ALABAMA TROUBADOUR

By

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IT ALL BEGINS WITH A SONG

Alabama Troubadour is a multi-dimensional project comprised of a collection of researched essays, original songs, and a live, formal performance. The primary focus of *Alabama Troubadour* is the songs and the performance. The umbrella objective for *Alabama Troubadour* is to chronicle a unique culture and land through a combination of artistic and scholarly mediums.

Technically, I began working on *Alabama Troubadour* nearly two years ago. However, in some ways, for me *Alabama Troubadour* began many years ago. From a non-personal, historical perspective, *Alabama Troubadour* began many hundreds of years ago.

From *Beowulf* to "The Battle of New Orleans," ballads have recorded the stories, characters, values, and emotions of the people from the times wherein they were written. An artistic weaving of fact and legend, the ballad's music and lyric come from the heart rather than the mind, reveal truth as it is felt rather than as it is rationalized, and continue as a part of community rather than as a part of text. Books, even entire libraries, can be destroyed, but the songs continue to be sung. As the Native American adage states, "As long as the songs are sung the people live." Thus, the ballad serves as a means of continuance for the culture that inspires its creation.

The composer and performer of the ballad has been known by many titles through many cultures and times: a scop, a bard, a minstrel, a troubadour, a singer-songwriter. At the end of the twentieth century, the singer-songwriter continues the tradition of combining music and words to chronicle the times creatively. Today, the mecca of the singer-songwriter is Nashville, Tennessee. In "Music City," the singer-songwriter attempts to earn a living from the craft of song-writing. Thus, a typical life pattern for many singer-songwriters usually starts with leaving home and family for Nashville with dreams of writing that famous hit song. However, many songwriters become frustrated by the music business and confined by the compositional format the business requires. Although many singer-songwriters arrive in Nashville in search of fame and fortune, many find only hard times on every corner of the big city. Finally, the singer-songwriter often leaves Nashville in search of self and some unknown that causes the modern minstrel to roam like a gypsy. While wandering, the singer-songwriter writes songs about the places and people experienced.

Few modern singer-songwriters are consciously aware of this pattern or tradition. At night, in cheap motel rooms or campgrounds, the songwriter wonders why he or she is alone and then picks up the guitar and writes about that feeling, in that place. At the next performance, or the next friend's home, the songwriter sings the new song. Thus, the wandering singer-songwriter, as an observer and a visitor, continues the tradition of the minstrel and the ballad in the twentieth century.

When I left Nashville behind for the first time, I intended to leave music behind as well. However, no singer-songwriter ever leaves music. As a mentor told me once, "You have no choice, you must write; it is what you are." She was right. From the Arizona desert to the Norwegian mountains, the places and people I encountered became songs. Upon returning to Nashville, I found that I had transformed to where I not only did not fit into the mainstream mold, but I no longer wanted to accommodate that pigeonhole. I discovered other birds-of-a-feather and, through late-night discussions, we came to understand the path we had chosen, or perhaps, the path that had chosen us.

I determined I would leave Nashville again. I sent letters to friends and acquaintances inquiring about possibilities. Through the efforts of Nancy Anderson and Susan Willis, I was offered opportunities that inspired me to relocate to Montgomery. I rented an apartment in Old Cloverdale and, as is the singer-songwriter's custom, I began writing songs about Alabama.

Therefore, when the director of the Hoover Library Theater, Linda Andrews, invited me to submit a project proposal, one of the ideas I suggested was a collection of songs about Alabama. I called it *Alabama Troubadour*.

Thanks to the support of many people, I have had the privilege of seeing my vision for *Alabama Troubadour* become reality. My original design for *Alabama Troubadour* was a collection of original songs based on my personal experience merged with the history and tradition of the sites. In addition, I planned for a brief historical sketch to accompany each song. Therefore, extensive research was necessary in order to choose the sites. As I continued to read and study about Alabama, I realized that I had the opportunity and the responsibility of chronicling a unique culture and land at the end of the millennium. Intuitively feeling that this body of work could evolve into more than a song collection, I drafted objectives for *Alabama Troubadour:*

1. to inspire visitation to the chosen sites;
2. to make available information concerning ethnic, cultural, and historical heritage

that is not generally included in the mainstream information about Alabama;

3. to show the uniqueness, diversity, and individualism of the population and history of Alabama;
4. to instill a sense of pride in the historic, cultural, and ethnic elements of Alabama;
5. to develop a sense of history, community, and individualism within community.

Meanwhile, Linda Andrews urged me to include a site from all geographical areas of the state. Although I resisted at first, I have been glad I followed her wishes. The project continued to grow, and Hoover Library commissioned renowned Alabama photographer Chip Cooper to photograph the sites in a manner that visually captured not only the site, but also the sentiment expressed in my songs. Later Linda contracted with me for the Library's annual Sunday musical performance of the Southern Voices literary conference. Thus, my original plan of a song collection with a brief historical sketch blossomed into a fully staged musical performance that was accompanied by a collection of artistic photographs.

At this point, the amount of research the songs were requiring forced me to realize that *Alabama Troubadour* was an academic as well as a creative project. I discussed *Alabama Troubadour* with Nancy Anderson and Susan Willis, and we decided to make *Alabama Troubadour* my thesis.

Because the Master's of Liberal Arts degree is an interdisciplinary program, I wanted my thesis to be more than a written document. In addition, as I am a singer-songwriter, a bound volume could not comprise the whole of my work. Therefore, I presented a large part of my thesis, and my thesis defense, on March 1, 1998, on the stage of the Hoover Library Theater.

The *Alabama Troubadour* performances were the final culmination of months of research, in libraries and in the field, in addition to months of rehearsing, both independently and with the musicians in Nashville. I composed all the music, wrote the lyrics, and arranged all the songs -- instrumentally and vocally. On stage, I introduced each song by providing personal experience along with historical and other information for each site. The vocal, instrumental, and speaking elements of the show had to work smoothly with the lights and be formatted in a manner that enabled the sound engineer to function quickly. Therefore, my speaking parts could not be spontaneous. I wrote and memorized a script for the show that included quotations from historical documents (Appendix A). In terms of stage presentation, Nancy Anderson, Lester Kaiser of the costume department at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, and I designed costumes for me and the band. These ensembles combined Renaissance color schemes with contemporary design, thereby providing a visual component that symbolized modern and historical troubadour tradition (Appendix C). In addition, I had controlling input on the stage design and lighting (Appendix B). From the first note of research I took to the last note of vocal performance I released, my performance of *Alabama Troubadour* reflected a work of the heart, spirit, and mind.

After the performances, the business phase of *Alabama Troubadour* began. Currently, lawyers, grant writers, and accountants are finishing paper-work to form a nonprofit corporation named The Southern Association for Music, Arts and History: SAMAH. SAMAH's objectives are to further opportunities for *Alabama Troubadour* and other projects as well. Several publishers have expressed an interest in a book combining my essays and lyrics, and Chip Cooper's photographs. My response to their inquiries has been to date, "I am still writing."

Now I am finished writing. Neither the research, the design of the format, nor the writing itself has been easy. My experience is that creating a unique work requires much of the individual, but, if the price is high, so are the rewards, at least on the inner level.

My intention is for the essays to be companion pieces to the songs, not the reverse. In Nashville there is an adage: "It all begins with a song." In the case of *Alabama Troubadour*, it all begins and ends with a song. Therefore, the essays are listed according to the order the songs with which they correlate were performed. The order of the songs was determined by performance criteria, including such considerations as confidence level, emotional content, tempo, instrumentation, length of introduction, and overall performance movement. The lyric is placed in front of the essay. The title of each essay states the place, and the end of each essay is the "hook" of the song. The bibliography functions for both song and essay. Nancy Anderson and I opted for a "Selected Bibliography" as opposed to a "Works Cited" page to show the amount of research invested. Thus, the format of the thesis' main body is a reflection of the artistic and performance focus of the thesis.

The appendices supply information on the performance. I sincerely appreciate the faculty and friends who attended my performance. As any artist can attest, there is no substitute for a live, formal performance. In addition, although SAMAH is working on the resources for repeat performances, the performance that afternoon in Hoover was showered by that magic that performers always wish for, but are not always granted, and is never duplicated in the exact manner. However, in order to provide for those absent some means of appreciating the performance, I have included a copy of the program and a photograph of the stage, the musicians and me in the appendices.

My objective for *Alabama Troubadour* is to merge the attributes of the singer-songwriter and the scholar. By combining art and academics, I have attempted to create a work that balances tradition and fact, past and present, heart and mind, spirit and physical. I do not yet know where else the *Alabama Troubadour* road may lead, but the terrain is familiar to me because it all begins with a song.

BROTHER JOSEPH'S WAYSIDE SHRINE

BETWEEN BIRMINGHAM AND NASHVILLE
ON HIGH WAY 65
I SAW "AVE MARIA GROTTO"
WRITTEN ON THE LANDMARK SIGN
TIRED OF THE ROAD
OR MAYBE JUST TIRED
I TOOK THE EXIT
AND FOLLOWED MY HEART

ONCE YOU LEAVE THE FAST LANE
I'M ALWAYS AMAZED
AT THE WONDERS YOU CAN SEE
WHEN YOU TAKE THE TIME TO GAZE
RIGHT SMACK IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE INFORMATION AGE
THERE STANDS A MONASTERY
WHERE MONKS STILL WORK AND PRAY

> LIKE PILGRIMS OF OLD
> I WAS ON A QUEST
> TO FIND MY WAY BACK HOME
> TO THE ONE WHO LOVES ME BEST
> A WORN AND WEARY SOUL
> I WAS GLAD TO FIND
> A PLACE TO REST
> AND A LITTLE PEACE OF MIND
> AT BROTHER JOSEPH'S WAYSIDE SHRINE

I WALKED THROUGH THE GARDEN
WHERE JOSEPH'S WORK ALL STANDS
FAMED GLORIES THERE IN MINIATURE
CREATED BY HIS HANDS
WONDERS IN THEMSELVES
BUT MORE WONDROUS TO ME
WERE THE SIMPLE THINGS HE USED
TO CREATE A MASTERPIECE

HE BUILT FROM THE ORDINARY
THINGS I MIGHT THROW AWAY

HE TURNED INTO A WORK OF ART
THAT GIVES JOY EVERYDAY
HOW PATIENTLY HE MOLDED
EACH PIECE INTO ITS PLACE
THE LOVING NATURE OF HIS WORK
IS PRESENT IN THIS PLACE

(REPEAT CHORUS)

HE USED A FLOAT FROM A FISHING NET
EVEN A TOILET BOWL
INK BOTTLES AND COLD CREAM JARS
AND MADE SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL
IT REALLY WAS A MARVEL
WHAT HIS HANDS HAD WROUGHT
FROM BROKEN SHARDS OF COLORED GLASS
AND RAGGED BITS OF ROCK

THEN SUDDENLY I KNEW
WHAT I'D COME TO UNDERSTAND
WE ALL ARE MINIATURES
CREATED BY GOD'S HAND
WE MAY THINK WE'RE ORDINARY
BUT WE'RE PART OF GRAND DESIGN
WE ALL HAVE A PLACE IN IT
AND IN IT WE ALL SHINE

(REPEAT CHORUS)

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THE AVE MARIA GROTTO

Along roadsides, in Europe and Latin America, stand small altars where travelers may stop, rest, and say a prayer. During the Middle Ages, travelers on pilgrimages to visit holy sites refreshed body and soul at these sanctuaries "on the way." Thus, these places became known as wayside shrines.

The "Ave Maria Grotto" at St. Bernard Abbey, just outside of Cullman, Alabama, offers such a place to rest and reflect. The grotto, the abbey, and Cullman are linked historically and they also share a legacy of being created, or founded, by individuals who were committed to making a contribution to humanity.

Colonel Johann Gottfried Cullmann founded the town of Cullman in 1873. History describes Colonel Culmann as a revolutionary, an entrepreneur, and a visionary. As a young man, he earned his reputation as a revolutionary by attaining the rank of colonel, and leading a regiment of Bavarian rebels in an armed insurrection against Prussian forces. Legend also whispers of his involvement in a plot to assassinate Bismarck. Eventually, Colonel Cullmann's political activities caused him to flee to the New World, where he proved his prowess as an entrepreneur. Although he arrived penniless and in debt, in only three years Colonel Cullmann acquired the capital necessary to finance his travels to search for land he and his fellow German immigrants could colonize. His vision was to establish a settlement where working class immigrants, especially those from his native Germany, could prosper. His quest finally led him to Northern Alabama. Satisfied that he had found the perfect location, Colonel Culmann personally advertised and promoted the site both in America and Europe: "After traveling around the country and arriving in North Alabama . . . I found here all that I had been looking for, all that I regarded as necessary to make good homes . . ." (qtd. in "The Spirit of Cullman County").[1]

Colonel Cullmann had found the place, but he also found political and social obstacles. Although his vision was clear, Alabama's legislative leaders' perceptions were clouded by their Reconstruction experiences. Colonel Cullmann's formal immigration plan for Alabama was defeated twice. In *Cullman--110 Years,* editor Raymond Yost gives a local historian's colorful explanation for the negative legislative vote:

> Many in the South, who by this time were fed up with Carpetbaggers and the Northern political thieves who had occupied the land since the end of the Civil War, opposed the immigration. (5)

However, Colonel Cullmann did not allow such formalities to darken his vision. In December 1872, he negotiated an option on several thousand acres of land from the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company. Many German immigrants living in the North re-located to North Alabama to homestead the land and were joined by other immigrants from Europe as well. Colonel Cullmann is credited with the immigration of over 100,00 people to Alabama.

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[1] Although I cited my source as Cullman County magazine, these words of Col. Cullmann are repeatedly quoted in a variety of printed materials. I found the complete quote in a pamphlet printed by the Cullman County Museum. The credit notation reads: "Col. John G. Cullmann, 1877, from a pamphlet to German immigrants." To further clarify, although Col. Cullmann's given name at birth was Johann, most historians call him John or, as I have chosen, Col. Cullmann. Also, in 1974 the people of Cullman elected to incorporate their town, to name it after its founder, but to drop one of the "n's" in his name.

During the early days of the new town, the German people who settled there raised staples such as corn, sweet potatoes, and chickens. They also opened and operated small industries, taking advantage of the railroad system, as indeed the L & N officials who negotiated the land offer to Colonel Cullmann had intended. The town of Cullman flourished, and Col. Cullmann's vision became a thriving reality.

For many years, the people of Cullman maintained their native traditions. They imported German newspapers and even conducted religious services in their native German language. However, during the course of two World Wars, wherein America and Germany were enemies, all aspects of German culture became unpopular. Therefore, the population of Cullman gradually ceased using their native tongue and participating in their other cultural traditions as well. In more recent times, a resurgence of interest and pride in the history and culture of the original settlers has spurred the renovation of historical buildings and fostered festivals commemorating the traditions of the town's German origins.

St. Bernard Abbey, the only Benedictine monastery in Alabama, continues a 1500-year-old legacy begun by St. Benedict (480-547), who founded the Benedictine monastic order. St. Benedict's written guideline, known as "The Rule," became the structure for monasticism across Christendom in his lifetime, and remains so to the present. Although "The Rule" dictates a monk's daily agenda in detail, two elements are elemental directives: work and prayer. For the Benedictine monk, work and prayer are considered equal in service to God and personal development of spiritual awareness.

Work and prayer were required in abundance from the Benedictine monks who founded St. Bernard Abbey in 1891. The monks transformed 160 acres of wilderness into a library, a church, and a college to serve the populace of Cullman, Alabama. Today the college is closed, but St. Bernard houses an active monastery, a college preparatory school, and the site of "The Ave Maria Grotto." The monks continue to minister to the people of the area by offering four prayer services a day and by making contributions to the community such as housing the Argentina soccer team during the Olympic games held in Atlanta. Thus, just a few miles from the roar of the 20th century, the 27 monks who quietly live at St. Bernard Abbey epitomize the 1500-year-old Benedictine tradition of serving humanity and God through work and prayer.

The building that housed the college is now the gift shop and entry way for the collection of the miniature replicas of famous shrines and buildings created by Brother Joseph Zoettel. These miniatures are beautifully and strategically placed on the site of the old stone quarry where the blocks for the monastery buildings were hewn. Today an easily traversed, paved path wanders and winds around the grounds granting the visitor both a pleasant walk and a self-guided, self-paced tour. The natural ledges and small recesses of the limestone lend themselves well to the display of Brother Joseph's miniature replicas of the most famous and beautiful architectural wonders of the world. Visitors gazing at Brother Joseph's work generally agree that the miniatures are equal wonders to behold.

Understanding the meaning of the name "Ave Maria Grotto" gives the visitor a deeper understanding of Brother Joseph's delightful artistic creations. "Ave Maria" (translated "Hail Mary") is a well-known Catholic prayer. The words are found in The

New Testament as the angel Gabriel's greeting and annunciation to Mary of the upcoming birth of Christ. The word "grotto" means "cave" and many of the wayside shrines in other countries are often found in recesses, if not in actual caverns. In that tradition, Brother Joseph's collection of miniatures stand in the many niches and indentations of the former quarry, thus its name. While there is an actual miniature called the "The Ave Maria Grotto," the name refers to Brother Joseph's collection as a whole.

Brother Joseph Zoettel, like St. Benedict, dedicated his life to prayer and work and, within that reality, to service. Like Colonel Cullmann, he was a Bavarian immigrant. Brother Joseph came to Cullman and the new abbey in 1892, when he was just fourteen years old. He began building his replicas from discarded building materials in 1912. At first, the miniatures were placed in the Abbey Garden, but they attracted so many visitors that they were moved to their present site in 1934. Of the 124 miniature replicas Brother Joseph created, he visited only six of the actual sites. Brother Joseph's information and inspiration came from historical and biblical research as well as photographs. Brother Joseph built his last miniature in 1958 when he was eighty years old. Following the Benedictine tradition, Brother Joseph lived at the monastery until his death in 1961. He is buried in the abbey cemetery, a beautiful and peaceful place only one hundred yards from where people are awed and inspired by his creations.

The visitor wanders along the foot paths among Brother Joseph's work and becomes the beneficiary of both the beauty of nature and the artistic genius of Brother Joseph. Whether admiring a hand-made miniature replica of an ancient and beautiful place, resting on one of the stone benches, or watching a mischievous chipmunk run among the miniatures of Jerusalem, the visitor is imbued with sense of both time passed and timelessness. A feeling of peace and quiet comforts the momentary refugee from the twentieth century and, like the pilgrim of old, the visitor is rejuvenated at Brother Joseph's wayside shrine.

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FROM CATFISH TO BARBECUE

FROM CATFISH TO BARBECUE
A GASTRONOMIC TREAT
FILL YOUR TUMMY FILL YOUR SOUL
IT'S ALL YOU CAN EAT
COME AS YOU ARE; MAKE YOURSELF T' HOME
COME WITH FRIENDS; COME ALONE
COUNT ON ALABAMA FOR A POUND OR TWO
CATFISH TO BARBECUE

FIRST, THE CATFISH STORY:

I CROSSED THE GAINESVILLE BRIDGE AND SAW THAT CATFISH CABIN
SITTING UP ON COLEMAN'S BLUFF I HEARD IT CALL TO ME
PAINTED WHITE AND ON ITS SIDE
WAS A RIVERBOAT AND A DANIEL BOONE
SO I STOPPED IN THE PARKING LOT
AND WALKED INTO THE DINING ROOM

THE SIGN SAID SERVING 4-10 AND IT WAS EARLY IN THE DAY
BETTY SMILED, SAID IF YOU'RE HUNGRY NOW I'LL BE GLAD TO FEED YA
SHE SERVED RIVER FISH HOT AND FRESH
FROM THE WATER BELOW JOHN AND BETTY BARNES
CAST THEIR NETS AND THEN JUST LET
GOD'S BOUNTY COME ALONG

THEY TOLD STORIES OF WANDERERS BROKE OUT ON THE ROAD
LIKE THAT OTHER FISHERMAN'S BROTHER
JOHN & BETTY FED THE HUNGRY
THEY GAVE ME A LOT OF HISTORY
TALES NOT ALWAYS TOLD
RIGHT FROM THEIR HEARTS JOHN AND BETTY BARNES
MADE ME FEEL AT HOME

(REPEAT CHORUS)

NOW HERE'S THE BARBECUE STORY:

DOWN IN TUSCALOOSA OUT ON JUG FACTORY ROAD
DREAMLAND'S A PLACE FAMOUS TODAY FOR THEIR SLAB OF RIBS
SERVED IN LOTS OF SECRET SAUCE
AND SUNBEAM WHITE BREAD STACKED UP HIGH
NAPKINS AND DRINKS BUT YOU WON'T SEE
ANY FORKS OR KNIVES

LICENSE PLATES ON THE WALL FROM 50 STATES AND BEYOND
"ROLL TIDE" AND ON THE RIGHT "BUCKLE UP FOR JESUS"
FIFTEEN BUCKS A PLATE AIN'T A CHEAP DATE
BUT AIN'T NOTHIN LIKE IT NOWHERE
THAT'S WHY THEY SAY ON THE EIGHTH DAY
DREAMLAND WAS MADE THERE

DREAMLAND IS SO FAMOUS FOLKS COME FROM FAR AWAY
I SAW ONCE A FULL TOUR BUS OF FOLKS VISITING FROM BRAZIL
THEY DIDN'T SPEAK MUCH ENGLISH
THEY LOOKED KINDA LOST BUT THEY SOON FOUND OUT
WHAT SUNBEAM BREAD AND A SLAB OF RIBS
IN ALABAMA'S ALL ABOUT!

(REPEAT CHORUS)

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COLEMAN'S CATFISH CABIN AND DREAMLAND BAR-BE-CUE

The indigenous food of a culture reveals not only the tastes of its people, but their stories as well. In Alabama, catfish and barbecue serve both functions. Catfish is pulled from the river, cut into filets, battered in corn meal, fried to a crisp brown, piled high on a plate, and served to friends and family. The connection between the South's natural resources and the food on the table, and the bond between the folks around the table, are recognizable aspects of Southern life. The catfish is a legendary character in the ancient lore of the American Indian and the tall tales of the wily fisherman. The catfish has evolved from a defining element of social strata to an example of Southern trust and need for manna from Mother Nature. The popularity of catfish is evident in Southern literature, lore, and menus.

Although barbecue is not, in the literal sense of the term, a natural resource, it does share in the outdoor tradition of the catfish. Barbecue traces its history to the American Indian, and its tradition to ante-bellum society. In Alabama, barbecue is a main dish, usually of pork, cooked over an open pit and basted with a tomato-based, spicy sauce definitive of preferences in the Deep South. Barbecue, described in *1001 Things You Should Know about the South* by John and Dale Volberg Reed as "the most Southern meat of all" (193), maintains its historic role at social gatherings, defines regional tastes and differences, and inspires regional pride. Alabama barbecue restaurants are plentiful, and the hungry guest will find delivered to the table racks of ribs smothered in smoky, spicy sauce to be shared by folks who need to be comfortable with each other because it is the accepted custom to consume barbecued ribs without table utensils. If it were not for the magnanimity of Southern heart and appetite, catfish would have a rival in barbecue. However, there is always room at the Southern table for one more guest and one or two more favorite foods.

The Catfish Story

Diane Young, in *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture,* states that "Southerners have never aligned themselves as closely with any cold-blooded creature as they have with the feline-looking catfish" (378). The "feline-looking" aspect is due to barbs on either side of the head that resemble cat whiskers. Catfish, known in the vernacular as "cats," belong to the family *Ictaluridae*. Of the twenty-four species of catfish in North America, eight are commonly considered edible and, of those eight, three are well established in culinary and cultural tradition. All three of these species are found in Southern waters, literature, and legends. Their vernacular names change with the locale, but they are most commonly known as: the channel cat (*I. punctatus*), the blue cat (*I. furcatus*), and the flathead or mudcat (*Pylodicits olivaris*). All three species grow to tremendous size, and so share roles in the tales about monster catfish.

The tales of huge, even man-eating, catfish range across time from Indian legends to the maintenance reports from the Army Corps of Engineers. Native American lore features stories about catfish large enough to swallow canoes filled with men. In 1673, French explorer Jacques Marquette noted in his journal that Indians warned him and fellow explorer Louis Joliet of the life-threatening dangers in the Mississippi River including a "demon who was heard from a great distance, who barred the way, and swallowed up all who ventured to approach him." Although Marquette wrote that he "scoffed at the alleged demon" (97), he later noted that "From time to time we came upon monstrous fish, one of which struck our canoe with such violence that I thought it was a great tree about to break the canoe to pieces" (109). Legends of gargantuan catfish continued into the nineteenth century and entered into the literary world when Mark Twain's Huck Finn and Jim caught a cat as big as a man and weighing 200 pounds. The modern version of the monster catfish story is set in the deep, dark waters that swirl close to the TVA dams. The catfishes' propensity to hide attracts them to the dams. Many modern stories feature behemoths lurking around the dams, waiting to intercept divers from the Army Corps of Engineers. Although reason and statistics indicate that with increased fishing the size of the available catfish gets smaller, the tales about catfish continue to get larger.

Nonetheless, the evidence for enormous catfish weighs in favor of the legends. Lund states that "during aboriginal times blue cats ran to six feet in length and probably more than 200 pounds." Lund cites a one-hundred-fifty pound specimen shipped to the Smithsonian in 1879; a local report in Troy, Indiana, of a ten-year-old boy who was pulled under and eaten by a giant catfish; and a fisherman near Metropolis, Illinois, who was drowned in a battle with a gargantuan cat (131). Mr. Jason Haynes, an engineer with the Army Corps of Engineers at the Danley Reserve in Alabama, states that he has been told all of his professional life about "man-eating cats" but has never seen the six-foot two-hundred-pound variety. However, Haynes states that he has seen catfish that weigh from thirty to fifty pounds and agrees that reports of larger catfish are frequent. Many communities around large Southern rivers continue to tell stories of old, huge, and even venerated catfish that live for decades in a certain area, hiding in secret, watery places, and eluding capture by stealth and strength.

Part of the catfish's legendary status derives from its huge mouth which nature designed to stay open as the catfish swims. As the catfish cruises in deep, dark waters, its open mouth attracts all manner of food--and other objects as well. Reports are plentiful of the varied contents found in a captured catfish's stomach: outboard motors, cats, and dogs. The catfish's lack of discriminating food practices has contributed to its tarnished reputation as a scavenger, or a bottom feeder.

Negative images of Southerners have been linked to the shadowy reputation of the catfish. From elitist judgments of catfish and folk, comes the stereotypical image of the barefoot Southerner napping on the river bank with a cane pole in hand. A more negative description is reported by Young, who discusses the catfish's reputation as a "trash fish" and further reports that, in the not so distant past, the catfish was considered "a lazy man's fish, a poor man's fish, a black man's fish" (378). Concerning the first two categories, such a social evaluation based on catfish consumption can be explained by the fact that the abundance of catfish made it an accessible and free source of food. In the case of the third category, racial prejudice combines with catfish prejudice, and both human and fish are maligned. The South has changed, however, and part of that change can be seen in the attitude towards catfish.

Catfish today is becoming a mainstream fish, partly because of catfish farms. Developed to create a commercial product, catfish farms are controlled environments where, according to Young, catfish are "fed on grain and carefully nurtured," thus eliminating the objections from the scavenger attributes of catfish (378). However, according to Lund, some catfish connoisseurs claim that raising catfish in ponds and on commercial grains alter their taste, making them "taste like alfalfa" in addition to having a less solid texture (131). The historical debate on the edibility of the catfish was commented on in the nineteenth century when Mark Twain, in *Life on the Mississippi*, defended the catfish saying "the catfish is a good enough fish for anybody" (295). However, at the end of the twentieth century, Randy Rayburn, proprietor of the renowned and award-winning Sunset Grill in Nashville, states succinctly: "I like it, but it's hard to charge twenty dollars for a catfish entree." Nonetheless, catfish festivals, catfish cooking contests, and an increasing number of catfish cabins (local restaurants specializing in catfish) testify to the increasing overall acceptance of catfish in the South.

A colorful example of a catfish cabin can be found across the Tutwiler Bridge, a few miles outside Gainesville, Alabama. The low, white structure beckons from Coleman's Bluff and is appropriately named "Coleman's Bluff Catfish Cabin." Both Coleman's Bluff and Gainesville are historical locations and, in addition to freshly caught catfish, cole slaw, and hushpuppies, proprietors John and Betty Barnes are very capable of providing the visitor with a feast of local history.

In *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, Thomas Owens records that Coleman's Bluff takes its name from John Coleman (643). Owens describes

Coleman as a "Choctaw Indian" who "owned three Negro slaves and cultivated fifty acres of his land" (643). Local historian Kitty Harrison relates that John Coleman was half Indian and living with, or married to, a Choctaw woman. In 1830 the Dancing Rabbit Treaty assigned portions of land owned by the Choctaw tribe to certain individual members of the tribe. The treaty's plan, which was fulfilled, was for the Indians to then sell their property to white settlers; thus, the Indians could raise the economic resources that would assist in their final dispersal to Oklahoma. The Dancing Rabbit Treaty was only one of many signed during the first half of the 1800's. In *Alabama: A Bicentennial History* Hamilton summarizes the history:

> Bowing to the seemingly inevitable, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Cherokees signed treaties ceding their lands. By 1839 the Indians had bartered their ancestral realm for the plains of Oklahoma and, like the buffalo which once roamed Alabama, had been been pushed west of the Mississippi. (151-152)

The six-hundred-and-forty acres assigned to Coleman included what was to become Gainesville. Harrison believes that the land was designated to Coleman because of his Choctaw wife, but, regardless, Coleman was authorized to sell the land. At first he negotiated with the Indian factor, or agent, George Gaines, who offered him one thousand dollars. However, he later accepted Colonel Moses Lewis's better offer of two thousand dollars. Lewis then named the town after Gaines. The bluff, however, retained the name of its Indian owners.

