1996, they completely gutted the house, during the course of which a halogen light bulb broke, igniting paint fumes. The house burned down to the studs in many areas, and much of the molding and flooring

was lost. Montgomery architect Les Cole managed the renovations, during which Winton decided, either during or shortly after the fire, to gut the house and completely redo it. They moved the original staircase and opened the back with glass, tore down a carport at the back porch, erected a new garage, guest house, pool and pool house, and built a nine-foot wall around the perimeter. The Blounts often opened the house for elaborate parties and other social events, including Winton's legendary 40th birthday party. Another renovation was upgraded. They also tore down the old guest house and replaced it with a basketball court and playground.

In 2015, the current owners, Tom and Amy Methvin, bought Shadowlawn. Tom's great-great grandfather, Henry Blount Slade, was one of the founders of the state and was from the area now comprising Washington County. He was in the first territorial legislature in 1818, and served as Chief Justice of the Chancery Court in Baldwin County. Tom's wife is the former Amy Agee of Birmingham, whose family started the investment firm of Stern, Agee & Leach in 1901. Amy's great-great grandfather was General Edmund Winchester Rucker, for whom Fort Rucker in Daleville is named. In 1988, Tom joined what is now Beasley, Allen Crow, Methvin, Portis & Miles, P.C., one of the nation's most successful personal injury law firms. Tom has served as Managing Partner since 1998. Tom served as President of the Alabama State Bar in 2009, and is active in numerous local charities, including the Brantwood Children's Home and Children's Hope Ministry boards of directors, and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, and March of Dimes.

Over the years, Shadowlawn was host to many dignitaries. Nat King Cole first sang in public in the house, and Liberace performed there. In 2001, Winton Blount, Karl Rove and others met in the library to discuss politics. Not the first, or last, time the topic was raised there.

End

*(Many thanks to Mr. Methvin and Jenny Chou, Executive Assistant to Mr. Methvin, for supplying the bulk of the content of this article.)*



# Shadowlawn

## A Montgomery Residence

### Rich in History

By C. C. Jack Owen



Jack Owen

The grand Greek Revival residence located at 1919 South Hull Street in the Garden District in Montgomery, known as Shadowlawn, has a history full of notable persons and fiery events. Built in 1905 by Charles Anderson, owner of Anderson Coal Company, at a cost of \$25,000, the stately house was home to the Anderson family for twenty-one years. Charles had two sons and three daughters, one of whom married W. A. (Tacky) Gayle, Mayor of Montgomery.

The grounds surrounding Shadowlawn once extended from South Hull Street east through the whole block to Norman Bridge Road. The original structure was made of wood and faced Norman Bridge Road. Later the house was moved to face South Hull Street. It had a beautiful garden on the south side, including a 50 by 100-foot garden full of gardenias. Two two-foot-high walls ran from Norman Bridge Road to the house. These remain, extending from Norman Bridge Road to the back wall of the current property. There was also an alley lined with crepe myrtles running all the way to Norman Bridge Road, and a pond on the Rose Lane side.

Legend has it that Anderson lost the house in a poker game. In 1926, Ray Rushton, a prominent Montgomery attorney, bought Shadowlawn. It is not certain if he bought it from the winner of the poker game, but the timing is interesting. Rushton was a founder of Rushton, Crenshaw and Rushton, predecessor to the current firm of Rushton, Stakely, Johnston and Garrett, P.A. He was also City Attorney and served as Chief Justice of a Special Supreme Court seated in 1933, to hear a case in which all Supreme Court members were recused.

Mac McLeod, current Chief of Staff to Montgomery Mayor Todd Strange, married Cathy Gayle, daughter of William Armstead

(Willie) Gayle, III, who was born at Shadowlawn and grew up there. When Cathy was little, the family received the gift of a lion cub. According to one source, Melissa Jackson, daughter of Willie Gayle Martin, was a portrait artist who went to Sarasota, Florida, to advance her painting skills, and ended up joining the Ringling Brothers circus. The circus had an excess lion cub and was unsure what to do with it. Melissa responded that her uncle was mayor of



Shadowlawn  
on South Hull at Rose Lane

Montgomery, and they had a zoo. The lion cub was sent to Montgomery and was kept in the yard at Shadowlawn until it got too big (no surprise there) and the Gayles gave it to the zoo.

