

Birmingham History Center

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Birmingham History Center

THOMAS E. JERNIGAN SR. MEMORIAL

To join our E-mail List send us an E-mail at:
info@birminghamhistorycenter.org



Letter from the Director/Jerry Desmond

Happy New Year! Mark Twain once wrote, “Now is the accepted time to make your regular annual good resolutions. Next week you can begin paving hell with them as usual.” So now seems an appropriate time to hit you up for a donation while you are still in a good and giving mood, before the road construction begins. I hate to do it to you, but it has to be done. Please forgive me.

There is an old Irish New Year’s blessing, “May your right hand always be extended in friendship and never in need.” This time we are doing both. We depend entirely upon donations from individuals, foundations and local businesses. This year’s budget is lean.

A saying of Confucius, “If you think in terms of a year – plant a seed; if in terms of ten years – plant a tree; if in terms of one hundred years – teach the people.” That is what we try to do here at the Birmingham History Center. We are in the business of planting seeds and teaching people about themselves through history. I hope when you ponder your “annual good resolutions” for 2012, you will consider our cause worthy of your financial support. No donation is too small (or too large).

Commercial over.

DEZ

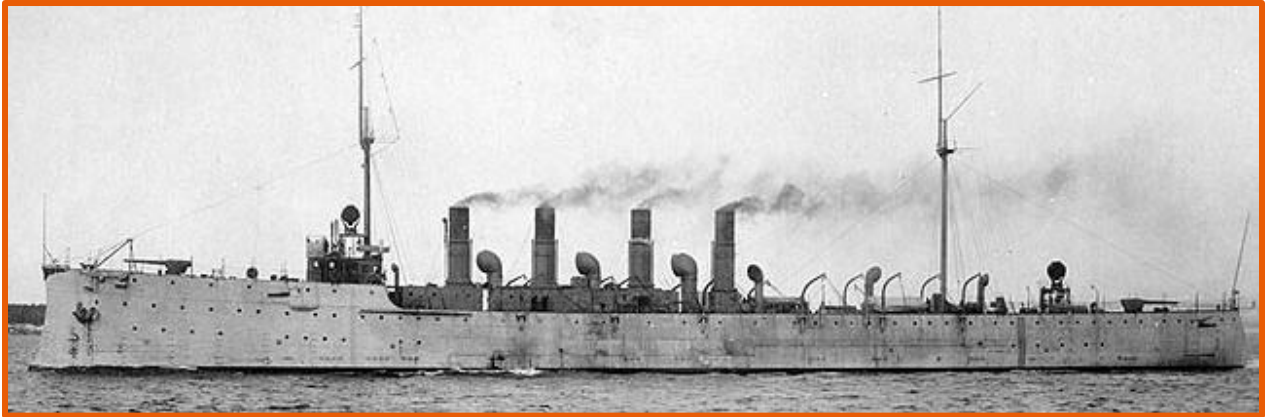
Featured New Artifact

The gracious members of the Alabama Historic Radio Society have lent us one of their mint condition SuperFlex A-1021X radios for exhibit at the History Center. In 1925, Ernest W. House, a resident of Birmingham, Alabama, began a business called Radio Products Corp. He started work immediately on a new design and circuitry for radios. In 1927 he received a patent for his new design. At a small factory on 28th Street North in Birmingham, he started making the one-dial, Superflex. Each radio was individually made and inserted into a two-tone walnut case. Two jacks were installed so that a loudspeaker could operate at the same time that headphones were plugged in. The retail price of the radio was \$80. No records exist which reveal how many sets were actually made. Hit by the Great Depression, the business folded in the early 1930s.



Close-up of the SuperFlex dial

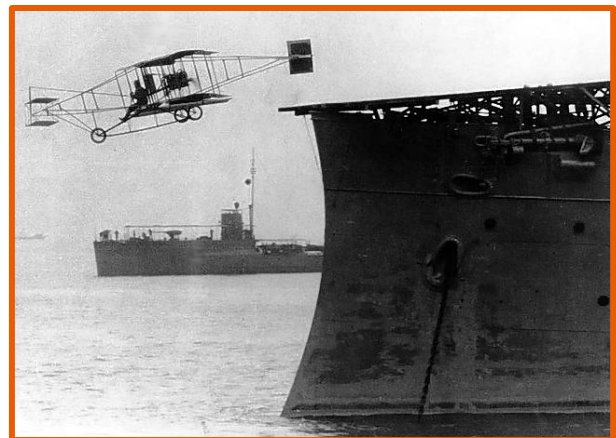
On Exhibit – USS Birmingham, CL-2



Except for the fact that the ship's name was the USS Birmingham, this article has nothing to do with Birmingham history. It is, however, one of the more interesting "did-you-know" stories in the History Center.