John and Betty Barnes' catfish cabin, sitting high on Coleman's Bluff, epitomizes that renowned Southern attribute of "good folks and good food." The outside walls are colorfully painted with figures from the region's history: a frontiersman, a log cabin, and a riverboat. Inside, wooden tables and chairs create a "down-home" atmosphere that is accentuated by John and Betty's own charm, hospitality, and largeness of heart. Betty can relate to the curious guest the story of each taxidermied specimen of the wild life that adorns the walls and rafters, since the trophies are the result of her and John's excellent marksmanship. John and Betty approach the cuisine and the ambiance of their restaurant in the same hands-on manner: they catch the catfish they serve from the waters below Coleman's Bluff. As they trust in the waters to provide, so they, as sincere Christians, consider it their duty to trust travelers who may be "short on cash" to pay them later for a needed meal. John and Betty enjoy working in their restaurant, serving their guests, and collecting and recording the history of their community.

John and Betty Barnes are both students of the area's history and are eager to share not only their knowledge but their extensive collection of books, letters, and various chronicles as well. One of the reasons John and Betty have an interest in the region's history is Betty's Choctaw heritage, which she proudly claims. Perhaps Betty's heritage contributes to their ability to adapt ancient living-off-the-land customs to meet their needs in the twentieth century. A framed picture of a younger John and Betty shows a tall, blonde man standing beside a small dark-eyed beauty. The visitor with a knowledge of local history is irresistibly reminded of another couple who lived on the same site over one hundred years ago. Betty looks up from her history papers and muses that she has read that the land her restaurant now sits upon once belonged to a Choctaw woman. "Well," she says with a smile, "I always heard that things have a way of comin' back around."

The Barbecue Story

In *1001 things Everyone Should Know About the South*, John Shelton Reed and Dale Volberg Reed state that barbecue is "a process, a dish, or an event" (192). Beyond these three general aspects any topic concerning barbecue incites debate. As John Shelton Reed apologetically puns in *Whistling Dixie:* "You might say barbecue pits Southerners against one another"(100). Although the connoisseurs agree that "the dish" of barbecue is meat, the type of meat varies with the locale. In their cookbook, *The Thrill of the Grill,* Chris Schlesinger and John Welloughby defend their preference in a typical manner: "I only deal with pork ribs. Some folks will argue that beef ribs are delicious barbecued but they are wrong and anyway it's my book" (261). Reed and Reed take a diplomatic stand and define barbecue as follows: "all the way to Kansas City (except in Texas and western Kentucky) barbecue means pork slow-cooked over aromatic hardwood fires, with sauce applied or on the side" (193). In Alabama, the definition holds true as pork is the meat of choice.

Once the pitmaster decides upon the type of meat, the next step in the barbecue process involves the cooking technique that again opens a heated debate. Historically, the Indians taught the white settlers to dig large pits in the ground, build fires of hardwood in the pits, construct large frames across the pits, and place game on the frames. In *Knights of Spain Warriors of the Sun*, Charles Hudson states that in 1540 Rodrigo Rangel, DeSoto's secretary, was the first European to document this cooking process (158). In Rangel's chronicle, he also introduces the word *barbacoa* as a name for the frame and compares it to a grill (270). In a footnote in John Worth's translation of Rangel's history, Worth and Hudson explain that the word derives from the Arawak Indians of the Caribbean and refers, as used by the Spaniards, to any frame structure whether used for cooking or storage, and as such is the progenitor of the word *barbecue* (270). In addition to cooking over an open fire, Indians taught Europeans to wrap meat in a protective covering and then to cover the pit. Many hours later, the pit was uncovered as was the meat that was tender, because of the slowness of the cooking methods, and smoky, from the wood fire. Barbecue cooks continue to argue over the superiority of the closed or open pit process today.

However, regardless of whether it is open or closed, the tradition of the earthen pit is still followed for private and community affairs, and time remains an important element. Schlesinger and Willoughby scientifically explain that slow cooking causes the connective issues of the meat to tenderize and dissolve (257). In *Side Orders,* John Egerton colorfully emphasizes the importance of slow cooking:

> No matter how you cut it, slice it, chop it, or pull it, you can't make real barbecue in a hurry . . . . To do it right requires time in the pit -- twelve, fifteen, eighteen hours or more. (68)

Egerton also notes the cultural importance of the barbecue process:

> The ritual of the all-night vigil beside the glowing coals has been repeated so many times . . . that it has long since taken its

> rightful place in Southern mysticism and folklore. (68)

In the restaurants of the 1990's, however, most barbecue is prepared in commercial equipment, and "closed or open pit" most often refers to the meat being covered or uncovered.

The next issue of debate concerns the wood used for the fire. Schlesinger and Welloughby explain that hardwood is required since other woods contain too much sap that causes an undesirable flavored smoke. Beyond the choice of hardwood, wood preferences again change with the location. While noting that "the fuel lends a distinct flavor to the final product," Schlesinger and Welloughby note that regional preferences show a strong correlation to wood available within that region (264). The most popular woods are hickory, oak, and mesquite and each adds its own essence to the taste of the barbecue.

The last factor to consider in the process of barbecue is the sauce. Again, the ingredients vary from region to region, are definitive of the locale's process, and, as such, can be jealously guarded. Claims of "secret sauces" abound, adding to the cultural mystique of barbecue. In the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Gary Ford states that as the barbecue connoisseur moves "through the Deep South sauces thicken and turn redder from a tomato or catsup base"(676). The sauce can be applied to the meat while the meat is cooking and is often available at the table for dipping. However, regardless of the attention the sauce commands, many connoisseurs believe the importance of the sauce is secondary to the choice of meat or wood. Schlesinger and Welloughby state this view succinctly:

> Being a barbecue purist, I believe that the sauce in itself has been totally overrated as it relates to the whole of a plate of barbecue. Barbecue is a method of cooking, not a sauce. (278)

Alabama's barbecue fits the description of barbecue in the Deep South: hearty, smoked, pork ribs served with a rather sweet tomato-based sauce that is created with gusto and a mystique that delights creator and consumer alike. Although often not perceived in the late twentieth century as an elegant dish, historically, in Alabama, barbecue held an esteemed place at the formal dining table. Griffith quotes from the *Dallas Gazete,* on December 31, 1858, that a Selma family's Christmas menu included "barbecued meats of all kinds" (313). According to the editor of the Selma *Times,* in 1882 barbecue continued to be featured in many fine dining establishments, such as the St. James Hotel. In "Alabama Appetites," written for the *Alabama Review*, Wright quotes the editor who wrote that the St. James Hotel's menu for New Year's Day included barbecued pig (28). While barbecue was accepted as a formal entree, Griffith states that the dish was also a popular favorite at informal functions in the late 1880's (531). At the end of the twentieth century, barbecue is prepared in Alabama by a variety of regional recipes and served in an equal variety of settings, commercial and private.

According to Hudson in *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun,* European settlers learned not only the cooking technique, but also the socializing aspect of barbecue from the Indians as he states that "the areas beneath these storehouse [*barbacoas*] were also shady places where people socialized during the day" (156). Today the informal community or private function is the realm of the traditional barbecue, and its popularity seems secure. Regardless of their differing opinions on the process and serving of barbecue, all Southerners agree that barbecue is an important tradition and that, as explained by Egerton:

> barbecue in these parts is ever so much more than just the meat; it's also the preparation, the ritual, the social occasion, the fellowship, the anticipation, the realization, the memory. Clear to the bone, barbecue is a savory slice of Southern history, a pulled chunk of the region itself, at its ever-loving best. (68)

Thus, importance of barbecue as a process and a dish long ago caused the word to evolve in meaning to include a social function.

If the visitor is not fortunate enough to secure an invitation to a community or private traditional barbecue, there is still hope. Alabama's many attributes include a variety and preponderance of barbecue restaurants. However, Dreamland barbecue in Tuscaloosa is considered by many to be, if not the best, then certainly the most famous.

Ford classifies the buildings and interior decor of barbecue restaurants into two categories: "barbecue primitive style," which refers to the "older, usually rural eateries" and "neoprimitive revival barbecue style," which he describes as located in urban areas and decorated to "look country" (676). In *Whistling Dixie*, John Shelton Reed takes a firmer stand and stipulates "if it doesn't come out of a pit behind a cinder-block building with a sign that says BBQ, it's not the real thing" (127).

Dreamland's cement block exterior meets the esthetic standards set by both Reed and Ford. Although Dreamland is located in the urbanity of Tuscaloosa, owner Jeanette

Bishop states that when her father, John Bishop, opened the restaurant on October 3, 1958, the surrounding area was "just woods." Dreamland's interior decor meets Ford's standards for the "barbecue primitive style" (676). The visitor enters through a screen door, walks across a cement floor painted red, while a ceiling fan whirls overhead. Choices of seating include wooden chairs at a wooden table, or a wooden booth, or, of course, the counter and stools. The walls are decorated, indeed covered, with automobile license plates from the fifty states in addition to novelty plates proclaiming regional expressions. Taken in its entirety, Dreamland's ambiance stands up proudly to Ford's descriptive standards of appearing "strikingly similar to a county-line beer joint" (676). Even John Shelton Reed would expect to be served "the real thing" at Dreamland, and he would not be disappointed.

The entree and presentation of Dreamland's famed barbecue are straightforward and traditional: a slab of ribs dripping in "secret sauce" accompanied by a stack of white loaf bread. The well-informed server informs the guest upon inquiry that only Sunbeam Bread is served at Dreamland. Beverage choices include a variety of soft drinks and the ever-present iced tea. Place settings are traditional and functional: a white paper plate for each guest and an ample stack of white paper napkins to be shared. The absence of eating or serving utensils in correlation with the abundance of napkins allows the guest to infer correctly that, at Dreamland, barbecue is a "hands-on" experience. Friends and family gather around the table, reaching for ribs, grabbing at napkins, receiving equal portions of nourishment and enjoyment from companionship, repast, and ritual.

Those who describe the South as comprised of a divided population have never witnessed the absolution of a catfish or barbecue dinner. Southerners may quibble over the believability of a monster catfish story or haggle over the edibility between a river-cat and a farm-raised cat, but all debate ceases when a platter heaped full of catfish is delivered to the table. Likewise, locals will defend their pit-master's wizardry and proudly acclaim the superiority of the region's own "secret sauce" against any and all claims that any barbecue, anywhere, is as tender, as tasty or as deserving of their loyalty. However, the digging, the fire-building, the roasting, the waiting, and finally, the sharing, harmonize or disperse all discord as Egerton testifies:

> Transcending as they do the boundaries of race, class, age, sex, religion, politic, and place of birth, these communions of the spirit are a blessed tie that binds and bonds and unifies all who partake. (68)

Carl Carmer wrote of the folk who live in Alabama: "No people of the world give more thought to social enjoyment that the Alabamians" (12). In Alabama, as tradition in the Deep South dictates, social enjoyment's two equally important components are good folks and good food. If the writers on foodlore have determined that the food traditions of the South have evolved from the polar aspects of the abundance of plantation hospitality to the hunger and hardship of settlement, depression and war, it is because the people of the South have also evolved from those same historical extremes. Although catfish and barbecue are from the land, they are also *of* the land and as such are bound to the people who, in the midst of a technological revolution, maintain their loyalty, commitment, and connection to a land they call the South. In short, if the food is "real," it is because the people are "real." The visitor is welcome to come and sit at the table and partake of the body of the land in Alabama for, from one end of the heart of Dixie to the other, the visitor can share in the grace of food and folks from catfish to barbecue.

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PEACE IN THE VALLEY

DEAD LINES AND DUE DATES
MADE ME LEAVE MONTGOMERY LATE
THANKSGIVING DAY SAW ME DRIVING TOWARDS MENTONE

FRANCES AT THE MENTONE INN
HAD INVITED ME TO EAT WITH THEM
SO THANKS WAS GIVEN UP ON LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN

I SAT DOWN WITH BARBARA AND BOB
WE HAD TURKEY AND DRESSING AND CORN-ON-THE-COB
AND TOO MANY DESSERTS TO TALK ABOUT

THEN FRANCES WAVED ME TO HER SIDE
WE TALKED LIKE WE'D BEEN FRIENDS FOR LIFE
AND THEN SHE INTRODUCED ME TO SAM THE MOUNTAIN MAN

HE WAS TALL AND FAIR WITH CLEAR BLUE EYES
THAT FRANKLY LOOK STRAIGHT INTO MINE
AND SAID "WE'RE ALL, INCLUDING YOU, HERE FOR A REASON"

"WE'VE BROKEN HEARTS, BROKEN WINGS
LOST OUR MINDS, LOST OUR DREAMS"
SO SAID SAM, THE MOUNTAIN MAN

> HE SAID THERE'S PEACE IN THE VALLEY
> HEALING IN THEM HILLS
> THROW YOUR BLUES OFF
> OF A BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN TOP
> BREATHE WIDE OPEN SPACES TO YOUR FILL
> YOU CAN WANDER TILL YOU'RE SPENT
> CAUSE PROGRESS AIN'T GOT UP HERE YET
> AND I HOPE IT NEVER WILL

WELL I LOOKED OUT AND I COULD SEE
HILLS ROLLING INTO ETERNITY
AND A BROOK BABBLED SOME PLACE REAL CLOSE
HE SAID " WE'RE SEARCHING FOR SONGS, SEARCHING FOR REASONS
TO KEEP ON SINGING, KEEP ON BELIEVING"

SO SAID SAM, THE MOUNTAIN MAN

WE VISITED A LITTLE CHURCH
BUILT INTO A BOULDER AND MOUNTAIN EARTH
PEWS OF PINE AND AN ALTAR OF RIVER STONES

WORDS CUT IN THE RAFTERS JUMPED OUT AT ME
"GOD'S AS GOOD TO ME AS I'LL LET HIM BE."
"THAT'S THE TRUTH" SAID SAM THE MOUNTAIN MAN

(REPEAT CHORUS)

THE ROAD CALLED, SO I SAID GOOD-BYE
TO SAM AND FRANCES AND MY MENTONE TIME
BUT I THANKED THEM FOR BEING MY FRIENDS

BUT BEFORE I HIT THAT OLD FOUR LANE
I LOOKED BACK AT LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN AGAIN
ALABAMA'S APPALACHIANS WERE SHINING ON

AND THERE WAS PEACE IN THE VALLEY
AND HEALING IN THOSE HILLS
YOU CAN THROW YOUR BLUES OFF
A BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN TOP
AND OF WIDE OPEN SPACES BREATHE YOUR FILL
YOU CAN WANDER 'TILL YOU'RE SPENT
CAUSE PROGRESS AIN'T GOT UP THERE YET
AND I HOPE IT NEVER WILL

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Mentone

Mentone perches on the Alabama side of Lookout Mountain. The picturesque hamlet has been a popular destination for city dwellers for nearly one hundred years. A brief walk from the small shops and cafes that comprise the village is a spacious overlook known to locals as "the brow." The view from the brow of Lookout Mountain easily inspires the human spirit and soothes the human brow. Here, the weight and stress of life at the end of the twentieth century are lifted and scattered by a soft mountain breeze. In place of telephones ringing, radios blaring, and traffic roaring, a brook babbles, a cardinal chirps, a squirrel scurries. From this vantage point, the organic squares of farmland and the black strip of highway are a work of art to be enjoyed, not a territory to be covered. From this distance, many have seen, and felt, the reasons that Mentone continues to be a popular retreat.

The prehistory of the area reinforces that Lookout Mountain has long been a retreat from more populous places. Petroglyphs, arrowheads, and caves containing evidence of ancient human occupation prove that the area was a favorite hunting spot for Native Americans before European encroachment. Although sources differ in opinions concerning the earliest tribe to be in control of Northeastern Alabama, by the time of the land rush in the early 1800's the Cherokees were well established in the area.

Historians, nonetheless, agree that many Cherokees, who had been pushed out of North Carolina by white settlement, migrated to northeastern Alabama. However, Alabama proved to be only a temporary sanctuary. In *Alabama: Her History, Resources, War Record and Public Men From 1540 to 1872,* Brewer states that on December 29, 1835, the Cherokee tribal council signed the Treaty of New Echota that signaled their final cession of land (52). Strayhorn observes in *Mentone, Alabama: A History* that DeKalb County, where Mentone is located, was formed only eleven days after the treaty was signed (7). Historians cite various reasons for the intolerance of the White settlers toward the Cherokees: fear because of the other tribes that had continued hostilities, affiliation with various tribes allied to the British in the War of 1812, the belief that the Indians' hunting and gathering way of life was incompatible with the establishment of farms and towns, and the White settlers' lust for land. Strayhorn continues that even the Cherokees who worked successful farms and owned slaves were made to concede their homes and were forcibly marched to Oklahoma (12).

The path of the historical exodus, known as the Trail of Tears, traversed the Mentone area. Although their lands were confiscated and they were ordered to vacate the area, many Cherokees hid from the soldiers to avoid the brutal march to Oklahoma. Local lore relates episodes of White families hiding sick and elderly Indians to save them from certain death as a result of the harsh journey. Some of these Cherokee refugees returned to the North Carolina mountains and eventually founded a settlement that became the Cherokee Indian Reservation.

In *Mentone, Alabama: A History,* local historian Zora Shay Strayhorn retells community lore about legendary mountain woman Granny Dollar. Although Granny's mother was a Scot, her father was a Cherokee; thus, the family fell under the edict of removal. The story relates that Granny, as a child, hid with her family in a cave in Buck's Pocket (a gorge on Sand mountain) from the soldiers. Therefore they escaped relocation. Additional stories are told about Granny's family, as well as her own adventures in her early and middle years, that exemplify the harsh but exciting times in the mountainous regions of Alabama . When Granny was in her seventies, she married Norman Dollar and the couple moved to Mentone. Twenty years later Norman died, but Granny continued to live in Mentone. Many of the legends surrounding Granny Dollar revolve around her knowledge of herbal remedies, midwifery, and fortune telling; some even claim she was a witch (42-43). The community cared for Granny until she died and then erected a tombstone over her grave. Strayhorn states that the dates on Granny Dollar's stone read "1826-1931" and further describes the tombstone as having the head of an Indian woman engraved at the top and "Daughter of the Cherokee" written at the bottom (43) .

The history of the dispossessed Indian reflects the darker side of the love of land. In modern times, the Indians' love of wilderness and respect for land have become symbols and standards for the preservation of the precious resource termed "undeveloped real estate" at the end of the twentieth century.

A legend claims that Europeans also played roles in the prehistory of the area. In the vicinity of DeSoto Falls, the remains of a stone and earthen structure incite curiosity and imagination. Although local builders have removed many of the huge, roughly hewn, stone blocks for their own building projects through the years, chronicles repeatedly describe the original structure's immense size. In *History of Alabama*, Pickett describes the ruin:

> . . . two ancient ditches, nearly parallel with each other, and about thirty feet apart in the middle of the curve which they form, though they commence within ten feet of each other upon the upper precipice, and when they have reached the lower precipice are found to run into each other. On their inner sides are rocks piled up and mixed with the dirt which was thrown up in making these entrenchments, indicating them to be of the simplest and rudest Indian origin. The author has seen many such entrenchments . . . and hesitates not to say that they are the works of the aborigines of the country. (157)

Carey Oakley, an archaeologist at Moundville State Park who surveyed the site, validates Pickett's assessment of the site's creators.

However, a persistent legend attributes the structure to a Welsh explorer named Prince Madoc. The story continues that Madoc and a group of settlers from Wales landed in Mobile Bay prior to Columbus' historic venture, explored the land, built forts in Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia, and finally merged with the Maenads, a Native American tribe. Although a romantic story, in *Alabama: A Documentary History to 1900*, Lucille Griffith summarizes the reality:

> No one has ever produced enough evidence to convince the historian that the story is true, and until that happens it must remain what it is, a legend. (2)

The structure, as well as changes to adjacent caves, has also been attributed to DeSoto. However, no evidence exists to substantiate that claim either, as Pickett observes: "DeSoto erected no forts, in passing through this country" (154). Although DeSoto's name is prevalent in the area and tradition holds that DeSoto discovered the waterfalls bearing his name, modern scholars generally agree that DeSoto did not pass through the Lookout Mountain area during his expedition. In *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, Charles Hudson explains the reason debate on DeSoto's trail continues : "because too few sites along the trail are positively documented, it can be argued that a scholarly consensus on the route does not exist" (478). Perhaps the truth about Madoc and DeSoto will never be known, but their stories lend intrigue and romance to Mentone's traditions.

The ruins and the waterfalls are featured in the first documented descriptions of the area. In *Lookout: The Story of a Mountain*, Robert Walker accredits Reverend Daniel S. Butrick with the first European description of the waterfalls and the ruins on August 25, 1823. However, Reverend Butrick did not refer to the waterfalls by any name. Walker hypothesizes that the falls were not yet named since the area was, for the most part, unsettled (31-32). According to Walker, by the Civil War period the falls were known as Indian Falls. Strayhorn records that the advance cavalry of the Twentieth Corps under Major-General Alexander McD. McCook camped along the falls (17). Walker relates that "in September 1863, the officers of some of the brigades that encamped there, in making their official reports, recorded the name as 'Indian Falls' " (32).

Mentone was not established as a town before the Civil War, but the settlers who had built homesteads and farms in the areas constituted a recognizable community. In

Mentone, Alabama: A History, local historian Strayhorn records the adventures, hardships, and tragedies of several of these families during the Civil War period. Taken together, their stories reveal that the movement of Union troops across Lookout Mountain in the close vicinity of Mentone was the source of looting, destruction, and even death (17-19). Since the area's population was defined by isolated, small farms worked mainly by families, the economic issues that incited the war did not pertain to the local population in any great degree. Nonetheless, the majority of the men served in the Confederate forces. However, other men chose to serve in the Union army, and some refused alliance to either side. Regardless of any family's loyalties, the war and its aftermath delivered loss, hurt, and hardship to the populace of the Mentone area.

Strayhorn states that after the Civil War, more settlers came from adjoining states to settle in the vicinity of the future town of Mentone (20). Robert Vernon built the first log cabin in what would become Mentone prior to 1870 when he was nineteen years of age. His son, Simmie Sherman Vernon, grew up to be a minister and started one of the first churches in Mentone (21). Fittingly, the Vernon cabin is preserved today as the center of the rustic and unusual St. Joseph's-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church. In addition to settlers, Strayhorn observes that only seven years after the pain and hurt brought by the Civil War, the Mentone area was gaining a reputation for its healing properties and natural beauty and thus began attracting tourists (21). The visitors and settlers brought growth and prosperity to the Alabama side of Lookout Mountain. Thus, the restorative abilities of locale that guests reported having experienced seemingly began to have the same effect on its residents.

John Mason, the father of Mentone, arrived in 1872. In *Lookout: The Story of a Mountain,* Robert Walker's account of John Mason's personal history, prior to his arrival on Lookout Mountain, casts Mason in the classic American role of daring youth, successful entrepreneur, and visionary. According to Walker, Mason's father, along with the rest of the immediate family, decided to homestead in the newly opened Oregon territories and so boarded a boat in New York that "was never heard from again" (219). Walker recounts that the young Mason then enlisted in the US Cavalry to fight in the Mid-Western Indian wars. When Mason was honorably discharged because of an injury, he bought a farm in Iowa, married, and became prosperous.

However, at the age of fifty, Mason began to suffer health problems. The philosophies of the times held that certain geographical areas were possessed of healing properties, especially areas where mineral springs bubbled out of the earth. Resorts were often built around these springs. Mason had been traveling to various sites attempting to find a cure for his malady when he was told about Lookout Mountain. Walker relates that Mason contacted a man named Leavitt who lived on the Alabama side of Lookout Mountain, and who "gave glowing accounts of how people who came to Lookout and drank its pure water had been restored to perfect health" (220). Although the area was still wild and isolated, Mason traveled to Alabama and boarded with the Leavitt family. Mason was again rewarded for his sense of adventure by a return of his health (220).

However, soon Mason felt the need to return to his farm in Iowa in order to conduct the business of making a livelihood. Walker relates that Mason had not been in

Iowa long before his illness returned. In the summer of 1872, Mason moved his entire family to Lookout Mountain in the vicinity of Mentone.

In *The History of Mentone Alabama*, Nelda Howe records that John Mason and his family were pleased with their new location. The family's happiness with their new location inspired John's older son, Ed, to move to Mentone from New York (4). Later, Ed bought land and used his surveying skills to lay out a town that would become Mentone. Ed Mason advertised his town extensively, and a few settlers moved to the new town, built homes, and started farms. Walker records an assortment of pioneer information:

> Among the early arrivals came Horatio T. Libby from Maine. Mr. Libby . . . was of the same family as the men who founded the famous glass works and the large packing firm by his name . . . . [George] O'Rear's house was the first with two stories on that part of Lookout Mountain and the second house to have glass windows. (225)

According to Strayhorn, in *Mentone, Alabama: A History*, Ed Mason's advertisements attracted Dr. Frank Caldwell, who built a resort inn in the new town in 1884 (21). The town's naming came about simultaneously with the naming of Dr. Frank Caldwell's new inn. In *Lookout: The Story of a Mountain*, Walker recounts that Caldwell roomed with John Mason's family while the inn was being finished. At breakfast, Caldwell asked John Mason's daughter, Alice, to suggest a name for the new inn. Walker recounts the event:

> Miss Mason had recently read press reports of Queen Victoria

> of England stopping at a place in France called Mentone. The news item stated that the meaning of the word was "a musical mountain spring," whereupon she declared that inasmuch as the water from the spring on top of the mountain flowed with a "ripple," she believed that "Mentone" would prove a most fitting name. At that moment, Mentone, Alabama, came into existence on top of Lookout Mountain. (224)

Strayhorn records that Ed Mason did not see his dream materialize as he died in a fire (21). However, according to Walker, Ed's father John Mason lived to be "almost ninety-two years old" (224). Thus, in the process of reclaiming his own health, John Mason was instrumental in founding a town that would become one of the most successful health and pleasure resorts at the turn of the century.

Although Mentone became a very popular resort area, it never grew beyond the size of a small village. However, its small size did not retard its prosperity. Dr. Caldwell's hotel, the Mentone Springs Hotel, was the center of social activity during Mentone's most prosperous period which local historian Nelda Howe records as occurring from 1884-1924 (6). Strayhorn reports that, to escape the heat of the cities, guests traveled to Valley Head by rail. From Valley Head, the guests were then transported up the remainder of Lookout Mountain to Mentone by taxis which were at first horse and carriages and later automobiles (25). In the midst of Mentone's wild, natural beauty reigned the elegant hotel. Strayhorn describes the hotel as it appeared in the late 1800's to 1920's:

> The architectural style is Queen Anne of the Victorian period,

> of frame construction with seven gables, turrets, dormer windows, and verandahs. . . . There were 57 guest rooms with hot and cold running water and carbide lights. There was an air of quiet elegance in the dining room; waiters were attired in black bow ties and red vests. They served exquisitely prepared meals from the vegetable gardens of the hotel's own farm, and the hotel became famous for its food. Live music was provided in the dining room. (25)

Along with the hotel's elegance and comfort, the cool mountain air, the untamed wooded environment, and the scenic overlooks available from Eagle Nest and the Brow enchanted and enthralled the guests. However, regardless of the man-made grandeur of the hotel and the natural beauty of the mountain, the guests never lost their preoccupation with the mineral springs that had fostered the birth of Mentone and the Mentone Springs Hotel.

Like John Mason, who founded Mentone, many people believed that the two mineral springs on the hotel's grounds could improve health and even cure illness. The mineral springs were popular meeting places where the guests believed exhausted minds and bodies could be rejuvenated, restored, and even healed. In *Historic Alabama Hotels and Resorts*, James Sulzby describes the springs:

> Mineral Springs and Beauty Springs on the hotel grounds were never-failing in their strengthening and curative properties. Beauty Springs was reached by a shaded pathway along the mountain's brink for a distance of two hundred yards. Nearby

> Mineral Springs was sheltered by a two story pavilion which made a spendid observatory for Wills Valley, two thousand feet below. (177-178)

Ladies and gentlemen leisurely strolled along the paths to the springs and the overlooks. The water flowing from the earth and the expansive vistas reconnected the escapees from city life to the pulse of nature. The guests enjoyed dinners, indulged in leisure, and appreciated the beauty of nature. Whether for the pampering of the luxurious hotel, the powers of the springs, or the peace of nature, Strayhorn reports in *Mentone, Alabama: A History*, that thousands of city dwellers at the turn of the century flocked to Mentone during the summer and autumn months.

In addition to the Mentone Springs Hotel, other establishments also accommodated guests. The Windward Inn and the DeSoto Inn are often mentioned in local histories. Strayhorn records that Carl Carmer wrote parts of his famous *Stars Fell on Alabama* at the Windward Inn and that the DeSoto Inn was built where one of the first boarding houses once stood. At the height of its popularity, Mentone offered a range of accommodations that all relied upon the relaxation and inspiration that the mountain environment provided.

For over fifty years, Mentone prospered as a classic Southern summer resort defined by Gary Ford as those that provided "romantic luxury in magnificent scenic settings." Ford further comments that "although southerners used health as an excuse to spend a season at a resort, the purpose of their visit was also pleasure" (1235). From the Gay Nineties through the Roaring Twenties, guests pursued both health and pleasure to their hearts' content on the top of Lookout Mountain in the picturesque village of Mentone.

While the health and well-being of the individuals who frequented Mentone were improved, the health of the economy as a whole was degenerating. At the advent of the Great Depression, the declining economic conditions brought the resort business to a close.

However, as Ford notes: "The land itself is a resort's most important asset" (1236). Thankfully, nature does not, at least not directly, depend on economics; nor does it close. In Mentone, the sun still rose over the crest of Lookout Mountain, the hills still rolled to the horizon, and the trails to the overlooks still beckoned. From the brow, the guest could still observe sun, sky, and hills and gain that sense of continuity that only the natural world can offer. The seasons continued in their uninterrupted cycles: new life sprang from the wet earth in spring, sun warmed the rocks in summer, leaves drifted to the ground in autumn, and snow covered all with a blanket until the spring sun again provided warmth. Life continued in Mentone.

The next couple of decades were times of shifts and changes. The Mentone Springs Hotel changed ownership and names, became vacant, and sadly fell into disrepair for a time. Strayhorn records that although Beauty Springs and the stone structure that enclosed Mineral Springs remained, road construction destroyed Mineral Spring's water flow (21).The DeSoto Inn also experienced ownership shifts, and its name changed to the Mentone Inn. The Windward continued operations but decreased the amenities offered. Walker records that in 1927 the ruins beside DeSoto Falls were ransacked for the stones which were then used to build a private home (254). The DeSoto Falls and over five thousand interior acres of Lookout Mountain became DeSoto State Park. The Civilian Conservation Corps developed the park and built a lodge. The creation of DeSoto State Park in correlation with creation of Little River Canyon National Park has doubtless been a major factor in the preservation of the wild and beautiful land of Lookout Mountain, as well as the preservation of Mentone.

