



**HISTORIC  
HUNTSVILLE  
FOUNDATION**



# 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.*



Mayor Tommy Battle at MIP 2016 premiere with Norah Ann Johnson, Gabriela Comulada & Maddie Wilkinson

## MOVIES in the Park

Donna Castellano

### MAKING MEMORIES IN BIG SPRING PARK

The Historic Huntsville Foundation's 2016 Movies in the Park (MIP) opened to rave reviews, kicking off the free film series in Big Spring Park East with the classic 1980s flick *The Goonies* on Friday, June 10 and followed up with *Raiders of the Lost Ark* on Friday, June 8. The park becomes a colorful checkerboard of blankets and lawn chairs by 6:00 pm as moviegoers stream in early to claim prime movie viewing spots before visiting food trucks or Kid's Corner, a children's activities center.

Chosen every year by an online voting survey, the 2016 MIP lineup features three popular films on the second Friday of June, July and August. HHF closes out the series on August 12 with the Disney film *Aladdin*.

Now in its fourth year, Movies in the Park is a production of the Historic Huntsville Foundation to support the revitalization of downtown Huntsville. Fred Coffey, HHF Chairman states, "Movies in the Park give people

who do not ordinarily venture to downtown Huntsville a reason to discover our historic downtown and Big Spring Park. Our crowds reflect the diversity of our city, and folks from surrounding counties even come in for our movies. Once they experience downtown Huntsville's charm, we know they will become a repeat customer."

Kyla Kelly, Vice President and Branch Manager of BancorpSouth, title sponsor of the June 10 event, is a longtime supporter of Movies in the Park and HHF. Kyla says, "HHF always has great events; BancorpSouth is pleased to sponsor Movies in the Park and support HHF's broader preservation mission."

The feature film is always the main attraction of Movies in the Park, but HHF Kid's Corner is quickly becoming a fan favorite. HHF member and MIP volunteer Teresa Ledbetter shares, "Movies in the Park brings people together. It's fun helping kids of all ages discover the charms of downtown Huntsville and Big Spring Park – and who can resist a game of hopscotch?"

Movies in the Park is made possible through the support of our loyal members and sponsors. Please join us in the park on Friday, August 12 for an irresistible evening that shows Huntsville at its best.

# This. Place. Matters.

Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle proclaimed May as Preservation Month during a ceremony on Tuesday, May 10 with preservation leaders at the historic Huntsville Depot. Following a proclamation reading, preservation leaders kicked off a “This. Place. Matters.” social media campaign for residents to post photos of historic places they love. Executive director Donna Castellano spoke on behalf of the Historic Huntsville Foundation.

Mayor Battle spoke about Huntsville’s foresight in retaining many important historic structures and on the resurging interest in repurposing and preserving older buildings.

“Places do Matter.” said Mayor Battle. “In a time where people are hungry for authenticity, quality, and craftsmanship, we are seeing greater interest in restoring and repurposing places in our community.”

The Mayor cited the Belk-Hudson lofts downtown, Lowe Mill and Lincoln Mill, Campus No. 805, and Providence Classical School - to name a few. He also noted the City’s high number of preserved structures and districts including the Twickenham area, Old Town, and Five Points Districts; Humphrey Rogers House, Washington Square, the Times Building, Terry Hutchens Building, Struve-Hay Building, First National Bank Building, Yarbrough Building, Dunnavant’s Building, Harrison Brothers and many historic churches and other downtown buildings.

The Huntsville Historic Preservation Commission announced two new projects of note: a historical survey of McThornmor Acres neighborhood, and a heritage development plan for Alabama A&M University. “None of these projects would be possible without the support of local organizations like the Historic Huntsville Foundation



Councilman Mark Russell, Huntsville Historic Preservation Consultant Jessica White and HHF Executive Director Donna Castellano join Huntsville Mayor Battle Tommy Battle to celebrate National Preservation Month.

and the Normal Historic District Preservation Association,” said Jessica White, preservation consultant for the city of Huntsville.

