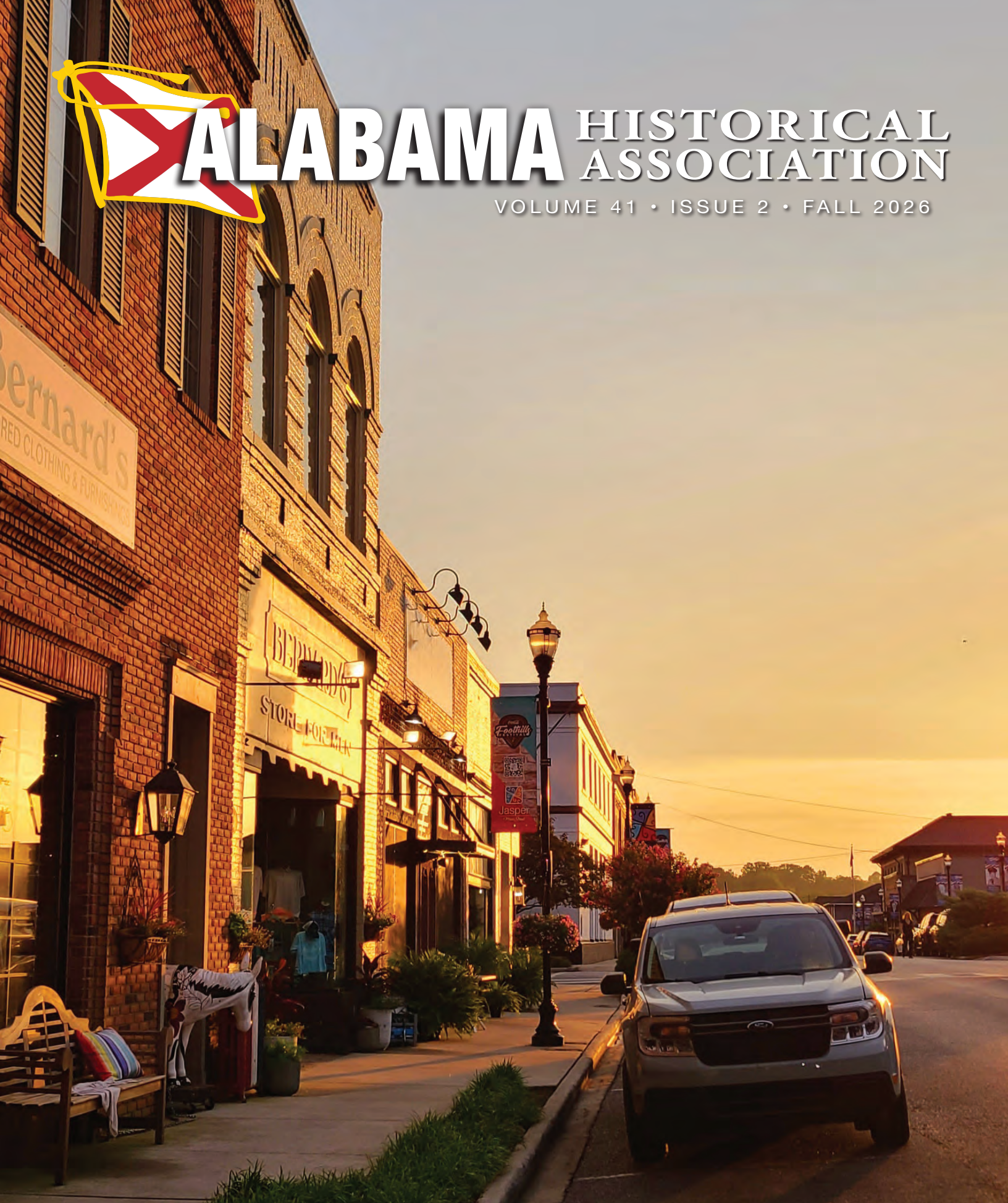




ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 41 • ISSUE 2 • FALL 2026



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Cover photo courtesy of Jasper Main Street

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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 for more information.



Laura N. Hill

If this newsletter is your introduction to the Alabama Historical Association, Welcome! We hope you are intrigued by what you read and decide to attend the 2026 Fall Pilgrimage. The activities described in this issue have been made possible by generous Jasper residents excited to highlight some of what makes them proud of the city. I am grateful that Paul Kennedy, Mimi Hudson, Mike Putman, and Renae Wilson led the planning team and made great things happen. In addition to providing an intriguing introduction to Walker County's largest community, I believe the Jasper pilgrimage will explain why AHA events appeal to people drawn to the histories of Alabama's communities and the stories of the people, from all walks of life, who have shaped the state's history. For those of you who are already a member of the AHA community, please mark your calendar now. Oh, and invite a friend, or two, to spend a day with you in Jasper and the natural beauty of Walker County.

My first AHA meeting was in my hometown, Opelika. There I met an enthusiastic couple traveling the state to

verify the locations of existing AHA historical markers, was regaled by a first-hand account of an event involving escaped German POWs and a noise in the night, and was introduced to the stunning art of Roderick MacKenzie. The interesting and varied programs, welcoming people, and opportunities to visit locations across the state have kept me involved in the organization for close to 20 years. I strongly suspect those elements of AHA are what appeal to most of the membership year after year. The opportunity to see and learn interesting tidbits of Alabama history and culture excites us. The friendships formed while touring sites and learning new stories are an unexpected bonus.

If you are someone who has spent more than an hour or two in pages of county history, stops to read historic markers, makes a U-turn to get a closer look at an old cemetery, or goes to local events featuring speakers on historical events, then it is highly likely that the offerings of the Alabama Historical Association will appeal to you. Join us for the activities in Jasper and experience the celebration of our state for yourself. There are AHA members who are looking forward to meeting you.

