



**Monroe, Alabama  
Circa, 1950s**



**Walk Monroe II**



*The Maycomb Tribune Office, p. 171*

*“Mr. Underwood not only ran The Maycomb Tribune office, he lived in it. That is above it. He covered the courthouse and jailhouse news simply by looking out his upstairs window. The office building was on the northwest corner of the square, and to reach it we had to pass the jail.”*



Max McAilley Photos, Aaron White Collection



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# Walk Monroeville, Edition V

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Design & Layout: Glenda Dailey Price, Bolton Newspapers

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**33 Finch’s Landing – Williams Plantation:** To reach the fictional Finch’s Landing, travel north of Monroeville on Highway 41. At County Road 17, turn left, and follow 17 to the fork in the road leading to the Alabama River Museum and Haines Island Park (Approximately 5 miles on County Road 17—bear left on Finchburg Road, then take a left on Lock & Dam Road.) Follow past the old Williams Store, recognizable by its white façade and red roof on the right, until you see white fencing on your left. At the top of the incline is the old Williams Home, at what was once a river landing known as Finchburg. This is the family home of Harper Lee’s grandmother, Ellen Williams. This was once part of a self-supporting plantation. To see Isaac Creek Park on the Alabama River, continue for another .4 miles on Lock and Dam Road.

*Finch’s Landing, p. 91*

*“Finch’s Landing consisted of three hundred and sixty-six steps down a high bluff and ending in a jetty. Farther downstream, beyond the bluff, were traces of an old cotton landing, where Finch Negroes had loaded bales and produce, unloaded blocks of ice, flour and sugar, farm equipment, and feminine apparel. A two rut road ran from the riverside and vanished among dark trees. At the end of the road was a two-storied white house with porches circling it upstairs and downstairs....”*







**Maycomb County High School Gymnasium, p. 211**  
*“The Maycomb County High School gymnasium was tastefully decorated with balloons and white-and-red crepe paper streamers. A long table stood at the far end; paper cups, plates of sandwiches, and napkins surrounded two punch bowls filled with a purple mixture. The gymnasium floor was freshly waxed and the basketball goals were folded to the ceiling. Greenery enveloped the stage front, and in the center, for no particular reason, were large red cardboard letters: MCHS.”*



Photo courtesy of Aaron White Photography – Max McAlliley Collection

**32 Monroe County High School Building:** In 1936, a new high school building was erected on York Street in Monroeville. According to the deed, the following residents of Monroeville came together and sold property to the state of Alabama for the new high school: S. W and Amelie Hixon; Elizabeth and Bert Chambers; Kitty Sue and E. T. Millsap; Lula H. and R. L. Jones; Elizabeth and Bert Chambers; L. A and Juliette Hixon; and Maiben and Jeff Beard. They were paid, as a group, the sum of \$2,500 for conveying this real estate to the State of Alabama for public school purposes.

From 1936 until the beginning of the school year in 1978, this building served as a high school, with enrollment being as high as 837 students in the 1970's, with a black-white ratio of 60-40, serving grades 8 – 12. The new high school opened on Tiger Drive in 1978.

Nelle Harper Lee attended Monroeville public schools and was a graduate of Monroe County High School.

## Welcome to Monroeville!

Maycomb, Alabama

Harper Lee's Fictional Small-town World

*I would like to leave some record of the kind of life that existed in a very small world. I hope to do this in several novels to chronicle something that seems to be very quickly going down the drain. This is small-town middle-class southern life as opposed to the Gothic, as opposed to Tobacco Road, as opposed to plantation life.*

*As you know, the South is still made up of thousands of tiny towns. There is a very definite social pattern to these towns that fascinates me. I think it is a rich social pattern. I would simply like to put down all I know about this because I believe that there is something universal in this little world, something decent to be said for it, and something to lament in its passing.*

Harper Lee, in 1964 interview with Roy Newquist

Many writers do not have a singular objective for their writing-they simply follow their characters and plots as they develop. Nelle Harper Lee, however, told Roy Newquist in 1964, that her "objectives are very limited." Since her two published novels had been written at the time of the interview (completed in the late 1950s and published in 1960 and 2015), she was speaking about what she had done to achieve these objectives: she had created the fictional Maycomb, Alabama, based on her hometown of Monroeville, Alabama.

Vivid descriptions in *To Kill a Mockingbird* lead readers down Maycomb's treelined streets as Scout, Jem, and Dill pass hot summer afternoons playing games and enacting stories until adults call them home for supper at dusk. In *Go Set a Watchman*, Jean Louise walks these same streets when she returns to her hometown for a visit twenty years later, in the summer of 1956. Certainly the town has grown and changed in the intervening twenty years, but the setting is still recognizable as Jean Louise once again walks from the Finch home to the courthouse square.

For the story in the two different decades, Lee describes the town realistically, with its weaknesses and strengths. Residents struggle with poverty, unemployment, racism, and social classes in Maycomb, but it remains a small town where "Neighbors bring food with death and flowers with sickness and little things in between . . . Street lights winked down the street all the way to town" (as Scout reflects after she has walked Arthur "Boo" Radley home).

Visitors to Monroeville, Alabama, can still identify many of the sites that inspired the creation of the fictional Maycomb. They can sit in the balcony of the old courthouse and relive a key scene in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and a pivotal scene 20 years later in *Go Set a Watchman*. They can experience a hot summer day such as the one Scout describes when "People moved slowly then. They ambled across the square, shuffled in and out of the stores around it, took their time about everything."

*The thousands of visitors who come to Monroeville each year can recognize the origins of the fictional Maycomb because Harper Lee has captured “something universal in this little world. . .” and achieved the goal she revealed to Roy Newquist:*

*. . . all I want to be is the Jane Austen of South Alabama.*

Nancy Grisham Anderson  
Distinguished Outreach Fellow  
Auburn University at Montgomery

**The Maycomb Tribune Office, p. 171: GSAW**

*“Mr. Underwood not only ran “The Maycomb Tribune” office, he lived in it. That is above it. He covered the courthouse and jailhouse news simply by looking out his upstairs window. The office building was on the northwest corner of the square, and to reach it we had to pass the jail.*

Published by: Monroeville/Monroe County Chamber of Commerce, 86 North Alabama Avenue, Monroeville, Alabama 36460

Printed by: Bolton Newspapers, 49 Hines Street, Monroeville, Alabama 36460

For Information on Monroeville events, please check our calendar at [www.monroecountyal.com](http://www.monroecountyal.com). For complete information on Monroeville contact [www.discovermonroeville.com](http://www.discovermonroeville.com).



