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Three Historical Markers Recently Unveiled in Madison County

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Mr. Woodrow Dunn and Mr. E. F. DuBose at the Merrimack Marker Dedication



Ranee Pruitt, Alex Luttrell, and Joyce Smith at the Buckhorn Tavern Marker Dedication

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THREE HISTORICAL MARKERS RECENTLY UNVEILED
IN MADISON COUNTY

F. Alex Luttrell, III

(Photographs courtesy of Jeanne Smith (Merrimack Mill/Bradley School), John Rison Jones, Jr. (Oakwood College), and Jim Lee (Buckhorn Tavern)

The Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society Marker Committee intensified its efforts during late 1995 and early 1996 with the erection and dedication of three new historical markers. On Sunday, November 19, 1995, a marker noting the existence of the Merrimack Manufacturing Company & Village and the Joseph J. Bradley School was officially unveiled and dedicated at the old textile mill site on Triana Boulevard in west Huntsville. The marker dedication ceremony and reception, hosted by the Merrimack/Joe Bradley Reunion Committee, were well attended by society members and residents of the Huntsville Park community. Mr. Bill Gant, chairman of the reunion committee, emceed the 2:00 p.m. event. Other participants included the Rev. Spurgeon Hendrick who gave the invocation, Mr. Jerry Crabtree, who presented the marker, and the Rev. J. B. Pendergraft who offered the benediction. Mr. Crabtree noted the attendance of Councilman Ken Arnold, representing the City of Huntsville which provided the funding for the marker. Mr. E. F. DuBose, long-time principal of Joe Bradley School, spoke of the school's history and importance to the community. Mrs. Harriet Dunn Giles, daughter of the last mill superintendent, spoke about the mill on her father's behalf. Mr. Alex Luttrell and Mr. Jim Lee accepted the marker for the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society and the Alabama Historical Association, respectively. The complete text of the two-sided marker is given below.

A second historical marker, commemorating the founding of Oakwood College, was unveiled and dedicated on Easter Sunday, April 7, 1996, the final day of Oakwood's 100th Anniversary Homecoming Celebration. The marker is located at the new entrance to the college on Sparkman Drive. The ceremony commenced with an invocation by the Rev. Leslie N. Pollard, pastor of the Oakwood College Church, and a welcome by Dr. Benjamin F. Reaves, President of Oakwood College. Mrs. Minneola L. Dixon, Oakwood College Archivist, gave an account of Oakwood's history and recognized special guests including Huntsville City Councilmen Richard Showers and Bill Kling; Madison County Commissioner Glen Nunley; and members of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society. Mr. Showers presented the marker on behalf of the City of Huntsville to Mr. Alex Luttrell and Mr. Jim Lee. The program closed with remarks from Dr. Roy E. Malcolm, Dean of College Relations and Chairman of Oakwood's Centennial Committee, and a benediction by Dr. Garland J. Millet, President Emeritus of Oakwood College. The text of the Oakwood College marker is also shown below.

Luttrell: Three Historical Markers Recently Unveiled in Madison County

The Buckhorn Tavern historical marker was hastily unveiled amid threats of thunderstorms and tornadoes at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 20, 1996, at the intersection of Winchester Road and Maysville Road in New Market. The marker dedication opened a weekend Civil War encampment and re-enactment of the Buckhorn Tavern Skirmish. The program began with the presentation of colors by the Buckhorn High School ROTC and the playing of the national anthem by the Buckhorn High School Band. Mrs. Rane G. Pruitt, a member of the Buckhorn Tavern Event Committee which funded the marker, welcomed the approximately 100 attendees and Mr. Ernest Gurley gave the invocation. Mr. Wayne McFarlen, Jr., then spoke briefly of New Market's history, and Mr. Joe W. Davis, Jr., read the history of Buckhorn Tavern and the Buckhorn Tavern Skirmish. The marker was then unveiled by Mr. McFarlen, Mr. Davis, and Mr. Tillman Hill, Madison County Commissioner. Mr. Alex Luttrell accepted the marker on behalf of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, and Mrs. Wayne L. Smith accepted for the Alabama Historical Association. The program concluded with Civil War era music by the Buckhorn High School Band just prior to the arrival of the predicted storms. The text for the two-sided marker is shown below.

