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The AHA Newsletter is designed and printed by
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Established 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 for more information.
Kudos goes to Main Street Wetumpka for organizing this year’s informative Pilgrimage. We had a fabulous time exploring Wetumpka’s rich history from the Fitzpatrick home, Jasmine Hills Gardens and Outdoor Museum, Fort Toulouse to the Tulotoma Snail Trail Alleyway Park, and all places in-between. Food, weather, accommodations, tours, and more were excellent. Thanks to the Mayor, City Council, County Commissioners, City Staff, and Volunteers, who made the Pilgrimage a great success in my hometown of Wetumpka. They made my city look good and showcased Wetumpka’s historical assets to the attendees.

Now let us turn our attention to Florence and the (Muscle Shoals sounds) located in Colbert County, Alabama, for the 73rd Annual Meeting, April 2-4, 2020, and its historical significance to our state’s history. Known throughout the music industry for its unique sound and the depth of its musical talent, Muscle Shoals leaves its mark on Alabama. In the song “Sweet Home Alabama” by Lynyrd Skynyrd, a verse states: “Muscle Shoals has got the Swampers.” However, we also want to pay tribute to significant people and the history of a few cities in the area, Sheffield, Tuscumbia, Florence, Leighton, St. Florian, Underwood-Petersville, Killen, Littleville, Town Creek and Russellville, Alabama. The W. C. Handy museum, Fame and other recording studios, Julia Tutwiler’s home, other historical homes, Indian Museum, and Pope’s Tavern are just a few of the historical sites that you will have a chance to explore in connection with the meeting.

We are pleased to welcome as our Friday night Banquet Keynote Speaker Dr. Jonathan Rieder, professor of sociology at Barnard College and Columbia University, who will discuss Muscle Shoals music and its relationship to civil rights and treat us with examples of various music genres in his discussion. For more information about Dr. Rieder, see page 22. We are happy to have him as our keynote speaker.

As a family historian, I have studied over the past the connection of families to each other and historical events surrounding them. I have come to realize that our families are all connected. No family lives isolated from their neighbors or communities, whatever the ethical makeup, and that is why we, as a history organization, must put forth a concerted effort to tell our communities diverse history. We are striving to continue to do this at our annual pilgrimages and meetings. Therefore, let me see you in Florence to have your input in keeping these efforts alive!

The Mariott Shoals Hotel & Conference Center will serve as the main venue for the meeting, so book your hotel room early and let’s have a good time exploring the diverse history of the area.

Frazine K. Taylor
President
Perched on the banks of the Tennessee River just below the once-formidable Muscle Shoals sits Florence, Alabama. Founded in 1818 by the Cypress Land Company, Florence quickly became a stable and thriving community. Crisscrossing transportation networks helped make Florence part of a much larger world. Andrew Jackson’s Military Road and the Natchez Trace connected the residents of Florence to Nashville, New Orleans, Chattanooga, and other points far distant from northwest Alabama. Alongside the town flows the Tennessee River, which, more than any other factor, has helped to shape Florence over the past two centuries.

Long before white settlers arrived in the area that would become Florence, many different American Indian communities had made their homes along the river’s banks for thousands of years. In the early 1700s, the Cherokees and Chickasaws came to dominate the area. European explorers realized the potential of the river to shape trade networks in the late seventeenth century, though large numbers of white traders did not push into the area until the 1780s. Permanent settlers followed the traders. By the early 1800s, much of the soil in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia had been stripped of its nutrients because of over cultivation. Farmers moved west into what would become Alabama and Mississippi, looking for new and more fertile lands. Soon the number of white settlers living illegally on native lands grew. The US government had purchased the land that would make up the state of Alabama from Georgia in 1803, but much of the land in the north officially remained under the control of the Cherokees and Chickasaws. In 1806, the Cherokees gave up most (but not all) of their lands between the Duck and Tennessee Rivers to the US government. However, the Chickasaws retained control of their land. This did not stop the flood of settlers from moving into Chickasaw territory; by 1810 between four to five thousand white settlers had moved into northwest Alabama. The government tried to stop this rush, sending in troops from 1809 to 1811 to drive all illegal settlers out. This attempt to prevent haphazard and illegal settlement was not successful in the long run. By 1816 the Chickasaws had also ceded most of their land to the US government.
giving the remainder up by 1819), and in 1817 the Cherokees relinquished the rest of their land.

