

SIX DOLLARS

NUMBER 81, SUMMER 2006

ALABAMA HERITAGE



PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AND THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY



Cover: Portrait of Alabama Power Company founder James Mitchell by Danish-born American Impressionist John Christen Johansen (1876–1944). See article, page 8.

ALABAMA HERITAGE

EDITOR Donna L. Cox
 DESIGNER Robin McDonald
 MARKETING & ADVERTISING Sara C. Martin
 ASSISTANT EDITORS Jessica Fordham Kidd, Liliana Loofbourow,
 Vince Masterson, Alissa Nutting, David Welch
 CONTRIBUTING EDITORS L. J. Davenport, Pam Jones
 CIRCULATION Cindy Sanford
 MARKETING ASSISTANT Mary L. Johnston
 EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Naomi Wolf
 PROOFREADERS Jessica Lowther, Melissa Womack
 INTERN Katie Cole

ALABAMA SCHOOLS SPONSOR: BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD OF ALABAMA
 Alabama Heritage wishes to thank Blue Cross and Blue Shield for giving
 the magazine to every school in the state.

PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AND THE
 ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

ALABAMA HERITAGE
 wishes to thank the following
 for their generous support:

LIGON INDUSTRIES, LLC

MERCEDES-BENZ US
 INTERNATIONAL, INC.

PHIFER WIRE
 PRODUCTS, INC.

PROTECTIVE LIFE
 CORPORATION

REGIONS FINANCIAL
 CORPORATION

VULCAN MATERIALS
 COMPANY

A corporate-level gift has
 been made in honor of

JOE H. RITCH

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

Robert E. Witt
President

Judy Bonner
Provost

Daniel J. J. Ross
Director, The University of Alabama Press

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

Most Reverend Oscar H. Lipscomb
Chairman, Board of Trustees

James E. Simpson
Vice Chairman, Board of Trustees

Edwin C. Bridges
Director

THE ALABAMA HERITAGE FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT: Maury D. Smith, Montgomery • FIRST VICE PRESIDENT: Steve Williams, Birmingham

Rufus Bealle, Tuscaloosa; Lella Bromberg, Birmingham; Paul W. Bryant Jr., Tuscaloosa; Jim Cashman, Tuscaloosa; Artur Davis, Birmingham; Larry Foster, Birmingham; Gillian Goodrich, Birmingham; Dr. Charles Graffeo, Huntsville; Elmer B. Harris, Birmingham; Betsy Lowe, Huntsville; Sid McDonald, Union Grove; D. Joseph McInnes, Montgomery; Thomas McMillan, Brewton; Tennant S. McWilliams, Birmingham; Emmett Meyer, Tuscaloosa; Vaughan Morrisette, Mobile; Beverly Phifer, Tuscaloosa; Ann Pritchard, Birmingham; Yetta G. Samford Jr., Opelika; John Scott, Montgomery; Barrett C. Shelton Jr., Decatur; Brenda Sonner-Fox, Montgomery; Joab Thomas, Tuscaloosa; Neal Travis, Birmingham; Neal Wade, Montgomery; Suzanne Wolfe, Tuscaloosa.

EDITORIAL AND ADVISORY BOARD

Edwin C. Bridges, Director, Alabama State Department of Archives and History; Wilton S. Dillon, Senior Scholar, Smithsonian Institution; J. Wayne Flynt, Department of History, Auburn University; Robert Gamble, Senior Architectural Historian, Alabama Historical Commission; Virginia Van der Veer Hamilton, Professor Emerita, Department of History, University of Alabama at Birmingham; William J. Koopman, Chairman, Department of Medicine, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Tennant S. McWilliams, Dean, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Robert O. Mellow, Department of Art, University of Alabama; George C. Rable, Summersell Chair in Southern History, University of Alabama; Michael Thomason, Department of History, University of South Alabama; Cordell Wynn, President Emeritus, Stillman College.

