



Foundation Forum

THE HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

HARRISON BROTHERS: MORE THAN A STORE

Our preservation mission discovers, documents, shares, and preserves the history and material culture of Huntsville-Madison County through programs and projects that include the contributions of all Alabamians.

Supported by member donations since 1974, our nonprofit organization promotes the preservation of historically and culturally significant places through education, public engagement, and advocacy.



Ron Poteat and the Downtown Huntsville, Inc. Board of Directors present the Best Retail Establishment of 2026 award to the Historic Huntsville Foundation Board of Directors and staff.

It was an honor to be nominated, and we never expected to win, but we are deeply grateful to everyone who voted for Harrison Brothers as the **Best Downtown Huntsville Retail Establishment of 2026**. Winners were announced at the Downtown Huntsville, Inc. awards program on January 29 at Mars Music Hall.

Since 1879, Harrison Brothers has been part of Huntsville’s commercial life. That history gives us a unique perspective on the challenges facing locally owned retail shops today. Retail is a hard business in 2026, especially when it is so easy to click and shop from home.

But those clicks come at a cost to our community. Locally owned shops employ local residents and strengthen the economy close to home. At last count, Harrison Brothers carries the goods of **over 150 local artists and vendors**, providing a marketplace for local artists, artisans, and makers to connect with customers to grow their businesses. Shopping local is also an investment in our area’s infrastructure, funding critical services such as schools, roads, and police and fire protection.

The Historic Huntsville Foundation purchased Harrison Brothers in 1984 to keep an established retail business on Huntsville’s historic courthouse square. Today, through walking tours, museum exhibitions, and educational events, the store serves as a hub of activity that connects visitors and shoppers from around the world with Huntsville’s history, local makers, and community life. Through this, Harrison Brothers is a strong contributor to Huntsville’s broader economic development through tourism, local retail, and support for local makers.

At a time when so many things seem beyond our control, shopping local is a meaningful choice we can make that directly benefits our community.



Our **Cornerstones of Freedom** walking tours launched in May 2025.



Bart Siniard made his debut as a guest tour guide during the June 2025 walking tour.

Mrs. Olye Conley, William Hampton, and Bart Siniard joined our October 2025 tour as guest tour guides, bringing their perspectives to the discussion.



**OUR
GUIDED TOURS
BRING PEOPLE TO
OUR DOWNTOWN CORE
TO EXPERIENCE
HISTORY IN THE
PLACES WHERE
IT HAPPENED.**

Our **Places Where Huntsville Women Made History** walking tour debuted in March 2026 to rave reviews. Many thanks to guest guides **Dr. Henry Binford, Dr. Laura Keigan** and UAH intern **Glorly Sipper** for sharing their expertise with our group.



Visitors enjoy the chance to experience hands-on history, including the opportunity to operate our 1907 National cash register.



Harrison Brothers is a favorite stop for family reunions and group visits, connecting personal stories with local history.



This Arkansas family spent their morning learning about the Reconstruction Era during their visit to Harrison Brothers.

The American Signature Quilt drew strong interest from quilting enthusiasts eager to connect local history with a national story.



OUR MISSION BRINGS THE WORLD TO

HARRISON BROS. ALABAMA

HUNTSVILLE Est. 1879

IN 2025, HHF HOSTED **98** COMMUNITY EVENTS

WELCOMED **32,000** VISITORS

from **49** STATES (darn South Dakota!) and

30 COUNTRIES WHO PURCHASED GOODS FROM

150 LOCAL ARTISTS, ARTISANS, AND MAKERS.



The new federal courthouse provided a dramatic setting for HHF's 2025 Community Partners Reception.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS RECEPTION: THE NEW UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

Our Community Partners Reception at North Alabama's new federal courthouse honored the donors and partners whose generosity sustains our preservation and educational work.



Left: Senior United States District Judge Lynwood Smith welcomed guests at the September gathering. **Right:** Judges Liles Burke and Lynwood Smith secured the relocation and restoration of the c.1937 Xavier Gonzalez mural, "Tennessee Valley Authority", now displayed in the atrium of the new courthouse.



Artist Caleb O'Connor shared his "Wheeler Natural Wildlife Refuge, Sandhill Crane Migration", one of the seven history-based murals displayed in the new federal courthouse.

In 2025, HHF members gathered in historic places, shared memorable experiences, and engaged more deeply with the work of preservation. These events are one of the many ways HHF membership brings people closer to the stories and spaces that define our community.

INVITATION TO HISTORY: VON BRAUN PLANETARIUM



HHF members peered through telescopes once used by Huntsville's pioneer space scientists at our April Invitation to History tour at the Wernher von Braun Planetarium on Monte Sano Mountain.



