

Today in Columbus History:

Today, I'll depart from our usual look into the Digital Library of Georgia sources to examine an event that happened about a quarter century later than the Columbus newspapers available on that site. This post is based on my article "Columbus Throws a Party – Homecoming 1915" in the Spring 2017 issue of *Muscogiana*, available for download at: <https://csuepress.columbusstate.edu/muscogiana/63/>.

April 14, 1915 was the opening day of the first Homecoming festival in Columbus. This four-day party had numerous events at various locations in town. Among them were almost daily parades, speeches by Georgia's governor, a senator and other politicians, as well as other entertainment and athletic contests. The Columbus YMCA challenged an Auburn team to daily baseball games at Driving Park in South Commons and field events took place on Broad Street. Daily music and dancing included minstrel shows, and dancing on Broad Street as well as tea dansants at the Ralston. The Murrah Building, on the northwest corner of First Avenue and 12th Street hosted the daily Dixie Pigeon Shows that included over four hundred entrants. The local YMCA also put on a show called "Society Circus" with a variety of acrobatic, vocal, and musical acts. The highlight of the Homecoming was the premiere of the very first movie filmed in Columbus.

The Chamber of Commerce organized the homecoming to encourage former residents to come back to Columbus and help the local economy by spending some money. Local clubs and organizations pitched in with the merchants to make it a success. The idea was to get people to spend as much as possible. The organizers encouraged attendees to buy homecoming buttons for themselves and their friends as well as ballots to elect the Homecoming Queen (at a penny per vote), tickets to the Society Circus show and lots of confetti. Local businesses referenced the homecoming in advertisements with some making special offers during the event.

Earlier that month, the Chamber of Commerce constructed a large arch on Broad Street, between 11th and 12th Streets. The Columbus State University Archives has a photograph of the arch in its collection. However, it incorrectly labels it "World War I Homecoming," describing it as "meant for returning World War I veterans April 14-17, 1919." There is no mention of any such arch or event in the newspapers of April 1919.

The newly formed Historical Society and its president, the former mayor of Columbus, Lucius H. Chappell took a prominent role in planning the events for Friday, April 16. It was the anniversary of the last major military engagement of the Civil War – the Battle of Columbus. The Civic Pageant was actually another parade with civic-themed floats. The Historic Society was lobbying hard for national recognition of the battle and used the new medium of motion pictures to showcase the story for all the visitors.

The Spirit of Columbus 1865-1915 was the name of this Columbus movie. It was a melodramatic love story whose cast of hundreds consisted of local townspeople, known as a home-talent photoplay. Itinerant filmmaker O. W. Lamb used the Confederate monument in Salisbury Park as a plot device to introduce a flash back to the locally famous "Last Battle of the Civil War." He filmed the battle scenes at North Highlands a few weeks before. In the film, the young lovers toured the city allowing the moviegoers to see Columbus in all its glory. The Chamber of Commerce paid for the film to present the city of Columbus and all the commercial opportunities it had to offer to potential businesses and future visitors.

Columbus merchants interviewed during the Homecoming were pleased with the result. The success of the homecoming encouraged the Chamber of Commerce to hold another, smaller version in 1916. By 1917, the war in Europe had changed the mood and the Chamber gave up planning for another homecoming and directed its efforts toward landing an Army camp south of town, instead. That too, was a resounding success.

Compiled by Daniel A. Bellware, Muscogee Genealogical Society

Our weekly snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.



Homecoming Arch, described in the CSU Archives as being for returning WWI veterans in 1919, it was actually for the Chamber of Commerce Home-Coming event four years earlier, (Courtesy of the CSU Archives).