Changing your address? Please notify *Alabama Heritage* as soon as possible; the post office does not forward bulk mail. Rates, postpaid in the United States: One year (four issues) \$18.95; two years (eight issues) \$32.95; single copies \$6.00 plus \$2.50 for postage and handling. All correspondence regarding subscriptions, donations, or manuscripts should be directed to: *Alabama Heritage*, University of Alabama, P.O. Box 870342, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0342, (205) 348-7467. Visit us online at www.AlabamaHeritage.com.

Alabama Heritage (ISSN 0887-493X) is a nonprofit educational quarterly published by the University of Alabama and the Alabama Department of Archives and History. Entire contents, copyright 2006 by the University of Alabama and the Alabama Department of Archives and History. All rights reserved.

Alabama Heritage disclaims responsibility for all statements of fact or opinion expressed in signed contributions to the magazine. The editors will give careful consideration to all unsolicited materials but cannot assume responsibility for their safety; return postage is requested. Writer's Guidelines are available at www.AlabamaHeritage.com.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

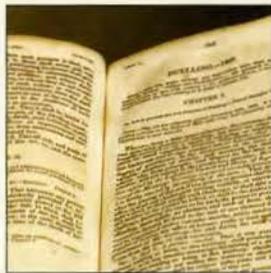


EMPOWERING ALABAMA: THE JAMES MITCHELL STORY

8

Leah Rawls Atkins

Entrepreneur, engineer, and newcomer James Mitchell showed more faith in Alabama than most native sons, revolutionizing daily life with reliable electric power.



TOULMIN & HITCHCOCK, PIONEERING JURISTS OF THE ALABAMA FRONTIER

18

By Philip Beidler

Harry Toulmin and Henry Hitchcock wrote the law books of the Alabama frontier, revealing the raffish, freewheeling world of antebellum statehood.



ALABAMA'S VINE AND OLIVE COLONY: MYTH AND FACT

26

Rafe Blaufarb

In Vine and Olive Colony myth, dashing aristocrats struggle in vain to tame the wilderness, but the truth is just as compelling—and far more important to the American story.



FROM TUSKEGEE TO ANGKOR: THE ODYSSEY OF LUCILLE DOUGLASS

36

By Stephen Goldfarb

In an era when society expected women to be dainty, passive, and entertaining, Alabama artist Lucille Sinclair Douglass defied conventions by traveling the world and capturing her adventures in exotic etchings, pastels, and watercolors.

DEPARTMENTS

Letter from the Editor: Alabama Heritage Turns Twenty	5
Alabama Mysteries: Bangor Cave Casino	6
Nature Journal: The Two Faces of Dr. Nott	45
Recollections: A Gold Star Pilgrimage to Flanders Fields	47
Contributors, Sources, and Suggested Readings	51
Alabama Album: Lung Learning	52

A GOLD STAR PILGRIMAGE TO FLANDERS FIELDS

By J. Darren Peterson

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row.*

—Lt. Col. John McCrae, M.D.

WHILE MANY PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY those educated a few decades ago, remember these lines penned by John McCrae,

most residents of southeast Alabama's Wiregrass region probably do not realize that a local connection exists to the military cemetery in Belgium known as Flanders Field. The Flanders Field American Cemetery in Waregem, Belgium, was one of several cemeteries created after World War I as a final resting place for American soldiers who died in Europe during the war. The cemetery contains 368 graves, 21 of them Unknowns, and the names of 43 soldiers missing in action are inscribed on the memorial walls. Among the graves of Flanders Field is that of Private William C. Barlow of Ashford, the only Alabama native buried there.

William Cataloe Barlow was born December 27, 1888, in what was then known as the Dixons Beat in Pike County, Alabama, near Brundidge. One of three children born to Leroy H. and Russia Bryan Barlow, William was known to his family by his middle name, Cataloe. The Barlows moved south to Houston County in 1911. Leroy, Russia, and their daughter Essie moved to Dothan, while William moved to Ashford, where he took up farming like his grandfather, Anderson Barlow, had done before him. He also

worked occasionally as what was then known as a substitute Rural Free Delivery (RFD) courier, or mailman.