Laura N. Hill



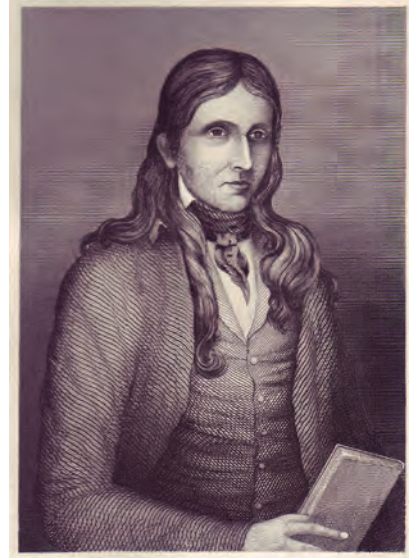
Jasper

A HISTORY OF INDUSTRY, ICONS, AND HEROES

By Emma Walls

Located in the heart of Walker County, Alabama, the town of Jasper is home to stunning trails and a charming downtown district, and it is a regional hotspot for freshwater fishing. While Jasper is a modern-day hub for sightseeing and entertainment, the town's rich history and cultural output make it one of the most storied and significant areas in the state. From booming industries to civil servant heroes and Hollywood stars, Jasper's impact on Alabama and the nation at large shapes an essential part of the state's heritage.

Legend has it that evangelist Lorenzo Dow established a trading post on the bank of Town Creek during the Revolutionary Era in a region that would later become Jasper. Dow's trading post invited new European settlers to pass through the area that the Choctaw and Muscogee (Creek) Nations already called home. As a gospelier, Dow sought to convert the local Native American population to Christianity, but his wandering nature quickly compelled Dow to leave the trading post in new hands, where it was believed to have been managed as a U.S. Government Indian



Portrait of Lorenzo Dow. Photo courtesy of the Encyclopedia of Alabama

Agency. The post operated under new management until the Indian Removal Act of 1830 forcibly relocated Native American tribes.

Local folklore holds that Chief Okachano was the last Creek chief in

the area and that he lamented this cruel fate to some of the early settlers just before he headed West on the Trail of Tears. By the time of the displacement of the Choctaws and the Creeks, the town of Jasper

had already been established in 1822 near the site of the original trading post. Prior to the arrival of settlers within the area of Jasper, and before their colonial influence, the region was covered with lush forests of timber. The local timber industry began to grow as settlers funneled into the area, and timber harvesting and processing soon proved to be a lucrative venture within Walker County. While operations were small-scale, the scope of production went far beyond Walker County—logs harvested in the area were even floated down the Black Warrior River to markets in Tuscaloosa. Many of the historic buildings of downtown Jasper were built using locally-sourced wood;



Two men and their lumber truck in North Alabama, circa 1920.

Photo courtesy of Pat Morrison

these storied structures are still available to view today, and they attest to the industry's long-standing influence and heritage.

As railroads began to expand across America and into the South, Walker County immediately began to reap the benefits of the railways. In the late 1800s, the development of railroads into Walker County transformed the region entirely; as coal mining and the timber industry thrived, the efficient transportation that railways provided allowed for the region's production, profits, and population to flourish. In 1886, Jasper had just 200 residents—by 1890, that number had increased to more than 3,000. New businesses and workers poured into the area, and Jasper quickly gained significant prosperity. An 1891 edition of *The Mountain Eagle* reported that Jasper was home to “six coal mines, two sandstone quarries, 400 coke ovens, one foundry and machine shop, two sawmills, one brick works, four hotels, and two banks.”



Coal mule sculpture created by artist Kris Mersch for the Downtown Jasper Sculpture Trail. Photo courtesy of Guido Besserer

Once coal was first discovered by settlers in Walker County in the 1820s, it wasn't long before word of the resource's abundance spread, and incomers in search of coal began to pour into the region. Railways allowed large corporations to move into the area, industrialize coal mining and processing, and cause local economies to subsequently flourish. The town of Jasper was officially incorporated in 1887, with the coal mining industry attracting greater and grander growth within the region. Early mining within Walker County built the area's economy, infrastructure, and profound heritage that is still visible as you walk the streets of Jasper.

A history of Jasper's coal industry would not be complete without the mention of the many mules used in the area's coal mining operations. Dependable due to their small size, ability to haul coal, and skill for navigating tight spaces within mines, mules were routinely used in the process of coal mining. In 2011, the Walker County Arts Alliance introduced a community art project, launched to honor the countless mules used for coal mining within the region for their contributions to the success of Walker County. Since the project's launch, 80 statues of mules have been installed throughout Walker County, with around 30 of these statues located in downtown Jasper.

Clarence “Professor” White, a native of Selma, Alabama, was not only an ambitious trailblazer for Walker County, he was a champion for equality and inclusion during one of the most critical periods of American history. In his early years, White was a spirited athlete and member of the 1936 Black National Championship football team. In the same year, White joined the segregated Walker County Training School



Coal workers in Walker County, circa 1927. Photo courtesy of Pat Morrison



Portrait of Clarence White, circa 1973. Photo courtesy of the Bankhead House & Heritage Center

as the head football and basketball coach. He served as a coach at Walker County Training School, where his skillful leadership earned the school 13 consecutive winning seasons. White parted from the

school after 13 years to serve in World War II, and he returned to the school following his term of service to continue coaching and to serve as the school's principal. He maintained these positions with the school until its closure in 1969.