In 1941 Joe Wells bought the property for \$50,000. Joe came to Montgomery in 1930 from Mississippi, where he got into the lumber business in one of the largest in the logging camps of the Mississippi delta as a teenager. He built Wells Lumber Company into one of the largest in the country, with plants all over the U.S., and became known as the King of Hardwood. Joe was known to be a frequent visitor to Montgomery Country Club, where he often played dominoes and cards (poker?). Joe's son Freddie later married Helen Crump,

RIDE CLOVERDALE CAR

## Choose Yours Now

Reserve your lot in

# Cloverdale

(Among the Pines)

while the selecting is best.

When you have picked the spot we will give you any help you wish to build the home.

CLOVERDALE is not "fancy priced." You have a wide choice of fine lots shading by towering pines and in close distance to the city.

No need to worry about the terms, let us arrange that.

It will be a pleasure to show you any day you say.

## Cloverdale Homes

O. O. Nelson, Agent

papers.com, All First Nat'l Bank Bldg. Montgomery, Ala.

SEE THE PROPERTY TODAY

The Montgomery Advertiser, Jan. 2, 1916

Commissioner Orum told the Cloverdale authorities that the water department had grown from 8,000 to 13,000 water meters since the present administration took charge.

J. M. Garrett, city engineer, said that all paving and other contracts of the town of Cloverdale would be carried out.

Estimate at the city hall of the assessable value of property annexed to the city on October first vary from \$5,000,000 to \$8,000,000 with a probable \$6,500,000 being the closer figure.

Capitol Heights and Cloverdale municipalities have assessable valuations on October first of this year of approximately \$3,000,000. This includes new construction in the two municipalities and also property value increases which have been made this year.

The most valuable property taken in by annexation that is valuable so far as taxation is concerned, is a section of North Montgomery adjacent to the old city limits in what is known as Riverside. This section abounds in large manufacturing plants including fertilizer plants. It is believed that this particular section of the city will net somewhere around \$2,000,000 in assessable property. Other sections taken in including South

Cloverdale, Ridgecrest, the West End and certain Oak Park sections are expected to add \$1,000,000 or more to this sum. Public utilities will furnish a considerable increase as much more railroad and other utility mileage will be on the city's tax rolls.

Property in the annexed sections will not begin to pay the \$1.25 per hundred city taxes until after October, 1928. In the meantime it is pointed out, the city will have to furnish water, garbage, fire, police and other service to the annexed portions of the city.

It is expected that the city will net for its general fund from the newly annexed territory approximately \$90,000 per year.

Citizens of the newly annexed territory must be patient with the city authority so far as garbage collection is concerned. It will be some time before the city will be provided with the necessary organization and equipment to give daily garbage service.

City Commissioner Joseph Orum who has charge of the matter of garbage collection says that it is hoped to give the citizens of the newly annexed, service in the very near future. It is probable, it is, announced, that the present garbage collection arrangement in Cloverdale will be kept up for a month or two. Garbage in Cloverdale is collected on a monthly contract and the present service is said to be very good.

Inasmuch as the city's limits have been increased three hundred per cent, from less than seven square miles, the problem of garbage collection is quite an important one for city authorities to solve.

End

Editor's Note: In 1927 the business section for Cloverdale was on Cloverdale Road between Decatur Street and First Street. Confusing? At that time Decatur St. continued further and later became Norman Bridge Rd. and First St. became Graham St. Also Cloverdale Rd. did not continue past Decatur going toward Hull. That one block had the name of Clitheral, for a family by that name who lived close by. This was a unusual occurrence of four different street names at the same intersection.

In 1927 the first block of Cloverdale Rd. had the following businesses as well as some residents: North side of the street, Cloverdale Grocery and Cloverdale Pharmacy both sharing the space now occupied by Stonehenge. Next on the same side were: Hill Grocery, Piggly Wiggly, O. B. Benton, Great A & P Tea Co., W. E. Cardinal and W. R. Nickel. Surprising that there were four grocery stores in this one block.

Editor



# STORY OF MISSING ACTRESS RECALLS HER APPEARANCE AT THE OLD ELECTRIC PARK

By Joel W. Woodruff  
Montgomery Advertiser,  
August 3, 1919

NEW YORK July 26. - Gertrude Hoffman, known on two continents for her dancing, is missing. Her husband, Max Hoffman, today employed private detectives to trace her.

The dancer disappeared Wednesday night, leaving her husband on Fifth avenue to enter a drug store to make a purchase. When she did not reappear, Hoffman investigated and found no trace of her.