While many members of the native communities remained in the area during the early years of settlement of northwest Alabama, the physical presence of native peoples on the landscape largely faded because of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. In fact, Tuscumbia Landing, across the river from Florence, became one of the major disembarkation points for the removal. After thousands of years living and farming in the river valley, the US government removed most native people to the Indian Territory in what is present-day Oklahoma.

The men and women who came to settle in what would become Florence recognized the value of both the land and the location, as had the people whom they displaced. In March 1818, the Cypress Land Company formed in Huntsville to organize the settlement of this important location. The members of the Cypress Land Company included Gens. Andrew Jackson and John Coffee (both heroes of the War of 1812), future Supreme Court Justice John McKinley, and Irish immigrant James Jackson. When advertising the sale of the lands, the Cypress Land Company told potential buyers that the new community would have a high chance of success, as “at the lower end of the Muscle Shoals, there must, in the natural course of things spring up one of the largest commercial towns in the interior of the southwestern section of the Union.”

By the time the company was formed in 1818, Andrew Jackson and Coffee already had surveyed potential locations for the new town. The area they chose had several advantages. First, Andrew Jackson’s Military Road ran through the prospective site, connecting Nashville to New Orleans. Second, the site sat about one hundred feet above the river, which Jackson and Coffee believed would make the community less susceptible to the “night airs” that caused so much sickness in low-lying communities (although disease-carrying mosquitos were the true culprits). Third, the site sat at the base of the Muscle Shoals, which ran for forty miles with an average drop of three and a half feet per mile. While the shoals made transport eastward along the river a challenge, to the northwest, the river connected Florence to the Ohio River, which then fed into the Mississippi River.

Unlike the founders of many frontier towns that sprang up in a haphazard fashion, the members of the Cypress Land Company carefully laid out the town out ahead of the first land sale. Coffee worked with Italian surveyor Ferdinand Sannoner and engineer Hunter Peel to design the new community. The design the men developed included large lots for residential and commercial purposes (almost half an acre in most cases), as well as land set aside for a college, a female seminary, a

Inset of John La Tourette’s 1837 “An Accurate Map of the State of Alabama and West Florida.” Courtesy of Alabama Department of Archives and History.
while cotton plantations and other agricultural endeavors did not dominate the economy of Florence as completely as they did in other parts of Alabama, plantations did appear on the landscape, and on those plantations enslaved persons labored. Enslaved people also lived within the city limits—working as both skilled and unskilled laborers. Dred Scott, whose Supreme Court case Dred Scott v. Sandford was heard in 1857 and was one of the main contributing factors to the start of the Civil War, was enslaved by the Blow family in Florence in the 1820s. One of the earliest African American churches in the state of Alabama, Church Springs Church, was founded in Florence in 1837. After the Civil War, the church would be the site of a school established by the Freedman’s Bureau, which would eventually transition into Burrell Normal School in 1903.

In 1855, the educational opportunities in Florence expanded dramatically when the state of Alabama chartered Florence Wesleyan University. The school, originally named LaGrange College—established by the Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, and Memphis Conference of the Methodist Church—had been located to the southeast of Florence in Leighton, Alabama. In 1830, the State of Alabama had issued the first charter for the establishment of a university to LaGrange College, making it the oldest chartered institution of higher learning in the state. In 1856, Wesleyan Hall, designed by architect Adolphus Heiman and constructed by enslaved people under the supervision of Florence builder and contractor Zebulon Pike Morrison, became the college’s permanent home. The move helped to turn Florence into the cultural center of northwest Alabama, drawing students and faculty from across the country. The school remained open in some form or another during the Civil War. After the war’s conclusion, the school, like many across the South, struggled financially. In 1871, the doors of Florence Wesleyan closed. The next year the State of Alabama took over the college, and Florence Normal School became the first teachers college south of the Ohio River. The school began to admit women in 1874, making it the first co-educational teacher training college in the country. The college continued to grow and change into the twentieth century. In 1929 the school became a four-year state teachers college, and in 1956 it began offering graduate courses in education. After a 1963 court order, the college began the process of integration, admitting Wendell Willkie Gunn as the school’s first African American student.

