

To: Members of Birmingham-Jefferson Historical Society  
What: Quarterly Meeting  
Date: October 9, 2007  
Time: 7:00 PM - Social Period Program - 7:30 PM  
Where: Botanical Gardens - First Floor Lecture Hall  
Speaker: Marvin Clemons & Lyle Key  
Topic: Birmingham Rails

Marvin Clemons: Marvin and his wife Kayron live in the historic Roebuck Springs area and attend Wilson Chapel United Methodist Church. A native of Jacksonville, Florida, he moved to Birmingham in 1958, graduating from Banks High in 1965. He was employed by Birmingham Terminal Company as an operator-towerman responsible for controlling passenger train movements through Terminal Station, and later transferred to Atlanta Terminal.

After enlisting in the Army, his active duty included tours in South Korea and the Republic of Viet Nam. He became UAB's first graduate in mass communications, and interned with the former Birmingham Post-Herald as assistant city editor before being named transportation editor. He later earned degrees at UAB in counseling and, in 1988, was pursuing private practice as a Professional Counselor, and serves as a current board member of the Alabama Association for Psychological Type.

His first vocation and favorite avocation of railroading continued and his interest in railroad photography developed, as well as being a transportation journalist, led to his current pursuit as publisher and co-author of BIRMINGHAM RAILS.

Lyle Key: Born in Birmingham, he and his wife Carolyn have two children and two grandchildren. He graduated from Shades Valley High School, and attended University of the South and University of Tennessee, with a BS in Business (major in Transportation) in 1967, and a JD from the University of Alabama School of Law in 1974.

He began a summer job with Southern Railway in the Birmingham Sales Office in 1966, then served in the Navy in the Pacific, 1967-69, and held various positions in L&N, Seaboard System and CSX law departments from 1974-1997 and was regional VP for Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee from 1997 until his retirement in 2004.

He remained active with UT National Alumni Association (President - 1993). His railroad connections included National RR Historical Society (National Director - 1981), Railway & Locomotion Historical Society (Southeast Chapter Director - 1993-97). He is active with the Heart of Dixie, Kentucky and Indiana Railway Museums, and the L&N Railroad Historical Society. He has numerous publications sharing his railroad knowledge, and video tapes of passenger train movies.

### **BIRMINGHAM RAILS**

Marvin Clemons and Lyle Key have published a new book called BIRMINGHAM RAILS. Red Mountain Press was formed just to publish this book.

It consists of 280 pages of historical narrative, entertaining personal essays, detailed maps, and richly detailed color and black & white photos, many published for the first time. Separate chapters cover each of Birmingham's major rail lines, including Atlantic Coast Line, Central of Georgia, Frisco, Gulf, Mobile & Ohio, Illinois Central, Louisville & Nashville, Seaboard Air Line and Southern Railway. Birmingham's numerous industrial railroads, such as U. S. Steel, Tennessee Coal & Iron, U.S. Pipe & Foundry, Woodward Iron, and shortline Birmingham Southern, are extensively reviewed by subject matter experts Tom Lawon and Ron Mele.

Of course, no book on Birmingham railroads would be complete without an account of Birmingham's magnificent Terminal Station. A full chapter is devoted to the station's history, from its glorious beginning in 1909 to its sad demise in 1970. The station's grand

interior and exterior features are covered in pages of rare photos, along with many colorful images of the passenger trains that called at Terminal Station.

For those with fond memories of Birmingham's streetcars and the brief but shining years of steam excursions, we've included separate chapters covering the last years of Birmingham's trolleys and the early beginnings of Birmingham's "steam revival" from the late 1960's.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

### **1. CHANGE OF MEETING DATES**

Due to an error by your President, the dates for our next four meetings have been changed to conform to the Constitution, which states that meetings are to be held on the second Tuesday of a given month. The Botanical Gardens has kindly changed the dates for us. The new dates are as follows, and your calendar should be changed to show this correction:

**October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**Especially note the next meeting date, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007.**

### **2. VOTE TO AMEND CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS:**

In our next meeting, there will be a vote by the membership on a minor change in the Constitution and the By-Laws, which is required by the IRS in order for our Society to conform in our application for reinstatement of our 501 (c)(3) tax status. This was approved by a recent called-meeting of the Executive Committee, but a vote by the membership is required.