Gertrude Hoffman appeared before Montgomery audiences more than ten years ago at the old Electric Park when she was beginning her career as a dancer. Her talent was soon recognized by patrons of the old summer park theatre and she was a great favorite during the short time she was here. Since then she has been in some of the big theatrical attractions and has made successful appearances in England and France. During the war Gertrude Hoffman was one of the American entertainers who cheered up the dough boys at the "Y" houses in France - *Evening Advertiser*, July 26, 1919.

Since then nothing had come over the wires "up to the present writing" to solve the mystery of the famous dancer. But that is nothing unusual in these days of storm and stress. Rulers of the world, notably the heads of the new Red Republicans in Europe are reported killed, or about to flee to Switzerland in one day's dispatch, the wires of the following next few days appear to forget their existence, then about two weeks later they seem to be doing business at the same old stand and shocking the world with fresh atrocities. So

if men on whom the fates of nations hang are treated thus cavalierly, a dancer, although "known on two continents" should not complain if the powers that be in world of newspaperdom forget for the time being her existence or non-existence.

Electric Park, with whom the news story intended for the edification and instruction of Montgomerians, link the name of the danceuse [danseuse], has likewise disappeared, though not suddenly or mysteriously as did the artiste who appeared at its casino one summer when she was just "breaking into the big time on Broadway."

Some dozen years have elapsed since the famous amusement park of Montgomery was dismantled after having had a noteworthy career for several summers. Much can happen and has happened in that time.



Electric Park in 1907,  
Atlanta Highway at Three Mile Branch. The  
site fronted on the Atlanta Highway exactly  
where Forest Hills Shopping Center is now  
located.

## CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION IS TO BURN MORTGAGE AT THANKSGIVING SERVICE NEXT SUNDAY MORNING

The Montgomery Times  
June 23, 1921

Rev. Pierce N. McDonald, rector, announces Thursday that the Church of the Ascension is free of debt and that the service Sunday morning will be a thanksgiving for the accomplishment of lifting the mortgage that has been on the beautiful little church edifice for several years.

An effective program, to be announced later, will be rendered at this service.

Through the activity and generosity of the people nearly \$6,000 had been raised during the last six months.

The offering taken at the service Sunday will be donated to the neighborhood house association.

Friends throughout the city are invited to attend this service and partake of the joyfulness of the occasion.

### "The Problem Solver"

continued

They then turned to pneumococcus, a bacterium causing pneumonia in adults but also meningitis in infants. Their pneumococcus vaccine [marketed by Pfizer as 'Pprevnar'] was approved for infants in 2000 and used in industrialized nations. Also it was recently approved to supplement a vaccine seniors formerly got to prevent pneumonia. Porter credits our National Institutes of Health for financial support and the FDA for guidance in the development of these vaccines.

However, Pprevnar is very expensive. And, the World Health Organization reports that pneumococcus still kills about one million children worldwide each year, mostly in poor countries that cannot pay for Pprevnar. Therefore after retirement in 1995, Porter has worked as a volunteer on a cheaper alternative. This - developed in collaboration with David Briles of the University of Alabama - uses simpler technology and could be made for pennies per dose.

The Spring 2011 issue of 'Emory Magazine' called Anderson "The Problem Solver" and credits him with saving the lives of many thousands of children worldwide. His success in dramatically reducing disease places him on the list of those who have saved the most lives worldwide, compiled on the website Scienceheroes.com. With his sister Sarah Anderson Pope, Porter established in 2000 the Anderson-Rogers Foundation, which funds a variety of social and environmental issues that they believe are as important as vaccinations.

Yes, your author does have an unusual respect for Dr. Anderson. He graduated a class ahead of me at Lanier and lived at the big curve of Woodley Road down the street from me. In 1954, Porter and I, along with childhood close friend, Sterling Culpepper, went down the Alabama to Mobile Bay in nine days. Bill Chandler let us borrow a two-man canoe from what was then Camp Rotary on Lake Jordan. Boy, was it overloaded!!! In those days, before there were any dams, there was current and plenty of sandbars to sleep on each night. I had a special appreciation for Porter's vaccine, having barely survived a form of meningitis in 1949, before there was any medicine to combat it. Porter still stays with my wife, Pat and me each year and visits his old friends in Montgomery. For a kid from Montgomery, he grew up to be a truly incredible man.

End



## “The Problem Solver” Porter Anderson

By Thornton Clark

It is interesting but sad that a Montgomerian who has done so much for world health has received no press in his own hometown. Microbiologist Porter Anderson, born in 1937, spent his boyhood here, going to Cloverdale and Lanier before leaving for college at Emory in 1954.