In 1907, the U.S. Navy built three Scout Cruisers (later called Light Cruisers) – the USS Chester (CL-1), the USS Birmingham (CL-2) and the USS Salem (CL-3). They were designed to be speedy reconnaissance ships. Carrying a crew of 359 officers and sailors, the Chester class ships could reach a speed of 24 knots (28 mph), were 423 feet long and displaced 3,750 tons. Named for the Magic City, the USS Birmingham was commissioned in April of 1908 and served in the Atlantic Fleet for most of its career. During World War I, the ship patrolled the North Atlantic looking for German submarines and warships. In June of 1917, the USS Birmingham served as an escort for the first American troop convoy to France.

But the USS Birmingham became famous for an event that happened over 101 years ago. From its deck, civilian pilot Eugene Ely made the first airplane take-off from a warship on November 14, 1910 in a Curtiss Model D biplane designed by Glenn Curtiss. As his landing wheels touched the water, he was able to pull up and land on a beach near the Norfolk Navy Yard in Virginia, winning a \$500 prize.



Ely takes off from the Birmingham, Nov. 1910

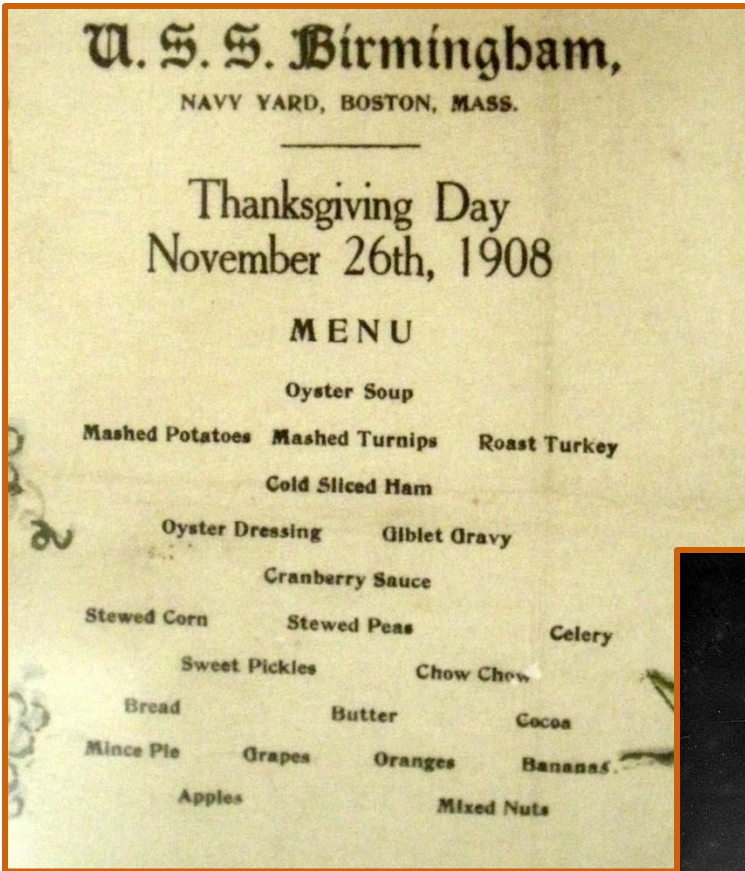
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Birmingham History Center