While White's determination and leadership thrived under stadium lights and within the classroom, he was simultaneously working to build a better future for underrepresented communities in mid-20th century Alabama. White served as commander of the Black American Legion from 1947 until the Legion disbanded in 1962. He was the first president of the Black Athletic Association in Alabama, and, in 1954, White founded the first youth program for African American children

Portrait of Carl Elliott. Photo courtesy of the Bankhead House & Heritage Center

in Walker County. He was an ardent champion for civil rights, and his efforts helped to expand voting access for African American citizens in Walker County. Additionally, in 1958, White played a major role in the integration of Walker College, and he expanded educational access throughout the community. His passionate commitment to equality, leadership, and the betterment of the community gave a voice to those who were previously silenced, and paved the way for the Walker County of today.

Born on December 20, 1913, in Jasper, Alabama, congressman Carl Atwood Elliott was a leading champion in expanding education access and equality throughout America. Serving in the U.S. Congress from 1949 to 1965, Elliott was dedicated to establishing policy changes that expanded our nation's literacy rates, federal funding for schools and other programs, and access to education. Elliott worked to pass the Library



Services Act of 1956, which helped to develop access to rural libraries across America. The Act also facilitated the establishment of "bookmobiles" throughout the country, which were vehicles that worked as small-scale, moving libraries that distributed books to remote areas without access to a public library. Elliott also helped to pass the National Defense Education Act of 1958, which focused on providing federal funding to remove financial barriers to accessing education. He advocated for additional



Clarence White, pictured in the back row on the far left, with one of his baseball teams. Photo courtesy of the Bankhead House & Heritage Center

Portrait of William Bankhead. Photo courtesy of Harris & Ewing



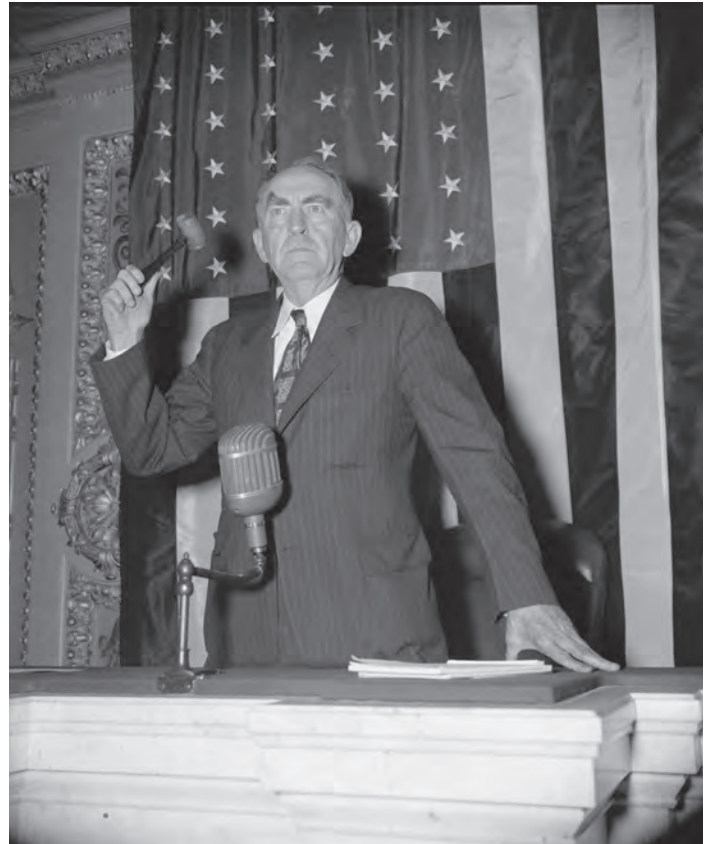
funding for public schools, as well as forgiving student loan debts. Elliott's efforts to expand educational programs across the country made a substantial impact on our nation, and his legacy is still visible within schools, libraries, and homes across America.

William Brockman Bankhead, born in Lamar County, Alabama, served as the 42nd Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1936 to 1940 under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Hailing from a prominent, powerful family, Bankhead was the son of John Hollis Bankhead Sr., who served in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, and the brother of John Hollis Bankhead II, who was elected to the U.S. Senate three times. Furthermore, his daughter, Tallulah Bankhead, was an awarded stage and screen actress with a profound legacy that is still celebrated today.

Bankhead's former home, located in Jasper, now stands as a historic hub for Walker County. Built in 1924 by Bankhead, the Bankhead House & Heritage Center serves as a cultural foundation for visitors to learn more about the Bankhead's and Jasper's histories.

Born on December 17, 1928, beloved actor George Lindsey's roots were grown right in Walker County, Alabama. Lindsey was raised in Jasper, where he graduated from Walker County High School in 1946. While attending college at (what is now known as) the University of North Alabama, Lindsey discovered his love for drama, comedy, and storytelling—this serendipitous encounter with the arts led Lindsey to pursue a career in acting, where his talent and charisma quickly transformed him into a household name. Starring in the role of "Goober Pyle" on *The Andy Griffith Show*, the charming personality of Lindsey's character endeared him to audiences nationwide. Lindsey's fame followed him onto the variety show *Hee Haw*, where he remained a long-term member of the cast.

