Join us in Gadsden for the annual meeting, April 15-17, 2010.
President’s Message
Gary Burton

Gadsden/Etowah County to Host 63rd Annual Meeting

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2009 Historical Markers

Historical Markers/The Alabama Review

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When the Alabama Historical Association convenes in April, lovers of Alabama history will find themselves delightfully mesmerized by the magnificence of Gadsden. Not since 1958 have so many historians, both avocational and professional, descended on this town in northeast Alabama for their annual meeting. Newspaper accounts in 1958 describe the arrival in Gadsden of the titans of Alabama history and members of the “Alabama State Historical Society.” Six of the association’s presidents attended that meeting and posed for a newspaper photo, including Charlie G. Summersell, Peter A. Brannon, James F. Sulzby Jr., William H. Brantley Jr., Ralph B. Draughon, and Rucker Agee.

Fifty-two years later, for the 2010 AHA meeting, members once again find themselves welcomed by Gadsden. As arrangements for the meeting have been made, the goodwill and gracious hospitality of Danny Crownover, president of the Etowah Historical Society, has almost overwhelmed the planning committee, and the city of Gadsden, led by Mayor Sherman Guyton, has made resources available to our organization in an unprecedented manner.

Our hope is that solid history and the stuff of legend and folklore will combine to create an unforgettable experience for those who travel to Gadsden in April. All the sessions promise to be exceptional. In extending the call for papers and scheduling the breakout sessions, Dr. Ruth Truss’s knowledge of the state and her winsome personality have resulted in a smorgasbord of choices that will enrich our appreciation of the state we love. We also look forward to hearing from renowned speakers, Dr. John Ferling and Mary Saums, who will both inform and inspire us. I can hardly wait.

Participants will also have an opportunity to learn about Gadsden and to be transported back in history—to the time of the first steamboat rounding the bend on the Coosa River in 1845; to the tense days of the Civil War and the heroism of Emma Sansom; to the year when the first public library was constructed in nearby Alabama City; to the period of our state’s history in which William Patrick Lay founded the Alabama Power Company; and to the time when Gadsden was the epicenter for heavy industries such as Goodyear Tire and Republic Steel. The city of Gadsden and the surrounding county is rich in history, and we look forward to exploring that history.

I encourage you to register for the annual meeting soon so that you can experience the richness of Gadsden’s past, the mystique of its contemporary culture, and the vibrancy of its future.

Gary Burton, President, Pintlala

Cover photo courtesy of Karen Henricks.
(The following article by Patricia Hoskins Morton is published courtesy of The Encyclopedia of Alabama. Visit the free, online resource on Alabama’s history, culture, geography, and natural environment at www.encyclopediaofalabama.org).

Located in the northeast corner of the state, Etowah County has been an industrial center of Alabama since the nineteenth century. It is the birthplace of William Patrick Lay, the founder of Alabama Power. The city of Gadsden played an important role in both the Civil War and World War II and is home to one of the state’s most breathtaking geographic features, Noccalula Falls, a 100-foot waterfall.

Etowah County was created by an act of the Alabama State Legislature on December 7, 1866, from portions of Cherokee and DeKalb counties. Originally named Baine County in honor of Confederate General David W. Baine, the county existed for one year before being abolished by the state’s Reconstruction government. One year later, the county was recreated and named Etowah, a Cherokee word believed to mean “edible tree.”

The first settlement in what is now Etowah County was located at a town called Double Springs on the Coosa River. Double Springs was transformed on July 4, 1845, when Captain James Lafferty piloted the first steamboat to the area. Local residents offered to name the town “Lafferty’s Landing” in his honor, but Lafferty declined. Instead, the name Gadsden was chosen, in honor of Colonel James Gadsden of South Carolina, famous for the Gadsden Purchase.

On May 2, 1863, during Union colonel Abel Streight’s raid through north Alabama, a local farmer named John Wisdom gained notoriety when he raced ahead of Streight’s troops, who were in turn being pursued by Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest, to Rome, Georgia, to warn the town’s citizens of the Union troops’ impending arrival. A young girl named Emma Sansom became a local heroine during the raid when she led Forrest and his men across Black Creek to capture Streight’s troops.

