

# HUNTSVILLE- MADISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESERVING THE PAST TO ENRICH THE FUTURE

## November - December 2014

Our next meeting of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society will be held on **Sunday, December 14 at 2 pm**, at the public library on Monroe Street. Our speakers are Wil Elrick, an executive at Fox 54, and Kelly Kazek, former editor of the *Athens News Courier* who is an award-winning writer for [al.com/ The Huntsville Times](http://al.com/TheHuntsvilleTimes). Kelly and Wil have partnered their writing skills for a new book, "Alabama Scoundrels – Outlaws, Pirates, Bandits & Bushwhackers." Among their stories is one about Rube Barrow and his brother Jim, who grew up in Lamar County. Jim died in prison of tuberculosis, but when his grave was opened five years later, the coffin was empty. Rube died in a shootout in Linden, Alabama in 1890. His body was viewed by thousands who showed up for souvenirs (his buttons, hair, and even his boots) as he was transported back to Lamar County for burial.

Other stories include those about Railroad Bill, Bloody Bob

Sims, a prophet whose followers were known as Simsites, and Mountain Tom Clark, buried on Tennessee Street in Florence. He famously said that "no one would ever run over Tom Clark" and residents of Florence made sure they would do just that, every day. Aaron Burr spent at least one night in Huntsville before allegedly hiding out in The Dismals and before his arrest in Washington County. Of course there were several scoundrels who called Madison County home, if only for a short time.

Wil and Kelly's presentation promises to be fun, entertaining, historical, but most of all, educational.

### *Other items of note:*

✻ Our attendance at the September meeting was outstanding! We were pushing 100 guests, including many new faces, and both of our speakers had some surprises for us. Thanks to everyone who came out. Those who came to the Huntsville Veterans Museum on September 28 for an

interesting presentation for the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War I thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Many had never been to the museum and vowed to return for a formal tour. Huntsville is lucky to have this museum and many caring volunteers for whom preserving our past is a labor of love.

✻ On Saturday, November 22 (rain date November 29), the Cedar Point Cemetery, final resting place of African Americans of the Brandon, Douglass, Lansden, Sammons, and Shinault families, will be dedicated at 11 a.m. with a state-issued plaque by descendants of these families. This long-forgotten cemetery suffered from neglect and vandalism over the years until it was rediscovered a few years ago. This cemetery is located off of New Hope/Cedar Point Road (Madison County Route 5). Directions from Huntsville: Take Highway 72 East through Paint Rock, turn right on Route 5 (New Hope/Cedar Point Road) before county mile marker 120. Continue

approximately two miles and turn left on the access road before Cherry Tree Road. Because of parking issues, it is recommended that attendees carpool. For more information, **contact Sherry Milan at (256) 701-1254 or [isheri22@verizon.net](mailto:isheri22@verizon.net).**

✻ We are in the waning months of the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War. Some interesting facts during this time of year to think about: On November 27, 1863, Huntsville native General John Hunt Morgan and his men escaped from the Ohio State Penitentiary where they were imprisoned. On November 28, 1861, Southern Congress officially admitted Missouri into the Confederate States of America. On December 5, 1839, George Armstrong Custer was born in New Rumley, Ohio. On November 30, 1864, 63,000 Americans in blue and gray clashed at the Battle of Franklin. Many of those soldiers were from North Alabama.

✻ The historic home of Rev. Robert Donnell is hosting the annual Festival of Trees in Athens.

Reverend Donnell is credited as the founder of the First Presbyterian Church as well as the First Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Huntsville. Some references indicate he preached at John Hunt's cabin as well. The Festival of Trees features numerous Christmas decorations in every room of the 1845 home, located in the middle of the Athens Middle School campus on Clinton Street. The Festival of Trees will run from **November 21 through November 30 from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.**, including Thanksgiving evening. The **cost for admission is \$5 per person.** All money raised will go toward continued renovation efforts for the historic Donnell House.

✻ The Huntsville Museum of Art is featuring the Grandma Moses; Visions of America original paintings **through March 1, 2015.**

✻ Harrison Brothers Hardware Store will hold their Luminary Open House on **Saturday, December 13 from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.** Unique items, many made by Alabama

artists, are available for gift-giving and entertaining. When you have finished shopping, come to the library for their **Holiday Concert at the Library event from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.** It's a popular night! The Spirit of Christmas Past Homes Tour takes place from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. There are many other events as well: concerts, plays, ballets, various programs, and celebrations. Look at the Madison County Convention and Visitors Bureau's website for constant update.

✻ We will have a few copies of **"King Cotton to Space Capital, The Huntsville-Madison County Story"** available at our next meeting. They will make great Christmas gifts.

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2014-2015, send a check for \$25 to:

**HMCHS  
P.O. Box 666  
Huntsville, AL 35804**

**Please include your e-mail address.**

***Thank you for your continued support of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society. See you on Sunday, December 14 at 2 PM!!***

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