## Walk Monroeville! “Seeing Maycomb, Through The Author’s Eyes

**Monroeville** is an iconic destination, evoking images of deep south, rural Alabama.

**Monroeville** is known for its connections with Pulitzer Prize winning author Nelle Harper Lee and her childhood companion, Truman Capote. Lee’s **“To Kill A Mockingbird”** has become the town’s anchor which draws upwards of 30,000 visitors annually—more than Monroe County’s population. Visitors liken **Monroeville** to Andy Griffith’s Mayberry, perhaps because the town and its residents are overwhelmingly friendly and welcoming to visitors. In July of 2015 the publication of Lee’s **Go Set a Watchman** brought renewed attention to Monroeville and the fictional Maycomb.

Annually, in April and May, **The Mockingbird Players** stage a production of the Christopher Sergel play, **“To Kill A Mockingbird.”** This production has achieved worldwide acclaim. Its unique setting for Act I, in the Otha Lee Biggs Amphitheater on the west side of Monroeville’s 1903 courthouse, complete with antique car, a mad dog, a mule named Stormy and a shotgun wielding sheriff is noteworthy to both international and domestic tourists. Act II may be even better—taking place in the second floor setting of Monroeville’s 1903 courthouse courtroom where the trial scene of Atticus Finch, attorney, defending Tom Robinson, a black man wrongly accused of raping a white female, dramatically comes to life and where a jury of twelve white men (summoned from the audience) are selected to decide Tom’s fate. At the close of the 2-1/2 hour production there is a standing ovation and the audience clamors up to the cast to solicit personal autographs on play programs. This is the ultimate **Monroeville Experience**—but there is so much more!

This Walking Tour will have two major focuses: (1) What are the real Monroeville places tied to Lee’s novels, **Go Set A Watchman and To Kill A Mockingbird?** (2) What is here today, incorporating the history of some of the homes and structures around the courthouse square? Lee’s **“To Kill A Mockingbird” and “Go Set A Watchman”** are a works of fiction set in the town of Maycomb, Alabama in the 1930’s and 1950’s. How does it compare with Monroeville?

In this Walking Tour, we will explore a history of homes and commercial properties located in Monroeville’s Downtown Historic District (recognized by the National Park Service in September, 2009).

**1 The Old Monroe County Courthouse, 31 North Alabama Avenue, Home of Monroe County Heritage Museum:** The original Federal Land Grant of 80 acres, 3 of which were to be designated as a public square, was issued to Monroe County Probate Judge Henry Taylor on July 11, 1831. This was the original Monroeville, named for James Monroe, who served as Secretary of State from 1811-1817, and who was elected President in 1817, serving two consecutive terms. Monroeville’s population in 1903 was 450; in 1900 the official census counted 422. The towns of Burnt Corn on the Old Federal Road eastward and Claiborne, the Alabama River Port to the west were both still thriving and more heavily populated, by comparison. In 1832, the county citizens voted to move the county seat from Claiborne to Monroeville.

At least five different courthouses have been erected on the downtown square:

(1) A log structure combining the courthouse and county jail, built in 1832. It burned the following year, destroying most county records. Few county records exist from **1815** (when Monroe County was declared a part of the Mississippi Territory) until after the fire in **1833**. (2) a two-story frame building constructed by Wingate Rumbley and believed to have been erected on the southwest section circa **1840**. It burned in 1849 but this time the county records were saved. (3) The first brick courthouse was built in **1852**; it was used as a

**31 Mel’s Dairy Dream, 216 South Alabama Ave.:** Mel’s Dairy Dream, in the heart of Monroeville’s historic downtown, is the quintessential old-fashioned drive- in restaurant. Its notoriety stems not only from its menu of mouth-watering burgers and shakes and 1950’s era façade, but from its location on the site of the Lee house (that is “Lee” as in Nelle Harper Lee, who penned the Pulitzer Prize winning *To Kill A Mockingbird*). Visitors flock to this site in search of Lee and of some tangible evidence of her fictional Maycomb. Its location, next door to the site of the Faulk house (once home of Truman Capote’s cousins, the Faulk’s, with whom he resided when visiting Monroeville) is nostalgic when one considers that Truman and Nelle, kindred spirits, hammered out short stories in their treehouse behind the Lee house. The Lee house was torn down in 1953 and Mel’s was subsequently built. The Faulk house burned to the ground in 1940, and a second house was erected on this site; the second house was torn down in 1988. All that is left of the original Faulk house is a rock wall and the indentation for a goldfish pond, along with plantings of camellias, oaks and magnolias. However, visitors to the area often order to-go burgers and fries from Mel’s and stroll over to the adjacent Faulk property to read the historic marker dedicated to Truman Capote, and to soak up the atmosphere that so inspired two of the south’s most renowned writers.

According to Rebecca Hardee Brunson, in her book, *Hardee’s Dairy Dream*, A. C. Lee was seventy-two years old when he moved with daughter Alice Finch Lee to the house on West Avenue. The original Lee home was purchased by Frances and Ruth Hardee and was torn down within two months of the purchase. Prior to selling the home, the Lee family had been devastated by the death of Frances Finch Lee, on June 2, 1951, and Edwin Coleman Lee on July 12, 1952.

The Hardee’s built Hardee’s Dairy Dream, which opened in 1953. They sold out to Claude Garrett, who operated it as Garrett’s. Randy McDonald, a local insurance executive, bought the business some twenty-plus years ago, and has since operated it as Mel’s Dairy Dream.

Mel’s is technically a fast-food restaurant. There are picnic tables for outdoor seating. All food is prepared to order, and ordered “to go”. Milkshakes are “real” shakes, made with an old fashioned machine such as one used to see at a soda fountain. Sweet tea and soft drinks are also available. The burgers, fries and hot dogs are likely to come wrapped in wax paper and placed in brown paper bags. Visitors enjoy ordering their food to go from Mel’s and strolling up to the downtown square where they may picnic at one of the tables on the courthouse lawn.

Mel’s is a trip back in time, a reminder of how things once were. As such, it is likely to endure and prosper. It is most visited for its connection with Harper Lee and her family.







