The purpose of this study was to examine Progressive Farmer Company’s 1966 launch of *Southern Living* magazine in Birmingham, Alabama, in its sociocultural context. The publisher of *Progressive Farmer*, the largest magazine in the South, launched *Southern Living* when Birmingham was at the epicenter of the civil rights movement. The primary research question was: How did *Southern Living* magazine reflect or reject its sociocultural environment? This study examined more than one thousand archival documents and reviewed *Southern Living* magazine’s first four years of content. It found that *Southern Living* was the result of extensive preparation to target a new audience of affluent urban and suburban southerners. Struggles between company leaders at Progressive Farmer Company over *Southern Living*’s content mirrored tension between white southerners in the region. Overall, the magazine was a rejection of the significant societal change in the region. It represented a way to reconfigure white southern identity in a nostalgic way that allowed readers to escape the tension of the 1960s, but it also negated the place of African Americans in southern culture. This research extends scholarship on the role of magazines in American culture, contributes to the understanding of Birmingham, Alabama, during the civil rights movement, and is the definitive history of *Southern Living* magazine’s launch.