In the fifties, Mentone began a restoration phase that continues to the current era. Today, the view of Old Hotel Square is a romantic, rustic, and welcome sight in comparison to the strip malls and chain motels common in the modern era. One corner of the square is occupied by "The Hitching Post," a rustic, wooden building whose beginning, according to Strayhorn, dates from 1900. "The Hitching Post" was so named by its owners because in the forties an early breakfast was served for fox hunters staying at the hotel (28). Today, it intriguingly beckons the visitor to browse among a unique and eclectic collection of shops that offer crafts, antiques, and original pottery. Across the street and up a few wooden steps, a series of weathered buildings stands on higher ground and comprises the next corner of Old Hotel Square. The collection includes the "Log Cabin Deli" and another assortment of shops. Up on the ridge, the renovated Mentone Springs Hotel still remains the focal point of the square. Both springs have been capped, but the inn's Victorian architecture combined with modern accommodations is reminiscent of an earlier, elegant time and continues to attract guests. Although the Mentone Springs Hotel is beautiful, grand, and romantic, the Mentone Inn across the street may offer more of what the weary city dweller of the nineties is seeking--and needing: a sense of coming home. The Mentone Inn sits back from the road framed by a low rock ledge. A wide, wrap around porch, complete with rocking chairs, invites the visitor to "set a spell." A sign on the oversize screen door says "WELCOME;" the squeak of the opening door, and the creak of the first step upon the threshold make the visitor feel more than welcome--here is a feeling of sanctuary. Folks are friendly; furniture is comfortable; life is easier. After settling into one of the cozy bedrooms, the visitor sets out for a brief walk to the brow.

The visitor follows the land that slopes gently and then ends at the rock ledge.The sky stretches beyond where human eyesight can peer; there is no need to look farther. The trees murmur as a mountain breeze whispers in their leaves; there is no need to hear more. Deadlines and due dates fade as priorities as the visitor's attention is drawn to a hawk circling overhead; there is nothing more important. Below, the landscape is painted in seasonal colors, and one part blends and contributes to the whole. For--regardless of what the visitor left below--from this vantage point it becomes obvious that there is peace in the valley.

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BON SECOUR

BON SECOUR   BON SECOUR
I LONG TO SEE THE WINTER LIGHT PLAY ON YOUR RIVER
WATCH THE BLUE HERON'S FLIGHT AND BE DELIVERED
TO YOUR PEACE ONCE MORE
BON SECOUR

BON SECOUR   BON SECOUR
I KNOW JUST BEYOND THIS HORIZON
ANOTHER DAY ONE MORE NIGHT I'LL CAST MY EYES ON
YOUR SWEET AND WELCOME SHORE
BON SECOUR

ME AND MY SHIP, THE NATIVE SON
WENT OUT FARTHER THAN WE HAD EVER DONE
CAST OUR NETS DEEPER
THEN DEEPER STILL
REACHING FOR THAT UNION BEYOND FEAR AND WILL

BON SECOUR   BON SECOUR
WE HAVE SAILED OUT ON FAITH AND FAITH ALONE
WORN AND TIRED YOUR NATIVE SONS ARE COMING HOME
HEAL US AS YOU HAVE BEFORE
BON SECOUR

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BON SECOUR

The history of Alabama's waterways is often a record of times when risk and adventure were the necessary ingredients for growth. Thus, ancient Indians, Spanish conquistadors, French trappers, English traders, and American settlers all took risks and found adventure on or near Alabama rivers. However, just as all but two of Alabama's rivers--the Coosa, the Tallapoosa, the Alabama, the Tombigbee, and the Black Warrior--flow and merge into the Mobile River in Mobile Bay, so various cultures have flowed and merged, and can be traced, in Mobile Bay. After speculation and danger comes a time, as well as a need, for peace and safety. Bon Secour lies tranquilly in Mobile Bay as it has for over two hundred years, epitomizing the meaning of its name: safe harbor.

Long before the French named the quiet inlet, prehistoric Indian cultures enjoyed the area as a source of plentiful seafood, as evidenced by the mounds of shells they left. In *Alabama: One Big Front Porch,* folklorist Kathryn Tucker Windham claims that "Indians first discovered the excellent seafood around Bon Secour, leaving towering piles of oyster shells to mark the spots where they gathered to feast on the bounty of the sea" (15). In *Aboriginal and Indian Remains in Alabama,* Thomas Owen makes a note of the "Shell banks high and extensive on Bon Secour Bay, near Gasque P.O." (359). Vernon James Knight, Jr., in "Late Prehistoric Adaptation in the Mobile Bay Region," maintains that Indians worked the land and fished the waterways from as early as ca. 1000-500 BC, which he terms the "Bayou La Batre period." Archaeologists refer to the later prehistoric culture of the region, from Woodland to Mississippian, as the Pensacola complex. The

Pensacola complex is often considered as part of the well-documented Fort Walton complex (201). Knight documents evidence that shows the settlements in the Mobile Bay area were

> tied, through the Mobile-Alabama-Tombigbee river system, to the enormous Mississippian center at Moundville; at various times in prehistory, Mobile Bay cultures were also in contact or in indirect contact with the lower Mississippi valley, southern and central Georgia, and northwestern Florida. (98)

Through pottery shards, he identifies remains of the culture functioning into the eighteenth century (202). Thus, different Indian populations inhabited the Mobile Bay area for nearly 3000 years. They paddled canoes through bays and across rivers, traversed trails, and crossed over hills and valleys. After their many and various journeys, it is easy to imagine that they were glad to return home to their safe harbor.

In *Alabama: A Documentary History,* Lucille Griffith states:

> Spain was the first European country known to historians to claim what is now Alabama. . . .within a decade or so after the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus. (2)

Griffith continues that the earliest map to note Mobile Bay, credited to geography professor Martin Waldseemuller in 1507, is also famous as the first map to assign the name "America" to the newly discovered land. Waldseemuller notes the bay as "Bahia Espiritu Santo" (2). Griffith continues that the Waldseemuller map's rendition of Mobile Bay is exact and detailed, but no written record of exploration exists until 1519. At that time, according to Charles Summersell in *Alabama History for Schools*, Alonzo de Piñeda became the first Spanish explorer to touch Alabama's shores. Historians debate whether the body of water Piñeda entered was the Mobile River or the Mississippi River. However, Griffith states that "modern evidence points to Mobile rather than the mouth of the Mississippi River" (2-3). Griffith reports that Piñeda and his men sailed up the Mobile River into and around the area now known as Bon Secour, anchored, and spent forty days caulking their ships. Thus, the first European adventurers found in the area a safe place to rest and repair.

Other Spanish expeditions did not fare as well in the Mobile Bay area. Griffith continues that, in 1528, the ill-fated Narvaez expedition also sailed into Mobile Bay searching for water. In place of finding a safe harbor, they lost two of their comrades in an encounter with unfriendly Indians (3-4). Charles Hudson, in *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, provides a map indicating various interpretations of the route of De Soto, the most famous of the Spanish conquistadors in Alabama history. According to the cartographical summary, most historians agree that De Soto did not explore the Mobile Bay area during his exploration of Alabama in 1540 (457). However, according to Jo Ann Flirt in "Mobile-Tensaw and Gulf Coast Area," De Soto's Admiral Maldonado sailed into Mobile Bay while searching for De Soto's expedition (180). In *Alabama: History of a Deep South State*, Atkins states that Tristan de Luna, a Spanish explorer who attempted a settlement in Pensacola in 1559, landed in Mobile Bay after missing his intended landing site. At Mobile Bay, Luna unloaded his horses and sent them overland. Five days after Luna and his colonists returned to Pensacola a hurricane destroyed the majority of their ships (Rogers, Warren, Ward, Atkins 23). If Luna had remained in Mobile Bay and sailed farther upstream, the ships might have been sheltered by the little harbor that would become known as Bon Secour.

According to Griffith in *Alabama: A Documentary History,* in 1678. the famous French explorer LaSalle

> ventured down the Mississippi to its mouth, where he planted a standard, claiming for Louis XIV all the land drained by the river and its tributaries. (12)

Thus, Mobile Bay became a French possession and available for colonization by the French. According to Griffith, "The honor and responsibility of creating a colony fell to the LeMoyne family" (12). Griffith further states that the eldest of the Canadian born brothers, Pierre d'Iberville, was chosen leader, but that Bienville is better known in Alabama. In *Alabama: A History for School,* Charles Summersell adds that Bienville completed "the most historic tasks" and is remembered as the founder of both New Orleans and Mobile (62). Thus, the French are credited with the initial settlement of the Mobile Bay area in Alabama.

Flirt states in "Mobile-Tensaw and Gulf Coast Area" that Bienville established the first settlement, Fort de la Mobile, in 1702 (181). However, this site was not where Mobile is now, but rather twenty-seven miles up the river on a bluff appropriately named Twenty-Seven Mile Bluff. Thus, the LeMoyne brothers were diligently exploring the area and, according to Kathryn Tucker Windham, in *Alabama: One Big Front Porch,* Bienville and Iberville built a hunting and fishing lodge at Bon Secour in 1702 (15). In *Seeing Historic Alabama: Fifteen Guided Tours*, Virginia Van der Veer Hamilton notes that

> Ruins of a building made of tabby (oyster shells and water) and probably built by French or Spanish explorers in the 1700's have been found near this fishing village. (201)

Although a connection between the ruin and the LeMoyne brothers' hunting lodge would be exciting, such is not the case. Greg Waselkov, an archaeologist at the University of Southern Alabama, excavated the ruin and states that it dates from the late 1700's. Therefore, Waselkov conjectures that the Spanish, who came into the area after the French, built the structure. However, he does note that the building is composed of materials from an ancient shell midden in close proximity. Thus, the ruin is symbolic of the various cultures that have been attracted to Bon Secour.

The need for a safe harbor from the storms that raged from the Gulf and delivered destruction to sailor and settler is well documented. André Pénicaut, whose narratives were translated by Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams and published as *Fleur De Lys and Calumet,* records an episode in 1707 concerning survivors of a violent storm at sea in the Mobile Bay area. On a return trip to Dauphin Island from Pensacola, Pénicaut reports that the ship he was aboard came to the aid of "a small merchant ship" (117). Pénicaut describes their plight and reaction to their return to land:

> They had run aground on the point of this island, where they had been driven by a storm that had battered them for ten days without surcease. More than half of their men had perished and

> fallen into the sea. They had been completely dismasted; the prow of the ship had been smashed by the violence of the storm. . . . . For four days they had not eaten. They were so carried away with joy when help arrived--contrary to every expectation that they kissed the ground when they reached Isle Dauphine . . . . (117-118)

Charles Summersell, in *Alabama History for Schools*, discusses the "great hurricane" in 1717 that changed Dauphin Island's harbor. Summersell explains that the storm "washed a sandbar into the harbor mouth and choked up the entrance" (68). As the sandbar reduced the harbor depth from twenty-one feet to ten feet, ships could no longer anchor in Dauphin Island's harbor to unload cargo. The loss of a deep harbor spoiled Mobile Bay's desirability as a port and a settlement. In *Colonial Mobile,* Peter Hamilton summarizes the importance of the storm's damage:

> The closing of the port on the southern side of Dauphine by the shifting bar changed the history of the island, and of Mobile too. (168)

Peter Hamilton also describes a storm that further damaged Dauphin Island in 1740:

> Half the island was washed away by the storm, and three hundred head of cattle were destroyed. A cannon was blown eighteen feet. (132)

Thus, Peter Hamilton confidently states: "Bon Secours Bay, beyond Mobile Point, was no doubt named on account of its security in time of storm" (170).

Toward the end of the 18th century, the quiet and safe harbor of Bon Secour, as a part of the Mobile Bay area, was affected by the changing political tides of European and American power. In *Alabama: A History for Schools*, Summersell notes that in the Treaty of Paris, which ended the French and Indian War in 1763, the French surrendered to Great Britain "what is now Alabama . . ."(96). Included in this cession, of course, was the sanctuary of Bon Secour. Flirt, in "Mobile-Tensaw and Gulf Coast Area," succinctly summarizes the exchange of land between major powers in the following years. During the Revolutionary War, the Spanish attacked and captured Mobile. In the Treaty of Paris, which ended the American Revolution in 1783, England ceded the Mobile Bay area to Spain (183). Flirt continues:

> In the War of 1812 America claimed that the Spanish were allowing the British to use ports on the Gulf coast and, since American settlers wanted Mobile anyhow, the American army marched in and took the city without bloodshed. (184)

Thus, at the end of the War of 1812, as poetically stated by Summersell, the Star and Stripes flew over all of Alabama, including Mobile Bay and the quiet waters of Bon Secour (126).

In "Mobile-Tensaw and the Gulf Coast Area," Flirt states that thirteen years after the War of 1812 the United States Congress appropriated ten thousand dollars worth of improvement to Mobile Bay (184). The Army Corps of Engineers made further improvements from 1837-1857 and, as a result, according to Flirt, "river traffic boomed" (184).

However, Flirt states that, "the Civil War brought an end to regular commercial trade" (185). Flirt continues that harbor defenses constructed by the Confederates kept the mouth of the Mobile River closed until 1876 (185). According to Summersell in *Alabama: A History for Schools,* since ships from New England no longer brought salt into Mobile, another source of salt became a critical necessity. Thus, on Bon Secour Bay, the Confederates operated fifteen salt houses. These operations distilled salt from sea water and produced up to seventy-five bushels a day (328). With the surrender of Fort Morgan and Mobile and the defeat of the Confederate Army, the camp was deserted. The soldiers returned home, and Bon Secour returned to its natural, peaceful existence.

According to Flirt in "Mobile-Tensaw and Gulf Coast Area," the improvements of the Army Corps of Engineers that began in 1876 have continued into the present time (185-201). Flirt continues that these improvements have accentuated Bon Secour's natural attributes:

> Improvements to the small-craft channel have made Gulf intracoastal waterways a haven for commercial fisherman and recreation boaters as well. (201)

Thus, Bon Secour's reputation for fine seafood, especially oysters, has survived into the twentieth century.

In *Alabama: One Big Front Porch,* Kathryn Tucker Windham describes the delicious seafood dinners and colorful ambiance of Meme's seafood restaurant that operated in the 1970's (16). According to Mary Ann Neeley, many Alabamians have fond memories of the oysters, and other seafood entrees, served at Meme's. However, Meme's has succumbed to the tides of time. The deserted restaurant has fallen into disrepair and, stands, like the shell middens left by a previous culture that also feasted on Bon Secour's oysters, as a physical reminder of the many people who have found food and companionship by the waters of Bon Secour.

However, Flirt also warns that modern times have brought changes that do not contribute to health, beauty, or safety:

> the shifting sands and silt deposits will no longer seriously affect the shipping industry in the Mobile Area . . . .Whether these same waterways will forever be useless for seafood, wildlife, and recreation is another problem and one which must be resolved within not too many more years. Sand can be dredged and moved; wildlife once it has gone is usually lost forever. (200)

A report by Everette Smith, "Bon Secour Bay Shoreline 1989-90 with Descriptive Data on Shoreline Observation Stations," provides a warning concerning "a general acceleration in shoreline erosion and inundation of Bayfront land area" (44). The report also states that many areas remain in "an almost totally natural state" and recommends that "this area's physiographic and biological character would appear to merit recognition and conservation as a state or federal park or preserve" (46). Although, at this writing, Bon Secour specifically is not part of any state or federal conservation effort, much of it remains secluded and beautiful in its natural state.

The visitor stands on the banks beside the Bon Secour River under the shelter of an ancient oak tree as the afternoon sun sparkles across the water. A weathered wooden pier beckons, and although some planks are missing farther out, a few feet from shore it appears safe. As the visitor walks out on the pier, a pelican dips in from the water and lands close by, as if to reward the visitor for taking the risk. Boats are tied to other piers along the water front. Some of these boats are new and shiny, some old and rusted; they all rock quietly in the current. Across the other side of the river, similar wooden piers and small private boat docks prove the existence of folk who not only continue to live by the water, but continue to make a living from the water. From out across the bay, the noise of a motor drifts back to the shore. As the boat comes into view, the visitor realizes it is a large shrimp boat and that it is quickly approaching the pier, the pelican, and the visitor. The visitor also realizes it is approaching home. The men toss heavy cable to the pier and secure the vessel. Tired but friendly, they greet the visitor. Yes, they have been out a long time. One month? Two! Yes, they have brought back a good catch. Yes, they are thankful and glad to return again to Bon Secour.

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THE BOLL WEEVIL

BACK IN THE DAYS WHEN COTTON WAS KING
PEOPLE DIDN'T GROW MUCH OF ANYTHING ELSE, WELL
IN 1915 ALL THAT CHANGED
THAT WAS WHEN BOLL WEEVIL CAME AROUND, CHOWING DOWN

HE ATE THE COTTON
HE ATE THE CASH CROP
HE ATE THE FUTURE
HE COULDN'T BE STOPPED
OLD MEN CUSSED WOMEN CRIED
BOLL WEEVIL HE JUST GROOVED ON BY
SOME SAID HE WAS THE WRATH OF GOD ABOVE
SOME SAID HE COME FROM BEELZEBUB
BUT BOLL WEEVIL WAS JUST A BUG
BOLL WEEVIL AIN'T EVIL

THE FACT IS FOLKS DON'T LIKE TO CHANGE
SO THE NEXT YEAR THEY PLANTED COTTON AGAIN AND YOU KNOW
HOW THAT STORY GOES

BUT THAT SAME YEAR FOLKS IN ENTERPRISE
EARNED THEIR NAME CAUSE THEY GOT WISE
AND SO THEY DIDN'T GROW
COTTON. INSTEAD THEY PLANTED HAY
AND CORN AND PEANUTS AND SUGAR CANE
AND THEN THE MONEY ROLLED ON IN

(REPEAT CHORUS)

IN THE HEART OF ENTERPRISE A FOUNTAIN FLOWS
AND A LADY RAISES HER HANDS AND HOLDS
A MAGNIFIED BOLL WEEVIL GUY

THEY PROCLAIMED HIM THE HERALD OF PROSPERITY
FOR THOSE WHO LEARNED A LESSON IN COFFEE COUNTY
IN APPRECIATION OF WHAT HE DONE (WHEN HE)

(REPEAT CHORUS/INSTRUMENTAL)

NOW THE MORAL OF THE STORY FOR YOU AND I
IS TO LEARN FROM THE FOLKS OF ENTERPRISE
WHAT YOU RESIST WILL PERSIST

LIFE'S ABOUT CHANGE LEARN FROM THE BOLL WEEVIL
MAKE SOMETHING GOOD FROM WHAT LOOKS EVIL
BE LIKE ENTERPRISE: DIVERSIFY

(REPEAT CHORUS)

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THE BOLL WEEVIL MONUMENT

Like an ancient fable or analogy, the story of the Alabama farmer and the boll weevil reveals the philosophical lessons learned from a clash between the power of nature and the strength of Southern spirit. Even a brief survey of human history shows that, unfortunately for the stubborn human being, wisdom is often acquired through hardship. In such a role, hardship spurs the human mind to discover an innovative path out of difficulty; wisdom is the reward won from the hindsight gained at the end of that road. To take the first steps on an innovative path often requires the surrender of a well-established and usually destructive habit. Thus, through learning and risk taking, the people of Enterprise survived the disastrous effect of the boll weevil.

In fact, in 1919 the citizens realized that the knowledge they had gained, and the new reality that their knowledge had helped create, were worth the losses they had suffered. In recognition of their improved status, the citizens of Enterprise raised a monument to the catalyst of their raised consciousness: the boll weevil. The story that explains the reasons a community would honor a destructive insect begins, as many fables do, with an old king. His name was King Cotton.

King Cotton's rule began in the South with the first White settlements. In Alabama, King Cotton's reign coincided with the opening of land for White settlers around 1814. The availability of these huge tracts of land was the result of Andrew Jackson's victory over the Creek Indians at Horseshoe Bend. Wealthy planters from the neighboring states of North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia bought extensive acreage to create plantations and establish towns. Many families received large amounts of land as payment for military service. Still other settlers simply packed up and headed to Alabama to take advantage of an opportunity to homestead virgin territory. But, regardless of their differences, the majority of the settlers were farmers, and they planted cotton.

By 1850 many fortunes had been made by supplying cotton to the textile mills of the industrial revolution. Economic prosperity from cotton logically led to economic dependence on the crop, but illogically led to political overconfidence concerning cotton's social and political power. Wealthy plantation owners believed that Northern and European economic dependence on their cotton crop prohibited the use of force or even serious political pressure against the Southern states. In *Cotton: The Plant that Would Be King*, Bertha Dodge discusses the Honorable James Henry Hammond's Senatorial address, which reflected that opinion and made famous the term "King Cotton." In historical and political context, Senator Hammond, also a plantation owner from South Carolina, was arguing in favor of more than cotton since the production of cotton in the South was dependent on the institution of slavery. The issue that had brought cotton, slavery, and war to the Congressional floor was the admission of Kansas to the Union. The Senate was struggling to modify the Missouri Compromise of 1820 in a manner that would appease the southern states; failure would result in the South's secession. Senator Hammond, as well as his constituents, was confident of the economic and political power the South wielded when he declared on March 6, 1858, as recorded in *The Congressional Globe*:

> Without firing a gun, without drawing a sword, should they make war on us, we could bring the whole world to our feet. The South is perfectly competent to go on one, two, or three years without planting a seed of cotton . . . .What would happen if no cotton were furnished for three years? . . . this is certain: England would topple headlong and carry the civilized world with her, save the South. No, you dare not make war on cotton. (961)

Hammond was right and wrong. He was wrong in that, of course, King Cotton's power could not and did not prevent war. However, the defeat of the Confederacy had little effect on King Cotton's hold on Alabama and the other Southern states. Although the elimination of the slave labor force terminated the huge financial gains of the plantation system, the share-cropping system kept many large land owners economically functional. Smaller farmers continued planting cotton as well and so, whether planted on large or small farms, cotton continued to be an almost exclusive crop in the South. In Alabama, the farmer remained loyal to his liege lord, and, at the beginning of the 1900's, Cotton was still king.

Regardless of economic gains, agriculturists do not consider King Cotton a benevolent monarch. In *Cotton: The Plant that Would be King*, Dodge states that:

> the plants that, for various reasons, people let themselves become dependent upon come to exercise a tyranny out of all proportions to their own intrinsic worth. (3)

King Cotton's tyranny developed partly from the American perception that land was an endless commodity. From the White settlement of Alabama in 1814 to the close of the frontier, the extensive amounts of available land created wasteful and destructive farming habits. Farmers used land to exhaustion, and then abandoned it. Most farmers were unaware of, and certainly did not practice, conservation methods such as fertilization processes, draining techniques, nor deeper, different, or more intensive plowing methods. Instead, a planter owning thousands of acres simply cleared more land when a field became depleted. According to William Dodd in *The Cotton Kingdom,* planters were still clearing land regularly just prior to the Civil War (4). A farmer with limited resources, nonetheless, also worked the land to exhaustion, abandoned the farm, and then migrated westward. The migration of the impoverished farmer became an American tradition beginning in the 1700's and continuing for nearly two hundred years.

However, as early as 1855, some farmers were recognizing the damaging consequences of destructive agricultural habits and even organizing groups to address the distress of the land in addition to the negative human consequences from the use and abuse of land by King Cotton. In *Alabama: A Documentary History to 1900*, Lucille Griffith quotes C.C. Clay of Huntsville in an address to the Chunnennuggee Horticulture Society in December of 1855, describing the situation:

> I can show you, in the older portions of Alabama . . . the sad memorials of the artless and exhausting culture of cotton. Our small planters, after taking the cream off their lands . . . are going further west and south, in search of other

> virgin lands, which they may and will despoil and impoverish in like manner. Our wealthier planters . . . are buying out their poorer neighbors, extending their plantations, and adding to their slave force. In traversing that country one will discover numerous farmhouses . . . deserted, and dilapidated; he will observe fields, once fertile, now unfenced, abandoned . . . .(175)

By allowing themselves to fall under the tyranny of King Cotton, the planter and farmer failed to recognize that their most precious resource was the land. In addition, loyalty to King Cotton blinded farmer and planter to the fact that the loss of fertile land, and the hardship that loss initiated, was the result of their own destructive farming habits. So it was, in the last few years of the nineteenth century, that King Cotton, while systematically depleting the land, simultaneously created fertile ground for the end of his reign.

According to Dodge in *Cotton: The Plant that Would be King,* a "time of reckoning" was at hand for King Cotton (145). Dodge explains in layman's terms the reasoning that is the foundation for modern agricultural policy: "If no attention is paid to maintaining soil quality to meet the demands of the plants to be grown there, disaster may be expected to follow" (144-145). The instrument of judgment for King Cotton, and unfortunately of the above-mentioned disaster as well, was the boll weevil.

In *Cotton: The Plant that Would be King,* Dodge states that the boll weevil was an ancient resident of Mexico. She relates that in a cave south of Mexico City, once occupied by Zapotec Indians, archaeologists found a weevil-infested cotton boll. Carbon 14 dating indicated that both cotton and weevil had been alive around the year 900 AD (148). Don

Rummel, in *The Encyclopedia of Southern History,* states that in 1843 the boll weevil "was originally described from a specimen collected in Mexico" by Swedish coleopterist C. H. Boheman (134). Most historians give 1892 as the date the boll weevil made its first appearance in the cotton fields of the American South. The infamous debut occurred in the southern-most tip of Texas, in the town of Brownsville. However, according to Dodge, two years passed before the Entomology Division of the United States Department of Agriculture visited the infested Texas fields and then filed an official report in 1895. Dodge further reports that the Department of Agriculture's report stated that the boll weevil presented a serious threat to the cotton crop and made several recommendations relating to controlling the pest and "urging the governor of Texas to . . . [push] legislation to permit quarantine." However, the governor did not follow the recommendation from the USDA, and the boll weevil spread (149). According to Rummel, the boll weevil "spread through Southern cotton at a rate of forty to one hundred sixty miles a year" (134). In *Destructive Insects: Their Habits and Control,* Metcalf and Metcalf state that "more than 20,000 [miles] of new territory was infested by the weevil in each of the thirty-five years after it had crossed the Rio Grande" (12.8). Albert Moore states in *History of Alabama and her People,* that the boll weevil entered Mobile County, Alabama, in 1910 (858). The time and instrument of reckoning had arrived; King Cotton toppled and took Alabama's agricultural economy down with him.

Understanding the life cycles of the cotton plant and the boll weevil clarifies the farmers' struggle. In *Destructive and Useful Insects,* Metcalf and Metcalf state an established opinion: "No insect pest in the world has gained greater notoriety than the cotton boll weevil" (12.7). The insect attracting this degree of attention is only one-quarter-of-an-inch long and has a hard shell, six legs, wings, and wing covers. Metcalf and Metcalf state that it varies in color from shades of yellow, to gray, to brown, but darkens with age to nearly black (12.10). The boll weevil's scientific name is *Anthonomus grandis*; its order is Coleoptera. Infamy is a family trait; included in the boll weevil's family, Curculionidae, are such "serious pests" as the alfalfa weevil and the rice weevil (Metcalf and Metcalf 6.68). Besides notoriety, the other distinguishing family trait among the weevil family is the prolongation of the head--known as the snout. In fact, in scientific communities, the family is referred to as snout beetles. The boll weevil's snout, which is fully one-half the length of its body, has elbow antennae protruding from each side. However, less obvious, but more causal of the snout beetles' bad reputation, is the "full set of chewing mouthparts in the end of it [the snout]" (Metcalf and Metcalf 6.68). The snout and the teeth of the boll weevil enable it to reproduce and to live -- by killing cotton plants.

A healthy, unmolested cotton plant's immature flower bud, called the square, blossoms into creamy white flowers. These flowers soon turn a deep pink, fall off the plant stalk and leave small green seed pods known as bolls. Inside the boll, seed hairs or fibers grow from the outer shells of the seeds. As these fibers continue to grow, they become tightly packed within the boll that bursts upon maturing revealing cotton. However, when a boll weevil invades a cotton patch, the maturation process of the cotton plant is interrupted.

Cotton plants die with the first frost, but boll weevils go into a state of hibernation. According to Metcalf and Metcalf in *Destructive and Useful Insects*, boll weevils come out of hibernation "about the time early cotton is up (March)" (12.10). Metcalf and Metcalf further state that although male boll weevils "resume spermatogenesis immediately, the females do not begin oogenesis until after feeding on young cotton"(12.10). When cotton plants are about six days old, adult boll weevils use their snouts to puncture the squares and bolls of the plant, hence the name of the weevil. The boll weevil feeds on the germinating tissues within, creating a hole where the boll weevil then lays eggs. A female boll weevil may lay as many as one hundred to three hundred eggs throughout cotton's growing season. The eggs hatch in three or four days; for another seven to twelve days the grubs eat and mature into the pupal stage. The pupal stage lasts another three to five days, resulting in the formation of an adult boll weevil, which eats its way out of the square or boll. Thus, the boll weevil destroys the developing flower of the cotton plant to the point that either it will not be able to bloom, or the seeds cannot develop into acceptable amounts of fiber. Metcalf and Metcalf explain that the boll weevil is "one of the most difficult of all known pests to control" because the boll weevil reproduces so quickly, and all of its developmental stages are inside the cotton plant (12.11). In 1910, the instruments of "control" were in developmental stages, and the cotton plants, weakened from growing on increasingly less fertile land, lay vulnerable to attack.

In *Our State Alabama,* Thomas Owen states that the Agricultural Extension Services were formed by legislative action in 1911. A list of objectives specified the services to be made available to Alabama farmers, but in particular the agency was to "prepare the farmers of Alabama for the coming of the boll weevil by providing for local agricultural experiments in the several Counties of Alabama"(497). "Experiments" included pesticides and different methods of land cultivation, both of which were new technologies for the time. As the archaeological evidence shows, the boll weevil was ancient and well established; however, the land and the cotton plants were weak and vulnerable, and the farmer was in only experimental stages of defense.

