

Belle Mont

CIRCA 1828

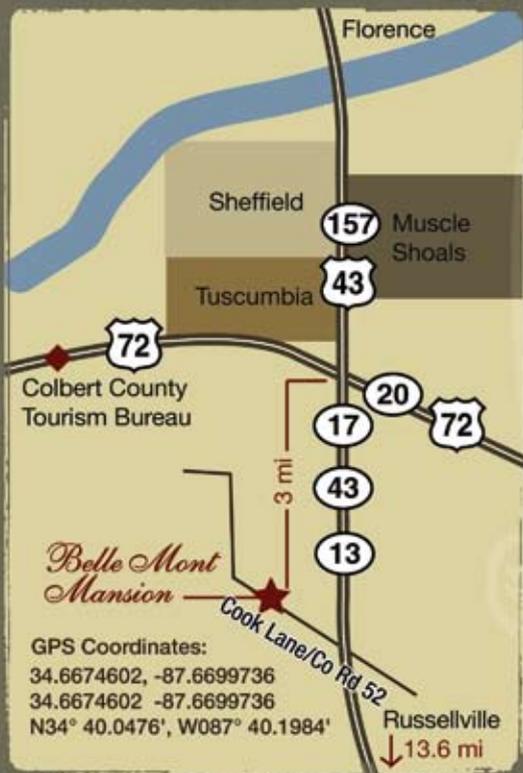
TUSCUMBIA, ALABAMA

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Hours: Th - Sa 9 am-4 pm; Su 1-5 pm
Additional group times by appointment.
Admission is charged. Group and military discounts available.



1569 Cook Lane, Tuscumbia, AL 35674
(256) 381-5052 www.preserveala.org

Alabama Historical Commission
334.242.3184
www.preserveala.org

Colbert County
Alabama
Colbert County Tourism Bureau
800.344.0783 / 256.383.0783
www.ColbertCountyTourism.org



One of the Most Outstanding Palladian-style Houses in the Deep South.

Crowning Architectural Achievement in Early Alabama

The source of Belle Mont's design is shrouded in mystery, but tantalizing clues suggest the direct influence of President Thomas Jefferson, gentleman architect of the early Republic. Characteristics of "Jeffersonian Classicism" are exhibited at Belle Mont, including finely executed brickwork with contrasting woodwork and a hilltop setting. Belle Mont also illustrates Jefferson's reverence for the neoclassical architectural elements and ideas of the Italian Renaissance architect, Andrea Palladio.



Thomas Jefferson



Andrea Palladio

Typical of Palladian style, the mansion is a three-part house with a narrow raised pavilion flanked by side wings which project to the rear to embrace a courtyard.

The tapered columns and plaster walls of the courtyard display an early faux finish to suggest limestone and granite. Square, slave-made brick pave the courtyard floor.

Who designed Belle Mont? While we do not know the answer, we may postulate that it may have been one of the large circle of craftsmen and builders who fell under the influence of Jefferson during the construction of his own home, Monticello, and the nearby Charlottesville campus of the University of Virginia.

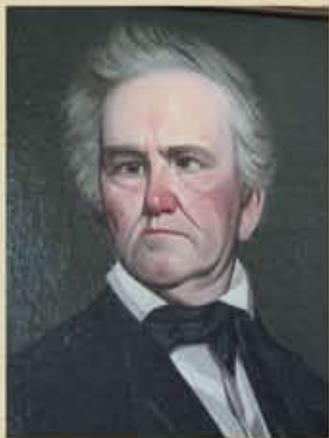
A pair of elliptical windows, set high upon the poly-chromed doors at Belle Mont, offer light into an otherwise windowless side entry. Similar "eyebrow" windows found in buildings in Charlottesville are linked to Thomas Jefferson's designs.



memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/habs_haer

Belle Mont was recorded in the Historical American Buildings Survey conducted in the 1930's. View this document at the Library of Congress or on their website listed above.

Belle Mont Mansion & Plantation History



Isaac Winston



Catherine Winston

Thomas Jefferson's close friend, neighbor and private secretary in Albemarle County, Virginia. A brother, William Winston, lived near town in a large brick plantation home, now part of Tuscumbia's Deshler High School. Extended family members occupied additional properties in and around Tuscumbia. The Winston family cemetery lies at the northwest border of Tuscumbia in what is now Sheffield. Isaac and Catherine are buried here, along with many others of this influential Alabama family, including Revolutionary War veterans and Alabama governor, Robert Burns Lindsay.

Subsequent generations of the Winston family enjoyed life at Belle Mont. When the family ceased using it as their primary residence, it remained the setting for family gatherings and retreats.



Master Bedroom on 2nd Floor

In 1941, Belle Mont was purchased by J.C. Fennel, who in 1947 sold a half interest in the property to Gordon Preuitt. In 1983, heirs of the Fennel and Preuitt estates, Ben Fennel and wife, Carolyn Preuitt Fennel, Maude Fennel and Judy Fennel Vials, generously donated the house and approximately thirty five surrounding acres to the State of Alabama. The Alabama Historical Commission administers and operates Belle Mont. A long-term, phased restoration is underway so that Belle Mont's history, beauty and architectural integrity may be preserved.

Belle Mont was built circa 1828 for Dr. Alexander Williams Mitchell, a native of Louisa County, Virginia. Besides being a physician, Mitchell was an early official of old Franklin County, from which Colbert was formed. He was one of the area's largest cotton planters, holding 1680 acres and a large number of slaves. The fine craftsmanship of some of these slaves was likely used to construct the mansion. Shortly after the home was completed, Dr. Mitchell put it and the surrounding land up for sale and moved to Philadelphia.

The estate was purchased in 1833 by Isaac and Catherine Baker Jones Winston, who migrated from Buckingham County, Virginia, in about 1817. They maintained Belle Mont as one of the showplaces of the Tennessee River Valley.

Winston was the uncle of Alabama's first native-born governor, John Anthony Winston, and a cousin of Dolly Madison and Patrick Henry. Another cousin was Isaac Coles who was



Parlor Guest Area

Welcome to Belle Mont for Special Events

For a current list of upcoming events visit www.ColbertCountyTourism.org



"A Plantation Christmas" at Belle Mont
On the first Sunday afternoon in December, Belle Mont is transformed into the scene of a lively holiday party. Traditional greenery decks the halls of the mansion, period music wafts through the spacious rooms and vintage ballroom dancers twirl, as hundreds of guests enjoy refreshments and a Christmas event reflective of the opulence and hospitality of the "Old South."



Belle Mont Quilt Show
When autumn guilds the trees around the mansion, equally colorful designs of vintage quilts enliven the rooms within. A juried selection is made on the first Sunday afternoon in October when approximately 20 quilts are chosen for the Belle Mont Quilt Show which opens on the second Thursday of October and runs through the last weekend.



Civil War Living History
Civil War re-enactors present vignettes of camp life. Occasional skirmishes recreate a Federal invasion of the home, based on an actual event in Belle Mont's history. Dates vary.

Additional public and private events may be scheduled at Belle Mont, including weddings, receptions, musical concerts and group tours. Fees may apply.