Austin, Marion, and Nora Faulkner enjoyed their afternoon exploring the stars.

INVITATION TO HISTORY: "TALES FROM THE CASTELLANO CRYPT"



With designer Charles Vaughn leading the discussion, Donna and Mike Castellano's Little House (a 1940s freestanding garage adapted as a living space) was the focus of our October Invitation to History event.

MEMBER EVENTS

As we look ahead to 2026 and America's 250th anniversary, Historic Huntsville Foundation will continue to offer members special opportunities to gather, learn, and connect Huntsville's places to the larger American story.

INVITATION to HISTORY

Our *Invitation to History* tours provide members with unforgettable experiences in Huntsville-Madison County's historic places.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS AND TOUR OF OAK PLACE

THE VENUE AT OAK PLACE, 808 MAYSVILLE ROAD

Built in 1840 as the country home of architect George Steele, Oak Place is distinguished by its unusual split-level design and grand entertaining spaces. Following our preservation awards, join us for a tour of this extraordinary historic residence.

Hosted by Bill Chapman and Breck Robinson of The Venue at Oak Place.

This event is open to all HHF members. Reservation required.



MAY 6, 2026, 10:00 AM

OAK STREET REMEMBERED: A TOUR OF THE SUBLETT-LOCKWOOD HOUSE

527 FOUNTAIN ROW SW

The Sublett-Lockwood Home is one of only three houses that remain from the days when Fountain Row was known as Oak Street and part of a vibrant neighborhood of middle-class Black and white residents. Now home to Lockwood Law, the house offers members an opportunity to explore a fascinating chapter of Huntsville history.

Hosted by Julie and Robert Lockwood.

This event is open to all HHF members. Reservation required.



JUNE 28, 2026

AN AMERICAN CLASSIC: HHF COMMUNITY PARTNERS RECEPTION

THE GEORGE STEELE HOUSE, 519 RANDOLPH AVE

Held at the George Steele House, the architect's first home in Huntsville, the Community Partners Reception offers a gracious setting to celebrate the donors and partners whose generosity sustains HHF's mission.

Hosted by Stephanie and Neil Schamban.

This event is open to members at the Community Partners (\$500) level and above. Reservation required.



OCTOBER 25, 2026

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS MEMBERS!

Your membership donations are the foundation for our community-based mission.

HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE MUSEUM SPONSOR

Propst Family Foundation
Virginia and Parker Griffith

PROGRAM SPONSOR

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124 Southside Square
Huntsville, AL 35801

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2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Ex Officio
U'Meeka Smith
Katie Stamps

Donna Castellano, *Executive Director*
Debra Jacobs, *Store Manager*

FREE PUBLIC PROGRAMS FOR AMERICA'S 250TH

WED, MAY 6
10 AM

SUN, MAY 17
2 PM

THU, MAY 21
2026

SUN, MAY 31
2 PM

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS
The Venue at Oak Place, 808 Maysville Road
(RESERVATIONS REQUIRED)

WISH YOU WERE HERE:
AMERICA THROUGH THE VINTAGE POSTCARD COLLECTION OF PEG AND GEORGE HEESCHEN
Harrison Brothers Hardware, 124 Southside Square

AMERICA'S 250TH SIGNATURE CELEBRATION
The American Signature Quilt returns to Harrison Brothers.
THE DEBUT OF OUR NEW EXHIBITION, "HOW TO SAVE A HISTORIC STORE IN FIVE EASY STEPS" OPENING NIGHT OF THE AMERICAN SIGNATURE ART SHOW
American Signature Quilt exhibited through July 4, 2026.
Five Easy Steps and Signature Art Show run through September 8.

FRIENDSHIP AND FUNDRAISING:
THE STORY OF AMERICAN SIGNATURE QUILTS
A PROGRAM BY RYAN BLOCKER, MUSEUM COLLECTIONS COORDINATOR, ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY
Madison County Public Library, 915 Madison Street

COMING IN SEPTEMBER: **DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED**

PRESERVING MEMORY, PROTECTING PLACE:
THE MISSION TO SAVE BLACK HISTORIC SITES

Presentation and panel discussion with
DR. CAROLINE SWOPE, HISTORIC PRESERVATION SPECIALIST, CITY OF DECATUR, and
DR. DAYLAN WOODALL, PASTOR, FIRST MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, DECATUR.
This program is a partnership with the Alabama Humanities Alliance.

**JOIN, RENEW,
OR DONATE
TODAY!**



THERE ARE THREE WAYS TO JOIN HHF:

1 Complete enclosed form and return with check

2 Join online at historichuntsville.org

3 Scan this QR code with your smartphone