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The AHA Newsletter is designed and printed by Davis Direct, Montgomery, Alabama.

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.
As my tenure as your president rapidly winds down, I want to express my deep appreciation to each of you for your continued enthusiastic support for the Alabama Historical Association and our various programs and missions. Although I joined the AHA about forty years ago, serving as president has been a tremendous learning experience for me and has reinforced my own dedication to our organization. More than anything else, I will always remember the AHA’s creative, energetic members who have eagerly embraced active roles in all of our endeavors and given so much of their time and talents in our behalf.

When I was growing up in the early 1950s on the Gulf Coast, Birmingham was the first “big city” in Alabama that I visited with my family. For me Birmingham truly was a “Magic City,” with its panoramic vistas of mountains and valleys, Vulcan’s towering presence, and the evening darkness illuminated by the fiery furnaces of countless steel mills that seemingly never slept. Over the years, Birmingham became known as the “Pittsburgh of the South”—a sprawling, gritty industrial city that primarily produced vast quantities of iron and steel.

But during the late 1950s and early 1960s, Birmingham also acquired unwelcomed notoriety as an epicenter of racial oppression and violence—captured in daily TV images of African Americans under ferocious attack by high-pressure firehoses, snarling dogs, and angry police officers. Like “Bloody Sunday” later at Selma’s Edmund Pettus Bridge, the horrific bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham provided shocking, irrefutable proof that a deadly, virulent strain of racial hatred had metastasized in Alabama. Since that terrible day, as Alabamians I think each of us has struggled to place those cold-blooded murders and the entire civil rights era in some semblance of historical and personal context. And I think it is safe to say that today we are still wrestling mightily with this aspect of our own particular Burden of Southern History, to borrow from the title of C. Vann Woodward’s iconic work.

We obviously will never forget what happened in Birmingham over sixty years ago. Today when barely a thimble-full of Alabama history is taught in our schools and colleges, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that our children and grandchildren learn the facts and legacies of the civil rights movement within the context of our state’s entire historical narrative. In the midst of Alabama’s Bicentennial commemoration, individual stories of civil rights activists’ courage and sacrifice should be chronicled equally along with the rest of our history rather than merely as obscure footnotes to the past.

Likewise, while documenting Birmingham’s struggle for racial equality, we would be guilty of historical ignorance or amnesia if we neglected the city’s remarkable history of ethnic diversity. In this spirit, I call to your attention Jim Baggett and Dr. Regina Ammon’s incisive, scholarly contribution in this newsletter about Birmingham’s community of immigrants—many of whom originally arrived in the 1880s and dramatically shaped the city’s future economic, social, political, cultural, and demographic development.

Along with my distinguished AHA colleague, Mark Wilson, I wish to conclude with a brief message of appreciation to everyone who contributed so much time and effort over the past year in preparation for our meeting. I simply cannot say enough in recognition of the tireless efforts of our Local Arrangements Committee: Jim Baggett, Beth Hunter, Pam King, Jim Lewis, and Deborah Love. Dr. Victoria Ott has organized an outstanding program of papers for your edification and enjoyment. Laura Murray designed the local maps that are essential to navigating downtown Birmingham. These individuals, joined by our various academic and civic partners, look forward to seeing AHA and the Alabama Association of Historians members in Birmingham in April.

David E. Alsobrook
Sometimes a story is captured in a moment. This happened when one of this article’s authors sat with Ashfaq Taufique, a Pakistani American and President of the Birmingham Islamic Society while his wife Rita served Christmas cookies made from her Italian grandmother’s recipe. Just as good food is made up of many ingredients, a strong community is made up of many different kinds of people. And Birmingham has always been a diverse place. For much of its history, as historian William Barnard noted, Birmingham’s ethnic makeup “bore as much resemblance to a middle-western or northeastern industrial city as it did to Savannah, Charleston, Montgomery, or Memphis.” With his journey to Birmingham, Ashfaq Taufique followed in the footsteps of fellow immigrants—Greeks, Italians, Germans, Irish, Welsh, Slavs, Syrians, Lebanese, and many others—dating back two centuries. A student activist in his home country, Ashfaq was imprisoned twice before his mother—the “mover and the shaker in the family”—convinced him to leave for America. In the United States, he completed his education and worked as a nuclear engineer, living in various states before settling in Alabama.

In 1884, Birmingham’s first known Greek immigrant, a sailor named George Cassimus, arrived to make his fortune in a city growing so fast it was already known as “The Magic City.” The rich mineral deposits in the area provided the ingredients for making iron and steel, and mills struggled to fill shifts to keep the molten material flowing. Upon arriving from Greece aboard a British ship, George settled for a while in the port city of Mobile, but the opportunities waiting in the bustling and smoky industrial city of Birmingham encouraged him to move. While working for the Birmingham Fire Department, George learned enough English and saved enough money to open a short order seafood restaurant. He wasn’t working in the mills, but George was part of the large service industry that emerged during the economic boom.

