



Foundation Forum

Foundation Forum and Historic Huntsville Foundation Newsletter

The Historic Huntsville Foundation is committed to building a vibrant future for Huntsville-Madison County by preserving our past. Since 1974, we have promoted the protection and preservation of Huntsville-Madison County's historically, architecturally and culturally significant structures and sites through education, advocacy and public policy.



©2015 Bob Gathany/AL.com, The Huntsville Times

A Picture Perfect Evening – 2015 Movies in the Park

Donna Castellano

The first Movie in the Park Summer Series opened to rave reviews! And why wouldn't it? The evening had it all! A grassy venue in Big Spring Park East, a blockbuster film, enthusiastic crowds, and pre-movie festivities that included kid's activities courtesy of the YMCA, food trucks and vendors, face painting and even a fire-eating magician!

But it was Malificent who was the star of the evening, and she did not disappoint. With a modern twist to the classic tale of "Sleeping Beauty," Malificent delivered the true-love kiss that awakened Princess Aurora from her sleep. This version of the story revealed that Prince Charming is the fairy tale.



The theme of true love continues with the July 10 showing of *The Princess Bride*. Is it possible that Westley will fail in his quest to rescue Buttercup from the evil clutches of Prince Humperdink? All together now! Inconceivable!

The summer series concludes with the animated film *Despicable Me* on August 14. True love continues to work its magic, as the love of three orphan girls changes the super villain's heart.

The YMCA's Funtastic Family hour kicks off at 6:00 with free activities for the kids. Pick up dinner from a food truck and enjoy the sights and sounds in Big Spring Park East. Movies begin at dark.

Documenting Twickenham

Updated Twickenham National Nomination listed to the National Register of Historic Places Donna Castellano



The thirteen blocks of the Twickenham Historic District contain many of Alabama's oldest and most architecturally significant homes, churches, and commercial buildings. Twickenham was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973, but the level of documentation required by the National Park Service in the early years of the program is minimal compared to today's standards.

Thanks to a \$20,000 grant provided to the City of Huntsville by the Historic Huntsville Foundation, the Twickenham Historic District now has a National Register nomination that fully documents and captures the architectural and historical significance of the district.

Replacing the 1973 nomination of 19 pages, is a 195 page nomination that documents each individual property, including a complete architectural description of the residence and any outbuildings, documents historically significant events or persons associated with the property, and identifies the architect, if applicable. The 2015 National Register nomination also documents the district's distinguishing landscaping features, such as stone walls, granite curbs, iron fencing, brick sidewalks and limestone carriage mounts.



The 2015 National Register nomination includes Newman and Lowe Avenue and parts of California Street, which were added by the city to the local district in 2000.

The 1973 district contained 324 contributing resources and 148 noncontributing resources; the 2015 National Register nomination contains 361 properties with 527 individual resources, since outbuildings are included in the totals. Of these, there are 359 contributing buildings and 163 non-contributing buildings. Roughly 69 percent of the district is contributing. The nomination states: "This ratio is an indication of the district's integrity and architectural design."

Jessica White-Blatter, Historic Preservation Consultant to the Huntsville Historic Preservation Commission, states: "The resurvey of the Twickenham historic district comes at a crucial point for historic preservation in the City of Huntsville. This body of work is a vital component to the Huntsville Historic Preservation Commission's decision-making process, providing key information on each building's history. This project would not have been possible without the funding and support of the Huntsville Historic Foundation, which worked tirelessly to keep the nomination up-to-date and relevant to our city."

From the Chairman *Fred Coffey*

There are times in board meetings that discussions wander from Profit and Loss statements or committee reports to probe the deeper question: How can we practice our preservation mission in a way that makes a tangible difference in our community?

This edition of the Foundation Forum reveals the answer to this question.

Through the listing of the resurveyed Twickenham Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places and the completion of the Madison County Historic Resources Survey, the Historic Huntsville Foundation has documented the oldest and most historically and architecturally significant structures in the state of Alabama.

