

The Historic Huntsville Quarterly

Volume 22 | Number 3

Article 2

9-22-1996

From the Editor... Elise Stephens

Elise Stephens

Follow this and additional works at: <https://louis.uah.edu/historic-huntsville-quarterly>



Part of the [Historic Preservation and Conservation Commons](#), and the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Stephens, Elise (1996) "From the Editor... Elise Stephens," *The Historic Huntsville Quarterly*. Vol. 22: No. 3, Article 2.

Available at: <https://louis.uah.edu/historic-huntsville-quarterly/vol22/iss3/2>

This Editor's Note is brought to you for free and open access by LOUIS. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Historic Huntsville Quarterly by an authorized editor of LOUIS.

From the Editor...Elise Stephens

About the Cover...

Historic preservation is like environmental protection: essential to the maintenance of quality living. Education unlocks the door to historic preservation. Usually the Foundation logo, the fanlight, is empty. It lets in more light that way. But for the *Quarterly*, the light is meant to bring forth enLIGHTenment as we introduce six essential elements in the *Quarterly's* historical preservation mission which is clearly stated at the base of the fanlight: Knowledge Is Preservation Power.

At the base of the fan stand two corner stones of our purpose: Architectural Design and Historical Integrity. Nestled in the beautiful Tennessee Valley, citizens of North Alabama and especially Huntsville, are blessed with extraordinary natural settings for all our human endeavors. We need only blend our gifts and God-given talents to continue the work of forefathers—which is to preserve the historical integrity of our community and be ever mindful of the importance of protecting, practicing, and perpetuating vigorous and harmonious architectural design. History is as intrinsically expressed through architecture as love is through poetry.

The next two elements: Character and Stewardship, represent the stuff we are made of, what we are, and what we are about. The Foundation consists of citizens, proud of their city and dedicated to its betterment. How does a private citizen make a contribution? What better way than joining together in stewardship. Yes, this built and natural environment requires our care and commitment. The past calls to us to pay our dues and build for the future. Continuity is expressed in buildings like the First Alabama Bank and I. Schiffman on the Square. It is also expressed in the canal that runs from Hunt's Big Spring. By working together to restore our past and bring it safely into the 21st century we will be building a bridge as surely as the one we are trying to bring to the Canal from Geneva County.

At the heart of our fanlight are Community and Quality of life: the coming together from diverse backgrounds in pursuit of common goals. The quality of this community is nationally, even internationally, recognized. Bricks and mortar as well as rockets and missiles embody our nobler selves. EnLIGHTened preservation is the key to a quality community.

Let us consider for a moment, the name of our group and the nature of our mission. Historic Huntsville goes without saying. Foundation is what makes us strong and will keep us strong. Our mission is founded on sound principles as expressed in the fanlight. And underlying/girding all is the truth of our shibboleth: Knowledge Is Preservation Power. Is there any better Foundation?

This *Quarterly* is organized around two themes: **Why Not** and **Putting the Preservation Puzzle Pieces Together**. **Why Not** goes first because knowledge that seeks no application is not the sort that generates Preservation Power. So, here are some **Why Nots** followed by the wherefores which we need to solve the **Preservation Puzzle**.

This issue owes an especial debt of gratitude to Dr. Sarah Hall Edwards who brainstormed the Fanlight motif and then designed and executed the computer graphics for the cover and the issue. She was ably assisted by Lori Walton. Last minute information was graciously Fed-Expressed from the Alabama Historical Commission's Mary Shell who fielded a slew of questions. Thanks also go to Jerry Galloway of Community Development, Linda Allen of City Planning, board members Carol Harless, Ira Jones, Lauren Martinson, the Chair Diane Ellis, the Historical Commission members Frances Roberts and Harvie P. Jones, and lover of downtown, Kathryn Welborn McGuffey, whose words kept sounding in my mind and urging this effort forward. Kathy, who works in the Old Times Building, draws renewal, even at the end of the day, when she walks to her car. The feel of history is strong as she looks up at the varied architectural details and relishes "all the little things that someone cared about at one time." The Kress Building, she remarked, "abounds in little things that appear if one just stares at it. A friend and I stood and looked and daydreamed and thought about putting in a downtown athletic club."

Why Not?