



## Comments from the Visitors Register

Seoul, South Korea .....You inspire me very much!  
Derby, England.....Inspired  
Northumberland....Fascinating. Brings things to life.  
Ocala, FL.....It is amazing  
Sydney, Australia....Thank you. Great museum. An exceptional experience.  
London, England ....Fantastic museum  
Santa Barbara, CA....Loving the history  
Ludlow, WA....Thanks for telling this story  
Queensland, Australia...Wonderful exhibits! Thank you!  
Cairns, Australia...Absolutely wonderful!  
Pensacola, FL ....Nice  
Lincoln, England....Very good!  
West Point, NY....Fantastic!  
San Diego, CA....Charming!  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada....BRILLIANT  
Goodland, VA.....Love it!  
Albuquerque, NM....Love it!  
California...What an honor and privilege  
Leesburg, AL.....Awesome!

**MONROE COUNTY  
MUSEUM**  
*Bringing People and History Together*  
31 North Alabama Avenue  
Monroeville, Alabama 36460

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MONROE COUNTY  
MUSEUM  
*Bringing People and History Together*

# MUSEUM MUSINGS

Summer 2018 · Newsletter of Monroe County Museum, Monroeville AL



## FEATURED UPCOMING EVENT

### Old Claiborne Pilgrimage - October 13 & 14, 2018

This fall, the Old Claiborne Pilgrimage will offer the rare chance to explore pioneer sites and privately held antebellum treasures near the Alabama River in Monroe and neighboring Clarke County. The weekend event Oct. 13 - 14 will tell the story of the lost town of Claiborne -- once a chief cotton shipping port and a contender as Alabama's capital -- and will reveal its legacy with docent-guided tours of private plantation homes, early churches, and historic sites in the Claiborne-Perdue Hill area.

Ticketholders will be able to visit the 1813 site of Fort Claiborne, where an attack against the indigenous Creeks helped ensure the safety of settlers and commerce, and resulted in Claiborne's becoming a pioneer "gateway to the west." Genealogy and history buffs will get to visit the long-hidden 19<sup>th</sup> - century Jewish cemetery, now protected on private land. Dellet Park, The Woodlands, the Gov. John Murphy home and Bullard Hall will showcase the area's antebellum architectural gems, now carefully preserved and maintained. Other important tour sites near the river in neighboring Perdue Hill will be the 1825 Masonic Hall, which is Alabama's oldest standing public building; the home of William Barrett Travis, hero of the Alamo; and other historic buildings, some of which were moved from their original sites in Claiborne to Perdue Hill.

Ticketholders will also enjoy a special Saturday night gathering at the Old Courthouse Museum featuring a program by historian Tom McGehee, followed by a wine and cheese reception.

The pilgrimage is a joint project of the Museum Endowment Board and the Perdue Hill-Claiborne Historic Preservation Foundation. Ticket information and sales will be available at the Old Courthouse Museum in Monroeville starting in July.



Left: James Dellet house in the 1930's. Photo credit: Library of Congress.

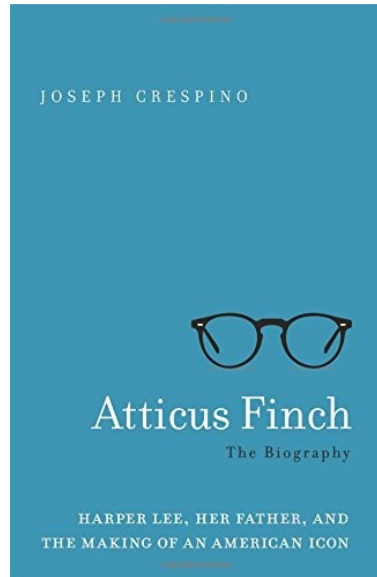


Right: Masonic Hall in 1935. Photo credit: photographer W. N. Manning - Library of Congress.



## Summer Events 2018

### Meet the author of *Atticus Finch: The Biography*



Please join us at the Old Courthouse Museum on Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup> for an author appearance with Joseph Crespino, who will discuss and autograph his new book, ***Atticus Finch: The Biography***.

In ***Atticus Finch: The Biography*** (Basic Books, May 8, 2018), Joseph Crespino tells Atticus's story, from his origins in the life and example of Harper Lee's father, Amasa Coleman (A.C.) Lee, to his evolution in her two novels, his adaptation in the film version of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and his public reception during the critical years of the southern civil rights struggle. As Crespino argues, to understand Atticus Finch, it is necessary to recover the political struggles that preoccupied her father, a lawyer, state legislator, and newspaper editor in Monroeville, Alabama, which were the same struggles that preoccupied Harper Lee herself.

Joseph Crespino is the Jimmy Carter Professor of History at Emory University. His previous books include *In Search of Another Country*, winner of the 2008 Lillian Smith Book Award from the Southern Regional Council, and *Strom Thurmond's America*. He lives in Decatur, Georgia.

The program will begin at 10:30 a.m. in the courtroom and is free to the public. Afterward, copies of the book may be purchased in the Bird's Nest Gift Shop at the museum and autographed by Mr. Crespino. *Atticus Finch* is the May selection of Capote & Other Voices Reading Group.

