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Luttrell Marker Committee Publishes New Book Featuring 79  
MARKER COMMITTEE PUBLISHES NEW BOOK FEATURING 79  
HISTORICAL MARKERS IN MADISON COUNTY

By  
F. Alex Luttrell, III

Many events have transpired since the previous marker update in an earlier issue of the *Review*. During the past two years, committee members have worked diligently toward accomplishing each of the committee's primary objectives: 1) identify historical sites, perform research, write text, and erect Alabama Historical Association markers throughout Madison County; 2) refurbish existing historical markers; and 3) compile a book of all historical markers. This third objective was finally accomplished with the publication of *Historical Markers of Madison County, Alabama*. Initiated in 1995, this book features all 61 of the historical markers erected by our society plus 18 additional ones erected by other organizations. It contains a full-cover cover, 178 pages and 214 photographs, an introduction and brief history of the area, the text of all markers, maps to locate each marker, a bibliography, and complete index. The book arrived in time for the Alabama Historical Association's Annual Meeting in Huntsville on April 19-21. The society also held a special reception and book premier on April 22 at the Church of the Nativity. Trustees of the Doris Burwell Foundation were on hand to present a check to the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society to finance the publication of 1000 copies of the book. The trustees were thanked for their generous gift and presented with the first copies of the book. Books are now available through the society and at a number of local stores: Shaver's Bookstore, Fleming Books, Lawren's, Harrison Brothers Hardware, Books-A-Million (University & Parkway), the Huntsville Museum of Art, Burritt on the Mountain, the Historic Huntsville Depot, and Alabama Constitution Village.

After noticing that many of our existing markers were in need of a facelift, the Marker Committee voted to encourage sponsoring organizations to assist in this project. The Alabama Historical Association also agreed to help with some of the refurbishment expenses. The First United Methodist Church agreed to finance the refurbishment of their marker. This was accomplished in 2000, and the congregation held a rededication ceremony on June 25, 2000, to unveil their marker. The Marker Committee also designated a portion of the city-appropriated funds to be used toward refurbishing some of the older, faded markers and replacing some of the damaged posts. Posts were replaced at Ditto's Landing and at the Twickenham Historic District marker at the intersection of California and White Streets. The City of Huntsville marker, Indian Creek Canal marker, Burritt Museum marker, and Saint Bartley's Primitive Baptist Church marker were returned to the manufacturer and completely refurbished. These arrived in Huntsville and were erected just prior to the Annual Meeting of the Alabama Historical Association.

Thanks to funding provided by the City of Huntsville, the Madison County Commission, and other organizations and individuals, great strides have also been made in erecting new markers. The five most recent markers to be dedicated include the Tallulah Bankhead / I. Schiffman Building marker, the Weeden House marker, the Temple B'nai Sholom marker, the Goldsmith-Schiffman Field marker, and the Episcopal Church of the Nativity marker. A marker for the Huntsville Slave Cemetery was also completed during this time period, but has not yet been erected. The future promises to be busy as well. The Marker Committee is currently reviewing text for markers to be located at Councill Training School, Vienna/New Hope, Central Presbyterian Church, and the Big Spring. Members are also performing research for a future marker in the Monrovia/Blue Springs area. An account of each of the recent dedication ceremonies, along with the text of each marker follows.

A crowd of nearly one-hundred people was on hand to witness the unveiling and dedication of the Tallulah Bankhead / I. Schiffman Building marker at 3:00 pm on Sunday, April 18, 1999. The ceremony and reception were held at the I. Schiffman Building (231 East Side Square), and were sponsored by the Tallulah Bankhead Society and Mrs. Margaret Anne Goldsmith Hanaw, owner of the building. Mr. David Robb, Treasurer of the Tallulah Bankhead Society, welcomed the guests. Rabbi Steven L. Jacobs, Temple B'nai Sholom, gave an invocation which was followed by a Scripture reading by the Rev. Kerry Holder, Episcopal Church of the Nativity. Mayor Loretta Spencer greeted the assembly and spoke several minutes regarding the city's commitment to preserving our rich history. Mr. Robb and Mrs. Hanaw introduced all of the invited guests which included representatives from the governor's office, state legislators, and city and county officials. They noted that the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs provided a grant to fabricate this marker. The City of Huntsville was also recognized for erecting the marker. Following the introductions, Mr. Robb reviewed Tallulah Bankhead's distinguished career, and Mrs. Hanaw gave a history of the building in which Tallulah was born. The marker was then unveiled by Mrs. Hanaw and Ms. Catie Grant, a descendent of the Bankhead family. On hand to accept the marker for the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society was Mr. Alex Luttrell, Chairman of the Marker Committee. Mrs. Joyce Smith, Vice-President of the Alabama Historical Association, accepted the marker for that organization. The ceremony concluded with Mrs. Elaine Hubbard singing Tallulah Bankhead's signature song, "May the Good Lord Bless and Keep You."



