



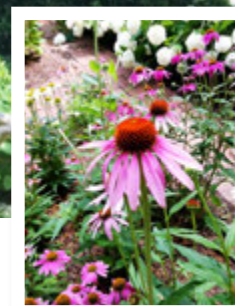
# Foundation Forum

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.*



*The garden of Julie and Dale Culpepper*



## Tending our Garden

*Donna Castellano*

The five gardens featured in the Historic Huntsville Foundation's Spring Garden Tour took our breath away. Not to detract from nature's role in their creation, but the talent, dedication and labor of the respective gardeners were also on display, inspiring us to take a chance and, perhaps, commit to our own project.

The tour gardens and their neighborhoods are not just examples of green thumbs, but also of the rejuvenating force of historic preservation. Decades ago, fearful for the future of Huntsville's historic homes and buildings, concerned citizens and city leaders created the Twickenham Historic District.

That successful endeavor inspired the creation of the Old Town Historic District,

followed by Five Points, then the Normal, New Market, Gurley, and Madison Station historic districts. Topped off with the Lincoln, Merrimack, Dallas and Lowe Mill Village historic districts.

With a strong, local economy and well-managed city and county governments, we live in an area whose fertile soil encourages investment in historic properties. In 2013, property owners invested roughly \$5.6 million in approximately 98 homes in the Twickenham, Old Town and Five Points historic districts or close to \$57,000 per house. Birmingham generated about \$6.5 million in investments for 362 houses, or \$18,000 per house; and Mobile generated an estimated \$8.2 million in investments for 343 houses, roughly \$24,000



*Tons of sunshine and bountiful hydrangeas greeted guests at HHH's Spring Garden Tour.*

## Tending our Garden

*continued from cover*

per house. House for house, Huntsville realizes more than double, even triple the amount of investment in its historic districts than the districts of these other cities.

Investment in historic properties is not limited to the downtown historic districts. Jim Hudson's imagination turned Lowe Mill from a vacant mill into the Southeast's largest privately owned arts center. The former Merrimack Mill commissary is now a place where kids dance their dreams, thanks to the vision of Alan and Debra Jenkins. And Lincoln Mill is back to work again as an office campus, courtesy of Ana and Jim Byrne.

There is a conspicuous absence in our garden of National Register listed homes, neighborhoods and buildings. Aside from the Test Stands at Marshall Space Flight Center, we have no specimens from our most dynamic decades, the 1950's and 1960's, when Huntsville scientists and engineers developed the technology that took man to the moon. There is a tendency to view homes, neighborhoods and buildings from this era as weeds, something to pull and toss away. We should guard against this impulse.

Once plucked, a house can never be replanted.

## From the Chairman

*Fred Coffey*

Ann and I have lived in Huntsville for most of our married life and feel fortunate to call this city our home. Huntsville was a great place to raise our daughters, and we want to ensure that the city thrives so that it is a great place for our grandchildren. Supporting organizations whose mission promotes Huntsville's future is one way to make this happen. I joined the Historic Huntsville Foundation a few years ago, and I am proud to serve as chairman for 2015.

HHF closed 2014 on a strong note: A record year in sales for Harrison Brothers Hardware and a nomination for Downtown Huntsville's Event of the Year for Movies in the Park.

We have an exciting year planned for 2015! Movies in the Park will return this summer, and we are thrilled that Our Valley Events chose Movies in the Park as a "Must See Event" for 2015! Crowds should be even larger!

We will debut a new courthouse square event on Saturday, October 10, which is our way to thank the community for their support of Harrison Brothers Hardware over the past 30 years. We can promise music, food vendors, and free activities for the kids.

We hope you enjoy the Winter/Spring HHH newsletter. I recommend HHH board member Charles Vaughn's essay on Stuart Abel and post-modern architecture and Katie Stamps' synopsis of the City of Huntsville's "Preserve Huntsville" Lecture Series. We have a great year planned for 2015.



# Spring Garden Party Food, Fun, and a Blooming Good Time!



*The Lowry garden awaits the arrival of party guests.  
Stephanie Sherman (event chair) with hosts Sam and Kay Lowry*



We promised you the garden of Kay and Sam Lowry was made to party, and it did not disappoint. Guests caught up with friends over cool drinks as the band, Rick Jobe and the Wonderin' Cowboys, serenaded the crowd with lively western swing tunes. As the night wore on, storms threatened to bring festivities to an early close. But stalwart partygoers found refuge under the covered porch of the pool house. We sang. We danced. And the celebration continued as the band played on.