Barlow was twenty-eight years old when the U.S. ordered the first of three mandatory draft registrations. It was held June 5, 1917, for men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one; Barlow registered but requested a draft exemption listing "dependent parents" as the reason. Shortly thereafter, on March 24, 1918, he wed Miss Effie Palmer of Edison, Georgia. They were married less than a month when their tranquility was shattered. On April 20, fifty-two men were summoned for military duty by the Houston County draft board.

Despite his exemption request, Barlow was among them.

Barlow shared only five days more with his bride. He reported to Dothan at 1:00 p.m. on April 25. Before noon the next morning, Barlow and eighteen other white draftees left Dothan by railroad headed for Columbia, South Carolina. The black draftees had departed that same morning at seven o'clock for Battle Creek, Michigan. The remaining men from the draftee group traveled over the next few days to Fort Oglethorpe, near Chattanooga, and Camp Sheridan at Montgomery.

National Guard units in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee were ordered to form the U.S. Army's 30th Infantry Division in July 1917. When casualties occurred and replacement soldiers were needed, though, men

joined those ranks from all over the country. After training for about six weeks, Barlow was transferred into Company F, 105th Engineers Regiment, 30th Infantry Division on May 17, 1918. His overseas service began May 27 and would last only three short months.

The U.S. 27th and 30th Infantry Divisions were attached to the British 4th Army as the American II Corps.



William Cataloe Barlow is the only Alabama soldier buried at Flanders Field. (Courtesy Lisa Campbell.)

Barlow's time in battle was therefore spent on the Western Front where the corps occupied the Canal Sector near Ypres, Belgium, during the Ypres-Lys Offensive, close to where John McCrae was stationed when he wrote the poem "Flanders Fields." Through that effort, American troops liberated the village of Voormezeele.

Four days after the battle for Voormezeele, Lt. Col. Herr issued an order calling for an attack requiring that 2,520 cylinders of mustard gas be "pushed" across the front occupied by the 30th Infantry. It was to take place during the night of August 24–25 or as soon after as weather conditions permitted. The attack was, in fact, delayed by three days. During the evening of August 27, soldiers positioned train cars of the gas, which were discharged at 2:25 a.m. the next morning. Tragically, a change in wind arose about three minutes after discharge, driving a cloud of the chemical back under the train onto the British and American troops.

The portion of the train manned by the 105th Engineers was hardest hit by the cloud. While retreating from the gas, many of the men encountered wire entanglements more than one hundred yards from the train, which slowed their escape. Although all personnel were wearing protective gear and gas masks, the gas proved too strong. The backlash being at its strongest in the area, and the wire slowing or, in one case, preventing immediate escape, three engineers were either killed outright or died soon after. Those killed were Corporal

Ray Stroman of Indiana, Private Dave Lee of North Carolina, and Private William Cataloe Barlow.

Due to the state of communications at the time, Barlow was not listed on the daily War Department roster of casualties until five weeks after his death on October 2, 1918. As next of kin, Effie was notified at her Ashford address of the death of her husband and asked her preference for his burial. The body could have been returned to the States, but she chose, like nearly thirty-three thousand other families at the time, to have her husband permanently laid to rest near where he fell. Cataloe Barlow was accordingly buried in Flanders Field.

Like Barlow, many thousands of soldiers were buried overseas, and trips to Europe were beyond the means of most Americans. One notable exception was Charles Lindbergh, who flew the *Spirit of St. Louis* over Flanders Field on Memorial Day in 1927, only nine days after his historic trans-Atlantic flight. As part of a memorial ceremony, he dropped poppies over the cemetery and saluted the fallen.

Serious efforts began in the 1920s to lobby the government to take other Americans, mainly the mothers and widows of the fallen, to visit the soldiers' graves. Although the first such legislation was introduced in Congress in 1919, a full ten years passed before support-

Gold Star pilgrims arrive at Aisne-Marne. (Courtesy National Archives and Records Administration.)





