



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.

Caring Through Covid-19

HHF and the Alabama Humanities Foundation Keep the Learning Going



A big smile from a Riverton Elementary School student as she colors Carole Forêt's sketch of the Clay House.

Conceived as a way to use art, history and coloring to celebrate the Alabama Bicentennial in 2019, *Color Me, Huntsville* is now placing history, art and humanities lessons directly into the hands of students, keeping the learning going for kids whose school year is cancelled by Covid-19.

A grant from the Alabama Humanities Foundation (AHF) gave HHF funds to extend the *Color Me, Huntsville* program into 2020. In February and early March, before Covid-19 happened, HHF visited schools and shared our program with third grade students in the same way we had in the past—with students and teachers gathered together in the school library or cafeteria talking together about Huntsville's historic buildings.

But everything changed in mid-March. Collectively, we all listened at the slow roll of announcements cancelling classes through March, April, and finally through the end of the school year. And like everyone else witnessing the uncertainty and fear brought by Covid-19, we wanted to help. Our time in school classrooms built strong relationships with those in the Huntsville and Madison County school system--administrators, principals, librarians, and those wonderful, dedicated teachers.

So, we reached out to friends. Our first call was to Rachel Reed Evans, Assistant Principal of Riverton Elementary School. After learning that Riverton Elementary school would be a school lunch distribution point, we asked if HHF could give out coloring books to go along with the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Rachel readily agreed. Then we reached out to Graydon Rust, Grants Administrator for the Alabama Humanities Foundation, and asked if giving coloring books to kids in lunch drive-through lines met the spirit of the AHF grant. Without hesitation, Graydon offered enthusiastic support. And a plan was born.

On March 20, about 250 kids from the Riverton Elementary school district received *Color Me, Huntsville* coloring books as they went through the lunch drive-through line. We were so pleased with the results we reached out to Linda Arredondo, principal of Madison Cross Roads Elementary School in Toney, and



asked if they were interested in sharing *Color Me, Huntsville* with their students. Linda readily agreed. On March 28, their staff gave out 250 coloring books to kids in the lunch drive-through line.



As we pulled this newsletter together, we worked with Christopher Gunnels, Harvest Elementary School principal, to include *Color Me, Huntsville* coloring books with the homeschooling packets schools will distribute to parents. Since there are families in Madison County without internet--which means online lessons aren't available to them--our coloring books put history and art directly into the hands of young students. HHF gave 250 coloring books to Harvest Elementary school students.

Linda Arredondo, Madison Cross Roads Elementary School principal, said of our program: "The students...were so excited to receive these wonderful *Color Me, Huntsville* coloring books during our food distribution program! What a great opportunity to expose young learners to the historical sites and landmarks of the Rocket City! Thank you so much for bringing a smile to these faces during such an uncertain and unusual time."

Linda, we are happy to help!

A word from your Historic Huntsville Foundation Board Chairman...

Anything I could say to you, our Historic Huntsville Foundation members, about the strangeness of these days, the uncertainty of what will change next in our lives or the affect this unprecedented time is having on you or those around you might frankly seem trite as we are inundated with stories about what's happening in our world each day. The simple truth is we ARE all in this together and it IS a common bond we can only hope will bring us all closer. It's something we share now, just as we have long shared our love of Huntsville and its history. Though our nearness to one another may be limited, our ability to enjoy a common interest does not have to be.

During these coming days, the Historic Huntsville Foundation wishes nothing more than to ensure resources are available so you may keep experiencing the joys of Huntsville history with as much social distance as you like. With this in mind, we added both our *Finding Huntsville* downtown architectural scavenger hunt and six sketches and pages from our *Color Me, Huntsville* coloring books as FREE digital downloads to the historichuntsville.org website. Simply visit our website and you can find these offerings on our "Home" page. We hope these activities will be a welcome distraction as well as a way for everyone to get out and enjoy the beauty of our city and stretch those cabin fever weary legs.