Early residents of Florence also encouraged industrial development. Unlike many antebellum southern communities, Florence had a decidedly industrial element to its economy. The banks of the creeks and the river provided perfect locations for factories and mills. Prior to the Civil War, Florence was home to the largest textile mill in the state of Alabama, the Globe Factory. There were also wool carding mills, gristmills, sawmills, a brick factory, tanneries, foundries, machine shops, and gun factories. While most of these industrial sites were destroyed during the Civil War, many rebuilt after the war’s conclusion. During the 1880s and 1890s, Florence underwent a second industrial revolution. The establishment of new companies—including the Florence Land and Mining Company; Florence Coal, Coke and Iron; and Florence Wagon Works—led one observer to state in 1888 that “Florence is the coming city of the south as to manufacturing.” As a result, the population exploded, jumping from 1,359 in 1880 to 6,012 in 1890. To facilitate further growth, the Tennessee River needed to be tamed. Left to nature, the river wreaked havoc during floods, and the shoals made transportation eastward practically impossible. One solution to getting around the Muscle Shoals was the Tuscumbia, Courtland & Decatur Railroad, the first rail line west of the Appalachian Mountains, completed in 1834. However, one railroad could not completely solve the problem.
Engineers determined that three canals would be necessary to make the river navigable. In 1831, the US government gave the State of Alabama 400,000 acres of land to sell to finance the construction of these canals. While the first phase of project was completed in 1836, the canal and lock system were full of problems. Boats could not enter the canal in times of low water, and the wooden lock gates warped or rotted. Construction, this time under the direction of the federal government, began anew in 1875. By 1888, the project still was not completed, and George Washington Goethals, who would later go on to oversee the construction of the Panama Canal, was brought in to complete the project. Goethals proved successful, and the new canal opened in 1890.

While the new canal provided a better route across the shoals, and another canal constructed at the Colbert Shoals in 1911 made the river easier to travel, the Muscle Shoals were not truly tamed until the construction of Wilson Dam. The building of Wilson Dam was part of the US government’s defense plan during World War I. As American leaders began to prepare for war, one of their main concerns was ready access to nitrates, necessary for both the production of fertilizer and gun powder. The bulk of the world’s supply of nitrates came from Chile, and leaders feared the supply could be cut off. Prior to WWI, the Germans had developed a process to manufacture nitrates by producing ammonia from coal. To produce nitrates in this manner required a great deal of power, and to generate this power, the US government had to build a hydroelectric dam on a powerful river. The Muscle Shoals were chosen as the best site for such a dam, and construction of the dam, two nitrate plants, and two power-generating steam plants were approved. Workers began to flood into Florence, Tuscumbia, and Sheffield in August 1918, taxing the resources of all the communities.

Construction of the dam began in 1918, not long before the armistice ending the war was signed. However, construction of the dam continued, lasting for six more years. When the dam was completed on September 12, 1925, it was the largest dam in the world. With the war long over, the looming question was what to do with the dam, which had cost taxpayers more than $130 million to build. In 1921, Henry Ford and Thomas Edison visited Florence to view the construction site and proposed using the power generated by the dam to turn the seventy-five-mile stretch between Florence and Huntsville into an industrial corridor. Ford’s proposal was denied by the US Senate, who worried about the repercussions of putting a publicly funded project in the hands of a private corporation.
In 1933, when Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt took office and founded the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), the dam gained a true purpose. Florence had suffered greatly during the early years of the Great Depression. The founding of the TVA on May 18, 1933 began to turn things around for the Shoals region and the Tennessee River Valley as a whole. The main goals of the TVA included the production of fertilizer, rural electrification, the eradication of malaria, and aiding the farmers of the Tennessee River Valley with learning more sustainable farming practices that would improve the quality of their land and help fight soil erosion. As part of the plan, more dams were to be constructed.

Work began on Wheeler Dam, sixteen miles north of Wilson Dam, on November 21, 1933. Construction of Pickwick Dam, located fifty-two miles below Wilson Dam, began on March 8, 1935. Other New Deal projects helped put the residents of Florence back to work and continue to benefit the community today. The Civilian Conservation Corps constructed trails and a pavilion on the TVA reservation. On the campus of UNA, the Works Progress Administration built Willingham Hall, the Stone Lodge, Collier Library, and the president’s home. Florence and the rest of the Shoals region found their economies slowly revived. Once again, the river proved central to the success of Florence.

As the Tennessee River flowed along its southern edge, the city of Florence continued to grow and develop throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Barges can be seen both above and below the dam, carrying goods to people along the Tennessee River far from Florence. The University of North Alabama plays a central role in the life of the community, still acting as a cultural center as it did in the nineteenth century when it began its life in Florence as Florence Wesleyan. The river still connects the city with a world far beyond its borders. A thriving downtown full of businesses, a public arts and museum system, a symphony, theaters, and a large public library show the dedication Florence residents have to supporting the same goals the founders of Florence had for the city they founded almost two hundred years ago. Florence truly is “Alabama’s Renaissance City.”

