



Foundation Forum

Foundation Forum and Historic Huntsville Foundation Newsletter

Building the Future of the Preservation Movement

One workbook at a time



Finding Huntsville workbook creator Caroline Swope visits the Church of Nativity-Episcopal

*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.*

Everyone, meet Caroline Swope.

Caroline is an architectural historian who is relatively new to our city. She quickly developed a fondness for Huntsville's historic buildings and is passionate about their preservation. Caroline has a PhD in Art History with a concentration in nineteenth century American Art and Architectural History. Standing in a college classroom, introducing students to architecture from early Greece to the Bauhaus movement, is Caroline's natural habitat.

Caroline shares our belief that the future of the preservation movement is in the hands of our children and grandchildren. This is why we are thrilled that Caroline agreed to create the workbook for our Bicentennial project, *Finding Huntsville: A Kid-Friendly Field Guide to Huntsville's Historic Architecture*.

Finding Huntsville is one of HHF's Bicentennial projects aimed to help children develop an understanding of Huntsville's historic architecture through an interactive walking tour. The blocks surrounding the

courthouse square illustrate 200 years of Huntsville's history, reflecting our transformation from a frontier town to the birthplace of American's space program

Caroline is creating the content of *Finding Huntsville*, an 8-page workbook that uses word searches, crossword puzzles, photos, and maps to help children explore our historic downtown. The workbook which will be available to schools, libraries, community recreational programs, church groups and at Harrison Brothers Hardware. Kids can return the workbooks to Harrison Brothers for a treat and a special badge of completion.

On the eve of Alabama's Bicentennial year, now is a special time to be involved with Huntsville history and the preservation movement. *Finding Huntsville* will be an educational program HHF can offer to kids for years to come. We are most grateful to the Alabama Historical Commission and the Community Foundation of Greater Huntsville for the grants that funded these initiatives.

From the Chairman

Kyla Kelly

Christmas is my favorite holiday. So, I am one of those people who get a head start on the season and decorate my house the day after Halloween. Yep. I've found that the sugar high from Halloween candy gives my kids the buzz they need to help me pull the 15 tubs of decorations we've acquired over the years from the attic and begin the work of transforming my house into a place of Holiday Cheer!

And you know the only thing I've found that is better than one Christmas tree?? Two! Our traditional Christmas tree, which we love, is decorated with beautiful, fragile ornaments, meticulously placed on branches until the tree is a perfect composition in red and white. It is serenely festive.

But the heart of our Christmas involves a tradition called the Tacky Tree. The Tacky Tree is decorated with ornaments that hold the memories of our family. This tree is decorated with ornaments from my childhood, souvenir ornaments from special trips, ornaments that capture paw prints from beloved pets and handprints of my kids. All will be shuffled around to find a place for the new ornaments kids, Owen and Olivia, will make this Christmas. Each ornament, no matter how chipped or tattered, has a special meaning and memory. The Tacky Tree is a way we celebrate our ties to family and friends.

My favorite tradition with my kids is making Christmas cookies and candy for the holiday season. We also have an Elf on the Shelf, Max, who shows up the day after Thanksgiving. He brings gifts, mischief and laughter to my children every year. I am pretty passionate about the Christmas spirit at my house. And, as I tell my kids, if you don't BELIEVE, you don't receive.

I'm also getting pretty excited about bringing the holiday cheer to Historic Huntsville Foundation and Harrison Brothers Hardware. Our HHF membership reception this year is at the Preservation Company, the former Lincoln Mill commissary renovated by Jason and Christa Butler for their architectural salvage business. Board members Patrice Bishop and Becky Carstens are leading the committee who will plan a fabulously festive evening for HHF members. If you know of someone who would enjoy the party, PLEASE email Donna and she will happily send them an invitation!