Lindsey's appreciation for his home state of Alabama endured, even as his profession took him

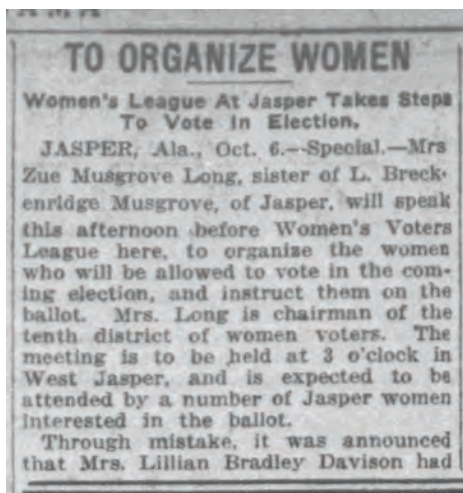


William Bankhead serving as Speaker of the House. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division. Photograph by Harris & Ewing

to greater heights. Lindsey donated his collection of the memorabilia, souvenirs, and ephemera that he accumulated over the span of his career to the University of North Alabama, where he also established the George Lindsey UNA Film Festival. In 1995, Lindsey was the recipient of the Governor's Achievement Award and was inducted into the Alabama Music Hall of Fame. While Lindsey returned home to Jasper to be laid to rest in 2012, his legacy remains woven within American media and culture, and his generous contributions to Alabama's performing arts programs will continue to inspire

Portrait of George Lindsey. Photo courtesy of the Bankhead House & Heritage Center



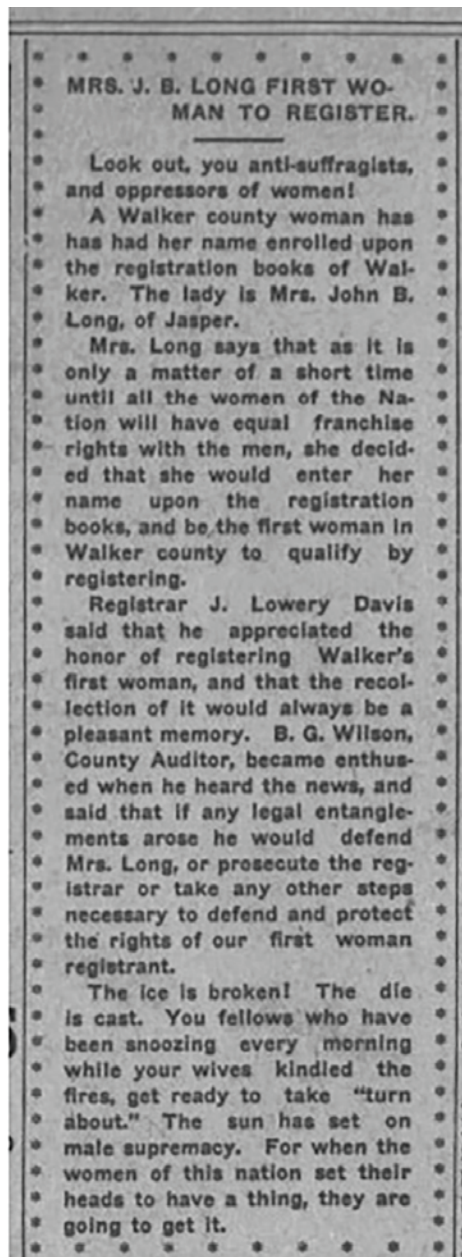


*The Birmingham News,
October 6, 1920*

generations of young artists.

The first woman ever listed on the voter rolls of Walker County was 61-year-old Zue Musgrove Long, the granddaughter of Dr. George Musgrove, one of the founders of Jasper. On February 4, the *Daily Mountain Eagle* newspaper announced that, in anticipation of the national voting enfranchisement of women, Long had entered her name in the county registration books (legislation that officially opened Alabama voter rolls was not signed until October 4, 1920). In the *Daily Mountain Eagle* newspaper, the county auditor is quoted as saying he would defend Long if any legal conflict arose surrounding her registration. Long was also highly active in the civic life and culture of Jasper and Walker County, most notably within programs surrounding youth agricultural education. Long was active with the League of Women Voters, at both the local and state level, and served as the president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Additionally, she edited regular newspaper columns for both organizations. In 1927, Long helped organize the Elizabeth Musgrove Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and served as the chapter's president. Having also established a 6,000-tree Elberta peach tree orchard, Long was a skilled agriculturist and was regularly invited to speak on crop diversification.

From the region's original Native American presence,



such as the Choctaw and Creek tribes, to the casual hobbyists of today, fishing remains a large part of Walker County's foundation and heritage. The region is a hotspot for anglers, as its geographical features prove advantageous for catching a wide variety of game; regional rivers and lakes such as the Black Warrior River, Walker County Lake, and Lewis Smith Lake, are renowned for their diverse and bountiful populations of fish. Because Walker County is home to a number of lakes, streams, and rivers, early settlers in the region relied on the area's plentiful freshwater sources for sustenance. For centuries, fishing in the region of Walker County has allowed for the development of communities, economies, and more—Walker County's heritage and modern culture are made possible by the area's diverse and storied land and the bountiful natural gifts that can be found throughout.

Resting upon the shoulders of countless settlers, rigorous industries, and selfless leaders, the history of Jasper, Alabama, is illustrious and enduring. From politicians to celebrities, the region has produced some of Alabama's most prominent, shining stars. The area's beautiful, diverse landscapes

and wildlife have continuously nourished and supported Jasper's community, and fruitful industries have shaped the town's economy, infrastructure, and culture into the warm and bustling community it is today. Hints of these centuries-old stories still remain in Jasper, and glimpses can even be caught in historic buildings, statues, and the town's thriving culture.

Emma Walls is a senior at Auburn University majoring in Professional and Public Writing. Emma wrote this article while serving as an intern with the Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts & Humanities. Information from the Jasper Main Street Sculpture Trail was utilized in the development of this article. Learn more about the Sculpture Trail at <https://www.jaspermainstreet.com/sculptures/.Rerios>

Fall Pilgrimage

JASPER, ALABAMA

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23

Arrive early on Friday and get a jump on Saturday's tour offerings by visiting these public sites on Friday!

