

Lowe Mill

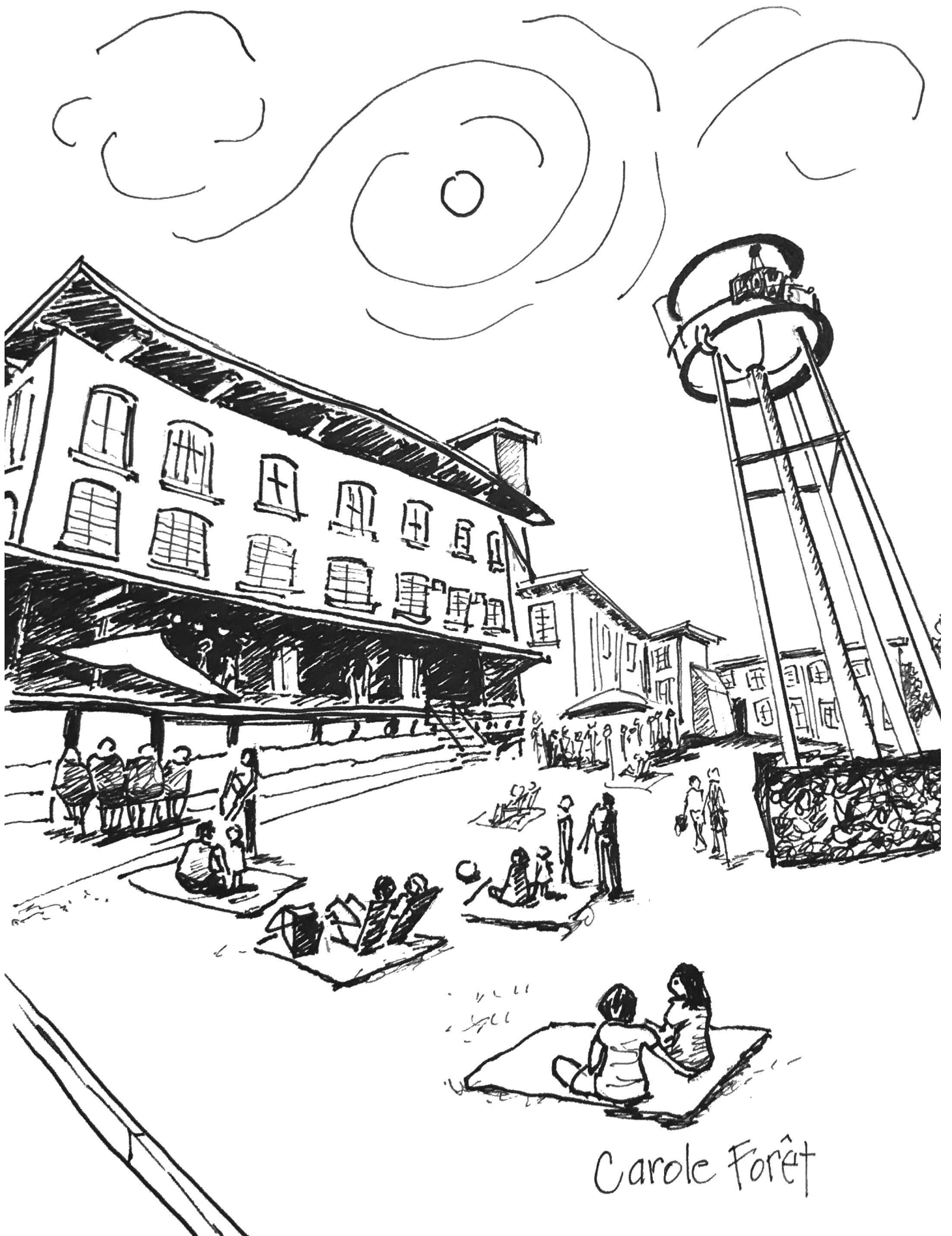
Most people who first settled in Madison County grew cotton. After the cotton was harvested, it was shipped to textile mills in other cities where it was manufactured into cloth.

In the 1880s, some city leaders decided that Huntsville should have its own textile mills. That way, instead of sending Madison County's cotton to other cities, local textile mills with local workers could turn Madison County's cotton into woven cloth. Textile mills would bring new prosperity to the city and offer manufacturing jobs to Alabama workers.

City leaders visited mill owners in the North and asked them to open factories in Huntsville. In 1900, Arthur H. Lowe formed a business named Lowe Manufacturing and opened a textile mill known as Lowe Mill. Lowe Mill made high-grade cloth that was turned into shirts, dresses and other clothing. The major textile mills established in Huntsville during this period were Dallas, Lincoln, Merrimack, and Lowe Mill.