In 1903, Gadsden resident William Patrick Lay built his first hydroelectric plant on Big Wills Creek, which furnished the town of Attalla with electricity. He organized Alabama Power Company in 1906. Gadsden became an important military center during World War II, when the Gadsden Ordnance Plant was constructed to produce shells for cannons. By the end of the war in
In 1942, the U.S. took possession of 36,300 acres in Etowah and adjoining St. Clair County to establish Alabama’s first Chemical Warfare Center (CWC). Known as Camp Sibert, it served as a Unit Training Center and a Replacement Training Center for the CWC. Deactivated in 1945, Camp Sibert was the training site for more than 45 percent of all CWC troops who served in WWII. In 1963, Etowah County received national media attention when civil-rights worker William Moore was murdered near Attalla.

Because of its rolling and hilly terrain, Etowah County has never been an agricultural powerhouse. Instead, the county’s natural resources and large labor force have made it one of the most important industrial centers in Alabama. In 1845, Coosa Furnace, located on the banks of Big Wills Creek, became the first iron furnace built in the county. In 1895 Dwight Mill in Alabama City was organized, and at the height of its production in 1953, it employed 2,600 people. The mill, which included a village, eventually closed as a result of strikes in 1959. In 1900 Underwood Coal Company was organized and later purchased by Alabama Steel. At one point, the company had 11 mines in operation near the town of Altoona.

In 1929 Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company constructed a plant in Gadsden. At the turn of the twenty-first century it remained the largest employer in the county, with 2,550 workers. On October 5, 2006, U.S. Steel workers went on strike at the plant, which left approximately half the workers without jobs. As of August 2007, Goodyear announced that it would spend close to $125 million to upgrade the plant. The second largest employer, Gulf States Steel, organized in 1903 and in 1998 employed 1,900 workers. In 2000 the company declared bankruptcy and closed.

Photo courtesy of the Alabama Department of Archives and History.
Comprising approximately 542 square miles, Etowah County lies in the northeastern area of the state, wholly within the Cumberland Plateau physiographic section. It is bounded to the east by Cherokee County, to the south by Calhoun and St. Clair counties, to the west by Blount and Marshall counties, and to the north by DeKalb County.

The Coosa River runs north to south through the eastern half of the county, and two of its tributaries, Black and Big Wills creeks, intersect the area. In 1966, Alabama Power constructed H. Neely Henry Dam on the Coosa River, creating the H. Neely Henry Lake, which covers the southern tip of Etowah County. In addition, both the Sand Mountain and Lookout Mountain ranges are located in the county. Interstate 59 runs north-south through the center of the county, and U.S. 11 and U.S. 411 parallel the same route. U.S. 278 runs east-west through the center of the county, and U.S. 431 runs north-south.

The Alabama Historical Association is honored to convene its 63rd annual meeting in Gadsden, and we are indebted to the City of Gadsden and the Etowah Historical Society for making the event possible.

Photo courtesy of the Alabama Department of Archives and History.
Members of the Alabama Historical Association are invited to arrive early on Thursday for the annual meeting in Gadsden and enjoy either a guided tour of historic Noccalulla Falls or a visit to the Etowah Historical Society and Jerry B. Jones Historical Research Library. Both events are available at no cost to members.

Noccalula Falls is home to a 90-foot natural waterfall named for the legendary Cherokee princess who fell to her death to avoid an arranged marriage. The park includes a pioneer village complete with cabins made of hand-hewn logs, grist mill, country store, blacksmith shop, smokehouse, and more. Learn about the intriguing history of the Falls area from Danny Crowover, local historian and president of the Etowah Historical Society. The tour will begin at the Kiwanis Club Pavilion at 3 p.m., and the park is located at 1600 Noccalula Road, Gadsden, AL 35904.

The Jerry B. Jones Historical Research Library of the EHS is a repository for local and state history and contains the historical files and papers of the late Jerry B. Jones, genealogical source materials, census records, local newspapers, and a vast collection of historical maps and photographs. The Etowah Historical Society began in 1954 and is one of the state’s most active societies with over 150 members. The EHS is located at the Elliott Community Center, at the intersection of 29th Street and Meighan Boulevard (U.S. Hwy 431), and members will be available to lead tours and assist researchers from 3 to 5 p.m.
## Schedule of Events

### Thursday, April 15

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>3:00–5:00  PM</td>
<td>Pre-Meeting Guided Tour of Noccalula Falls</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
<td>Etowah Historical Society Open House</td>
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<td><em>(No cost; see page 7 for event details)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td>Reception, <em>Gadsden Museum of Art &amp; History</em></td>
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### Friday, April 16

