



# ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Join us for the fall pilgrimage to Mentone, Alabama! | September 23-24, 2022



- 3 President's Message
- 4 Feature Article: *Mentone: Where Little River Runs* by Charles Holley Midgley
- 9 Schedule of Activities
- 10 Pre-Meeting Tours: Fort Payne
- 11 Reception
- 12 Saturday Tours
- 14 Map
- 16 Speakers
- 17 Closing Reception
- 18 2022 Award Winners
- 20 2023 Annual Meeting  
Call for Papers
- 21 Award Nominations
- 22 Special Thanks

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*Founded in 1947, the Alabama Historical Association is the oldest statewide historical society in Alabama. The AHA provides opportunities for meaningful engagement with the past through publications, meetings, historical markers, and other programs. The AHA is a volunteer-led and membership-supported organization. Our members are from every walk of life but share a common interest in Alabama history and a belief in its value for society today. Visit [www.alabamahistory.net](http://www.alabamahistory.net) for more information.*

*Cover photo: DeSoto Falls, courtesy of  
Brittney Hughes.*



*Jim Baggett*

Greetings,  
After living in a virtual Covid world for far too long, it was good to catch up with so many of you in Florence, to visit some historic sites I had not seen, have breakfast with Chris and Harriet Doss (and yes, Chris had a funny story about another time AHA met in Florence),

and hear some great papers.

For those who do not know me, I serve as Archivist for the Birmingham Public Library and Archivist for the City of Birmingham. I attended my first AHA meeting as a grad student in 1988, and I am honored now to serve as your 74th president.

My most recent predecessors, Frazine Taylor and Ben Severance, made increasing our organization's diversity a top priority, and I am pleased to continue that work. As Ben has pointed out, diversity means many things and it is vital to reach as many people as we can if we want to grow and prosper. As part of this effort, I hope to expand our social media presence. I do not spend much time on social media, but I'm odd in that way. This is an inexpensive way to reach more people who love Alabama history and to better highlight the work being done by our organization and our members. I also hope to build on the wonderful outreach AHA does through its publications, meetings, podcasts, and historic marker program by adding an AHA speakers' bureau where members will give talks on

Alabama history to interested groups around the state. We will be seeking enthusiastic (or at least willing) volunteers.

In September, we will take our fall pilgrimage to Mentone for the first time. The good people of DeKalb County are excited to host AHA, and we owe thanks to many people and organizations for their help in planning the event, especially the Mentone Area Preservation Association, Landmarks of DeKalb County, St. Joseph-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church, Sallie Howard Memorial Baptist Church, Moon Lake Community Library, the Mentone Arts Center, DeSoto State Park, the Town of Mentone, and homeowner John McFarland. The area has far more to offer than we can squeeze into one day, so we are encouraging those who can to visit for the weekend. In the months leading up to the fall pilgrimage, I plan to share (and invite others to share) information on places to see and places to dine around Mentone. I especially want to highlight the best food in the area restaurants. I do not feel comfortable recommending a dish that I have not tried, so my duties as president will include driving around northeast Alabama with my wife sampling delicious food. That is a sacrifice I am proud to make.

Have a safe summer, and we will all look forward to gathering in Mentone in the fall.

Jim Baggett  
President

# *Mentone:*

## **WHERE LITTLE RIVER RUNS**

*Charles Holley Midgley*

Lookout Mountain, part of the Cumberland Plateau of the Appalachian Mountains, extends almost 100 miles and is anchored by Gadsden and Attala, Alabama to the south and Chattanooga, Tennessee to the north. Just about equidistant from the ends sits Mentone, Alabama, in DeKalb County. The town (village would be more accurate) has a permanent population of only 320 souls, but in the summer this can grow to several thousand when tourists, and kids who attend one of the area's nine summer camps, arrive. Mentone sits at the highest elevation (about 1,900 feet) of any incorporated place in the state.

canoeists, swimmers, and fishermen for more than 150 years. Eventually it cuts through, and creates, Little River Canyon, about 10 miles away, and regarded as the deepest gorge east of the Mississippi River. There are almost a dozen waterfalls on the mountain, including 100' Desoto Falls in Mentone's town limits. It's this natural scenic splendor that has attracted people since the 1870s.



*Photo courtesy Holley Midgley*

The town that would eventually become Mentone is situated in the midst of spectacular natural beauty. There are four distinct seasons: in spring, rhododendron, mountain laurel, pink lady slippers, and dogwood paint the forest with magentas, yellows, and whites. Summer sees temperatures that are usually 5 to 10 degrees cooler than in most of the rest of Alabama. In the fall maple and oak leaves splash color through the woods. And winters can be cold: this past winter, some residents recorded up to 18 inches of snow. Running right through the middle of town is the Little River, often cited as the longest river in this hemisphere that runs its course on top of a mountain. Its aqua waters have attracted