I. Schiffman Building



David Robb, Tallulah Bankhead Society Treasurer, and Margaret Anne Goldsmith Hanaw, great-granddaughter of Isaac Schiffman

The next marker to be dedicated was the Howard Weeden Home marker. This project, initiated in 1973, hit numerous roadblocks prior to its completion. The marker was finally ordered in 1978, and when the marker arrived in Huntsville, it was discovered there were two errors in the text: a misspelled name and an incorrect birth date. For nearly twenty years the marker lay in a county warehouse. The marker was rediscovered by Mr. Winston E. Walker, III, in 1995 when the Marker Committee undertook a survey of all historical markers in Madison County. One year later, the errors were corrected, and the marker was finally erected. Several additional years passed before scheduling the unveiling and dedication ceremony for Sunday, June 27, 1999. The ceremony, sponsored by the Twickenham Historic Preservation District Association, took place at the museum immediately following the Annual Meeting of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society. Dr. William G. Cockrill, Senior Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, opened the ceremony with an invocation. Mrs. Nan Hall, a representative of the Weeden House Committee, welcomed those in attendance. A brief history of the home and museum was then given by Mrs. Martha Simms Rambo, another Weeden House Committee member. Mrs. Missy Ming Smith, Community Relations Director for the Madison County Commission, was on hand to unveil and present the marker. The Madison County Commission provided the funds to manufacture the marker. Mr. Alex Luttrell and Mrs. Joyce Smith accepted the marker on behalf of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society and the Alabama Historical Association, respectively. Mrs. Hall then invited attendees to join the Twickenham Historic Preservation District Association at their Annual Meeting and Ice Cream Social immediately following the benediction by Dr. Cockrill.



Howard Weeden Home

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Congregants of B'nai Sholom chose the Centennial Celebration of the Dedication  
of Temple B'nai Sholom at 7:30 pm on Friday, November 12, 1999, as an  
opportunity to officially unveil and dedicate their new historical marker.  
Following the historic Shabbat Service led by Rabbi Steven L. Jacobs, Mrs.  
Margaret Anne Goldsmith Hanaw gave a history of Huntsville's Jewish  
Community, the Congregation, and Temple B'nai Sholom. Dr. Martin Davis,  
Professor of Architecture at Clemson University, spoke about the architecture  
of the Temple and its designer, Mr. R.H. Hunt. Mr. Scott Averbuch, President  
of Temple B'nai Sholom, then introduced Mayor Loretta Spencer and thanked  
her and the city council for providing the funds for the marker and supplying  
the labor to erect the marker. Mr. Averbuch then presented the marker to  
Mrs. Raneé Pruitt, Vice-President of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical  
Society. She accepted the marker for the local historical society and then  
presented it to Mrs. Joyce Smith, President of the Alabama Historical  
Association, who also accepted it. The ceremony concluded with a prayer by  
Rabbi Jacobs.



Temple B'nai Sholom

On Friday, October 27, 2000, the Goldsmith-Schiffman Field marker was officially unveiled. The dedication ceremony, sponsored by the Huntsville City Schools and Ms. Margaret Anne Goldsmith, took place at 6:30 pm during pre-game festivities for Huntsville High's game against Sparkman High. Mr. James E. Taylor, Captain of the 1938 Huntsville High School Football Team, served as master of ceremonies for the event. He noted the field was dedicated during the area's first night football game on October 4, 1934. Mr. Taylor then introduced several of the players who participated in that game. Those present included: Mr. Ernest Bailey, Mr. Ed Mitchell, and Mr. Hershel Bingham. Ms. Goldsmith, great-granddaughter of the two women for whom the field is named, discussed the history of the field. She then presented the marker to Mr. Alex Luttrell, who accepted it on behalf of both the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society and the Alabama Historical Association. He thanked the Huntsville City School System for paying for and installing the marker. Those in attendance then enjoyed seeing Huntsville and Sparkman play a spirited game of football.