HHF Chair Leslie Walker

It's our hope that sooner rather than later we will all be together once again, gathering on those creaky floors of Harrison Brothers Hardware, elbow to elbow, as we excitedly prepare to head off on a guided tour by one of our great local history minds. Until then, utilize these guides, bone-up on your Huntsville knowledge, and who knows, it might be YOU leading that next tour.

Take care and hang in there!

Planning for the Unexpected

Donna Castellano

So far, this has been a year that proves the Yiddish proverb, *Mann traach, un Gott Lauch*, or Man plans, and God laughs.

HHF said good-bye to a 2019 that exceeded our expectations and planned a 2020 membership year filled with educational projects, programs, and events to reach new audiences and shape the landscape of our community through our historic preservation mission. And then Covid-19 happened.

Knowing that your minds are occupied, we debated about sending this newsletter. Is this a waste of time, of resources? Will you even read it? But we know that the best way to deal with the uncertainty of our current situation is to fix our eyes firmly to the future.

It is in this spirit that we send the Spring 2020 newsletter. We aren't *cancelling* the plans we made in the late summer and fall of 2019, but we are *adapting* to meet the challenges of the current circumstances.

As you'll see in the newsletter, HHF has pursued our mission in the ways that we could, helping those we could reach, given the circumstances we face. When elementary schools closed, we found new ways to bring *Color Me, Huntsville* to school children.

Inspired by the centennial celebration of the ratification of the 19th amendment, we've researched and worked with community partners to develop programs about Huntsville's suffrage history. In fact, HHF recently received a grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Huntsville to fund a project based on Huntsville's suffrage history, which will launch, in some form, in August.

And we are rescheduling our special events and lectures as we speak. Yes, it will be 2021 before we hear Dr. Ed Bridges, but go ahead and mark your calendar for Sunday, September 13 for the Sacred Sanctuary Tour! The tour of Charles Vaughn and Tom Froehlich's Monte Sano home is still scheduled for Sunday, October 25. We are working with homeowners Nell and David Johnston and Jerry Barclay to reschedule their "Invitation to History" home tours for a date in the fall. When confirmed, we will notify you with a mailed postcard. As a reminder, members who joined at the Benefactor level or above level have early registration privileges to the Invitation to History tours, as tour size is limited.

When it's safe to meet again, we look forward to seeing everyone!

HHF Executive Director Donna Castellano spoke at the March meeting of the Tennessee Valley Civil War Roundtable (TVCWR), a local nonprofit organization dedicated to the exploration of Civil War era history. After her talk, she met with two members in period attire, Cpt. Ron Bednarczyk and 2nd Sgt. Stefan Bednarczyk of the 42nd Indiana Volunteer Infantry.

The TVCWR supports local historic preservation projects and is raising funds to benefit the restoration of Glenwood Cemetery. Meetings of the TVCWR are free and open to the public. Learn more about this organization at their website, tvcwr.org.





A Walking Tour
of
Huntsville's Suffrage History

DISCOVER THE PLACES
Where Women Made History

Huntsville has a history and historic resources unmatched by any city in the state. With our territorial and early statehood homes, stunning Victorian era homes, textile mills and mill village historic districts, and space age history, it's almost understandable why the history of Huntsville women has not received the attention it deserves.



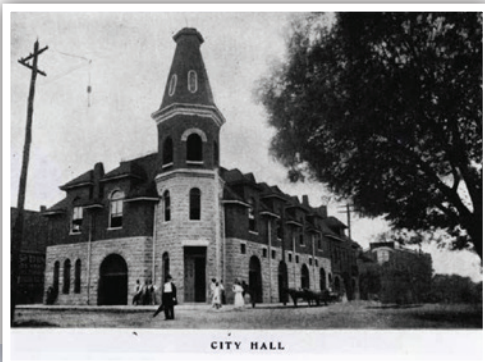
Priscilla Holmes Drake



*The Inter Ocean
Newspaper
(Chicago, Illinois)
August 10, 1878.*

Meet Priscilla Holmes Drake, a Huntsville resident and Alabama's first suffragist. Born in New York and raised in Ohio, she settled with her husband James in Indiana. While there, the Drakes became involved with state politics and were early advocates of women's suffrage.

