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From the Editor

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From the Editor:

Happy 20th Birthday H.H.F.

Happy 10th Anniversary Harrison Brothers.

When I turned twenty, I looked back and thought what a long time it had taken to reach that milestone. The Foundation turned twenty this year: in what seems a “twinkling of an eye,” and it too, is looking back. The accomplishments were fast coming: meeting preservation challenges from birth, when it helped to save the Steamboat Gothic house; through encouraging and assisting the formation of the Old Town Historic District; to saving the George Steele Home, Oak Place, and the Humphreys-Rogers House. Those are the Biggies. Preservation requires eternal vigilance and the Foundation membership has responded like Minutemen to perceived dangers and preservation opportunities (see letter to the Editor).

When the Foundation turned ten, which must translate to fifty in organization years, it took on the awesome responsibilities of purchasing, paying off the mortgage and continuing to run as a business, Harrison Brothers Hardware on the Square.

The theme of this *Quarterly*, Celebrating Preservation Triumphs, particularly heralds two recent honors heaped on Harrison Brothers. Hobnobbing with the likes of The Biltmore House and The Battleship *Texas*, Harrison Brothers has been selected to be featured in *America Restored*, published by the Preservation Press of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Harrison Brothers has also been chosen by the National Trust for inclusion in its 1995 engagement calendar, *Historic America*. Both are available at the store (see advertisements).

There is a spirit that is manifest at Harrison Brothers, and it is aptly captured by Diane Ellis. The breath that gives life to Harrison Brothers is the free labor provided by volunteers. Not your usual “gray lady,” these men and women of all ages are “hardware hawkers.” And they love it. But we need more volunteers to man the store.

This October marks the tenth anniversary of the Foundation’s unique property. The Chairman’s remark, “We believe that this is the only instance in the country where a preservation group has saved not only a structure, but the business housed in it,” is worth repeating. The store is a “living-working” history museum. Its walls and shelves are loaded with authentic memorabilia, its fixtures and ambiance engage all the senses in

synergistic nostalgia. Why, its no wonder people love to shop at Harrison Brothers! B. J. Robinson, the Chairman of the Management Committee, fills readers in on the secrets the old store emanates.

Another unusual aspect of Harrison Brothers and an important service of the Foundation, is the architectural warehouse located in the basement. George Harsh's grandfather's Tennessee resort made a lasting contribution to Huntsville's preservation and restoration. Truck loads of architectural elements made the transit from resort to warehouse to Huntsville homes and buildings in creative transformation. Thanks, George, to you and your family. Huntsville shows her appreciation each day and now our readers can enjoy this restoration miracle story.

The final article by Nancy Munson sheds light on the Harrison brothers as neighbors and, at the same time, takes us into a home originally theirs. Nancy weaves the history of the house with that of its occupants and neighbors. Enjoy!



In 1990 members of the Historic Huntsville Foundation gathered to burn the mortgage on Harrison Brothers Hardware. Foundation fund-raising projects raised more than \$50,000 to retire the \$30,000 mortgage balance. (Left to Right: Freeda Darnell, Nancy Van Valkenburg, and Ginger Fail.)

Alabama
Preservation
Press, April, 1994.