Ashfaq Taufique (center) as a young activist in Pakistan.

Greek immigrants Anastasia Macris Covollos and her new husband George Covollos in 1900. Their nuptials were said to have been the first Greek wedding in Birmingham.
Italian immigrants came from Sicily, especially from villages near Bisacquino. Sicilian schoolteacher Carmella Anselmo came to Birmingham in 1921 for a short visit with her brother and decided to stay. Carmella taught in the Birmingham city schools and in her free time she taught English and citizenship classes to other Italian immigrants. Photographs of Carmella and her classes of work-worn men determined to succeed in their new land speak volumes about the immigrant experience.

The influence of Birmingham’s immigrant communities was readily apparent. Near the offices of the mainstream Birmingham News and the Age newspapers were the presses for the German language Alabama Staats Zeitung and the Birmingham Deutsches Volksblatt and the Italian newspapers H Libero Pensiero and L’Aquila. Lebanese and Greek immigrants established schools to teach their children the languages of their parents. Houses of worship for congregations from distant homelands settled in among the Baptist and Methodist churches. The onion dome of St. Nicholas Orthodox Catholic Church rose above the houses in the Slavic neighborhood. In 1904, Father John Canepa of Genoa arrived to help found three Italian Catholic churches. Turn-of-the-century Birmingham included the congregations of the Evangelische Friedens Kirch, Temples Emanu-El and Beth-El, and St. Elias Maronite Church.

Many Birmingham immigrants found work in the coal mines, limestone quarries, or steel mills, while many others established businesses to cater to these laborers and their families. Grocery stores, fruit stands, dairies, five & dime stores, and myriad other businesses opened in Birmingham, making it as cosmopolitan as any port city. During his lifetime, George Cassimus could have found within walking distance of his restaurant many businesses owned by his countrymen. He may have eaten at George Grammatikakis’s cafe or bought candy at the Pappageorge Brothers confectioners shop. Perhaps he bought fruit from William Bosbonos, George Kalavis, or Alex Kontos, the millionaire “Banana King” of Birmingham.

George Cassimus probably traded with many other immigrant merchants in his neighborhood. He was near Otto Marx’s brokerage house and Moses Pititz’s department store. He could have purchased groceries from Filippo Lombardo or Salvador Perigoni, a beer from Ferdinand Kareulhaus, jewelry from Isadore Rubenstein, a new suit from Abraham Rumniank, furniture from Pete Zinszer, art supplies from Messieurs Abo-Samra & Kandela, and odds-and-ends from itinerant peddler Abdallah Boohaker. Should his own business really expand, George could hire decorators from J.L. Chalifoux & Company, many of them French, to furnish his home.

Some immigrants, especially Italians, were more willing than native whites to open businesses in African American neighborhoods. By 1930, Birmingham counted more than 300 Italian-owned grocery stores, many on corners...
in black communities. One of these was Joseph Bruno’s store, which grew from a small, family-owned business opened by a peddler to a successful chain boasting over 160 stores in five states.

As in other places, Birmingham’s ethnic diversity sometimes led to tensions. In the early-twentieth century, the city’s native white Protestants consistently voted for the prohibition of alcohol and Sunday movies, while the city’s Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Jewish immigrants welcomed the chance to see a show or relax with a beer on their one day off. In the 1920s, anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic hysteria led to the murder of a Catholic priest. But despite past (and present) tensions, Birmingham is enriched by and immensely proud of its ethnic heritage. For a city of its size Birmingham is still, unexpectedly, cosmopolitan.

Lured here now by the temperate climate, relatively low cost of living, and a booming economy based largely on banking and the medical and hospital industry, Birmingham’s immigrant populations, now including people from many Asian, African, and Hispanic countries, bring many different experiences, wonderful cuisine, and varied perspectives. Restaurants specializing in kafta kabobs, souvlaki, pad thai, sushi, gnocchi, and haute cuisine have settled in among the barbecue places and meat-and-three diners and have both changed the flavor of this once-industrial town and contributed to

Greek immigrant Alex Kontos (third from left), began as a fruit peddler and became prosperous “Banana King” of Birmingham. All “carloads of bananas are consigned to him only,” a contemporary explained, “and he is the supreme arbiter of their destiny … he is our miniature Rockefeller.”

Many of Birmingham’s Italian immigrants operated small corner groceries. This is the Catanzano Brothers grocery store on Fourth Avenue North.
its sense of continuity. Each year Birmingham residents line up, sometimes by the thousands, to sample dolmathes at the Greek Food Festival, matzo ball soup at the Jewish Food Festival, baked kibbe at the Lebanese Food Festival, spinach pies at the St. George Middle Eastern Food Festival, Jasmine tea at the Asian Cultures and Food Festival, pasta at the Feast of St. Mark Italian Festival, and (we know from personal experience) rum-soaked rice pudding at the Magic City Caribbean Food and Music Festival.