THE WEATHER Fair today and to-morrow.	<h1 style="margin: 0;">The Columbus Enquirer-Sun</h1> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">ESTABLISHED 1822</p>	COTTON Good middling . . . 9½¢ Strict middling . . . 9¢ Middling 8½¢
VOL. LXXXVII.—NO. 76.	COLUMBUS, GEORGIA, WEDNESDAY MORNING, APRIL 14, 1915.	See Date on Yellow Address Label on Your paper. Subscriptions by Mail stopped on Date of Expiration.
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> COLUMBUS On The Occasion Of Her First Annual Home-Coming </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> WELCOMES </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> And Extends Greetings and Cordial Good Wishes to All </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> VISITORS </div> </div>		

THE LEDGER The Advertising Medium for the Ocmulgee Valley. It Moves the Goods.	<h1 style="margin: 0;">THE COLUMBUS LEDGER</h1> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">ESTABLISHED 1865</p>	THE WEATHER Forecast for Georgia: Fair tonight and probably Thursday. Cooler tonight.
VOL. 29, NO. 171.	COLUMBUS, GEORGIA, WEDNESDAY APRIL 14, 1915.	ESTABLISHED 1865
<h2 style="margin: 0;">HOME-COMING CELEBRATION IS NOW IN FULL SWING</h2>		

Headlines from *The Columbus Daily Enquirer-Sun* and *The Columbus Ledger* announcing the opening of festivities, April 14, 1915.

SPRINGER OPERA HOUSE

ALL THIS WEEK BEGINNING MONDAY

COLUMBUS MOVING PICTURES

"Spirit of Columbus '65-'15"

A real play enacted by Columbus people showing Columbus Scenes.

Special Feature—Last Battle of the Civil War.

Three Other Reels of Pictures will be shown each day

12 NOON to 10 P. M. DAILY,

PRICES 5 AND 10 CENTS

Colored People Admitted to Gallery.

Ad for the first movie filmed in Columbus from *The Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, April 14, 1915.

During Home-Coming Week

The same prices which prevailed during our recent
"First Sale in Thirty Years" will again be in force

This is for Home-Coming Week Only

We have decided to do this mainly because many out-of-town people have expressed themselves as having been unable to take advantage at the time set for the previous "Sale."

We Kept Faith with the Public before--We will Keep Faith with the Public now

We have been receiving Shoes and Slippers daily to replenish our stock--and during the present week every single pair of them will be placed on sale at

FACTORY COST and LESS

This is enuf said, as the public knows we do what we advertise

To insure choice in selection we would earnestly suggest immediate inspection as these Shoes cannot last long at these prices

OUR SCALE OF PRICES

\$4.50 Oxfords now \$4.95	\$5.00 Oxfords now \$3.75	\$4.50 Oxfords now \$3.10	\$4.00 Oxfords now \$2.90	\$3.50 Oxfords now \$2.15	\$3.00 Oxfords now \$1.90	\$2.50 Oxfords now \$1.75
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GARRETT SHOE STORE

Garret Shoe Store ad with special Home-Coming prices, from *The Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, April 11, 1915

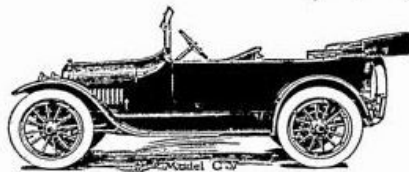
BUICK

DODGE

GEORGIA AUTOMOBILE EXCHANGE

"High Grade Motor Vehicles and Their Accessories"

Thirteenth Street at First Avenue
Columbus, Georgia



During "Home-Coming" Don't Forget to Investigate the Latest Models in the BUICK and DODGE. Make Our Salesroom Your Headquarters.

TIRE DEPARTMENT

We carry the tire you want in stock at the price you want to pay.

SERVICE

To the Automobile Owner

We are members of the Chamber of Commerce.

Gasoline Filling Station

Free Air Repair Department
Vulcanizing

Georgia Automobile Exchange ad reminding people to check out the latest Buick and Dodge models during Home-Coming, from *The Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, April 11, 1915

LET

McCOLLUM

PHOTOGRAPH

YOUR BABY

In Its Decorated Carriage
YOUR AUTOMOBILE,
Decorated for the Parade

YOUR FAMILY GROUP AT HOME
You All May Never be Together Again.

