

Alabama Heritage



The Muscle Shoals Sound

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Alabama Heritage

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Cover: Cher and friends gather in front of Muscle Shoals Sound. See caption, page 10. (Stephen Paley)

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CREATING "THE MUSCLE SHOALS SOUND"

BY CHARLES L. HUGHES

For more than five decades, a small corner of Alabama has helped the music industry produce a soulful sound that reverberates throughout the nation and the world.



AN INVISIBLE MAP REVEALED: THE FIRST STATE SEAL OF ALABAMA

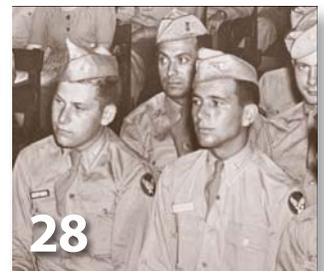
BY DAVID M. ROBB JR.

High-resolution scans uncover an early state map, published here for the first time, providing insights about Alabama's founding and the first state seal.

ALABAMA'S JEWISH SERVICEMEN IN WORLD WAR II

BY DAN J. PUCKETT

Members of Alabama's Jewish population gained a profound sense of purpose and found themselves ever-changed as a result of their World War II service.



COMING OF AGE IN GEE'S BEND

BY MARY STANTON

Alabama sociologist Olive Stone spent years researching the culture of Gee's Bend, discovering a community that thrived on independence and a unique identity that survives to this day.

PLACES IN PERIL 2014: ALABAMA'S ENDANGERED HISTORIC LANDMARKS

BY MICHAEL PANHORST

This year's list of historic places in need of restoration and preservation includes a number of compelling sites throughout the state.



Revealing Hidden Collections

GLIMPSES OF THE GREAT WAR AT HOME AND ABROAD

BY DONNELLY LANCASTER WALTON

On November 7, 1914, Surgeon General of the US Army William C. Gorgas wrote to his sister Mamie, who lived in Tuscaloosa with their sisters Jessie and Ria:

The European war interests me intensely. I have a great admiration for the Germans. They have certainly shown the greatest courage and pluck. But we are now passing through one of the great epochs in the world's history. This war will decide whether our present civilization will proceed along lines of absolutism or democracy. We are all equally interested and should take sides with one or the other party. If I were

a young man and my country did not go in I would shoulder a gun and join the Allies.

The Alabama native referred to the beginning months of World War I, and as the highest ranking medical officer in the US Army, General Gorgas would have been more attuned to world affairs than the average person during that period. However, although the war had raged in Europe for several years before the United States entered it in 1917, very

Soldiers from the Third Army make toasts with European civilians. The sign on the table reads: "The Temperance Club of the Rhine." (All photos W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library)





Above: Lt. Walter B. Jones took this photo of his tent in Villebougis, Yonne, France, in January 1919. The soldier is most likely one of his brothers (Howard, Edwin, or Raymond). Cooks in the background are gathering snow for snow cream. Right: Private Eli Hughes of Kennedy, Alabama.



little archival material in the University of Alabama Libraries Division of Special Collections, which includes the W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library and the A. S. Williams III Americana Collection, seems to indicate that Americans and Alabamians held a great interest in the war. But a closer look uncovers several items in the collections that reveal important information about those fighting in the war.

Research materials covering the period during US involvement are significant, and researchers will find letters, photographs, and artifacts in over eighty discrete manuscript and photograph collections at the University of Alabama. For example, members of the Hughes family from Alabama recently donated materials that their family created, received, and kept during World War I. Two brothers, Arley and Eli Hughes, of Kennedy, Alabama, served in the Army's Eighty-first Infantry, and over one hundred letters, along with photos and Eli's uniform, document their activities.

The Hoole Library also houses items originally belonging to Alabama native Walter B. Jones. Before Jones attained his PhD from Johns Hopkins University, served as the Alabama

State Geologist (among many other titles), and double mortgaged his home to buy Moundville, he served as an officer in the Army Corps of Engineers. Throughout his life he was a prolific photographer, often placing his prints in albums that document different periods. One such album contains around 150 photos, complete with captions, from his World War I service. His family also donated Jones's uniform and riding boots, French parade flag, leather map case, ammunition holster, Red Cross bag, medical kit, and sewing kit.