- Artesian Well in Downtown Jasper
- The Jasper Memorial (Confederate) Cemetery
- WPA Bridge and Old Fire Pit
- White House on Fifth Museum and Gallery (10 a.m. to Noon; 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)
- Bankhead House & Heritage Center (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

2 to 4 p.m. Guided tour of Minkin Paleozoic Footprint Site

See page 10 for information. NOTE: Participants must pre-register with Laura Hill (newlandhill@gmail.com)

5:00 p.m. Book Talk with Dr. Kari Frederickson, author of *Deep South Dynasty: The Bankheads of Alabama*

Jasper First Methodist Church, 1800 3rd Avenue South

6:00 p.m. Welcome Reception and Book Signing

Jasper Welcome Center & Museum, 311 West 18th Street

7:00 p.m. Dinner On-Your-Own

Check out downtown dinner options at www.visitjasperal.com/eat-drink

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

Jasper City Hall, 121 17th Street West

8:30 a.m. Coffee, Book Sales, Exhibits

10:00 a.m. Local History Program

Noon Box Lunches

1 to 4 p.m. Tours On-Your-Own

- Bankhead House & Heritage Center — 800 7th Street West
- The Burton Building — 1841 2nd Avenue
- First Methodist Church — 1800 3rd Avenue South
- Former Jewish Temple Emanuel — 500 15th Street West
- Hill Crest House — 1300 7th Avenue
- Graham-Kyser Home — 1208 6th Avenue South
- York Lodge No. 211 Masonic Temple — 300 18th Street West
- White House on Fifth Museum & Gallery — 1508 Fifth Avenue South
- O'Rear-Wilson Home — 1301 6th Avenue South
- WPA Bridge and Old Fire Pit — Downs and Associates, 1603 1st Avenue East

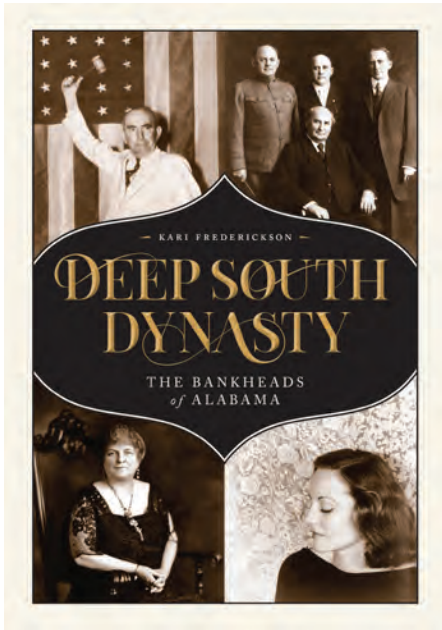
1 p.m. & 3 p.m. Guided Walking Tour of the Historical Figures Sculpture Trail

Departs from the Jasper Main Street Welcome Center & Museum

2 p.m. & 4 p.m. Trolley Tour of Downtown of the Walker County Arts Alliance Mule Project

Departs from the Jasper Main Street Welcome Center & Museum

Dr. Kari Frederickson to Discuss the Bankheads of Alabama on Friday at 5 p.m.



Dr. Kari Frederickson, Professor of History at the University of Alabama, will discuss her award-winning book *Deep South Dynasty: The Bankheads of Alabama* on Friday, October 23 at 5 p.m. at the Jasper First Methodist Church. From Reconstruction through the end of World War II, the Bankheads served as the principal architects of the political, economic, and cultural framework of Alabama and the greater South. The talk will be followed by a welcome reception and book signing at the Jasper Main Street Welcome Center & Museum. ▶



Courtesy of the University of Alabama Press

Friday Visit to the Minkin Paleozoic Footprint Site

AHA Pilgrimage attendees have an opportunity to visit the Steven C. Minkin Paleozoic Footprint Site in Walker County on Friday, October 23 from 2 to 4 p.m. The site is the most prolific source of vertebrae trackways of its age in the world, since they are preserved in shale that formed from mud on a freshwater tidal flat about 315 million years ago. Logistics for this unique opportunity require advance planning. The access road, for example, is an unpaved two-track field road through woods and pasture with rolling hills. Attendees who are interested in this experience should contact Laura Hill at newlandhill@gmail.com by October 1 for more information. No one can participate in this tour without coordinating their participation through Laura Hill. ◀



One of the first trackways collected by Steven C. Minkin. Courtesy of the Alabama Paleontological Society

Arrive early on Friday and get a jump on Saturday's tour offerings by visiting these public sites on Friday!

- Artesian Well in Downtown Jasper
- The Jasper Memorial (Confederate) Cemetery
- WPA Bridge and Old Fire Pit
- White House on Fifth Museum and Gallery
(10 a.m. to Noon;
1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)
- Bankhead House & Heritage Center
(10 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

Local Historian and Folklorist to Highlight Jasper's History on Saturday

Local historian and collector Pat Morrison and folklorist and storyteller Martha Parnell Salomaa will provide an engaging program on local history on Saturday, October 24 at 10:00 a.m. at the Jasper City Hall Auditorium.

Pat Morrison is originally from Jasper, Tennessee, not Jasper, Alabama, but his love for the Alabama town and Walker County is evident in his private museum, massive (35,000) postcard collection, and publications, including *Post Card Series*, *Walker County* and *History of Walker County High School Athletics*.

Martha Parnell Salomaa can trace eight generations of ancestors back to the Sipsey community in Walker County. She serves as storyteller to all fourth-grade students in the county for the Walker County Arts Alliance and is president of the Sipsey Heritage Commission.



Jasper City Hall, courtesy of City of Jasper. Jasper City Hall resides in the former Sherer Auditorium, a municipal auditorium built in 1938 as part of the Works Progress Administration. The stone structure received a modernist façade in 1972, and the recent restoration and removal of the overlay revealed its original stonework and character.



2025

Accommodations:

For online reservation links,
visit alabamahistory.net/meetings

- A Hampton Inn Jasper**
100 Industrial Pkwy, 205-221-3334
\$135+tax before October 16th.
- B Holiday Inn Express Jasper**
110 Industrial Parkway, 205-387-8383
\$130+tax before August 30th.