Men and women often left their jobs on farms to work in the textile mills. Mill owners built houses for the employees. Mill owners also built stores, churches, schools, libraries and even ballparks for their workers to use. These communities were called mill villages.

While cloth is no longer made in the mills, Lowe Mill remains an important part of the Huntsville community. Lowe Mill is now an arts facility, filled with artists and artisans who create and share their talents with audiences of all kinds.



Carole Forêt

Buffalo Soldier Memorial

The Buffalo Soldier Memorial honors African American soldiers who fought in the United States Army in the years after the Civil War. Many of these soldiers were freed slaves who wanted to fight for their country. At that time, black and white soldiers could not serve together.

African American troops were sent to guard the western frontier. Native Americans gave these troops the nickname “Buffalo Soldiers” because the soldiers fought as fiercely as a buffalo.

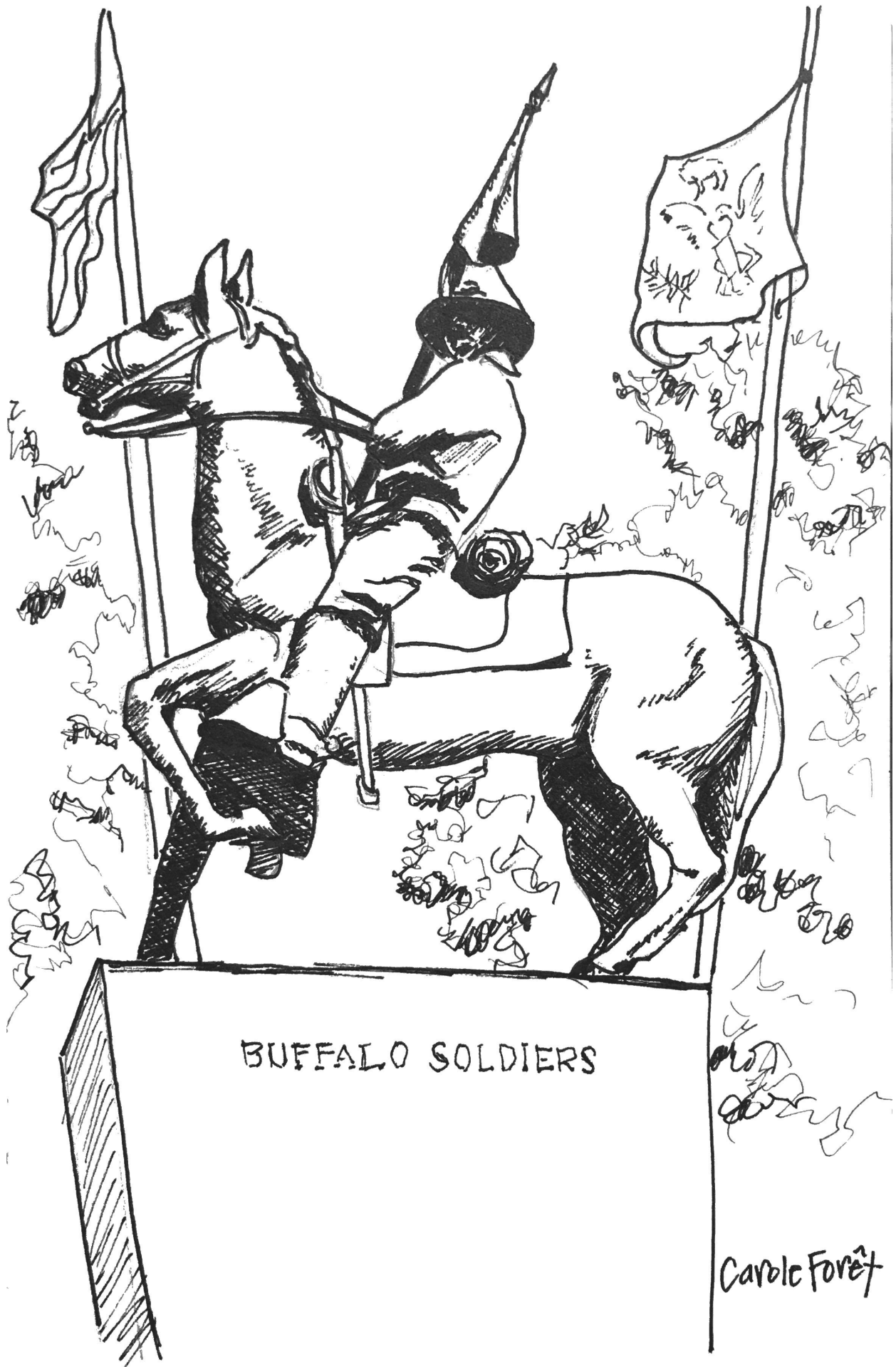
Buffalo Soldiers also served in the Spanish-American War of 1898. This statue is of 10th Cavalry Sgt. George Berry, who rode up San Juan Hill and into battle during the war.

