

# FOREWORD

The making of history is not always a story of grace and grandeur but a dynamic story of people as they come together to create a life and future for their families. Bobby Joe Seales and his wife Diane have published **Pelham Memories: A Pictorial History** to tell this story. It offers more than a peek into the past — it's a chance to linger there. As you enjoy these photographs you will better understand how Pelham is a special place with a unique history.

A community named Pelham has existed in this location since about 1867. Most of us probably associate the City of Pelham only with recent history. After all, Pelham was not incorporated until 1964, when the population was 654. Much of the town's growth has taken place since that time.

This book is divided into five chapters and it is entirely fitting for the first chapter to be titled "SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION" displaying life as it was long ago with a collection of photographs of schools, classes, and events in the early formative years.

The second chapter "COMMUNITIES" demonstrates how surrounding communities, railroads and commerce played a significant role in shaping the history that formed and united the people with a common sense of belonging — thus making Pelham what it is today. This chapter will show the power and determination of the people to mine coal, grow and harvest crops, mine stone from quarries and build homes and churches within their communities.

In conjunction with the 2018 theme of the Alabama Bicentennial, it is only appropriate that we devote a chapter to "HONORING OUR PEOPLE" and recognize the early settlers of Pelham and surrounding communities as we celebrate who they were and what they have

accomplished since the forming of Shelby County Alabama Territory on February 7, 1818, and its first county seat in Shelbyville (currently Pelham). The first Shelby County Alabama courthouse was built in Shelbyville in 1820 and served the people until it was moved in 1826.

The chapter "PUBLIC SERVICE" demonstrates how people came together to work together with determination to incorporate and improve the quality of life for everyone.

The final chapter is on "SHARING OUR STORIES" and is the 2019 theme as Alabama celebrates its Bicentennial on December 14, 2019. Here we share our stories with photographs of people, places and events.

All in all, this book is a remarkable collection of photographs. Thank you to the many others who provided heirloom photographs and documents to enhance the efforts of this publication: to preserve the history, memories and precious moments of an almost-forgotten past, people and places; we appreciate your generosity. Our appreciation would not be complete without mentioning the support from the City of Pelham, Pelham City Schools and the Pelham Library Guild.

Try as we may, it is very difficult to accurately recreate history; however, we have discovered that "history never written is soon forgotten" and "a picture is worth a thousand words." We are proud to have played a part in making this keepsake book available, for if history were taught in the form of pictures and stories it would never be forgotten.

Bobby Joe Seales  
Alabama Bicentennial Ambassador