## 28 **Old Jail, Monroe County Public Library, Sheriff's Annex, RSVP:**

This building housed the 1859 jail (see description for original jail). It has also served as the location for Monroe County Public Library, and today houses the Retired Senior Citizens Volunteers, and serves as an annex to the Monroe County Sheriff's Department.

*The Maycomb jail, p. 171*

*"The Maycomb jail was the most venerable and hideous of the county's buildings...Starkly out of place in a town of square faced stores and steep-roofed houses, the Maycomb jail was a miniature Gothic joke one cell wide and two cells high...It's fantasy was heightened by its red brick façade and the thick steel bars at its ecclesiastical windows. It stood on no lonely hill, but was wedged between Tyndal's Hardware Store and The Maycomb Tribune office."*

## 29 **The Original Jail, Skinner Furniture, Stallworth Law Office, 53 North Mount Pleasant Avenue:**

The two story brick building on the west side of the courthouse is the original county jail, built in 1854. It was replaced in 1859 with what is commonly known as "the old jail". The original county jail is in the left, rear of the building which today houses the Stallworth Law Office. Both the 1852 courthouse and the old jails were constructed of brick made from local red-clay deposits and believed to have been formed by slave labor. The brick were irregular in size and relatively soft due to inferior locally built brick kilns. Both jails are still standing and are the only known ante-bellum structures in Monroeville.



public building until the completion of the 1903 courthouse. The 1852 building burned in 1928. The only remnants of this courthouse are two iron columns, mounted on the north wall of the museum's exhibit room, and a brick walkway at the home of Nicholas Stallworth Hare. (4) The Old Monroe County Courthouse, built in 1903, served as county seat for sixty years, and presently houses the Monroe County Heritage Museum. (5) The present courthouse was dedicated in 1963.

The Old Monroe County Courthouse was built in 1903 under the leadership of Monroe County Probate Judge Nicholas Stallworth. The architect was Andrew Bryan, a prominent Southern municipal architect. The contractor was M. T. Lewman from Louisville, Kentucky, who was contracted to build the courthouse for \$29,000. The actual building cost was considerably more, due to the fact that the cost of the foundation and the basement were not included in the original cost estimate. It is widely said that cost overruns on the old courthouse defeated Judge Stallworth in his subsequent run for re-election.

Many of the materials used in the construction of the courthouse were shipped in by rail, including manufac-



tured heart pine flooring and rolled tin for the ceiling of the upstairs courtroom, which is stamped in a dog-wood pattern. The courthouse dome is made of sheet metal, which has at various times been painted silver or white. The courthouse clock strikes on the hour, and is frequently mentioned in the earlier works of Truman Capote.

## **Old Courthouse, P. 105, GSAW**

*"The old courthouse stood white in the afternoon glare . . . . When she went to the north side entrance she saw empty cars standing in a double row the length of the building.*

*When she went up the courthouse steps she missed the elderly men who loitered there . . . . She walked past the offices of the tax collector, tax assessor, county clerk, registrar, judge of probate, up old unpainted steps to the courtroom floor, up a small covered stairway to the Colored balcony, walked out into it, and took her old place in the corner of the front row, where she and her brother had sat when they went to court to watch their father."*





2 **“A Celebration of Reading” by Branko Medenica:** “A Celebration of Reading” is a bronze sculpture which was commissioned in 2010 by the Monroeville/Monroe County Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Alabama Tourism Department. Its purpose is to offer “some tangible evidence of Monroeville as Alabama’s Literary Capital” and to establish a permanent presence on Monroeville’s courthouse square. The project provides an opportunity to inspire those who experience it with a love of reading. It is a way for Monroeville to further the goal of raising awareness of the benefits of reading and the lingering life lessons of the message brought to a reader by a good book.

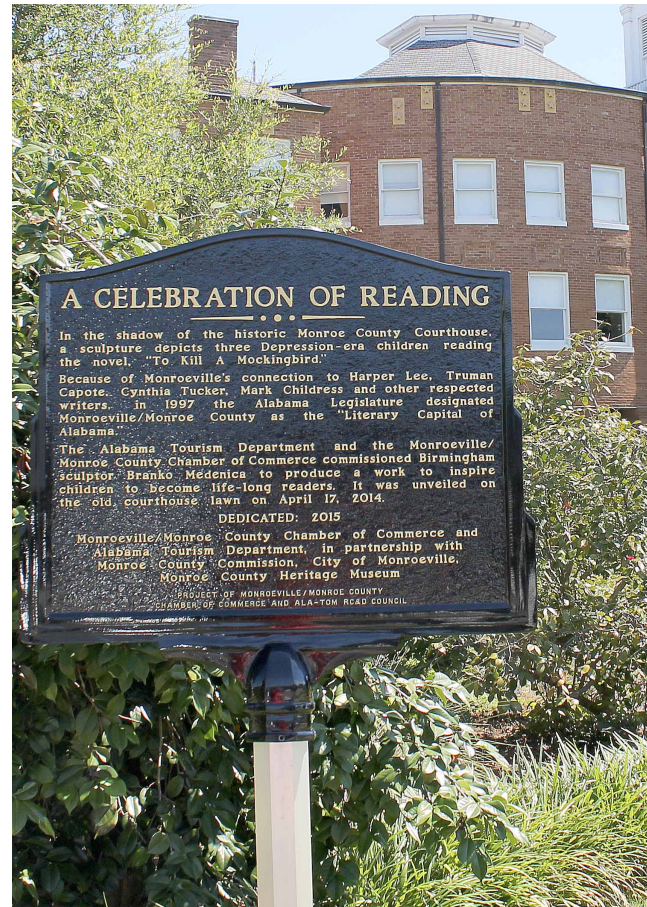
The Birmingham, Alabama sculptor, Branko Medenica, was selected to execute the commission.

His sculpture depicts three children centered around a bench, reading a book. The piece is designed such that visitors may place themselves within the setting for photographs with the courthouse’s distinctive dome in the background.

As Branko sees this, “The challenge with this project has been to capture that special quality of timelessness that is so prevalent when studying certain literary works, which transcend language and cultural barriers. This sculpture could be anywhere, and it would speak to those who see it as a celebration of childhood innocence and a celebration of reading. The fact that it is in Monroeville, Alabama’s Literary Capital, should speak volumes.”