After the Spanish-American War, several hundred Buffalo Soldiers came to Huntsville to recuperate. The site where they camped became known as Cavalry Hill.

In 1948, after World War II, President Harry Truman signed an order that integrated the U. S. military. Integration meant that black and white soldiers would serve together as equals.

The Buffalo Soldier Memorial sits on the front lawn of the Cavalry Hills Elementary School building on Poplar Avenue, on a rise overlooking the neighborhood. The statue is the only Buffalo Soldier Memorial east of the Mississippi River.

This statue shows our appreciation to the African American soldiers who fought to serve their country. Our community remains grateful to these brave men and their families.



BUFFALO SOLDIERS

Carole Forêt

Harrison Brothers Hardware

What do a bin full of marbles, an old-fashioned cash register, and a cat named Harrison have in common? They can all be found in Harrison Brothers Hardware, Alabama's oldest hardware store. Brothers James and Daniel Harrison started the store in 1897.

Folks enjoyed shopping in their store. They knew Harrison Brothers was a place they could pick up an iron stove, creamware pottery, and furniture. Back when the Harrisons owned the store, most people didn't have air conditioning. On hot summer days, the brothers would close the store, promising to return when temperatures cooled.

When the Harrisons could no longer run their store, the Historic Huntsville Foundation bought Harrison Brothers Hardware. The Foundation promised to preserve the building and run the store just like the Harrisons.

The Foundation took their promise to heart. Volunteers ring up sales on the same 1907 National Cash register used by James and Daniel. The store has all the original display shelves, counters, and wood floors.

The Foundation keeps other reminders of the Harrison brothers around the store, too. Their office desk is in its original spot, piled high with invoices and ledger books. The wall safe is still there, with doors are open so folks can peek inside.

There has been one major change at Harrison Brothers, though. The store is now air-conditioned and no longer closes during hot Alabama summers.



First National Bank Building

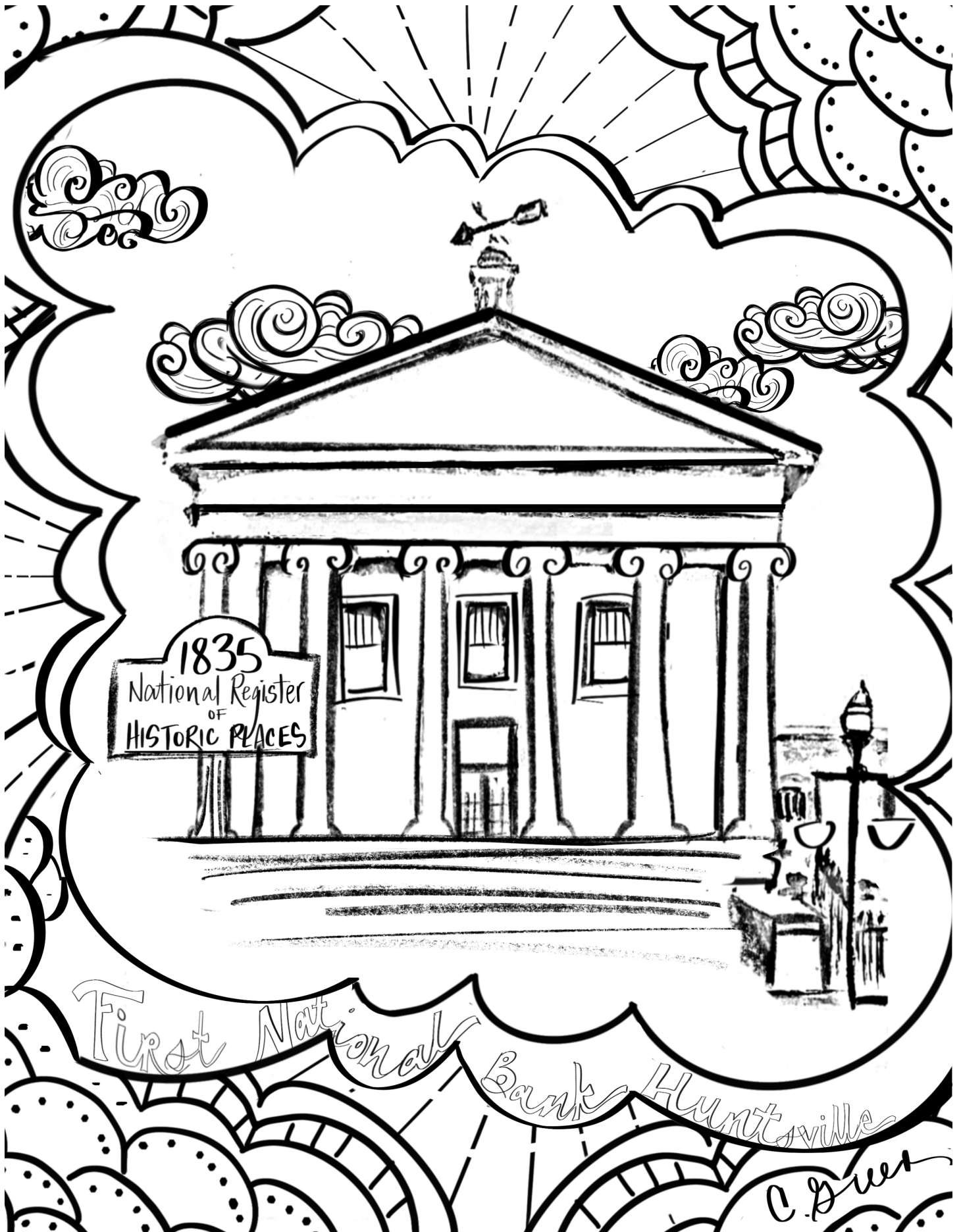
The great limestone building with the tall columns on the west side of Huntsville's courthouse square shows just how quickly Huntsville grew in the decades after John Hunt first camped on the banks of the Big Spring in 1805. Built in 1835 as the Huntsville branch of the Bank of Alabama, the building has been known as the First National Bank building since 1889.