Working with our preservation partners from across the state, the Historic Huntsville Foundation provided information to our members and the public that addressed concerns of the preservation community about HB 584, which proposed to dismantle the Alabama Historical Commission. Fortunately, our efforts slowed the bill's progress, and it did not pass in the regular legislative session.

Through Movies in the Park, we provide evenings of fun, free entertainment to friends and families across Madison County, bringing them together at the Big Spring, the very place John Hunt made his home, about 210 years ago.

Historic preservation is not the work of impatient people. We require a long view of history, so we can take on projects that may take years to develop before they are completed.

We are ever mindful that we do this work on your behalf, the members of the Historic Huntsville Foundation. Your membership dues provide the critical resources required to pursue our mission. With your support, we can stay focused on our goals. We can build a more vibrant future by preserving our past.

Our Preservation Mission at Work

*Madison County Historic Resources
Survey a Boon for Historians*

Sarah Walker Carmack

HHF's "Log Cabins to Bungalows" historic site survey is an accomplishment appreciated among the community of local historians due to its record of early nineteenth through mid-twentieth century structures and sites. Local researchers become excited when they realize the existence of documented historical resources that tie into our rich Madison County history. Much of our county's settlement came long before the Civil War and much of our history predates our 1819 Alabama statehood, so locating historical evidence can be a careful and spirited search effort. Court records, personal documents, inherited tales, historic sites, family trees, writings of the early residents... any sources right here in the community that we can see and access... those are the things local historians dream about.

Documentation of the architectural backdrops, early farms, commercial buildings, cemetery sites, and other focal points of our ancestral communities supply individual researchers with invaluable details. This survey document provides information essential to studies of individuals, communities, rural development, Southern culture, and so much more. Thanks to HHF and the grant of the Alabama Historical Commission for the creation and availability of the "Log Cabins to Bungalows" survey.

Sarah Carmack studied in the graduate history program at UAH and is now a freelance writer who enjoys historical research. She also takes special interest in local food, hiking Tennessee Valley trails, and native plants.

The Arts and Crafts Movement in America

Charles Vaughn

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, a quiet revolution had begun. This revolution protested the replacement of the handcraft with objects mass-produced by machine. It also reacted to Victorian society's penchant for the exotic and the ostentatious. This movement came to be known as the Arts and Crafts Movement in England and America. Such a show of artistic solidarity had not been seen before, nor has it been repeated in the century since.

The Arts and Crafts movement in America came to be associated with a type of home called the bungalow. The word bungalow was originally derived from a Hindi word that described a type of Colonial dwelling built by the British in India. It was generally a single story house whose well ventilated rooms opened off a central hall and which had a shallow pitched roof and covered porches all around.

The American movement adopted the bungalow as the ideal Craftsman house. It modified the Indian version, as some bungalows of two stories were constructed, and ceilings were lowered for warmth and coziness as well as for economy. The covered porches of the Indian version were replaced by a combination of porches, terraces, and arbors. Windows were abundant, sleeping porches almost always figured into the design, and the houses were generally sensitive to their surroundings. Further, the use of materials indigenous to the area of construction was thought to be appropriate to make the house feel as if it belonged to its location.

According to Gustav Stickley, considered by many to be the major voice of the Arts and Crafts movement in America:

The Craftsman type of building is largely the result not of elaboration, but of elimination. The more I design, the more sure I am that elimination is the secret of beauty in architecture. By this I do not mean that I want to think and work meagerly. Rather, I feel that one should plan richly and fully, and then begin to prune, to weed, to shear away everything that seems superfluous and superficial. Practically every house I build I find, both in structural outline and in the planning and the adjustment of the interior space, that I am simplifying, that I am doing away with something that was not needed; that I am using my spaces to better advantage. All of this means the expenditure of less money and the gain of more comfort and beauty.