And in the spirit of the holiday



season, we want to do something extra for our HHF members. So, we are expanding the Harrison Brothers Hardware 10% discount to ALL HHF members, regardless of membership level. The discount does not include sale or consignment, but DOES include a huge selection of great merchandise for everyone on your shopping list. Santa's elves stocked the store with great art and fine crafts, original pottery, housewares, gourmet edibles and toys! HBH offers complimentary giftwrap, so packages arrive festively attired for the tree.

Thank you for your support of Historic Huntsville Foundation and Harrison Brothers Hardware. I wish you the happiest of holidays.

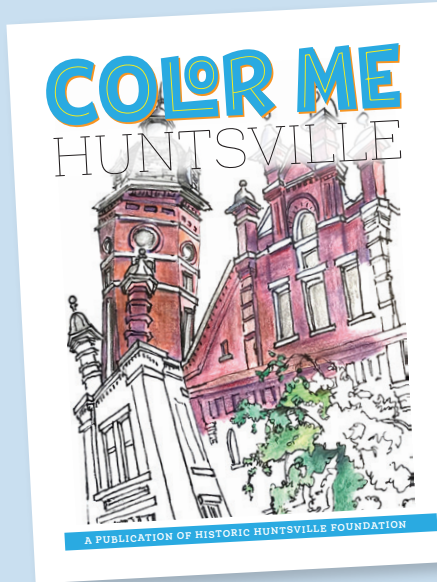
season's greetings

Present this Coupon for a
10% Discount on ALL Harrison Brothers Hardware Purchases
*Excluding Sale and Consignment Merchandise

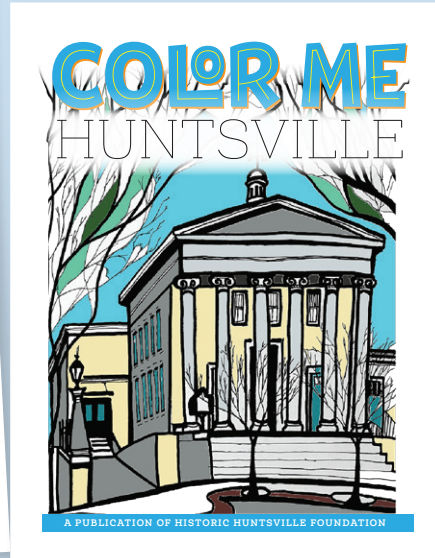


Color Me, Huntsville

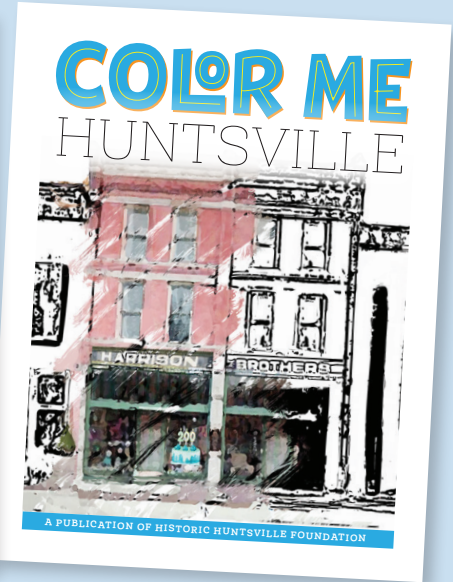
A Sneak Peek of an Instant Huntsville Classic



Carole Foret | Temple B'nai Sholom



Christina Wegman | Alabama Bank Building



Christina Green | Harrison Brothers Hardware

Color Me, Huntsville debuts in late spring, 2019.

Give the Gift of Huntsville

The future of Huntsville-Madison County's historic buildings, homes and neighborhoods are in the hands of our children and grandchildren. Help us distribute coloring books FREE to Huntsville-Madison County's school children. Your sponsorship of *Color Me, Huntsville* helps plant the seeds of historic preservation in the imaginations of future generations.

\$5,000 SERIES SPONSOR (one available)

- Family name or business name and logo listed as the Series Sponsors on the inside, full-color cover page of *Color Me, Huntsville*.
- Series Sponsor logo featured on the full-color back cover.
- Recognition as a Preservation Sponsor on signage at all events introducing *Color Me, Huntsville*.
- Recognition as a Preservation Sponsor on the *Community Partners and Benefactor Board* in Harrison Brothers Hardware.