*Rhododendron, "Queen of the mountain."  
Courtesy Holley Midgley*



*Mountain laurel. Courtesy Holley Midgley*

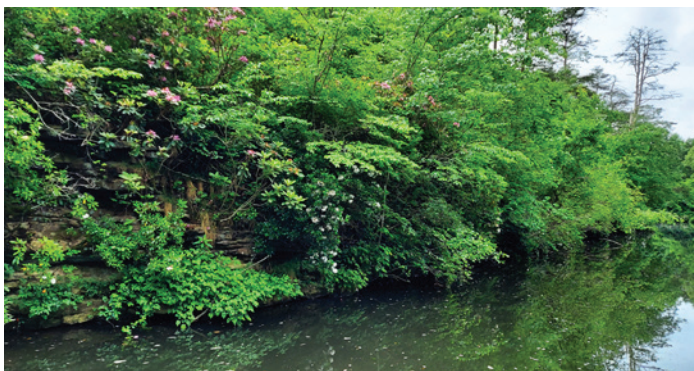


In about 1854 a man named Vernon built Mentone's first permanent home, made of hand-hewn logs. It still stands, incorporated into the center section of St. Joseph's Episcopal Church in downtown Mentone. But millennia before Vernon arrived, Lookout Mountain was often visited by the ancestors of the Cherokee and Creek Indians. "They were called paleo Indians, and 10-12,000 years ago they were big game hunters," says archaeologist and biologist Jay Clark, of nearby Lafayette, Georgia. "There is little evidence that Native Americans ever lived here; they came to hunt and to worship in a place they regarded as sacred." Archaeologists have identified small horseshoe-shaped stone structures which served as spiritual and meditative spots.

In 1838, the removal of the area's Cherokee Indians during the infamous "Trail of Tears" suddenly freed-up enormous swaths of territory which was quickly appropriated by whites seeking new farm land. The more fertile valleys were settled first, so late comers were forced to seek arable land on Lookout. Because the soil on the mountain was frequently poor, rocky and hilly, it was never well suited to such crops as cotton. Few slaves could be found here in pre-Civil War days, and when fighting broke out in 1861, many area people had no interest in secession. Some either chose to avoid the war as much as possible or to actively fight for the Union cause. After the war, farms remained small, subsistence operations, and the people who moved to the mountain found themselves in something of a backwater. Roads, where they existed at all, were poor and in some seasons almost impassable. That made getting crops to market difficult.

Stella Lacy, born in 1918, once recalled that the roads were always a challenge. She rode her first school bus in about 1932. She told an interviewer that, "The roads were in such bad shape the boys would sometimes have to get off the bus and push it over the steep, rutted hills!" Many would argue that some of the roads on Lookout are still a challenge.

Settlers made and grew almost everything they



*Little River. Courtesy Holley Midgley*

needed to survive. In an age when medical care was nonexistent or hard to access, a snake bite could be serious business, so settlers routinely swept their yards to remove the grass. There were 6 grinding mills around Mentone, but one popular use for farmer's excess corn was to turn it into whiskey. Elizabeth Raughton, raised along Little River, recalled in a 1995 interview that during her childhood in the 1930s, "Just about every holler along the river had a moonshine still. They were everywhere, and people thought nothing about it," she remembered.

The man credited with founding Mentone was an Iowan named John Mason. In the early 1870s, he was advised by a physician to seek a better climate for his health. Mason possibly fought at the Battle of Chattanooga during the Civil War, and thus would have been familiar with the attractions of Lookout Mountain. Several "John Masons" appear on various rosters of Iowa troops present at that 1863 battle. Mason brought his family with him, and immediately began buying up land along and near the brow of the mountain. One of his sons, Ed, fancied himself a promoter and developer. He advertised far and wide, extolling the locale's scenic



*Mentone Springs Hotel. Courtesy John Dersham*

and healthful attributes through newspaper articles and advertisements. A Pennsylvanian named Dr. Frank Caldwell saw one of Mason's ads and visited the nascent town, which at this point had no name. Caldwell was impressed by its river, the views of the valley below, and abundant natural springs. In 1884 he began building a large resort, and attracting guests from across the country. It came to be called the Mentone Springs Hotel, and it operated, off and on, for 130 years until it burned to the ground one night in March 2014. People who saw the fire that night said half the town looked on in horror and half of them were crying.

Seeking healthy and restorative spring waters was all the rage in the 1800s, and Dr. Caldwell's new resort became an instant success. Three springs were located within walking distance of the hotel. Caldwell offered





*The original springs at Mentone. Courtesy Holley Midgley*

such activities as a tennis court, golf, a bowling alley and horse rides to nearby DeSoto Falls. He prevailed on the Masons to come up with a name for the town. At breakfast one morning, John Mason's young daughter, Alice, was reading a newspaper article about a visit by Queen Victoria to the French seaside town of Menton. Supposedly, a translation of the name meant "Musical Mountain Spring." Perfect. So they added an "e" and Mentone, Alabama was born. Although the town would not be officially incorporated until 1936, it now had a name.

Caldwell's Mentone Springs Hotel was built in classic Victorian-era style, with a garret/turret on one end and a spacious veranda across the sides and front. A ballroom accommodated musical performances and dancing, and waiters in black tie served guests as they relaxed in the dining room.

The railroad had been completed in the valley below Mentone by the 1870s. It became possible to arrive by train in the little town of Valley Head, directly below, take a "hack" (a wagon, which operated well

into the twentieth century), and ride the three miles up the mountain to the town. With the hotel at its core, Mentone began to attract summer visitors and people who sought second homes where they could enjoy the mountain's cooler summers and slower pace.

Mentone's first mercantile establishment, the Huron Store, doubled as the post office, and was built by developer Ed Mason in around 1888.

Among the people attracted to Mentone in the early twentieth century was Martha Berry. Founder of Berry Schools and College in Rome, Georgia, Berry purchased property at Moon Lake, along the Little River, from the Mason estate in the 1920s. In 1938 she built a large log home, which is now in private hands. One of her guests was automobile magnate Henry Ford.

