

An Alabama School Girl in Paris



1842-1844

the letters of
Mary Fenwick Lewis
and her family

Nancy M. Rohr

An Alabama School Girl in Paris, 1842-1844

**The Letters of Mary Fenwick Lewis
and Her Family**

Edited by Nancy M. Rohr

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An Alabama School Girl in Paris, 1842-1844: The Letters of Mary Fenwick Lewis and Her Family

Mary Fenwick Lewis was seventeen years old when she left Huntsville, Alabama, in 1842 and traveled to Paris, France, "to finish" her education. Her mother insisted that Mary write long letters home so in later years they might renew her memories of her time in France. Mrs. Lewis also wanted to know everything that was happening in her daughter's life so the family in north Alabama might live her trip vicariously. Mary writes in great detail about Paris and the French countryside she visited, and her family responds with newsy letters about her friends and relatives and events taking place in Huntsville. These letters offer a delightful peek at a mid-nineteenth century Alabama family and provide historical information about north Alabama in the 1840s. Nancy M. Rohr has done a sound job of editing, and the book is complemented with numerous family and historical photographs, essays about the family before and after the letters were written, and genealogical charts to help keep everyone straight. Scholars have known about and used these letters for some time, but publication will enable a larger audience to know Mary Lewis. This work will place a significant Alabama primary source easily at hand, one that high school teachers and college professors alike may mine for special assignments for their students. These letters should interest the general public as well, especially those fond of Huntsville history and Alabamiana.

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