The sculpture was dedicated on April 17, 2014 in a ceremony held in the Otha Lee Biggs Amphitheater, followed by an official unveiling of the piece. Under terms of the contract with the artist, Branko Medenica, the Monroeville/Monroe County Chamber of Commerce holds the copyright for the piece.

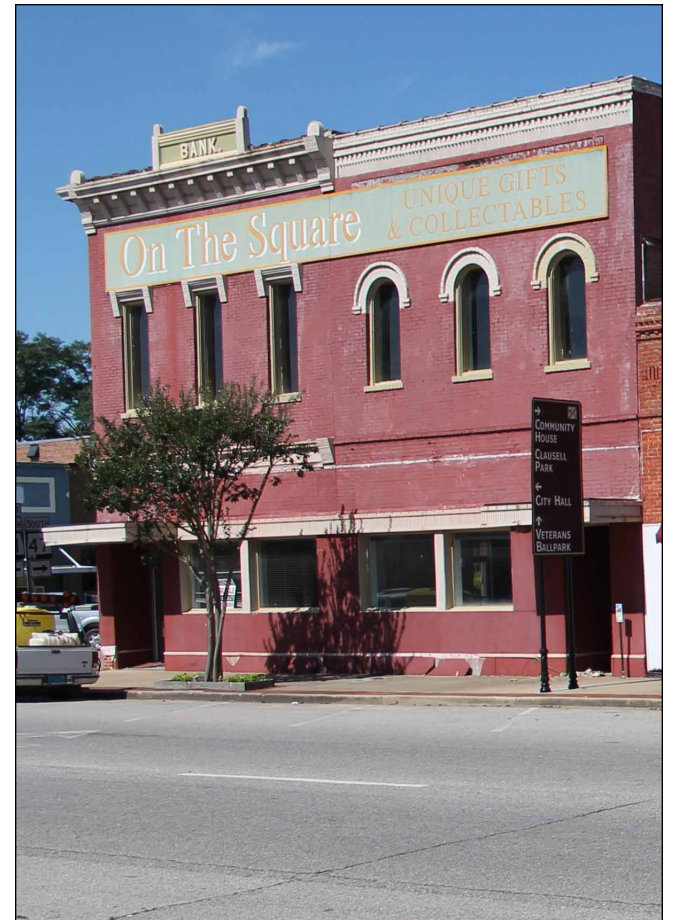
*From Roy Newquist Interview with author Nelle Harper Lee: ...We didn’t have much money. Nobody had any money. We didn’t have toys, nothing was done for us, so the result was that we lived in our imagination most of the time. We devised things; we were readers, and we would transfer everything we had seen on the printed page to the backyard in the form of high drama.*



27 **Monroe County Bank Building, Corner North Mount Pleasant and West Claiborne:** The Monroe County Bank was founded in Monroeville on February 11, 1904. Its first office was in the 1852 courthouse, which was vacated due to the establishment of the 1903 courthouse next door. J. B. Barnett, Sr. was the first President of the Monroe County Bank, which was the first bank in Monroe County. He arrived in Monroeville in 1901 and opened his law office. According to local historian George Thomas Jones, there was a huge need for a local bank in Monroeville. The economy was almost solely dependent on farming, and it was almost impossible for the local farmers to obtain affordable loans. J. B. Barnett raised \$8,000 from local businessmen toward the \$15,000 minimum required to establish a bank, then raised the additional \$7,000 from out of town investors.

In 1909 the bank moved in to its new two-story brick building on the southwest corner of the town square. Originally, the bank occupied only the building on the corner. It was later expanded to include the building next to it, which had been Hixon’s Store. To reach the second floor of the original corner building, there was a door on the southwest corner of the building which opened to a stairwell that went straight up to the large director’s room. The front area on the second floor was residential, being occupied by Dr. Ida A. Fraser, a chiropractor who had both her residence and office there. A stair on the north side of the Hixon building gave access to a lawyer’s office. Harper Lee’s father, A. C. Lee, had his law office in this building, as did his daughter Alice, first upstairs, then downstairs. Harper Lee wrote portions of her novel, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, in her father’s law office in this building. In 1923, the second bank founded in Monroeville, the Bank of Monroeville, merged with the Monroe County Bank. Harper Lee’s father, A. C. Lee, was Vice President of the Bank of Monroeville.

In 1972, the Monroe County Bank moved from its location on the downtown square to a new office on Hines Street. In 2004, the Monroe County Bank merged with Bank Trust, and in 2012 it was acquired by Trustmark National Bank.



*Atticus’s office, p. 171  
“Atticus’s office was in the courthouse when he began his law practice, but after several years of it he moved to quieter quarters in the Maycomb Bank building. When we rounded the corner of the square, we saw the car parked in front of the bank...”*

*When we rounded the corner of the square, we saw the car parked in front of the bank. . .”  
His office was reached by a long hallway. Looking down the hall we should have seen Atticus Finch, Attorney-at-Law in small sober letters against the light from behind the door. . .”*





**19 Monroeville Elementary School:** There has been a school on this site since as early as 1871, according to George Thomas Jones, Monroeville historian. The first school was called the Monroe Male and Female Institute, and it was a private school. In October, 1895, students at the school moved into a new, larger building on this site. In January, 1903, the frame building was destroyed by fire. Following this, the city became involved in public education, and sold bonds to finance the first brick building on this site. The city operated the elementary school as a public school; at this point, the high school, which was private, shared space in the same building as the public elementary school.

This arrangement continued from 1905 until the opening of the school year in 1911. (In 1907, the Alabama Legislature passed an act that required every county to provide a public high school.) The public high school had to be on a five-acre plot, and a new building of at least \$5,000 in value was required. It took four years for Monroeville to meet these requirements. Bonds were sold to finance the new high school building, which was to be on 7-1/2 acres about fifty yards south of the combined elementary/high school. Classes were first held in the new high school building in 1912-13 school year. When the public high school opened, the private high school closed.

In 1936, a new high school was erected on York Street (the present Monroeville Middle School). The elementary school moved into parts of the old high school, which burned on November 11, 1946.

The present school was built on this site in 1947 according to records in the Monroe County Revenue Commission Office. Over the years several additions have been added to the footprint of the original building.