From the earliest days, Mentone folks had a deep appreciation for religion and education. Churches, primarily Baptist and Methodist, were numerous for such a small community. Citizens began building their own church-based schools in the late 1880s, and there were 7 schools in the immediate Mentone area by 1900. Mentone's Moon Lake School was built around 1911. Even though it was academically the highest rated elementary school in the county, in 2021 the board of education ordered that it be closed due to a declining student population that had fallen to just fifty-five



*Martha Berry. Courtesy Berry College Archives*



children. It was a blow to the community that still stings.

Over the decades Mentone has had its share of eccentrics, dreamers, and iconoclasts. Surprisingly, two men have represented the area in Congress. One was Miles Allgood, who served as the commissioner of agriculture in Alabama before serving for 6 terms as a U.S. congressman, beginning in the 1920s. Perhaps his finest contribution came when he convinced President Franklin Roosevelt to take a train tour of the impoverished Tennessee Valley, and then successfully pushed the president to create the Tennessee Valley Authority.



*Congressman Miles Allgood, (wearing a dark tie and standing behind President Roosevelt's right shoulder), at the signing of the bill creating the TVA. Courtesy David Allgood*

Mentone's second congressman was a man named "Colonel" Milford Howard. The title was honorific, often given to lawyers in small towns. Around the turn of the twentieth century he had walked the 60 or so miles to Fort Payne from his home near Rome, Georgia, borrowed and read a set of law books, and passed the bar exam. Although some regarded him as little more than a frustrated dreamer and schemer, his law practice was a success. He served two terms in Congress, authored a best-selling novel, wrote, directed and starred in a couple of well-regarded major Hollywood movies, and personally laid out the Lookout Mountain Scenic Parkway, on foot, from Gadsden to Chattanooga. He wrote a weekly column for the *Birmingham Post Herald*, and once interviewed Italian strongman Benito Mussolini. A tireless promoter and would-be developer of the Mentone area, for many years Howard attempted to attract buyers. But many of his schemes never materialized. He envisioned an educational institution for the area's children called the Master School. Although he managed to build a one-room stone school, it only

operated for a single term before the money ran out. To raise funds, he toured and lectured, often displaying his white supremacist views to receptive audiences.

In his columns, the Colonel created an enduring myth around a local woman known as Granny Dollar Callahan, who acted as a midwife and herbalist for decades. According to Howard, and to stories Granny told about herself, she was supposedly of Cherokee origin, stood over six feet tall, had lived in a cave with her family during the Civil War in order to escape detection by the Yankees, and was 113 years old when she died. Recently, Marcus Thomas, an ex FBI special agent/investigator and genealogist, discovered that virtually nothing about the Granny Dollar legend was factual. Her real last name was not Callahan but Callaway; she was related to the family that created Callaway Gardens. It's a great story, but most of it is grossly exaggerated or made up out of whole cloth. As Colonel Howard might have said, "When confronted by the truth and the legend, print the legend!"

The Colonel did manage to complete the Sally Howard Memorial Chapel, in 1937, to honor his first wife. The striking structure is literally built into a giant rock and is still an active Baptist Church.



*Sally Howard Memorial Chapel. Courtesy Holley Midgley*





A.A. Miller was also a dreamer, but unlike Howard, Miller's schemes were usually realized. In the early 1910's he managed to drive from New Jersey to North Alabama. At one point he owned the Chevrolet dealership in tiny Valley Head, and built the first apartments in nearby Fort Payne. In 1926 he built a dam on the Little River at DeSoto Falls to create electricity. It still stands today, holding back the river and creating a 2.5 mile navigable stream for boats and canoes. The electricity he produced was sent to Fort Payne, Mentone, Hammondville, and Menlo, Georgia. He also planned a residential community around the falls, but the Great Depression kept that project from ever happening.

Earning a living in Mentone has always been difficult. If you didn't farm, you pretty much had to leave the mountain. Fort Payne experienced a boom phase in the 1890s centered around coal mining and iron production. During the 3 years the boom lasted, many Mentone men worked in the iron factories or the coal mines that fired the mills. Another way to earn a

living was by cutting, hauling, and milling timber.

Beginning in the 1930s, Mentone started developing something of an artists' colony, and today that trend continues. There is a strong arts council which supports all the arts and artists in the area.

The other employment option was in the service industry that grew up around the town's hotels, restaurants and summer camps. However, even though Mentone has attracted so many folks from other places from the very beginning, there has always been a kind of town and gown atmosphere among the residents who were born here and the visitors. Second homes and retiree residences are being built at a furious pace, and many area homes have morphed into bed and breakfast inns and rental properties. As late as the 1980s, there were almost no such places; now there are almost 400. This has resulted in driving up costs for existing homes, and has priced-out many locals.

Tremendous growth now prompts the question in the minds of those who treasure what's here: "Will Mentone become just another Gatlinburg?" That seems a long way off. But there is real concern that the very things that made Mentone special and desirable will be its undoing. Will time and development kill the goose that produced such a golden egg?

