



Sample Historical Marker Texts

Below are several different examples of markers commemorating events, places, and people. Text for more than 600 AHA-sponsored markers can be found, arranged by county, on the AHA website [link].

CHURCHES and SYNAGOGUES

First Baptist Church Holly Pond

First Baptist Church of Holly Pond was organized in 1885 as Holly Pond Missionary Baptist Church. Charter members included the families of P. R. Tennison, William Jefferson Hazelwood, Bill House, Seaborn Shaw, and Isaac Barnett. Over the course of the church's life, the congregation worshipped in three different locations and five different sanctuaries. The first, destroyed by fire in 1895, was a wood-framed structure located in the triangle formed by HWY 278 and Blountsville Road. The second, destroyed by a wind storm in 1914, was a wood-framed building located 1/10 mile west of the first site. The third sanctuary was white, wood-framed, and located at the triangle formed by HWY 278 and New Hope Road, as was the fourth, a brick, Georgia Colonial structure built in 1939. The last was built on this site in 1978, the same year the church's name was changed to First Baptist. Many preachers and missionaries have been sent from here to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Dedicated October 2015 on the occasion of the church's 130th anniversary.

Sponsored by the Holly Pond Historical Society

[2015: Highway 278, Holly Pond]

Temple B'nai Sholom

Huntsville's first Jewish citizens arrived during the 1840's. Congregation B'nai Sholom ("Sons of Peace") was founded July 30, 1876 by 32 families.

They affiliated in 1877 with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Reform Movement. Construction of the Temple began in 1898, and it was dedicated on November 26, 1899. Chairman of the Building Committee was Isaac Schiffman. Architecture is primarily of the Romanesque Revival style, with influences of the Renaissance Revival in the west front gable. The Temple was designed by architect R.H. Hunt of Chattanooga. Extensive restoration was completed in 1994. Temple B'nai Sholom is the oldest synagogue in Alabama in continuous use.

[1997: Clinton Ave. at Lincoln St., Huntsville]

BUILDINGS

Alabama Department of Archives and History

In 1901, Alabama created the first state-funded, independent archival and historical agency in the United States. Its founding director, attorney Thomas McAdory Owen, combed the state to acquire and preserve both public and private materials that document Alabama's past from the prehistoric period forward. The agency has since continued Owen's mission, preserving the records that guarantee the rights of citizens and serve as the basis for educational programs for schools and the general public. Originally housed in the State Capitol, the agency moved to this building upon its completion in 1940. Generations of Alabamians and visitors from around the world have come here to explore the state's rich history and its many contributions to the history of the nation.

-----REVERSE-----

Archives and War Memorial Building

A monumental structure to house the Department of Archives and History was envisioned at the close of World War I and again in a 1930 Olmsted Brothers plan for the Capitol Complex, but inadequate resources delayed its construction. In 1937, Marie Bankhead Owen, second director of the Archives, secured New Deal funds to build the central portion of a design by architect William T. Warren of Birmingham. The building opened to national acclaim in 1940 and was dedicated as the state's World War I memorial. The addition of an east wing in 1974 and a west wing in 2005 fulfilled Warren's vision for the complete structure. In 2014, the state dedicated an expanded and updated Museum of Alabama on the second floor.

[2015: 624 Washington Avenue, Montgomery]

The LeRoy Pope Mansion, 1814

During the original Madison County Land Sales of 1809, LeRoy Pope of Petersburg, GA, secured among other purchases a majority of Section 36, Township 3, Range 1 West, the site of the future town of Twickenham, as Huntsville was originally known. Pope created Poplar Grove Plantation on this site and erected his home in 1814 in time to entertain Gen. Andrew Jackson on his return from the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. The residence was among the earliest brick structures in Alabama. Inherited by his son, William H. Pope, the mansion was sold in 1848 to Dr. Charles Hays Patton, who commissioned George Steele to add the handsome Classical Revival portico. Nearby during the Civil War, Federal forces built an earthen breastwork to defend the eastern approaches to the city.

[1998: Echols Ave. at Adams St., Huntsville]

PEOPLE

Governor William Calvin Oates

Born in Pike County into a poor Alabama family in 1835, Oates practiced law in Abbeville when the War began. Elected Captain of the "Henry Pioneers," Co. G, 15th Alabama Infantry. He saw service in Jackson's Corps and was appointed Colonel of the 15th Regiment in 1863. Given command of the 48th Alabama infantry in July 1864, Oates' right arm was shattered by a mini ball at Petersburg in August 1864. He later served Alabama as a legislator, Congressman, and Governor. Oates served stateside as a Brigadier General, USV in the Spanish-American War.

-----REVERSE-----

Colonel W. C. Oates, CSA at Gettysburg

July 2, 1863: General Law's Alabama Brigade of Longstreet's Corps arrived on the field, having marched 23 miles in 11 hours. The 15th Alabama Regiment commanded by Oates became the extreme right flank of Lee's Army. It made five charges up Little Round Top against withering fire of the enemy and engaged in fierce hand-to-hand combat with Col. Joshua Chamberlain's 20th Maine Regiment and other Federal troops before being driven off the hill by a final desperate bayonet charge from the high ground against its flank and rear. Oates always attributed his regiment's failure to take its objective on the shortage of water and fatigue from the forced march.

[1994: 829 Columbus Street, Montgomery, 32.38472 N 86.29429 W]

HISTORIC EVENTS

Desegregation at Auburn

The first African American student entered the library to register at Auburn University at this site. Acting on a court order, Auburn president Ralph Brown Draughon accepted the application of Harold Franklin as the first African American student in 1963. Hoping to avoid conflicts as had occurred during the desegregation of other universities across the South, Draughon scheduled the registration for Saturday, Jan. 4, 1964, and closed the campus to the public. University officials and FBI agents met Franklin at the nearby Auburn Methodist Church to escort him to campus. State troopers sent by Governor George Wallace blocked their access, forcing Franklin to proceed alone and unprotected. Some protesters assembled nearby, but no violence occurred and registration was concluded peacefully. A century of institutional segregation effectively ended that day, clearing the path for other African American students to enroll and attend Auburn University.

Erected to commemorate 50 years of desegregation at Auburn University.

[2015: Draughon Library, Auburn]

Rousseau's Raid

Along Stow Ferry Road on July 16, 1864, a column of five federal cavalry regiments led by Major General Lovell H. Rousseau passed on their way to destroy the railroad at Opelika. Captain Thomas A. Elkin of the 5th Kentucky Cavalry in the lead detachment rode into Youngsville about 6:00 P.M. on the 16th. The Yankees scavenged and burned four tax-in-kind warehouses containing grain, cornmeal, and bacon.

Crossing the Tallapoosa River in the darkness on the 16th, Col. William D. Hamilton of the 9th Ohio recalled: "Ever after we referred to the crossing of that river in the night with shudders. . . unpleasant as that of any battle."

[Tallapoosa County: 1999]