**Huntsville History Collection**

Join us on Sunday, March 13, 2016, at the Huntsville Public Library at 2:00 p.m. for a special presentation to members and guests of the Huntsville Historical Society. Dr. Deane Dayton, who founded and created the Huntsville History Collection along with his wife Carol, will explain the many items previously held in private collections that are now available on the internet. Dr. Dayton has worked with many local historians and artists to digitize photos, drawings, paintings, articles, links, family stories, audio stories, and even an architectural collection! This event is free to the public and guests are invited to attend. For more information, call 256-539-5287.

**History Evangelists Meet to Brainstorm**

Representatives from a half-dozen history exploratory groups met for a workshop recently at the Blue Plate Café – south. Purpose of the meeting was to see if there are areas of history in Huntsville and Madison County that should be examined, amplified, or merely acknowledged.

Group topics included 1) a history museum, 2) a history photo contest, 3) history clubs for the 3rd graders, 4) an annual Ranee Pruitt Award for a noteworthy historian, 5) an annual joint meeting or banquet with all other history groups in the area.

Further down the list were these topics, some of which were also discussed: 6) History of HMCHS (we have it up thru 2002), 7) Pins or name tags for members that would show their longevity in the Society (some have been in for 40+ years), 7) Fundraiser – gold/silver Christmas ornaments with a local history theme (Limestone HS does this and rakes in thousands every year), 8) Identification pin, award certificate, etc., for any contributor to the Historical Review, 9) Design a HMCHS rack card for display counters, 10) John Rison Jones Scholarship Award and the Frances Roberts Essay Contest (should these be discontinued or revamped?), 11) City/County Historian – what would be the advantages of this? (Florence, Ala., has one).

Persons attending, included Emil Posey, Alexis Albright, Kelly Fisk Hamlin, Sam Tumminello, Gil White (look for his article in the Review), Jacque Reeves, Arley McCormick, John Allen, and Chris & Sharon Lang.

These exploratory discussions are on-going. Some may evolve into bona fide committees, sanctioned by the board to move forward. If you see an area that interests you, please let John Allen know at jha@knology.net

**Historical Marker Committee Plans for Warmer Weather**

By Alex Luttrell & Deane Dayton

“Hurry up, Spring!” The Historical Marker Committee has several activities in a holding pattern, waiting on better weather. The proposed locations of two markers have been agreed upon by our Committee, and now we are working the other details to get them erected. New posts are on order for both the John Williams Walker home site marker and
the Huntsville Female Seminary marker. The John Williams Walker marker was “found” several years ago at a metal recycling center in Tennessee. It has been refurbished and will eventually be erected at the Southeast corner of US 231/431 and Steger Road, Meridianville. The Huntsville Female Seminary marker is new and will be erected at 512 Randolph Street in Huntsville.

At its last meeting, the Committee identified the next set of markers to be refurbished in preparation of the Alabama Bicentennial celebrations. Those selected include: St. Mary’s Church of the Visitation, First Presbyterian Church, Birthplace of General John Hunt Morgan, First Bank in Alabama, Buckhorn Tavern, Town of New Market, Town of Gurley, and Oakwood College. Several of these markers will also require new aluminum posts. Hopefully, work on these markers will begin in the late Spring and continue through the Summer months.

Another major project of the Society is the development of a Historical Marker Web Application suitable for use on a smartphone or computer. Users will select a topic of interest and be guided on a tour of the related markers with maps, images and historical background. The team of local historians who are developing content for each of the markers includes David & Rebecca Hitt, Kelly & Tyler Hamlin, Alexis Albright, Jessica White, Jimmy Pemberton and Jacque Reeves.

**Did you know?**

- A committee has been formed to look into resurrecting selected articles from the *Historical Review* and binding them into subject-specific books for sale to the general public, including on Amazon.com. The committee consists of Arley McCormick, Jacque Reeves, Deane Dayton, and John Allen.
- The Huntsville Housing Authority is allowing HMCHS to sort through its old records to identify materials of historic value. Details will be forthcoming.
- Changes to the HMCHS.org website:
  - Link for help with genealogy research
  - Criteria for getting a historical marker

---

**Historical Review is Robust with History**

*By Arley McCormick*

Good news, I have so many articles in the queue that the second 2016 issue is already full. However, I’m soliciting more articles because I want to have a balance between WWI, pre-1819, and other historical features. Here are the articles appearing in the next issue.