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*Charles Holley Midgley has lived in Mentone for 15 years, although he says he has been coming here to his family's summer home since before he was born. He retired after 17 years as the executive vice president of the Alabama Academy of Family Physicians. For more about Mentone, he recommends going to YouTube and viewing the 88-minute documentary "Mentone: Where Little River Runs."*



*DeSoto Falls. Courtesy Charley Stone, Blue Sky Photography*



*Indian Pipe plant.  
Courtesy Holley  
Midgley*



*Mentone Inn, the town's only remaining hotel.  
Courtesy Cynt Stinson*



# Fall Pilgrimage

## MENTONE, ALABAMA

### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

- 2:00 p.m. Fort Payne Cabin Site**  
Local historian Larry Smith will be available from 2 to 3:30 pm to answer questions regarding this and other Trail of Tears sites.
- 4:00 p.m. Guided Tour of the Fort Payne Depot Museum**
- 5:00 p.m. Walking Tour of Fort Payne's "Boom Era"**  
Depart from the Opera House
- 6:00 p.m. Reception**  
Fort Payne Old Hosiery Museum and Opera House

### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

*St. Joseph's-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church*  
21145 Scenic Highway, Mentone, AL 35984

*NOTE: See map for parking information.*

- 9:00 a.m. Refreshments and Book Sales**
- 10:00 a.m. Program**  
Welcome: Mayor Rob Hammond
- Local History Talks:**
- "Col. Milford Howard," by Kelly Leavitt
  - "The Real Story of Granny Dollar," by Marcus Thomas
  - "The Black Bears of DeKalb County," by Hannah Leeper
- 11:30 a.m. Lunch**
- 12:30 - 5 p.m. Historic Site Visits (on-your-own)**
- Martha Berry Home
  - Sallie Howard Memorial Baptist Church
  - Mentone Arts Center
  - DeSoto State Park CCC Museum
  - DeSoto State Park Walking Tour to the Falls at 3 p.m. and 4 p.m.
- 5:00 p.m. Closing Reception and Dulcimer Music**  
*Brow Park*  
200 North Cool Street  
Mentone, AL 35984



## Landmarks of DeKalb County invites attendees to the following tours of Fort Payne on the afternoon of Friday, September 23.

### FORT PAYNE CABIN SITE

4th Street S. and Gault Avenue

2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

The cabin site is an officially certified historic site on the Trail of Tears Historic Trail. In July 1838, more than 800 Cherokee Indians assembled at the fort, and on September 29, the first group of Willstown captives departed the fort and their ancestral homeland. Cherokee John Benge lead the group on the journey. The cabin was demolished in 1946, after standing for approximately 125 years.

Local historian Larry Smith will be available from 2 to 3:30 pm to answer questions regarding this and other Trail of Tears sites in the county.

### FORT PAYNE DEPOT MUSEUM

105 5th Street NE

4:00 p.m.

Alabama Great Southern Railroad constructed the Fort Payne Depot in 1891. Fort Payne was a main stop on the line, with two express mail trains and as many as six passenger trains daily. The depot was a passenger station for 79 years. The museum features a large collection of Native American artifacts as well as holdings that illustrate the history of the region and the railroad era. The museum will be open all afternoon with a guided tour at 4 pm.

### WALKING TOUR OF FORT PAYNE'S "BOOM ERA"

5:00 p.m.

Departing from the Opera House

510 Gault Avenue N

Join Jessica Harper-Brown at 5 pm for a walking tour of Fort Payne's "Boom Era." The tour will depart from the Opera House.



*Photos of cabin site courtesy of Landmarks of DeKalb County, Inc. Photo of Depot Museum, Courtesy of the George F. Landegger Collection of Alabama Photographs in Carol M. Highsmith's America, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.*



## Reception to Feature Fort Payne Hosiery Museum and Opera House

The Fall Pilgrimage evening reception will be held on Friday, September 23 at 6:00 p.m. at the Fort Payne Hosiery Museum in downtown Fort Payne.

The Hosiery Museum tells the story of Fort Payne's unique reputation as the "Sock Factory of the World," when one in eight pairs of socks in the world were produced in the town, which boasted an annual payroll of over \$150 million. The museum features hosiery mill memorabilia, textile machinery, photographs, and displays.

Attendees will also have a chance to visit the historic Fort Payne Opera House, built during the city's industrial boom in 1889. The structure has served as a movie house, live theatre, and a public forum. The Opera House opened in September 1890 and was converted to a theatre during the era of silent films. After decades of non-use, Landmarks of DeKalb County, Inc. purchased the building and reopened the Opera House to the public in 1970 following renovation and restoration. The Opera House is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the National Register of 19th-Century Theatres in America. The Opera House continues to host live theatre and concerts.



*Photos  
courtesy  
Landmarks  
of DeKalb  
County,  
Inc.*





## MENTONE ARTS & CULTURAL CENTER

5951 Alabama Highway 117

The Mentone Arts & Cultural Center is a 501c3 organization dedicated to promoting local and regional artists and makers by allowing them to display and sell their works inside the gallery. The Center offers arts-education programs including painting, sewing, fairy house making classes, the ever-popular Bob Ross workshops, songwriters rounds and many other special events. A monthly musical event includes jazz, blues, folk and/or roots music. Attendees will be particularly pleased to tour the “Open Spaces Sacred Places” sculpture garden on the property. The Center is located in the Chuck Sennett Center for the Arts building.

*Photos courtesy of the Mentone Arts & Cultural Center.*



## THE BERRY HOUSE

69 Lynchpny

The Berry House dates to the 1880s and was the mountain retreat of the Rhea family of western Cherokee County (Etowah County today). Built for summer use only, the house has 8 rooms: four rooms on each floor with 2 chimneys and 4 hearths on the first floor. The kitchen remains detached. Martha Berry, founder of Berry College in Rome, Georgia, called the house her “mother’s old cabin just outside Mentone on one and a third acres” in her 1931 inventory.