If, added to this simple reasonable structure, the materials for the house are so far as possible those which may be found in the locality where the house is built, a beauty of fitness is gained at the very start. A house that is built of stone where stones are in fields, of concrete where the soil is sandy, of brick where brick can be had reasonably, or of wood if the house is in a mountainous wooded region, will from the beginning belong to the landscape. And the result is not only of harmony, but economy.

Thus the Craftsman home was conceived as a simple dwelling. These houses are easily recognizable by their shallow pitched roofs with wide overhangs, bracketed gables, and wide porches. They featured banks of windows to allow light the flood the interior. The gables were often set off by stucco and timbering. Some bungalows showed an Asian influence in their details.

The bungalow movement was more than an architectural style, as Stickley alluded to. It was philosophy and a way of life. It stood for home ownership for the growing middle class. These homes which were devoid of unnecessary ornament, and designed to fit their sites, were also relatively inexpensive and easy to build. They could be and were sometimes erected by the sweat-equity of their owners to designs that were specific to the needs of the homeowners' family. The movement seemed to take hold in the Northeast and in California. In the Northeast, the popularity is probably because of proximity to the centers of ideas in the established cities and in California, because of a climate well suited to the indoor/outdoor living that was a part of the philosophy of the movement.

But the movement gained wings because of vastly improved communications throughout the nation, and because of such publications as *The Craftsman*, the work of Gustav Stickley. Filled with a combination of house plans and essays, *The Craftsman*



showed would-be homeowners throughout the US that they had options for living that they might not have considered without Stickley's publication. These homes were furnished with exceedingly simple pieces that expressed their construction methods with exposed pegs and through-tenons and looked as though they were capable of having been created by a talented homeowner.

Of course, grander houses in the bungalow style were also created. The most famous of these are in Pasadena California, and were designed by the brothers Charles and Henry Greene and their followers. The Gamble House, one of the finest of the Greene's works, today is operated as a house museum and is open to the public. It was built for Mr. and Mrs. David Gamble, second-generation

members of the Proctor and Gamble family of Cincinnati, and was to be used as a winter home. The Gambles had been wintering at the resort hotels of Pasadena since the turn of the century and in 1907 decided that it was time to have a place of their own. The Greene brothers built for these clients what was unquestionably one of their masterworks.

As with most fashions, the Arts and Crafts movement fell out of favor, but frugal Americans held on to their bungalows. They were simply too practical, comfortable, cozy, and numerous to pass into obscurity. And the furniture was rock solid and difficult to destroy.

Examples of the style languished for decades only to be rediscovered more than 20 years ago by a generation who appreciated its

charms anew. A host of new publications espousing small house design show bungalows as an ideal for construction in the late 20th and into the 21st century. Today the followers of the Craftsman style and philosophy outnumber those who came under its spell in its first incarnation.

The success of the Craftsman revival may be explained by taking a critical look at our world today. A philosophy of simplicity is very appealing at a time when the American family seems truly in danger of being overwhelmed by its possessions. English Arts and Crafts icon William Morris' adage that one

Historic Recognition for the Old Madison Cemetery Jeanne Steadman

“Congratulations! Madison City Cemetery has been favorably reviewed and is now listed on the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register.” I was thrilled to see these words as I opened the letter from the Alabama Historical Commission in mid January 2015. As President of the Madison Municipal Cemeteries Committee, I sent in the application in August of 2014 and was anxiously awaiting the results.

We believed Madison’s oldest city-owned cemetery deserved historic recognition. Madison receives attention now as the fastest growing city in the state, but there were hardy souls who were here 200 years ago. It is easy to overlook this in our fast paced, modern environment, so the Cemetery Committee wanted to make sure we remember.

This plot of ground has been the resting place of many of Madison’s pioneer families since the early 1800’s. We do not know who or when the first person was buried here, nor do we know exactly how many souls rest here. Many were poor, unable to afford a permanent marker and the wood ones placed so long ago have been lost to time. There are countless babies lying here, a heart wrenching testament to a harsher time, but even more reason to honor this sacred ground and the folks who rest here.



The plaque we ordered for the cemetery will be a lasting marker for all their graves. In part it will say:

This marker is erected
to remember and honor
those who came before us.