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<tr>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>Registration, <em>Crosspoint Community Church</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 AM</td>
<td>General Session, <em>Crosspoint Community Church</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45 AM</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions, <em>Crosspoint Community Church</em></td>
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**Session A**

“Creating a Crowd: Trilogies in Alabama Literature,” Bert Hitchcock, Auburn University

“Life into Fiction: Harriet Hassell’s *Rachel’s Children*,” Norman McMillan, University of Montevallo

“William March and Eugene B. Sledge: Mobilians, Marines, and Writers,” Aaron Trehub, Auburn University

**Session B**

“To Save Alabama’s Children: Power, Politics, and Child Labor, 1880-1908,” Thomas Bockhorn, University of Alabama in Huntsville

“Rammed Earth Houses: An American Vision in the New Deal,” Beth Hunter, Birmingham

“Rural Rehabilitation and Farm Security in Alabama,” Charles Roberts, University of Alabama

**Session C**

“Race, Class and Volunteering: Alabama and the War of 1898,” David Turpie, University of Maine

“John R. Steelman and Mob Violence in Alabama, 1930-1934,” Kathleen Lowe, University of Montevallo

“The Twelve Greatest Air Battles of the Tuskegee Airmen,” Daniel Haulman, Maxwell Air Force Base

**Noon**

Lunch, *Crosspoint Community Church*

**1:00 PM**

Afternoon Tours *(maps available at registration)*

**6:00 PM**

Cash Bar and Music by The Kings of Swing, *Gadsden Country Club*
Thursday, April 15
3:00–  Pre-Meeting Guided Tour of Noccalula Falls
5:00 PM Etowah Historical Society Open House
(No cost; see page 7 for event details)
6:00 PM  Reception, Gadsden Museum of Art & History

Friday, April 16
8:30 AM Registration, Crosspoint Community Church
9:30 AM General Session, Crosspoint Community Church
10:45 AM Concurrent Sessions, Crosspoint Community Church

Session A
“The Great Depression in Alabama: Three Visiting Photographers,” Frances Robb, Huntsville
“Captain Wallace E. White: A Perspective on Roosevelt’s Forest Army in Alabama,” Hayden McDaniel, Troy University, Dothan
“A ‘Democratic Labor’: The Tennessee Valley Authority and Regional Development in North Alabama, 1940-1960,” Matthew Downs, University of Alabama

Session B
“A History of Norwood: One of Birmingham’s Most Architecturally and Socially Diverse Early Twentieth-Century Neighborhoods,” Pam King, University of Alabama at Birmingham
“Pigskin to Stethoscopes: Football Players Who Practiced Medicine in Alabama,” Tim Pennycuff, University of Alabama at Birmingham

Session C
“Elizabeth Lyle Saxon: From Alabama Belle to American Suffragist,” Chance Harvey, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
“Weakley vs. Tyson: The 1906 Democratic Primary for Chief Justice,” Tim Lewis, Alabama Supreme Court and State Law Library

Saturday, April 17
8:00 AM Breakfast, Crosspoint Community Church featuring novelist Mary Saums
9:00 AM Registration, Crosspoint Community Church
9:45 AM General Session, Crosspoint Community Church
10:30 AM Concurrent Sessions, Crosspoint Community Church

Session A
“The Great Depression in Alabama: Three Visiting Photographers,” Frances Robb, Huntsville
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“Elizabeth Lyle Saxon: From Alabama Belle to American Suffragist,” Chance Harvey, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
“Weakley vs. Tyson: The 1906 Democratic Primary for Chief Justice,” Tim Lewis, Alabama Supreme Court and State Law Library

11:45 AM Annual Luncheon, Crosspoint Community Church
“Pintlala’s Cold Murder Case: The Death of Thomas Meredith in 1812,” Presidential Address, Gary Burton
Howard Garner Nichols Memorial Library

One of the first sites in Etowah County to be listed on the National Register of Historic places, the Nichols Memorial Library’s unique design and architecture is reminiscent of an ancient Greek temple. Following his graduation from Harvard University, Howard G. Nichols came to Alabama to oversee the construction of a cotton mill and village for Dwight Manufacturing Company but died in June 1896, the result of a work-related injury at the mill. The Nichols family built the library as a memorial to their beloved son, hiring a Boston architect to design the building and oversee its construction in Alabama City. The library was opened to the employees of Dwight Cotton Mill in 1902, making it the first lending library in the state, and in 1973 the Northeast Alabama Genealogical Society purchased the facility to preserve the beauty and use of the historic structure.