Lunch plates will be available after the autographing and can be enjoyed on the courthouse lawn or to go. To reserve a \$10 lunch plate, please call the Museum at 251-575-7433.

### History Adventure Camp

Monroe County Museum's annual week-long History Adventure Camp will take place June 4<sup>th</sup> – June 8<sup>th</sup> for children entering 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grades. Activities will include daily fun-filled explorations of historic places in Monroe County from Rikard's Mill in the north to Little River State Park in the south and many places in between. Museum members: \$55 for 1<sup>st</sup> child, \$45 for each additional. Non-members: \$65 for each child. Meet at Old Courthouse Museum each day to begin the adventure. Monday – Thursday, 8:00 am – 12:00 noon and Friday, 8:00 am – 2:00 pm. Please call the museum at 251-575-7433 in advance to register. Spaces are limited.

Volunteers of high school age and up are invited to register as chaperones to share in the fun at no cost.

### A Day in Old Monroeville

The museum will host students from Holmes County, Florida on May 16 for A Day in Old Monroeville. Museum volunteers staff our exhibits for this educational program, and "tell it like it was" here in the days when Truman Capote and Nelle Harper Lee spent summer afternoons playing and making mischief. Student visitors tour the museum exhibits and courtroom, and the grounds.

A Day in Old Monroeville may be scheduled in advance year-round for school groups of just about any size who are studying Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* and are searching for an experience which will bring them to a better understanding of this award-winning novel and subsequent film of the same name. A small fee of \$10 per student is charged. All proceeds go to support of additional educational programs sponsored by the museum.

Contact Wanda Green at the Old Courthouse Museum at 575-7433 for more information or to schedule a day for this program.



## Winter/Spring Highlights: Your Museum at Work



### Annual Quilt Exhibit, March 2018

The fabric of our regional history covered the museum courtroom throughout March during our highly successful annual Quilt Exhibit. Some 45 locally made quilts from Monroe, Clarke and Escambia counties decorated the courtroom benches and hung from the gallery. Area families shared handmade and machine-sewn heirlooms; antique quilts and recently made works delighted visitors. The event kicked off with a talk by Camden quilter Mrs. Betty Kennedy. Dozens of ladies and children in hats and gloves, and gentlemen in dress attire, attended afternoon high tea on March 27 at the exhibit's close.

Local quilter Paul Shelley once again graciously donated a quilt for raffle to raise funds for the museum. Museum member Nancy Ramer was the winner.

The historic markers surrounding the Old courthouse Museum will be refurbished in June, thanks to a grant secured by museum staff in April. The grant from the Alabama Historical Commission as part of the ALABAMA 200 celebration also will refurbish the Truman Capote marker located at the Faulk property on South Alabama Avenue, next door to Mel's Dairy Dream.

Tom McGehee, museum director for Bellingsrath Gardens and Home, spoke in the courtroom April 17 on the history of the gardens and home. In conjunction, the museum hosted a plant sale on the south lawn by the new owners of Southern Farm & Supply of Monroeville (formerly Central Farm Supply). An eager crowd enjoyed a delicious luncheon on the grounds following the program.



The museum hosted highly popular author Sean Dietrich, "Sean of the South," in conjunction with the Monroe County Library's 91<sup>st</sup> birthday on April 18. A packed courtroom enjoyed the author's storytelling and musical performance, then were treated to homemade pound cake from some of the county's best cooks. Sean also served as judge of the library's Pound Cake Competition.

The Capote & Other Voices Reading Group continued the focus on Southern literature and Alabama authors. Cleveland Brown's *Old Salem Baptist Church* and Carl Carmer's *Stars Fell on Alabama* were February and March selections, with Michelle Richmond's *The Marriage Pact* featured in April. Michelle Richmond, a Mobile native, was here on April 19 at the invitation of the Alabama Writers Symposium to receive the Truman Capote Award. The Reading group meets the second Monday of each month at the museum at 5:30 pm, unless otherwise noted. It is free and open to the public. Refreshments are usually served.

The 21st Alabama Writers Symposium kicked off April 19 with author sessions and readers' theatre in the Old Courthouse Museum courtroom, where Sylacauga marble sculptor Craig Brown unveiled his new "Mockingbird" sculpture. The work depicts a mockingbird among flowers, and is carved from Sylacauga marble. Dr. Wayne Flynt purchased the work, which is on temporary loan to the museum and is in the Harper Lee Exhibit.

Also attending the Alabama Writers Symposium as special guests were Alabama's Poet Laureate Jennifer Horne, Harper Lee Award winner Honoree Jeffers and Truman Capote Award winner Michelle Richmond. An elegant evening under the stars followed at the Monroeville Community House for the Awards Gala Dinner.



**Clearing the Nest** - Museum visitors should plan to do some early holiday shopping during the semi-annual sale June 25-29 at The Bird's Nest. Gift shop manager Laura Richeson Harris says look for markdowns throughout the store. Museum members enjoy a 20% discount on most items year-round.