Berry likely entertained many notable guests in the house, including Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Ford and Thomas Edison. John and Kathy McFarland are the current owners, and they are told by some locals that the Berry House is the oldest private home remaining in Mentone. “It shares many characteristics of the old hotels,” John says, “and will carry you back to an earlier time.”

*Photo courtesy of John McFarland*





## DESOTO STATE PARK

7104 DeSoto Parkway NE, Fort Payne, AL 35967

DeSoto State Park was developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the mid-1930s to early 1940s and was known as State Park #5. In November 1933 a CCC camp was built in the town of Fort Payne and in early 1934 work was started above Fort Payne on Lookout Mountain. The CCC boys then built roads, trails, culverts, a 9-hole golf course, and stone and wood structures such as picnic pavilions, barbeque pits, cabins, and a group lodge. CCC Companies 472 & 2436 contributed to the development of DeSoto State Park. The park's Civilian Conservation Corps Museum features local artifacts, a historic film, and interviews from workers who remained in the area following construction of the park.

*Adapted from [www.alapark.com](http://www.alapark.com)*

*Photo courtesy of Brittney M. Hughes*



## HOWARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Intersection of County Roads 165 and 617

Also known as the “Rock Church,” Milton Wriarson Howard built this unique chapel to honor his wife Sallie Lankford of Fort Payne following her early death in 1925. He completed the chapel in 1937 with help from young men in the Civilian Conservatoin Corps, using an existing boulder as one wall. Howard included above the stone altar a quote from Sallie’s last letter, “God has always been as good to me as I would let him be.” Milton died a few months after construction, and his ashes are interred in the boulder wall. Sallie Howard Memorial Baptist Church holds services in the chapel each Sunday.

*Photo courtesy of John Dersham*



## ST. JOSEPH’S-ON-THE-MOUNTAIN

21145 Scenic Highway, Mentone, AL 35984

The log cabin at the center of the church structure dates to around 1870 and was first the home of the Simmie Sherman Vernon family. The structure is now used as part of St. Joseph’s Episcopal Church, founded in 1965 and recognized by the Diocese of Alabama beginning in 1971. The stained glass window behind the altar was a gift from St. Luke’s in Scottsboro, and the pews in the chancel area came from Advent Episcopal in Tuskegee, stained and hand rubbed by George Washington Carver with a stain prepared especially for them.

*Text and photo courtesy of St. Joseph’s-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church*







## Holiday Inn Express

112 Airport Road W • (256) 997-1020

VERY LIMITED BLOCK that expires September 1.

Rate for the night of Friday, September 23 is \$117.99

## OTHER LOCAL CABIN RENTALS:

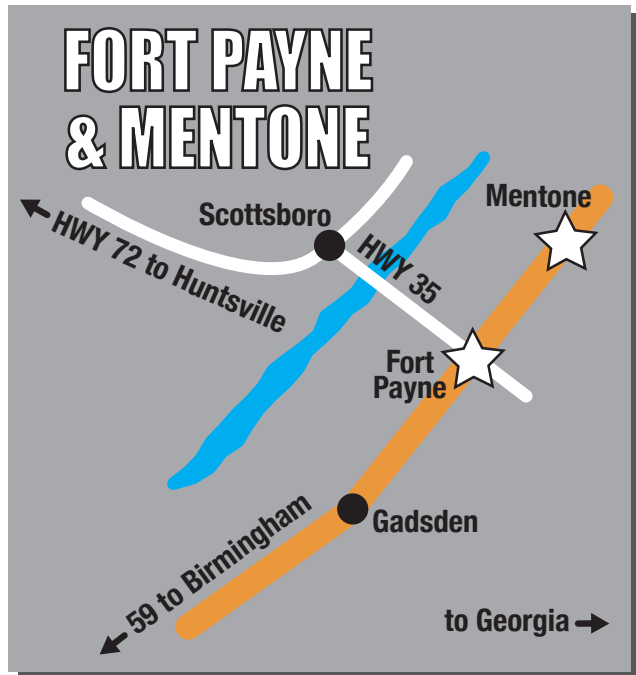
[www.alapark.com/parks/desoto-state-park](http://www.alapark.com/parks/desoto-state-park)

[www.mentonemountaingetaways.com/cabins/](http://www.mentonemountaingetaways.com/cabins/)

[www.mentoneinn.com](http://www.mentoneinn.com)

[www.winstonplacebnb.com/](http://www.winstonplacebnb.com/)

[www.vrbo.com](http://www.vrbo.com)