Eventually his work contributed to saving millions of lives worldwide from a form of meningitis which is frequently fatal. He is a recipient of many awards, including the Albert Lasker Clinical Research Award, the World Health Organization's Pasteur Award, election to the National Academy of Sciences, and the Prince Mahidol Prize [awarded by the royal family of Thailand] for his contributions to public health.

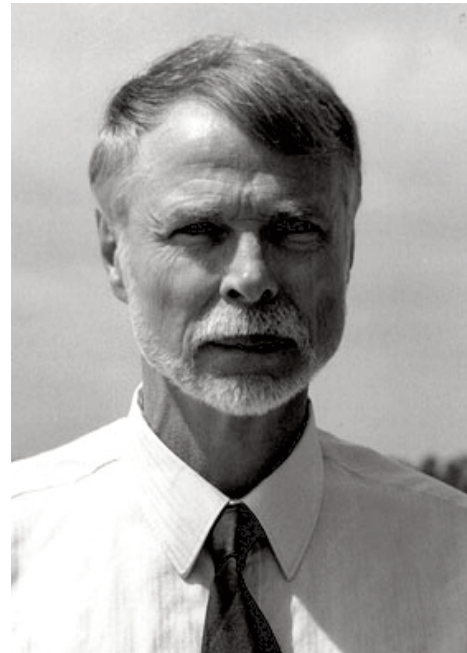
Microbiologist Porter W. Anderson, Jr. co-invented a vaccine to protect infants from Haemophilus influenzae type b or "Hib". Hib is a bacterium that, before the vaccine existed, killed or seriously injured hundreds of thousands of children throughout the world by causing meningitis, which damages the brain. Porter says that such work is generally overlooked because once-common diseases preventable by vaccines have largely disappeared from public attention [until the recent measles outbreak!]. And jokes that "Vaccination is the branch of medicine that has no grateful patients; its benefit is appreciated just by statistics.

For example, Hib used to afflict roughly 1/400 children per year in USA. This may seem minor but - with our 4 million births per year - represents 10,000 kids annually. When pediatricians inject 400 babies, all 400 cry and their parents worry. If the vaccine is perfect, on average one life-threatening infection is prevented, but we don't know in which kid.

Only careful examination of many health records shows the effect. Meanwhile, if a child naturally falls ill soon after vaccination, it is easy for parents [and their

lawyers, and the 'anti-vax' movement] to blame the vaccine. Again, only examining health statistics comparing vaccinated vs. not-vaccinated kids over time distinguishes causation from bad luck."

Porter's parents, Porter Sr. and Mary Rogers Anderson, raised him from age 3 months in Montgomery. He credits his public school education here with great preparation for college and graduate schools. After graduating from Sidney Lanier High School in 1954, he earned a B.A. in chemistry from Emory University, where he won a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship for post-graduate study. Before graduate study he worked for three years on plant diseases for the United Fruit Co. in Honduras, where he observed firsthand the many problems faced by poor children in underdeveloped countries. He then received a Master's and a Ph.D. degree from



Dr. Porter W. Anderson, Jr.

Harvard University. Then, believing that the disadvantaged needed better access to education led him to teach science from 1966 to 1968 at Stillman, a "Historically Black College" in Tuscaloosa. He then began vaccine research with co-workers at Harvard Medical School. Following an honored but risky tradition, they tested early recipes first on themselves and fellow doctors. In 1977 they moved this project to the University of Rochester. Their vaccine, which prevents Hib infection in infants by 99%, was approved by the FDA in 1990. Soon they showed it could be safely mixed with the usual "baby shots", so no additional injections were needed.

## THE DAYS OF OLD

Remember Electric Park was in its prime in the days of that distant past when the admission fee to moving picture shows was only a jitney (only a nickel and was not referred to disrespectfully then, for it could purchase something), when we hadn't quite cured ourselves of the habit of looking at an auto ascending Dexter avenue hill and wondering if it could make the climb, when we thought we had a big bunch of soldiers around Montgomery if about a thousand state militiamen were in camp near here for a week or ten days when beer was sold and beef was given away. Old-timers can remember one thirst emporium on Commerce street, for instance, on whose free lunch counter there was a noble haunch of beef which would be locked up in a safe nowadays, and from which the most toothsome sandwiches were made for anyone who spent a nickle for a stein of that amber brew or a glass of buttermilk. "Them were the days."