Friday, October 23:

- 1 First Methodist Church**
5 p.m. Book Talk with Kari Fredrickson
1800 3rd Avenue South

Welcome Reception:

- 2 Jasper Main Street Welcome Center & Museum**
311 18th Street West

Arrive early and get a jump on
Saturday's tour offerings by visiting
these public sites on Friday!

- A Artesian Well in Downtown Jasper**
2000 4th Avenue South
- B The Jasper Memorial (Confederate) Cemetery**
15th West and 4th Avenue
- C WPA Bridge and Old Fire Pit**
Downs and Associates
1603 1st Avenue East
- D White House on Fifth Museum and Gallery**
1508 Fifth Avenue South
(10 a.m. to Noon; 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)
- E Bankhead House & Heritage Center** 800 7th Street West
(10 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

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Please don't
rely on the scale
of this map for
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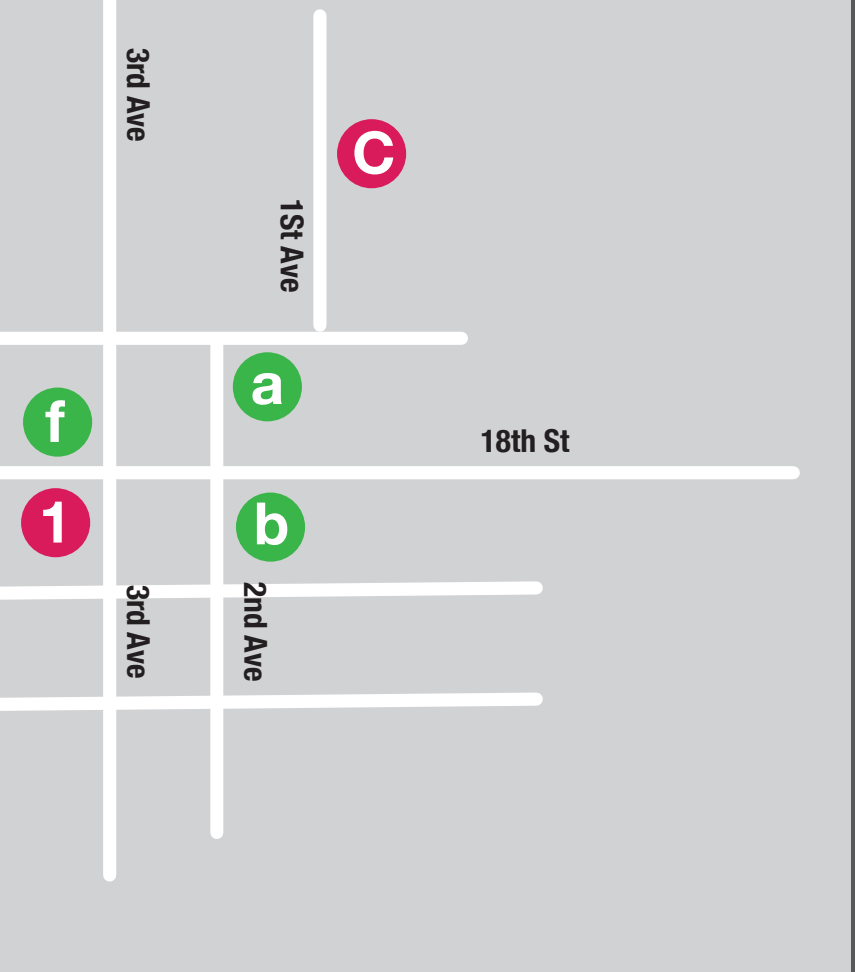


Saturday, October 24:

- a** Jasper City Hall
121 17th Street West
- b** The Burton Building
1841 2nd Avenue
- c** Former Jewish Temple Emanu-El
500 15th Street West
- d** Hill Crest House
1300 7th Avenue
- e** Graham-Kyser Home
1208 6th Avenue
- f** York Lodge No. 211
Masonic Temple
300 18th Street West
- g** O'Rear-Wilson Home
1301 6th Avenue South



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





ARTESIAN WELL IN DOWNTOWN JASPER

Located in the original Water Board Building parking lot at the corner of 4th Avenue and 20th Street West, this site features an inconspicuous gray pipe rising about 7 feet above the ground. Between 1913 and 1917, two German engineers and a Pennsylvanian drilled a 3,800-foot-deep well in Jasper in search of oil or natural gas. Although the well initially produced natural gas, the supply was eventually depleted due to heavy demand. Today, it yields sulfur-rich water that was once believed to aid digestive health. While many contemporaries dismissed the engineers' ambitious vision for a regional water system, the artesian well represents an important early effort to provide a reliable water supply to six surrounding mining counties. The well's creators later applied their engineering expertise to the design of major bridges, leaving this modest landmark as a lasting testament to their innovation and foresight. It is undergoing a full renovation in Fall 2026.

Photo courtesy of Pat Morrison

THE JASPER MEMORIAL CEMETERY (ALSO KNOWN AS THE CONFEDERATE CEMETERY)

Historically known as Old City Cemetery, Jasper Memorial Cemetery is a historic burial ground and the resting place of many of the area's pioneers, civic leaders, and veterans. The cemetery located on 4th Avenue and the Walker County Confederate Monument located on the Town Square are both maintained by the City of Jasper. The cemetery has been awarded a restoration grant from the Alabama Historical Commission to restore some of the grave markers later this year. Dedicated in 1908 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the monument honors approximately 1,900 soldiers from Walker County who served during the Civil War.