The marker committee actively participated in the installation of each of the three new markers by working with the sponsoring groups until the marker text was finalized and approved by the Alabama Historical Association. In addition to these recently dedicated markers, several others are in various stages of the research and review process. A marker for the New Market Presbyterian Church was recently approved and ordered. This marker was financed by the Vandiver family and the New Market Presbyterian Church congregation, and was dedicated on May 19, 1996, at 1:00 p.m. A marker for Glenwood Cemetery in Huntsville was also recently approved and ordered. This marker was paid for by the City of Huntsville and will be unveiled in the near future. Markers for the Temple B'nai Sholom, Viduta Historic District/Monte Sano Hotel, and Echols Hill are scheduled for erection later in 1996, using the remaining funds appropriated by the City of Huntsville several years ago.

The marker committee encourages members to suggest sites to be added to a list of more than 40 proposed markers. This list is constantly reviewed, and each site is prioritized based on national, statewide, and local historical significance; age; location, accessibility to the public; and funding availability. The newly erected markers, along with each of the more than 50 existing historical markers throughout Madison County, will be featured in a new publication soon to be released. This booklet will include a brief history of the county, maps to locate each marker, current and historical photographs of the sites, references to additional published information on the sites, as well as the complete text that appears on each marker.

**MERRIMACK MFG. CO. & VILLAGE
1900-1992**

In 1899, construction started on Merrimack Mill and village. The mill began operation in 1900. A second mill building, added in 1903, made it one of the largest in the South. Under Joseph J. Bradley, Sr., managing agent (1905-1922), the village grew to 279 houses, a hospital, school, company store, and other small businesses. In 1920, the steam-operated mills converted to electricity. Lowenstein Fabrics bought the mill (1946), changed its name to Huntsville Mfg. Co., and the village became Huntsville Park. The mill continued to operate until 1989 and, in 1992, Huntsville's last operating textile mill was torn down.

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ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION 1995

**JOSEPH J. BRADLEY SCHOOL
1919-1967**

(Continued from other side)

The School, named for Joseph J. Bradley, Sr., was built in 1919 on the site of the first mill-sponsored school. Under the leadership of Edward Foyl DuBose, Principal (1921-1967), and with the mill's financial support, the school grew from 6 grades to 12 and served as a social and recreational center for the entire community. In 1951, the mill owners made a gift of the school to the county school system and, in 1956, it became part of the city school system. The elementary school continued operating until it was closed in 1967.

ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION 1995

OAKWOOD COLLEGE

Founded in 1896

Oakwood College, which began as an industrial school, was founded by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1896 to educate African Americans in the South. The school was erected on 380 acres purchased during the previous year for \$6,700. Additional property secured in 1918 nearly tripled its land holdings. The school underwent several name changes over its history:

1896: Oakwood Industrial School

1904: Oakwood Manual Training School

1917: Oakwood Junior College

1943: Oakwood College

In 1958, Oakwood was granted full accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Oakwood prepares students from across America and many nations to serve the world in a variety of positions and careers, reflecting its motto, "Today's College for Tomorrow's Leaders!"

On this site, too, stood the Peter Blow Plantation which counted Dred Scott among its slaves in 1819. In 1857, Scott captured national attention by virtue of his appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court for his freedom in Missouri after sojourning in the free state of Illinois.

ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION 1996



Mrs. Minneola L. Dixon, Dr. Benjamin F. Reaves, and Councilman Richard Showers unveil the Oakwood College Marker

BUCKHORN TAVERN

Located in Section 18, Township 2, Range 2 East, this site was an early wayside stop for pioneer settlers as they traveled the road from Winchester, Tennessee, into Madison County. The tavern pre-dates the creation of the county, Dec. 13, 1808.

During the Creek Indian War (1813-1814), the Deposit Road was created at this point and stretched southeastward through Cherokee lands to Fort Deposit near Gunter's Landing. This became the supply route for General Andrew Jackson's forces. His deputy, Colonel John Coffee, stored supplies opposite the tavern and camped his troops (Nov. 22 - Dec. 8, 1813).

By tradition, the tavern took its name "Buckhorn" in 1858 when William L. Fanning killed a buck near the site and presented its antlers to the innkeeper. The antlers are now displayed at Buckhorn High School.

The original building was demolished in the early 1950s.

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ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION 1996

BUCKHORN TAVERN SKIRMISH

(Continued from other side)

Buckhorn Tavern was the site of a skirmish on Oct. 12, 1863. Confederate General Philip D. Roddey's Alabama Cavalry Brigade was moving south from New Market when it intercepted Union General Robert Mitchell's Cavalry Brigade, advancing northeast from Huntsville. A brisk firefight broke out, the opposing forces so close they could see each others' faces by the muzzle flashes. Both sides hesitated to advance in the approaching darkness and heavy rain. The Union troops camped for the night in the woods; the Confederates retired to New Market. The next morning, Roddey's Brigade rode on to Athens. The Union cavalry did not pursue.

ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION 1996