

Parnell Memorial Library has a collection of approximately 28,00 books and periodicals, nearly 1,000 CDs and Audio Books, as well as over 2,300 DVDs. Internet terminals are available for use by the general public.

The facility represents one of the fourteen Shelby County Public Libraries which form the Harrison Regional Library System.

A cardholder at Parnell Memorial Library has access to the many services that the regional library system provides, including searching the catalog on the Internet and free downloadable eBooks and audios. The interlibrary loan program allows the libraries in Shelby County to offer their books to the entire county. The interlibrary loan program also allows patrons of Shelby County Libraries to search for items outside of our county with the help of library employee.

## Foundation

The Montevallo Public Library was founded in March of 1958 under the leadership of the City of Montevallo and the Montevallo Branch of the American Association of University Women. The President of the Montevallo Branch of AAUW at that time was Dr. Lucille Griffith, who was also serving as Chair of the Montevallo Library Board. The library began modestly as a collection of several hundred books in a small room at City Hall. The first librarian was Lillian Ward.

## Relocation

In 1974 the public library was moved to the Depot-in-the-Park, where Mayme Yarbrough was the librarian. It remained there until a 1978 fire destroyed the building and all its contents. The library was relocated to the City Hall Annex until 1984. At that time, the library was moved to the renovated telephone company switching building located at 845 Valley Street. This building had been donated by Dr. and Mrs. L.C. "Foots" Parnell, Jr., to the City for a public library. The renovation of the building was made possible through the efforts of many people in this community and beyond. From March of 1984 until December of 2006, that facility served as Montevallo's public library.

In response to the offer from Dr. L. C. Parnell, Jr., to house his Civil War collection in the existing library at 845 Valley Street if an expansion of the library were undertaken, the Parnell Memorial Library Foundation was incorporated on March 23, 1998. The mission of the Foundation is to promote funding for expansion of the facilities, services, and programs of Parnell Memorial Library. Emily Pendleton spearheaded the efforts leading to incorporation and to the Foundation's receiving 501(c)3 nonprofit status with the IRS. She was the first President of the Foundation, serving from 1998 until 2001, when Elizabeth Rodgers was elected President.

## Expansion

As community needs grew, and particularly as community arts programming expanded, it was apparent that Montevallo needed a facility that was more than a traditional library. One of the primary agents of community arts programming is the Montevallo Main Street Players. The community theater group began more than thirty years ago and has performed in various city locations, including the Depot-in-the-Park and the City recreational building. For years, members of the Montevallo Main Street Players have needed a theater, complete with an up-to-date lighting and sound system, which they can use consistently for producing plays and storing props.

## Current Library Building

In June of 2001, representatives from the Foundation, the Montevallo Library Board, the Library Staff, the Montevallo Main Street Players, and the City of Montevallo agreed that the community needed a new library in a new location to meet diverse community needs and to house the Parnell Collection of historical books and documents. The group requested that the City locate property suitable for building a new library that would also serve as a community cultural center.

In August of 2001, Mayor Grady Parker announced that the new facility would be located adjacent to Orr Park where it was subsequently built. Groundbreaking took place on November 1, 2004, and the Grand Opening was held February 25, 2007. The new library, located at 277 Park Drive, provides the traditional collection of books, computers with high-speed Internet access, and wireless Internet access. It also includes an art gallery and a quality theater used by the Montevallo Main Street Players, the public schools, and other area groups. Along with the large meeting room, the theatre is a much-needed venue for productions by touring theatre companies and musical groups as well as for City of Montevallo meetings and other civic gatherings.

## Community Involvement

Since 2006, the Montevallo Arts Council has been working with the library and Alabama Humanities Council to increase cultural opportunities and area events. Most popular is the annual Montevallo ArtsFest, a week of art and culture that uses both the library facilities and Orr Park to bring a variety of literary, musical and visual arts events to our city.

As a community, we see the new Library as a community cultural center not only for Montevallo but also for Shelby County and Central Alabama, meeting educational, cultural, social, and economic needs.

Areas of the facility can be rented for events, including the theatre, meeting room, and patio. Contact the Parnell Memorial Library for scheduling, rental fees, and guidelines.