The Drakes moved to Huntsville in 1861 and brought those views with them to Alabama. Priscilla was a Vice President in the National Women's Suffrage Association (NWSA) from 1868-1888—the only Alabamian in that position and only one of a few southern women to hold a leadership position in the NWSA. While Priscilla had a prominent place in the national organization, there is no evidence she tried to start a local suffrage movement.



Located at the corner of Clinton Avenue and Washington Street and demolished in 1913, the Huntsville City Hall was the site of the 1895 Anthony-Catt talk.



*The former City Hall site is now home to the Central City Parking Garage.
There are now five women-owned businesses operating in this location.*

Women's suffrage formally came to Huntsville with the arrival of Susan B. Anthony and Carrie Chapman Catt on January 29, 1895. The ladies were invited by Alberta Chapman Taylor, the daughter of former Alabama Governor, Reuben Chapman. Alberta Taylor spent time in Colorado where she became an advocate of women's suffrage. Anthony and Catt spoke at the Huntsville City Hall on January 29, 1895 to an overflow crowd. From newspaper accounts, people attended the lecture from curiosity but were won over by the logic of Anthony-Catt's arguments.

After the women's talk, Mr. Milton Hume invited those in attendance to sign up and support the Huntsville Equal Suffrage Association. Mr. Humes was a prominent member of the Huntsville community. His wife, Ellelee Chapman Humes and the sister of Alberta Chapman Taylor, became a leader in Huntsville and Alabama suffrage. Years later, reminiscing about the night of the Anthony-Catt lecture, Ellelee Humes wrote: "Thus the entering wedge was made for women's freedom in Alabama."

While the Anthony-Catt public lecture brought public attention to suffrage in Huntsville, progress on women's rights was uneven in Alabama and across the south. The Huntsville movement revived in 1912, at the behest of Bossie O'Brien Hundley, wife of Judge Oscar Hundley. Bossie was a leading member of the Birmingham Equal Suffrage Association and travelled to Huntsville to reignite the Huntsville Equal Suffrage Association, which she called "the Mother of Suffrage in Alabama." The kick-off meeting was held at the YMCA on Greene Street; members selected Virginia Clay Clopton as President and Ellelee Chapman Humes Vice President. The Huntsville Equal Suffrage Association was an active organization until after the ratification of the 19th amendment in August 1920.

Except that it's not. Especially when there are Huntsville women who directly shaped the political, economic and social history of our state and whose contributions deserve recognition. Huntsville women had a leadership role in Alabama's suffrage movement.

Through HHF's participation in a state-wide project to identify sites associated with the women's suffrage

movement, we've researched Huntsville's suffrage history and created an overview that connects important suffrage events with the places where they happened. We hope you enjoy a special member preview of the walking tour we will debut in August. Welcome to the places where Huntsville women made history!



The YMCA Building served as an early suffrage meeting place

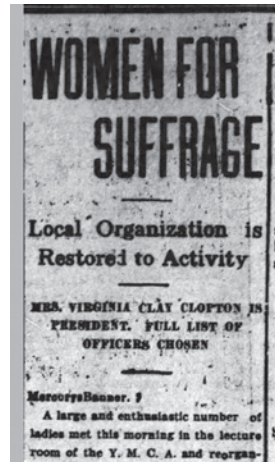
After their re-organization in 1912, Huntsville suffragists promoted issues that would make Alabama and our nation a better, fairer, place to live. Alabama suffragists were not feminists nor were they civil rights advocates, but they did want to use their political rights to pass laws and legislation improving schools, promoting sanitation and public health, and preventing the exploitation of young children in mining, industrial and manufacturing jobs. To spread the movement, Huntsville members worked with North Alabama women to start suffrage organizations in their towns; they also hosted public events to educate area residents about women's suffrage, and they lobbied elected officials to pass laws that addressed their concerns.

After the 1912 meeting, Huntsville YMCA initially allowed the women to meet in their building, but the Chairman of the YMCA Board stated that the group was too controversial and asked them to find another place.