And twenty-first-century Birmingham’s ethnic makeup is no longer that different from many Southern cities, and certainly not different from many American cities and small towns. In this way, and many others both good and bad, Birmingham has always been a very American place.

James L. Baggett is Head of the Birmingham Public Library Archives and Archivist for the City of Birmingham. Dr. Regina Ammon is an independent historian living in Birmingham. Special thanks to Catherine Champion for her editorial assistance. An earlier version of this article appeared in Archival Outlook. Photos courtesy of Birmingham Public Library Archives.

While integrating themselves into American society, many Birmingham immigrants also held on to their ethnic identities. Here are students from St. Elias Arabic School, established to teach Lebanese children to read, write, and speak Arabic.

Many Eastern European immigrants settled in the Brookside community and worked as miners. In this 1937 photograph the Bensko brothers – John, Mike, and George – return from work.
UAB HISTORY DEPARTMENT
WELCOMES AHA TO BIRMINGHAM
WITH THURSDAY NIGHT RECEPTION

The UAB History Department invites members to attend an opening reception for the annual meeting at the UAB National Alumni House (1301 10th Avenue South) on Thursday, April 12 from 6 to 8 p.m. Limited parking is available on site, but additional parking is available along the street, as well as in a lot across from the street from the Alumni House. UAB students studying history will present posters outlining and illustrating various research projects.

The UAB History Department offers bachelor’s and master’s degrees in history, and students regularly intern at local historical sites such as Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, Vulcan Park, Sloss Furnaces, Southern Museum of Flight, and Rickwood Field, as well as the sites AHA members will tour on Friday afternoon.

“The history department is delighted that AHA chose downtown Birmingham for the 71st annual meeting. So many of our faculty and students have been involved with public history efforts in our city, and we know everyone will discover something new as a result,” says Pam King, Assistant Professor and AHA Board Member.
FRIDAY AFTERNOON TOUR: Historic Renovation Walking Tour

David Fleming, CEO of REV Birmingham, will explore history through architecture by leading a walking tour of renovated and repurposed historic buildings in the city’s downtown. Starting on beautiful Morris Avenue the tour will include the John Hand Building (one of four early twentieth century skyscrapers making up the “Heaviest Corner on Earth”) and look at the ways old buildings have found new life. The tour will finish at the Pizitz Building, formerly a grand department store and now a mixed-use retail and residential development. Participants can end their tour by grabbing a drink or snack at one of the many restaurants and food counters in the Pizitz Food Hall.

Participants will walk approximately five blocks, and there is no charge for the Renovation Walking Tour.

Walking tours will depart from Morris Avenue at 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm.
FRIDAY AFTERNOON TOURS: Civil Rights District

The Birmingham Civil Rights District Tour includes Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (bcri.org), Sixteenth Street Baptist Church (16thstreetbaptist.org), and the Ballard House (ballardhouseproject.org).

You may tour these three locations on-your-own between 1 and 5 p.m., or you may participate in the following guided tours:

1:00 p.m. Docent-led tour of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, designed by African American architect Wallace Rayfield, and the site of a tragic bombing in 1963. $5 per person

2:30 p.m. Tour of Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, led by Dr. Jonathan Bass, author of Blessed are the Peacemakers: Martin Luther King Jr., Eight White Religious Leaders, and the “Letter from the Birmingham Jail.” $10 per person

Docent-led tour of the Ballard House (1940), a cultural, education, and social space honoring Birmingham’s African-American community in the decades prior to the Civil Rights Movement. Majella Hamilton will be available from 1 to 5 pm for tours. $5 per person

See registration form for payment information.
The Birmingham Theatre District Tour includes the Alabama Theater and the Lyric Theatre. Guided tours of both theatres will take place on Friday afternoon and the cost is $15 per person (see registration form for payment information).

The Alabama Theatre was built in 1927 by Paramount Studios as an Alabama showcase for Paramount films and features an ornate Mighty Wurlitzer organ. It was used primarily as a movie palace for 55 years, with the exception of the annual Miss Alabama pageant and the weekly Mickey Mouse Club. In 1998, the Theatre underwent a complete front door to back door restoration. In 8 months, the theatre went from its look of faded grandeur to a sparkling 1927 look with all the gold leaf paint either replaced or cleaned. See the beautiful theater auditorium and go below stage to see the dressing rooms, work rooms, and shops that made the magic possible. Visit alabamatheatre.com for more information.

The Lyric, built in 1914 for B.F. Keith’s Vaudeville circuit, is one of few theatres still existing today that was specifically designed to maximize the acoustics and close seating needed for vaudeville shows. In its heyday the Lyric played host to legendary performers including Eddie Cantor, Will Rogers, Buster Keaton, Milton Berle, Fred Allen, Jack Benny, and the Marx Brothers. During the 1920s, it was the custom to attend shows at the Lyric Theatre on Monday nights, when tickets cost from 25 to 75 cents. In the summertime, air was fanned over two tons of ice a day to keep guests cool. Though seating was segregated, the Lyric was one of the first venues in the South where blacks and whites could watch the same show at the same time for the same price. Visit lyricbham.com for more information.