According to Clayton Metcalf in the introduction of *Pea River Sketches,* the boll weevil "made its renowned appearance in Coffee County and southeast Alabama during the late Summer of 1915" (xviii). Clayton Metcalf records that the farmers of Coffee County experimented with pesticides and other methods of control. However, in Coffee County, as in other parts of Alabama as well the South as a whole, the boll weevil proved resistant to early methods of control, and the cotton farmer faced complete destruction. In *Pea River Sketches*, Clayton Metcalf quotes a sixty-percent loss in the first year because of the boll weevil (xviii). In *Destructive Insect Pests*, Metcalf and Metcalf state that the boll weevil has been responsible for a loss of over $200 million annually since 1909 (12.7). Dodge succinctly states that the result of the boll weevil's invasion of King Cotton's realm was "almost total destruction of the crops in the infested areas" (149).

The boll weevil's damage to Alabama's main cash crop precipitated a domino effect on the economy of Alabama, as well as the other southern states. Metcalf and Metcalf explain that the loss of the cash crop directly caused land values to depreciate, banks to fail, and cotton gins and mills to close (12.7). In addition, railroad service was interrupted and retail establishments' profits plummeted because of the effect from what Douglas Helms in the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* terms "the boll weevil depression" (32).

Societal aspects of economic panic are painful, and the human consequences created by the boll weevil's economic devastation were no exception. Many farmers went bankrupt. Because a large number of these farmers had extensive loans at the bank, the farmers' inability to repay the loans left the banks without capitol to lend for next year's planting. The depreciation of land values further accentuated the lack of available funds. Thus, many farmers lost their farms and found themselves and their families penniless and homeless. Landlords, upon realizing that leasing to a cotton farmer was a losing proposition, evicted tenants and thus added to the number of homeless farmers. Workers employed in cotton gins that closed were also left without income and, in the case of "company housing," places to live. Southerners migrated in record numbers out of their homeland. Some continued the pattern westward; others went North to work in factories. The human, as well as the agricultural, landscape was permanently changed by the dethroning of King Cotton.

To the non-agrarian resident, the most prominent architectural edifice might be the silo, but every farmer knows that the center of the farming community is the country store. In the introduction of *Pea River Sketches,* Clayton Metcalf reports that around 1916, in Enterprise, Mr. R. O. (Bon) Fleming's store was the gathering place for local farmers. Since the boll weevil's infestation of their fields, the farmers had persistently planted cotton in the optimistic attitude that the pest would abate. Their efforts harvested only continued failure, and they were, like other farmers across Alabama and the South, facing economic ruin. In Fleming's store, according to Clayton Metcalf, "the subject of cotton and the weevil were 'prime topics' "(xix).

Although extension agents cite the influence of George Washington Carver's work at the Tuskegee Institute, and local residents recall several individuals experimenting with different crops, local historian Mr. Roy Shoffner gives the the credit for the blazing of the path out of their difficulties to Mr. Sessoms, who owned an extensive amount of land in Coffee County. Shoffner explains that Sessoms was accustomed to advancing his tenant, Mr. Bastion, cash for planting. After suffering economic reversals from cotton, Sessoms decided to experiment with another crop. According to Shoffner, Sessoms had "heard" that peanuts were "doing well" in North Carolina. Sessoms traveled to North Carolina and bought peanut seed. He then offered Bastion a deal: for every bushel of peanuts that Bastion harvested, Sessoms would pay him one dollar. Although Bastion had never grown any crop but cotton, he accepted Sessoms' offer. Bastion harvested eight thousand bushels of peanuts, and Sessoms paid him eight thousand dollars.

In Fleming's store, indeed all around Coffee County, the news spread that crops other than cotton were economically feasible. The farmers laid their loyalty to King Cotton aside and began experimenting with various crops such as peanuts, corn, and soybeans, even branching out into livestock. The story of their successful diversification reached other farmers in Alabama and the rest of the southern states. The farmers of Enterprise and Coffee County served as an example, encouraging other farmers to shake off the yoke of King Cotton, to diversify, and to experience success. As Mr. Shoffner states, "Enterprise and Coffee County brought the Southland back from disaster."

Farmers in Enterprise and surrounding Coffee County continued to plant the original experimental crop, peanuts, with record-breaking success. In *Alabama: One Big Front Porch*, Kathryn Tucker Windham reports that one million bushels of peanuts were harvested in 1917 (104). In fact, Shoffner states that Coffee County held the lead in peanut production in the world, and Clayton Metcalf states that Enterprise became known as "the Peanut Capitol" (xix).

As the farmers successfully harvested a variety of new crops, the economy stabilized. By diversifying their crops and implementing cultivation methods that encouraged land conservation and discouraged infestation, the farmers gained a new perspective on agriculture. By 1917, at Fleming's store in Enterprise, the farmers gathered to discuss success instead of disaster. Clayton Metcalf and Shoffner agree that Fleming was responsible for the idea of a statue to commemorate the community's transformation. In addition, Fleming paid over half of the cost of the monument, with other individuals paying the remainder of the expenses. A large well had always been in the center of Enterprise, and the men decided to utilize the water to create a memorial fountain. The men's design for the monument was a thirteen-foot lady dressed in Grecian drapery holding her arms high above her head. The original design had a fountain spraying around the base, spouting from the top of her head, and flowing over her arms. This original design, commissioned from an Italian sculptor, did not include an image of the boll weevil.

However, the instrument of Enterprise's transformation was given full credit on a plaque that reads:

> In Profound Appreciation of the Boll Weevil and What It Has
> Done As the Herald of Prosperity, This Monument Was
> Erected by the Citizens of Enterprise, Coffee County, Alabama.
> (Windham 106)

The statue was unveiled and dedicated on December 11, 1919. Later, in 1950, the statue of the boll weevil was added. The boll weevil stands on a Grecian urn that is held by the upraised hands of the lady.

The visitor watches the water sparkle as it rises in the fountain, like the farmers' courage and spirit that rose to challenge old ways that no longer served the good of land or community. The lady raises her arms and, in doing so, raises the boll weevil to be seen, not as a curse, but as a blessing. The well-read visitor understands that through hardship delivered by the instrument of nature, the boll weevil, the farmers of Enterprise and Coffee County learned to rise above old destructive habits. By diversifying their crops, they provided needed commodities, healed the land -- healed themselves. The boll weevil is raised aloft in testimony of the raising of the community's consciousness and spirit that enabled the people to overcome obstacles and achieve the wisdom that is the most beneficial of all rewards. The visitor may walk around the fountain admiring the Grecian lady, a timeless symbol of balance and grace, as she shines in the circle of splashing water. The visitor may muse that the boll weevil she lifts above her head is a reminder that as sure as wisdom is always good, it follows that "the boll weevil ain't evil."

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OH CAHABA

ONCE THE CANDELABRAS SHIMMERED IN THE NIGHT
ONCE THE LAUGHTER SPARKLED IN THEIR LIGHT
ONCE THE PILLARED MANSIONS SHINED
FILLED WITH MUSIC, LOVE AND LIFE
NOW THERE'S ONLY GRASSY HEIGHTS
YOU'VE DISAPPEARED FROM SIGHT

OH CAHABA
YOU WERE ONCE A DREAM COME TRUE
OH CAHABA
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT OF YOU
I STAND AMIDST THE MEMORIES
FEEL THE WIND MOVE THROUGH THE TREES
OH CAHABA
AM I LIKE YOU

IN YOUR GRAVEYARD MARBLE STONES LIE BLACK AND BROKE
THE NAMES THAT BUILT YOUR GLORIES NOW FADE INTO STONE
WHATEVER PAIN AND PASSION RODE
PEACE NOW REIGNS HERE ALONE
WHATEVER WOUND OR GRAVE WAS OPEN
TIME HAS HEALED AND CLOSED

OH CAHABA
YOU WERE ONCE A DREAM COME TRUE
OH CAHABA
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT OF YOU
I STAND AMIDST THE MEMORIES
FEEL THE WIND MOVE THROUGH THE TREES
OH CAHABA
AM I LIKE YOU

YOUR BRICK WALLS SO TALL AND STRONG WERE ALL TORN DOWN
USED FOR THE FOUNDATION ON OTHER GROUND
YOUR PILLARS AND YOUR STEEPLES PROUD
NOW ADORN ANOTHER TOWN
THE KNOWING EYE CAN LOOK AROUND
AND THE BEST OF YOU IS FOUND

OH CAHABA
I SEE A DIFFERENT YOU
OH CAHABA
YOU GAVE BIRTH TO SOMETHING NEW
CAN I USE THE BRICKS OF MY OLD DREAM
AND BUILD ANOTHER DESTINY
OH CAHABA
AM I LIKE YOU

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CAHABA

The remains of Cahaba provide the modern visitor with few physical remnants by which to mentally recreate Cahaba's past glory. However, in *Memories of Old Cahaba*, Anna M. Gaye Fry records the founding and abandonment of the first capital city of the state of Alabama. As the young daughter of a wealthy plantation owner, she participated in its second rise to prosperity, and witnessed and its second demise. She poetically describes the ruins as they appeared in the early 1900's.

> At the foot of the picturesque Cahaba Hills, on the banks of the majestic Alabama, just above the mouth of the beautiful little Cahaba, where their waters glide into each other's embrace on their way to the sea, is located the old historic town of Cahaba -- a place replete with romantic interest, and in its mighty ruins a forceful reminder that man, proud man, cannot build against the destructive inroads of time, circumstance, and political influence. (10)

Her many descriptions of life during the time of Cahaba's prosperity, as well as the final days of the city after the Confederate surrender, serve as windows into Alabama's past. Her words and images assist the visitor in envisioning the grandeur of Cahaba as well as providing a reminder of the changes time always commands.

Just as slight grassy rises and occasional glimpses of a pile of brick are all that remain of Cahaba's Southern genteel grandeur, so archaeological evidence of a ceremonial mound and palisade is all that remains of a prehistoric Indian town of the Mississippian period. Because of new research, the name of the town is currently the subject of archaeological debate. Tradition held, and historians from the first half of the twentieth century hypothesized, that the town's name was Casiste. In *Historia general y natural de las Indias,* Rodrigo Rangel, secretary of Spanish conquistador Hernandez De Soto, describes Casiste as "a pretty town alongside the river" (288). More recently, archaeologists tend to give credence to Dr. Charles Hudson's suggestion that the Mississippian settlement at Cahaba may be the famous Mabila. Mabila is mentioned in all of the De Soto chronicles as the site of the bloody battle between the conquistadors and the native population that proved decisive and disastrous for both sides. Ongoing research may provide more information on the prehistoric Indian town that existed on the site now known as Cahaba.

Later historians overlooked these Spanish entries and assigned the Indian earthen works to either the efforts of the French merchant Antoine Crozart, or later French traders.[1] In 1713 Crozart, known as "Prince of Louisiana," received an extensive land grant from King Louis XV that included the area later known as Cahaba. Crozart attempted to set up trading posts at several strategic points in the South but soon abandoned his efforts because of Indian hostilities. In *Alabama, Her History, Resources, War Record and Public Men,* Willis Brewer perpetuated the hypothesis that the Indian earthen works were trading posts built by French traders who combed the area in the 1750's (209). However, site archaeologist Linda Derry states that recent excavation and research reveal no evidence of French building on the site.[2] Regardless of the debate over their building efforts, maps and journals document the fact that French traders traveled the area extensively in the 1700's. In *Three Capitals*, William Brantley relates that French traders make note of an Indian settlement named "Cahawba" at the site (224).

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[1] However, Alabama's esteemed first historian, Albert Pickett, in his *History of Alabama,* states, "As for the ancient ditches at Cahaba . . . we have been unable, in our investigations, to ascribe them to European origin, as they are generally supposed to be" (154).

Brantley further states that after the Indian defeat and dispersal the land was not developed because the federal government owned the land and did not make it available for sale or settlement. Thus, when Alabama became a state, availability and convenience in terms of river travel, in addition to the wild beauty of the spot, enticed the first governor of Alabama, William Wyatt Bibb, to choose the site of the old Indian town, Cahawba, for Alabama's first capital city.

Tradition states that Cahawba derives from a Choctaw Indian phrase meaning "water above." Accordingly, water has played an essential role in both the rise and the failure of this historic city. Besides being located between the confluence of the Alabama and the Cahaba rivers, water flows through the site from over seventy-five artesian wells of varying power and content. Some of these fountains have provided pure, clean, drinking water from the earth's depths for centuries and continue to spout their essence from that same ground today; some contain sulfur and other minerals. These wells were channeled to provide the drinking water, the irrigation, and the artistic fountains that helped make Cahaba prosperous, gracious and famous, while the rivers that flanked the city's boundaries provided a means for travel and trade.

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[2] Derry's statement again validates Albert Pickett's history:" The French and Spaniards . . . erected no forts except those at Mobile . . . at St. Stephens, at Jone's Bluff [Fort Tombecbé] . . and four miles above confluence of the Coosa and Tallapoosa . . . [Fort Toulouse]" (155).

However, the less benevolent side of water was partially responsible for Cahaba's demise. Cahaba was the dream of Governor Bibb, who lobbied for and secured the land grants to create his vision of a southern capitol and trade center in this beautiful spot between two rivers. The capital of the new state was designed after the city of Philadelphia. In May of 1819 Governor Bibb auctioned lots in order to raise the money needed to construct the capitol building. Governor Bibb did not live to see his vision manifest. He bruised his kidney in a riding accident in September of 1819. Weakened from his struggle with tuberculosis, Governor Bibb was bedridden until he died in July of 1820. Other legislators and political factions had previously advocated other locations for the state's capital. With the death of Governor Bibb, Cahaba had lost her strongest champion.

In addition to rising political issues surrounding Cahaba, rain and rising rivers caused a flood that inundated the city in 1821 and again in 1822. Historians disagree as to the real extent of the flood waters within the city, but a persistent account relates that legislators were transported to their second-story chambers in the courthouse via a rowboat. Although flooding was an issue, the bigger issues were created by legislators who advocated moving the capital. As Brantley succinctly states in *Three Capitals,* "It appears that these floods were more powerful and effective politically than they were naturally" (170). Cahaba's problems did not end with rising waters and political issues. The standing flood waters, continued rain, and the heat of the Alabama summer created an environment hard on human beings, but perfect for mosquitoes. Outbreaks of yellow fever depopulated the city, both from death and from flight. Dr. Jabez Wiggins Heustis resided in Cahaba during these epidemics, attended the sick, and made a study of the sickness. He has gone down into Alabama history with his documentation of the disease as " 'the bilious remitting fever which prevailed in Cahawba . . . might be denominated the yellow fever' " (qtd. in Brantley 89). Dr. Heutis blamed the disease on the moisture, heat, and standing water but did not realize that the most serious culprit was the mosquito.

When the dome of the state capitol building collapsed from flood damage, debate to choose another city to serve as Alabama's capital intensified. In 1826, the capital city was redesignated at Tuscaloosa, and all archives were transported overland from Cahaba to Tuscaloosa. Many of Cahaba's buildings were dismantled and relocated as well. For a few years Cahaba was almost deserted and fell into a state of partial ruin.

Nonetheless, some romantic and colorful stories of those days survive. The day the steamboat *Harriet* came around the bend from Mobile cheering citizens crowded at the foot of Arch Street. The population of Cahaba had every reason to believe that the advent of the steamship would bring prosperity in the form of travel and trade right to the shores of their city. In April of 1825 the Marquis de Lafayette arrived in Cahaba aboard such a vessel. His visit remains a historic landmark of the time. Historians disagree whether Lafayette spent one night or three days in Cahaba, but it is plain from the accounts available that regardless of the accolades, admiration, and multiple festivities across the entire territory in his honor, Lafayette, then in his sixties, was tiring and anxious to get to New Orleans. The descendants of those who lived in Cahaba when the Marquis de Lafayette visited retold treasured family stories of the balls, the Indian entourage and the crowds that streamed under the arch constructed for his entry into the city on Vine Street. One family even maintained that a small cross under their dining-room table marked

Lafayette's seat. Jewelry and clothing worn for the affair as well as journals and letters describing the event are preserved and cherished to this day. In private collections as well as city and state museums, these remaining treasures attest to the excitement and the romance of life in Cahaba, the first capital city of Alabama.

Then, in the early 1830's, the railroad entered into the area because of the economic needs of the surrounding plantation communities that had continued to grow and prosper, regardless of Cahaba's failure as a capital city. Amazingly, Cahaba became a social and economic center again. Although Cahaba was no longer the state capital, she was the Dallas County seat, and this added to her prestige and ability to rise from the flood and fever-causing waters of her earlier grave. Anna M. Gaye Fry described the society and city that flourished:

> Happy and prosperous were the Cahabaians in those old days, with their slaves, their gardens, their orchards, their fertile fields of waving corn and cotton, brilliant with bloom in summer and in autumn heavy with boll and long, snowy staple that covered the valleys and gentle slopes around the town . . . . (51)

The Civil War brought an end to the plantation way of life and to Cahaba. The Union blockade had made the economic realities of agriculture difficult and even impossible for several years. The surrounding plantations that had survived during the war, and thus supported Cahaba, could not survive the surrender as with it came the loss of the slave labor force.

The “death knell” came when the county seat was removed from Cahaba to Selma. As the city again became deserted, citizens from neighboring towns tore down the mansions, the public buildings, even the churches to aid in Reconstruction. Important features of favorite buildings, such as the columns of the mansions, the fountains, and the copper dome of the capitol that was re-established on top of a Lowndesboro church, were taken to other locations. Some structures, such as St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Martin’s Station, were lifted from their foundations and moved in their entirety. Residents relocating to Selma dismantled their homes and rebuilt with the same brick. Cahaba again became a wild and deserted spot.

In 1988 a different sort of resurrection began for Cahaba. Linda Derry, archaeologist for the Alabama Historical Commission, with the support of a private organization, the Cawhawba Concern, began initiatives to preserve the site as an archaeological park. Thanks to their efforts, in addition to assistance from the Archaeological Conservatory, Old Cawhawba Archaeological Park became a reality with the first purchase of 200 acres of the original 1600-acre city. Linda Derry became manager and site archaeologist of the park, which is owned and operated by the Alabama Historical Commission, a state agency.

Since that time, Linda Derry has overseen the purchase of additional acreage (including the site's first standing slave quarters), archaeological excavations, restoration projects, and the registration of all remaining buildings on the National Register of Historical Places. In addition, a welcome center contains a photograph and artifact exhibit and offers information that assists self-guided tours of the city and cemeteries. Linda

Derry is proud of the stream of visitors and correspondence that provides stories, archive materials, and family heirlooms that continue to shed light on the historical events as well as the affairs of everyday life at Cahaba. Festivals, community activities, scientific and historical research, in addition to the natural beauty of the spot, continue to attract people to Cahaba.

Today the visitor walks the marked streets but sees little evidence of a city besides a grassy foundation line or a hole that was once a cellar. The occasional pile of bricks peeks from tangled undergrowth. The artesian wells gush unattended and undirected into the ground. Currently part-time residents on the site live in dilapidated mobile homes with lean-to additions constructed of weathered side-boards. An old frame house, the Judge Fombro house, still stands though the foundation posts lean precariously. The house has been occupied by the descendants of the freed slave who purchased it in 1870 until the death of the last family member in 1998. The house is noted by both a historical shield and a "No Trespassing" notice. The framed two-room "boys' school" also survives, standing in close proximity with the two leaning brick walls that remain of the Methodist Church. The Crocheron Columns still stand rather eerily in place, and the Cahaba "new" graveyard is in some disrepair but is a peaceful, beautiful spot. Sitting on a stone bench and watching the afternoon shadows slip across the weathered tombstones, the visitor can almost imagine the wind sighing "oh, Cahaba," as it moves through the huge and ancient trees. As that wistful wind then departs, the visitor is left to contemplate the passing of time and the coming of change, those ever-present companions of humankind.

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HELL IS HOT

I TURNED DOWN A LONELY ROAD
I HAD TO SEE THAT MIRACLE GARDEN
THERE I FOUND A SIGHT TO BEHOLD
HUNDREDS OF CROSSES   A TALE TO BE TOLD

RICE'S CROSSES ARE BIG AND SMALL
PAINTED WITH WORDS WARNING THE SINNERS
HE SAYS THE PRICE OF IGNORING THE CALL
IS TO BURN IN HELL FOR ONE AND ALL

HELL IS HOT
AND YOU WILL DIE
WHERE YOU ARE GOING THERE IS NO ICE
ARE YOU READY
YOU'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME

HELL IS HOT
YOU WILL DIE

HELL IS HOT
YOU WILL DIE
HELL IS HOT
JESUS IS COMING
IT'S TOO LATE IN HELL
HELL IS HOT

TWENTY-ONE YEARS THAT GARDEN'S STOOD
THOUGH SOME HAVE TRIED TO MAKE HIM TEAR IT DOWN
BUT IT'S STILL HERE; THE COURT SAID RICE COULD
CONTINUE TO RAISE CROSSES OF WOOD

THOUGH JESUS WON THE BATTLE TOUGH
RICE'LL SELL HIS LAND   GO BUILD A BIGGER GARDEN
SO PUT UP OR SHUT UP
THE SIGN SAYS FOR SALE   FIVE MILLION BUCKS

(REPEAT CHORUS)

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THE MIRACLE CROSS GARDEN

The South is a spiritual land. In Alabama, the rivers run deep and rush to the gulf to merge with the unfathomable waters of the ocean. Alabama's mountains reach high and stretch to touch and blend with the firmament and thus spread over all creation, known and unknown. The warmth and moist environment ooze the life energy that becomes visible in the green panoramas of forest, field, and wet lands. The cycle of life in Alabama, as in other areas of the South, is easily experienced and, therefore, inspires confidence in the spiritual mysteries of life.

Since Southerners are a people connected to an intensely spiritual land, the visitor is not surprised to find that they are a deeply religious people. At the end of the twentieth century, many of Alabama's sons and daughters continue to find release in the setting of the sun and to believe in the promise of each new dawn. The steeples silhouetted against the ever-changing horizon are the Southerner's contribution to the spiritual and life-giving landscape of the South.

Alongside the Southerner's belief in God, exists an equally strong belief in the rights of the individual. In *The Mind of the South,* W. J. Cash explores the development of Southern attitudes and perceptions. Cash writes that "the dominant trait of this [Southern] mind was an intense individualism. . . " (31). Individualism remains an important attribute at the end of the twentieth century and is listed categorically among: "Other Time-Honored Southern Characteristics" in *1001 Things You Should Know About the South* by Reed and Reed. Reed and Reed cite quotations from Cash to country singer

Charlie Daniels to show that "individualism -- in the sense of independence and self-reliance -- has been tied to self-respect since the days of the frontier, at least for white men" (275). Historically and philosophically, for the Southerner, individualism, in addition to self-reliance and self-respect, means self determination. Roy Reed colorfully states that Southerners "carry in their hearts or genes or livers or lights an ancient, God-credited belief that a man has a right to do as he pleases. . . " (103). For many a Southerner "doing what he pleases" means living his or her own life on his or her own land, and worshipping his or her own God as he or she pleases.

In the religious arena, the combination of a spiritual environment and an individualistic ideology fosters a variety of beliefs, from mainstream doctrine to folk theology. Cash maintains that the Southerner requires "a faith as simple and emotional as himself. A personal god, a God for the individualist. . ." (56). Thus, the steeples that rise symbolize Christian belief systems as varied as they are many. Along with steeples, the Southern countryside is dotted with cement buildings serving as gathering places for worship, roadside signs advertising and admonishing, and displays of folk art that express a wide diversity of passionate religious expression. In Alabama, the individual expression of religious devotion supported by an inspirational environment is one of the many unique aspects of Southern culture that the visitor can witness.

In the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Patrick Gerster restates a common perception of most observers: "Religion, broadly defined, rests at the heart of Southern culture and what it means to be a Southerner" (1122). Others have stated the observation in less complimentary terms. H. L. Mencken coined the most famous and repeated of the diatribes, the phrase "bible belt," to describe the South in 1920. In *The Enduring South*, John Shelton Reed interprets a body of sociological data to show the pervasiveness of religious expression in the South. Reed discusses Southern religious belief systems and uses a series of polls to demonstrate that, in comparison to non-Southerners, "Southerners are much more likely to believe in a god Whose Eye is on the sparrow, or at least on them as they go about their day-to-day business" (61). In addition, Reed interprets data that indicate that many Southerners believe in an anthropomorphic Satan and that "Southerners were more likely to mention specific details such as heaven, hell, judgment, and bodily resurrection" (61). A brief overview of Reed's interpretations shows that Southern culture can be characterized by religious devotion based on literal interpretations that can be defined geographically. Thus, Reed affirms that the South's religious orientation is correlated to its geographical orientation.

Moving from social science to social mythology, Patrick Gerster, in the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture,* prefaces his observations on religion and myth in the South by stating that the earliest meaning of the word "religion" is "to bind together" (1122). Thus, Gerster explores the importance of religion in the South as a "bonding agent of culture" (1122). Gerster states further that myth is closely associated with religion and thus maintains that Christian myth and Southern myth:

> share a common infrastructure . . . . The Christian myth relates the story of a human destiny born to Edenic perfection, lost to an earthly salvation by the fall, and capable of being born again to a paradise regained. The South, in relation to its historical experience, long has felt itself a participant in much the same

> pattern of existence. (1123)

Historically and currently, in social philosophy, religion, and myth, the Southerner intertwines individualism, identity to land, and religion. Academic observation in the twentieth century, as documented through John Shelton Reed and Gerster, recognize the importance of religion, individualism, and love of land to the Southerner.

The Southern themes of religion, individualism, and land are explored further from an intellectual and theological perspective in *Haunted by God* by James McBride Dabbs. Dabbs defines freedom, that all important aspect of individualism, as reconciliation with God. Dabbs comments on the Southerner's need for freedom and equates that longing to the search for God. Connecting Gerster's etymology of religion to Dabb's perceptions, one explanation of the importance of religion in the South is that it binds the Southerner to the land (which relates the Southerner to the natural world) and links the Southerner to the independent spirit (which demands freedom). Therefore, Dabbs goes on to describe the Southerner as searching for completeness by establishing a connection to both land and freedom through religion and thus describes the South as "haunted by God" (181).

In Alabama, one of the religious expressions that could be described as "haunted by God" is Mr. William Carlton Rice's Miracle Cross Garden. Driving through the countryside down Autauga Country Road 85, the visitor notices nothing unusual in the long stretches of woods and greenery broken occasionally by a new brick home. Then, suddenly, peering over the hill like a sentinel, the first cross appears. Huge and rugged as any imagination could visualize its ancient predecessor, it silently informs the visitor that William Carlton Rice's Miracle Cross Garden lies imminently ahead.

Many more crosses, too many to count, are propped, hung, laid or stood along the approximately one hundred feet of Mr. Rice's property line. The crosses, as well as other objects Mr. Rice's uses for religious expression, extend to both sides of the road on Mr. Rice's property. The crosses vary in size, and many are decorated with red ribbon symbolizing the blood of Christ shed to save humankind -- the ultimate proof to the Christian of God's love for humanity. The crosses are not the only structures raised to inspire and inform. Signs warn that "Sex is a Pit" and "Hell Is Hot" and remind the visitor that "You Will Die." The old bus that Mr. Rice used in the past to transport fellow believers to his private, small, cinderblock chapel stands derelict. On its side words painted in red state "Jesus is coming" and ask the reader, "Are you ready?" Three dark, roughly hewn, wooden crosses, approximately twenty feet tall, loom from a hill and stir the visitor's religious memory of those other crosses on Golgotha. The cross is an enduring symbol of Christianity, and the visitor is easily overwhelmed by W. C. Rice's powerful use of the symbol to express the intensity of Christian suffering, sacrifice, and love. Mr. Rice's Cross Garden elicits a variety of responses and evaluations, all of which center on the intensity and uniqueness of his work.

Mr. Rice and his Miracle Cross Garden exemplify what the standardized twentieth century brands as religious extremes, radical individualism, and archaic connection to land. However judgmental these evaluations, all three of these aspects are recognizable traits of Southern culture and of the established tradition and history of the South.

The structures that cover Mr. Rice's private land are the most obvious proof of his individualistic religious philosophies. However, a conversation with Mr. Rice provides many more examples. Mr. Rice's unorthodox beliefs include a resistance to structured religion, or, as he states it: "You don't have to be in a church to feel the spirit." As an example, Mr. Rice states that he was saved in a house trailer while he was chewing tobacco. In addition, through literature available at the site and inscriptions on the objects in the garden, Mr. Rice expresses his belief that spiritual messages are communicated by numerology. Although Mr. Rice's religious beliefs fall within the basic framework of mainstream Protestant Christianity, his individual religious philosophy and unique religious expression place him well outside of the collective mentality.

An important part of Mr. Rice's beliefs, the ability of the individual to communicate directly with God, is also an important aspect of individualism. Mr. Rice is confident that the Miracle Cross Garden is God's work and therefore created "only for the glory of God." He maintains that he has always been directed by divine guidance in the creation of the Miracle Cross Garden. On the internet's *Roadside America*, Mr. Rice states: "What I've done is what they told me to do . . . . I built it like they told me" (2). Artist Anton Haardt interviewed Mr. Rice, and again his statements show him to be a strong individualist: "I'm one of a kind. My work is known all over the world, now." He explains his faith in individualistic terms: "Each of us understands our faith in our own way. We talk to God in each our own individual way. The snake handlers, the church goers, and even me. We speak our own language to God, and no way is wrong." In summary, Mr. Rice worships as he pleases and believes that other people innately possess that same right.

Hills, grass, brambles, and trees intermingle with the crosses and other objects Mr. Rice's uses to express his faith. Therefore, in addition to his use of his own private land, his integration of the natural landscape with religious expression exemplifies the Southerner's love and acceptance of the natural environment. Mr. Rice's Cross Garden is a contemporary example of unique and intense religious conviction and a connection to land linked by a spirit of individualism.