The home of Marie Shelby Pleasants on Walker Avenue

At first, they met in a the home of Marie Shelby Pleasants, who lived on Walker Avenue, in a house that still stands.



1912 Headline from the Huntsville Times Daily announces the revival of the Huntsville Equal Suffrage Association



Ellelee Humes was recognized throughout Alabama as a leader in the suffrage movement. She also served as a trustee of the Boys Industrial School of Birmingham, as a member of the Huntsville City Infirmary, a forerunner of Huntsville Hospital, and was a strong proponent of prohibition.



Ellelee Humes hosted suffrage meetings at her McClung Avenue house from 1913-1918

The permanent meeting place of the Huntsville Equal Suffrage Association was the home of Ellelee Humes, on McClung Avenue, in a house that still stands. *Editor's Note: The Daughters of American Revolution, Twickenham Town Chapter, plans to place a historic marker recognizing the contributions of the Chapman sisters.*



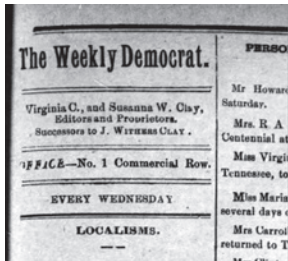
A Walking Tour

Huntsville's Suffrage History

DISCOVER THE PLACES

Where Women Made History

continued



Virginia and Susanna Clay assumed ownership of the Huntsville Weekly Democrat after the death of their father, John Withers Clay, in 1896. The Clay sisters were the first women to own a newspaper in the state of Alabama. The Clays used the pages of the Weekly Democrat to share information about suffrage issues. The office of the Weekly Democrat is now home to Cotton Row restaurant.



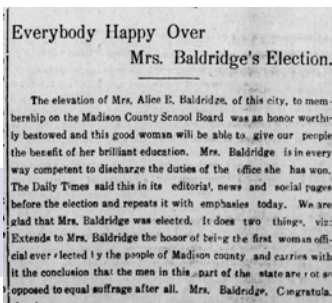
The home of Virginia and Susanna Clay

In 1915, the Alabama Legislature passed a law allowing women to run for elected office to local school boards. In 1916, ten women across Alabama ran for seats on local school boards; six women won office, four years before women received the right to vote. One of those women was Huntsville resident, Alice Boardman Baldridge, who male voters elected to the Madison County Board of Education. The following year, Baldridge graduated from law school and passed the Alabama Bar Exam. Baldridge was the first woman attorney to practice law in Madison County. A few years later, Baldridge left Huntsville and joined a Wall Street law firm in New York, where she practiced law until the late 1950s. She returned to Huntsville after her retirement and passed away in 1961.



Alice Baldridge and her daughter Vida

Huntsville Times Daily praises election of Alice Baldridge to the Madison County School Board



Baldridge's license to practice law is headline news



The family home of Alice Baldridge once stood on this Adams Street property; the house was demolished in 1962

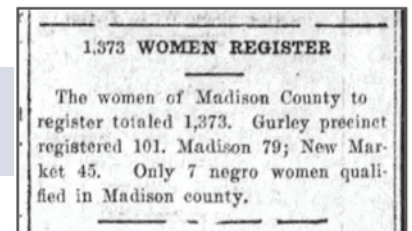


Headlines herald the ratification of the 19th Amendment

After the ratification of the 19th amendment, Alabama women registered for the right to vote. The state's 1901 Constitution placed the same limits on women voters as they did on men. To register to vote, a woman must be 21 years of age or older, have lived in Alabama for two years and one year in the county of registration, and she or her husband must pay taxes on property assessed at \$300. Lastly, if between 21 and 45 years of age, she was required to pay a cumulative poll tax of \$1.50 annually.

By mid-October, in advance of the 1920 presidential contest, more than 40,000 women registered to vote in Alabama, more than any other southern state. 1,373 women registered to vote in Madison County, including seven African American women.

