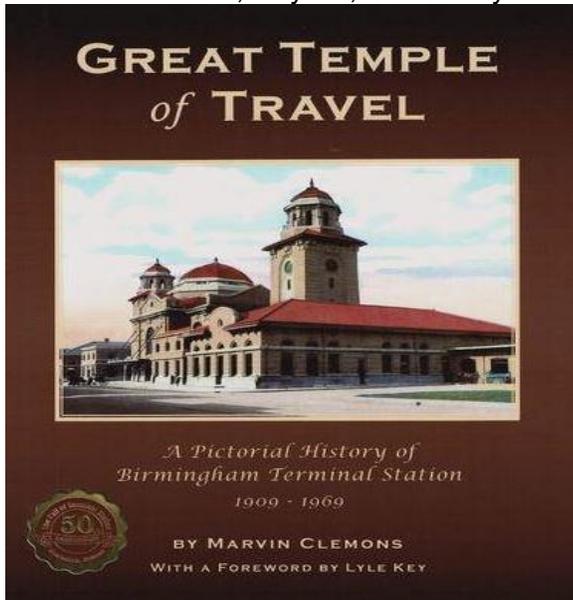


the chapter's first president and established the chapter's publication, *The Mid-South Flyer*, covering railroad history in the Mid-south region. Marvin is curator of the Frank F. Ardrey Exhibit at the Leeds depot, showcasing the work of Birmingham's most noted railroad photographer.

Marvin and his wife, Kayron, live in Hayden.



Throughout his professional life, Marvin continued to acquire historical data and photographs on Birmingham's Terminal Station, which was demolished in 1969 for a failed commercial development. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the station's untimely removal, Marvin has authored and self-published the first book-length history of Terminal Station. **Great Temple of Travel: A History of Birmingham Terminal Station** is a tribute to one of Birmingham's most venerated lost landmarks, and a personal testament to a life-long love for trains and the forgotten romance of rail travel.



The Beginning - Picture from 1910, one year after building completion.

In 1909, at the height of passenger rail travel, a magnificent railroad station was constructed in Birmingham, Alabama, to serve the rapidly growing "Magic City." Hailed at its opening as "the Great Temple of Travel," the imposing Byzantine and Beaux Arts structure, with its magnificent tiled dome and twin towers rising above Birmingham's skyline, was considered the finest railway station in the New South. Incorporating design elements of Washington, D.C.'s Union Station and Istanbul, Turkey's Hagia Sophia basilica, Terminal Station was "built to last the ages."



The iconic "MAGIC CITY Welcome" sign

For over 60 years, the station was the main stop for out-of-town visitors. The famous "**Birmingham, The Magic City**" sign welcomed visitors to the city. The station connected Birmingham to cities like Chattanooga, New Orleans, and even New York.

At its peak, the station received 54 trains per day. However, rail traffic significantly declined by the 1960s.

Just 60 years after its construction, the magnificent structure fell to the wrecking ball, the victim of years of neglect and steady decline in rail passenger service.

The station's destruction in 1969 was a devastating blow to Birmingham's architectural heritage, but the loss produced a heightened awareness of the importance of preserving the city's surviving historical structures.

A \$10 million multi-story building for Social Security personnel was supposed to be erected at the Terminal Station site.

In January 1960, The Birmingham News ran an article describing a local businessman's dream to convert Terminal Station into a "Birmingham Travel and Convention Center." Architectural plans were drawn, but never acted upon. What was left was a vacant field over-grown with weeds.



The Sad End - a pile of rubble from the once magnificent Great Temple of Travel.

Although Terminal Station can never be replaced, its colorful history has been preserved in this first book-length account by railroad historian Marvin Clemons through scores of rare photographs, art work, and detailed text.

Railroad Park and its amenities now occupy where Terminal Station once stood.