*P. 9, GSAW  
The elementary school, p. 9  
“The Maycomb school grounds  
adjoined the back of the Radley  
lot; from the Radley chickenyard  
tall pecan trees shook their fruit  
into the schoolyard, but the nuts  
lay untouched by the children;  
Radley pecans would kill you. A  
baseball hit into the Radley yard  
was a lost ball and no questions  
asked.”*

**3 “To Kill A Mockingbird” Play and Monroeville:** The “To Kill a Mockingbird” play season is very important to the town of Monroeville. The 25th season of Mockingbird was listed in the Top Ten Events for Alabama Tourism. The play brings in visitors from all over the United States and the world. The play, adapted by the late Christopher Sergel for the stage from Harper Lee’s novel, *To Kill A Mockingbird* was an immediate success when it was performed for the first time locally in 1991 in the old courthouse courtroom on a frigid November evening. The town of Monroeville is forever indebted to the late Miss Nelle Harper Lee for the gift of her novels, *To Kill A Mockingbird* and *Go Set A Watchman*, both of which demonstrate a strong sense of place, and that place is the fictional Maycomb, loosely based on Monroeville, and the old courthouse, which served as her model for the courthouse in both books. As a result, the courthouse and the town of Monroeville have forever been memorialized through the work of Miss Lee.

The local production of Mockingbird originated with a gentleman by the name of Morton McMillian who grew up in Monroeville and became a Presbyterian minister. He was also an amateur actor, performing in little theater productions, and he played the character of Atticus Finch at such a production in Tupelo. He planted the seed that Monroeville should host such a production with Judge Otha Lee Biggs, then local Judge of Probate for Monroe County. At this time there was a grassroots effort underway to restore the old courthouse, which was in deteriorating condition, and Judge Biggs felt that such a production could aid in raising funds for restoring the old building. Biggs enlisted the assistance of Kathy McCoy who had recently been hired as the first executive director of the Monroe County Heritage Museum. Kathy worked quickly to acquire play licensing, establish a cast and worked to put together the first play performances, assisted by Alabama Southern College Art Director Susan Davis Brown.

As was stated earlier, the first local play performance took place in the fall of 1991, with a condensed version of Act 1, and the entirety of Act II, in the old courthouse courtroom.

In 1995, Act 1 was added in its entirety, and sets were built on the courthouse lawn by a local volunteer, Wayne Bell. The sets include the Radley House, the Finch House, and the houses for local gossip Mrs. Stephanie, the narrator Mrs. Maudie and the morphine addicted Mrs. Dubose.

In the early days of the play production the outside sets were more primitive. Audience seating was on wooden bleachers and plastic grocery store chairs, purchased for \$5.00 each from a local grocery store. In the heat of the spring days, these chairs became almost liquid. Many a play-goer was surprised to find himself sitting on the ground, as the chair legs buckled in the extreme south Alabama heat.

In 2012, Georgia-Pacific/Alabama River Cellulose donated \$175,000 to design and landscape the space on the courthouse’s west side for a professional setting for the play performance and other entertainment. This venue was





named the Otha Lee Biggs Amphitheater, in honor of retired Judge of Probate Otha Lee Biggs, without whose leadership there would be no play. In the entire twenty-seven years of the local production there are very few performances not visited by Judge Biggs. He is usually found discreetly watching behind a camellia bush, or up in the balcony in the old courthouse courtroom.

The cast for the play is a special group of people from all walks of life. The cast is a family and most of them have been together for several years, some in the same roles. They are volunteers, serving together for the love of the play. The play has traveled to several venues, most recently to Hong Kong’s ASIA Society Center.

Consider that two blocks south of the Monroe County Courthouse is where Harper Lee lived growing up. Her dad, A. C. Lee, practiced law in the old courthouse courtroom. She watched him argue cases from her seat in the balcony. She attended Monroeville Elementary School, three blocks south of the old courthouse, and graduated from Monroe County High School, to the west of the Old Courthouse. She wrote parts of her novel, *To Kill A Mockingbird* in the red brick building that once housed the Monroe County Bank and her father’s law office. She attended Monroeville’s First United Methodist Church all her life, and is buried in the Lee Family plot in Pineville Cemetery, adjoining the church. There are reminders of Nelle Harper Lee and her family throughout Monroeville. She left her mark, but gave the town its best gift by characterizing it in her novels.

*To Kill A Mockingbird, p. 4*  
*“It was customary for the men in the family to remain on Simon’s homestead, Finch’s Landing, and make their living from cotton. The place was self-sufficient: modest in comparison with empires around it, the Landing nevertheless produced everything required to sustain life except ice, wheat flour, and articles of clothing, supplied by river-boats from Mobile.”*  
*“When my father was admitted to the bar, he returned to Maycomb and began his practice. Maycomb, some twenty miles east of Finch’s Landing, was the county seat of Maycomb County. Atticus’s office in the courthouse contained little more than a hat rack, a spittoon, a checkerboard and an unsullied Code of Alabama.”*



**4 Monument to Atticus Finch:**  
This bronze monument was erected by the Alabama Bar Association in 1997 in honor of the legendary lawyer, Atticus Finch. It is one of several “Legal Landmarks” recognized by the Alabama State Bar Association. Today it serves as a meeting place for tour groups and as a point of interest in the history of the courthouse square.



Rock wall original to the Faulk house, home of Truman Capote’s cousins.

**18 Truman Capote Historic Marker/Site of the Faulk House:** On this site was the original Faulk house, owned by Truman Capote’s cousin, Miss Jennie Faulk. Miss Jennie Faulk owned a millinery shop in downtown Monroeville. She lived with her two sisters, Callie and Sook and her brother, Bud, in the house on this site. The original house burned to the ground in 1940. The second house on this site was demolished in 1988. The stone wall is original to the first home on this site, and there is an indentation to the rear of the property where a goldfish pond once existed. The site is virtually all that is left of Truman Capote’s Monroeville childhood. Many of Capote’s writings are considered as autobiographical based on his Monroeville childhood, such as “A Christmas Memory”, “The Thanksgiving Visitor”, “The Grass Harp”, etc. Truman, born Truman Streckfus Persons, was very close to his Monroeville relatives, particularly Sook. He visited frequently during his lifetime. According to Monroeville author Nelle Harper Lee, Truman served as the model for Dill in her novel, “To Kill A Mockingbird”. Capote and Lee were childhood neighbors and lifelong friends.