### **3. REFRESHMENTS**

The Chairperson of our Refreshment Committee, **Jeannie Bradford**, now has the enthusiastic help of **Courtney Thompson**, who is Director of Sales and Marketing of Greenbriar at the Altamont. Courtney will furnish all of the sandwiches, cookies and drinks for our social hour, and will be present to help serve. This will save the Society some money, and will solve a problem of coverage of this activity. Introduce yourself to Courtney, and thank her for her kind participation.

### **4. RECRUITING**

**Carolyn Reich**, Chairman of the Membership Committee, is doing an outstanding job in her recruiting efforts. She mailed out a large number of letters to members of other organizations in the area. The organizations that she and her committee have selected are those which, by their nature, should be interested in local history. Some of our members are probably members of some of those groups, and will receive Carolyn's letter. If so, please pass it on to other who may not receive one.

### **5. DAY-TRIP PLANS**

**M. E. Lokey** has been hard at work planning an exciting and interesting day-trip for us. You should have already received her mail-out by now. As many of you know, M.E. spent quite a few years in the travel industry, and knows how to put together a successful trip. She has been able to put a package together that is economical, but value-packed. The social opportunities for our membership will be a valuable supplement to the sightseeing, learning and dining opportunities. Seriously consider joining your friends for a day out together.

### **6. BOOK**

**Jim Bennett's** new book on history of the Birmingham-Jefferson district is about to be published. It will be available for our own reading, as well as an excellent choice as Christmas gifts. Consider sending on to a Service Man or Woman, especially serving overseas. It would bring to them a touch of home, and may kindle their interest in history.

Profits from the sale of this book will go into our Museum of History funds from the BJHS.

## **7. MUSEUM**

Reports from Charles Speir's office, and his Board members, are very encouraging. They have been engaged in a two-pronged effort to acquire artifacts, and to obtain a building for the museum. Progress is being made in both fronts. They are engaged in a worthy endeavor which will have long-range benefits. Any members of our society who have pictures or artifacts that will help to tell the story of the Birmingham region should contact Charles. *Likewise, anyone who can contribute funds or suggestions toward purchase of a building should give Charles a call. Sooner would be better than later.*

## **8. A PASSING NOTE**

**Mary Emily Andrews**, a former long-time Board member of the Birmingham-Jefferson Historical Society, died recently. Your Society has sent a memorial gift, in the form of a book about flowers, to the Emmet O'Neal Library. Her son, William, will be appropriately notified. She was a faithful worker in the Society, and will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

## **9. THIS NEWSLETTER, a statement by your president:**

**Bob Kracke** produced the NEWSLETTER that you received prior to our last meeting. I hope you found it to be interesting as well as useful. He has agreed to serve all of us by editing and producing a newsletter quarterly. This is the second in this new series. A newsletter can often serve as a binder to bring members of an organization together, and to stimulate latent interests in the activities of the group. I wish to thank Bob for this effort, and would ask all members to express to him your appreciation. One outstanding way to help to make the newsletter successful is to *participate*. Many members have interesting stories to tell. If you have such a story, please send it to Bob. *If you would rather tell the story to one of us, and have us write it up for you, please call me at 871-6213, and I will make arrangements to visit you.*

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

**By Ann Hillhouse**

Sponsors for 2007-2008 Birmingham-Jefferson Historical Society:

Ms. Lela Anne Brewer  
Mrs. Jane Brock  
Mrs. Yvonne Crumpler  
Mrs. Jacqueline David  
Mrs. Claire H. Fairley  
Mr. Joseph M. Farley  
Mrs. Constance Grund  
Mrs. Jeanette Hancock  
Mrs. Ann Hillhouse  
Mr. Fred Jackson  
Mr. Bob Kracke  
Dr. James Pittman  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas A. Ritchie  
Carolyn Satterfied, PhD  
Mr. and Mrs. James F. Sulzby  
Mr. and Mrs. James L. Terry  
Dr. and Mrs. Bayard Tynes  
Mr. and Mrs. R. R. Vevle  
Mr. and Mrs. Harold Williams  
Mr. and Mrs. John N. Wrinkle

Benefactors:

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Stockham  
Mr. and Mrs. Craig Allen

**Lynn Dobson submitted the following:**

### **MEMORIES OF WWII IN ROEBUCK SPRINGS**

**By Beverly Donalson Lewis**

It was the summer of 1943. I had finished my freshman year at Ramsay, we had a baby boy to carry on the family name and summer to enjoy time with my little sister. Mama had to look for a place to move, as the man we rented from needed the house. She found a place in historic Roebuck Springs and Daddy flew in to sign the papers from Sedalia, Missouri.