Carolyn M. Barske Crawford is the director of the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area and an affiliated faculty member in the UNA Department of History. Special thanks to Alabama Heritage for allowing us to reprint a version of the article that appeared in the Winter 2015 issue of AH.
VILLAGE ONE

U.S. Nitrate Plant Village One, or “Village One,” is a residential neighborhood in Sheffield, Alabama of both national and local historic interest regarding military history, landscape design, industry, and architecture.

Village One is a Garden City development designed by Mann & MacNeille Architects in 1917 to house the U.S. Army Ordnance Department overseeing the construction and operation of nearby U.S. Nitrate Plant Number One. Prior to entering World War 1, U.S. production of ammonium nitrate for munitions was in its infancy. The experimental Nitrate One was the first production facility in the country.

A unique landscape feature of Village One is the 9-acre commons and streetscape shaped like the Liberty Bell, the Liberty Bell being a prominent patriotic symbol during the Great War. Here the roadways come together to form the hanger, the bell, the clapper, and the crack of America’s most famous bell.

Village One houses were built in the craftsman bungalow style and range in 14 different sizes and styles plus flipped floorplans create variety in street views. Exteriors were clad in white stucco and roofed in matching terra cotta tile, giving the neighborhood the feel of a quaint European Village in Northwest Alabama. Being an occupied government facility from 1918 to 1949, much of Village One remains intact as it was originally constructed and designed.

Thursday’s 1:00 p.m. tour will begin at the Village One Schoolhouse.

Photos and guided tour courtesy of the The Village One School Foundation.
WILLIAM R. JULIAN HOME  circa 1820

104 North Dickson Street, Tuscumbia, Alabama

Open Thursday, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

The main part of this house was originally built near Cherokee and is said to have been floated on the Tennessee River to Tuscumbia Landing and pulled by oxen to its present site. The originally detached brick kitchen remains, now included as part of the house-structure by an enclosed passageway. The large fireplace with arm for cooking and the kitchen’s original brick floor are still in place. The structure is a two-story clapboard (referred to as an “I” house), put together with wooden pegs and square nails and floored with wide pine boards. The original woodwork is handmade and the foundation timbers and ceiling beams are hand hewn, fashioned from whole trees. The date of construction is not certain, but it is considered to be similar to early Virginia townhouses. William Reese Julian (1822-1889) lived in Tuscumbia from childhood. A veteran of the Mexican-American War and the Civil War, Julian served two terms as sheriff of Colbert County and postmaster of Tuscumbia. Julian was married to Elizabeth Melissa Croxton.

The home has been occupied by members of the Julian family since its location in Tuscumbia (seven generations), and it is currently owned by Richard and Ninon Parker, the great-great-granddaughter of Captain Julian.

—

ST. JOHN’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
300 N. Dickson Street, Tuscumbia

St. John’s will be open for tours from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. on Thursday.

St. John’s Episcopal Church in Tuscumbia is Alabama’s oldest church built in the Carpenter Gothic style. Parishioners first used the building in October 1852 and completed construction the following year. During the Civil War, federal troops used the structure to stable horses. In 1874, a tornado was responsible for extensive damages, and the building was reinforced with iron rods. Concrete buttresses were installed in 1956. The church contains original stained-glass windows, furnishing, and a pump organ. St. John’s is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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Photo courtesy of the George F. Landegger Collection of Alabama Photographs in Carol M. Highsmith’s America, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

Photo courtesy of Alabama Mountain Lakes, Charles Seifried.
Local planter George Washington Foster constructed Rogers Hall, originally named Courtview, in 1855 at the summit of Court Street. The Foster family occupied Courtview until 1900, when it became the home of Alabama Gov. Emmet O’Neal. In the 1920s, the residence was acquired by Thomas M. Rogers, Sr., and in 1948 by the university.

Authors of local histories will be on hand to sell and sign books. Please email alabamahistory@gmail.com if you have a local history book and would like to participate.

Photos of Rogers Hall courtesy of University of North Alabama.
BELLE MONT MANSION
1569 Cook Lane, Tuscumbia

Belle Mont Mansion, built circa 1828, is one of the few examples of Palladian-style houses in Alabama. This design is derived from the neoclassical architectural style of Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio. Although the original architect and builder remain unknown, the style of Belle Mont appears also to have been influenced by past U.S. President and architect Thomas Jefferson.