*P. 62 and 63, GSAW*  
*“A gravel driveway divided the Finch yard from Miss Rachel’s. The fishpool was in Miss Rachel’s side yard, and it was surrounded by azalea bushes, rose bushes, camellia bushes, and cape jessamine bushes. Some old fat goldfish lived in the pool with several frogs and water lizards, shaded by wide lily pads and ivy. A great fig tree spread its poisonous leaves over the surrounding area, making it the coolest in the neighborhood. Miss Rachel had put some yard furniture around the pool, and there was a sawbuck table under the fig tree.”*







## 14 **First United Methodist Church of Monroeville:**

From Permelia S. (Pat) Lazenby's "History" – The first Methodist Church in the vicinity of the present town of Monroeville was built in 1821. It was a primitive style log structure, one mile west of the present town square. At the time, Monroeville was known as Walker's Mill, named for a Mr. Walker who had built a store, grist mill and tavern. In 1832, the county seat, then at Claiborne, was moved to Walker's Mill, which for a short time became known as

Centerville. The town was officially named Monroeville later in 1832.

In Monroeville, now the county seat, a lot was reserved in the town's plan for a Methodist church and cemetery. In 1835 a bare-boned, frame structure was erected. Inside there was a center aisle and two tiers of seats. One tier was reserved for women, the other for men. This building served the congregation for 45 years. It was later enhanced with a steeple and bell, glass windows, and paint.

The church continued to grow and in 1916 a new location for the church was secured at the corner of Alabama Avenue and Claiborne Street, on the site of the present day Lee Motor Company. The Building Committee Chair was J. B. Barnett. According to Mrs. Pat Lazenby's history, "A handsome brick structure was erected with beautiful stained-glass windows as lovely memorials."

On January 2, 1929, the church was devastated by a fire that had originated in a neighboring building. "The only things saved from the consuming flames were the pews, the pulpit appointments, and the memorial windows."

The church secured a new location on Pineville Road, its present day site. The same building committee worked to erect a new church building. The congregation worshipped in the Old Courthouse Building on downtown square while the new building was being erected. On Sunday, August 2, 1931, the first service was conducted in the new building. The steeple was placed on the building in 1951, which is the same year that the church began construction of its parsonage. An educational building and chapel were added in 1963. Furnishings for the chapel were given by Nelle Lee in memory of her parents and brother. Wesley Hall, the church's newest wing, was dedicated in 1999.

### *The Radley Place, P. 9: GSAW*

*"The Radley Place jutted into a sharp curve beyond our house. Walking south, one faced its porch; the sidewalk turned and ran beside the lot. The house was low, was once white with a deep front porch and green shutters, but had long ago darkened to the color of the slate-gray yard around it. Rain-rotted shingles drooped over the eaves of the veranda; oak trees kept the sun away. The remains of a picket drunkenly guarded the front yard—a "swept" yard that was never swept—where Johnson grass and rabbit-tobacco grew in abundance."*

5 **The United States Post Office, 104 North Alabama Avenue:** On this site was originally the Yarbrough House/Hotel built in 1833. It was the oldest building of any kind on the square when it was demolished in 1937 to make way for the present post office.

The Monroeville Post Office was built in 1937 under President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, one of well over one thousand such post offices built during this period. These post offices, built during the Great Depression, were meant to demonstrate the importance of the American people to their federal government. The inclusion of original art in many of these structures was part of the Treasury Relief Art Project, 1935 – 1938, which provided artistic decoration for existing Federal buildings, and which produced a number of post office murals. TRAP was established with funds from the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

In the Monroeville post office, a mural entitled "Harvesting" occupies the south interior wall. The subject is a farmer using a three-mule team to pull a threshing machine across a wheat field. This is a Midwestern, not a southern, scene. The artist is Arthur L. Bairnsfather, and the painting is dated 1939. He was commissioned to paint this mural when he won an open competition conducted by the Treasury Section on Painting and Sculpture under contract to the WPA, for which he was paid \$680. The Harvesting mural is one of the surviving works of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal Art Program. The mural was restored in 1985 by John Bertalan, a native of Birmingham, Alabama, who specializes in art restoration.



U. S. Post Office, Monroeville – 2016

*To Kill A Mockingbird, The Post Office, p. 170*  
*"We went by Mrs. Dubose's house standing empty and shuttered, her camellias grown up in weeds and Johnson grass. There were eight more houses to the post office corner."*



U. S. Post Office, Monroeville – 1950's





### The Wee Diner

The Wee Diner was located on Pineville Road across from the La Salle Hotel & Motel (the present-day site of Monroe County Public Library). It was a popular dining place, and it is where Gregory Peck frequently dined with Harper Lee when he visited Monroeville in the 1960's in preparation for his role as Atticus Finch in the film, "To Kill A Mockingbird." The Wee Diner was owned by Frank Meigs. It opened in 1956. According to Bunny Hines, former Monroe County Librarian, when Peck and wife Veronique stayed at the La Salle, Meigs would send breakfast over to them every morning.

**6 Faulk Millinery/Morgan Furniture Building/North Alabama Avenue:** The original building on this site was owned by V. H. and C. E. Faulk. It was a two story frame building. The first floor housed Jeff Smith's Barber Shop on its left corner, the Faulk Millinery Store in the center, and a dental office on the right corner. The second floor was residential. (Miss Jennie Faulk, the milliner, was Truman Capote's cousin and the business owner). Upon the deaths of the Faulk sisters, this building was demolished and the present brick building was erected by J. T. and Hammond Morgan. The building served as the offices and showroom for locally owned Morgan Furniture Company until the early 1990's, when Gladys Morgan sold the property to Monroe County Tax Collector Charlie Deer. The property today is in the ownership of Deer's family, and is available for rental.

*p. 51 GSAW*  
*"Henry drove up to the E-Lite Eat Shop and honked the horn. Give us two set-ups please, Bill, he said to the youth who appeared at his summons. In Maycomb, one drank or did not drink. When one drank, one went behind the garage, turned up a pint, and drank it down; when one did not drink, one asked for set-ups at the E-Lite Eat Shop under cover of darkness: a man having a couple of drinks before or after dinner in his home or with his neighbor was unheard of. That was Social Drinking. Those who Drank Socially were not quite out of the top drawer, and because no one in Maycomb considered himself out of any drawer but the top, there was no Social Drinking."*



developed by Farish Manning. The oldest of these cemeteries is actually the Methodist Cemetery, off West Claiborne Street, followed by the Baptist Cemetery, which was established with the church, in 1846.