The historical survey is the first step for listing McThornmor Acres to the National Register of Historic Places as Huntsville and Alabama’s first Space Age Historic District. The 1950s neighborhood was home to the engineers and scientists who formed the work force in the early days of the space and rocket program. McThornmor Acres is adjacent to the University of Alabama Campus, and is bordered by Holmes

Avenue, University Drive and Jordan Lane.

The heritage development plan for Alabama A&M will provide suggestions for adaptive reuse and repair for postwar buildings in the Normal Historic District on the campus of Alabama A&M University.

The Historic Huntsville Foundation committed grant matching funds for the McThornmor Acres survey and a heritage development plan for Alabama A&M University.

In her remarks at the ceremony, Donna Castellano, HHF Executive Director noted the role of property owners and investors in the preservation of historic homes, buildings and neighborhoods. Donna stated: “Historic places matter, but that does not ensure their preservation. The heroes of the preservation movement are those who invest their time, their talent, their energy; those who risk their capital to bring life to old buildings that needs new ideas. Our city, our historic districts, and our revitalizing downtown are all evidence of their accomplishments. Their work made these historic places matter again.”

# FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Fred Coffey

As Chairman of the Historic Huntsville Foundation I have been asked if historic preservation is really for all age groups. Isn't historic preservation really just for older folks who live in the historic districts of Huntsville, Madison and Madison County? Why should parents and grandparents care if their children or grandchildren ever develop a passion for preserving our history? Imagine a world where we have learned nothing from the past and have destroyed all visual images of how our families and ancestors lived.

Historic preservation is for all ages. It provides a valuable link to the past as well as the future. Where do we belong? Our heritage in the south is decidedly different than other parts of our country. As memories fade within our own families preserving historic buildings is one way to bring the past to life for the generations to come. To the extent we fail to instill a passion for historic preservation in others we have failed the future and ourselves.

We learn from the past about how to pursue the future. The Historic Huntsville Foundation is committed to preserving historic structures in Huntsville and Madison County. In furtherance of our mission we are preserving Harrison Brothers Hardware on the south side of the courthouse square.

Harrison Brothers Hardware is a treasure for our city and a jewel in downtown Huntsville. Our store is an excellent example of historic preservation while also providing a current use by housing a wide array of art, toys, and gifts and yes all the

marbles anyone could ever want. If you have not taken a young person to Harrison Brothers please schedule a visit soon.

While downtown spend some time walking around to see the historic buildings and churches which tell the story of Huntsville past, present and future.

We are for the most part products of our past experiences. Consider whether telling our story would be materially different if

all of the historic buildings were removed. Let's work together to educate future generations about the importance of historic preservation. The Historic Huntsville Foundation is your voice in many forums to promote preservation efforts but you are our voice in your family and community.

Please get involved and involve all ages in telling the story of historic preservation. You see, it is for all ages but someone must believe it is important enough to spend the time to expose future generations to the wonderful experiences that abound in our community to see, tour, renovate, preserve, restore and use historic places in our everyday lives. Historic preservation is important to all ages. See you along the way to tomorrow.



Historic Preservation is for ALL Ages

## HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE FOUNDATION



Mark your calendars for August 12

For the return of Historic Huntsville Foundation's  
Movies in the Park Summer Film Series in Big Spring Park East.

Festivities kick off at 5:30, with Food Trucks, Kid's Activities, Face Painting and Fun!

Movies begin at Sundown

To find out more about Movies in the Park and sponsorship or vending opportunities,  
contact HHF Executive Director [donna@historichuntsville.org](mailto:donna@historichuntsville.org).





# EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

*Jeanne Steadman*

A twenty-first century stroll along Main Street in downtown Madison still resembles what visitors and residents would have seen in the early 1900's. While there are new buildings on the west end of the street, the east end looks remarkably the same as when Madison was a small, sleepy town surrounded by acres of cotton fields.

The friendly, helpful attitude that people used to experience still exists and the exteriors of the buildings remain the same, but what was once the location of blacksmiths, funeral parlors and mercantile shops has been replaced with modern day businesses. The building that housed Madison's first bank is now Noble Passage, an interior design store, yet with the old vault still inside, now days rich with lovely furnishings and accessories.