Photo courtesy of Jasper Main Street



WPA BRIDGE AND OLD FIRE PIT

The WPA (Works Progress Administration) Bridge is located in Town Creek Park and was built as part of a joint WPA-NYA (National Youth Administration) project. One of the most intriguing features of the bridge is the material used to build it, including native stone found and cut from the local area. The original structure of the bridge washed out in March 1939 during a massive flood.

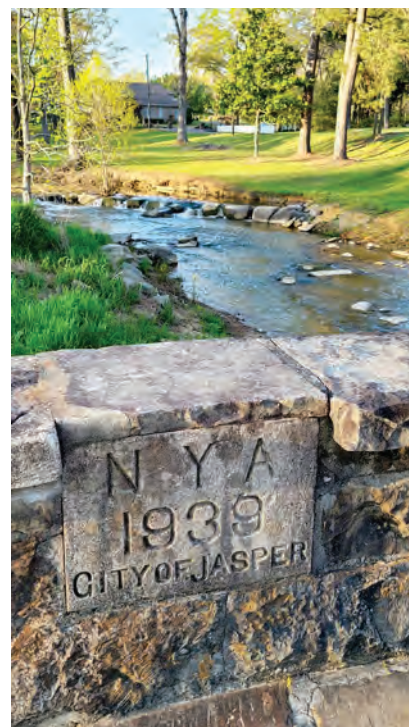


Photo courtesy of Jasper Main Street

TEMPLE EMANU-EL

Temple Emanu-El in Jasper was a Reform synagogue closely tied to the growth of the city's Jewish community. In April 1922, eight Jewish families joined together to purchase land for a synagogue, which was officially dedicated on June 3, 1923. During its years of operation, the congregation remained relatively small, reaching a peak membership of 140 people in 1937. Over time, the Jewish population in the Jasper area declined, leading to a gradual decrease in membership. In 2005, the congregation voted to disband and sell the temple, bringing its long history in Jasper to a close.

Photo courtesy of Jasper Main Street



THE BURTON BUILDING

Built in 1900 by brothers J.J. Long and C.D. Long, this three-story building was the tallest structure in downtown Jasper at the time. Constructed using locally made brick, it originally served as the home of the Long & Richardson Mercantile Company. Over the years, Long & Richardson grew into one of Alabama's largest general mercantile establishments. In 1919, the Burton Manufacturing Company purchased the building, which then became known as the Burton Building. In its early days, the company manufactured leather horse collars and harnesses but later became well known for producing superior quality golf bags. Almost every professional

golfer in the day owned a Burton Golf Bag. Today, this historic building continues to serve the Jasper community as offices and is home to the very popular Los Reyes Grill.

Photo courtesy of Pat Morrison

YORK LODGE NO. 211

York Lodge No. 211 has been a significant part of the Jasper, Alabama, community for more than a century. The current lodge building was constructed in 1921, as evidenced by the cornerstone inscription bearing the date A.D. 1921 and A.L. 5921, the Masonic Year of Light. The building committee responsible for the construction included C. L. Burton, J. H. Bankhead Jr., J. J. Curtis, Norman Gunn, and E. W. Long. Of particular historical significance is the involvement of the Bankhead family, one of Alabama's most influential political families. Historical records indicate that several members of the Bankhead family were active Masons and members of York Lodge No. 211. Today, the lodge remains an important landmark reflecting Jasper's rich Masonic and civic heritage.

Photo courtesy of Jasper Main Street





HILL CREST HOUSE

Completed in 1902 for prominent attorney and future Alabama Lieutenant Governor William Columbus Davis, Hill Crest stands as a premier neoclassical landmark in Jasper. Designed by Birmingham architects Charles and H.B. Wheelock, the grand residence featured a symmetrical façade, a commanding columned portico, and an elegant interior millwork that reflected the region’s civic confidence. Following Davis’s tenure, the Hare family purchased the property in 1931 and preserved its architectural integrity for decades before it briefly transitioned to Walker College in the 1970s. A major revival began in 1979 when the Nelson family launched an extensive five-year restoration that modernized the home’s vital systems and added a rear wing, expanding the property to 7,800 square feet. Today, the Barrett family continues this protective legacy by revitalizing the home’s historic city-block grounds and planning a period-accurate kitchen renovation. The home’s survival is a testament to generations of careful stewardship.

Photo courtesy of Jay Barrett

GRAHAM-KYSER HOME

Dating back to pre-Civil War, this house was later owned by Judge J.J Ray. Restoration has included enclosing the dogtrot and removing or closing the porches. Among the several owners of this house have been Judge Garrison, Jim Beech G.A Pribbenow, Sr., and G.A Pribbenow, Jr. G.A. Pribbenow, Sr. (c. 1916–2000) and G.A. Pribbenow, Jr. (1947–1989) were prominent figures in Jasper. They were deeply connected to the local business and civic landscape, including early local establishments. Today, downtown business owners Thomas Kyser and Stephanie Cheatham reside here.

Photo courtesy of Guido Besserer



O’REAR-WILSON HOME

Built in 1854 by Colonel O’Rear, who served with the local “Home Guard,” this house is known as the oldest continuously lived-in home in Jasper. Its hand-dug well made it the first home and water source for the area immediately north of downtown Jasper, and Colonel O’Rear allowed neighbors to draw water until they could provide for themselves.

The street, now known as 6th Avenue, was once Houston Road, an early route connecting Winston County to Elyton in Jefferson County. During the Civil War, Union troops traveled this road through Jasper; local accounts say Colonel O’Rear was killed nearby as they passed through.

Originally a four-room dogtrot house, the home was built with heart pine milled north of Jasper. Many original floors, windows, and structural timbers remain, along with decorative front-porch fretwork that was manufactured in England. Current owners are Mark and Renae Wilson.

