NEW HMCHS PRESIDENT TAKES OVER

John is a long-time history buff, having served as president of the Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table, and was a speaker last April at the Alabama Historical Association in Mobile. He once spearheaded a drive to beautify Huntsville with plantings and was a Boy Scout leader for 12 years. John is the retired training manager at Amana in Fayetteville. He is married to Joan, a retired school teacher, and they have two grown children. Jacque has been a good steward of the HMHS, and we are fortunate that she will continue as 1st vice president, which she will share with Ron Bledsoe.

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

LTC (ret) Edwin Kennedy will offer a special presentation on the life of an American soldier during World War I. June 5, 1917, was designated “Registration Day” across the nation. Patriotic speeches were made at our local courthouse as well as at voting precincts, where young men between 21 and 31 went to register. The May 7, 1917 issue of the Huntsville Mercury announced that “North Alabama boys are not slackers” and did not wait for the draft to enlist. Col. Kennedy is a graduate of West Point and served for many years overseas before becoming an instructor in military tactics, leadership, and history. He conducted numerous “staff rides” over battlefields all over the world for Army officers and has written a number of articles on military history and horsemanship. Early arrivers will get a musical treat.

ARE YOU A PUBLISHED AUTHOR?

If you are a published author or editor of any history book or article, then please bring it to the general membership meeting on Sept. 13 at 2:00 at the Library auditorium. A group picture will be made of all the published authors. The photograph will appear on the Society’s webpage and on Facebook.
The Marker Committee met recently to review the marker activities of the past year. Seen in the picture (left to right) are: Nancy Rohr, Joyce Smith, Sam Tumminello, Alex Luttrell (chairman), and Deane Dayton. Wayne Smith and John Allen also joined the group.

HISTORICAL MARKER ADVENTURES

With more than 125 markers located within Madison County (some of them nearly 60 years old), the committee decided over a year ago to focus on refurbishing the existing markers as opposed to erected new markers.

Boy Scout Landon Boyd approached the committee in the fall of 2013 about refurbishing the three Twickenham Historic District markers to fulfill his requirements for Eagle Scout. Landon, his fellow Scouts, and other family members successfully completed this project in late 2013. The HMCHS Board took note of the great job and voted on a new Marker Policy Mission Statement, and approved $3,500 for marker restoration over the 2014-2015 year. The Marker Committee contracted with the Boyd Family/Scouts to refurbish an additional 10 markers for $3,000. This price included removal, complete refurbishment, and re-erection (the only other quote we received was from the marker manufacturer, Sewah Studios, which agreed to a price of $800/marker, but we would have to remove, package for shipment, and then re-erect upon delivery).

The Boyds completed their contract this past July (please drive by and check out these newly refurbished markers: Temple B’nai Shalom, Calhoun House, Site of Huntsville Inn, Site of Alabama’s First Constitutional Convention, Huntsville Passenger Depot, Original Site of Alabama A&M University, Old Limestone Road Skirmish, Site of Ditto’s Landing and Town of Whitesburg, and Merrimack Mfg. Co. & Village / Joseph J. Bradley School). The John Williams Walker Home marker was also refurbished, but is awaiting re-erection once the committee determines the appropriate location. The Marker Committee also plans to approach the Board again to request additional funds to continue the refurbishment program.

Contact Alex Luttrell (256-837-6821) if you are interested in joining the Marker Committee, or if you notice a damaged or missing marker. We especially need members who are willing to perform the necessary research on any of the historical sites we maintain on the list of potential markers.

Deane Dayton has done a complete pictorial inventory of 125 markers within Madison County and Huntsville, and can be seen at historyconnections.info/vf/markers.html.
**WEBSITE QUIZ**

Visit our website at HMCHS.org and find the answer to the following questions. If you are the first to know the answer when called on at the meeting, you will win a candy bar.