## HHF Joins HHPC in New "Preserve Huntsville" Lecture Series

*Katie Stamps*

### *Debuts to Standing Room Only Crowd*

Historic Huntsville Foundation makes public outreach and preservation education part of its mission. On Thursday, Jan. 29 at 6:00pm, Historic Huntsville Foundation Executive Director Donna Castellano and ex-officio board member Katie Stamps participated in the first Annual "Preserve Huntsville" Lecture Series organized by the Huntsville Historic Preservation Commission.

On this night, guest lecturers presented on a variety of preservation topics to educate the public on preservation history, guidelines and standards at the national, state and local levels. "The purpose of this event is to uphold the commission's education endeavors, while at the same time partnering with organizations like the Historic Huntsville Foundation, which have played a vital role in the continued success of grassroots historic preservation," said Jessica White, City of Huntsville Historic Preservation Consultant.

The night's first speaker was Katie Stamps who works as the Architectural Historian for Redstone Arsenal and also serves as a member on the HHPC. Katie's lecture, "National

*The Huntsville Historic  
Preservation Commission*  
— is proud to present —

**The Preserve Huntsville Lecture Series**

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Join us for an engaging evening of presentations and audience discussion as esteemed speakers Donna Castellano, Katie Stamps, and Jessica White lead the discussion on historic preservation efforts in Huntsville.

*Event:*  
**JANUARY 29, 2015**  
Public Service Building @ 6:00 PM : **320** *Fountain Circle*

*Presentations:*  
National Standards, Local Impact  
Katie Stamps, Redstone Arsenal Architectural Historian and HHPC Commissioner

A Guide to Huntsville's Historic Preservation Guidelines  
Jessica White, City of Huntsville Historic Preservation Consultant

Preservation at the Grassroots  
Donna Castellano, Executive Director of the Historic Huntsville Foundation

Standards, Local Impact," focused on the early history of the historic preservation movement in the United States which began in the mid-19th century and how that movement led to the establishment of national preservation legislation and standards.

Jessica White brought the discussion to the local level during her presentation of "A Guide to Huntsville's Historic Preservation

Guidelines." Her presentation focused on explaining Huntsville's Historic Preservation Guidelines, their significance, and their role within a community. She encouraged community members to actively participate in local preservation efforts and think about what these guidelines should say about Huntsville's dynamic historic neighborhoods.

Donna Castellano, Executive Director of Historic Huntsville Foundation, concluded the evening with her presentation on "Preservation at the Grassroots," providing an overview of the grassroots preservation movement in Huntsville. Listing the many preservation success stories in Huntsville/Madison County, she stressed the need to identify buildings, homes and neighborhoods from the post-war period, a period of great significance in Huntsville history.

The HHPC will present other lectures throughout the year on topics such as historic building materials and methods and successful ideas for historic building design. Workshops for weatherization and historic wood window repair are also being planned for the spring and summer months.

## Thank you notes

We are indebted to  
Julie and Dale Culpepper,  
Tina and Jimmy Caudle,  
Bobby Bradley and  
Charley Burruss,  
Stephanie Sherman,  
Lynne and Steuart Evans  
for sharing their gardens  
with us for the  
HHF Spring Garden Tour;

Many thanks to  
Kay and Sam Lowry  
for opening their garden  
for the  
Spring Garden Party.

More thanks to  
Alice Lawler, Lucy Brown,  
and a legion of volunteers  
from the  
Old Town Historic District  
and the

Master Gardeners Class.  
And greatest thanks to  
Stephanie Sherman,  
the dynamo who thought up,  
planned, organized  
and executed  
the whole shebang.

*Stephanie, it was wonderful!*



## Get your 2015 garden fix!

Sunday, June 7 from 1:00 pm  
to 5:00 pm.

Old Town Garden Tour  
features gardens  
in the beautiful  
Old Town Historic District.