Gunn-Bellenger Home

The Victorian-style Gunn-Bellenger Home was built in 1886 by Edward Tracey Hollingsworth, a prominent merchant and banker, for his wife, Julia Parrot, and is officially the second oldest domicile in the city. The house was purchased by Dr. and Mrs. Charles L. Gunn in 1901, and it eventually came under the ownership of their daughter Carolyn Gunn Bellenger, who bequeathed the home to the city of Gadsden upon her death in 1990. The house is listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage and the National Register of Historic Places.
First United Methodist Church

The oldest church in Gadsden was founded in 1845 when Gen. D. C. Turrentine organized a union Sunday school that met in a schoolhouse. By 1868, despite post-war austerity, the Gadsden Methodist Episcopal Church was growing rapidly and became a full-time station. In 1870, a tall and narrow sanctuary with a high, tin-covered spire was located on the lot of the present church at the corner of Fifth and Chestnut Streets. The North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church was organized at this location on November 16, 1870.

Noojin Home

In 1887, the Gadsden Land & Improvement Company built the one-hundred-room Bellevue Hotel on the highest point of Lookout Mountain overlooking Gadsden, the state’s finest resort hotel at the time of construction and popular destination for visitors of nearby Noccalula Falls. During the Civil War the point was known as “The Cliff” where Confederate soldiers kept watch over the small town of Gadsden. Today, nearby Paseur Park Overlook offers a beautiful panoramic view. After the hotel burned in 1912, B. L. Noojin, Sr. purchased the land and constructed the present home. Noojin was a baseball player, educator, athletics director, and owner of the Noojin Supply Company.
The stately Classic Revival home was built in 1904 and was the residence of Colonel Oliver Roland Hood, a Gadsden attorney, civic leader, and one of the three incorporators of the Alabama Power Company in 1906. For thirty-five years Hood was closely associated with W.P. Lay in the development of electric power in Alabama. The home was purchased in 1954 by the Gadsden Woman’s Club and is used for the group’s monthly meeting, as well as special events. The home is on the Alabama Historical Register and was added to the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior on May 8, 1986.

Turrentine Avenue was named for one of Gadsden’s founding fathers, General Daniel Clower Turrentine, who came to Gadsden in 1842. The avenue was originally the lane leading to Turrentine’s 1851 farmhouse. The avenue is known for its architecturally rich collection of houses built between 1891 and 1934. These houses include examples of Queen Anne, Neoclassical, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Mission, Spanish Revival, and Tudor Revival.
Congregation Beth Israel Synagogue
In May 2008, Congregation Beth Israel celebrated the 100th anniversary of the first local religious service held in a rented room in the Gadsden National Bank building. The cornerstone of the current synagogue was laid on March 8, 1922 when Grand Marshal Julian Spearman led Masonic dedication services. The popular pastor, Reverend W.R. Rigell of the First Baptist Church, also spoke, and the service was attended by hundreds of local people interested in this growing sub-community of their town. Although the dedication of the Zemurray Social Hall on March 25, 1960, was marred by an attempted fire-bombing, the Congregation Beth Israel has remained committed to both its Jewish heritage and the Gadsden community.

As part of the construction of Dwight Manufacturing Company in 1895, three grand homes were built on the hill overlooking the cotton mill. They were located on Hillcrest Avenue, soon known by many workers as “Boss Hill.” The three homes were for the company doctor, the mill agent and the school superintendent. The mill agent’s house in the middle was the largest, a two-story home complete with a gingerbread gazebo attached to the house.
Meeting Sites

Noccalula Falls Park
(pre-meeting)
1500 Noccalula Rd.
Gadsden, AL 35902-0267
(256) 549-4663

Etowah Historical Society
(pre-meeting)
Elliott Community Center
2829 W Meighan Blvd
Gadsden, AL 35904-1717

Gadsden Museum of Art & History
(reception)
515 Broad Street
Gadsden, Alabama 35901
(256) 546-7365

Crosspoint Community Church
(main venue)
2730 Wills Creek Rd
Gadsden, AL 35904-4576
(256) 546-9236

The Gadsden Country Club
(Friday Night Banquet)
1884 Rainbow Drive
Gadsden, AL 35902
(256) 546-0451

Accommodations

Gadsden Inn & Suites
200 Albert Rains Blvd
Gadsden, AL 35901-2500
(256) 543-7240

Mention the AHA to receive a special rate of $51 for a single room and $65 for a double room, plus tax. Reservations must be made by April 1.