Photos Courtesy the Historic Alabama and Lyric Theatres
THURSDAY, APRIL 12

PRE-MEETING OPPORTUNITIES
See pages 16 for important details.

1:00 p.m. Genealogy Workshop @ Birmingham Public Library
10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Guided Tours of Arlington Antebellum Home
1 p.m. – 3 p.m. Guided Tours of Stinson Ole Place and Hale-Joseph Home
6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Reception, hosted by UAB History Department
UAB Alumni House
1301 10th Avenue South

FRIDAY, APRIL 13

8:00 a.m. Registration, Coffee, Book Sales
DoubleTree by Hilton, Birmingham

9:00 a.m. General Session
DoubleTree by Hilton, Birmingham

10:45 a.m. Concurrent Sessions

SESSION A
• “Birmingham City Schools and the Persistence of History in Public Memory”
  Wes Lybrand, Ramsey High School, Birmingham, Alabama

• “Liberalism, Anti-Civil Rights Backlash, and Alabama’s 9-8 Plan”
  Charles Roberts, Andrew College

• “Grassroots Historians and the Defining of an African Heritage in Alabama”
  Justin Rudder, Alabama Department of Archives and History

SESSION B
• “Agricola Wilkins: Hopeless in 1830s Mobile”
  Donnelly Walton, University of Alabama Library Special Collections

• “An ‘Able Defense of Civil and Religious Liberty’: The 1855 Battle against Know-Nothings in Mobile, Alabama”
  Lonnie Burnett, University of Mobile

• “More or Less Arbitrary”: The Story Behind the Placement of the Alabama-Mississippi Border”
  Mike Bunn, Historic Blakeley Park

SESSION C
• “Sara J. Hatcher Duncan, Pinnacle of Women’s Power in the A.M.E. Church: Her Alabama Journey from Emancipation to Jim Crow”
  Linda Derry, Alabama Historical Commission, Old Cahawba Archaeological Park

• “Life in Rural Jackson County, Alabama 1934-1938: The Diaries of Charles Rice Coffey”
  Annette Norris Bradford, Jackson County Historical Association

• “Fritz Ritz: The Experience of German Prisoners of War in World War II Alabama”
  Emily Amos, University of Mobile

Noon Lunch
DoubleTree by Hilton, Birmingham

1:00 – 4:30 p.m. Friday Afternoon Tours

6:00 p.m. Cash Bar
DoubleTree by Hilton, Birmingham

7:00 p.m. Annual Awards Banquet
SESSION A
Panel discussion with contributors to *Alabama Women: Their Lives and Times*, moderated by co-editor Susan Youngblood Ashmore, Oxford College of Emory University.

Panelists include:
- Harriet E. Amos Doss, University of Alabama, Birmingham
- Kimberly Hill, University of Texas at Dallas
- Rebecca Cawood McIntyre, Middle Tennessee State University
- Tina Naremore Jones, University of West Alabama
- Susan Youngblood Ashmore, Emory University

SESSION B
- “Some Birmingham Boys in the Great War, 1917”
  *Carolyn Satterfield, Birmingham, Alabama*
- “Montgomery Motor Corps: Patriotism and Southern Hospitality in Khaki Skirts and Sam Browne Belts”
  *Laura Newland Hill, Encyclopedia of Alabama*
- “The Shadow Tiger: Billy McDonald Wingman to Chennault”
  *William McDonald, Independent Scholar, Birmingham, Alabama*

SESSION C
- “‘At His Agreeable Villa in the Suburbs:’ A Brief History of Snake Shoals and Boykin’s Plantation”
  *Rachel Dobson, Independent Scholar, Cottondale, Alabama*
- “What Comes After Freedom? Past Themes and Future Prospects in Interpreting Emancipation and Reconstruction”
  *Anthony Gene Carey, Appalachian State University*
- “An Impressive and Sad State: West Point Manufacturing Company and the General Textile Strike of 1934 in Chambers County, Alabama”
  *Andrew Harrison Baker, Auburn University*

11:45 a.m.  **Annual Luncheon**
- Presidential Address by Dr. David Alsobrook
  *DoubleTree by Hilton, Birmingham*
Hotel & Meeting Venue

DoubleTree by Hilton Birmingham
808 20th Street South (205) 933-9000
Contact the hotel by March 22 to receive a special rate of $119 per night. Reserve online using the code AHS.