Another issue connected with the aspects of individualism, religious expression, and land was raised and resolved some years ago in relation to the Cross Garden. In the interview with Anton Haardt, Mr. Rice states his belief in the Devil and credits that enemy as the instigator of the legal action that challenged Mr. Rice's use of his land. Mr. Rice relates: "Some realtor claimed it was a public nuisance, and filed a petition against us. He was doing the Devil's work. But we took it to the Supreme Court and won." Cards available at the site proclaim that "Jesus won the battle" through an order from the Alabama Supreme Court. Regardless of whatever forces for good or evil that may have been at work, Southern individualism is again observed in the Court's ruling. Thus, Alabama law supports the philosophy that an individual has the right to make choices concerning the use of private land and the right to religious expression. Regardless of the increasing uniformity of the New South at the end of the millennium, many Southerners remain tolerant of expression outside of the norm rather than succumb to standardization.

The visitor stands and stares at the array of crosses. Intermingled with brambles, laid in unmowed grass, leaned against a tree, raised on hills, they seem to merge with the land and to miraculously grow out of it. And yet, the words, the numbers, the arrangements are definitively human made and reflect that need -- that longing described by Dabbs as "haunted by God" (181). Standing on the warm blacktop and staring at the mass of crosses, the visitor wonders at the immensity of the effort and the power of faith. Perceiving the sight from a knowledge and an appreciation of a unique people whose past is firmly rooted in a spiritual land, the modern visitor can understand and accept the intense experience of the present. If a glimpse into a more standardized future threatens to be too frightening, the visitor can find some assurance in the traits and traditions that have endured in a land known as the South. As the crosses still stand against the blue of the Alabama sky, the visitor can hope, perhaps even pray, that the love of God, land, and self will endure for surely as long as Hell is hot.

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THE MOUNDS

THEY RISE IN THE MORNING MIST
STAND TALL IN THE AFTERNOON
CAST SHADOWS IN THE EVENING
SILHOUETTED BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON

ON BLACK WARRIOR RIVER
SPREAD ACROSS THE GRASSY PLAIN
STAND TWENTY OR MORE, AND HISTORY RECORDS
IT WAS QUITE A CITY IN ITS DAY

BUT ALL THAT'S LEFT NOW
ARE THE MOUNDS

BUILT BY INDIAN PEOPLE
HIGHER THAN SIXTY FEET
ON THE TOP STOOD A TEMPLE
OR THE HOME OF A POWERFUL CHIEF

PEOPLE CAME FOR FUN AND BUSINESS
FROM AS FAR AS MEXICO
WARS WERE FOUGHT, EMPIRES WERE LOST
KINGS WERE CROWNED WITH GOLD

BUT ALL THAT'S LEFT NOW
ARE THE MOUNDS

YOU CAN CLIMB TO THE TOP AND LOOK AROUND
WHERE ONCE PEOPLE LAUGHED AND CRIED NOW IS NOT A SOUND
YOU CAN WALK FROM PLACE TO PLACE
WHERE THOUSANDS HAVE TROD
BUT YOU WON'T FIND THE TRACE OF A FOOTPRINT
IN THE GRASSY SOD

ALL THAT'S LEFT NOW
ARE THE MOUNDS

WHAT WILL BE LEFT WHEN WE ARE GONE
WHEN OUR AGE RUNS OUT OF TIME
AND A NEW WORLD PROVES MORE STRONG
AND REPLACES WHAT WE CALL YOURS AND MINE

IT DIDN'T HAPPEN TO THEM IN A DAY
AND SO IT WILL BE FOR US
WE FADE BY MOMENTS: PRESENT TO PAST
FROM DREAMS TO FLESH TO DUST

DON'T THINK THAT CONCRETE AND STEEL
ARE MORE IMMORTAL THAN WHAT'S PASSED AWAY
WHAT WE SEE IN THE PAST IS THE FUTURE'S LOOKING GLASS
AND OF OURS ANOTHER MAY SAY

ALL THAT'S LEFT NOW
ARE THE MOUNDS

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MOUNDVILLE

Moundville stands today, as it did in the dim past and shining memories of yesterday, high on a bluff overlooking the Black Warrior River, watching the currents of water and time roll by. Although their grandeur is diminished, the twenty-nine mounds[1] that comprise the 320-acre site are preserved. The ceremonial mound, which is the tallest at a height of 56 feet, still causes the approaching human to stand and stare in awe. Water continues to sparkle in the artificial lakes created by the extraction of earth necessary to raise the imposing works, but in this modern era the only purpose either the water or the sparkle serves is to delight the eye and intrigue the mind. Today the plaza and the game court are discernible only to the educated eye. Three thousand people lived in Moundville during any one period at its apogee, yet all that remain of their existence are graves, stories, and perhaps a reference in a Spanish Conquistador's diary. Although to the knowledgeable visitor much of Moundville is lost, the great mounds still stand.

An ancient belief holds that the name of any entity defines and maintains its life energy. Investing in such a mystical philosophy provides an explanation for the fact that although the largest and most prestigious of all prehistoric Indian centers during the Mississippian period in the Southeast is today physically preserved in the site known as Moundville, its original name is lost. Ongoing study and excavation continue to reveal information, but archeologists cannot determine for certain the Indian name of the prehistoric urban center currently known as Moundville, Alabama. In *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun,* Charles Hudson states that Moundville may possibly be the town of Zabusta of the powerful chiefdom Apafalaya (258). Dr. Hudson derives his hypothesis primarily from the narrative of Rodrigo Ranjel, secretary of Spanish conquistador Hernandez De Soto. In *Historia general y natural de las Indias,* Ranjel describes the experiences of the De Soto expedition at a town he names Zabusta in late 1540. Also using *The De Soto Chronicles,* Dr. Vernon James Knight, recognized as the leading expert on Moundville, can only hypothesize that the site was part of the ancient chiefdom of Apafalaya. Even the validity of these names themselves, Zabusta and Apafalaya, independent of location, must be viewed with the understanding that the Spanish writer who recorded these names had invaded the Mississippian culture from another world and was writing the names, people, and places of a language, land, and culture completely alien to him. Whatever its creators and inhabitants called their center in their time, Moundville's importance is recognized now, as it was then, as the major cultural, business, and political center for the Mississippian culture in the Southeast.

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[1] "Mound count" inspires much archaeological debate. The figure, quoted from Dr. Vernon James Knight, reflects a current count, and is new information from his soon-to-be-published book: *Archaeology of the Moundville Chiefdom*. Dr. Knight graciously gave permission to use this new data.

Determining a chronology for the Mississippian culture is an ongoing study and is the subject of ongoing debate. Depending on a particular site's location, the outside perimeters of the timeline for the Mississippian culture date approximately from AD 800-1731 (Sheldon). Mississippian centers are located in the Midwest, across the Southeast, down through the South, and as far west as Oklahoma. The sites range in size from extensive centers comprised of a varying number of mounds, plazas, community game courts, and structures built according to astronomical data to small centers with only one mound, or even villages without a mound. Cahokia, the largest site, is located in Collinsville, Illinois; Cahokia's decline in circa AD 1250 correlates with Moundville's rise to prominence.

Current excavations, studies and analysis inspire frequent debate on issues concerning a chronology for the building at Moundville. However, Dr. Vernon James Knight's time frame for the construction of the mounds at Moundville is the result of his professional synthesis and summary of all available data in addition to his field experience and research in Moundville and the Mississippian period. Dr. Knight's soon to be released new book, *Archaeology of the Moundville Chiefdom,* co-edited with Vincas P. Steponaitis, promises to be the definitive study of the Moundville site to date. Dr. Knight derives the chronology in his new book in part from his report to the National Science Foundation titled *Chronology And the use of Public Architecture at the Moundville site: Excavations in Mounds R, F, G, and E.* Therein Dr. Knight states that the years between AD 1250-1300 were a "time of large scale building initiatives" (85). Dr. Knight further states that during this "flurry of mound building everywhere" all the mounds that comprise the center of the complex were either started or substantially heightened (86). Other works initiated during this period include an extension of the plaza terrace, the construction of residential structures, charnel houses, and other buildings of indeterminate function, and the raising of a palisade. In summarizing his chronology of Moundville, Dr. Knight makes the point that the one-hundred-year span between 1250-1350 witnessed "a tremendous amount of construction over a relatively brief span of time" (86).

The source of the staggering number of man hours invested into Moundville's building projects can be partially explained by the Mississippian political system. In "Location Theory and Complex Chiefdoms," Vincas Steponaitis [2] states that numerous satellite communities, some as far away as 45 miles (72 river kilometers), functioned as a part of Moundville's political system (440). These villages expanded the population associated with Moundville to a possible 10,000 or more. The people who lived in the outlying settlements of varying size and population density paid tribute to Moundville. Some of that tribute may have included manpower (Steponaitis 440). From the violence depicted in art work and the presence of the palisade, Dr. Charles Hudson hypothesizes that, in return, Moundville provided defense and protection for these settlements (254). The other important element linking outlying communities to Moundville was the individual rulers who resided in and presided over Moundville. Steponaitis described these leaders' influence in the political, social, and religious affairs of Moundville, and other Mississippian communities, and termed the centers and their satellites "Complex Chiefdoms" (437).

For approximately three hundred years dating from Moundville's consolidation date (AD 1250) to its apogee (AD 1300) and to the beginning of its decline (AD 1500), Moundville was the major regional center for the Mississippian culture in the Southeast. In *Lost Cities of The American Southeast*, Allory McCane O'Connor imaginatively describes a scene from the past in the center today known as Moundville:

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[2] In Steponaitis's essay he coins the term "Complex Chiefdoms" and provides the details, data and models to define Moundville accordingly. Although published in 1978, Steponaitis's hypothesis is still considered the definitive study of most Mississippian, socio-political structure, and his terminology has become standard. Accordingly, Steponaitis's work in this specific area is quoted and annotated repeatedly in texts on Moundville and the Mississippian period.

> Imagine the thrill of emerging from the dense primordial forest and seeing before you the splendid city of mounds with its temples rising into the sky. Sculptures of fierce birds and feathered serpents guarded the sacred buildings, copper eyes glinting in the sun. Imagine the throngs of people on festival days. In the ceremonial plaza, costumed dancers performed, and the crowds cheered the players in the ball game. At night, thousands of campfires would have gleamed from the surrounding hills like clusters of stars. At first light, the cries of the priests would have echoed from the tops of the mounds, announcing the rising sun that marked the great cycles of planting and harvest, of death and rebirth, of destruction and renewal. (99)

Through almost a thousand years and many cycles, although its true name has currently fallen into obscurity, Moundville still stands.

Long before White settlement of the area began, Moundville was abandoned and overgrown. Nonetheless, educated travelers passing through the area were not only aware, but impressed with the ruins of the great chiefdom. They were so impressed, in fact, that they named the small town that had grown up near the site "Carthage," romantically referring both to the ruins of the mounds and the ancient city destroyed by the Roman Empire in 146 BC (O'Connor 98). In 1851, Alabama's first historian, Albert Pickett, referred to the site now known as Moundville in his *History of Alabama:* "Near Carthage, in the same State [Alabama] there are many mounds of various sizes, some of which are large" (151). Thus, for many years the site was known as "The Carthage Mounds."

Later, the ancient center became part of a cotton plantation and was referred to as the "Prince Mounds" in reference to the land's owner, C. S. Prince. In her informal modern history of the Moundville site, *Behind The Mounds*, Mrs. lona Wilson noted that Dr. Clarence Bloomfield Moore of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science could not finish his initial investigations in 1905 because of "the advanced state of the cotton planted upon the area" (12). Dr. Moore returned and continued his excavations at Moundville in 1906. According to Steponaitis in *Ceramic, Chronology, and Community Patterns,*[3] "Moore's excavation techniques were crude by today's standards" (6-7). Nonetheless, Moore's two books on his findings, *Certain Aboriginal Remains, Black Warrior River* and *Moundville Revisited,* "contained the first accurate map and extensive description of the site to appear in print, and, to this day, they remain virtually the only source of information on what was inside the mounds" (Steponaitis 7). In addition, Dr. Knight, in his introduction to *The Moundville Expeditions of Clarence Bloomfield Moore*, credits Moore's two books (reprinted in Knight's text) with bringing "the Moundville site in Alabama to the attention of the scholarly world in a dramatic fashion . . ." (1).

The next characters to play important roles in the preservation phase of Moundville's history were Mrs. Jeff Powers, Jr., known as Miss Clara; Dr. Walter Jones, state geologist and director of Museum of Natural History (O'Connor 98); and Peter A. Brannon, Curator of the State Department of Archives and History. In 1923 these citizens created the Moundville Historical Society and began initiatives to preserve the site. Their ambitious grass-roots attempt to persuade the state legislature to grant aid failed in 1927. Nevertheless, the dedicated members of the self-created Moundville Historical Society persevered. In 1929, Mr. James A. Anderson's address to the Board of Regents for the Alabama Museum of Natural History on behalf of the Moundville Historical Society's objective inspired the board members, with the assistance of other individuals, to purchase the first section of land for the Museum of Natural History. Regional newspapers of the day printed the names of the contributors, including the land owners' names as they sold the land for substantially less than market value. The articles praised the efforts of all persons involved in securing the initial 175 acres that included the principal mounds. Adjoining land was purchased as the tracts, and the funding, were made available.

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[3] In his introduction to *Ceramics, Chronology, and Community Patterns*, Steponaitis summarizes historical references, events, and research (up to his publishing date: 1983) concerning Moundville's current history. Many books begin with such summaries, and much research contributes to the information considered "common knowledge" available in many texts. However, Steponaitis's introduction is quoted and annotated repeatedly in texts on Moundville and the Mississippian period. I have followed what seems to be convention.

In addition, Alabamians owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Walter Jones, who further proved his dedication to Moundville's preservation by mortgaging his house for additional funds needed for the purchase of the site. Starting in 1930, Dr. Walter Jones conducted extensive excavations at Moundville. Then, in 1933, Dr. Jones enlisted the service of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to continue and expand work at Moundville. His project, which included both archeological investigations and building projects, continued until 1942.

Today, Moundville belongs to the State of Alabama and is protected by the University of Alabama. *In Archaeological Excavations at the John and Delia Roberts*

Craft Pavilions, Moundville Archaeological Park, Elizabeth Ryba states that although excavations have been conducted at Moundville for over 100 years, "only a small portion of the park has been formally excavated" (5). Equally enticing, the University of Alabama Museum's pamphlet available at the visitor center, *Moundville Archaeological Park,* teases that "Moundville still holds many secrets." Current excavations in various areas of the now 320-acre park continue to provide knowledge about the people who lived in Alabama during the Mississippian period.

Moundville Archaeological Park, and other archeological parks, preserve irreplaceable arenas of human history and provide opportunities for the study and the understanding of the past and the present. Moundville, as an archeological park, also serves the present population by providing a learning center, tourism, preservation of natural environments, and areas set aside for relaxation and recreation. In addition to the visage of the impressive site, the citizens of the local area and the visitors from distant and regional areas use and enjoy Moundville's picnic areas, hiking and jogging trails, and museum exhibits. A paved path meanders among the mounds and leads to a vista of the Black Warrior River. Signs point to nature trails that wind through the woods. The museum houses the famous Moundville slate palette, the Rattlesnake Disc, which is Alabama's official state artifact, other artifacts unearthed at the site, and information on prehistoric Alabama. In addition, the museum, in cooperation with the park, hosts a variety of artisans, workshops, Native American festivals, and the Easter Pageant, now a 50-year-old tradition. Thus, Moundville Archaeological Park meets the objectives of preserving a historical arena while providing an ongoing archeological excavation site and study station, in addition to serving as a center for a variety of cultural, recreational, and educational activities.

The visitor to the park can wander among the mounds, marvel at their size and number, and imagine what the center might have looked and felt like 700 years ago. Climbing the ceremonial mound and looking over the other mounds and the area that was once the plaza, the visitor might see an archeologist taking notes, a wooden cross left from an Easter service, or a child running in the grass. At a glance, Moundville appears to continue to be a place where people visit, scholars study, the faithful worship, and children, as children of all cultures have continued to do for all these centuries, play.

However, even while considering this thread of continuity, it becomes obvious that more of Moundville is lost than remains. The homes, the temples, the game courts are gone. The copper that shined in the sun, the feathers that moved in the breeze, and the sacred fires that burned in the ceremonial houses are all gone. The human beings who designed, built, lived and loved here, and their descendants, are gone. Even the name that they gave to their community is gone. All that is left now are the mounds.

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GOOD AS GOLD

AT THE FOOT OF RED MOUNTAIN
THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH
THE NEW SOUTH TOOK ITS FIRST BREATH

FROM THE BELLY OF THE EARTH
FROM BLOOD RED STONE
THE INDUSTRIAL AGE IN ALABAMA WAS BORN

LIKE AN ALCHEMIST'S SPELL
OR A PHILOSOPHER'S STONE
RED ROCK TURNED TO IRON
AND THAT'S AS GOOD AS GOLD

SO THEY BUILT SLOSS FURNACE
RAISED STACKS LIKE CATHEDRAL SPIRES
MELTED BLOOD RED ROCK WITH RED HOT FIRE

FROM THE ASHES OF WAR
KNIGHTS OF THE LOST CRUSADE
BUILT THE MAGIC CITY
MADE THE DRAGON RAGE

> HI-YA SLOSS BREATHED FIRE
> TURNED THE RIVER TO STEAM
> MADE THE NIGHT SKY BURN
>
> HI-YA SLOSS BREATHED FIRE
> MADE THE WHEELS OF PROGRESS TURN
> MADE THE WHEELS OF PROGRESS TURN

THERE ARE STORIES OF MARTYRS
WORKERS FELL INTO THE FIRES AND FANS
SACRIFICES TO SLOSS FROM THE WORKING MAN

BUT THE SOUTH THEY BUILT
STANDS STRONG TODAY
WE'VE BEEN THROUGH FIRE

BUT WE'RE HERE TO STAY

LIKE AN ALCHEMIST'S SPELL
LIKE A PHILOSOPHER'S STONE
THE SOUTH TODAY IS AS GOOD AS GOLD

HI-YA SLOSS BREATHED FIRE
TURNED THE RIVER TO STEAM
MADE THE NIGHT SKY BURN

HI-YA SLOSS BREATHED FIRE
MADE THE WHEELS OF PROGRESS TURN

HI-YA SLOSS BREATHED FIRE
THAT'S THE STORY I WAS TOLD
HI-YA SLOSS BREATHED FIRE
TODAY THE SOUTH IS GOOD AS GOLD
TODAY THE SOUTH IS GOOD AS GOLD

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SLOSS FURNACE

From the end of the Civil War to the turn of the twentieth century, the vernacular of Southern mythology referred to the Civil War as a holy cause and the Confederate soldiers as knights. Continuing the romantic, medieval theme, the terminology characterized the South as a damsel in distress who deserved--and to any man of honor--demanded to be defended. Regardless of the high-mindedness of the figurative speech, surrender found the South in ashes, literally and figuratively. No amount of romantic ideology or poetic mythology could create an illusion strong enough to veil the harsh reality endured at the economic as well as the emotional level. Holy or not, the cause was lost, the damsel possessed by the enemy, and the knights defeated psychologically, politically, and financially.

But if mythological idiom possessed the power to inflame Southerners to raise the stars and bars standard of war, it also wielded equal power to raise hopes out of defeat and to inspire Southerners to regroup and rebuild. Thus, in Alabama, the "magic city" of Birmingham rose like the proverbial phoenix from a broken land offering a new way of life in a new place. The ideals symbolized by white columns that stood among shaded groves in the black belt and provided prosperity for a few were exchanged for the ideals symbolized by industrial stacks that rose to the sky and promised opportunity for the many. Faced with the possibility of a new way of life, a new image, and a new city, the people of Alabama began to dream, and to build dreams, again.

The medieval idiom and romantic references employed by writers in the late nineteenth century make the era appear unbelievable. However, the industrial city that sprang from a corn field in 1871 and the prosperity that flowed from the furnaces like the melted ore they produced were no illusions. No illusion either were the fire and smoke that flared and billowed from the furnace's pit day and night. By all accounts, the mythological comparison of the furnace to the infamous dragon of medieval lore held true: Sloss breathed fire!

Sloss's fire was used to melt iron ore mined from Alabama's Red Mountain. Thus, the land for which all had been sacrificed for now yielded from deep within the means to rebuild. Although Alabama's mineral resources were not utilized until the beginnings of the modern era, their development began millions of years ago in the Paleozoic Era. The Paleozoic Era is subdivided into seven periods, the earliest of which is the Cambrian Period. According to W. David Lewis in *Sloss Furnaces and the Rise of the Birmingham District*, "the foundations of . . . Alabama's . . . rapid emergence as the South's leading industrial state rested on events that began in the Cambrian Period of geological time, 570 to 500 million years ago . . . " (4). Lewis explains that, in this period, an enormous shallow sea stretched across what is now Alabama. Sediment from a northwest area, and volcanic debris from the islands to the southeast, accumulated and caused the floor of the sea to sink. Then, in the Ordovician Period, 500 to 440 million years ago, these deposits changed into limestone and dolomite. Lewis further explains that these materials are known as fluxes and their presence became important later as agents that "helped remove impurities from iron ore in the roaring bellies of Alabama blast furnaces" (4). During the

Silurian Period, 440 to 400 million years ago, enormous amounts of iron were deposited into the same inland sea. By the Pennsylvanian Period, the last in the Paleozoic Era and 320 to 280 million years ago, much of the sea had turned into swamps. The swamps and sea teemed with plant and animal life. For many eons, these plants and animals died, and their remains decayed and accumulated. Lewis explains the next step in the process that is responsible for Alabama's coal fields: "heat and pressure caused by the accumulating weight ultimately produced enormous concentrations of peat, lignite, and bituminous coal" (7). Also during the Pennsylvanian Period, the first reptiles began to roam. In *Yesterday's Birmingham,* Malcolm McMillan includes photographs of prehistoric fossil tracks from an ancestor of the dinosaur. Sloss was not the first dragon-like beast to roar in Alabama.

Lewis continues that "cataclysmic geological events" at the end of the Paleozoic Era, about 285 million years ago, created a "fortuitous condition" for Alabama:

> Far below ground level, tectonic plates on which the North American and African continents rested moved steadily closer together until they collided. The terrific grinding and thrusting heaved up deposits that had accumulated in the inland sea bed, causing them to fold and buckle in spasms of mountain building. (8)

Thus, Jones Valley and Red Mountain came into existence, and the mineral wealth within them became accessible. The geological milestones of Alabama, although non-human events occurring millions of years ago, are integral factors in Alabama's human history.

After the Civil War, the existence of enormous amounts of coal, ore, and limestone in Alabama was the impetus for Colonel Sloss to participate in founding a city and to build a furnace in that city. In *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, Thomas Owen states succinctly:

> Nowhere else in the State, nor in the United States, are the three essentials to the manufacture of iron and steel, coal, iron ore and limestone present in such close proximity and in practically unlimited quantity. This fortunate circumstance has enabled the manufacturers of the Birmingham district to make iron and steel more cheaply than others and, as a result, practically to control the market price. (140)

Lewis adds that the "fortuitous condition" of abundant mineral resources caused Jones Valley to become "Alabama's most heavily populated site" (8).

However, long before Jones Valley became Alabama's most populated, modern, industrial center, and Sloss' lair, ancient Indian cultures inhabited the area. In *History of Alabama,* Albert Pickett records that remains of the Mississippian civilization that flourished and built urban centers of earthen mounds exist:

> A few miles from Elyton, in the county of Jefferson, the author is informed that there stands a large quadrangular mound, about fifty feet high, and flat on the top. (159)

In "Prehistoric Works," Thomas Owen also lists various mounds and Indian grave sites within Jefferson County (363). Chriss Doss, in "Early Settlement of Bearmeat Cabin

Frontier," notes that prehistoric cave burials, mounds, and artifacts were found within that general area, which was close to Jones Valley (271-272). In 1941, DeJarnette and Wimberly excavated the Bessemer site, named for the sister city close to Birmingham. In "The Bessemer site: Excavation of Three Mounds and Surrounding Village Areas near Bessemer, Alabama, " David DeJarnette and Steve Wimberly date the site as "Middle phase of the Mississippian Pattern or in the late prehistoric period," which is ca. 1250-1400 (21). In 1980, in *Prehistoric Indians of the Southeast,* John Walthall reviewed the DeJarnette-Wimberly data, in addition to other studies, and states that the apex of the Bessemer site probably predates the extensive urban center of Moundville (209). Walthall also discusses the Pinson cave burials, which were excavated by University of Alabama archeologist Corey Oakley in 1969 and 1970. According to Walthall, Oakley's findings led to the hypothesis that the cave was used as an ossuary by Indians as early as ca. AD 104 (210-211).

However, Armes notes, in *The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama,* that by the time of white settlement, history and tradition state that the four tribes whose territories bordered Jones Valley, the Cherokee, the Creek, the Choctaw, and the Chickasaw, did not reside in the area, but rather used the region as a hunting ground and cermonial location (9-11). Armes also notes that the Indians used the red hematite, which gives Red Mountain its name, to create paint and dye. However, according to Lewis in *Sloss Furnace and the Birmingham District,* although the Indians did find a use for the iron ore, "the Native Americans who began entering Alabama about 9,000 years ago had no metallurgical knowledge and never made iron" (9). Thus, the region's mineral wealth went unrecognized until the advent of White settlement.

Andrew Jackson's decisive battle against the Creek Nation at Horseshoe Bend, coupled with the end of the War of 1812, opened the Alabama territory for settlement and signaled the beginning of the Alabama land rush. According to Ethel Armes in *The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama*, the first geological explorers, coal diggers, and iron makers in Alabama were blacksmiths, machinists, and wagon makers who had been sent to Creek country to assist General Andrew Jackson at the suggestion of Benjamin Hawkins, government agent to the Creeks (2). Thus, tradition claims that the first use of iron in Alabama was to shoe Andrew Jackson's horse (3). Armes continues that Powell's *History of Blount County*"[1] states that, in 1813, John Jones and his brother-in-law Caleb Friley were the first settlers in the region that remains known as Jones Valley (cited in Armes 40). Jones and Friley built a fort, cabins, and a blacksmith shop. Jones' and Friley's decision to build a blacksmith shop within the same time as structures intended for housing and defense reinforces the early use of iron by White settlers. In *Sloss Furnaces and the Rise of the Birmingham District*, Lewis notes Jones' nickname, "Devil Jones" (21). Lewis does not explain Jones' sobriquet; however, given the fire and brimstone nature of Sloss's process, the connection between the two appears sibyllic. Thus, the recognition and use of iron ore were an initial and integral part of the settlement of Jones Valley.

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[1] Armes (as well as many other historians of Jones Valley and Birmingham) notes Powell's title as written above. However, Chriss H. Doss, in a footnote for his article "Early Settlement of Bearmeat Cabin Frontier," *Alabama Review 22* (October, 1969): 271, indicates that Powell's work was a paper titled: "A Description and History of Blount County." Doss' notation explains that the paper was published under the direction of the executive committee, 1855, as a part of *Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society at the Annual Meeting in the City of Tuscaloosa, July 9 and 10, 1855*. In *The Years of the Alabama Historical Society*, Peter Brannon states that in 1905 the collection was deposited into the Department of Archives in Montgomery. However, the research department currently shows no listing for Powell's or other documents from the 1855 meeting.

In 1818, according to Virginia Van der Veer Hamilton in *Alabama: A Bicentennial History*, Joseph Heslip built the first blast furnace in Alabama in Franklin County to the northwest of Jones Valley in 1818 (13). Hamilton describes the furnace as "a rough limestone structure constructed after the style of furnaces built by ancient Britons . . . " (13). In addition to the early date of Heslip's furnace corroborating early interest in Alabama's industrial potential, the reference to the furnaces of ancient Celtic people reinforces a historical reference point for the mythological language often used in describing Sloss. Hamilton continues a brief history of Alabama's iron industry by stating that, in 1846, English geologist Sir Charles Lyell recognized the value of Alabama's coal and limestone (12). According to Hamilton:

> When invited to admire the dark, rich soil of the Black Belt, the geologist startled an acquaintance in Selma by predicting that the real wealth of Alabama lay in the north. (12)

Nonetheless, the people of the time were focused on agricultural products, and the soils in Jones Valley were thin and infertile. Thus, according to Hamilton:

> Farmers avoided these mineral lands or sold them. One disposed of a rocky patch near Russellville to Col. Enoch Ensley for fifty dollars; in time that ten-acre tract would come to be regarded as one of the richest possessions of Sloss Sheffield Coal and Iron Company. (12)

However, Sloss's time to roar and rule would not come until after the Civil War.

In 1886, Henry Grady, managing editor for the *Atlanta Constitution,* addressed the New England Society of New York and described the experience of the returning Confederate soldier twenty years earlier:

> He finds his house in ruins, his farm devastated, his slaves free, his stock killed, his barns empty, his trade destroyed, his money worthless, his social system, feudal in its magnificence, swept away; his people without law or legal status; his comrades slain, and the burdens of others heavy on his shoulders. (7)

However, Grady's purpose was not to provoke sympathy, but to inspire investment. Grady continued:

> The soldiers stepped from the trenches into the furrow; horses that had charged Federal guns marched before the plow, and the fields that ran red with human blood in April were green with the harvest in June. (7)

Although Grady describes the South's plight after the war and the Southerner's ability to endure and overcome hardships in romantic prose, his words do not exaggerate the harsh realities, nor over credit the efforts expended to recreate a land and people devastated by war. A shift from agricultural commodities to industrial products became an essential part of rebuilding the South. The problem, as Colcord states succinctly in *The History of Pig Iron Manufacture in Alabama,* was that "capital in the South was nonexistent" (8). Thus, many Southerners supported Grady's self-appointed mission to entice Northern financial backing for Southern enterprise.

In *Sloss Furnace and the Building of the Birmingham District*, Lewis summarizes Alabama's experience during reconstruction:

> Like every other southern state, Alabama had a hard time during Reconstruction. Harsh realities had to be overcome to make even limited gains. Despite all odds, it was an era of achievement. Amid recovery from a devastating war, Alabama became the South's leading producer of two basic industrial commodities, coal and iron. (39)

However, in addition to the natural resources and the willingness to build industrial centers, another element was necessary: railroads. Not surprisingly then, the critical element in the founding of Birmingham, and the future site of Sloss, was the railroad.