THOMAS E. JERNIGAN SR. MEMORIAL

On Exhibit – USS Birmingham, CL-2

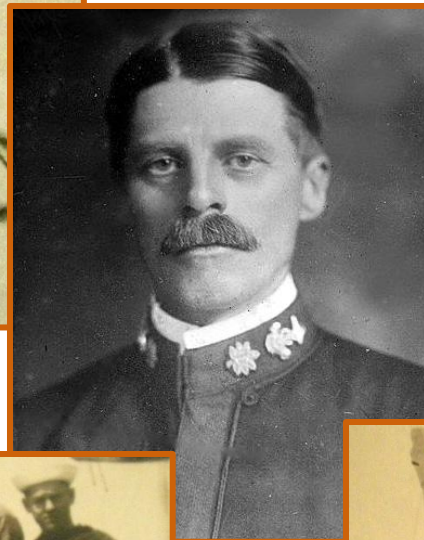
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Thanksgiving Day menu of the Birmingham in 1908

In 1914, the first mission by a heavier-than-air aircraft flew off the Birmingham while scouting for mines off Veracruz, Mexico. The ship was decommissioned in 1923 and sold for scrap in 1930.

The History Center has several artifacts from the USS Birmingham, including candid crew photographs and a Thanksgiving Day menu from 1908.



Captain William Bartlett Fletcher, commanded the USS Birmingham in 1909 and 1910. Prior to his death in 1957 at age 95, he was the oldest flag rank graduate of the US Naval Academy.



Some of the crew at leisure, note the cabin boy at the far left of the photograph.



Taking gun practice.

DONORS IN 2011

Foundations

Barbara Ingalls Shook
Foundation
Comer Foundation
McWane Foundation
Protective Life Foundation
Thomas E. Jernigan Foundation

Corporate

A. H. Cather Publishing
Alabama Theatre
BBVA Compass
Birmingham Apothecary
Blue Cross/Blue Shield of
Alabama
Coca Cola Bottling Co. United
Cobbs, Allen & Hall
Dixie Store Fixtures
Drummond Co.

Engel Realty
Kassouf & Co.
Longshore, Buck & Longshore
Mayer Electric
Miglionico and Rumore
Molton Allen & Williams
Pritchard, McCall & Jones
Red Diamond, Inc.
Regions Bank
Royal Cup
Shaia's
Shook and Fletcher
Southern Armature Works
Sterne Agee
Strickland Companies

Francis Crockard
Wyatt Haskell
Henry Lynn
Phillip McWane
Charlotte Murdock
Dennis Pappas
Kathryn Porter
Joyce Ratliff
Carolyn Reed
Garland & Lathrop Smith
Lucille Thompson
Estate of Becky Marie Trigg
Bayard Tynes

Individual (\$1,000 or more)

Leigh Allison
Bill Bowron

NEW MEMBERS IN 2011

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J. T. Stephens

Supporter

Thomas Donald
Murray and Joseph South
Arnold Steiner

Family

Phyllis and Barron Bethea
Jane and Don Byrd
Judy Clasen
Jeffrey Cohn
Steve DeMedicis
Robert Gorman
Allison and Timothy Gregg
Candice and Juan Gutierrez
Lee Ann and James Harris
David Herring
Donna and Bill Hood
Yvonne and Bill Jenkins

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Louise and Frank McPhillips
Sara and Phil Neal
Bette and Crawford Owen
Walter Pittman
Carolyn Reed
Paula and Mike Rushing
Mr. and Mrs. James Shepherd
Katy and Charles Terry
A. S. Williams
Eva and Alexander Vare

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Judy Armstrong
Phillipa Bainbridge
Martha Bartlett
Marie and Ronald Baynes
Marsha Duell
Ralph Hare
James Hawk
Jerry Hyman

Christopher Metcalf
Mary Martin
Julia Norton
Jim Phillips

Individual

Maryon Allen
Loretta Brown
Andrew Farrell
Melissa Hogan
Darrell Hrabouski
Ivey Jackson
Burgin Mathews
Clara Prevo
Susan Schillaci
Joseph Schoel
Betsy Simmons
Merrill Stewart



1906

RED DIAMOND, INC.

Need a good cup of coffee or tea? Through four generations of family leadership, Red Diamond, Inc. has provided quality beverage and food products in the Southeast. Founded as Donovan Provision Company in 1906 by William Fitz Donovan in Birmingham, the company supplied the area with fresh eggs, meat, poultry and butter bearing the Red Diamond brand. Located on Morris Avenue then First Avenue North, the company, renamed the Donovan Coffee Company, in 1930 began concentrating on blending, roasting, packaging and distributing coffee to local wholesale customers. In 1991, the name was changed to the current Red Diamond, Inc. In 2009, the company headquarters moved to Moody, Alabama.