## Pre-Meeting Options:

1

### Fort Payne Cabin Site

4th Street S. and Gault Avenue

2

### Fort Payne Opera House

510 Gault Avenue N

3

### Fort Payne Depot Museum

105 5th Street NE

4

### Alabama Fan Club & Museum

101 Glenn Blvd SE

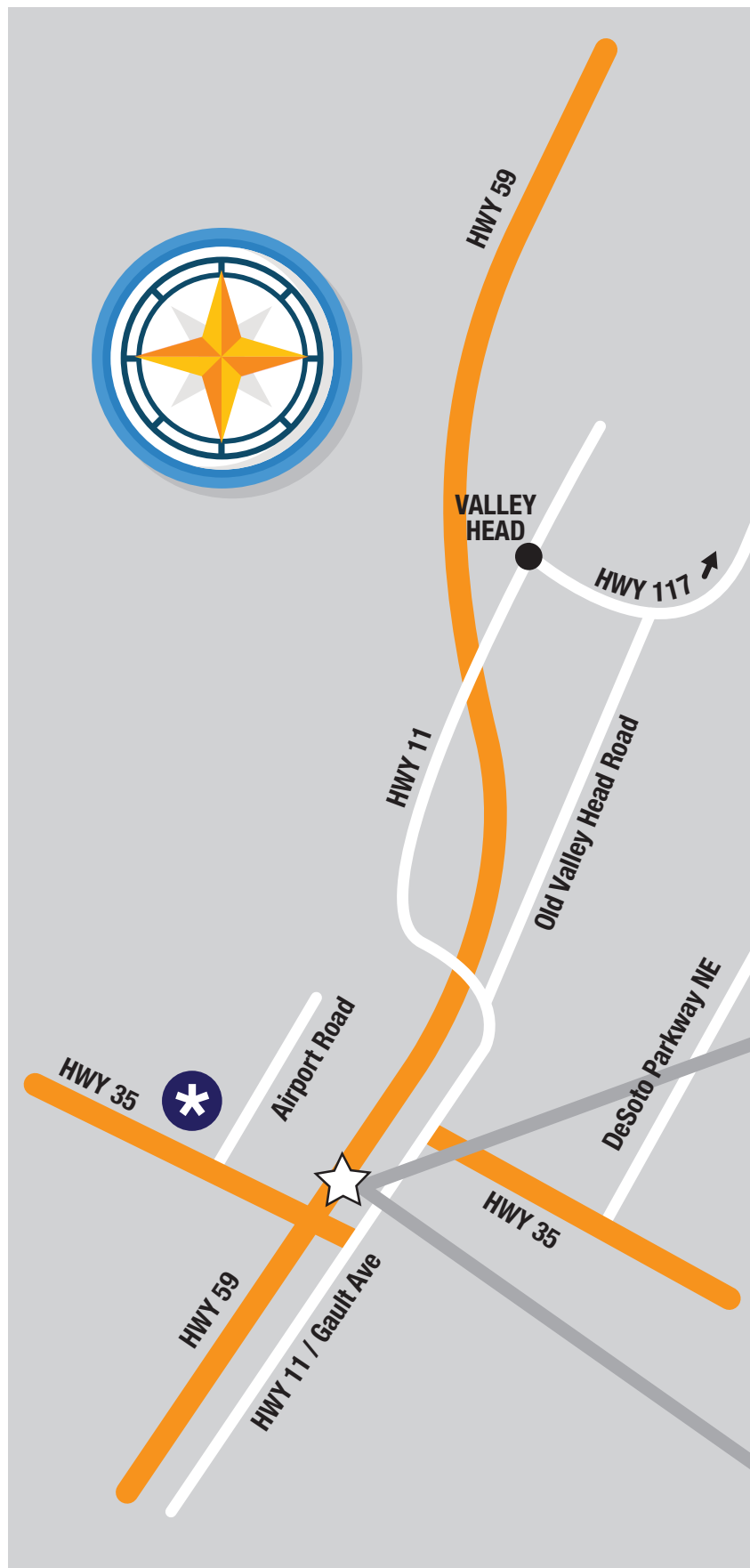
Admission \$10 / person

## Friday Reception:

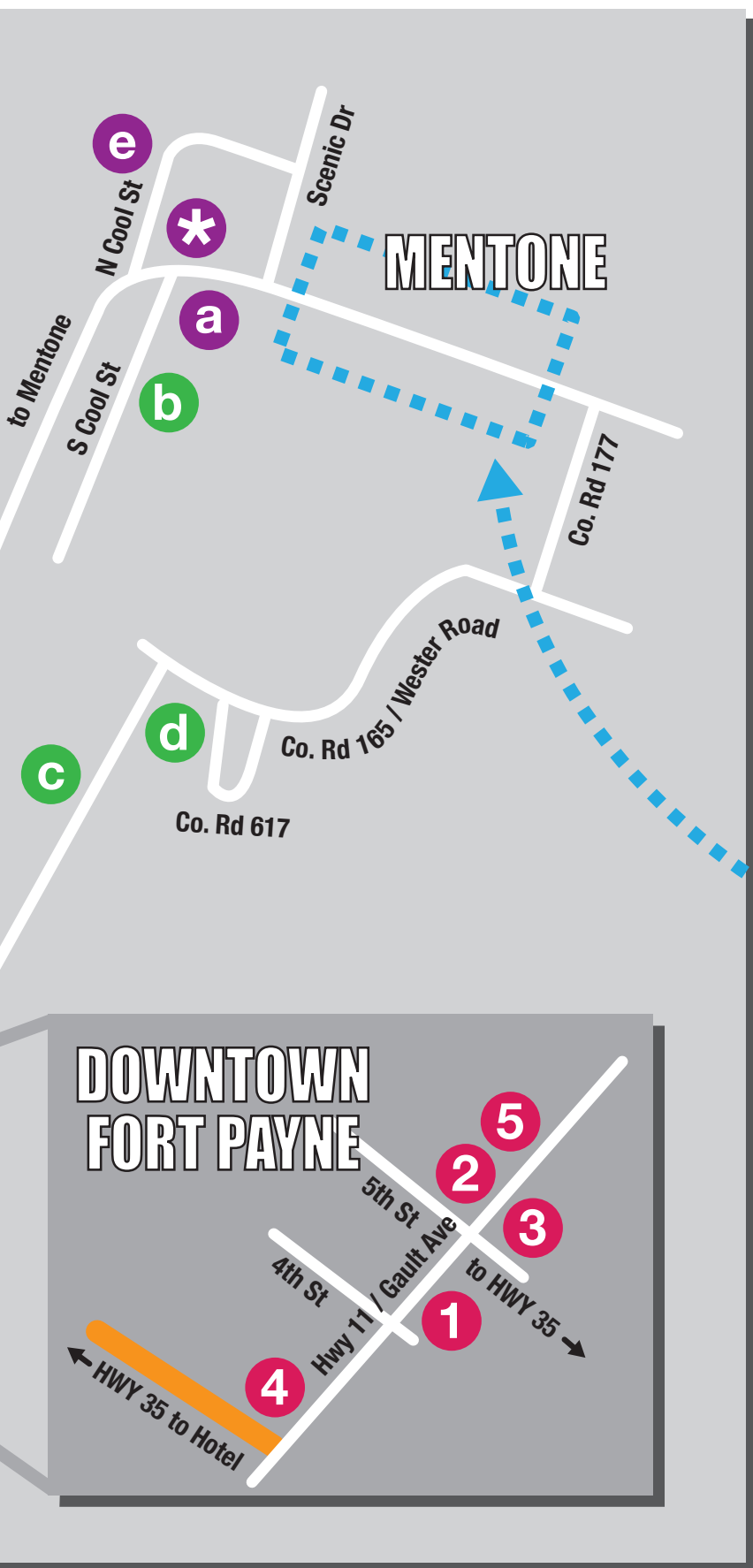
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### Old Hosiery Museum