Hampton Inn Gadsden
129 River Road
Gadsden, AL 35901
(256) 546-2337

Mention the AHA to receive the special rate of $82 plus tax. Reservations must be made by April 8.

Photo courtesy of the Alabama Tourism Department.
1. Gadsden Museum of Art and History
2. Gadsden Inn and Suites
3. Hampton Inn
4. Crosspoint Community Church

Note: Map is not drawn to scale.
John Ferling to Deliver Keynote Address

The 2010 Annual Awards Banquet of the Alabama Historical Association will feature a keynote address by one of the nation’s premier historians of the American Revolution and Early Republic. John Ferling, author of nine books, will discuss how America’s first president became a national icon, the subject of his latest book, *The Ascent of George Washington: The Hidden Political Genius of an American Icon* (2009).

John Ferling is the author of biographies of George Washington and John Adams, each of which is being republished by Oxford University Press on President’s Day 2010. The books are *The First of Men: A Life of George Washington*, which was originally published in 1988, and *John Adams: A Life*, first published in 1992.


Two of his books have been prize winners. *Almost A Miracle: The American Victory in the War of Independence* (2007) and *A Leap in the Dark: The Struggle to Create the American Republic* (2003) won prizes as the best books of the year on the American Revolution.

Ferling has appeared on numerous television documentaries on PBS, the History Channel, and the Learning Channel, and he has appeared on C-Span’s “Booknotes” and “In Depth” programs. Ferling taught in Kentucky and Pennsylvania, but spent most of his career at the University of West Georgia near Atlanta. He retired from teaching in 2004, and he and his wife, Carol, live in Carrollton, Georgia.

Books by John Ferling will be available for purchase from NewSouth Books at the annual meeting, and the author will be available for signing from 6 – 7 p.m. before the awards banquet.

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**Join us before the banquet from 6-7 p.m. for music by the Kings of Swing, an award-winning local volunteer band led by Steve Means, former Gadsden mayor and historic preservationist. Enjoy some great Big Band selections, as well their signature rendition of “Stars Fell on Alabama.”**
Mystery Writer to Speak on Saturday Morning

The annual Saturday breakfast program will feature Alabama native and novelist Mary Saums.

In her youth, Saums worked as a recording engineer in Muscle Shoals on albums by Bob Dylan, Roy Orbison, Jimmy Buffett and many other fine artists. Her new mystery series, set in northwest Alabama, is about two ladies in their sixties who defend an historical forest using intelligence, wit, and assault rifles.

The first book, *Thistle and Twigg*, was a finalist for the 2008 SIBA Book Award for Fiction, given by the Southern Independent Booksellers Association. The sequel, *Mighty Old Bones*, was a “Top Pick” in *Romantic Times*. Mary has a short story in the upcoming anthology *Delta Blues* which also includes contributors John Grisham and James Lee Burke.

She is an active member of Mystery Writers of America and currently serves on the national board of Sisters In Crime, a non-profit organization for the advancement of women in the mystery field.

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For more about Mary’s work and interests, visit her website at www.marysaums.com.
Over 160 AHA members attended the 2009 fall pilgrimage to Lowndesboro on October 10. The program began at the historic CME Church, which boasts the octagon steeple that once graced the state capitol at Cahaba. Presentations by local historian Wayne Taylor, AHA vice-president Dr. Kathryn Braund, and Robyn Harris of the National Park Service were witty, informative and inspiring. AHA past president Dr. Wayne Flynt gave a tribute to Dr. Virginia Van der Veer Hamilton, whose memoir was released just prior to the pilgrimage.

Members toured a number of historic homes and structures in Lowndesboro, including Steelehaven, built in 1818, one of the oldest homes in the Black Belt. Holy Ground Battlefield Park, the site of the important 1813 battle between Creek Indians and American forces, and the Lowndes County Interpretive Center, dedicated to the memory of the participants of the 1965 Selma to Montgomery March, were also a part of the tour.