The building that now houses Main Street Café began life as Madison City Hall. Inside was everything the town needed to conduct business: the mayor's office, city clerk, and fire department—including the fire trucks! The fire trucks were moved out so voting machines could be set up for elections. In case of an emergency there was a siren on top that could be set off by using a large button located on the side of the buildings. City Hall also contained two small jail cells. Now this space is a dining room where folks regularly visit for a yummy lunch. The Poulet de Normandie and strawberry pretzel salad is a personal favorite!



The building at 110 Main is one of the oldest structures in Madison and was once home to a saloon. Ronnie and Pat Williams did an extensive restoration of the building beginning in 2009. The building was taken down to four walls. It was discovered that the foundation, what there was of it, was resting on dirt.

In addition to a stellar historic restoration the Williams went the extra mile to have their building LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified. It is believed this building was the first in a commercial district in our state to have this designation! Today this building is home to Madison Station Antiques, featuring fine Southern antiques and Early American pressed glass. The large wooden bar, original to the saloon and beautifully restored, remains inside.

A former Western Auto store, stocked with bicycles and tires, is now a craft beer brewery, Old Black Bear. Next door, in the pub side of the business, once sat a telephone operator handling all the calls in Madison. Now you can enjoy lunch or dinner, live music and a game of bocce on the back patio.

Many folks don't realize that the commercial buildings along Main Street and Martin Street are part of the Madison Station Historic District, and that changes to the exterior of these properties must be reviewed and approved by the Madison Station Historic Preservation Commission. We are proud that Madison is one of the few cities in the state of Alabama whose historic commercial districts are subject to design review. Design review has led to increased Investments on Main Street and Martin Street. Property owners have confidence the area will retain its historic character and charm, which encourages new entrepreneurs and businesses to move in and make themselves at home.

Where once there were saloons, dress shops, barber-shops and cafés there are now brew pubs, trendy female clothing boutiques, hair salons and restaurants. So maybe things have not changed that much after all and everything old is truly new again.

Come visit and see for yourself.





# FRONT ROW SEAT ON MAIN STREET

Jeanne Steadman

**MATTHEW J BALCH**  
ATTORNEY AT LAW

For Opie and Elbert Balch it was a dream to own and operate a family business on Main Street in historic downtown Madison. Family and tradition are very important to the Balch's and as Matt, their son, had just passed the bar exam in the spring of 2010 they knew they wanted to join together and make their dream a reality. Serendipitously, as property on Main Street rarely comes up for sale, the old barber shop building at 106 Main was available. When Elbert heard he said, "Go buy it!" Opie, being a realtor, took a more cautious approach and suggested they go look at it first.



Elbert Balch and daughter Ashley Balch Blackwell, a realtor with the family real estate business.

The structure at 106 Main Street was erected nearly 100 years ago. In the minutes of the town council meeting of January 16, 1928 the council gave permission for a building to be built for the purpose of renting to the US Post Office. It remained the post office until the early 1940's when Mr. Bob Shelton opened a two-chair barbershop and ran it until he retired.

In the early days most of the customers were farmers from outlying farms. During certain times of the year, these customers had very little free time and so would arrive at the barbershop directly from the fields coated in dust and dirt. Mr. Shelton installed a shower and charged 25 cents to use it so his customers could knock some of the dirt off before getting their weekly trim.

Hoyte Shelton, Bob's son, took over from his father and remained in business until his death in 1997. For a short time afterwards the building was home to a florist, then a hair salon before the Balch's acquired the property in May of 2010. Only five businesses have occupied the space since 1928.

The building was completely gutted on the inside but the outside today remains very much as it did eighty-nine years ago, notably with a very interesting brick detail on the front unique to 106 Main. Elbert and Matt did a good deal of the sweat equity work, demoing walls and installing flooring. The old shower was removed and a new ADA compliant bathroom added.