Photo courtesy of Guido Besserer



BANKHEAD HOUSE & HERITAGE CENTER

The Bankhead House & Heritage Center is a historic site in Jasper that preserves the home of the influential Bankhead family. Built around 1924 by William Brockman Bankhead on land known as the Kilgore Orchard, the house is an example of Colonial Revival architecture.

Because of its importance to the community, the Walker Area Community Foundation acquired the property under the leadership of former president John T. Oliver Jr. The home belonged to William Brockman Bankhead, who served as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and his wife second wife Florence. Mr. Bankhead's first wife and mother to actress Tallulah Bankhead died several days after Tallulah's birth.

Photo courtesy of Bankhead House & Heritage Center



FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

Jasper First Methodist Church was founded in 1833, and its first church building was constructed in 1826 from large hewn logs. In 1858, that structure was replaced by a two-story building that is rumored to have been burned by General James H. Wilson's cavalry corps in March 1865. In 1915, Lycurgus B. Musgrove, grandson of city founder Dr. Edward Musgrove, funded the construction of a new church in memory of his mother, Elizabeth Cain Musgrove. Featuring a white marble exterior and a stained-glass dome, the church was dedicated debt-free in 1927. Today, it is known for its Beaux-Arts Neoclassical architecture, including Georgia white marble, a mahogany interior, stained-glass windows, and an art-glass dome.

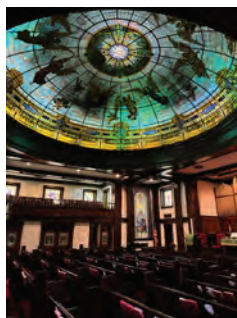


Photo courtesy of Jasper First Methodist Church

WHITE HOUSE ON FIFTH MUSEUM & GALLERY

The White House on Fifth, also known as the Phillips House, was owned by Jefferson M. "Jake" Phillips and his wife, Annie Worthington Phillips, in circa 1910. Phillips was, at one time, Mayor of the City of Jasper, Sheriff of Walker County, Director of First National Bank, Jasper, and partner in a mercantile business. He was a member of the First Methodist Church and the Masonic Order. Phillips, who opened his beautiful two-story home to family and friends, was loved and admired by people from all walks of life. Fun fact: Look for a bullet hole with the bullet still intact somewhere in the house from an altercation many years ago. After extensive renovation, it is owned and operated as a gift back to the community by the Walker Area Community Foundation.

Photo courtesy of White House on Fifth Museum & Gallery



Congratulations to the following award winners!

FRAZINE TAYLOR RESEARCH GRANT

In honor and memory of past president Frazine Taylor and her contributions to the Alabama history community, this graduate student award supports new research on an Alabama-related topic. Congratulations to Tanner Corley, University of Alabama, for his dissertation project “License to Cut: Race, Regulation, and the Southern Beauty Industry, 1890-1980.”

Pictured are Tanner Corley and Shari Williams.



VIRGINIA V. HAMILTON AWARD

The Hamilton award is given for contributions to Alabama history which encourage joint endeavors and mutual understanding among avocational and professional historians. Congratulations to Steve Murray of the Alabama Department of Archives and History. *Pictured are Steve Murray and Veronica Henderson.*

HISTORICAL MUSEUM AWARD

The Historical Museum Award recognizes exceptional achievement by small and large museums in promoting state or local history. Congratulations to the Museum of Pell City, winner of the small museum category, and the Guntersville Museum & Cultural Center, winner of the large museum category. Pictured are Sara Elizabeth Phillips of the Guntersville Museum & Cultural Center and Felisha Anderson.



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 Jack D. Ellis for his book *Physicians for the People: Black Doctors and the Struggle for Health-Care Equality in Alabama, 1870-1970*. Pictured are Michael Robinson and Jack D. Ellis.



CALL FOR PAPERS

79th Annual Meeting
Montgomery, Alabama
April 8-10, 2027

The Alabama Historical Association invites paper proposals to be given at its 79th Annual Meeting in Montgomery, Alabama, on April 8-10, 2027. 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 in one of two categories:

- 1) Traditional presentation – original research, often based in primary sources, in Alabama history;
- 2) Public history – projects related to archival practice, exhibit curation, or creative dissemination of Alabama history content.

Also required is a brief curriculum vitae or résumé (two-page max).

Please email your one-page abstract and c.v. to vburnes@uwa.edu
by the deadline of **October 1, 2026**.

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.

If you would like to discuss your proposal or have other questions:
Dr. Valerie Burnes, Program Chair, vburnes@uwa.edu.

For more information on the Alabama Historical Association, visit
www.alabamahistory.net

2026 NOMINATIONS

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR 2027 AWARDS

The following awards will be presented at the annual meeting on April 9, 2027.

- The **Clinton Jackson and Evelyn 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 2025 are eligible, and those written by non-professional historians are welcome. Nominations must be postmarked by December 31, 2026. For submission information, contact Graydon Rust at grust@alabamahumanities.org
- 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 December 1, 2026, provided it has not received the award in the last ten years. For a copy of the application/nomination form, visit www.alabamahistory.net or Beth Hunter at beth@bethhunter.com
- The **Robert J. “Jeff” Jakeman 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. The deadline for submission is January 18, 2027. For more information, contact Marty Olliff at mtolliff3@live.com
- The **Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins Award** recognizes a master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation completed at any institution of higher education in the last two years focusing on Alabama history. Dissertations or theses defended in 2025 and 2026 are eligible for submission and should be sent as a PDF file to Dr. Ben Severance at bseveran@aum.edu by December 31, 2026.

For more information on all of these awards, visit www.alabamahistory.net.

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

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79th Annual Meeting

April 8-10, 2027

Renaissance Montgomery Hotel

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Photo courtesy of the Alabama Historical Commission