This is the Time and You Will Always be Glad, and
Treasure a McCollum Print.

PHONE FOR AN ENGAGEMENT

McCollum's Studio

PHONE 424

Ad for McCollum's Studio acknowledging that "You All May Never be Together Again" from *The Columbus Enquirer-Sun* on April 15, 1915

A Cordial Invitation to All During
Home-Coming Week to Visit
CASTELLAW-PERKINS CO.

Make Our Store Your Headquarters

All the Newest Models in Everything
Ready-to-Wear for Ladies and Misses

New Suits, New Dresses, New Skirts, New Blouses, New Coats, New Neck-
wear, New Hosiery, New Rain Coats, the Latest Novelties in Belts and Girdles.

NEW GARMENTS ARRIVING VIA EVERY EXPRESS

Meet Your Friends this Week at

Castellaw-Perkins Co.

8 Twelfth Street Phone 1817

Ad for Castellaw-Perkins Co. clothing store from *The Columbus Enquirer-Sun* on April 11, 1915

Official Program Columbus Home-Coming

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14.

- 12:00 noon—Public reception to visitors at courthouse grounds. Addresses by Governor John M. Slaton, Congressman Wm. C. Adkinson, Mayor John C. Cook, President John T. Davis.
1:00 P. M.—Baby parade, Broad street.
4:00 P. M.—Field events on Broad Street.
5:00 to 7:00 P. M.—Tea-dansant Hotel Ralston.
8:00 P. M.—Address, "Star of Bethlehem," by Congressman Wm. C. Adkinson at First Baptist church.
8:00 P. M.—Minstrel on Broad street.
9:00 P. M.—Dancing on Broad street.
Columbus motion pictures at Springer opera house, and Dixie Pigeon show in Murrah building all day.

THURSDAY, APRIL 15.

- 10:00 A. M. to 4:00 P. M.—Conference of farmers and business men at courthouse under direction of Georgia Chamber of Commerce.
11:15 P. M.—Address by Senator T. W. Hardwick at Springer opera house on the Ship Purchase bill.
1:30 P. M.—Baseball at Driving park.
3:00 to 7:00 P. M.—Tea-dansant, Hotel Ralston.
8:00 P. M.—Society Circus, Springer opera house. (Admission 25c, 50c, 75c.)
8:00 P. M.—Minstrel on Broad street.
9:00 P. M.—Dancing on Broad street.
Dixie Pigeon show, Murrah building, all day.

FRIDAY, APRIL 16.

- 11:00 A. M.—Civic pageant. Celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the last battle of the war between the States.
11:30 A. M.—Crowning of Queen at arch on Broad street.
2:00 P. M.—Address by Congressman T. J. Heflin at courthouse.
3:30 P. M.—Baseball at Driving park.
5:00 to 7:00 P. M.—Tea-dansant at Hotel Ralston.
7:45 P. M.—D. O. K. K. Parade on Broad street.
8:00 P. M.—Minstrel on Broad street.
9:00 P. M.—Dancing on Broad street.
9:00 P. M.—Queen's ball at Hotel Ralston. (Admission \$1.00.)
Motion pictures of Columbus, Springer opera house and Dixie Pigeon show in Murrah building, all day.

SATURDAY, APRIL 17.

- 11:00 A. M.—Floral parade.
3:30 P. M.—Baseball at Driving park.
5:00 to 7:00 P. M.—Tea-dansant at Hotel Ralston.
8:00 P. M.—Minstrel on Broad street.
9:00 P. M.—Dancing on Broad street.
Columbus motion pictures at Springer opera house and Dixie Pigeon show, Murrah building, all day.

Official schedule of Homecoming events for *The Columbus Enquirer-Sun* on April 14, 1915.