Article from October 27, 1920
Huntsville Times



By recognizing the history made by Huntsville women, we honor all the ways that Huntsville women shaped our city and community. Soon, residents, tourists and school kids who walk down Franklin Street and learn about Thomas Fearn, the doctor who used quinine to cure typhoid fever, or walk past the home of Thomas Bibb on Williams Avenue, to learn about Alabama's second governor, can turn up McClung Avenue, and learn about Ellelee Chapman Humes, one of the Huntsville women who made history.

Marking Suffrage History

The Twickenham Town Chapter DAR Honors the Chapman Sisters

Written by Penny Sumners, Twickenham Town Chapter DAR • Researched by Dorla Evans, Twickenham Town Chapter DAR

The Twickenham Town Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) plans to erect a historic marker at the McClung Avenue house once home to Alberta Chapman Taylor and her sister Ellelee Chapman Humes, in recognition of their contributions to Huntsville's suffrage movement. The daughters of former Alabama governor Reuben Chapman, Alberta Taylor and Ellelee Humes were deeply committed to suffrage and equal rights for women. By erecting the historic marker in celebration of the hundred-year anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment, the Twickenham DAR brings much-needed recognition to the women who fought for equal suffrage.

The DAR focuses on historic preservation and education. In Huntsville, the Twickenham Town Chapter DAR was started in 1908 by a group of ladies who were dynamic in their pursuit of this mission. In our study of the women's movement in Huntsville, we became aware that some of the DAR daughters and their families were suffragists. As women, we were interested in how the movement began in Huntsville.



Alberta Chapman Taylor was a driving force in Huntsville's early suffrage movement. She became involved with women's suffrage when she and her husband lived briefly in Colorado. While there, she became acquainted with Susan B. Anthony, President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, and Carrie Chapman-Catt, National Organizing Chairman. Taylor arranged for Anthony and Catt to speak at a public meeting in Huntsville on

January 25, 1895 at Huntsville's city hall. Newspaper reports state that while curiosity drew crowds, many were won over by the Anthony and Catt's arguments. After Anthony and Catt spoke, attendees at the meeting formed Huntsville's first equal suffrage organization.

Alberta's sister, Ellelee Chapman Humes, was also a leader in the suffrage movement. After the Anthony-Catt meeting, Ellelee and Milton Humes hosted a dinner for Susan B. Anthony and Carrie Chapman Catt at their home, Abingdon, located near Meridian Street and the Lincoln Mills. Ellelee Humes later became president of the Huntsville Equal Suffrage Association.



The McClung Avenue house owned by the family of Alberta Taylor was the formal meeting location of the Huntsville Equal Suffrage Association from 1913-1918. Albert passed away in May 1912, and Ellelee Humes lived in the McClung house until her own death. When local churches and organizations refused to provide a permanent space for the suffrage meetings, Ellelee volunteered to host the meetings at the family home she had shared with her sister, Alberta. Ellelee was a founding member of the Twickenham Town Chapter of the DAR and the Vice President and eventual President of the Huntsville Equal Suffrage Association.

Through this historic marker, the Twickenham Town Chapter DAR will introduce residents and visitors to Huntsville's suffrage movement and the women who helped expand the voting franchise.

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124 Southside Square
Huntsville, AL 35801

Please consider a donation to support *Color Me, Huntsville*
Your donations, sponsorships and membership donations
keep this educational program going!

2020 Membership Levels & Benefits

Individual/Family Membership \$50

- Guests at holiday membership reception ▪ Invitations to HHF Special Event
- 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

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

- Name or company recognized in *Color Me, Huntsville* coloring books.

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

- Sponsorship signage at ALL HHF tours and special events.

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

- Recognized as Preservation Partner in HHF Newsletter
- Recognition as a Preservation Partner on HHF website

*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

☐ Community Partner \$500

☐ Preservation Society \$1,000

☐ Preservation Partner \$2,500

☐ YES! In addition to my membership contribution,
I want to support HHF's *Color Me, Huntsville*
Educational program with a donation of
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Print name as it should appear on our membership levels and mailings.

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