\$2,500 TITLE SPONSOR

- Family name or business name and logo listed as a Title Sponsor, on the Title Page of *Color Me, Huntsville*.
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- Recognition as a Preservation Partner on the *Community Partners and Benefactors Board* in Harrison Brothers Hardware.

\$1,000 BICENTENNIAL SPONSOR

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- Recognition as a Preservation Society Member on the *Community Partners and Benefactor Board* in Harrison Brothers Hardware.

\$500 BICENTENNIAL PARTNER

- Business or family name listed as a Bicentennial Partner in the *Color Me, Huntsville* coloring book series.
- Recognition as a Bicentennial Partner on signage at all events introducing *Color Me, Huntsville*.
- Recognition as a Bicentennial Partner on the *Community Partners and Benefactor Board* in Harrison Brothers Hardware.

Join OUR CELEBRATION

HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE FOUNDATION

The Preservation Company

1214 MERIDIAN STREET NORTH
WEDNESDAY, THE FIFTH OF DECEMBER

FIVE UNTIL SEVEN O'CLOCK

IN THE EVENING

CELEBRATE THE SEASON

AT OUR ANNUAL HOLIDAY

RECEPTION

RSVP Donna@historichuntsville.org

A Life's Work

Historic Preservation is More than Bricks and Mortar

By Caroline Swope

"How did you become interested in historic architecture?" is a question I am often asked. At times, I am unsure of how to appropriately answer, because truthfully, I cannot remember a time when I wasn't fascinated by historic buildings.

I was introduced to historic architecture at an early age. My paternal grandfather lived in an old brick farmhouse, just down a well-traveled dirt road from us, in the picturesque Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Built in the Civil War era, the house was a simple structure, with a dirt cellar. A large barn, complete with handhewn timbers, dominated the yard. It shared space with an 1820's log cabin, a large chicken coop, and a weathered springhouse. I still clearly remember my grandfather sitting in his desk chair, with wisps of cigarette smoke curling above his head. My mother's family lived hundreds of miles away in a "newer" coastal South Carolina home, built around 1890. The house sat under the shade of

massive live oak trees and a magnolia that had wrapped its roots around old railroad ties. The interior smelled of old books and faint perfume.

Both of these family homes had experienced major remodels over the years, with layer after layer of paint and wallpaper added, porches removed, bathrooms added, architectural details lost. Their doors never shut properly. Windows rarely opened. Floors always creaked. And yet, I loved them. They were puzzles, waiting to be solved. What had the front porches looked like originally? Why was there a window between the bedroom and the hallway? What about that odd room off to the side-- what possible use could it have had? These homes were so different than the one I lived in, a 1970's split-level, complete with an avocado-colored kitchen. Yes, our home "functioned" better, with an efficient kitchen and a more convenient bathroom placement, but where was the mystery, fun, and unique sense of space? I loved the historic homes for what they were, and for what they had the potential to become ... I could see through the peeled wallpaper, and imagine original hallways, high ceilings, and graceful dining rooms.

By high school, I had learned how to slip into the historic R. E. Lee Episcopal church, when it was supposed to be locked and closed during the week, just so I could sit in the sanctuary and marvel at the historic woodwork and luminous stained



glass windows. This was probably not a normal past time for most 17 year olds, but it suited me well. In an era where students were being pushed away from the arts to the sciences, I balked. My interest wasn't in chemistry or physics, but in crumbling plaster, spalling bricks, and long forgotten histories. My high school classmates selected colleges based on closeness to home, or potential majors. I picked a college with a dormitory from the 1780's, enchanted by its handcrafted bricks with multi-colored swirls.