514 Gault Avenue N







## Saturday in Mentone:

- \* PARKING**  
On the site of the former Mentone Springs Hotel  
*Between N. Cool St and Scenic Drive*
- a Meeting Venue:**  
**St. Joseph's-on-the-Mountain**  
21145 Scenic Highway  
*VERY LIMITED parking on-site. If able, please walk from designated parking area.*
- b The Berry House**  
69 Lynchpny
- c DeSoto State Park**  
7104 DeSoto Parkway NE
- d Sallie Howard Memorial Chapel**  
Intersection of County Rd 165 & 617
- e Closing Reception:**  
**Brow Park**  
200 North Cool Street

Shops & Restaurants in  
Downtown Mentone



Be on the lookout for  
the red and white  
AHA signs!

Scan this QR  
code for  
access to the  
Google Map.

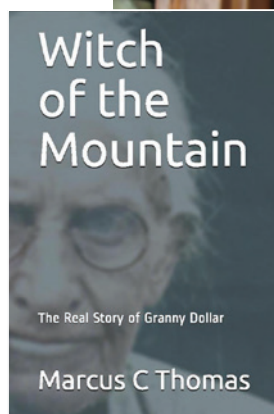
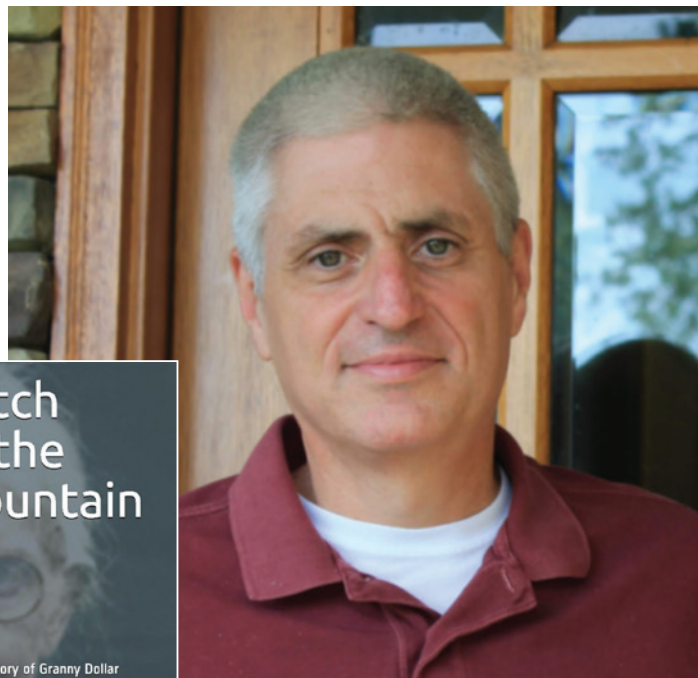


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◀ **Hannah Leeper** is originally from Minnesota and earned a bachelor's degree in fisheries, wildlife, and conservation biology from the University of Minnesota, followed by a master's degree in wildlife sciences from Auburn University. She wrote her thesis on resource selection by bears in Alabama, and she is employed by Auburn University as a researcher focused on cub survival, den habitat, juvenile dispersal, and population expansion. Leeper will discuss her current research on black bears in DeKalb County.