- **Alabama’s Rocket City: Cotton, Missiles, and Change in Huntsville and Madison County**, by Christopher M. Young
  - An excellent illustration of how residents and the city transitioned from an agricultural economy to an emphasis on technology.
- **The “Salt King” of Abingdon, VA: Huntsville’s First Entrepreneur**: By Gilbert White, a Society member and local resident share his research on his forefather’s growth as a merchant of salt prior to and during the quest for statehood.
- **Of Myth and Moo: Huntsville’s Lily Flagg** by Whitney Snow, a professor and part-time resident of North Alabama, shares her research on The Legend of Lily Flagg.
- **“Madison County Doughboys Hit the Trenches,”** Part 2, of a series commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Great War, by Jacque Reeves.
- And a book review “The South in a New Nation.”
THE MANNING/CHANNEY/GODDARD HOUSE DEMOLISHED

One of the oldest houses in Madison County, the Manning/Chaney/Goddard House on Redstone Arsenal, has been unceremoniously demolished. Calls to historians on the Arsenal indicated they apparently had not been informed of demolition beforehand. According to Donna Castellano of the Historic Huntsville Foundation, the architectural salvage was donated to the HHF.

Over the years the house, built around 1835, underwent extensive renovations, face-lifts, and refurbishments, in an attempt to "modernize" the structure. The exterior clapboard siding gave way to stucco and later to yellow brick. The interior gave way to carving and partitioning to suit changing needs. Although evaluated for the National Registry of Historic Places, the numerous structural and design changes prohibited the old house from achieving official historic recognition as it retained little of its original architectural or historical significance.

The two-story farmhouse was built by James Manning. The government bought it in 1941. At the time of its purchase, it was owned by Mr. M.G. Chaney. Contractors first used the farmhouse in 1941 for storing electrical supplies. The building was remodeled in 1942 and used as quarters for arsenal personnel until 1953. At this time, it was closed because of water problems and its remote location. Although slated for demolition, the house was saved by "public sentiment" and an "acute" shortage of housing for high-level visitors.

As the arsenal's guided missile and rocket program assumed national importance during the mid 1950's, the number of visiting dignitaries increased, with few suitable accommodations available on the arsenal. Therefore, it was decided to make use of the otherwise unusable farmhouse by moving it to the Redstone Arsenal headquarters area. During a two-day period in December 1955, the house was moved 11.5 miles from the northwest part of the installation to a new site on Redstone Road, across the street from Building 7101 that was then post headquarters. Work began immediately to turn the old house into a guesthouse for top-ranking official visitors.

Newly renovated and expensively furnished, the VIP guesthouse was ready for occupancy by February 1956. The first to sign the guest book was Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson. His party included Secretary of the Army Wilber Brucker; and Secretary of the Navy Dan Thomas.

Among the other notables who stayed in the house were Fred Friendly and Edward R. Murrow of CBS, and former movie star, Mona Massey. In May 1956, the guesthouse was officially named "Goddard House" in honor of Dr. Robert H. Goddard, the famous scientist generally recognized as the "Father of American Rocketry."

The newsletter thanks Mark Hubbs and Henry Turner for assistance with this story.

FUTURE HMCHS PROGRAMS MAY LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS

Raymond Watson Jr - Huntsville Technological Evolution
David Hitt – The U.S. Space & Rocket Center
Ed Buckbee - History of MSFC & Experiences with Dr Werner von Braun
Henry Turner - History of Maple Hill Cemetery
Leslie Nicole Thomas - Legendary Locals of Huntsville
Dr Kaylene Hughes & Russ Rodgers – Redstone Arsenal & How It Got Its Name
David Byers – History of Huntsville in Photo
Bob Adams & George Mahoney, - Forum to discuss Huntsville before the “space boom”
Nancy Rohr – Huntsville Beginnings to WWII times
Jacque Reeves – Huntsville progress & developments in the 1930s
Sam Tumminello – 1940s, 50s, 60s and the 2000 era
Spring Newsletter
COLLECTING, PRESERVING, RECORDING AND PROMOTING HISTORY SINCE 1951
Spring 2016

HUNTSVILLE-MADISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PRESCRIBING THE PAST TO ENRICH THE FUTURE

at HUNTSVILLE-MADISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WWW.HMCHS.ORG

Board of Directors: John Allen, Wayne Smith, Sharon Lang, Arley McCormick, Jacque Reeves, Gary Wicks, Carol Cadori, Ron Bledsoe, Deane Dayton, David Hitt, David Byers, George Mahoney, Sam Tumminello, and Bob Adams.

HMCHS
P.O. BOX 666
HUNTSVILLE, AL 35804-0666