It proved an ideal place once Mama fenced it in to keep my little sister from running away. We shared the drive with Professor and Mrs. Hall. He was principal at Woodlawn Grammar, Kennedy and Minnie Holman schools. The roads were not paved, only surfaced, with trees along the sides giving shade to walkers. Mama fell in love with the red bud that bloomed along the curve by the Gottlieb's drive.

Gas rationing was in full swing so one had to plan one's errands, and think only of necessary trips. Neighbors were great to offer rides, or pick you up along Valley Road or 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue as the street car turned at 85<sup>th</sup> Street to return to Birmingham.

By the time you walked to the Roebuck Country Club in the summer heat you counted it a refreshing treat to take a dip in that icy spring-fed pool. Pelham McDonald, a Woodlawn High student who lived at 514 North Drive, delivered our newspaper on horseback.

Mama had a bag swing put up and carpenters built what they referred to as a "Flying Jenny" a huge post put in the ground with a large spike driven through a board that two people could use as a see-saw, or go around in a circle. The swing was a favorite even though you had to wait "til the cat died," meaning until the swing actually came to a stand with no effort on the part of the swinger. Mama had a glider on the screened-in porch. I spent many hours keeping my brother content while reading Jane Eyre, Wuthering Heights, and The Scarlet Letter, as well as other historical novels. There was one about Spain from which I drew the name Donna to name a German Shepherd puppy my mother's brother Bill had given me. If I finished my tasks, and the children were napping, Mama released me to explore all those hills and valleys to my heart's content. All that time there were no houses beyond Rutherford Circle or Ridge Road.

In the wee hours of the morning on June 6, 1944, Ethel and Bob Ware, long-time friends of my mother called her and said they had just heard Daddy's name mentioned on the radio - **D-DAY HAD BEGUN!**

Mama came and woke me, and we sat glued to my grandmother's old Atwater-Kent radio. The news announcement came on again. A young reporter from the Atlanta newspaper was standing behind Daddy and said, "Lt. Col. John M. Donalson in command, from Birmingham, Alabama, flying a C-47, towing gliders filled with paratroopers leading the D-Day Air invasion." Even when the newspaper reports came out, we were still in

shock! Fred Myers, who lived at 427 Exeter Drive suggested that we all gather at Wilson Chapel to offer prayers for our men and their safe return. I kept my sister and brother while Mama attended.

We kept a large map on the breakfast room wall so we could follow our allies' victories and heartbreak tragedies from news reports. There were broadcasts by well-known commentators like Edward R. Murrow. We counted days between the mail from our loved ones overseas, sending them news from home in return, while Mama tried to make the worst of times better for us at 511 Valley Road in Roebuck Springs.

**Sam Rumore submitted the following:**

**A CHRISTMAS MEMORY**

**By Sam Rumore**

My uncle, Joe Rumore, was a radio star in Alabama for forty years. His shows were folksy, popular, and unscripted. He was unique because he had a broadcast studio in the basement of his home, and he chatted and played music on the most powerful station in Alabama. He was heard all over the state.

Because he broadcast his shows from home, his family, friends, and neighbors were often on the air through personal appearances or by phone. His most popular shows were the Christmas programs when the entire extended family, his sponsors, and even nationally known entertainers such as Tennessee Ernie Ford, Jim Nabors, Sonny James, and others made appearances by phone or in person.

It was so much fun to have your uncle place a microphone in front of you and you could say hello to your friends, tell what Santa left at your house, or even sing a song. My radio singing debut took place when I was six years old.

The previous Christmas I had received a new record player (not a stereo), and a great number of 45 RPM records. Uncle Joe also had a record store, Rumore's Record Rack, and he was generous with his gift records. One special record I received was Bing Crosby's rendition of Adeste Fideles. After playing the song over and over it was not hard for a six year old to memorize the words in Latin. So the next Christmas Uncle Joe asked me to sing a Christmas song, and being quite unafraid, I sang that famous carol in Latin a

capella for thousands of listeners. That was a Christmas memory I will always cherish. And I will always remember my Uncle Joe on the radio.