Always a leader in product innovations, Red Diamond was the first in the nation to introduce gallon-size and quart-side tea bags, decaffeinated tea and a Goglio "brick pack" vacuum pack system for coffee. Red Diamond was also a pioneer among coffee distributors for its use of radio and television advertising. From 1962 to the early 1970s, Jim Henson's Muppet characters "Wilkins and Wontkins" appeared in advertisements for Red Diamond Coffee.



Red Diamond ad featuring Jim Henson characters, Wilkins and Wontkins.



William A. Bowron, Jr.,
4th generation CEO

This Edition's Featured Enduring Business



Birmingham History Center

THOMAS E. JERNIGAN SR. MEMORIAL

A Gathering of Spirits



Our guests had a fine time mingling with the spirits of Oak Hill Cemetery at the end of October at the History Center.

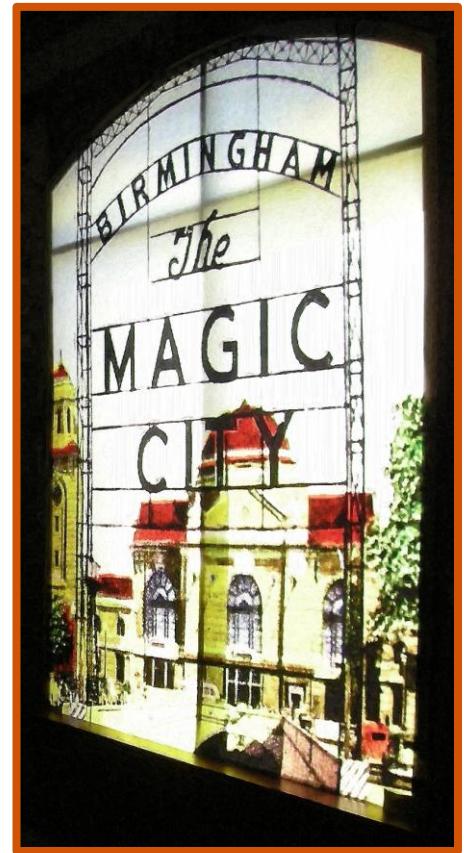
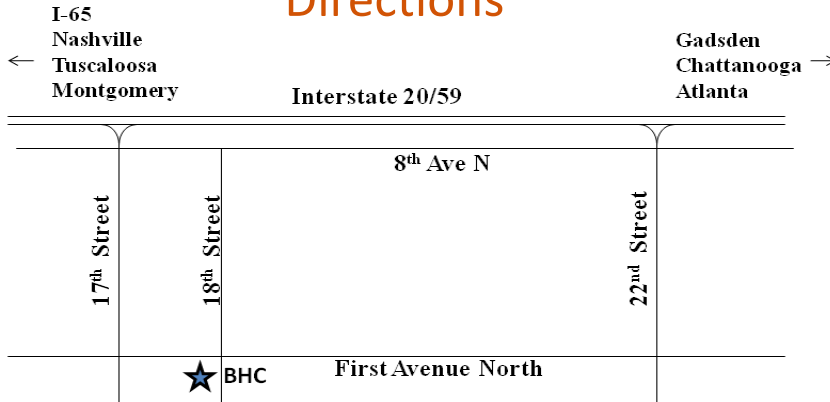


Our Board Chairman, Dr. Tynes, with "Lou Wooster," the gold-hearted Madam.

Birmingham History Center

Recently opened in the Spring of 2010, the BHC features exhibitions of historical events of Birmingham and Jefferson County from the 18th century to the present. Admission charged; \$4 adults, \$3 seniors and veterans, \$2 students, children under 6 free. Visa, Discover, Master Card accepted, tickets available also by phone. Group rates available, free parking. Open 9:00 am - 4:30 pm, Monday – Friday, Saturday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. Located at the corner of 18th Street and First Avenue North in Birmingham at the historic Young and Vann Building.

Directions



Birmingham History Center



1731 First Avenue North
Birmingham, AL 35203

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