Right above this place of liquid and solid refreshments occurred something which threatened to put Electric Park out of business during practically its first and possibly its most prosperous season, and for a while kept all other interests in Montgomery on edge. This was in the summer of 1905. It is true that the park opened in the September of the year previous on practically the same site of the old Bloomfontaine [Bloemfontein], a former amusement park on a much smaller scale, which had gone out of business some years ago, but it was able only to give the Montgomery people a whet, so to speak, before the autumn came and we waited through the fall and winter and early months of the spring until it should open up for a season-long career in 1905.

## THRILLING TIMES

That season was an exciting one. Rival street car companies fought to see who should carry the major portion of the

big crowds that every night packed the cars to the amusement park. There was all sorts of competition, litigation, etc. and once the workmen engaged in laying contiguous tracks for the two companies took up their bosses' quarrel and almost came to blows.



The Lake at Electric Park

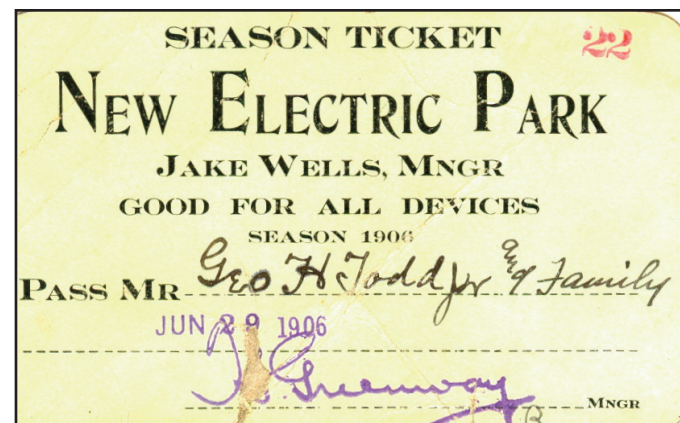
## YELLOW JACK QUEERS THE GAME

But the big event to which we have referred came later in the summer. During the early part of July, that bughug [bug hug] of the South, Yellow Jacket, put in his unwelcome appearance in New Orleans. That did not worry us so much, like Italian peasants dancing on the sides of volcanoes from which the lava is already beginning to trickle, we kept on packing the crowds to Electric Park, riding the roller coaster, rowing on the lake, investigating and investing in the slot machines, etc. But on Friday, July 28, a stranger from Louisiana was taken ill at a hotel on Commerce street. A few days later, it was announced by the health authorities that it was a case of yellow fever, but there was no cause for the people of Montgomery to get alarmed.

Some of them did, however. The steam cars were crowded now with persons "refugeeing" to North Carolina, Tennessee, anywhere outside of the mosquito belt. Likewise the conductors on the trolley cars journeying to Electric park had a rest from taking up the fares of packed and sweltering humanity. Those of us who couldn't get away, whistled to keep our courage up, trusted in providence, and kept our mosquito netting



mended. Some of us would go out to the park to hear the band o' nights, talk to one another about the fever situation and swat the stegomyia fasciata or his brothers of the skeeter tribe.



ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

But all came out right in the end. The Louisianian's was the only case, the refugees came back long before [Yellow] Jack arrived, and business picked up again at the park and in the city. In fact some time before "killing frosts" set in that fall, Montgomery was honored by a visit from the President of the United States, one Theodore Roosevelt. Also if our memory serves us correctly, a street fair was held on Dexter Avenue, the last one for many years until the notable one of 1916, immortalized by Julian Street in *Collier's Weekly*.

#### FAMOUS ARTISTS

The season of 1906 was the time when the Casino, or playhouse at Electric Park was in its greatest glory. It became one of a chain of summer theatres throughout the south and got a great deal of talent that was at the time promising and later became famous. In those days all-summer vaudeville was unknown in New York and ambitious artists who were just beginning to "arrive" were glad to make a little extra money by "touring the provinces," during the period when they were "at liberty." Local devotees of the lighter forms of dramatic entertainment were able to recall beside Gertrude Hoffman, several others of note who appeared for a week at the Casino dur-

ing those halcyon days. Among them were Jack Norworth, the celebrated monologist, Louise Dreaser, who afterwards starred in the "Legitimate," appearing in the well known "Potash and Perimutter," Frank Tinney, afterwards a comedian with the Ziegfeld Follies, and others, including Houdini, the man who now makes his famous escapes from handcuffs, ropes, sacks and water at the New York Hippodrome.