1. *In 1951, one of the first historical markers was erected in Huntsville on the encampment of Gen. Andrew Jackson while on his way to Horseshoe Bend. What other Huntsville organization assisted the Historical Society in erecting this marker?*

2. *What is the name of the UAH student who won the John Rison Jones scholarship for 2015?*

3. *Under the Publications tab, what is the name of the very first book mentioned?*

**LOCAL BEST SELLER**

New HMCHS member Mark Hubbs tells us his latest book, The Archer’s Son, passed a milestone recently. For a full year it has remained on the Amazon.UK top ten best sellers for Kid’s Medieval Fiction, and on-and-off in the #1 spot. For most of the year it has also been in the top ten for Kid’s European Historical Fiction. In the United States it has remained in the Amazon.Com Top 100 for the same genre. Mark says the reviews have remained great in both the U.S. and the UK. “It is very gratifying to have so many folks enjoy my stories,” he said.

**RANKIN DIGITIZING THE ARCHIVES**

For some 15 years, one of HMCHS’s best friends, John Rankin, has been systematically making photographs of land-deed books, court-record books, and tax-record books of the 1800s. The digital images are currently installed for examination or downloading from computers in the Madison County Records Center (MCRC) and in the Heritage Room, thereby protecting the ancient pages from handling damages. More volunteers are needed to complete indexing and similar preservation-scanning of the Bragg Collection records that were returned to us two years ago. Deane Dayton has been putting the digital records on-line. Find them on his website at HuntsvilleHistoryCollection.org
Huntsville Historical Review has new editor

Arley McCormick takes over from Dr. John Kvach, and already has five articles slated for the next issue, which will be out this fall, focusing on “King Cotton,” Madison Countian Dr. James Manning, the two Birney brothers from Huntsville (both Union Civil War Generals), WWI, and research techniques.

Arley is originally from north Missouri. He has a Master’s Degree from George Washington University, Washington D.C. in Public Administration and he is a former soldier and consultant. His articles have appeared in the U.S. Army Military Review published at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and other publications in the Tennessee Valley. He is currently the Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table newsletter editor and a volunteer aid to the Director of the Early Works Museum complex.

The following two graduate students authored the excellent stories in the last issue:

Drew Graham - is at UAH working on an MBA in history and getting certified to become a teacher. During my undergraduate years I studied psychology at the University of Alabama. My interests run the gamut from history, to sports, to movies, and a number of things in-between. As early as high school, history drew me in with its stories; I love a good story. I credit my father and the history teachers I lucked into in both high school and college for drawing me in.

Brittney Carnell - is at UAH studying history and secondary education and hope to become a middle or high school teacher. I graduated from Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida, with a BA in international relations and global affairs, with minors in French and anthropology. I’ve always been fascinated with learning about the past, and the REVIEW project was especially interesting to me because so much of what I discovered in my research can still be seen in Huntsville today. I hope to show my future students that learning about history can be both fun and exciting, and that we are surrounded by unique stories of the past just waiting to be told.

Did you know?

The Tennessee Valley Historical Society was active in north Alabama for some 50 years, but ceased meeting during World War 1.

From “Our First 50 Years,” by John Rison Jones – REVIEW, Summer-Fall 2002
Huntsville, publish several books/pamphlets relevant to the early history of Huntsville, create a souvenir calendar for the Bicentennial, organize a symposium/lecture series using Road Scholars and others. Please join the fun on this committee.

### HMCHS Bicentennial Committee

The first meeting of this committee took place at the library on July 30. Attendees were John Allen, Dean Dayton, Arley McCormack, and Jacque Reeves. It was a brainstorming session, with the following notes:

- We will work closely with the city’s Bicentennial Committee, plan different celebrations/commemorations for both 2017 and 2019, arrange for the annual meeting of the Ala. Hist. Assn. in Huntsville in 2019, encourage the state Bicentennial Committee to print a U.S. Postal stamp, establish a bicentennial logo for the HMCHS, establish a bicentennial poster contest, create “stars on the sidewalk” around the courthouse for the original 7 local delegates, create an app for a walking history tour downtown, establish a 200th birthday historical marker for Constitution Village, commission a painting of the Constitutional delegates greeting President Monroe, Re-issue the 1820 Sara Huff Fisk map of downtown-

### Ways you can help

THE HUNTSVILLE-MADISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

- Historical photo contest – need someone to spearhead this
- Design a method to identify members by length of tenure
- Continue the HMCHS history since the Review article in 2002
- Write an article for the Review
- Analyze whether to continue two different essay contests
- Serve on the Historical Marker Committee
- Examine the feasibility of a history museum for Huntsville
Huntsville- Madison County Historical Society
Preserving the Past to Enrich the Future

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