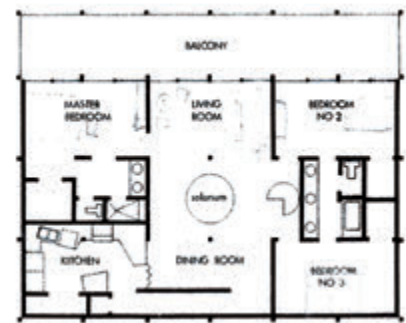
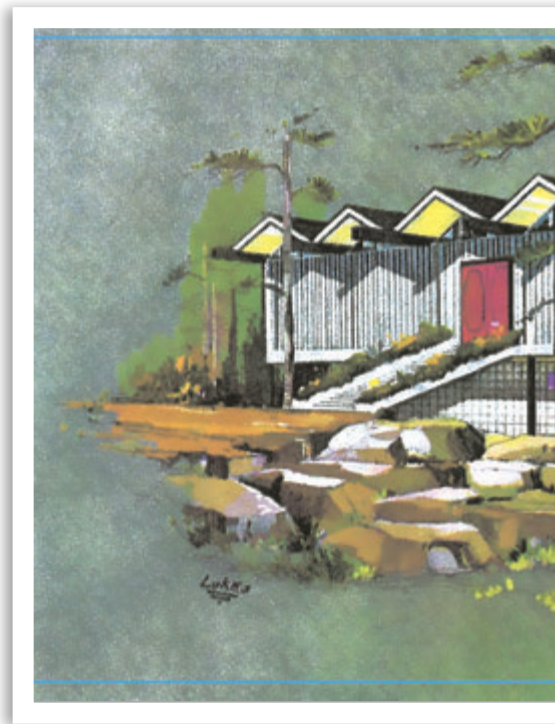
## Keeping the Dream Alive

*Charles Vaughn*

In the 1963 brochure for Huntsville's annual Tour of Homes, architect Stewart Abel published the plans and elevations for a house he had built in Mount Charron alongside the title of "A Dream Come True." This house was one of several dozen that Abel would design and build during his three-year tenure as an engineer working on the Saturn rocket program in Huntsville.

Abel was an architect by training, and he designed and built at least thirty houses that looked quite unlike those houses that the residents of our area were used to seeing. They are reflective of an aesthetic now known as Mid-century Modern, and the designs are characterized by large expanses of glass, flat roofs or unusual complex rooflines like the multi-gable "Dream Come True," minimal ornament, and humble materials (like plywood and concrete block) used in inventive ways.

These houses today constitute one of the hottest trends in historic architecture. Though it may seem odd to refer to these houses as historic, they are now more than 50 years old and have passed the milestone necessary to move them onto the preservation radar. There is a committed nationwide following for this style of architecture, and entire communities have built an economy based on touring these very special houses. Because of their high concentration of mid-century public buildings, cities like Palm Springs, California and Columbus, Indiana play host to thousands of devotees of the mid century style each year.



We are fortunate to have a number of these houses in Huntsville, built by Abel and by other capable designers and builders of the mid-twentieth century. Abel has some committed disciples of the style in the homeowners who live in his modern masterworks. And preservation has some unlikely allies in these people who might never have seen themselves living in a "historic" house of a more traditional bent, but appreciate the experience of being a part of the natural landscape that living in a glass house made of natural materials provides. These houses were built to target the needs of the average American family, and their

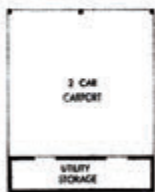
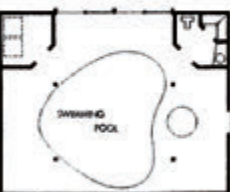




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## ***A Dream Come True***

**ABEL CONSTRUCTION CO.**  
408 EDMONT DR., N.W.  
852-6711



open floor plans, abundant natural light, and connection to nature continue to delight the individuals and families that call these structures home today.

During the 30-year heyday of the mid-century modern movement from approximately 1945 to 1975 – a period of economic growth which occurred concurrently with an attitude of great optimism for the future — America developed an appetite for progressive (modern) design in everything from automobiles to clothing to homes and the objects that filled them. Mid-century modern has been described as an architecture of ideas.

It is a style and a philosophy that came about as a reflection of the prevailing optimism of the times, and was created by those who believed the forward-looking style could be a vehicle for social change by providing beautiful and uplifting housing, and the expectation was that it would do so at an affordable price. Making the best use of resources to build homes at reasonable prices was especially important given the increased demand for single family housing due to the extended period of prosperity and to financing that was offered through the Veterans Administration to the huge number of returning service

men after World War II.

Often these mid-century houses are modestly nestled into their sites, which enhance their connection with nature while reducing site preparation and foundation costs. Many of Abel's Huntsville houses were located on sites that had been passed over by builders of more traditional structures (because of their steepness or rocky condition), and were left in their rugged state, again enhancing the natural experience while saving on landscaping costs.

Small efficient bedrooms and bathrooms allowed space to be concentrated in family living areas, and expanses of glass allowed even small spaces to benefit from natural light and views, thereby appearing larger and more pleasant. And it is the mid-century modern house that deserves much of the credit for the establishment of what we now call outdoor rooms. The connection to nature so apparent in the modern house provided convenient access to outdoor space intended as living space during temperate times of the year.