Also included are works by novelist William March, who is best known for writing *The Bad Seed*. March grew up in Mobile, Alabama, and served with the Fifth Regiment, Forty-third Company of Marines. Fighting in major battles of the war garnered him the French Croix de Guerre, the Navy Cross, and the Distinguished Service Cross. His novel *Company K*, comparable to *All Quiet on the Western Front*, tells the story of the war from 113 soldiers' perspectives and includes stories recycled from his own experiences. His papers include war letters to friends and family in which he sprinkles humorous

anecdotes and quips on top of grim or mundane stories. In a letter after the Battle of Blanc Mont Ridge, for which his heroics earned him the Distinguished Service Cross, March told his friend Hattie that he had "one billion cooties (of the big red German variety)" before describing what happened there. The collection also includes a canteen, a fork, an unusual floral ditty bag, and a mess kit, as well as photographs and colorful service certificates. (Soldiers and sailors used ditty bags—usually made from plain material—to hold small, often personal items.) Someone, perhaps March himself, neatly cut most pages from the leather pocket diary he carried with him in Europe.

There are several other items relating to World War I at the University of Alabama, and though most of the soldiers represented served in the Army, the Hoole Library does have letters and photographs reflecting the war experiences

of those serving in the Marines and the Navy. Additionally, though combat soldiers wrote many of the letters, a number of the soldiers served in other positions crucial to the war effort, such as engineer, baker, medical officer, and machine gun instructor.

While most of the World War I resources represent southern white families' experiences during the war, researchers can also find items relating to the African American experience. Over 350,000 African American men served in the armed forces during World War I. As Jim Crow laws were still very much in effect, African American soldiers and civilians encountered harrowing, often violent situations. Materials in Special Collections attest to this struggle. For example, in 1917 Joseph Cotter Jr., an African American writer, described potentially volatile events in Louisville, Kentucky, where white soldiers refused to salute African American officers. His letter to friend Louise Matthews is part of the Matthews family papers and explains that an aged Civil War general had neutralized the situation and averted further incident when he issued a statement in the Louisville *Courier* "in which he took the soldiers to task, saying that all officers were to be saluted." Other letters from Cotter to Matthews discuss race relations during the period and with Army officers. In a letter in the Huston family papers written on April 20, 1918, a soldier wrote from Europe that several friends had "tumbles" after refusing to salute African American officers, adding, "I haven't met one yet, thank goodness, but I would do just like the rest."

The Hoole Library contains approximately one thousand photographs from the World War I era. Many are studio portraits of soldiers in their new uniforms before they headed to the front. Rev. Wylheme Ragland and his son Frederick Kennedy donated a collection of early-twentieth-century photos that include several large portraits of both white and African American soldiers and sailors. The collections also include a great deal of photos that soldiers, friends, and family members probably took with a Brownie or similar camera. The Wade Hall Collection of World War I Photographs has



Left, from top to bottom: Sailors on a ship near Pensacola, Florida; photo of unidentified nurse, who was most likely a member of the US Navy; African American member of the Twenty-fifth Infantry Division baseball team, taken during a stateside game held during the war.

a catalog of over five hundred photos of soldiers, including portraits and candid shots taken in both the US and Europe. Although many of the photographs in the collection are unidentified, they provide a visual document of the war and include servicemen from different military branches. They show camp life stateside and in Europe and include photos of European civilians. Numerous other manuscript and photograph collections contain smaller numbers of photographs.

Researchers interested in seeing any materials discussed here may go to Acumen at <http://acumen.lib.ua.edu/> to search or browse the digital collections, or they may visit the reading room and view them in person. The Division of Special Collections has also created an exhibit, "Glimpses of the Great War Abroad and At Home," that showcases archival materials from the collections. While this examination focuses on manuscripts, photographs, and artifacts, the Libraries Division of Special Collections also holds numerous published items relating to World War I. Researchers can search for these in the university libraries' online catalog at www.lib.ua.edu.