“The Lowndesboro pilgrimage allowed our members to reflect on three significant aspects of Alabama history--antebellum architecture, the Creek War, and the civil rights movement,” recalled AHA Secretary Mark Wilson, “We are grateful to the Lowndesboro Landmarks Foundation for making the event possible. Their commitment to the preservation and interpretation of state and local history is inspiring.”
Walker County

William Brockman Bankhead Home
1874—1940
Speaker of the United States House of Representatives

William Brockman Bankhead served Alabama in the U.S. Congress from 1917 until 1940. For the last four years of his life, during Franklin D. Roosevelt’s presidency, he served as the 47th Speaker of the House. He was the son of U.S. Senator John Hollis Bankhead, and the brother of U.S. Senator John Hollis Bankhead, Jr. An 1893 graduate of the University of Alabama, where he played fullback on the school’s first football team, Bankhead earned his law degree from Georgetown University. He was the father of noted actress Tallulah Bankhead, who was married in this house on August 31, 1937. Upon Bankhead’s death on September 15, 1940, President Roosevelt and a large delegation of dignitaries, including future President Harry S. Truman, attended the funeral and burial in Jasper. [2009: Jasper]

Lauderdale County

Bettie Anne Highway

The home-place of Bettie Anne Springer-Thornton lies 1.6 miles north on the east side of Lauderdale County Road 51. This home was originally a one-room log cabin, built between 1892 and 1894 by Levi Patrick Thornton. Two rooms and a dog-trot were added prior to 1905. The home was razed and rebuilt in 1945, excluding the south room which remained intact. Bettie Anne Springer, daughter of William Marion Springer (1833-1884) and Rutha Jane Oldham (1826-1896), was born November 17, 1859, in Brooksville, Mississippi, and died May 6, 1932. Bettie Anne was affectionately called “Aunt Bett” by family and friends alike. She donated a portion of property for the construction of the highway, and her son, Samuel Beaver Thornton, donated land for the Old Mt. Bethel Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Levi Patrick Thornton, son of William Henry Thornton (1817-1855) and Sarah Rowsey-Burt (1814-1893), was born August 3, 1850, in Lauderdale County, Alabama, and died May 14, 1915. Levi and Bettie Anne were married on February 8, 1876, and had twelve children. They are buried in the Ingram-Thornton Cemetery in Good Springs (old Thorntonstown). Sponsored by Thornton Family Descendants and Benefactors [2009: Co. Rd. 5 at Co. Rd. 568, Rogersville]

Autauga County

Doster Road Artesian Well House

Prattville is often referred to as “The Fountain City” for the numerous free-flowing artesian
wells found here. A 1933 edition of the Prattville Progress noted that there were more than 400 of these artesian wells in Prattville and its immediate vicinity, some of which supplied the town’s water system.

Although many of the wells have been capped, or ceased to flow when relocated, quite a few remain, including several public wells in the Daniel Pratt Historic District.

This one, over which a well house was erected in 2001 through a partnership with the Historic Prattville Redevelopment Authority and the City of Prattville, has long attracted those who enjoy its clear, sweet artesian water. [2009: Doster Rd., Prattville]

Wilson Pickett, Jr.  
March 18, 1941 — January 19, 2006

A native of Prattville, Wilson Pickett was raised singing gospel in local churches. Upon moving to Detroit as a teenager, he began to blend gospel-style with rhythm and blues, resulting in some of “the deepest, funkiest soul music” to come from the Deep South.

In 1966, he began working with musicians in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, and it was there that he cut some of his biggest hits, including “Land of a Thousand Dances,” “Mustang Sally” and “Funky Broadway.” During his career, he made more than 200 recordings, 50 of which made the rhythm and blues and pop charts. Called “The Wicked Pickett” because of his uninhibited style, raw energy and distinctive sound, he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1991. [2009: Prattville]

Colbert County

William Leigh – Founder of Leighton

The town of Leighton was named in honor of the Reverend William Leigh, son and grandson of Revolutionary War veterans. He was born in Amelia County, Virginia, Oct. 4, 1790 and moved to Alabama about 1823. Leigh settled nearby at “Jeffers Cross Roads” and became a large landowner, pioneer merchant, postmaster, and La Grange College trustee. He was a charter member of Leighton Masonic Lodge No. 43 and served as Grand Master of the Alabama Masons (1833-1835). Leigh was a Missionary Baptist preacher for 63 years and served as pastor and leader in the Muscle Shoals Baptist Association. In 1836, he donated land and helped build a brick meeting house in Leighton for joint use by the Masons, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Cumberland Presbyterians, and others. William Leigh – Founder of Leighton
William Leigh was the first postmaster of Leighton (1824-1847) and, with William Gregg, operated a storehouse at the crossroads under the firm name of William Leigh & Company. He ran unsuccessfully for the state legislature on the Whig ticket in 1840. In 1847, Leigh sold his store, 1800-acre plantation, livestock, and 30 slaves and moved to Kentucky. He soon returned to Alabama, living in Moulton a few years before moving to Florence where his wife served as matron at the Florence Synodical College. Leigh died there in Florence, July 31, 1873, and was buried here in the Leigh family graveyard. The Masons erected a monument at his unmarked grave in 1931. The old brick church that he helped build a century earlier was razed about 1948.