The lessons that midcentury modern houses offer today are as fresh as they were more than fifty years ago when these structures were first conceived. These homes provided everything really necessary for comfortable family life. A connection to nature and an opportunity to simplify are ideas still just as seductive today. The unique appeal of these houses has not dimmed with the passage of time and their message rings as clearly today as when they were new.



*Barns and farm buildings that once dotted the Madison County landscape are an increasingly rare sight.*

## Making a difference: Our preservation mission at work

*Donna Castellano*

We have provided updates on the “Log Cabins to Bungalows: A Historic Resources Survey of Madison County” over the past few years. As you may recall, HHF received a grant from the Alabama Historical Commission to survey portions of rural Madison County to identify historically significant buildings, homes and sites that may be eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places. One purpose of the Survey is to protect Madison County’s historic homes, buildings, churches, and cemeteries from encroaching development.

The importance of this issue revealed itself a few months ago. A couple who lives in rural Madison County contacted us with

their concerns that the proposed route of a road-widening project would cut through their property, adversely impacting their historic homesite with a house and farm buildings dating from the 1830s.

The property had been in family hands for over 150 years. The home, farm buildings and grounds are lovingly maintained and in pristine condition. They asked the Historic Huntsville Foundation for help.

With documentation provided by the homeowners, HHF consulted with Alabama’s State Historic Preservation Officer, who notified state transportation officials of our concerns. Due to the historical significance of this home site,

transportation officials assured us the route of the proposed road will be reviewed to ensure no damage occurs to this historic property.

Madison County’s growth can be responsibly managed so that the architectural, historical and cultural resources built by our forebears are not sacrificed to progress. “Log Cabins to Bungalows” identifies over 256 historic resources in rural Madison County. Thanks to the Alabama Historical Commission and the Historic Huntsville Foundation, county and state officials now have the information they need to plan road and economic development projects so they do not damage our historic assets.



# Harrison Brothers Hardware

Last year marked a special anniversary for the Historic Huntsville Foundation and Harrison Brothers Hardware family. In 1984, it appeared certain that the hardware store owned and operated by the Harrison family on Huntsville's courthouse square since 1897 would go out of business.

Rather than let this tradition end, the Historic Huntsville Foundation raised the funds to purchase the Harrison Brothers Hardware store, fixtures and inventory and committed its resources to keep this important Huntsville landmark alive. The bold actions of the HHF Board of Directors, HHF members, supporters, customers and a legion of volunteers have kept the store in operation for the past thirty years.

For the Historic Huntsville Foundation, Harrison Brothers Hardware is more than a store. Harrison Brothers Hardware is a visible expression of our preservation mission at work in our community. Harrison Brothers Hardware places preservation before profits. And we couldn't do it without you.

## We Love a Good Party!

*Many Thanks*

to Nancy Van Valkenburgh,  
Sybil Wilkinson, Sarah Hereford,  
Suzanne O'Connor, Dale Rhoades,  
Lynn Jones, Freeda Vest, Jeanne Steadman,  
Pat Ryan, Carolyn and Jim Rountree,  
Richard Van Valkenburgh, Delphia Hill  
and many, many others for the wonderful  
Anniversary Celebration commemorating  
Historic Huntsville Foundation's  
purchase of  
Harrison Brothers Hardware.



## Another Blockbuster Year for Movies in the Park

**2015 movies scheduled for June 12, July 10 and August 14**

Looks like we have a hit on our hands! Movies in the Park captured a nomination for "2014 Downtown Huntsville Event of the Year," and Our Valley Events chose Movies in the Park as a "Must See Event for 2015!"

The 2015 Series is shaping up to be another fabulous year! Circle your calendars for June 12, July 10 and August 14, or second Fridays. Bring lawn chairs and blankets to Big Spring Park East, at the base of the courthouse square. With the event's popularity, this venue affords greater unobstructed views of the movie screen. Plus, it's only steps away (all uphill) from pre-movie dining options on the courthouse square!

As always, the public will choose final movie selection through an online vote. Movie ballots will be circulated to HHF members and posted on Facebook by April 1.

*Have a movie you want to see?*

*Nominate YOUR favorite for*

*Movies in the Park at [historichsvfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:historichsvfoundation@gmail.com)!*

**Many thanks to 2015 Movies in the Park Sponsors**

*Presenting Sponsor*

**Jerry Damson Honda/Acura**

*Title Sponsors*

**Bancorp South  
Downtown Huntsville, Inc.  
Huntsville International Airport**

**Get involved!**

**Have fun!**

**Make a difference!**

Contact Executive Director Donna Castellano  
and find out about the volunteer opportunities at  
Historic Huntsville Foundation – 256.508.5372



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

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