Belle Mont was originally built for Alexander Williams Mitchell, who grew up in Louisa County, Virginia. A graduate of the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, he was a physician, planter, and an early elected official of Franklin (present-day Colbert) County, where he settled around 1820 and built the house as the centerpiece of his large cotton plantation. In 1832, Mitchell put Belle Mont up for sale and eventually moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. An advertisement appearing in a Huntsville newspaper described “a brick dwelling house,” 76 feet across the front, along with “all the necessary houses.” The advertisement also noted Belle Mont’s 1,760 acres which were planted in clover, grass, corn, and cotton and included an orchard. Belle Mont was purchased from Dr. Mitchell by Isaac and Catherine Winston, whose family held the house and property for more than a century.

The Alabama Historical Commission owns Belle Mont, and the Colbert County Historical Landmarks Foundation, Inc. operates the site.

FAME STUDIOS
603 East Avalon Avenue, Muscle Shoals

NOTE: Guided tour available at 4 pm on Friday, but tour admission is not included in the AHA registration fee. Please be prepared to pay the $10 admission fee at the door.

Florence Alabama Music Enterprises (FAME) Recording Studios was established in 1959 by producer Rick Hall and was once the home of the session musician group the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section. FAME played a large role in creating the “Muscle Shoals sound” of country, blues, rock, and soul that was popularized by producer Rick Hall, the list of artists who have recorded with FAME is an index to American music history: Aretha Franklin, Clarence Carter, Little Richard, Etta James, Otis Redding, the Osmonds, Jerry Reed, Alabama, Mac Davis, the Gatlin Brothers, Bobbie Gentry, The Gregg Allman Band, Third Day, Vince Gill, Alison Krauss, John Paul White, St. Paul & the Broken Bones, Jason Isbell, and the Civil Wars, just to name a few. For Saturday tour times, visit www.famestudios.com.

Exterior photo courtesy of FAME Studios; Interior photo courtesy of Chris Granger.
INDIAN MOUND AND MUSEUM
1028 South Court Street, Florence

The Indian Mound and Museum preserves the site of an ancient earthen mound built by Native Americans of the Woodland Period, approximately 2,000 years ago. The mound is located on the banks of the Tennessee River in Florence, and is the largest Indian mound in the Tennessee River Valley.

The mound is an earthen four-sided structure with a base measuring 310 by 230 feet and a summit that rises 43 feet and measures approximately 145 by 95 feet on top. The mound was once surrounded by an earthen wall, which likely reached 12 to 15 feet high. The first historical mention of the mound is found on an 1818 map created by Ferdinand Sannoner, Hunter Peel, and Gen. John Coffee when laying out the city of Florence. In 1968, the city of Florence established the Indian Mound Museum adjacent to the site to exhibit artifacts recovered during archaeological excavations of the mound. The museum closed in March 2015 and was replaced with a much larger facility in 2017.


KARNSER-KENNEDY HOUSE
301 N. Pine Street, Florence

The Karsner-Kennedy House was constructed from 1828 to 1831 for Benjamin F. Karsner (1800-1897), a Justice of the Peace, Tax Assessor, and Commission Merchant of Florence. The two-story Federal Style cottage, uncommon to the area, was situated on Lot No. 7 according to the original plat of Florence as drawn by the Cypress Land Company. The house had 13-inch brick load-bearing exterior walls, broad pine plank floors and wood ceiling and roof framing. The main chimney was an integral part of the wall and not projected on the exterior. The house was remodeled several times before complete restoration to its original style in the early 1970s. In all modifications, the original structure of brick and wood remained basically unchanged. Throughout its long history, the house has stood as one of the finest examples of Federal Style domestic architecture in the Tennessee Valley. In 1971, it became the second local entry, after Wilson Dam, and the 17th Alabama entry to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Downtown Florence Alliance maintains the house today.

Photo courtesy of Downtown Florence Alliance.
FRIDAY AFTERNOON TOURS

MUSCLE SHOALS SOUND STUDIO
3614 Jackson Highway, Sheffield

NOTE: Guided tours available every half hour until 3:30 p.m. on Friday afternoon, but tour admission is not included in the AHA registration fee. Please be prepared to pay the $15 admission fee at the door.

The Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section opened the Muscle Shoals Sound Studio in 1969, the only recording studio owned and operated by the session musicians. Known as “The Swampers,” the Studio’s first release was Cher’s debut solo album titled 3614 Jackson Highway, and the cover features the title superimposed over the façade of the building, inspiring the now iconic sign. The Studio remained at the Jackson Highway location for nine years, and during that time, the Swampers played on over 200 albums, with over 75 RIAA Gold and Platinum Records, and hundreds of hit songs with artists Lynyrd Skynyrd, Bob Dylan, Duane Allman, Simon & Garfunkel, Bob Seger, Rod Stewart, Willie Nelson and more. By 1978, the Studio moved to a larger building on Alabama Avenue in Sheffield, and the original location became a retail facility before falling into disrepair. A local citizen reopened the original building as a museum and fully-functioning studio in the early 2000s, and the Muscle Shoals Music Foundation acquired the building in 2013 for the purpose of restoration.

Photo courtesy of Debbie Wilson, Muscle Shoals Sound Studio.

POPE’S TAVERN MUSEUM
203 Hermitage Drive, Florence

Pope’s Tavern Museum is housed in a building that dates back to the early 1800s. According to legend, Christopher Cheatham built and operated a tavern on this site for Leroy Pope in 1811, seven years before the founding of Florence. During the Civil War the house was used as a hospital by Union and Confederate armies. Thirty-two soldiers died in the house and were buried in the old Florence Cemetery.

Felix Grundy Lambeth, a postmaster in Florence, bought the house in 1874. It was occupied by the Lambeth family until 1965. When rumors circulated that the house was to be demolished, the Chamber of Commerce purchased the property and gave it to the City of Florence. The deed stipulated the city would maintain and preserve the building as a historic site and that it would be used as a museum. After extensive renovations of the building by the city and an extensive search for appropriate artifacts, the Pope’s Tavern Museum was opened to the public in 1968.

Photos courtesy Christi Williams Britten.
ROSENBAUM HOUSE
601 Riverview Drive, Florence

Frank Lloyd Wright designed this house built for Stanley and Mildred Rosenbaum in 1939, and according to the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, “it remains one of the purest examples of the Usonian style, which Wright would spend much of his later career refining.” The house is designed in a characteristic L-shape, is made from natural materials – largely cypress wood, brick and glass – and is capped by cantilevered roofs that cover both the living spaces and the adjoining carport. The house does not contain a basement or attic, and the heating system is embedded in the concrete floor to provide radiant heat. The Rosenbaum family remained the sole occupant until 1999, when they donated the house to the City of Florence, and it remains the only Wright house in the southeast open to the public. www.wrightinalabama.com

Photos courtesy Christi Williams Britten
**W.C. HANDY BIRTHPLACE, MUSEUM, AND LIBRARY**

620 W. College Street, Florence

**NOTE:** $14 admission fee is not included in the AHA registration. Please be prepared to pay at door. Museum closes at 4 pm.

The W.C. Handy cabin, museum, and library is dedicated to one of Florence’s most famous sons, the “Father of the Blues.” William Christopher Handy, was born in Florence in 1873 in a simple cabin at this site that now houses a large collection of his personal papers, memorabilia and artifacts donated before his death in 1958. Born with a natural musical bent—as a boy, he visualized birdcalls as notes on a scale. Handy went on to compose such well-known blues jewels as “St. Louis Blues,” “Beale Street Blues,” and “Memphis Blues.” Florence hosts an annual week-long W.C. Handy Music Festival, which features concerts, lectures, and events in honor of Handy. www.wchandymuseum.org

**WZZA RADIO STATION**

1570 Woodmont Drive, Tuscumbia

Bob Carl and Odessa Bailey launched WZZA Radio, the first African American-owned radio station in the Shoals, on July 4, 1972, and the station continues to reach approximately 45,000 listeners each day. Mr. Bailey was known for many “firsts,” including one of the first three African-American policeman in Huntsville; the first African American chief of police of Triana; the first African-American to have a television talk show in the Shoals; and the first President of the Shoals Areas Business Association. Knowns as “Soul of the Shoals,” WZZA Radio filled a void in broadcasting and remains the only locally owned station with a primarily African American audience in Northwest Alabama. Unique historical memorabilia collected throughout the station’s history will be on display as part of the facility tour. To listen to WZZA Radio online, visit www.wzzaradio.com.
THURSDAY, APRIL 2

1:00 p.m.  Guided Tour of “Village One,” U.S. Nitrate Plant Village
200 Chickamauga St., Sheffield, AL 35660

2:30 p.m.  Open House: Julian House and St. John’s Episcopal Church
Open until 4:30 p.m.