Reception

UAB Alumni House
1301 10th Avenue South

Pre-Meeting Opportunities
(See pages 16 & 17 for more information)

Birmingham Public Library Central Branch
2100 Park Place
Free Genealogy Workshop

Arlington Antebellum Home and Gardens
331 Cotton Avenue SW
$2 per person

Stinson Ole Place
Hoover Historical Society
PARKING: 2136 Bluff Road • Hoover, AL 35266
Additional Sites of Interest:

1. Oak Hill Cemetery
   1120 19th Street North
   oakhillbirmingham.com

2. Southern Museum of Flight
   4343 73rd Street North
   southernmuseumofflight.com

3. Vulcan Park and Museum
   1701 Valley View Dr
   visitvulcan.com

4. Negro Southern League Museum
   120 16th St S
   birminghamnslm.org

Additional tour sites and locations will be announced closer to the meeting. The QR code below will be updated at that time.

Please don’t rely on the scale of this map for navigation. Scan this QR code below for access to the Google Map:
Pre-Meeting Opportunity:
FREE GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

A free genealogy workshop will be offered at the Birmingham Public Library Central Branch (2100 Park Place) on Thursday, April 12, from 1 to 3 pm. The workshop is limited to 80 participants, who must be registered online in advance at https://aub.ie/AHAGenealogyWorkshop.

The workshop will consist of two tracks: Beginner (limited to 20) and Intermediate (limited to 60). Topics include African American and Native American research, the Alabama First Families program, Digital Resources, and DNA for family history.

Plan to arrive at 12:30 p.m. for registration so that the workshop can begin promptly at 1:00 p.m. Parking is available at the Birmingham Public Library and also at the parking lot across the street from the library at the corner of Richard Arrington Blvd. and Seventh Avenue North (enter from Seventh Avenue).

The workshop is sponsored by the Alabama Genealogical Society, Alabama Heritage, Birmingham African American Genealogy Group, Alabama Historical Association, and the Birmingham Public Library. For more information, contact Dr. Donna Cox Baker at donna.baker@ua.edu.

Stinson Ole Place in Hoover

The Hoover Historical Society maintains the Stinson Ole Place, an 1840s two-story house built of hand-hewn logs by the Hugh Acey Mack Stinson family. The house originally stood in rural Shelby County off Highway 25 between Columbiana and Wilsonville, Alabama, on a wooden plank road called the Columbiana Turnpike. The house includes historic furnishings and is surrounded by a number of interesting outbuildings and structures. The Stinson Ole Place serves as The Folklore Center to area schoolchildren.

Also available for tour will be the Hale-Joseph Home (1910). Be sure to see Ross Creek Bridge, the historic Civil War-era bridge on a railroad supply line. Tours will be available from 2 to 4 p.m. and there will be no charge for AHA members. For more information, visit www.hooverhistoricalsociety.org.

Arlington Antebellum Home and Gardens

Arlington Antebellum Home and Gardens (331 Cotton SW) will be open for guided tours from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (last tour begins at 3 p.m.) Arlington is a former plantation house and six acres of landscaped gardens near downtown Birmingham. The two-story frame structure was built between 1845–50 and features antebellum-era Greek Revival architecture. The house serves as a decorative arts museum, featuring a collection of nineteenth-century furniture, textiles, silver, and paintings. The garden features a restored garden room that is used for special events. The house was added to the National Register of Historic Places on December 2, 1970. Tours for AHA members are $2 per person. Visit http://arlingtonantebellumhomeandgardens.com for more information.
Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr. to Deliver Banquet Address

Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr., a civil rights icon and internationally-recognized leader in nonviolent social change, will provide the keynote address at the AHA’s Annual Award Banquet. LaFayette was a co-founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960 and an organizer of the Nashville Movement Lunch Counter Sit-Ins, 1960. He participated in the Freedom Rides of 1961 and directed the Alabama Voter Registration Project in Selma in 1962. He was appointed National Program Administrator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and National Coordinator of the Poor People’s Campaign by Martin Luther King, Jr in 1968. He is the author (with Kathryn Lee Johnson) of *In Peace and Freedom: My Journey in Selma*, winner of a Lillian Smith Book Award. He is currently Chair of the Board of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.
2017 HISTORICAL MARKERS

Covington County

W.S. Harlan School

William Stewart Harlan was the manager of Jackson Lumber Company in Lockhart, established in the early twentieth century as a mill town during the booming demand for longleaf yellow pine. Marketed as Dixie Rift Flooring and Dixie Poles and Piling, the superior lumber produced at the Lockhart mill was used in the construction of New York’s Grand Central Station and other buildings of stature in Virginia, Maryland, Louisiana, and Washington, D.C. Jackson Lumber Company also produced creosoted wood blocks that were used for paving streets in cities like Atlanta and Pensacola. At its height, the company employed 1,000 people. Dwindling resources and wartime enlistments resulted in the mill’s closure in 1940.