The First National Bank Building is one of Alabama's first Greek Revival style buildings. Greek Revival design copies the buildings of classical Greece. This design reminds people that the American republic is based on the ideals of ancient Greece.

George Steele designed the First National Bank Building. Steele grew up in Virginia and moved to Huntsville in 1818. He became one of Huntsville's most noted early architects. Steele returned to Virginia in the early 1830s. While there, he saw the buildings at the University of Virginia and Monticello. President Thomas Jefferson designed these buildings in the Greek Revival style. Inspired by Jefferson's buildings, Steele brought this architectural style back home with him to Huntsville.

Skilled African American slaves constructed George Steele's bank building. Steele owned over 70 slaves, which included stonecutters, bricklayers, plasterers and carpenters. Steele also owned a brickyard. Here, the children of his slaves molded bricks from Huntsville's red clay soil. In the 1830s, almost 38 percent of Alabama's population was African American slaves.

Huntsville has many beautiful buildings; we should celebrate their beauty, their history, and the people who built them.



The Saturn V Rocket

On Sunday night, July 20, 1969, people from around the world gathered around their television sets to watch Neil Armstrong take man's first steps on the surface of the moon. Armstrong's "one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind" moment is deeply rooted in Huntsville.

During Huntsville's early history, life in Huntsville and Madison County centered on cotton—either growing it or turning it into cloth. All that changed with the arrival of Werner von Braun and his team of German rocket scientists in 1950. The United States wanted to put a manned spacecraft into orbit and send astronauts safely to the moon. Soon, engineers and scientists from across the United States came to Huntsville to help the United States with the moonshot.

Rocket scientists designed, tested, and built the Saturn V rocket at Huntsville's Marshall Space Flight Center. The Apollo Program used the Saturn V rocket to launch the Apollo 11 spacecraft that took men to the moon.

The U. S. Space & Rocket Center collects and displays space artifacts in a museum that educates visitors about the United States space program. A replica of the Saturn V rocket is part of its collection. The Saturn V rocket has become a symbol of inspiration to people around the world, encouraging them to try the impossible.



First Baptist Church

As Huntsville changed from a town where people grew cotton to a city where people designed rockets, buildings rose in the Huntsville skyline that reflected the city's new identity.

With its barrel-vaulted arches, glass tile mosaic, and rocket-inspired bell tower, the First Baptist Church on Governor's Drive is recognized as one of Huntsville's finest modernist landmarks. Modernist architecture used new materials and new technology to construct buildings that looked very different from anything built before.

In Huntsville, where new science and new technologies were leading us to the exploration of space, people wanted modern buildings that marked this new period in our history.

The church is also special because of its members' direct connection to the U. S. Space program. As Marshall Space Flight Center drew engineers and scientists to Huntsville, many of these families joined First Baptist Church.

Organized in 1809, the First Baptist Church is Alabama's oldest Baptist church. The Governor's Drive building is the congregation's fifth church. Construction began on the sanctuary in 1962, one year after President Kennedy announced his goal to send a man safely to the moon.