Above: Gathered at the monument at the Flanders Field American Cemetery are a group of Gold Star Pilgrims—the mothers and widows of fallen soldiers. (Courtesy Michael Kearney, in honor of Thomas Emmett Kearney and all those at Flanders Field.) Right: Russia Barlow. (Courtesy National Archives and Records Administration.)



ers of the Gold Star Pilgrimages, as the trips became known, succeeded in their efforts. The name derived from the gold stars the mothers displayed on service flags in their homes and on armbands during World War I, each representing a son or daughter killed in the line of duty. Not until March 2, 1929, was the relevant legislation—granting five million dollars toward these trips, to take place over a period of three years—approved and signed by President Coolidge. Later that year the Army began contacting the mothers and widows of over thirty thousand soldiers, asking whether they desired a trip to Europe, and, if so, their date preference of 1930 or later.

To each of the 6,693 women who agreed to go, the Quartermaster General sent a complete itinerary detailing everything from travel dates and times to specific train berths and hotel rooms. Each group of women was assigned a letter of the alphabet. Party Q, for instance, consisted of African American women. Both white and African American women had the same itineraries, but they were segregated, as was the custom of the time. Accommodations were often different, with African American women traveling on commercial steamers while white women traveled on luxury liners.

Candidacy for the pilgrimage depended, too, on marital status. After the war, Effie Barlow had moved back to

her hometown of Edison, Georgia, where she remained unmarried through 1929—eleven years. When the government approached her offering a trip to her husband's grave, she accepted. But her marriage in January of 1930 to J. E. Kirksey, also of Edison, rendered her ineligible for the trip.

Barlow's mother, Russia, accepted the government's offer. But because of her age and physical condition, she convinced the government to allow her daughter Essie to make the trip.

Russia and Essie Barlow, the first women from Dothan to make a Gold Star Pilgrimage, left for New York City on June 20, 1931. Before leaving, Russia said she was glad to go to Europe, but that the trip would be a sad one, even after thirteen years, because of the death of her son. She declared, too, that she had no fear of seasickness. "Why, I'm young and strong and I'm not going to be sick," she said. They were assigned to Pilgrimage Party H, and were advised by the Quartermaster to wear "somewhat heavier clothing" and to pack

"sufficient underwear, nightgowns, stockings, and handkerchiefs," as laundry facilities would be unavailable.

Essie and Russia traveled by train, arriving in New York on June 22. On June 25 they sailed from New York aboard the USS *President Roosevelt* with the rest of their group, bound for Cherbourg, France. They arrived in Europe July 2, and would stay there two weeks. Their activities (orchestrated by the U.S. Army) included a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Arc de Triomphe, a visit to Napoleon's tomb, three days at Flanders Field, and considerable time for individual sightseeing.

Their stay in Europe would end July 16, and the Barlow women arrived back in the States July 24. While we do not have any record of Russia's experience on her trip, another Gold Star Pilgrimage mother wrote the following after returning home: "I feel that a gap has been filled, and that now that I have seen my dear son's resting place, and know that it will for ever be kept beautiful, I am more contented."

A native of Alabama's Wiregrass region, J. Darren Peterson is a software engineer with a deep interest in history.

ALABAMA HERITAGE

DIGITAL FEATURES

This feature is part of a complete issue of *Alabama Heritage*. Buying individual features is a fast, convenient, and cost-effective solution for accessing content from *Alabama Heritage*. Features are available for purchase individually through our online store at www.AlabamaHeritage.com, and are delivered in a PDF format for easy use. This feature should not be reproduced in any format (print or digital), unless specifically permitted by *Alabama Heritage* in advance.

Most *Alabama Heritage* articles are available for purchase as a downloadable PDF. A few, however, are unavailable due to rights and permissions restrictions for the images used within the articles. A good faith effort has been made to seek permissions from those claiming rights to all images. Those without permission have been redacted.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Once you discover how useful features from *Alabama Heritage* are, you may find it more cost effective to consider a personal subscription. A subscription to *Alabama Heritage* is also a perfect gift. To subscribe to our quarterly magazine, or to give a gift subscription, log on to www.AlabamaHeritage.com, or call us toll free at (877) 925-2323.

CONNECT WITH US

Stay connected with *Alabama Heritage* through our many social media sites. Follow us for fresh, daily content on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. You can also learn more about the operations of our magazine through the eyes of our interns, and vicariously visit historic sites and attend conferences by reading our blogs. Log on to www.AlabamaHeritage.com