6:00 p.m.  Reception and Local History Book Signing
Rogers Hall, University of North Alabama
500 Court Street, Florence

FRIDAY, APRIL 3

Marriott Shoals Conference Center
10 Hightower Place, Florence, Alabama

8:00 a.m.  Registration, Coffee, Book Sales

9:00 a.m.  General Session

10:45 a.m.  Concurrent Sessions
Session A
  “‘A Mind to Be Heard’: Early Alabama Suffragist Frances Griffin”
Scotty Kirkland, Alabama Department of Archives and History

  “‘To Make ‘Sissies’ of American Men’: Anti-Suffrage Propaganda in Alabama, 1919-1920”
Alex Colvin, Alabama Department of Archives and History

  “‘One of the ‘Slickest Little Suffragists’ that Ever Came Back South’: Scottie McKenzie Frasier and the Wiregrass Suffrage Movement”
Hayden McDaniel, Alabama Department of Archives and History

Session B
  “The Macon County Health Center: Black Women, Hunger, and Health Activism, 1967-1972”
Jill Cooley, Minnesota State University

  “Combatting Nature: The Alabama National Guard in the Great Depression and World War II”
Chris Rein, Air University Press, Maxwell Airforce Base

  “George Wallace, Segregation, and the Alabama Junior College System in Jefferson County”
Matthew West, Lawson State Community College
Session C
• “A Capitol in the Wilderness: Historical Archaeology at Alabama’s First State House”
  Eric Sipes, Alabama Historical Commission and Linda Derry, Old Cahawba Park
• “Alabama’s Historic Byler Road”
  Joel Sanford Mize, Tuscumbia
• “Whose Land? Whose Artifacts? Looting and Collecting in the Shoals”
  Brian Murphy, Florence Arts and Museums

Session D
• “Managing and Maintaining a Successful Historic Marker Program”
  Kerry Dunaway, Clarke County Historical Museum
• “Context Matters: Monuments, Memorials, and Memory in Limestone County, Alabama”
  Rebekah Davis, Limestone County Archives
• “Houston County Monuments and Memorials”
  Marty Olliff, The Wiregrass Archives, Troy University Dothan

Noon Lunch
1:00 - 4:30 p.m. Tours
6:00 p.m. Cash Bar
7:00 p.m. Annual Awards Banquet

SATURDAY, APRIL 4
8:00 a.m. Registration, Coffee, Book Sales
8:30 a.m. “Archivists and Artifacts from the Tennessee River Valley Region”
  • Kari Hallford, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Moderator
  • Dakota Cotton, Athens State University
  • Joyce Fedeczko, International Fertilizer Development Center
  • Harvey Long, State Black Archives, Research Center, and Museum, Alabama A&M University
  • Rebekah Davis, Limestone County Archives
9:30 a.m. General Session
10:30 a.m. Concurrent Sessions

Session A
• “Old Families of Florence: James Jackson, George Foster, and Alexander Coffee”
  Kayla Scott, Alabama Department of Archives and History
• “Bossie O’Brien Hundley”
  Monica Tapper, Wallace Community College Selma
• “Prohibition in Alabama”
  Matthew Downs, University of Mobile

Session B
• “Spiritual Journey: From Slavery to Hall of Fame”
  Josephine Bolling McCall, Montgomery
• “The Learned Slave”
  Christopher McIlwain, Tuscaloosa
• “Emmor Crew and the Opelika Monorail”
  Delos Hughes, Washington & Lee University

Session C
• “Daily Dreams: Alabama’s ‘Modern Girl’ Defines Herself”
  Haley Aaron, Alabama Department of Archives and History
• “Mollie Dowd: Champion of Alabama Working Women”
  Debbie Pendleton, Montgomery
• “Lelia Seton Wilder Edmundson: 1922 Candidate for the 8th Congressional District and Women’s Voting Pioneer”
  Annette Norris Bradford, Jackson County Historical Association; John Allison, Morgan County Archives

Session D
• “The Cotton Kingdom: ‘African and Native Americans and the Development of the Mississippi Territory’”
  Joseph Lee, Black Heritage Council, Alabama Historical Commission
• “The Impact of Dr. Booker T. Washington on Education in Rural South Macon County, Alabama”
  Lateefah Muhammad, Tuskegee
• “Identifying the Unfinished: Using Civil Rights Geographic Information Systems to Move from Study to Action in Alabama’s Black Belt”
  Robert White and Ram Alagan, Alabama State University