**Marcus C. Thomas** was born on Sand Mountain, in Sardis Community, about halfway between Section and Fyffe, Alabama, although his family later moved to Chattanooga, TN, where he attended the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Thomas served for 25 years as a special agent in the FBI, and he has taken up history, genealogy, and writing as a pastime in his retirement. He will discuss his new book *Witch of the Mountain: The Real Story of Granny Dollar*, a legendary figure of Mentone. ▶



Having grown up in Los Angeles, **Kelly Leavitt** appreciates small-town life in Mentone, where she has lived since 2010. She has studied, lived, and worked in Paris, Maui, and Birmingham, but the vitality of local history in the Mentone area particularly interests her. For the past five years, she has edited *The Groundhog*, a monthly newspaper published by the Mentone Area Preservation Association, a non-profit organization. Since 1982, *The Groundhog* has featured articles which preserve the area's local history and people, as well as current news and creative submissions from readers. She will discuss Colonel Milford Howard, the "vagabond dreamer," one of the most interesting historical characters who has impacted the Mentone area. ▶



**We will gather at Mentone's Brow Park at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday for a closing reception at this beautiful location on the brow of Lookout Mountain. Local dulcimer players will provide music.**





# *Congratulations to the following award winners!*

### **HISTORICAL MUSEUM AWARD**

The Historical Museum Award recognizes exceptional achievement by small and large museums in promoting state or local history. Congratulations to the Mobile Carnival Museum and the Mobile Medical Museum! Pictured are Daryn Glassbrook and Jason Williams.



### **JAMES F. SULZBY BOOK AWARD**

The Sulzby Award recognizes excellence in a book that has made the most significant contribution to greater knowledge and appreciation of Alabama history. Congratulations to the late Mary Elizabeth Johnson Huff and Carole Ann King for their book, *Alabama Quilts: Wilderness through World War II, 1682-1950*. Pictured are Carole Ann King and Justin Rudder.



## CLINTON JACKSON AND EVELYN COLEY RESEARCH GRANT

This graduate student research award supports new research on an Alabama-related topic. Congratulations to Christa Elise Kieffer, University of Kentucky, for her dissertation project, “I’m Afraid That He Ain’t Our Kind of Folks’: George Wallace, Happy Chandler, and the Making of Modern Conservatism.”



## VIRGINIA VAN DER VEER HAMILTON AWARD

This award is given for contributions to Alabama history which encourage joint endeavors and mutual understanding among avocational and professional historians. Congratulations to Peggy Towns of Decatur, Alabama! *Pictured are Peggy Towns and Laura Anderson.*


## SARAH WOOLFOLK WIGGINS DOCTORAL DISSERTATION IN ALABAMA HISTORY AWARD

Congratulations to Melissa Young, University of Alabama, for her dissertation, “Magic City Jews: Integration and Public Memory in Birmingham, Alabama, 1871-1911.” *Pictured are Ruth Truss and Melissa Young.*





## ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



### CALL FOR PAPERS

75th Annual Meeting  
Prattville, Alabama  
April 13-15, 2023

The Alabama Historical Association invites paper proposals to be given at its 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Prattville, Alabama, on April 13-15, 2023. This meeting is open to scholars, educators, public historians, students, local historians, and members of the general public who share an interest in the history of Alabama.

Proposals must include a one-page abstract of a **20-minute presentation** on original research in Alabama history and a brief curriculum vitae or résumé that includes the author's email address, postal address, telephone number, and academic or organizational affiliation (if any). Proposals should also indicate if the presenter will require any technical equipment (projectors, sound equipment, etc.)

**Proposals must be submitted electronically to [alabamahistory@gmail.com](mailto:alabamahistory@gmail.com) by October 1, 2022.**

All presenters are required to register for the conference and be members in good standing of the Alabama Historical Association by the time of the annual meeting. The committee gives preference to presenters who have not given papers at an annual meeting within the past three years.

**For more information on the proposal process, contact:**

Dr. Victoria Ott, Program Committee Chair, [vott@bsc.edu](mailto:vott@bsc.edu)

Dr. Mark Wilson, Secretary, [mwilson@auburn.edu](mailto:mwilson@auburn.edu), 334-844-6198

**For more information on the Alabama Historical Association, visit**

[www.alabamahistory.net](http://www.alabamahistory.net)



## 2023 NOMINATIONS

## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR 2023 AWARDS

*The following awards will be presented at the annual meeting on April 14, 2023.*

- The **Clinton Jackson Coley Book Award** goes to the best book or pamphlet focusing on local history, including but not limited to the history of an Alabama community, town or county, or any institution therein. Works published since January 2020 are eligible, and those written by non-professional historians are welcome. Nominations must be postmarked by December 31, 2022. For submission information, contact Emily Blejwas at [alabamafolklife@gmail.com](mailto:alabamafolklife@gmail.com).
- The **James Ray Kuykendall Award** honors a local historical society in Alabama for outstanding achievements and for significant contributions to a greater appreciation of community and state history. Any historical society is eligible to apply by January 15, 2023, provided it has not received the award in the last ten years. For a copy of the application/nomination form, visit [www.alabamahistory.net](http://www.alabamahistory.net) or Erik London at [erik.london@archives.alabama.gov](mailto:erik.london@archives.alabama.gov).
- The **Digital History Award** recognizes projects that deliver information on Alabama's past using the Internet and social media tools. Both large and small projects will be awarded, and a full description of the award and online submission form can be found at [www.alabamahistory.net](http://www.alabamahistory.net). The deadline for submission is January 15, 2023. For more information, contact Dana Chandler at [dchandler@tuskegee.edu](mailto:dchandler@tuskegee.edu)

For more information on all of these awards, visit [www.alabamahistory.net](http://www.alabamahistory.net).



# The AHA would like to thank the following individuals for their generous support!

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**75th Annual Meeting  
April 13-15, 2023  
Prattville, Alabama**

**Visit [www.alabamahistory.net](http://www.alabamahistory.net) for hotel room blocks and more information.**