Schooling began here in 1903, in a three-room structure serving seventy-five of the mill town’s children. The main grammar school building at this site was built in 1924. It was named in honor of W.S. Harlan, who had ensured its construction before his death a year earlier. The junior high building was added in 1939, part of the New Deal-era Federal Works Project. Both buildings were constructed with materials produced by Jackson Lumber Company and continue to serve students of the Lockhart area. The grammar school building is the oldest schoolhouse in Covington County still functioning as an active school.

[1641 Mohegan Street, Lockhart]

Crenshaw County

Daniel Dozier
(August 15, 1805 – November 4, 1878)

Born in South Carolina and orphaned as a young child, Daniel Dozier arrived in Alabama around 1817. As an adult, he operated a large farm and grist mill and served as minister for several area churches. He was a moderator and leader in the Conecuh River Association for more than fifty years. He married Elizabeth “Betsey” Taylor in 1824. The couple had fifteen children. Daniel Dozier died in 1878 and is buried in Good Hope Primitive Baptist Cemetery in Covington County. The town of Dozier is named in his honor. Incorporated in 1907, Dozier was known as “The Flowing Well City,” because of the many artesian wells located there, including one in the town center, which provided water for residents and livestock. Another artesian well filled the public swimming pool. In the early twentieth century, the vibrant town of Dozier included a train depot, hotel, post office, bank, several mercantile stores, a feed mill, cotton gin, lumber mill, textile mill, telephone exchange, doctor’s office, and a school.

[Dozier Cemetery, U.S. Highway 29]

Cleburne County

Shoal Creek Baptist Church

The first of three Baptist Churches was built on this site about 1842 as white pioneer settlers increased. The present building was constructed about 1895. The only surviving church book, begun in 1898, shows sixty-eight male and seventy-six female members. In the early years of the twentieth century the population decreased to the point that the diminishing membership ceased meeting here in 1914. Occasional events, including weddings, reunions, and “old-fashioned” church services are held at the church by reservation. Since 1921, an annual Sacred Harp shape note singing held each Labor Day is the only regular service.

The 2.83-acre site is private property surrounded by the Talladega National Forest; the U.S. Forest Service maintains the road leading to the site. For more than a century, descendants of early settlers have periodically maintained the building and its adjoining cemetery. In 1986, they formally organized the Shoal Creek Church Preservation Society under the leadership of William Lee Jones, grandson of an original builder. This non-profit entity represents scores of area families bearing such names as Cheatwood, Holley, Edwards, Coleman, Roach, Dunn, Thompson, Johnson, Knighten, and Jones.

[Talladega National Forest, Fruithurst]
FRANKLIN COUNTY

FRANKLIN – A COUNTY OLDER THAN THE STATE

The Alabama Territorial Legislature created Franklin County on February 6, 1818, from lands ceded two years earlier by the Chickasaw and Cherokee nations. The county was named in honor of Benjamin Franklin. The first sheriff was James Frazier. The first probate judge was John S. Fulton, appointed in 1821. At its creation, Franklin County consisted of more than 1200 square miles and just two towns, Russell’s Valley (Russellville) and Big Springs (Tuscumbia). The creation of Colbert County in 1867 from the northern portion of Franklin reduced greatly its original size. Tuscumbia became the seat of the new county.

In 1818, Joseph Heslip constructed Alabama Iron Works, the state’s first iron ore furnace. Iron produced at the Franklin County facility, which was later renamed Cedar Creek Furnace, aided in both the Mexican War and Civil War. In July 1864, Union Gen. Lovell H. Rousseau destroyed the furnace during his raid through Alabama.

Franklin County has made several notable contributions to the area of higher education. The origins of Alabama’s first state-chartered college are in the county. The Methodist Church established LaGrange College there in 1830. The first graduate, J. D. Malone, was a native of nearby Limestone County. In 1855, the college relocated to Florence, Lauderdale County. In 1887, Russellville adopted a mayor-council form of government. The town served as the seat of Franklin County from 1820 to 1849 and since 1891.

HISTORY OF RUSSELLVILLE

First known as Russell’s Valley, the area was settled after 1815 by Maj. William Russell, who served with Gen. Andrew Jackson in the Creek War of 1813-1814. Russell built a cabin and trading post about three miles east of the present-day town. Following an outbreak of disease, the settlement relocated along the strategically important Jackson’s Military Road from Nashville to New Orleans. The Alabama Territorial Legislature incorporated the town, then called Russellville, on November 27, 1819. The task of laying out the new town fell to the five trustees of the Russellville Land Company: David Moore, Anthony Winston, Brice M. Garner, George Martin, and Richard Ellis. They designed a large public square bounded by Jackson, Lawrence, Washington, and Franklin streets. Henry Hurst built the courthouse and jail that occupied the center of the town square.

Trusted governed the town through much of its early history. The first trustees were William Lewis, Walter Otley, Nat Clay, Humphrey Warren, and Arthur F. Hopkins. In 1887, Russellville adopted a mayor-council form of government. The town served as the seat of Franklin County from 1820 to 1849 and since 1891.