**AN EXCERPT FROM "BADHAM GENEALOGY, VOLUME 3"**

**By Robert R. Kracke**

Thomas E. Badham has forwarded to your newsletter editor Volume 3 of the Badham Genealogy, by Henry Badham, Jr., which begins in Badham, South Carolina, and tells the story of Henry Lee Badham, Sr., who arrived in Birmingham in 1886. This genealogy is virtually an early history of Birmingham: how it looked, what took place, and the incredible growth experienced. The following is just an excerpt from this lengthy genealogical history. In future issues of the newsletter, there will be additional quotes from the genealogy. As you recall, the Badhams owned Bessemer Land Company, and for many years, the Board of Trustees meeting of the Birmingham Country Club met at Bessemer Land Company's office. At one time, according to this genealogy, the Badhams owned most of the land from Valley Avenue to Lakeshore Drive. Thank you Mr. Tom Badham!

The following is quoted verbatim:

In 1886, Henry determined to break the chains which bound him to the Railroad with little future. The family discussion ended with Henry's father and mother placing a mortgage of \$500.00 on their homeplace with the Trustees of Davidson College, covering the property beginning on the corner of Meyers and Third Street, also portions of lots No's 503-504 in Square 87. This provided for the living of the family until Henry could become reestablished. Father paid this mortgage; I found it in his files.

Papers then were carrying headlines of the rapidly growing "Magic City" - - Birmingham, attracting many North and South Carolinians. The town was surveyed, lots staked out, and auctioned in 1871. By the end of 1872, the population was 4,000. In 1873, the New York Press Association held its

meeting here and wrote: "Birmingham is destined to be the manufacturing center of the habitable globe." Although the cholera epidemic almost depopulated the town by the end of 1873; in 1886, it was booming. Lots in town sold for as high as \$1,000 a front foot. The census in 1890 was over 26,000. Ben and Henry discussed its opportunities. Ben came to take a look. Henry wrote him to please look out for a place for him. But Ben stayed with his ventures in South Carolina; Henry, however, came to Birmingham with nothing but a wonderful personality to carve out his fortune.

Henry had to be outfitted - - he had nothing decent to wear. Ben came to his aid by giving him some "hand-me-downs." He wrote Ben how perfectly the suit fitted and reminded him not to forget the overcoat: "Send by express, Now don't forget that hat." Thus equipped, he left for Birmingham about the first of December, 1886.

The History of Alabama and Her People, Published by the American Historical Society, 1927, gives a long biography of Henry. I don't know where they got their information; for the most part it's accurate and detailed. One of their staff writers must have interviewed him before his death; and some of his friends may have been questioned. It tells of his family - - even cites William's award of the Distinguished Service Cross. It says that Grandma's family has been prominent in Warrick County, Virginia, since 1685; that Henry was descendant of William Badham who settled in North Carolina in 1711; and that this William was the son of Charles Badham of the Manors of Badham and Swaffham, Norfolk, England; this probably came from Ben. It states: "He was a little past the age of twenty-one when he came to Birmingham in 1886 at the invitation of the late Governor Joseph F. Johnston, at the time president of the old Alabama State Bank. Mr. Badham spent his first day in Birmingham, a Sunday, at the home of Governor Johnston, and while there met William Webb Crawford, then a clerk in the Berney National Bank. This was the beginning of a friendship that lasted until death and brought these two men in constant association in a business way."

Mr. Crawford often told of Henry's arrival in Birmingham; embellishing it with each telling, but the essential truth remained. In their early days, Webb called Henry "Bat," sometimes "Mr. Bat!" Others took it up. He said that when skinny Bat got off the train, he looked hungry and they found out later that he was hungry. After his Carolina friends had slapped him on the back, they sauntered down to the baggage room - - Bat didn't know where he was going. After standing around there for a while, they asked him if he was going to claim his baggage. He then held up a bag-like contraption, saying that it was all the baggage he had. Mr. Crawford finally got down to telling it that Father arrived with a valise and one extra shirt. It was young and felt humiliated when I heard the story told, but Father seemed to enjoy it as much as Mr. Crawford.

Governor Johnston was of the same family back in Edenton who have been friends of ours for over two hundred and fifty years.