There have been a lot of changes to Main Street recently and the Balchs have had a front row seat to many of them. The investment to renovate their building has greatly contributed to the resurgence of

downtown Madison. But the Balchs are not stopping on Main Street. As the realty business and Matt's law practice increased, so did their need for more space. The Balchs were making plans to add on to their Main Street building when luck would have it and a property came up on Martin Street, one block off Main Street in downtown.

Drawing people to our city's historic core has been a primary focus of Madison's city leaders over the past years. The city of Madison has invested in downtown with Phase I and Phase II streetscape improvements on Main Street. This included redesign of the street with under-

ground utilities, new streetlights, benches, fencing and wider sidewalks. Garner Alley has been transformed into a pedestrian only walkway with brick pavers replacing the asphalt.

The city's rezoning of Martin Street and properties to the south from residential to commercial has sparked a revitalization of this area. The Balch's new law office join the existing Studio of Creative Arts (SOCA) Gallery on Martin Street. The SOCA gallery is also in a historic house that has been adapted for a new purpose.

What with the City's plan to begin Phase III of street scape improvements to Martin Street and zoning changes, the Balch family will have another front row seat in the continued revitalization of historic Madison.



Future home of the Martin Street Balch Law Firm



Studio of Creative Arts Gallery on Martin Street



# MOVIES in the Park



## Reconstructing History

Architectural Salvage from the Manning-Goddard House

Hand hewn beams from the historic Manning house are now available for sale through HHF's architectural warehouse. The beams were salvaged from the 1830s Manning House-Goddard house. James Manning purchased 2,200 acres of land in the early 1830s and established Oakendale Plantation. The house became part of Redstone Arsenal when the Army purchased the property in 1941. The house was demolished in February 2015, and Redstone Arsenal donated the architectural salvage to HHF.

The Manning beams were made from poplar and pine trees that grew on the original site. Many of the beams have mortise and tenon joints—complete with the pegs that joined them. The beams also bear the marks of the adze, a cutting tool dating from the Stone Age that workers used to hack and shape felled trees to beams. In the construction of the Manning house, slaves performed this backbreaking work. The beams range in length from 9 feet to 15 feet, and vary in width from 6 inches to 14 inches.

The beams are currently stored in a warehouse at Huntsville Hardware on Triana Boulevard. After structure's demolition, the beams were first housed in a bunker on Redstone Arsenal. To make the beams more accessible to the public, HHF relocated the beams to a warehouse owned by Steve Harlan of Huntsville Hardware, 2511 Triana Boulevard. Mr. Harlan recognized the significance of the beams and graciously donated warehouse space to HHF.

If you are interested in the beams, please email Donna Castellano at [donna@historichuntsville.org](mailto:donna@historichuntsville.org) or call Judy Carden at 256.603.6076 for an appointment. The architectural warehouse at Harrison Brothers Hardware is open the first and third Saturdays from 10 am to 11:30.





124 Southside Square  
Huntsville, AL 35801

## 2016 Membership Levels & Benefits

### Individual/Family Membership \$50

For the above, members:

- Are guests at holiday membership reception, "Carols, Cocktail & Holiday Cheer"
- Receive invitations to HHF special events and programs
- Receive Foundation newsletter ▪ Recognition in HHF newsletter

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

- Receive a 10% discount on any one item at Harrison Brothers Hardware, excluding consignment.

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

- Individual or Corporate recognition as Benefactor on Community Sponsors and Donor Board displayed in Harrison Brothers Hardware
- Recognition on signage at Historic Huntsville Foundation events

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

- Individual or Corporate recognition as Preservation Society on Community Sponsors and Donor Board displayed in Harrison Brothers Hardware
- Recognition as Individual or Corporate sponsor of HHF's Movies in the Park

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

- Individual or Corporate recognition as Preservation Partner on Community Sponsors and Donor Board displayed in Harrison Brothers Hardware
- Recognition as Partnership Sponsor of HHF's Movies in the Park

*Thank you for helping us build a more vibrant future for Huntsville/Madison County by preserving our past!*

#### Membership Levels

- ☐ 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 \_\_\_\_\_

*Make checks payable to: The Historic Huntsville Foundation*

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

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