Donnelly Lancaster Walton received her undergraduate and graduate degrees in history from Auburn University. After working as an archivist at the University of Alabama at Birmingham archives for several years, she joined the faculty of the University of Alabama Libraries as the archival access coordinator in 2001. Louis A. Pitschmann, standing editor of the "Revealing Hidden Collections" department of Alabama Heritage, is dean of the University Libraries at the University of Alabama and director of the Alabama Center for the Book, which co-sponsor this department.

Contributors

CREATING “THE MUSCLE SHOALS SOUND”

BY CHARLES L. HUGHES

CHARLES L. HUGHES is assistant professor of history at Oklahoma State University. A native of Wisconsin, he received his PhD in history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 2015 the University of North Carolina Press will publish his first book, *Country Soul: Making Music and Making Race in the American South*. He has taught and written extensively on race, music, and southern history.

ALABAMA’S JEWISH SERVICEMEN IN WORLD WAR II

BY DAN J. PUCKETT

DAN J. PUCKETT is an associate professor of history at Troy University. He received his PhD at Mississippi State University and is the author of *In the Shadow of Hitler: Alabama’s Jews, the Second World War, and the Holocaust*, published by the University of Alabama Press. His work has appeared in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, *Alabama Heritage*, and *Southern Jewish History*, among other places. Puckett has been a Starkoff Fellow at the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, a Chancellor’s Fellow at Troy University, a member of the Alabama Holocaust Commission, and serves on the Board of Directors for the Alabama Historical Association and the Board of Trustees for the Southern Jewish Historical Society.

AN INVISIBLE MAP REVEALED: THE FIRST STATE SEAL OF ALABAMA

BY DAVID M. ROBB JR.

DAVID M. ROBB JR. is an art historian, has served as a museum director, and is now a regional historian and museum consultant. He has been intrigued by map making and design ever since his college art history studies. Following curator appointments at the National Gallery of Art, the Walker Art Center, and the Kimbell Art Museum, Robb served as director of the Telfair Museum in Savannah, Georgia, and at the

Huntsville Museum of Art (1984–1995). Since retiring he has been researching diverse topics, including the architectural photography of Frances Benjamin Johnston and the natural ice trade in the South, and has written articles about the adventurer Zachariah Cox and the origins of Alabama’s boundaries for the *Encyclopedia of Alabama*. He recently identified Thomas Freeman’s 1807 “Mother Map” for Madison County, Alabama. Robb currently serves on the boards of the Friends of the Alabama Archives and the Alabama Historical Association. Robb would like to thank Meredith McDonough for her excellent work in producing the high-resolution scans of the seal.

COMING OF AGE IN GEE’S BEND

BY MARY STANTON

MARY STANTON is a freelance writer who specializes in southern white civil rights activism. Her work includes *From Selma To Sorrow: The Life & Death of Viola Liuzzo* (1998), *Freedom Walk* (2003), *Journey Toward Justice* (2006), and *The Hand of Esau* (2006). She has also written for *Southern Exposure*, *The Journal of Southern History*, *Griot*, *The Gulf South Historical Review*, and *Southern Jewish History*. Her latest book, *Alabama Reds, Whites, Blacks & Bluebloods*, a social history of the Great Depression and the New Deal in Alabama, is currently under contract with the University of Alabama Press. Stanton has taught at the University of Idaho, New Jersey’s College of St. Elizabeth, and Rutgers University.

PLACES IN PERIL 2014: ALABAMA’S ENDANGERED HISTORIC LANDMARKS

BY MICHAEL PANHORST

MICHAEL PANHORST, PHD, coordinated the Places in Peril program in 2014. He is a historian of art and architecture and a member of the board of the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation. His book, *The Memorial Art and Architecture of Vicksburg National Military Park*, is forthcoming this autumn from Kent State University Press. His photo essay about the earliest Civil War monuments is forthcoming in *Southern Cultures* 20, no. 4 (November 2014).

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