Prior to the Civil War, in 1858, John T. Milner, a young surveyor, was mapping routes in preparation for two railroads, the North and South Railroad and the Atlanta and Chattanooga Railroad, to traverse Alabama. Upon examining Jones Valley, Milner recognized the industrial potential of the mineral rich region. Milner also knew that the two railroads would cross within this region. Therefore, as chief engineer for the N & S, he had input as to the choice and thus first-hand knowledge of the location for that crossing. In *The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama*, Armes quotes Milner's reminiscence concerning the situation twenty-seven years earlier:

> "When I look back and see the magnitude of the interests placed

> in my hands, I often wonder at the accidents that carried me through. The matter of connecting the two sections of the state, and at the same time developing the mineral regions in the best possible way, was left in my hands alone." (qtd. in Armes 112)

Milner's assessment of the industrial potential of the region, coupled with his knowledge of potential land development upon the completion of the railroad intersection, inspired him to visualize a great industrial city as he looked out over the farms and forests of Jones Valley.

However, not everyone agreed with Milner's evaluation. According to Armes, upon reading Milner's lengthy and detailed report to the Alabama legislature, Judge Walker retorted " 'That country up there is so poor that a buzzard would have to carry provisions on his back or starve to death on his passage' " (qtd. in Armes 119). Nonetheless, Milner's report was printed and thus, in Milner's words: " 'then and there was the beginning of the city of Birmingham' " (qtd. in Armes 120). However, twenty years would pass before Birmingham became the city whose night skies were lit by Sloss' fire.

In *Yesterday's Birmingham*, McMillian explains that, in the aftermath of surrender, many Southerners realized that the North's industrial economy was a contributing factor in the defeat of the South's agricultural economic system. Therefore, many Southerners, as epitomized in Grady's speeches, turned away from agrarian philosophies and economies. These post-war advocates of industrialization realized that transportation was a necessary element for their vision of Reconstruction. McMillian states that "the [w]ar was scarcely over when the Alabama legislature of 1865-66 passed a law . . . providing a state subsidy for railroads during the Reconstruction period" (12). As the surveyor for the North and South Railroad Company, Milner was still involved in the planning stages for the intersection of the North and South Railroad and the Atlanta and Chattanooga Railroad in Jones Valley. Milner had also retained his desire to be instrumental in the founding of a great industrial city at that juncture.

Initially, Milner attempted to create a location for the city through collaborative efforts between the two railroads. When those negotiations proved unfruitful and John and Daniel Stanton, the owners of the Atlanta and Chattanooga Railroad, proved to be Milner's rivals, Milner appealed to friends and business associates in Montgomery. Josiah Morris, an influential banker, invested in Milner's vision by purchasing an option on land that the Atlanta-Chattanooga Railroad failed to renew. In *The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama*, Armes states that Morris with "one hundred thousand dollars in cold cash" purchased four thousand one hundred and fifty acres of land -- the entire site for Milner's city (223).

Morris and Milner then formed The Elyton Land Company, named for a small town in the vacinity. The charter stated that the company's purpose was " ' the buying land and selling lots with the view to the location, laying off and effecting the building of a city at or near the town of Elyton' " (qtd. in Armes 222). In short, the Elyton Land Company's objective was to manifest the city of Milner's vision.

However, Birmingham was not a reality yet, and the Stantons tried one last effort to prevent Birmingham's birth. In *Sloss Furnaces and the Rise of the Birmingham*

District, Lewis relates that the Stantons, realizing that the men of the Elyton Land Company had strained their financial resources, acquired some outstanding and imminently due mortgage bonds against the South and North Railroad. Default of the loans therefore meant that Stanton would be in control of the North and South Railroads; thus, the Stantons could prevent the intersection of the railroad lines in Jones Valley (54). However, at the eleventh hour, Colonel James Withers Sloss negotiated a financial merger with the L & N Railroad that allowed the debts to be paid, and thus, according to Lewis, "in one bold stroke, Sloss saved the projected industrial city, still only a dream, from oblivion" (55).Therefore, from the very beginning, even before he built his famous furnace, Colonel Sloss was an integral figure in the founding of Birmingham.

Many colorful and romantic stories are told of the first days of the new city. In the second meeting of the Elyton Land Company, the entrepreneurs named the new city "Birmingham," after the English industrial city of the same name. In "Earliest Pioneer Days in Birmingham," Mrs. Alfred Hawkins records that the new city received a knife, made from Birmingham steel but forged in England's Birmingham, as a gift from the English Birmingham to its namesake (3). James R. Powell was elected president of the Elyton Land Company, and later the second mayor of Birmingham. Powell worked faithfully and energetically for the benefit of the new city. In *Building Birmingham*, Florence Moss recounts the story that when Colonel Powell told Major McCollum, a constituent of Milner, the name of the new city, McCollum declared "Very well, Colonel Powell, and I dub thee, ' Duke of Birmingham' " (109). Another romantic incident, according to Lewis, occurred in February of 1873 at the Elyton Land Company's annual meeting when Powell coined the city's nickname, "the magic city," in reference to its mushrooming growth (49). The romantic language, the reference to medieval titles, and connections to the old world exemplify the lyrical and mythological vernacular that was used to describe, and to inspire, the Southerner in the process of creating the foundations for a modern city. Thus, the sparks and smoke from the molten lead of an industrial furance could cause it to be metaphorically described as a fire-breathing dragon, while its stacks were compared to cathedral spires.

In 1881, Colonel Sloss built Sloss Furnace on fifty acres of land at 1st Avenue and 34th Street. According to Lewis in *Sloss Furnaces and the Rise of the Birmingham District*, the Elyton Land Company donated the land to further Birmingham's industrial might (74). Colonel Sloss imported an expert furnace man, Harry Hargreaves, from South Pittsburg to design the most advanced type of furnace available: the Whitwell furnace. In *The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama*, Armes describes Hargreaves as "an agile little fellow" who would " 'shin-up' all those pipes, stoves, and stacks like a jackie aloft the rigging of a man-o-war"(288). According to Lewis, the furnaces' designs were "as distinctive in form as the crenellated towers of medieval castles . . . " (74). Lewis goes on to state " Sixty feet high and eighteen feet in diameter, Colonel Sloss's new Whitwell stoves were the first of their type ever built in Birmingham" (75). By building the most advanced technology available in the market, Sloss ensured that his new enterprise, and the city he continued to invest in, remained competitive in the national market. In addition, Lewis maintains that Colonel Sloss intended for his furnace to be recognized as a Southern industrial enterprise operating on an equal basis with other industries in the United States (75).

According to Lewis, Sloss's first furnace produced a form of cast iron called pig iron, so named because the metal, liquefied by the intense heat of the blast furnace, "ran into channels that led in turn to oblong molds whose layout reminded ironworkers of a litter of piglets suckling at the belly of mother sow" (10). The technology and techniques required to produce pig iron were relatively new. However, Lewis claims that cast iron had become "a prized commodity, one on which the owners of Sloss Furnaces staked the future of their enterprise . . ." (9).

Lewis states that for centuries ironworkers worked with fire and bellows to produce wrought iron and considered cast iron a waste product. However, in Sloss's time, cast iron came into demand for military purposes such as cannons and cannonballs, as well as heating products such as stove backs and andirons. European ironmakers had invented the blast furnace to achieve that ever popular commercial objective: "higher yields with less human effort." The new blast furnaces were characterized by high, huge structures in which bellows pumped enormous amounts of air. The increased volume of air in the large spaces enabled large amounts of charcoal to burn, thus producing the intense temperature--1500 degrees centigrade--necessary to melt iron (9-10). Thus, a modern, commercial objective was achieved through the use of structures reminiscent of medieval cathedrals and technologies akin to an alchemist's spells.

According to Lewis, Colonel Sloss surpassed his objective of achieving equality with other national regions. Lewis states, "for a time, the firm that owned Sloss Furnaces became the world's largest maker of foundry pig iron, and Alabama was the chief center of the American foundry trade" (10). In *Yesterday's Birmingham*, McMillian traces the rapid increase:

> Between 1880 and 1890, the district's production of pig iron increased more than ten-fold . . . . In 1876 Alabama pig iron accounted for less than 2 per cent of the total output in the United States; by 1885 it accounted for 5 per cent and soon after 1890 for 10 per cent. Alabama ranked twentieth among the states in pig iron production in 1870, fifteenth in 1880 and fourth in 1890. (37)

Thus, fiery Sloss became famous, and the magic city that rose from a corn field became a major industrial center.

Such accomplishments inspired Henry Grady to boast to Northern investors that:

> We have sowed towns and cities in the place of theories, put business above politics. We have challenged your . . . iron makers in Pennsylvania. (8)

Therefore, Birmingham, through the power and prosperity of Sloss, became the epitome of Grady's now famous term: the New South:

> The old South rested everything on slavery and agriculture, unconscious that these could neither give nor maintain healthy growth . . . . The new South is enamored of her new work. Her soul is stirred with the breath of new life. The light of a grander

> day is falling fair on her face. She is thrilling with the consciousness of growing power and prosperity. (11)

However, regardless of Grady's picture of a shining New South, old shadows lingered. Like the conflicting metaphors of "dragon" and "cathedral," Sloss possessed both a light and a dark side.

In the one hundred years Sloss Furnace operated, it is credited with effects ranging from prosperity to pollution. Although Grady promoted and praised Sloss Furnaces, and other industrial enterprises, as elements of the New South, other writers offer a more negative viewpoint. In *Sloss Furnaces and the Rise of the Birmingham District,* Lewis describes Sloss as "deeply rooted in the old plantation order" (2). Lewis continues by quoting statistics to show that untrained, disadvantaged blacks constituted 90% of the labor force that manned the furnaces in Birmingham. He claims further that they were paid a menial wage that was often spent on company housing and in the company store. He states that "swarms of former slaves flocked to the Birmingham District," preferring to work in the mines and furnaces in preference to "peonage in the poverty-stricken countryside" (82). Lewis furthers his thesis by stating:

> Colonel Sloss and other owners were happy to hire them, believing that low wages, proximity to raw materials, a benign climate that permitted cheap, flimsy housing, and freedom from municipal taxes on land situated outside the city limits made an unbeatable strategy for competing with northern firms. (82)

In *Stars Fell on Alabama*, Carl Carmer likewise found little to praise in Birmingham:

> She has no traditions. She is the New South . . . an industrial monster sprung up in the midst of a slow-moving pastoral. (79-81)

Lewis does not limit his criticism to human abuses. He also records environmental damages:

> Belching soot and smoke, the furnaces blanketed the city with a pall of dust that blackened buildings, clogged window screens, soiled clothing and helped raise Birmingham's abnormally high incidence of lung disease. (2)

Leah Rawls Atkins, in "Growing Up Around Edgewood Lake," reminisces: "We went barefoot most of the time, and it was so dirty where we lived that footwashing was a twice-a-day ritual" (83). In the prologue to *Salvation on Sand Mountain,* Dennis Covington discusses environmental, human, and spiritual wounds connected to the New South:

> Let me tell you what we do with evil spirits in the City [Birmingham]. We start with coal that a bunch of our male ancestors died getting out of the ground. We heat it til it gives off poisonous gases and turns into coke . . . . Then we set that coke on fire. We use it to fuel our furnaces. We fill the furnace with limestone and iron ore and any evil spirits we find lying around. (xv)

Lewis reinforces Covington's perceptions concerning "evil spirits," calling Sloss furnaces "at least partly demonic" (2). Likewise, Carmer states that "the valley of the furnaces is an inferno" (81). Demon, evil spirit, dragon, or machine, Sloss was powerful and did not always submit to control. The same power that birthed both prosperity and pride also brought death to some of the men that toiled in Sloss's lair.

In *Like It Ain't Never Passed: Remembering Life in Sloss Quarters*, oral history interviews compiled by the Sloss Furnace Association, the Sloss Furnace Historic Landmark, and the Oral History Project of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Clarence Dean, who worked at Sloss in the late 1930's states:

> You had to be on your 'p's and q's' when you're working around a blast furnace . . . . when you go in the gate everything is dangerous. All of it was dangerous. (7)

In *Sloss Furnaces and the Rise of the Birmingham District*, Lewis retells the grim story of the demise of two black laborers, Aleck King and Bob Mayfield. The two men were repairing an inner wall when some "congealed material" fell to the bottom. The men partially suffocated from the fumes the material effused and, unable to stand, fell to fiery deaths (81). Paige Wainwright, director of Sloss Furnace Museum, recounts from the Sloss oral history library another accident that resulted in a horrible death in the wind tunnel building. The 20-foot fans that created the 300-mile-an-hour wind necessary to fan the flames ran continuously. Therefore, the men oiled the fans as they turned which caused the oil to splatter on the catwalks the men trod to reach the upper parts of the fans. One day, a man slipped and fell into one of the mammoth fans. As the fan could never be shut down, the man died impaled on the blades as they continued to whirl. Workers related that several days elapsed before his body was completely consumed by the fan blades. These deaths remind the modern romantic of the hardships and dangers workers endured in the past and the truth about "the good old days." As Clarence Dean declared in his interview: "Them days are gone. Let them stay gone" (7).

However, one worker's death has become the subject of popular folklore. In *The Ghost in Sloss Furnace,* Kathryn Tucker Windham tells the story of Theophilus Jowers. Windham surmises that, like other young men during Reconstruction, young Jowers left his father's plantation "lured by a great industrial awakening" (8). According to Windham, Jowers was committed to his foundry career and wanted to "be a good iron man" (10). In the spring of 1887, Jowers , with his wife and five children, moved to Birmingham to work at Alice Furnace No. One, which predated Sloss. Although his job as a foundryman was dangerous, Jowers never considered another occupation. His legend hinges on his reputed statement: "As long as there's a furnace standing in Jefferson County, I'll be there" (11). In relating the accident that cost Jowers his life, Windham quotes a *Birmingham Age* article dated September 10, 1887, that states Jowers fell while installing a bell that was part of a charging apparatus (18). According to the article, Jowers tripped and fell on top of the bell that then plummeted into the furnace. The intense heat of the furnace instantly burned most of his body to ashes. Some time later, workers reported seeing a man who looked like Jowers walking around the "dancing sparks and searing heat" of the furnace's hearth as if he was checking the system (20). Although the apparition's visitation shocked the workers at first, they soon became comfortable with Jower's ghostly presence and related the story of his death and his promise to remain at a furnace to new workers. When Alice No. One closed, Jower's phantom reappeared at the

"Big Alice" furnace. Then when "Big Alice" shut down, Jowers started his ghostly maintenance walks at Sloss, the only remaining furnace in Jefferson County. Thus, relates Windham:

> Theophilus became something of a folk hero, a prototype of the thousands of men who dug the ore and mined the coal and tended the furnaces. (20)

Although Sloss closed down in 1971, it survives as an industrial archaeological museum, and reports declare that Jowers remains true to his word and makes regular appearances. Thus, Sloss serves as the eternal workplace for the folkhero, the reminder of the price of power, and the keeper of the dreams of a past age.

Today the visitor can wander among the rusted stacks from where once the billowing smoke dimmed the sky. The visitor can stare at the dusty bull-ladles where once molten lead ran in liquid fire along the viaduct, lighting the night sky like newly-poured stars. The well-read visitor may look at the surrounding hills of Jones Valley and reflect that the ancient Cambrian Sea has long dried, the mountains formed by cataclysmic collision of continents are worn, and, of the huge reptiles that stalked the swamps, only a few bones and footprints in coal remain. The Creek Indians no longer hunt in the forest, the settlers no longer plow the fields, and the slaves no longer labor on the plantations. The workers, Black and White, are only known through the oral interviews in the archives kept within the facilities of the great Sloss. Sloss, once the most technologically advanced industry of its time, the epitome of a new era, is now an archeological museum. But the spirit of the people that built Sloss, and rebuilt Alabama and the South, continues to grow and to build. And, just as permanent as that footprint in that coal bed, each generation makes its impression on the future. Each dream realized or lost, every breath of fire or air, every spire of hope raised or dashed, is a part of the alchemical spell that has been tried through fire and has made the South good as gold.

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TRAPPED IN TIME

THEY GIVE WEDDINGS THESE DAYS
IN THE HOTEL TALISE
THEY HANG THEIR PICTURES ON THE WALL
FOR VISITORS TO SEE
THAT'S ONE OF OUR BRIDES
THE OWNER POINTED OUT TO ME
IN HER PICTURE SHE WAS SMILING ON THE STAIRS
WHITE SATIN FLOWED AROUND HER
HER VEIL FLOATED IN THE AIR

ON THE WALL BESIDE HER PICTURE
HUNG AN ANTIQUE MIRROR
REFLECTED IN ITS SILVER
WAS ANOTHER PORTRAIT NEAR
PAINTED IN THE 1860'S
JUDGING BY HER GOWN AND HAIR
GREEN VELVET FELL FROM SHOULDERS WHITE
DARK HAIR PARTED IN THE MIDDLE, HANDS FOLDED JUST RIGHT

WE STOOD THERE TOGETHER IN THE HOTEL TALISE
THE BRIDE, THE BELLE AND ME

> TRAPPED IN TIME
> THAT FEELING THAT THE PAST IS NOT QUITE GONE
> IT CAN REACH OUT AND TOUCH YOU LIKE A BREEZE OR A SONG
> IT CAN SHINE LIKE A HALO
> OR LOCK YOU IN THE DARK
> EVERY CHOICE YOU MAKE IS COLORED
> BY THE HISTORY IN YOUR HEART
> LIKE AN OLD CLOCK CHIME
> TRAPPED IN TIME

I WALKED OUT ON THE BRIDGE
THAT CROSSED TALLAPOOSA RIVER
WATER CRASHING DOWN THE DAM
MADE ME STOP AND SHIVER
BUT I KNEW IT BROUGHT LIGHTS
AND HEAT IN THE WINTER

SUN ON MY FACE AND THE FUTURE LOOKED BRIGHT
THEN I CROSSED THE BRIDGE TO THE OTHER SIDE

THE OLD CONFEDERATE FACTORY
STANDS BY THE RIVERSIDE
NOW JUST A SHELL IT WATCHES
TIME AND RIVER ROLL ON BY
THE ONLY MUNITIONS SPARED
IN WILSON'S RAIDERS' RIDE
THOUGH A RUIN TODAY IT STILL STANDS
CAUSE THE YANKEES GOT LOST IN ALABAM

I STOOD ON THE BRIDGE BETWEEN THE PRESENT AND THE PAST
WAR AND PEACE AND THE RIVER RUNNING FAST

(REPEAT CHORUS)

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TALLASSEE

In the South, the past remains a part of the present. The land and the people hold on to memories. In the introduction to *An Alabama Legacy*, Atkins, Rogers, and Ward state that "The past surrounds Alabama's citizens, permeating their lives and giving substance and meaning to the present" (13). Whether a specter that darkens the horizon, or a beacon that beckons to a brighter day, in Alabama, the past remains a cornerstone of the present and thus becomes the foundation for the future.

In Tallassee, the waters that rush beneath the Fitzpatrick Bridge bear witness to the past and the present, simultaneously, every day. A visitor crossing the bridge who notices the signposts of the past can feel as if the bridge not only crosses the Tallapoosa River, but also spans time.

According to David Lewis in *Sloss Furnaces and the Rise of the Birmingham District*, the first event that physically shaped Alabama and thus remains an influence on the present, occurred approximately 285 million years ago at the end of the Paleozoic Era. The tectonic plates on which the North American and African continents rested collided and created the Appalachian mountain range (8). The geological significance of this event is documented on physiographical maps of Alabama. In *Alabama the History of a Deep South State,* a physiological map of Alabama shows that the upper half of Alabama's land is marked by angles, while the lower half is marked by curves, thus demonstrating the stark differences in the two land masses caused by the Paleozoic collision (Rogers, Ward, Atkins, and Flynt xviii).

Johnston, in *Physical Divisions of Northern Alabama,* further describes the upper right half of Alabama's land:

> The Valley and Ridge province in Alabama is marked by northeastward-striking valleys and ridges developed upon sandstone, shale, limestone, and dolomite of Paleozoic age. (17)

These divisions are named Highland Rim, Cumberland Plateau, Valley Ridge and Piedmont Upland (Rogers, Ward, Atkins, and Flynt xviii). In addition, Johnston assigns the upper land mass to the Paleozoic Era, the second oldest time period in relative geologic time (17). Thus by name, design, and description, Alabama's upper land mass angles in a northeastwardly direction, designates the end of the Appalachian mountain range, and, as such, signposts the end of the second oldest geological era.

In contrast, the lower part of Alabama is mapped by curves. Craig Sheldon explains that these curves indicate a gradually flattening topography that descends to the Gulf of Mexico. The sections are named the Fall Line Hills, the Black Belt, and the Lower Coastal Plain (Rogers, Ward, Atkins, Flynt xviii). The Coastal Plain is composed of formations dated within the Cenozoic Era (Adams, Butts, Stephenson, and Cooke 252). Putnam explains that Cenozoic means "recent life," is the current geological era, and is one entire era forward in time from the Paleozoic (16). Thus, by name and design, Alabama's lower land mass curves in an east-westwardly direction, signifies the beginning of the river basin and coastal plain and, as such, indicates the beginning of the modern geological era.

Adams states that the boundary between these provinces is the "Fall line" (25). Thus, the fall line is that physical location where one age ends and another begins, where one type of land ends and another begins. The fall line is further defined in the *Columbia Encyclopedia* as "the place where rivers drop to the plain in falls or rapids" ("Fall Line" 653). Therefore, the dramatic sight of water cascading over a rocky precipice signifies more than a beautiful sight; it designates an abrupt change in topography. In addition, since human culture is often influenced by terrain, the fall line is frequently the dividing point between "mountain" and "flatland" cultures. In the introduction to *Alabama the History of a Deep South State*, Rogers, Ward, Atkins and Flynt state succinctly:

> Alabama is divided by nature into distinct sections that, overshading and overlapping at their edges, developed historically as separate political, economic, and cultural units. (xv)

Thus, inasmuch as the fall line is that place that separates two different geologic eras, and two different terrains, its demarcation powers can be extended to human history as well. In Alabama, that place is Tallassee.

Vernon James Knight, Jr., in an archeological excavation report of a site in the general area of Tallassee, describes evidence of "periodic use of the area by small groups during the period 8000 to 6000 BC." However, in the same report, Knight states that continuous occupation of the site, known as Tukabatchee, dates from the later Mississippian period, 1400-1550 AD (52, 9).

During the Late Mississippian period, Spanish conquistador Hernando De Soto entered many Indian settlements and was the first European to explore the interior of

Alabama. From the first written history of Alabama by Albert Pickett in 1851 until the United States De Soto Expedition Commission in 1939, historians state that De Soto visited Tallassee at its present location during his explorations in 1540. According to his secretary, Rodrigo Rangel, De Soto did visit a town they recorded as "Talisi." However, as Virginia Noble Golden explains in *A History of Tallassee for Tallasseeans*, three Indian settlements in Alabama have been known as Talisi. According to Golden, "These towns were located near where Talladega, Selma and Tallassee are today" (1).[1]

The De Soto commission locates the Talisi that De Soto entered near Selma. However, the latest evidence, reported by Charles Hudson in *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun,* places the Indian settlement that De Soto visited near Childersburg (228). In discussing the U. S. Commission's route, Hudson makes the following statement concerning the chairman, John Swanton: "Swanton did not claim finality for his route" (463). Concerning his own work, Hudson readily admits that "it can be argued that a scholarly consensus on the route does not exist" (478). Perhaps then, there is no need to refute tradition as stated by Golden:

> Older Tallasseeans whose grandfathers knew the Creek Indians in this territory and who heard from them stories of De Soto's visit may therefore reasonably still think they tread the ground which De Soto trod. (2)

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[1] A wide variety of spelling for Indian towns exist. Craig Sheldon explains that the variations are due to attempts by early writers to phonetically reproduce the Indian dialect. This essay will use the current accepted spellings used by archeologists except when quoting sources, when the source's original spelling will be used for accuracy and interest.

Golden states that Talisi is marked on a map in the British archives dated 1715 (2). In 1776, William Bartram records in *Travels* that he visited "Talasse, a town on the Tallaposse River" (251) A year later he revisited the area and writes that he arrived in Tukabatchee in search of some traders, but when he arrived they were gone (282, 447). Although Bartram does not note the proximity of the two towns, Talisi and Tukabatchee were across the river from each other (Golden 4). The first written description of the towns on the fall line at the Tallapossa Falls is from United States Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins in 1798 (Golden 3). In *A Sketch of the Creek Country,* Hawkins affirms the location of Talisi: "Talesee . . . situated . . . on the left bank of Tallapoosa, opposite Tookaubatche" (25). Hawkins places Tukabatchee "on the right bank of the Tallapossa" (27). He also notes the presence of "one-hundred-and-sixteen gunmen belonging to this town" (29). Hawkins also discusses numerous other settlements in the area. Thus, he documents that the region was well populated by Indian people, and the two towns, Talisi and Tukabatchee, were in close proximity and were well established by 1800.

In *A Sketch of the Creek Country,* Hawkins notes the gunman potential of each settlement, and his concern was well warranted. Although, as he records, the Talisis sided with the American colonists against the British during the American Revolution, the people of Tukabatchee, who were closely associated with the people of Talisi, were not pleased with the increasing numbers of White settlers migrating to their territory. At the fall line, where the town of Tukabatchee stood, battle lines were drawn.

In "Tecumseh's Visits to The Creeks," Mary Jane McDaniel states that in the fall of 1811, Tecumseh, accompanied by an entourage of fellow warriors from the northern

Ohio Valley, attended the annual council at Tukabatchee (6). Tecumseh's speech and prophecies during the council form the core of his legend. The events that followed are historical fact. However, the Tecumseh's legend weaves historical fact, political manipulations, romance, and mysticism into an intricate tapestry. Although the design beguiles and intrigues, the threads are almost impossible to trace.

According to McDaniel in "Tecumseh's Visits to the Creeks," legend and fact agree that Tecumseh was a Shawnee from the Ohio River Valley and that he had a family connection with the Southern tribes because his mother was born in Tukabatchee. Tecumseh attended the annual council at Tukabatchee to speak to the chief, Big Warrior, and the other warriors gathered there. His mission was to inspire the Muskogee to unite with tribes from other regions and to repel the White populace from their lands. He had formed an alliance with the British in which the British promised him arms and supplies (2-7). Thus, the military effort Tecumseh advocated was a part of the War of 1812.

McDaniel corroborates that legend and fact also agree that approximately five thousand people were present in Tukabatchee during the council meeting (6). The large attendence was probably due to two events. In *Benjamin Hawkins: Indian Agent*, Merritt Pound explains that the first was Benjamin Hawkins' speech, wherein he informed the Creeks that a new road was to be opened through their territory to aid in white settlement. He was aware his announcement would not be a popular one (209-210). Second, trader Sam Dale claims that rumors had spread that Tecumseh would speak, and many were curious (qtd. in Claiborne 41).

Hawkins delivered his speech and then waited a few days to hear Tecumseh. In *The Creek War of 1813 and 1814*, Halbert and Ball print the deposition of Samuel Manac, a warrior of the Creek Nation who claims to have been present at the council. Manac states that:

> Tecumseh refused to deliver his talk, and on being requested to give it, said that the sun had gone too far that day. (qtd. in Halbert and Ball 91)

Finally Hawkins, as well as other White men, left Tukabatchee. From this point of the story, fact is hard to find, and legend is difficult to believe.

Legend, tradition, and in many cases, history texts, state that Tecumseh and his entourage dramatically entered into the square to address Big Warrior, the Chief of Tukabatchee, and the other people present, naked except for a "flap," painted black, and wearing feathers in their hair. As they approached the council fire, their faces were grim, and they shouted loud war whoops. Tecumseh recounted the tribulations of the Indian people since the advent of White colonization. He urged the Creeks to return to the traditional ways of Indian life, to give up the norms of the Whites. He urged uncompromising warfare on the White settlers--even if it meant killing women and children. He advocated the complete removal of white settlements from Indian land--even to digging up graves. He promised support in a war effort from the mighty king across the water--Britain.

Tecumseh claimed to be the beneficiary of divine support as well. A member of his entourage professed to be a prophet, and many Indians claimed to have witnessed and experienced healings and visions. Tecumseh claimed his message was directed by the Great Spirit. He promised the warriors that spiritual powers would protect and assist them in battle.

Many young warriors were inspired by Tecumseh's speech and were inflamed with the desire for war. However, Big Warrior, although stirred, was not convinced. Tecumseh sensed Big Warrior's reservations. He accused Big Warrior of having White blood and of being a coward.

Then Tecumseh said he could prove his message came from the Great Spirit. He told Big Warrior and the rest of the gathering that when he returned to Detroit he would spread his arms wide and that this movement would be seen in the sky. He also promised to stomp his foot three times, which would cause the earth to tremble and destroy the houses in Tukabatchee.

He taught those inspired by his speech and his prophecies a new dance--the dance of the lakes. He promised that participating in the dance-of-the-lakes would provide the warriors with the strength to cast off White ways and to fight White settlers. He left a bunch of sticks he had painted red to symbolize war and instructed the warriors to cast aside one each day. When the last stick was thrown away, it was time to wage war against the White settlers. Then he left. However, several areas of Tecumseh's legend contain questionable content.

The text of Tecumseh's speech, reprinted in *History of Alabama and Her People* by Albert Moore, can be traced to John Claiborne in *The Life and Times of Sam Dale.* In the preface, Claiborne states that the publication's source is a series of original manuscripts on the "personal adventures of General Dale . . . taken from his own lips at different periods" (vii). Therefore, Claiborne acknowledges that the text originates from oral interviews given at a date much removed from the events. Claiborne further concedes that the original manuscripts were lost in a steamboat accident. In "Tecumseh's Prophecy," Lewis Dean explains in a footnote that Claiborne recreated Dale's memoirs ten years after Dale's death and approximately forty-five years after Tecumseh's speech (168). Benjamin Griffith, in *McIntosh and Weatherford, Creek Indian Leaders*, also questions Dale's memory:

> Sam Dale professed to remember Tecumseh's speech verbatim, but it is likely that his memory was colored by subsequent emotions inflamed during the Creek War of 1813 and 1814. (75)

In addition, none of the other accounts of Tecumseh's speeches contain the detailed and emotionally descriptive content of Dale's, as reported by Claiborne. However, McDaniel notes that other accounts of speeches to other towns corroborate basic content (7).