11:45 a.m. Annual Luncheon
Presidential Address by Frazine Taylor
Thursday Afternoon Pre-Meeting Tours:

1. Village One
   200 Chickamauga Street, Sheffield
   Tour at 1 o’clock pm

2. Julian House
   104 N. Dickson Street, Tuscumbia
   Tours between 2:30 and 4:30 pm

3. St. John Episcopal Church
   300 N. Dickson Street, Tuscumbia
   Tours between 2:30 and 4:30 pm

Thursday Evening Reception:

4. Rogers Hall
   University of North Alabama
   500 Court Street, Florence

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

Friday Afternoon Tours:

1028 S. Court St, Florence

Pope’s Tavern
203 Hermitage Dr, Florence

Rosenbaum House
601 Riverview Dr, Florence

Kennedy-Karsner House
303 N. Pine St, Florence

WZZA Radio
1570 Woodmont Dr, Tuscumbia

Belle Mont Mansion
1569 Cook Lane, Tuscumbia

Extra BONUS Tours:
(Pay Upon Arrival)

Indian Mound Museum
3614 Jackson Highway, Sheffield

FAME Studios
603 Avalon Ave, Muscle Shoals

WC Handy Birthplace, Museum & Library
620 W. College St, Florence

Scan this QR code for access to the Google Map. Please don’t rely on the scale of this map for navigation.
Dr. Carolyn M. Barske Crawford will provide an overview of Florence, Alabama at the general session on Friday morning. Crawford is the director of the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area and an affiliated faculty member in the UNA Department of History. Dr. Dr. Barske Crawford’s recent work includes The Tennessee River and Northwest Alabama, co-authored with Florence Indian Mound curator Brian Murphy. She has collaborated on many projects focused on the history of northwest Alabama, including Hidden Spaces, which uses photography and historical research to examine the stories of lesser-known locations across northwest Alabama, and the Roots of American Music Trail, which documents the rich musical heritage of the region. Dr. Barske Crawford teaches courses in historical administration, exhibit design, local history, Native American history, and co-leads a study abroad trip to Scotland.

Dr. Jonathan Rieder will discuss the civil rights legacy of the Shoals music tradition at the annual awards banquet on Friday evening. Jonathan Rieder is a professor of sociology at Barnard College and Columbia University and the author most recently of two acclaimed books on Dr. King, Gospel of Freedom: Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Letter From Birmingham Jail and the Struggle That Changed a Nation and The Word of the Lord is upon Me: The Righteous Performance of Martin Luther King, Jr. He has discussed his work on Dr. King on The Tavis Smiley Show, The Charlie Rose Show, CNN.com, the BBC, and All Things Considered and other NPR venues, as well as Australian and Canadian radio. His current project studies the transformation of rhythm and blues into soul music.
ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
HISTORICAL MARKERS ERECTED IN 2019

Text of markers will be published in the April 2020 issue of The Alabama Review.

- Alabama’s First Peanut Oil Mill (Henry County)
- Aus-Kel Springs (Geneva County)
- Austinville High School (Morgan County)
- Carver Elementary School (Morgan)
- Chilton County History (Chilton County)
- Church Street Community (Madison County)
- Ebenezer Baptist Church (Chilton County)
- Ebenezer Church/The Gordon Family (Jackson County)
- Enon Baptist Church (Lawrence County)
- First Southern Baptist Church (Colbert)
- Flat Rock High School (Jackson County)
- Goshen High School (Pike County)
- Charles Oscar Harris (Montgomery County)
- Holly Pond School (Cullman County)
- Leighton United Methodist Church (Colbert)
- William Moore, Freedom Walker (Etowah County)
- Thomas McAdory Owen (Jefferson County)
- Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist Church (Montgomery County)
- Prestwick High School/Prestwick Post Office (Washington County)
- Rebirth of Triana, Alabama (Madison County)
- St. Stephen Primitive Baptist Church (Morgan County)
- Tallapoosa County High School (Tallapoosa County)
- Dr. Moddie Daniel Taylor (Conecuh County)
- Bill Traylor (Montgomery County)
SAVE THE DATE!

Fall Pilgrimage to Historic Blakely State Park
October 2-3, 2020

Reserve a hotel room at the Spanish Fort Courtyard Marriott or Fairfield Inn & Suites. Information available at www.alabamahistory.net