[1000 N. Jackson Avenue, Russellville]

HENRY COUNTY

LITTLE ROCK, ALABAMA

The now dead town of Little Rock stood here, along a vital Native American trading route which joined northeast Henry County to the Gulf. A U.S. Post Office opened here on April 10, 1820. Amos Wheeler was the first postmaster, succeeded by Henry W. Conway on October 17, 1822. The post office later closed, but was reopened on February 18, 1899, with John C. Culppepper as postmaster. James Holt Herring took over the job on March 29, 1901. The post office was then located on his homestead; his wife, Arrie Gertrude Herring, served as postal clerk and assistant. On June 30, 1904, the Little Rock post office was permanently closed. Mail deliveries were transferred to the post office in Abbeville.

Inc., and Steven H. Stokes, M.D., great-grandson of James Holt Herring.

[County Road 194, two miles beyond County Road 57]
LAWRENCE COUNTY

O. C. STANLEY GROCERY AND SERVICE STATION

Built on this site in 1921, the store was a vital enterprise and local gathering place for African American residents of Town Creek and the surrounding rural communities. The Rev. O. C. Stanley owned and operated the business for more than six decades, expanding it from a simple grocery store and service station to include dry-cleaning and taxi services. When he first opened the store, eggs sold for 10¢ per dozen, meat for 10¢ a pound, and twenty-five pounds of flour for 50¢. After the original building burned, Stanley constructed a separate building to house his dry-cleaning service, renamed City Cleaners.

Born May 4, 1904, O. C. Stanley served as a minister for three area Baptist churches. In 1937, he built and served as the original pastor of First Baptist Church of Leighton, the town’s first black Baptist church. He married Elsie King Stanley of Leighton. The couple had ten children. A farmer, freemason, member of the Order of the Eastern Star, trustee of the North Alabama Baptist Academy, and a charter member of the Valleywide Improvement Assoc. of Courtland, Stanley died on August 1, 1987.

[2857 Alabama Highway 20, Town Creek]

MACON COUNTY

BATTLE OF CHEHAW STATION

In July 1864, Union Gen. Wm. T. Sherman sent Maj. Gen. L.H. Rousseau to Alabama with 2500 cavalry to cut the rail link remaining to Confederates defending Atlanta: the West Point & Montgomery Railroad. On 18 July, 3 Union units arrived at Chehaw Station, to be opposed by about 500 Confederates, mostly volunteers 15-17 years old who had never been under fire, were poorly armed, outnumbered, & commanded by an officer they had never seen. 1st Ala. Reserves came by freight from Pollard; 54 Univ. of Ala. cadets joined at Montgomery; conscripts from Camp Watts in Notasulga met them at Chehaw Station. Maj. Bryan Thomas, in overall command, took their train over Uphauppee Creek trestle to Beaseley’s tank, where Union Maj. Baird reported he had met “a superior force of the enemy.” Obsolete muskets faced Sharps carbines & Spenser repeating rifles for several hours before Union reinforcements arrived, forcing the Boys’ Brigade to fall back. Rousseau then withdrew his men rather than to delay further destroying the railroad. Final casualty count: Cadets, 2 wounded; Reserves, 48 killed or wounded; conscripts, 15 wounded, 17 missing. The Union had 3 killed, 11 wounded, and 1 captured.
[Alabama 199, near mile marker 2.]

MOBILE COUNTY

HOME OF JOE CAIN

Joseph Stillwell Cain Jr., recognized today as the patron saint of Mardi Gras in Mobile, purchased this plot of land in 1859 for $500, along with his wife of more than three years, Elizabeth Rabby Cain. The couple built a four-room classic revival cottage on what was then named New Hampshire Street. Here they raised a family of three girls and two boys. Joe Cain, who was the longtime clerk of Mobile’s Southern Market, lived here at the time of his famous ride through Mobile with the Lost Cause Minstrels on Shrove Tuesday, February 25, 1868. The Cains remained here for nearly seventeen years, leaving for a new home in Bayou La Batre in 1877, where they lived until Joe Cain’s death in 1904. Elizabeth Cain died there in 1907.

[906 Augusta Street, Mobile]
MEMORIAL PARK

Dedicated on March 21, 1926, near what was then the western city limits of Mobile, the park was made possible by the Mothers’ Army and Navy League, a volunteer women’s group organized in the city during the Great War. Fundraising for Memorial Park began 11 days after war’s end. Government Street trolleys used the short streets surrounding the park to circle back towards downtown. The area around Memorial Park was referred to as “the Loop,” a moniker which persisted through much of the century even as the city expanded westward.

Designed by local architect George B. Rogers, the park’s monument is made of Sylacauga marble and displays the names of 63 soldiers and sailors from the Mobile region who died during the war. The League raised more than $20,000 for the memorial, primarily through subscriptions purchased by the family and friends of the men listed on the bronze plaques. The names of 53 additional wartime casualties, black and white, were not included on the original memorial. An ordinance protecting the site established it as Mobile’s exclusive memorial to the Great War.