In *The Creek War of 1813 and 1814*, Halbert and Ball aggressively challenge the authenticity of Dale's memory and thus the accepted text of Tecumseh's speech. They maintain that Tecumseh simply advocated:

> giving the white people the alternative of restoring to the Indians, whom he claimed to represent, their lands, or of meeting those Indians in battle. (62)

Griffith, in *McIntosh and Weatherford, Creek Indian Leaders*, agrees with Halbert and Ball and states:

> The bellicose tone of his speech is atypical of Tecumseh, and the exhortation to kill women and children is particularly uncharacteristic. There is ample evidence that in many other speeches he counseled humane treatment of everyone except captured warriors. (75)

Halbert and Ball also strongly imply that Dale, as recorded by Claiborne, may have used another source besides memory concerning Tecumseh's speech:

> The speech as to its genuineness is much like the historic speech of John Adams, "Sink or Swim". . . .There is no reasonable evidence that it contains the substance of the statements of Tecumseh. (69)

Further, Halbert and Ball are convinced that Tecumseh was not present in Tukabatchee in the fall of 1811 and that, therefore, he never delivered any speech (71-73).

Tecumseh's prophetic statements concerning signs in the sky and earth were interpreted by much of the Indian and White populations as fulfilled by the comet of 1811 and the New Madrid earthquakes, respectively. Since Halbert and Ball ardently disclaim Tecumseh's presence in Tukabatchee, they also protest the account of his prophecy of the comet and the earthquake; thus, they equally oppose the hypothesis that he had knowledge concerning the comet provided by the British (73). However, Tecumseh's predictions of a comet and an earthquake are corroborated in the accounts of his speeches at other Indian towns. Certainly, from his political alliance with the British, he had access to information about the comet. In *Tecumseh's Visits to the Creeks*, McDaniel states: "Actually, the

British in Canada had told him that the comet was to appear." Concerning the earthquake, McDaniel states: "It is not certain how Tecumseh was able to prophesy the coming of the earthquake of 1811" (8).

Tecumseh's prophetic abilities aside, the comet and earthquake are scientific and historical fact. The comet of 1811 streaked across the autumn sky of North America to the wonder and awe of both White and Indian populations. Benjamin Griffith writes:

> In October this comet was unusually large, the head measuring more than one million miles in diameter and the tail one hundred million miles long. (77)

The violent earthquakes that began in December of 1811 rearranged the landscape and terrified the people of all races living in North America. James Penick, in *The New Madrid Earthquakes*, states that the severity of the earthquakes moved many--White and Indian--to believe that Judgment Day was at hand, although each defined that event differently (126). The New Madrid earthquakes, named for a small town near the epicenter, lasted from December to April. Penick notes that:

> The earthquakes . . . were a national event. Over a period of months shocks were felt in the southeast, in the middle seaboard states, in New England, in Detroit, in Canada's Province of Quebec, far up the Mississippi River, and in New Orleans. (1-6)

The scientific records of the earthquake make it easy to believe the story that the people of Tukabatchee, upon feeling the earth tremble beneath their feet and, according to some, barely escaping their homes as the structures collapsed, ran into the square and cried that Tecumseh had reached Detroit. Many proclaimed that the quake was proof that his message was divinely supported. Penick poetically summarizes:

> for Tecumseh . . . the earthquakes were a signal that the Great Spirit had finally taken a decisive hand in the affairs of his people. The Indian Armageddon was at hand. (126)

Thus, the people of Tukabatchee, and other tribes, were persuaded to follow Tecumseh, to join the warriors known as Red Sticks, and to wage war on the White settlers.

Without the use of a time machine, the truth about Tecumseh's speech and prophecies at Tuckabatchee may never be known. However, three things remain accepted fact: a comet streaked across the sky, an earthquake shook the ground, and a war was waged.

Regardless of the debate surrounding Tecumseh's prophecies, sources agree that he advocated a change in reality--one that did not include White settlers. Further, he attempted to initiate a new era for his people. The White settlers of the region were also advocates of a new reality for the region--one that did not include the Indian populations. Their philosophy also embodied a new era of opportunity for their people. It is an intriguing coincidence that the place where the statement of these ideologies has been immortalized is also the location where the geological ages collided. And further, just as when the continents collided, and one geological age ended and another geological age began, so too, when Indian and White cultures collided, the Indian dominance of the region ended and the American possession began. Just as the rapids and falls mark the fall line, so too the mounds and historical markers mark the remains of Tukabatchee in Tallassee.

Andrew Jackson defeated the Red Stick forces at Horseshoe Bend and then rode to the Battle of New Orleans and defeated the British. Armed with military success and the accompanying popular support, he rode the tide of victory into the White House. From that vantage place, he used the power of the Presidency to effect the expulsion of all Indians from the Southeast to lands west of the Mississippi. In *Alabama: A Bicentennial History* Hamilton summarizes the history:

> Bowing to the seemingly inevitable, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Cherokees signed treaties ceding their lands. By 1839 the Indians had bartered their ancestral realm for the plains of Oklahoma and, like the buffalo which once roamed Alabama, had been been pushed west of the Mississippi. (151-152)

Golden states that, in 1836, the chief of the Creeks, Opothleyaholo, sold Tukabatchee to William Marsten, and then left with his people for the new territory (10, 15). The time of the Indian in the southeast was over, and the time of the Anglo culture began.

Golden states that the first White settlement that would become known as Tallassee was located a mile and a half below the present site of Tallassee. Records of deeds show that people were building homes at what was later called "Old Town," as early as October of 1835. The history of Old Town is difficult to reconstruct, and "There is now no trace of the first location of the white settlement known as Tallassee" (11, 15).

However, Golden recounts two incidents that exemplify the shifts and changes of the times. Because he was married to a Creek woman, a white man named Barent Dubois owned a large amount of land in the area of the what is now Tallassee. Thus, Dubois may be considered the first resident of Tallassee at its present location. Golden states that his home "with its original log timbers" stood until 1939 when another instrument of change--the highway--caused its destruction. In a poignant note, Golden adds that " the Debois family lived in the house until 1890 when Mrs. Dubois left Tallassee to rejoin her people west of the Mississippi" (12). Golden also documents that John Highland McKenzie and his wife relocated to Tallassee from South Carolina in the 1830's. Golden states that, in addition to farming, McKenzie was a businessman who ran a sawmill, a gristmill, and the first ferry across the Tallapoosa River. McKenzie built his cabin on the regular Indian trail. Tradition relates that the Indians traveling on the trace did not detour for the house, but rather traveled through the open hall of the house, called the "dog trot." Golden notes that McKenzie's descendants, as well as other descendants of early settlers, have "lived continuously in Tallassee" since that time (14).The tradition of white settler and Indian living side by side peaceably remain along with the legend of war between the two in Tallassee.

Tallassee's industrial potential was recognized immediately by the Americans. As early as 1798 Benjamin Hawkins wrote:

> The water of the falls, after tumbling over a bed of rock for half a mile, is forced into two channels: one thirty, the other fifteen feet wide. The fall is forty feet in fifty yards . . . .the quantity of

> this description at the falls and in the hills adjoining them, is
> great; sufficient for the building of a large city. (27)

Within fifty years' time, Hawkins' observations were duplicated, and acted upon, by Thomas Meriweather Barnett. Family history recounts that Thomas Barnett rode through the area on horseback in the late 1820's and realized its industrial possibilities (17). In 1844, pioneer Dubois and his wife, Milly, gave permission to Barnett and William M. Marks to erect a dam above the falls. The dam's purpose was to provide energy to run the machinery for a textile mill. Three years later Barnett and Marks bought from Dubois and Milly land on either side of the river. Golden continues: "A small building, built of native stone by slave labor, now known as the 'old mill,' was built on the falls about this time" (18). Golden states that the employees of the Tallassee Mills came from the west side of the river (22). She provides a description of the initial settlement: "One or two stores, a few scattered log houses, and the mill were Tallassee before 1850" (22). Golden continues that the mill at Tallassee was the second mill in Alabama to produce cloth (18). Marie Bankhead Owen, in *The Story of Alabama,* claims that Barnett named the settlement that grew up around his mill "Tallassee" after the old Indian village of the same name and general location (421). Thus, while taking Alabama into the industrial age, Barnett and Marks held on to the past.

Golden states that wealthy families learned of the area's potential through the Barnetts and moved to the Tallassee area in the 1850's. They bought large plantations, built spacious, lovely mansions, and invested in the mills. In 1852, the company was incorporated and named the Tallassee Falls Manufacturing Company. The corporation prospered, and a second mill was built of native timber and stone, as was the first. Golden notes that this building is still in use and is referred to locally as "mill number one" (20). Thus, in the decade prior to the Civil War many white families in Tallassee prospered through both agriculture and industry.

However, not everyone in Tallassee became wealthy. In *Poor but Proud,* Wayne Flynt states that:

> The planter-owner of the Tallessee Factory opened his mill in 1845 with a half white-half slave labor force which he converted to all white (forty women, thirty-one men) by 1850. (21)

The slaves labored without compensation, although the planters assumed responsibility for their food and shelter. The white laborers fared little better. Dwight Wilhelm, in *History of the Cotton Textile Industry in Alabama,* states that little is known about wages in the early period, except that they were low. The first records from the 1890's record that a grown man was paid ninety cents a day and a young woman fifteen dollars a month. In addition, the mills employed children (49). Flynt explains that "Because many adult males earned too little to support their families, children had to go to work as soon as they were able" (96). Wilhelm cites records that children worked twelve hours a day for five days per week and nine and a-half hours on Saturday for three dollars a month (49). In addition, Golden notes that many of the employees still lived on and worked their small farms (27). Although Golden claims that the workers' homes were "centers of happy life and industry," the data indicate that many worked long hours at hard work for little pay. Thus, as noted by Lewis in *Sloss Furnace and the Rise of the Birmingham District*, the industrial age in Alabama, as in other areas of the South, was founded in the agrarian and feudal norms of the Old South. (2-6,15-16). Again, in Tallassee, the old and the new coexisted.

During the Civil War, the people, and industries, of Tallassee were again involved in conflict. According to Golden, "The Tallassee Mills became a part of the supply system of the Confederacy" (29). From 1861 through 1863, the mills furnished cloth for uniforms. The "old mill" was converted into an armory that manufactured carbines. Several houses were built for families of Confederate officers in charge of the armory. The muster roll of the "Tallassee Guard" lists over one-hundred men who volunteered for service in the Confederate army (qtd. in Golden 29). Golden comments that several "loyal sons of Alabama" lived in the Tallassee area into the 1920's (29).

Golden states that "Tallassee was never fired upon by Union forces" (29). However, Federal forces made two attempts to destroy the munitions factory in operation there. The first is known as Rousseau's Raid in 1864. In *A History of Alabama and Her People*, Moore states that "a detachment of State reserves, principally boys and old men" repelled Rousseau's soldiers and drove them into Georgia (535). Golden notes that the reserves defeated the raiders a short fifteen miles southeast of Tallassee. Wilson's Raiders made the last attempt to reach Tallassee and burn the armory. Golden states that the detachment's guide was a black man who "insisted on leading them across the river at Cowles Ferry" (29). The officer in charge believed the black man was lying and therefore had the man shot and killed. Golden records that: "He [the Union officer] then continued to march his mistaken way until he reached Franklin, ten miles from Tallassee" (29). In

Franklin, he learned he had missed Tallassee, but chose not to retrace his way because he did not choose to risk engaging General Forrest's men who were searching for the raiders. The old building that housed the munitions plant still stands today. A historical marker explains its survival and notes it is the only munitions plant to escape Union destruction. Thus, it remains by the river, another symbol of another age, and another collision, that has come and gone in Tallassee.

After the war, the soldiers returned to their families in Tallassee and, like all Southerners, began to rebuild their land and their lives. Golden notes that food was scarce, and homes and farms were in disrepair. She comments that salt was not available for many months and that the people had to "boil the dirt around the smokehouse" for their salt (29). However, Golden states that, during reconstruction, the residents of Tallassee did not suffer as extreme hardships as other residents of Alabama because the mills continued to operate and show a profit until 1872 (29). Thus, although remnants of Old South norms remained, the early integration of industry eased the transition into the modern era for the residents of Tallassee.

Golden continues that, in 1872, a national economic panic reversed the mills' profits and forced the owners into bankruptcy. For a few years the people of Tallassee, now dependent on the mills for income and revenue, endured an economic depression (29).

Then, Golden states, in 1878 a new administration purchased the mills. Golden notes that the new owners made improvements: "these consisted of a fifth story to the main mill, a four story 'duck mill'. . . a frame 'weave-shed,'. . . and a three story machine shop" (34). Golden records that the new owners gave a party to celebrate the completion of their improvements "with fiddlers and food aplenty and the town and countryside turned out for an all night square dance . . ." (34). Golden claims this improvement signaled a new time of prosperity for Tallassee.

She describes the Tallasseeans during the years from 1880 to 1900 as "a simple and isolated community" (34). Therefore, Tallassee was typical of the Southern textile town as described in *Alabama, History of a Deep South State*: "most of the state's textile mills were located in smaller towns . . ." (Rogers, Ward, Atkins, and Flynt 286). Golden maintains that although wages were low and working conditions hard, the people in Tallassee who worked in the mill were "a merry group" to the extent that the oldest part of the village where they lived was known as "Happy Hollow" (34).

Although Golden's version appears romantic, historians document the positive side of the textile industry-textile worker relationship. Rogers, Ward, Atkins and Flynt discuss the textile worker's life in general in Alabama:

> Industrialization was a mixed blessing in Alabama, as it was in most places. It favored some and it harmed others. It offered job alternatives to a bankrupt tenant class while often denying a meaningful rise in economic status or an improvement in the quality of life . . . . there are certainly times and situations when one more piece of cornbread on the plate can be taken as a reason for thanksgiving. (287)

In *Poor but Proud*, Flynt explains further that "many a white tenant farmer fancied his salvation in a cotton mill town" (98). Bob Goss, a native of Tallassee and an active member of the Tallassee Historical Association, states that on into the 1940's the Tallassee Mills and the residents of Tallassee maintained and enjoyed a symbiotic relationship. The mills depended upon the population for a labor force; the employees and residents received income and revenue. In addition, the Tallassee Mills provided water and sewage services for the town as well as financially supplementing schools, libraries, and other services usually provided by municipalities. Goss agrees that the social-industrial re-organization of industry and labor that resulted from the depression and the New Deal was an integral factor in the changes concerning the nature of the relationship between Tallassee Mills, its employees, and the residents of Tallassee. However, according to Goss, these changes were not initiated, nor accompanied, by conflict. Apparently, after being the site of so many collisions, in twentieth-century Tallassee, labor and industry never clashed. In Tallassee, the people and the mills redefined their relationship in modern terms that continue to allow for mutual growth.

Although the people of Tallassee and the Tallassee Mills grew and changed without conflict, the advent of big government and public utilities was not similarly welcomed. The history of the dams across the Tallapoosa Falls, in association with the development of power to provide energy for industry and residential use, offers another chapter concerning Tallassee's unique location as the collision point between ideology shifts. Golden notes that the Tallassee Mills built the first and second dams for the purpose of providing energy to run machinery and lighting for the plant (40). From 1901 to 1915, the mills underwent a series of economic fluctuations, corporation mergers, and name changes (62). In *The Story of Electricity in Alabama,* Thomas Martin explains that, in 1916, the mills, then known as The Mount Vernon-Woodberry Cotton Duck Company, fought a court battle with a state utility, the Alabama Power Company.

Martin continues that, in 1911, the Alabama Light and Power Company initiated plans to dam the Tallapoosa River above the falls at Tallassee to generate energy for public use. Until that date, power plants throughout Alabama were owned by individuals or corporations that operated the plants for private profits, such as the mills in Tallassee (10-18). Martin states that preliminary statistics showed that the dam the Alabama Power Company planned to build above the Tallassee Falls would increase the water flow, and thus the volume of power, at the dam operated by the Mount Vernon-Woodberry Company, beyond the mill's requirements. However, Martin states that all attempts at negotiating a "right to develop this excess power" with the textile company failed (38). Prior to these negotiations, in 1907, the Alabama legislature had, according to Martin, "enlarged the power of eminent domain" by giving state power companies the right to acquire necessary properties of factories and public utilities that were not state utilities, by condemnation (38). When the Alabama Power Company filed condemnation proceedings, the Mount Vernon Company "sued out a writ of error to the Supreme Court of the United States" (39). In 1916 Justice Oliver Wendall Holmes upheld the law of the state. Martin declares that "few cases in the annals of water power transcend the importance of this litigation . . . " (39). The resolution of the conflict between a private corporation and a public utility signaled that the age of the public sector had arrived in Alabama.

In the early 1920's, the lights came on in Tallassee. The Alabama Power Company built a new dam on top of the existing dam at the Tallassee Falls. Martin states that the Thurlow Dam was dedicated on October 28, 1939, and remains in operation today (64). Golden summarizes that the power generated by the three dams on the Tallapossa--Thurlow, Yates and Martin--not only provide energy for Tallasee and Tallasee Mills, but also contribute to the energy needs of the entire Southeast (68).

The visitor may pause along the pedestrian walkway of the Fitzpatrick Bridge, which spans the Tallapoosa River at Tallassee. Automobiles pass quickly and closely--modern people on their busy way. From one side of the bridge, the visitor can view the water cascading from the Thurlow Dam to the rocks and riverbed below. The well-read visitor knows that this place marks the fall line in Alabama--that place where, millions of years ago, continents collided and the present view was created.The 1920's architecture of the power house reminds the visitor of early modern times that demanded change and growth. Up on the bluff, the Tallassee Mills continue to run, and the textile workers continue with their work day. Tallassee residents proudly claim that the Tallassee Mills are now the oldest textile mills in continuous operation in the United States. Through the years, the mills, the employees, and the residents of Tallassee have experienced drastic transitions. However, the mills, built of native stone and timber, remain the focus of the native Tallasseean and have since 1844. The visitor can cross the bridge to better see the first, and therefore the oldest, of the mill buildings. A historical marker at the end of the bridge explains that this building housed the Confederate munitions plant. Today, it remains the only existing building not destroyed by Union forces and thus stands as a remnant of that conflict. In front of the new City Hall, the visitor can find the landmark plaque once placed at the site of Tukabatchee. The Indian town it describes, along with the culture and era it commemorates, is gone; but the plaque remains as a reminder of changes and conflicts witnessed in Tallassee. The visitor may sit in the courtyard behind the Talisi Hotel, leisurely sip a glass of wine, and muse at the traces of events, conflicts, and changes that remain at Tallassee, trapped in time.

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A GOOD COON DOG

IN THE WESTERN TENNESSEE VALLEY
OF THE STATE THEY CALL ALABAMY
TALL PINES GROW
AND EVERY HUNTER KNOWS
THERE ARE LOTS OF COONS

NOW EVERY HUNTER'S BOSOM BUDDY
IS HIS COON DOG, RAININ' OR SUNNY
CAUSE BETWEEN DOG AND MAN'S
A LOVE FEW UNDERSTAND
WHEN THEY'RE HUNTING COONS

THE COON DOG GOES:OOOOO
LORD, HE'S GOT ONE TREE'D
A GOOD COON DOG GOES: OOOOOOOO
HOLD ON WAIT FOR ME

ON SEPTEMBER 4TH 1937
OLD TROOP'S SPIRIT WENT TO COON DOG HEAVEN
HIS OWNER KEY UNDERWOOD
DECIDED THAT HE REALLY SHOULD
GIVE TROOP A PROPER GRAVE

AND SO MY FRIENDS THAT'S HOW IT STARTED
THE COON DOGS' MASTERS, ALL BROKEN HEARTED
LAY THEIR DOGS TO REST
WITH THE BEST OF THE BEST
AND REMEMBER THE GOOD OLD DAYS

(REPEAT CHORUS)

THEY EACH HAVE A HEADSTONE AND SOME AN EPITAPH
RAISED BY THEIR MASTERS THAT TELL OF LOVE THAT LASTS
I'LL SING YOU TWO OR THREE
SO YOU'LL KNOW WHAT I SEEN
IN THAT CEMETERY FOR COON DOGS

WHEN THE HUNT WAS IN DOUBT

DOCTOR DOOM WAS STILL OUT
AND RUSTY WAS A COON DOG INDEED
GREASY SPOT WAS A JOY TO HUNT
AND BRAG THE BEST EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI

NOW I DON'T MEAN NO DISRESPECT
LOVE IS PRECIOUS: MAN WOMAN OR PET
AND I HOPE THEY MEET AGAIN
IN THAT PINE FOREST ROUND THE BEND
AND THERE ARE LOTS OF COONS

(REPEAT CHORUS)

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THE COON DOG CEMETERY

When Key Underwood decided to commemorate the life of his faithful hunting companion, his coon dog Troop, by giving him a formal burial, Underwood did not know that he was starting a coon dog cemetary. Underwood was probably also unaware that his actions echoed back to a time-honored tradition. The bond between a hunter and a hunting dog began in a prehistoric period when the survival of both dog and man[1] depended on the successful killing of huge mammals such as the mammoth. Closer in time, but less known, the hunter's connection to his dog is steeped in European, medieval tradition and lore. As with other social norms, the American hunter followed traditions and rules of conduct concerning hunting from the Old World and adapted those norms to suit the New World's realities. Thus, the aristocratic, chivalrous, European, hunting tradition evolved into codes more suitable for the democratic, individualistic, American hunter. Understandably, the American hunter then bred the pure-blooded hunting hound of the European noble class to create a dog that better served the wilder terrain and more rugged hunter of the New World. Although a unique tradition in itself, Key Underwood's cemetery for honored coon dogs is an example of the American adaptation and continuation of European reverence and affection for the hunting dog.

In *A Chapter of Mediaeval History*, D.H. Madden discusses medieval treatises that deal with hunting as a sport in the Middle Ages. Madden lists two early works that were well regarded in their own day and are recognized as scholarly landmarks today. The first, *De Falconibus,* was written by Albertus Magnus and deals with sport hunting and horses (2). The second work listed by Madden, *De Arte Venandi cum Avibus,* was written by Emperor Frederick II (2). In the *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, Gerald Brault also notes the work of Emperor Frederick II (359). However, since both these works focus on falconry, their subject content did not contribute to Madden's study of the hunting of terrestrial prey. Therefore, Madden presents *La Chasse* by Gaston Phoebus, comte de Foix, as the earliest and most important book on medieval hunting (3, 11). Brault agrees that La Chasse is a well-established and famous medieval manuscript on hunting in the Middle Ages.

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[1] Although historically as well as in the present era women participate in hunting, the activity is overwhelmingly male dominated. As even female hunters concede this fact, I chose to use the masculine form in this essay.

In the Middle Ages spiritual discipline and religious philosophy influenced every aspect of life, including hunting. The religious influences of the era are apparent as Madden declares Gaston's purpose in writing the book:

> to proclaim to the world that the true sportsman makes the best of both worlds; he is free from temptation to mortal sins, for they have their origin in the slothful idleness which is not possible to a diligent sportsman. (18-19)

In his discussion of *La Chasse*, Madden maintains that Gaston describes the sportsman both as a gentleman and as a steward of land and beast. In addition, Madden claims Gaston to be "a lover of the dog" (19). Madden states that Gaston dedicates ten chapters to discussions concerning not only hunting techniques with the dog, but also descriptions "of the dog, as the loving and faithful companion of man . . ." (198). Other literary references to the hunting hound by Madden include a poem, *Romans des Déduits,* by M. Gace de la Buigne, also noted by Brault in the *Dictionary of the Middle Ages.* Gace served as first chaplain to three successive kings of France and, in that position, was appointed to oversee and combine the religious and sportsmanship training for Prince Phillip. The chaplain found no breach of spiritual duty in fulfilling this dual educational assignment. Madden quotes Gace from *Romas des Déduits,* wherein the chaplain expresses his love of hunting and of the hunting dog: "no alleluia has ever been sung in the chapel of the king that is so beautiful and gives so much pleasure as the music of hounds" (118). Thus, according to Madden, in the Middle Ages the high regard for hunting included a high regard for the hunting dog. The church's approval of the connection between hunter and hound is demonstrated by the fact that the patron saint of the hunter, St. Hubert, is also the patron saint of the hunting dog. The accepted spiritual connection between hunter and hound is exemplified not only by the sharing of the same patron saint, but also by a yearly ritual. At the chapel in the woods dedicated to St. Hubert, on the saint's feast day, November 3, hunter and hound in the company of the townsfolk gathered for the annual "blessing of the hounds" ceremony (20). In the mind and heart of the medieval community, the trail shared by the hunter and the hound was analogous to their mutual spiritual journey.

However, when that journey evolved into the crossing of the Atlantic and the colonization of the New World, an evolution of the hunter and the hunting dog became necessary. For the first several generations of hardy souls engaged in colonizing the New World, the chief purpose of hunting again became food and survival. By the time of

George Washington, the settlers had managed to gain enough control of some parts of the wilderness that hunters were once again enjoying hunting as a sport. In the New World, as in the old, the hunting dog remained an important part of hunting.

Although hunting had become a part of the American life style, as it had been for centuries in Europe, the American terrain and wildlife had demanded adaptations from the hunter and his hound. In exploring how such adaptations developed, Burkhard Bilger, in his article for the *Atlantic Monthly*, "Barking Up The Right Tree," describes the performance of seven Grand bleu de Gascogne hounds that the Marquis de Lafayette gave George Washington (95). Although famous and respected for their energy, training skills, and musical voices, these dogs typified an aristocratic breed developed for an European nobleman's form of hunting. In colonial America, although the wealthy had created and personified a type of class distinction, the concept of aristocracy in man or dog was not widely accepted. In the case of the hunting dog, the difference between European "blue bloods" and the type of dog needed by the American hunter derived from a practical and a critical consideration created by the difference in American and European prey. In Europe hare, deer and wild boar run on the ground, thereby requiring the hunting dog to chase and yell. However, much American game, raccoons, possums, and bobcats, hide in trees, thereby requiring the dog to yell but, more importantly, also to "tree." Thus, Bilger reports, Washington was not pleased with the performance of the legendary hounds as they only ran boars and would not attempt any maneuvers resembling "treeing." Experiencing similar limitations from the European pedigreed hunting dogs, the American hunter decided that the blue-blooded hounds, like their noblemen owners, did not suit the realities of the New World. The new breed of hunter needed a new breed of hunting dog.

Perhaps, for the American hunter, there was a philosophical side to the need for an American hunting dog as well. The political philosophy of democracy that men in the New World had sacrificed and been willing to die for embraced the concept of men being different yet equal. The life style of the American citizen epitomized that belief. Since hunting was also a part of the early American reality, it is acceptable to assume that political philosophy could have influenced hunting practices and, thereby, the hunting dog. In *Reminiscences of an Old Sportsman,* Frederick Skinner relates a discussion between himself (a Southerner in 1887) and an European gentleman of "bluest blood" who "hated democracy" (116).[2] The European gentleman stated, "I would still rather have a dog from a good kennel in England than your natives simply because of the recorded purity of their blood; for in spite of your democratic fallacy of equality I believe in the adage, 'Blood will tell'"(116). The European gentleman further revealed his feeling on the subject: "But after all how can you sovereigns, as you call yourselves, be expected to keep the pedigree of your dogs when so negligent of your own?" (116). As American cultural tradition and history indicate, many settlers perceived themselves as the transplanted descendants of different peoples now all identified as American. In that process, the American hunter began, through crossbreeding of dogs also transplanted from different European stock, to develop a dog that met his needs. Understandably, the hunter considered that dog "American." From the founding of the republic, that hunter and that dog became an integral part of Southern history and culture.

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[2] Originally published by *Turf, Field and Farm Magazine* on February 18, 1887.

In Alabama, some of the first recorded traditions and histories involving the hunter and his dog began with the opening of land for White settlement around 1814. The availability of these huge tracts of land was the result of Andrew Jackson's victory over the Creek Indians at Horseshoe Bend. Wealthy planters from the neighboring states of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia bought extensive acreage to create plantations and establish towns. Many families inherited large amounts of land as payment for military service. Still other settlers simply packed up and headed to Alabama to take advantage of an opportunity to homestead virgin territory. Sometimes these settlers caravaned in wagons filled with their belongings along wilderness paths to reach their new homes. More often, the settlers traveled light and what they did take was a reflection of what they valued, and needed, most. In *Dropped Stitches in Tennessee History,* John Allison relates a popular tale about Andrew Jackson, who was considered to be an example of the common folk of the day. Allison lists witnesses to the fact that when Jackson relocated he arrived with only two horses, his guns and his dogs (10).[3] Emma Bell Miles, in *The Spirit of the Mountains,* quotes a common expression used among the less affluent who migrated to new land: "When I get ready to move I jist shut the door and call the dogs and start" (177). In a land characterized by expanses of untamed wilderness, a flood of opportunists searching for land and adventure, and the still existing threat of hostile Indians, the survival of the settlers who streamed into Alabama depended on their hunting skills, and those of their hunting dogs.

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[3] I first found this information in *Albion's Seed* (p. 759) where author David Hackett Fischer footnoted it: Remini, Andrew Jackson, I, 37. However, Remini's work credits the source as the book I located and documented above.

The need for a "varmint" dog that could track and tree fostered the breed that is today known as the coonhound, referred to in the vernacular as "coon dog." American coon dogs evolved from a melting pot of bloodhounds, foxhounds, and, as Wilcox and Walkowicz state in the *Atlas of Dog Breeds of the World*, "dashes of French, German, and Irish dogs for specific needs" (97).

The Black and Tan Coonhound is the only coon dog recognized by the American Kennel Club. The registration of Coonhound breeds is an emotional issue among coon dog owners. Burkhard Bilger, in "Barking Up the Right Tree," quotes an owner of a Bluetick Coonhound as declaring, "The AKC would rather register some strange, furry little animal in China than the dogs that helped build this country" (96). Accordingly, the other four breeds of coon dogs registered by the United Kennel Club have evolved from a less documented breeding history, but are indicative of the adaptations of the hunting dog made by hunters in order to survive in the New World.