I can share what we do know. There are 476 existing grave markers, many with unusual symbols and touching words of farewell. The oldest known birth date is 1811. There are veterans from at least five different wars interred here. We know of no

Union graves, but there are several Confederate soldier graves including some marked with the rare Confederate cross.

There are whole areas owned by a single family where grandparents lie side by side with grandchildren. A boundary of these family plots are often outlined with wrought iron fences, brick or stonewalls. One of the most interesting facts is that two of the largest monuments, along with their occupants, were moved here from their original resting spot on farm land where the Huntsville International Airport is now located. Originally called the JetPort, many small and large farms were taken during construction. In many cases the same families had occupied the land for generations. As was typical back then, most had family plots where they buried their own. I bet these two never imagined a trip to Madison lay in

store for them!

Old Madison City Cemetery is a green, peaceful three and a half acre oasis in the heart of a bustling community; not much changed from 150 years ago. A bit of history you can see and walk and experience in the twenty-first century.

I am grateful to the Alabama Historical Commission for sponsoring a historic recognition register for our state’s cemeteries and so happy our little spot made the list!

THE HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE FOUNDATION

MOVIES in the Park

presented by

JERRY DAMSON HONDA/ACURA

MOVIE STARTS AT SUNDOWN

July 10

August 14

The Princess Bride
Downtown Huntsville Inc.

Despicable Me
Huntsville International Airport

FLAVOR	SMALL	LARGE
Cheddar	\$2.00	\$3.50
Kettle	\$2.00	\$3.50
White Cheddar	\$2.00	\$3.50
Windy City	\$2.50	\$4.25
Caramel	\$3.00	\$5.00
Cotton Candy	\$2.50	
Cinnamon Glazed Nuts	1 Cone: \$4.50 2 cones: \$8.00	
Sodas & Water	\$1.00	



New Location! Big Spring Park EAST (base of courthouse square)



FESTIVITIES KICK OFF AT 5:30

Food Trucks at 5:30



YMCA's FUNTASTIC FAMILY HOUR AT 6:00

www.historichuntsville.org





124 Southside Square
Huntsville, AL 35801

2015 Membership Levels & Benefits

Individual/Family Membership \$50

For the above, members:

- Are guests at a membership reception held annually in a historic residence
- Receive Foundation newsletters and email updates
- Receive invitations to HHF special events and programs

Patron \$125 *All of the above, plus:*

- Recognition in the HHF Newsletter and on HHF Website
- Receive a 10% discount on any ONE item, including original artwork, at Harrison Brothers Hardware

Benefactor \$250 *All of the above, plus:*

- Recognition at Harrison Brothers Hardware's Anniversary Sidewalk Celebration

Preservation Society \$1000 *All of the above, plus:*

- Individual or Corporate recognition at HHF Movies in the Park

Preservation Partner \$2,500 *All of the above, plus:*

- Individual or Corporate recognition in Harrison Brothers Hardware

Thank you for helping us build a more vibrant future for Huntsville/Madison County by preserving our past! Please make checks payable to: The Historic Huntsville Foundation

Yes, Please renew my membership in the Historic Huntsville Foundation.

Individual & Family \$50

Patron \$125 to \$249

Benefactor \$250

Preservation Society \$1,000

Preservation Partner \$2,500

Name _____

Print name as it should appear on our membership levels and mailings.

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Home Phone _____ Cell _____

Please send your membership dues to: The Historic Huntsville Foundation
124 Southside Square, Huntsville, AL 35801

HHF Board of Directors

Officers

Fred Coffey *Chairman*

Charles Vaughn *Vice Chairman*

Jeanne Steadman *Secretary*

Jason Vandiver *Treasurer*

Alice Lawler

Barry Carden

Judy Carden

Becky Carstens

John Cline

Kay Lowry

Mary Drakey

Pat Ryan

Stephanie Sherman

Susan Stinson

Diane Strickland

Donna Castellano

Executive Director