My curiosity in historic buildings led to graduate work in historic preservation. Eventually, I was awarded a fellowship in architectural history, which required moving to Seattle, a city with a completely new array of historic buildings and styles. I began working with local historical societies



on home tours, helping them identify the various architectural styles. I found classic national styles, along with some interesting hybrids and substyles. These middle class homes were prominently advertised in period magazines. They were buildings now riddled with odd changes that had taken place over time-- quirky closets, original siding covered, porches replaced. The questions I heard most from building owners were, "What style is it?" and "How do I bring back some of the old charm?" I authored a book on the *Classic Houses of Seattle* that captivated the city's growing attention for their not-so-distant past. I spoke on National Public Radio, and was



featured in regional magazines. When a colleague suggested that we needed a preservation non-profit in a neighboring city, and I should start one, I scoffed, as if I had the time or interest in that. Less than a decade later, I found myself president of a new non-profit I had helped create. It was dedicated to historic preservation law, economics, and education.

We were successful in everything from creating legislation to protect our historic structures to hosting blockbuster house tours, authoring professional publications, and even working with the local school district to ensure placement of a dozen (!) local schools on the local historic register. I consulted on preservation projects, with clients ranging from private citizens to businesses, and local to federal government agencies. I found joy working on projects as varied as designing period appropriate kitchens for domestic remodels, to working on several large multi-million dollar contracts – including a historic school that served as the first magnet school in the United States. Toggling between residential and commercial styles gave me a deeper appreciation for the layers of history, and how buildings reflect our communities' growth and change over time.

Although I loved my work in the Pacific Northwest, I longed to return to the South. When the opportunity arose for our family to relocate to Huntsville, I was ecstatic--real BBQ, biscuits with apple butter, and a distinctively warmer climate, complete with magnolias and crepe myrtles, were all within reach. I have enjoyed my time in Alabama, and have worked on a number of diverse projects ranging from Civil Rights era research in Birmingham to design review code in Decatur, Space Age architecture in Huntsville, to an antebellum plantation in the Black Belt. I have delighted in walking my son through the weathered cabins at Burritt, lit by flickering candlelight for Christmas festivities, and exploring nearby Mooresville on a warm spring day.

I am now looking forward to working

with the Historic Huntsville Foundation to create a children's architectural guide, which will showcase just a few of the unique buildings found around courthouse square. I have been out exploring with my elementary school-aged child, noting structures he finds of interest. He has pointed to the unusual modernist courthouse, and I am sure he would slide down the interior staircase railings if I'd let him. The "spikey" window at the I. Shiffman Building has garnered considerable curiosity, and careful touching, and the massive fanlight that decorates the Weeden Home is another of his favorites. These buildings are so much more than just brick and mortar. They bring awareness to our past beyond what can be taught in a classroom or read in a book. I look forward to sharing these treasures, and a few more, this spring when Historic Huntsville Foundation's children's guide, *Finding Huntsville*, goes into publication.



Our preservation mission begins with you.

From the site of Alabama's constitutional convention to the birthplace of the space program, Huntsville-Madison County has a history like no other.

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- Receive HHF newsletter ▪ Recognition in HHF newsletter, 10% off shopping discount in HBH, excluding sale or consignment.

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

- Recognition as Patron in HHF newsletter

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

- Recognized as Benefactor Member in HHF newsletter
- Recognition as Benefactor on Community Sponsors and Donor Board displayed in Harrison Brothers Hardware

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

- Recognition as a Bicentennial Partner in the *Color Me, Huntsville* coloring book

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

- Recognized as Preservation Society member in HHF newsletter
- Community Sponsors and Donors Board, and *Color Me, Huntsville* coloring book

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

- Recognized as Preservation Partner in HHF Newsletter
- Community Sponsors and Donors Board, and *Color Me, Huntsville* coloring book

Thank you for building 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
- ☐ Benefactor \$250
- ☐ Bicentennial Partner \$500
- ☐ Preservation Society \$1,000
- ☐ Preservation Partner \$2,500

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

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Make checks payable to: The Historic Huntsville Foundation

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