Sponsored by the Colbert County Historical Landmarks Foundation [2009: Co. Rd. 22, Leighton]

Franklin County

Newburg

First known as New Boston when a post office was established here in 1832, by 1834 the community was known as Newburg. The Newburg Masonic Lodge #388 was organized in 1872. Since its completion in 1878, the Lodge hall has been a center for community events, serving as the meeting place for the Masons and other clubs, as well as church, school, and voting precinct.

Mt. Pleasant Methodist Church, active since its founding in 1824 by Rev. James Smith, located 1/4 mile east of this site.

Denton Hollow burial site of William Russell (ca. 1745-1825) one mile south. Major Russell, for whom nearby Russellville was named, served with Andrew Jackson during the Creek War and returned to this area to settle after the war. [2009: Hwy. 24, 8 mi. east of Russellville]

Crenshaw County

Sports

The area known as Sports was settled by Jonathan Sport and his son, William, who migrated from South Carolina in 1842. Jonathan and William owned 600 acres of land in the area at one time, farming and operating a grist mill. William’s sons John Solomon, William Garmon, Thomas Benjamin, Malachai, Daniel Webster, and Joseph Nathaniel have descendants living in the area in 2009. Originally called “Piney Woods,” Sports first appeared on an official railroad map in 1900. [2009: Hwy. 29, Sports]
Pickens County

Summerville Industrial High School
1937 — 1958

On this site in September 1937, Summerville Industrial High School opened under the leadership of Otis James Brooks, who remained its principal throughout its existence. The new school, which consolidated the smaller schools of Emory Chapel, Wilder’s, Nolan, Union Valley, and Good Hope, initially had five teachers and 100 students engaged in general academic studies. In 1939, with vocational agriculture and home economics added to the curriculum, Summerville Industrial High School had 16 teachers teaching 500 students.

The school was named in honor of Hugh S. Summerville who donated the land for the campus.

Sponsored by Summerville/Kirksey Alumni [2009: Co. Rd. 13]

Montgomery County

Alabama State University
The Early Years
Side 1

Founded in 1867, the Lincoln School in Marion, Alabama became the first state-assisted normal school for African Americans in 1874. The school prospered in that location for 13 years, training teachers, preachers, and scholars. Following a racial incident in Marion in 1887 the main building was burned down and the school was moved to Montgomery where it would become the State Normal School for Colored Students. The state reneged on its promise to support the school after the move to Montgomery and suspended its funding for three years, during which period the college held classes in churches and survived largely because of contributions from the black community and northern philanthropies.

Tatum Street
Side 2

For three years, the American Missionary Association (AMA) teachers, President William Burns Paterson (1849-1915), his wife, Margaret (1853-1904), and his deputy, John Beverly (1858-1924), kept the school going. After state funding was restored in 1890, Tatum St. and nearby Hall St. became “faculty row.” There, Paterson built a house, a greenhouse, and Rosemont Gardens, which would contribute to the support of the school and his family. Beverly, who would be the school’s next president, also built his house on Tatum St. AMA teachers from NY, MA, and VT boarded on the street. [2009: Tatum St., Montgomery]
The Alabama Historical Association began sponsoring historical markers as early as 1950, and a standing AHA marker committee was created in 1952. The committee’s duties are to encourage and assist interested parties in the purchase and erection of markers for historical sites. The committee also serves to check the accuracy of information carried in the proposed marker texts and to attest to a site’s historic importance. The distinctive design of the Alabama Historical Association marker is a double-faced cast aluminum plate with a baked enamel finish. The plate has a deep blue background and the text is portrayed in gold letters. The insignia at the top is the Alabama flag, the St. Andrew’s cross, in red, white, and gold.

For more information regarding historical markers, please visit www.archives.state.al.us/aha/marker.html.

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Moundville Archaeological Park

Complete information will be available in the fall newsletter.

Photo courtesy of Moundville Archaeological Park.