Christmas, a few days after Henry's arrival, found him to be a very homesick young man. He was blue because he had received no letters from home. He wrote Ben: "I do think you all ought to let me know what to expect. If you don't care one way or another why just say so. I will get along much better for I get so blue when I go to the post office, expecting a letter from you and don't get it. Here it is Christmas day and not a word from those I love. It is tough and don't forget it." In the same letter, "I am still hard at work and hope before long to give you a good report. I do wish you had stayed here. The young men have made money on steel. If I only had a little to start on, I would be fixed, but then as the fellow says, I will get there. I don't intend to speak to a girl until I find one worth two or three thousand." He then asks if they had a pleasant Christmas and for him to kiss little Sara for him. Uncle Henry will give her a fortune before he dies."

I don't know how long he kept his resolution "not to look at a girl," but I do know he was looking at some girls - - not the right sort - - for he told me so. Although he started as a "runner." He soon became paying teller at the bank; from his cage he could see into the windows of the hotel across the

street. A burlesque company was staying there and he couldn't resist taking a look, while paying out money, at the scantily clad girls appearing at the windows. Thus distracted, he reached towards the stack of bills, intending to pick up a one dollar bill but picked up a twenty and paid it out as a one. He said it was an expensive "peep" and taught him a lesson to keep his eyes on his business.

In a few days after his arrival, he was caught up in the insane boom Birmingham was then experiencing - - lots selling \$1,000.00 a front foot. He wrote Ben, January 9, 1887, "I am so mad I don't know what to do. Just think of it, Alva Springs and Bob Williamson came to the Bank to see me the other day, Friday, and asked me if I knew anything nice. Well of course I did (had been worried all day how I could raise a thousand) I put them on to it. To day they had dinner with me. \$2000.00 a piece is all they had made in two days. There is a big reward for any man that has ever lost a cent on real estate in Birmingham. You see I am in a position to hear the 'Big Dogs' talk and know exactly what they are doing. Next week for instance Capt. Johnston and Colonel DeBardeleben a man worth 4 million will put a stock on the market that will double in less than twenty-four hours. Now I know what I am talking about. Our cashier has made all his money in this way. Old man, if you could come here, you could make a fortune in a year. Sell out lock, stock and barrel and come; or, else, stay and raise other money and let Capt. Johnston invest it for you. Let me hear from you soon."

After the above, Henry's letters were less frequent. Birmingham was too exciting for a young man to spend much time writing: new friends, a wide open, fast growing town. People making and losing fortunes. The bad people sinking to the bottom; the good, struggling to the top. Father said that people were like water, for a time they might be raised but soon would seek their own level.

What was Birmingham like then? What exciting events were taking place? What was there in the way of amusements and social life? What industrial and building developments were underway? Who were Henry's

friends? Imagine yourself a young man in the middle of a fast growing, wide open, brand new industrial town - - near the end of the period (so it was thought) when the South was being reconstructed.

The streets and avenues of Birmingham were as they are now. The Birmingham Street Railway was operated with horse-cars. The main routes were from Oak Hill Cemetery to Eleventh Avenue on Twentieth Street (Five Points); and on First Avenue, crossing the Town. Also, there was a steam dummy-line going around Highland Avenue. The well-off had their horses and buggies.

There were saloons on almost every corner and bars in between. It was not uncommon to see drunks reeling down the streets. A notorious red-light district flourished on Avenue A. Some of the "madams" became rich and well-known; one became somewhat of a heroine and is mentioned in history. "Lou Wooster nursed the sick and suffering through the cholera epidemic at the peril of her life." She said, "Why I remained has always been a mystery to me. I had the means and was constantly urged to go. My friends said, 'leave, before it is too late. You will die if you stay!' I was determined to stay and help nurse the poor, sick, and suffering ones who needed me." Lou helped to give status to the "madams." By 1887, they were flourishing - - and exercised not an inconsequential part in local politics. They would drive on the principal avenues in the afternoons in their well-appointed victorias, showing off the latest new girl. It was hard to keep in stock goodlooking ones because of their marrying; seriously interfering with the madam's business.

Incidentally, driving on the principal avenues was the main diversion for all, particularly on Sundays. At that time the main "drags" were Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Avenues North. All would drive back and forth, looking each other over, waving and tipping their hats to friends.

Next issue: Henry Badham, Jr. describes the Hawes murder.