The following were the names of soldiers and sailors from the Mobile area who died during the war which were not included in the original memorial:

- Banks, Charlie
- Branson, Bascomb Newton
- Brown, Carter M.
- Bush, Sim
- Chestang, Lee J.
- Childs, William G.
- Coleman, Dennis
- Coronas, Peter M.
- Crawford, Carl B.
- Creel, John W.
- Dailey, George
- Daw, Denley
- Dumas, William
- Durham, Maxwell L.
- Gailyard, Leonard
- Gibson, Johny
- Gilbreath, Walter P.
- Grubb, Everett J.
- Hanson, Carl
- Henderson, Lewis
- Hunter, Charles Leonard
- Hunter, Willie
- Jackson, Ervin
- Jones, Coleman
- Jones, Richard
- Jones, Thomas
- Junius, Gabe
- Keenum, Hugh R.
- Kirk, Bozzi
- Liepf, Robert L.
- Lloyd, Joe
- McCullum, Leonard F.
- McNair, Cleveland
- Matthews, George
- Mayson, Robert D.C.
- Moore, William C.
- Poe, Arthur
- Rembert, Armstead
- Singleton, Harry
- Smith, George
- Smith, Wilson
- Thomas, George
- Thomas, Ike
- Turner, Marion
- Vamboras, Frank
- Westry, Willie
- Wilkins, Frank Thomas
- Williams, Frank
- Williams, George
- Williams, James
- Williams, Jms.
- Williams, Jeremiah M.
- Williams, Phillip

[1800 Airport Boulevard, Mobile]
**TALLAPOOSA COUNTY**

**DADEVILLE COCA-COLA COMPANY, 1912-1934**

In 1912, Adam Hill Wilder opened a Coca-Cola bottling plant at the corner of Cussetta and West streets. Wilder’s plant produced the beverage in 6.5-ounce glass bottles, filled one at a time by machine. A case of thirty-four bottles cost 80¢. For two decades, the franchise serviced communities in Tallapoosa County east of the Tallapoosa River, including regular routes between Camp Hill, Carrville, Dadeville, Dudleyville, Easton, Jacksons Gap, Reeltown, and Union. The plant also supplied Coca-Cola to the construction site of the Thomas Wesley Martin Dam, built southwest of Dadeville between 1923 and 1926. Thirsty workers sometimes drank more than 300 cases of Coca-Cola a day.

In the 1930s, a businessman from Columbus, Georgia, purchased the Dadeville and nearby Alexander City Coca-Cola franchises. The Dadeville plant closed soon thereafter.

*Corner of West and Green street, Dadeville*

**SARDIS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Thirteen original members met beneath a brush arbor and organized the church in 1837. The first sanctuary was a simple, log structure. The present sanctuary was constructed in 1857. During the Civil War, Confederate soldiers camped on the church grounds as they passed through the region. For much of its history, circuit-riding Methodist ministers held services in the church once each month. Regular weekly services were begun in 1980.

In the early twentieth century, Sardis was seen as a model for establishing Sunday School programs in rural communities. Member Minnie Allgood, a graduate of Tuskegee Female College, served as a field secretary for the Alabama Sunday School Association and traveled the area encouraging other churches to establish programs. The church added a series of classrooms in the 1940s to accommodate the growth of its Sunday School.

The cemetery behind the church dates back to 1840. It is enclosed by a beautiful brick and wrought-iron fence adapted from a cemetery in Williamsburg, Virginia.

“So teach us to number our days so that we can apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Psalms 90:12

*10367 Alabama Highway 50, Dadeville*

**TALLAPOOSA COUNTY**

In August 1814, following Gen. Andrew Jackson’s victory at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, the Creek Nation ceded its land in central and south Alabama to the U.S. Government. On March 24, 1832, the Creek Nation signed the Treaty of Cusseta, yielding the remainder of their lands in east Alabama to white settlers. Tallapoosa County, named for the river that bisects it, was created on December 18, 1832, from portions of this land. The area had long been on the southern route around the Appalachians, serving Indians as the Okfuskee Trail or Upper Creek Path, and prompting the English to establish trading stations at the sites of Flint Hill, Young’s Ferry, Kowaliga, and Okfuskee. The final removal of the Creeks in the mid-1830s “trail of tears” brought in a new flood tide of Americans. The textile industry began at Tallassee Falls in the 1840s, and gold mining caused a boom around Goldville and New Site in the same era. The largely agricultural society began to change in the early twentieth century, with cotton mills in Alexander City and Dadeville; the completion of Martin Dam in 1926 and the formation of Lake Martin with 750 miles of recreational shoreline; and the continual reforestation program which began in the 1930s.

*125 N. Broadnax Street*
SAVE THE DATE!

THE AHA FALL PILGRIMAGE
will be held in Camden, Alabama on October 27, 2018.