### Barnett House – From Page 12

The house was damaged in Hurricane Ivan (2004), and a new roof was installed. In 2010, Preston hired Jimmy Hicks, a local contractor, and began the arduous process of a restoration, which lasted well into two and one half years. The goal was to preserve and reuse as much of the original floors and materials in the house as possible. A family room, laundry room, bathroom and modern closet were added. The main portion of the house was not altered. The kitchen was gutted and a modern kitchen added.

There have been seven children born in this house. Anna Lee and Gus had three children, Evlyn, William and Norman. Preston and his brother, Chester were both born in the house, and the bed where they were delivered by Dr. Rayford A. Smith, Sr., of Monroeville is still in the house. Preston's mother was in labor for forty hours in an upstairs bedroom of the house in August, when he was born. Preston's father relates that, Preston was not breathing when he was born, and Dr. Smith tried all the usual methods of getting the baby to breathe. When none of these worked, he placed a piece of gauze over the baby's mouth and breathed in several times, and the baby finally uttered his first cry. When asked why he had worked so hard, Dr. Smith stated that he could not give up on this baby—there were too many people praying in that room!

Louise Lee, the second oldest sister of Alice and Nelle, was also born in this house. The Lee's lived there for five years before building their own home on Alabama Avenue. Anne Barnett Zimmerman was also born in the house, and delivered by Dr. R. A. Smith, Sr. The history of this home is beautifully intertwined with a history of many of the families that established the town of Monroeville, and who worked to see it prosper.

Preston and his wife plan to spend several months a year enjoying this multi-generational family home. When they are not in Monroeville, they are living in Atlanta.

**13 Pineville Road Cemetery:** Pineville Road Cemetery is actually a combination of three cemeteries that have been developed over a period originating in 1846, according to George Thomas Jones, Monroeville historian.

The oldest of these cemeteries is the Baptist Cemetery. In 1846, the Baptists built a church on the site of the present day cemetery, and the cemetery backed up to the church. The Baptist Church was on this site until 1922, when it moved to a handsome brick building on the north side of the downtown square, demolished in 1970. In the 1970's, the Baptist's built the present day church across Pineville Road from the site of the original Baptist Church, Monroeville.

The Methodist Cemetery is actually on the west side of downtown square, at Sumter and West Claiborne Street, which was the location of the urch built in Monroeville **(1835 – 1916)**. The Pineville Road Cemetery also includes Hillcrest Cemetery, which was established by John B. Barnett, Jr. in the 1950's. A third cemetery was





**12 Gus Baker/Norman/Preston Barnett House:** This home was built in 1910 by Preston Barnett’s grandfather, Gus Baker Barnett, for his grandmother, Anna Lee Moore Barnett. His grandmother was from Wetumpka, and the couple met when his granddaddy went to work for his cousin, Mike Jenkins, who later founded Jenkins Brick Company in Montgomery. Gus was hired to be an engineer on the L & N Railroad out of Birmingham.

The property was originally purchased from Judge Stallworth, father of Mrs. Mary S. Hare. Judge Stallworth and Gus Barnett agreed there would be a common driveway, which is still the case today.

The house has two bedrooms on the main floor and four bedrooms upstairs. Two of the upstairs bedrooms were converted to kitchen and sitting rooms. Several families leased the upstairs rooms at one time or another, such as Harper Lee’s parents, and Mrs. O. B. Finklea, who came to the house with her son Charles and two daughters. She lived in Monroeville so her children could attend school, and the family arrived with their own milk cow.

Gus was a firm believer in building things to last. He oversaw the building of the house placing rocks in the ground before building the brick columns to support the house. As a result of this attention to detail, the house does not creak and groan and has not settled over the 100 years of its existence. This same attention to detail can be seen in his construction of the brick building on the square, which housed the Barnett & Jackson Hardware business.

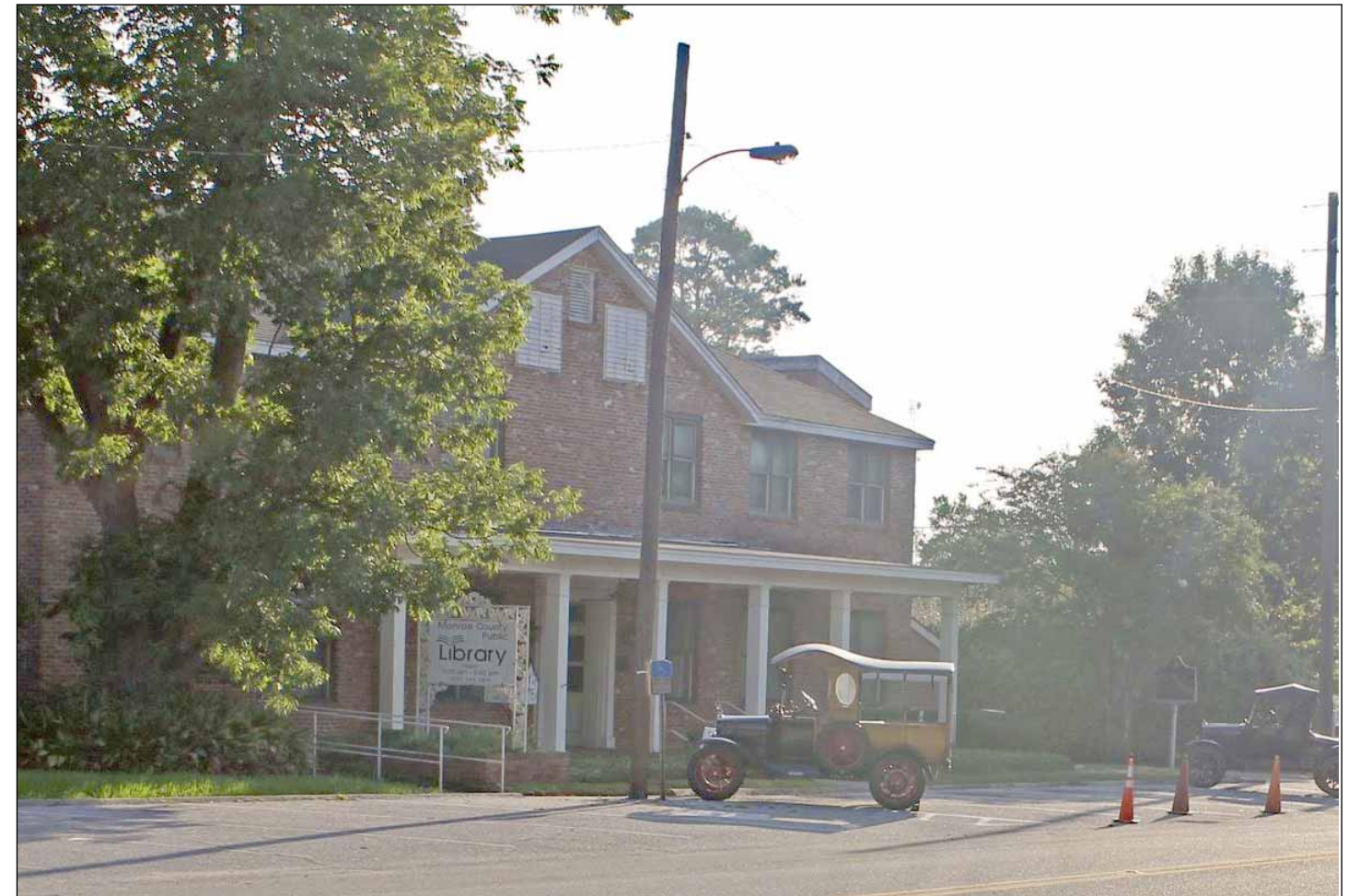
Gus also personally built five of the mantelpieces in the house, which are in the living room, dining room, master bedroom, and two of the upstairs bedrooms.