The Black and Tan Coonhound is the earliest formal breed of coonhound and dates to the late 1700's. The initial development of the Black and Tan Coonhound is accredited to the breeding efforts of Simon Kenton and the Poe brothers, whose reasons for creating the breed are linked with their own colorful history as scouts and Indian fighters in the Ohio Valley. As a descendant of the Bloodhound, the Black and Tan Coonhound claims as ancestor the famous and ancient Talbot hound, which was bred by the abbots of the previously mentioned Benedictine monastery of St. Hubert. The four breeds of hounds that hunt raccoons and are recognized by the United Kennel Club, in addition to the Black and Tan Coonhound, are the Bluetick Coonhound, the Redbone Coonhound, the English

Coonhound, and the Treeing Walker Coonhound. French trappers in Louisiana combined a variety of English, French, and cur dogs to create the Bluetick Coonhound. The Bluetick's melodious voice elegantly claims lineage from Lafayette's famous French Gascon hounds. Tradition, rather than strict historical documentation, attributes the development of the Redbone Coonhound to Peter Redbone, a Tennessean dog breeder. As proof of the permeation of the coon dog into modern American culture, Wilcox and Walkowicz in the *Atlas of Dog Breeds of the World* state that a Redbone coon dog is featured in the Walt Disney production *The Hound That Thought He Was A Coon* (716). The English Coonhound's family tree can be traced back to Virginia, where these dogs were used for running the fox more often than for treeing the raccoon. The Treeing Walker Coonhound was developed from the English Coonhound and named for its breeder, Thomas Walker, who imported its descendent, an English Foxhound, to Virginia in 1742. Registration, pedigree, and medieval ancestors notwithstanding, in "Barking Up The Right Tree" Bilger maintains that "most coonhounds are still proudly plebeian" (96).

Descriptions of a good coon dog are directly related to the coon hunt and engage much of the hunting jargon that has found its way into the Southern vernacular. A good coon dog must have a "good nose," even a "hot nose," to "pick up the scent." The next necessary attribute of a good coon dog is the ability to track that scent or "run it down," as soon as possible. Since coon hunting is a nocturnal sport, a good coon dog must be able to function "in the dark." After locating the scent, a good coon dog "picks up the trail," graduates to being "hot on the trail," and vocally alerts the hunter that he, the coon dog, is "on the run." A coon dog's voice is described as baying, howling and even singing. An accepted custom among coon hunters is that each hunter can recognize his dog's voice. In addition, many hunters claim that their dogs howl differently to indicate the certainty of having "treed" the coon. At this stage of the hunt, a good coon dog intermittently circles, stand and bays, paws, jumps and even attempts to climb the tree to the extent of "peeling the bark off" to prove he is "barking up the right tree." Sometimes the hunters would set brush and leaves on fire to "smoke the coon out," who was by then, understandably, "out on a limb." In *Hunting: The Southern Tradition*, May Lamar and Rich Donnell succinctly sum up the attributes of a good coon dog as one that can "track and tree and howl " (118).

In the early days of the coon hunt, the hunters allowed the dogs to kill the raccoon, but not to mutilate it because the raccoon's hide was valuable. Although many raccoon hunters today still hunt for "the kill," hunting for sport is the way of the future, and certainly field trials are a bloodless sport. Field trials duplicate the scenario of the hunt to the extent that the dogs must locate the scent of the raccoon, follow that scent, and then tree the raccoon. The judge keeps a tally of the dogs' performances in all three scenarios within a two-hour period. Championships are awarded on the basis of a point system. For many, the loss of the kill does not dim the excitement of the hunt. Descriptions of dogs howling through the dark, hunters striding through swamp and forest, and wild raccoons fighting and even killing dogs prove that a wealth of stimulation is still present without the raccoon's demise.

Since the modern coon hunter hunts more for sport than for survival, his need for and definition of a good coon dog have changed. The modern hunter's perception of "a good coon dog" vacillates between the registered breeds previously described and the plain "old yaller dogs" that their advocates maintain stand their ground with the registered, and decisively more expensive, breeds. Some modern hunters contend that hunting for sport and for championship requires a different type of dog than the time-honored hound described in 1907 by James McDonald in *Life in Old Virginia*:

> A good coon dog is of medium size. He is either a "yaller dog" or a mud-brown color. He has not pedigree to speak of. A good coon dog must be lively when the occasion arises. (613)

If the modern hunter feels that his dog needs papers and pedigrees to meet the demands of sport hunting, there is no argument that the older requirements of reliability, "a good nose," and liveliness are still necessary as well to be classified as a good coon dog.

The four-legged hunting companion that inspired Key Underwood to begin the Coon Dog Cemetery did not hold a pedigree. In *Hunting: The Southern Tradition*, Lamar and Donnell quote Key Underwood's answer to questions concerning the kind of dog Troop was: "I don't remember what kind. He was a big dog. A red and white spotted dog" (132). Lamar and Donnell relate Underwood's story that Troop was first owned by a "whiskey maker" who was arrested by a "revenue man." The moonshiner's wife pawned Troop to a Mr.Childers, and Key Underwood bought the dog from Childers in 1932 for $75. At that time Troop was 10 years old (132). Key Underwood is quoted as saying that Troop was the best coon dog he ever owned:

> That Troop was a professional. He didn't have any bad habits. He didn't growl at other dogs. He had a good nose. I saw him do

> things a dog just can't do. (135)

By all accounts, Troop was a very good coon dog.

Lamar and Donnell quote Underwood telling the story of the beginning of The Coon Dog Cemetery:

> Yessir, I had five good years with Troop. But the day came where he couldn't eat or get up. I had a vet put him to sleep. After it was done, I called up the boys and one of 'em said Troop deserved a decent burial bein' he was such a good dog. Well, we had always camped and hunted around here so we carried Troop on out. (135)

William Bolton, friend of Key Underwood, Troop, and current curator of the Coon Dog Cemetery, further relates that the favorite hunting ground was known as Sugar Creek and recalls that Troop was buried in a "cotton-pickin'sack," which is a cloth sack used to pick cotton by hand. Troop was buried on Labor Day Eve, September 4, 1937. Although it was not Key Underwood's intention to found a coon dog cemetery, several years later his brother buried one of his coon dogs at the same spot. At that point, the men agreed that some type of formality concerning the graveyard was needed. The men leased the land from the River and Pulp Company and named the cemetery "The Key Underwood Memorial Graveyard."

Today "The Key Underwood Memorial Graveyard," affectionately and casually known as "The Coon Dog Cemetery," is the final resting place for approximately 165 good coon dogs. William Bolton emphatically states that only "straight coon dogs" are allowed to be buried in The Coon Dog Cemetery. When questioned further on the specifics of burial requirements, Mr. Bolton explains that the dogs are not required to have pedigrees or even hold championship titles. However, they must have, in their life, "run coon only" and, Mr. Bolton adds, their backgrounds are "checked out." Mr. Bolton, who has been affiliated with the cemetery for over 40 years, further emphasizes that the burial ground is for "hounds only" because if just any type of dog was permitted to be buried there "you wouldn't have nothing." Currently there is a $50 interment fee, and memberships are also available. These and other efforts contribute to meeting the financial needs of maintaining The Coon Dog Cemetery.

The annual Labor Day gathering is still held on the grounds to commemorate the founding of the cemetery on the day Troop was buried. Bar-b-cue, music, and camaraderie add to the enjoyment of the day spent on the beautiful plateau. Friends, family, and community enjoy the natural beauty of the site and the recollection of the memories and the retelling of the stories about the good coon dogs. The well-read visitor might smile while comparing the gathering to another held long ago at a monastery in the woods.

The visitor on a quieter day will find the consecrated ground peaceful in its pristine beauty. The headstones speak elegantly and simply of the love, trust, and companionship that exists between the coon hunter and the coon dog. The simple graves give emotional testimony to the continuation of the bond between hound and hunter. Far from the roar of the twentieth century, the pine trees whisper and the grass rustles. Walking among the tombstones, the visitor may be joined by a hunter stopping to remember his companion by laying flower on a headstone, sometimes accompanied by a tear. Yet, the coon dog cemetery is not a sad place. Indeed, standing among the tombstones surrounded by natural beauty, the visitor is comforted by the realization that at the end of the millennium there is still a place set aside to honor the relationship between man, dog, and land. Here they lived and interacted in life, and here the land shelters, the hunter remembers, and the hound rests. The wind in the pines is not a sigh, but a reminder of man's love, respect, and need for a connection to animals and land. No better tribute could be paid to a good coon dog.

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EPILOGUE

Between the performances of Alabama Troubadour on March 1, 1998, photographer Chip Cooper and I entertained questions at large concerning the project. Many of the inquiries revolved around my choice of sites. I explained that I sought to document Alabama's uniqueness; I used a term from one of my sources, "off the beaten track." Several listeners took offense, pointing out that Alabama is becoming more mainstream. While politely accepting their comments, I silently wondered why a people possessed of such a unique and intense history would want an ordinary and shallow future. Further, I wondered when, in our Southern consciousness, "rural," or "off the beaten track" became negative. Perhaps, if the people of Alabama enjoy these songs and essays, they will rethink their bent to standardize their culture.

I have no regrets concerning any aspect of the Alabama Troubadour project. I wanted to feel for myself, and document for others, the heartbeat of Alabama's consciousness--the pulse of its spirit. Through my explorations of Alabama, I witnessed the land's myriad stratums of realities. Through my research of Alabama, I learned of the land's factual history, endearing traditions, and spell-binding legends that make up those layers. Through my songs and essays, I am happy to report that Alabama's heartbeat is strong and passionate, and its pulse is steady and life-giving.

Many visitors, writing of Alabama in the past, note Alabama's enchanted ambiance. As a visitor writing at the end of the millennium, I too have felt the touch of

Alabama's magic: the wind's sigh in the limbs of an ancient oak, the wisp of a reflection in a gilded mirror, the glint of sunlight on a river as viewed from the top of an Indian mound. As I visited each site, Alabama's muses whispered music, lyrics, and insights to me. In addition to enchantment, while traveling throughout Alabama, I found inspiration, adventure, understanding, and friendship. I have transformed, to the best of my ability, all of these gifts into song and prose.

Therefore, to all of Alabama and beyond, I am proud to be, and respectively remain,

Your very own,
Alabama Troubadour.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INFORMAL VERBAL INTRODUCTIONS TO EACH SONG FOR THE PERFORMANCE:

"ALABAMA TROUBADOUR RAP SHEET"

GREETING

1. "Brother Joseph's Wayside Shrine" In the Middle Ages people went on pilgrimages to holy places to seek healing or insight. On their way they would stop at places which had, since ancient times, been designated as sacred. Here the travelers would refresh body and soul on their way, so these places were called Wayside Shrines. My first song is about a wayside shrine right here in Alabama, the Ave Maria Grotto on the grounds of St. Bernard's Monastery. Brother Joseph, a monk who lived his entire life at the monastery, created the folk art miniatures of famous architectural sites. Brother Joseph has passed on, but his work remains a gift to those that stop by to see the Ave Maria Grotto during their life's journey. The day I visited the Ave Maria Grotto I sat on a stone bench and watched a chipmunk run in and out of the miniatures of Jerusalem. When I got to Nashville I wrote the song.

2. "Catfish to Bar-b-cue" I owe the title of this next song to my good friend Chip Cooper, who took all these beautiful pictures on exhibition. One day, he took me all around the Gainesville, Eutaw area in a borrowed pick-up truck. He showed me a lot of interesting

and beautiful sights but my muses wanted to write about catfish! Well, I learned a long time ago there's no point arguing with them. However, I asked Chip, "How is a song about catfish going to fit in with this project?" and he said, "Write about Dreamland; then you've got catfish to bar-b-cue." So that's what I did.

Before we start the next song I want to introduce my fellow conspirators up here on the stage with me. (And I will proceed to do just that, and some other jive as well.)

3. "Peace In The Valley" One of the most important and wonderful aspects of Alabama is its wilderness areas. I tell my friends, "I can ride for hours in Alabama and see nothing but pine trees on either side of the road." I chose to visit the mountain hamlet of Mentone because I had learned from my research that the name "Mentone" meant "musical mountain spring." I said to myself, "Well, there's bound to be a song up there," and I was right!

4. "Bon Secour" Since I wrote a song about the mountains, I felt duty-bound to write one about the seaside. It's hard job being a songwriter! There are many picturesque towns along the bays and inlets, and I don't mean to slight any of them. However, my muses picked Bon Secour, which means "Safe Harbor." Now, I have a confession. I got behind writing these songs, and Chip had to blaze the trail before me. After his visit, he called me and told me to telephone his friend Phil Norris, who would take me to a dock beside the Bon Secour River where an old, weathered boat named the *Native Son* was tied near a fish

processing plant. I rode down on a beautiful Saturday afternoon with my friends Nancy and Rick Anderson, and Phil took us to where the *Native Son* was anchored. I talked to some fishermen who had just returned from a thirty-day shrimping expedition, and one told me the owner of the plant had bought the *Native Son* from a man who sailed all the way from South Carolina, pulled up his boat, said he was tired of "shrimping," sold the *Native Son*, and just walked off down the road. It wasn't until later that the new owner discovered that *Native Son* was completely rusted out and could not be repaired. "What are you going to do with it?" I asked. "Burn it," he replied, "nothing else to do." " Well," I thought, "some safe harbor this turned out to be!" But then I thought about the transformational qualities of both sea and fire. And then I thought about the man who just sold his boat and walked away, and I thought, "something happened out there." Then I realized that the man's walking and the boat's burning was not a bad thing, just the process of life: they both were just changing their states of being after reaching Bon Secour, their safe harbor.

(After the song I will express my appreciation)

I'd like to take this time to thank Linda Andrews, Kristl Self, the administrative staff of Hoover Library Theater, and the people of Hoover, along with the director of the Master of Liberal Arts program, Susan Willis, and Nancy Anderson and the staff of the School Liberal Arts at the Auburn University at Montgomery, for providing me with a safe harbor where I could create this work.

5. "Boll Weevil" The next song features a little bug that caused big trouble--the boll weevil. The day I visited Enterprise I was amazed that the statue, which is also a fountain, is right in the middle of main street. A lot of store windows had all kinds of boll weevil stuff, like ash trays and key chains. Enterprise is boll weevil central! It's like a lady said to me later, " The boll weevil is important to Enterprise!" Well, I got to thinking about that and this is what I came up with.

6. "Oh Cahaba" When I visited the ruins of Alabama's first capital, Cahaba, I was surprised to find, for the most part, only building foundations covered in grass. Later in my research I discovered that neighboring towns used the brick and other parts of buildings for new projects, even moving entire houses. Also in my research I came across the memoirs of Anna Gaye Fry. These are her words about her home town:

> Though long years have passed and the ruin is now perfect and complete, the site of the old town is still a lovely spot . . . where the mocking bird still sings in springtime, and the Cherokee roses, full with blossoms, shed their snowy petals along the deserted streets; where the stars still shine in all their brilliant beauty and the moon rises in its old time splendor enfolding the ruined town in its soft, mellow light and lovingly shadows the graves of the dead, who, when living, were among the most refined, cultivated, and intellectual people that ever adorned the State of Alabama. (69-70)

I'm glad I came upon Anna's words after I wrote my song, or I might have been daunted. However, I had my own experience at Cahaba, and I wouldn't take anything for it.

7. "Hell Is Hot" Mr. W. C. Rice's Miracle Cross Garden is the most controversial site I chose. I believe it is an important site because it represents two important elements of American philosophy: individual rights and religious freedom. Mr. & Mrs. Rice's use of their private land to demonstrate their religious beliefs was challenged and went all the way to the State Supreme Court. Now, a lot of people don't believe the same way that Mr. and Mrs. Rice believe and find no beauty in the "Cross Garden." However, anyone who has lived in a democracy knows that the road to freedom is sometimes not the prettiest nor the easiest, but in Alabama, the rights of religious and individual freedom are upheld, and I think Alabama should be proud. Preachin' over, we will now proceed to render an old-time gospel song,

8. "The Mounds" Among all the precious and amazing things to be found in Alabama, on the top of my list are the number of Pre-Columbian Indian mounds still in tact. A part of this land's history, and a part of human history, these sites are priceless and irreplaceable. When I let it be known I was going to write about mounds, Chip Cooper said I should visit Moundville, which I agreed to do. However, he further insisted that I see them in the morning mist. "How early of a morning mist?" I inquired. "Oh, about 5 or 6 o'clock," he merrily replied. So we drive over to Moundville State Park. There is a small paved road that circles around the main plaza. Chip pulled up in front of the tallest mound and said

"Here you go. I'll be back in a minute." So, I wandered around the mounds; I love mounds so I didn't mind. However, when he returned, he was sipping a cup of coffee and confessed he had been sitting in his truck talking with his girlfriend on his cell phone while I was out in the cold morning air. Well ! You can see how this relationship works! Later in the evening, his girl friend told me that Easter sunrise services are held on the ceremonial mound. I was fascinated by the idea of modern people whose day-to-day lives involve cars and cell phones and personal computers, gathering on the ancient ceremonial mound for a nature-based religious ritual, since the mound's builders oriented them to take advantage of the first rays of the rising sun. Although such a correlation has a theme of continuity, what I felt standing there among the mounds as the sun burned off the morning mist was a sense of change and of endings.

9. "Good As Gold" When I would tell friends about the Alabama Troubadour project, a lot of them said "Go see Sloss furnace." I kept saying, "An old industrial furnace?" I just couldn't image that anything as left-brained as industry would make a good song. But finally I allowed myself to be talked into visiting Sloss. Let me tell you, if you haven't been, go see Sloss furnace! It is HUGE!! I walked into one room and this six-foot wrench lay rusting on the floor with cobwebs dangling from it. Giants made this, I thought. Then I realized that this site was the remains of the highest technology of its day. It was the Stonehenge, the Notre Dame of the Industrial Age. I liked that theme and so I mixed it up into a kind of song-writer's stew and put it on a back burner to simmer. To add to this theme, I read that many of the workers were veterans of the Civil War and had lost their

land or come upon financial hard times and needed work. They came to rebuild their lives and to build the "Magic City" and as well. Further research informed me that these same people were descendants of Highlanders that had settled in the Alabama mountains, having lost land in other wars in other lands such as Scotland or Ireland. I was fascinated by this pattern and added it to my songwriter stew, which was starting to thicken up nicely. Finally, as just the perfect last ingredient, I pulled from Dennis Covington's preface to his book, *Salvation on Sand Mountain*. Dennis linked the workers from the mountains, their Highlander ancestors, and that indomitable Southern spirit to Sloss furnace. Thank you, Dennis. And thanks to all the inventors and workmen who made Birmingham a place that we can sing songs about.

10. "Trapped In Time" Contemporary Southern writers often comment on the South's close relationship with the past. In my travels through Alabama I have felt present, past, and future exist sometimes simultaneously! Dinosaur tracks and space ships. Mounds, ghost towns, towns restored, cities with skylines. Mansions renovated, mansions deserted, mansions with descendants of the original plantation owners living in the back part of the house and leaving the rest to slowly deteriorate. This song is about an entire day when that line between the present and the past was more than a little shaky.

11."A Good Coon Dog" Well, we have come to the end of the show and its time for THE song. But I want to tell you the story about it as well. On my way back to Nashville, I planned to visit the coon-dog cemetery. On the map the area looked sparse, but when I arrived in Cherokee there was not a whole lot there but two gas stations. When I asked the attendants about a coon dog cemetery, I was shot some pretty strange looks. I drove down a road and came upon an older gentleman that gave me complicated directions. I drove a while and I realized that I was basically in wilderness. Now, I'm not afraid of wilderness, but I respect it. I had not prepared for such an adventure, and I knew this put me at risk. Nevertheless, I kept driving, turning on the dirt road off of the dirt road. I reminded myself that no one knew where I was if trouble occurred. But then I saw the sign and drove down the driveway. I walked around the cemetery--it is pretty amazing--and was heading back to my car when I heard the pick-up truck pull down the driveway. Well, I've seen *Deliverance*! I hurried back to my car, jumped in, and locked the doors. Sure enough, it was one man in a pick-up. I started my car, but something made me hesitate. After all, I was in my car and ready to roar, so I waited. The man looked my way suspiciously and then got out of his car with roses and placed them on his coon dog's grave.

Now, as some of you know, this song requires audience participation. In fact, I know as a matter of fact that there are some veteran coon-dog howlers out there.

(I will be getting them ready to howl. I'll want to play with the audience at the end. When we tag the song, we'll walk off the stage. We'll come back for bows.)

APPENDIX B

INFORMAL COMMUNICATION TO STAGE DIRECTOR, HOOVER LIBRARY THEATER

LIGHTING-MOOD-INFORMATION

Brother Joseph's Wayside Shrine: Thoughtful but not too subdued since it is the first song

Catfish to Bar-b-cue: Fun

Peace In The Valley: Blue Lights. A story ballad with a didactic theme

Bon Secour: Dusk/Dawn. A feeling of being on the water as the sun rises or sets. A very spiritual song.

Boll Weevil: Fun, but has a message.

Oh Cahaba: Thoughtful, emotional, mystical.

Hell Is Hot: I want the audience enjoy and kind of "scratch their heads" about this one. Country uptempo.

The Mounds: Eerie, a mystical, moving and thought-provoking song. We need to plan lights gradual dim and go out at end.

Good As Gold: Something Knight-ish. Story line uses fairy tale and medieval imagery (Sloss is a dragon).

Trapped In Time: Contrast this feel to what is coming up (which, in addition to being the last song, is a hell-raiser-howler). Trapped has a lot of words but a mainstream chorus; contemplative.

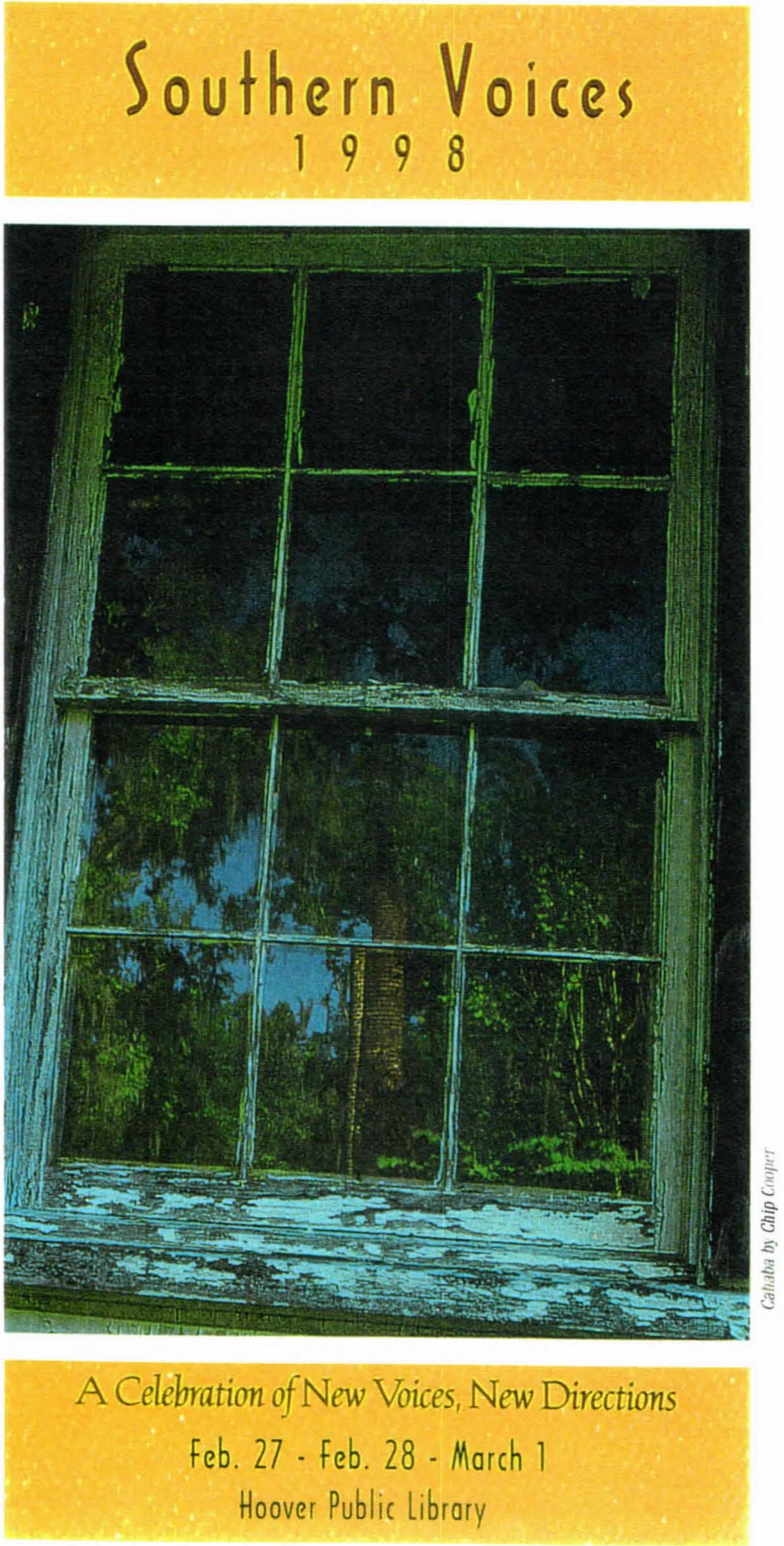
A Good Coon Dog: Last song. Rowdy. Bring house lights up somewhat to encourage audience participation and interaction.

APPENDIX C

PHOTOGRAPH

APPENDIX D

PROGRAM



Southern Voices
1998

Cahaba by Chip Cooper

A Celebration of New Voices, New Directions

Feb. 27 - Feb. 28 - March 1

Hoover Public Library

On Stage: A Look Behind Alabama Troubadours

Conversations with Songwriter Karren Pell and Photographer Chip Cooper

Sunday, March 1 at 4:00 P.M.
Hoover Public Library
The Library Theatre

Arts Staff

Kristl Self	Arts Program Coordinator
Keith Champion, Matina Johnson	Box Office
Jonathon Cain	Production Assistant
Alan Bates, Ty Lacey, Greg Patterson	Technical Assistants
Linda Andrews	Chairman

Notes from Karren Pell . . .

Many thanks and much love to the following people for opportunity, support, inspiration, and most importantly, friendship:

Linda Andrews, Kristl Self, and the Hoover staff, along with associated (but unknown to me) Angels

Nancy and Rick Anderson, Chip Cooper, Tim Lorsch, Kit Lough, Michael Melton, Robynne Napier, Randy Rayburn, Claire Skowronski, Susan Willis

In addition, my heartfelt appreciation goes to all the wonderful people at the sites who shared time and knowledge.

Lastly, appreciation and acknowledgment to my muses and the Big Boss Creator.

Alabama Troubadours

World Premiere Performance

Sunday, March 1 at 2:30 & 8:00 P.M.

The Alabama State Song	
Brother Joseph's Wayside Shrine "The Loving Nature of His Work Is Present in This Place"	Ave Maria Grotto Cullman
Catfish to Bar-b-que "Fill Your Tummy, Fill Your Soul, It's All You Can Eat"	Catfish Cabin & Dreamland Bar-b-que Gainesville/Tuscaloosa
Peace in the Valley "Progress Ain't Got Up There Yet"	Mentone Inn Mentone
Bon Secour "Your Sweet and Welcome Shore"	Bon Secour Bon Secour
Boll Weevil "Life's About Change, Learn From the Boll Weevil"	Boll Weevil Statue Enterprise
Oh Cahaba "The Knowing Eye Can Look Around/ and The Best of You Is Found"	Site of First Alabama Capitol Cahaba
Hell is Hot "Twenty-one Years That Garden's Stood"	Miracle Cross Garden Prattville
The Mounds "What We See in the Past Is the Future's Looking Glass"	The Mounds Moundville
Good As Gold "The South Today Is As Good As Gold"	Sloss Furnace Birmingham
Trapped In Time "That Feeling That the Past Is Not Quite Gone"	Hotel Tallassee Tallassee
A Good Coon Dog "Lay Their Dogs to Rest with the Best of the Best"	Coon Dog Cemetery Cherokee

"Alabama" was written by Julia S. Tutwiler. All other songs written by Karren Pell Ó ASCAP.

Alabama Troubadours

...a musical history of Alabama places

March 1, 1998   2:30 P.M. & 8:00 P.M.

Notes from Linda Andrews, Conference Chairman

Our idea for the ***Alabama Troubadours*** project began in the spring of 1997 when I visited the Ave Maria Grotto in Cullman, Alabama. I had been up and down I-65 many, many times in my life, always wondering what the exit sign meant, but never taking the time from my busy schedule to find out. The day that I took the few hours to travel to St. Bernard's Monastery, I was, as the song says, "truly amazed" at what I saw.

I read the guest book in the gift shop and realized that people come from all over the United States and the world to see Brother Joseph's masterpieces, and many of us in Alabama do not realize what gifts we have "right smack in the middle" of our beautiful state. I had recently worked with Karren Pell on another project (*As I Lay Dying*, a musical adaptation of William Faulkner's novel) and in talking with her about some of the many fascinating places in Alabama that should be celebrated, this singer/songwriter from Nashville, Tennessee, got excited about Alabama — its history, beauty and sometimes indescribable uniqueness.

We began looking at maps, guidebooks, history books, and talking to friends about potential off-the-beaten track places to celebrate in song. We discovered the photography of Chip Cooper in *Alabama Memories* and *Silent in the Land*, and called him. I was again amazed when Chip got excited about the idea and decided to join the project. Karren would visit the sites and create the music and Chip would capture the spirit of the places in photographs. So, that's how the project began. When Karren sang the first song, "Brother Joseph's Wayside Shrine", in the library one day and said "Well, what do you think?", I knew that the ***Alabama Troubadours*** project would become more than just an idea. Many, many people have joined in along the way to make the project work and without them the "show" would not go on.

From the *Ave Maria Grotto* in Cullman and the *Mentone Inn* in the mountains to the seashores of *Bon Secour*, we have had some great adventures, as troubadours of old, discovering and capturing for you some places in Alabama that we feel should always be remembered and celebrated. We've thrown in a little history, some humor, of course some controversy, and hope you can experience these places in sight and sound as we have. Maybe you'll even visit one of these places or towns and discover something new about Alabama. You may find these songs and photographs hold memories for you already. Too often we view our past and present as ordinary and we don't "take the time to gaze." In the words of Karren Pell from Nashville and Brother Joseph from St. Bernard's Monastery:

> *We may think we're ordinary*
> *But we're part of grand design*
> *We all have a place in it*
> *And in it we all shine.*
> Karren Pell © ASCAP