#### VIEWING THE RUINS

Nothing now remains of the old casino save a part of its concrete foundation. A concrete base which makes an almost perfect cross marks where the old merry-go-round (or Carrousal [Carousel], as it was termed), once revolved and whence issued the nerve-ceasing strains of "Meet Me in St. Louis," and "The Belle of New York" from the musical mechanism. Some fragments of tarred paper on the ground are all that is left of the other buildings. The lake on which so many boat loads of girls and their swains used to ply has shrunk into a small pond about 30 feet wide by 75 feet long. A corn patch grows where the old roller coaster used to carry so many carloads of shrieking pleasure-seekers. A young man of very affable manners, Mr. C. H. Burt, is now engaged in farming on the site of the park and assured the writer that it makes fine land for crops. The old fat and easy days of the 190\_'s have passed away. The land formerly used for "non-essential" frivolities is now given to feeding a hungry world.

We would defy even Sherlock Holmes to construct the history of Electric Park from anything he might now find on its former site. Speaking geologically, the strata do not yield any fossil remains which would enable us to reconstruct the life of the epoch. Likewise the memories of men after lapse of twelve years or so are very fallible.

#### GET GRANDMA TO "REMINIS"

A happy thought! We would get Grandma to "reminis!" We slipped into the

file room of *The Advertiser* and perused the back numbers. Sure enough, Louise Dresser opened the 1906 season on May 21. Jack Norworth was with her.

Now here is a find! On June 26 appears a review of the bill for the week as follows:

"There is Gertrude Hoffman, for instance. The woman is an artist. Poorer performers than this Hoffman woman have gone around the winter circuit with their names stuck on billboards in printed letters three feet high. A star at the head of a first class company, charging from \$2 down - that's her proper sphere."

The man who wrote that was a great picker of talent. The world has endorsed his judgment and given Gertrude her \$2 per ticket and even more. We wish we knew who he was. That is the trouble with newspaper work; it's so anonymous. A man's own brother might write a story and he not know it. We do not always succeed in slipping our names in at the heads of our stories by the watchful eye of the Managing Editor.

The unknown writer goes on to describe La Hoffman:

"The young woman is slender, graceful and winsome and best of all she knows how to act. Everything she does is done so spontaneously and winsomely that one doesn't think she is doing it at all for the money there is in it. She looks like she had rather go right out there and have a good time on the stage than do anything else in the world, and the audience doesn't enjoy it half as much as she does. Of the many good things she does the best is her mimicry of such stage favorites as George Cohan, Anna Held, Ethel Levy, Eddie Foy and others. But she has got to be seen to be appreciated. If the local theatregoers do not go out there and see her they will miss the best thing that will be at the Park this summer."

#### POOR OLD "SHIVERS"

But listen, our writer is not through with celebrities yet:

"The Dolly sisters, song and dance women, did their work with such spirit

and abandon that the audience was impelled to give them encores. In addition to being clever, they are pretty. They ornament the stage quite nicely."

All theatregoers now know the famous Rosika and Yanci Dolly. In recent years pictures of these shapely and comely dancers have probably appeared more frequently in theatrical magazines than those of any other persons of the profession who have not achieved screen celebrity.

The criticism ends as follows:

"No notice of the performance could be adequate that did not have something about the intelligence and cleverness of Tony Hart, not only in his monologues, but in his comedy part to wind up the feature."

This review, so chockfull of great names in the lighter branches of the Thespian art, was enough. We were almost afraid to bother the files any further. In the good days of 1906, be it remembered, acting for the movies did not bring the fame and fortune that it now bestows. Who knows but that later in the summer the dramatic critic may not have written: "This slapstick act on the bill deserves honorable mention. The program informs us that the name of the comedian is Charlie Chaplin; this young fellow has a great future before him?"

End

*The author of this article, Joel Woodruff, was a popular writer for the Advertiser and was the brother of Montgomery educator, Miss Gussie Woodruff. It was she who was largely responsible for the educations of many young boys and girls in Montgomery. The MCHS is the proud owner of the pump organ that she played each morning as her students marched in to school to the tune of "Onward Christian Soldiers." We also have in our collection, two homemade student desks.*

*Several years ago your editor had a recorded interview with Mr. David Gorrie concerning Electric Park that has never been developed into an article. Sometime in the future, hopefully, we will have an additional impression from him published on Electric Park from someone who visited frequently. David died several years ago at age of 99 or 100.*

Editor