The center hall of the house is one third the width of the house both upstairs and downstairs. These wide halls provided ventilation, as did the twelve foot ceilings. In the big hall upstairs, brackets were installed so a curtain could be hung and part of the hall could be partitioned off as a guest room.

All of the windows in the house were rebuilt during the 2010 restoration, approximately half of the windows are original mouth blown glass, also known as “float glass”. The remainder, which required replacement are mouth blown glass that was purchased from Germany and were made by the same process as the old glass.

Anna Lee Moore died in 1972. One of her younger sisters, Dot Moore Sowell, married Monroeville native, Marcus Sowell and moved to Monroeville. Marcus Sowell was a lawyer and they lived on West Claiborne Street. Her best friend was Mary Stallworth Hare, wife of Francis Williams Hare, a prominent Monroeville attorney and Spanish war veteran. In the house today there are two landscape paintings that originally were painted by Dot, when she was still living in Wetumpka.

In the late 1970’s, Preston Barnett bought the house from Norman Barnett and turned it into two apartments.



**9 The La Salle Hotel/Monroe County Public Library, 121 Pineville Road:** The Monroe County Public Library has been in the former La Salle Hotel Building since 1984. It is on the site of one of the oldest parcels that has been in continuous usage since it was part of a land grant (#8417) from the United States of America to Probate Judge Henry W. Taylor. There have been several different structures on this property, including a stable, homes, a Methodist parsonage and hotels, some with restaurants. One example, The Commercial Hotel, was owned and operated by Mrs. Charles Richard Crook until her death. Her daughter, Helen, and son in law, Harvel Deas, moved in and ran the hotel until it was purchased by Sarah Strong of Brewton. She continued operating in the same old frame building until 1939, when it was demolished, and a more modern, two story brick building was erected. In 1952, Mrs. Strong sold the hotel to Mr. and Mrs. Dave Katz, who named it “The La Salle Hotel”. During this period, many dignitaries visited the La Salle, including actor Gregory Peck, who visited to prepare for his role in the movie “To Kill A Mockingbird”. The La Salle was also a favorite stop for members of the big dance bands who came to Monroeville to play at the Monroeville Community House for the Monroeville Cotillion Club. The hotel later became a restaurant with the last owner being L. C. Gaston. In 1979 the building was purchased by Dwight Harrigan, who sold it to the Monroe County Public Library Board in 1981 for the appraised price of \$229,000. The Library raised \$125,000 and the remaining \$104,000 was donated by Mr. Harrigan in order for the library to have a new home. Today the library is shelved with fiction, non-fiction, biographies, large print books and books on tape on the first floor. In addition, the first floor houses public access computers, a children’s library, and a small meeting room. The second floor holds reference books, paperbacks, an Alabama Authors section, a genealogy room, a forestry collection, and the Anne Farish Memorial Reading Room, dedicated to the late four term mayor of Monroeville. The building’s claim to fame is its ties to Gregory Peck, who stayed in the building when it was known as the La Salle Hotel.

*At Monroe County Public Library: p. 46, GSAW  
“ . . . They were in the Maycomb Hotel dining room sitting with chromium chairs at a table for two.”*





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## Index of Structures & Sites “Walk Monroeville II”

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Old Courthouse   | 17. Lyle Salter Park                            |
| 2. Sculpture: “A Celebration of Reading” by Branko Medenica | 18. Truman Capote Historic Marker               |
| 3. Otha Lee Biggs Amphitheater                              | 19. Monroeville Elementary School               |
| 4. Monument to Atticus Finch                                | 20. J. C. Hudson House                          |
| 5. U. S. Post Office  | 21. Finklea/Tate House                          |
| 6. Faulk Millinery  | 22. Maxwell/Sawyer/Barnett House                |
| 7. Barnett & Jackson Hardware                               | 23. Chambers/Barnett/Lazenby/Jeffcoat House     |
| 8. Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center                   | 24. E. T. Millsap/Nicholas/Countryman House     |
| 9. Monroe County Public Library                             | 25. Mims/Wohlers House                          |
| 10. Hybart/Hendrix/Lewis/Brewton Home                       | 26. Coxwell House                               |
| 11. Stallworth/Hare House                                   | 27. Monroe County Bank Building                 |
| 12. Barnett House   | 28. Old Jail/RSVP                               |
| 13. Pineville Cemetery                                      | 29. Original Jail, Leston Stallworth Law Office |
| 14. First United Methodist Church                           | 30. FRS Timber Building                         |
| 15. City Hall of Monroeville                                | 31. Mel’s Dairy Dream                           |
| 16. Lee Motor Company                                       | 32. Monroe County High School                   |
|   | 33. Finch’s Landing                             |