Ernest Bailey, Margaret Anne Goldsmith, Jimmie Taylor, Ed Mitchell,  
Hershel Bingham, and Alex Luttrell

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 The most recent marker dedication occurred at the Episcopal Church of the Nativity on Sunday, April 22, 2001, immediately following the congregation's 11:00 am worship service. Rev. Roderic L. Murray, III, Rector, welcomed the congregation and other guests assembled at the marker site. He recognized Mr. George M. Mahoney, Jr. for his efforts as the congregation's liaison to the Marker Committee. Father Murray also introduced Dr. Don Allan Wheeler, Senior Warden of the Church of the Nativity, who unveiled the marker. Father Murray then presented the marker to the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, represented by Mr. Alex Luttrell. Mr. Luttrell thanked the City of Huntsville for providing the funds for the marker, and he recognized Mr. Mike Mahone for ensuring the marker was erected in time for the ceremony. Mr. Luttrell noted that Mr. Mahone's crew encountered several problems with the marker and post, but they were able to install it just two days prior to the ceremony. Mr. Luttrell then presented the marker to Mr. Wayne Smith, Executive Board Member of the Alabama Historical Association. Rev. Jack F. Wilson, Associate Rector, gave the benediction. All attendees were invited to attend a reception in the church's Ridley Hall. It was noted that copies of the new marker book would be available for sale at that time.



Rev. Roderic L. Murray, III, Dr. Don Allan Wheeler, Alex Luttrell, and Wayne Smith



1902-1968

### Alabama's Best-Known Actress

Tallulah Bankhead was the toast of the London theatre in the 1920's, and nationally renowned for her dramatic roles in "The Little Foxes" (1939), "The Skin of Our Teeth" (1942), the movie "Lifeboat" (1944), and as emcee of "The Big Show" (NBC Radio, 1950-52). She was born in Huntsville on January 31, 1902, in an apartment of the I. Schiffman Building (see other side). Her father, then Huntsville City Attorney, was later Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. A ravishing beauty in her youth, Tallulah was known for her uninhibited exuberance, deep sultry voice, and for calling everyone "Dahling." She appeared in 56 plays, 19 movies, and scores of radio and television productions during her 50-year career. She is buried in the churchyard of St. Paul's, Kent County, Maryland.

ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION 1999

#### I. SCHIFFMAN BUILDING

##### Birthplace of Tallulah Bankhead

This was the original site for a building erected by John Brahan before 1817 and known as No. 1 & No. 2 Cheapside. Erected circa 1845, the present structure is the surviving south third of a Federal-style building. In 1895, the Southern Savings and Loan Association acquired the property, and commissioned Architect George W. Thompson of Nashville, Tennessee to transform the building into Huntsville's only surviving example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture. Isaac Schiffman purchased the property in 1905. His family's businesses have continued here since that date. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION 1999

### HOWARD WEEDEN HOME

Built 1819 by H. C. Bradford, this home was later owned by John Read, John McKinley, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court (1837-1852), Bartley M. Lowe, M. C. Betts and Maria Howard Weeden (1846-1905) whose poetry and paintings preserve nineteenth century Southern Culture.

Marker by D.A.R. 1910; H.A.B.S. 1935  
National Register of Historic Places, 1973

ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
1978

### TEMPLE B'NAI SHOLOM

Huntsville's first Jewish citizens arrived during the 1840's. Congregation B'nai Sholom ("Sons of Peace") was founded July 30, 1876 by 32 families.

They affiliated in 1877 with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Reform Movement. Construction of the Temple began in 1898, and it was dedicated on November 26, 1899. Chairman of the Building Committee was Isaac Schiffman. Architecture is primarily of the Romanesque Revival style, with influences of the Renaissance Revival in the west front gable. The Temple was designed by architect R.H. Hunt of Chattanooga. Extensive restoration was completed in 1994. Temple B'nai Sholom is the oldest synagogue in Alabama in continuous use.

ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION 1997

**GOLDSMITH-SCHIFFMAN  
FIELD**

On January 25, 1934, Oscar Goldsmith, Lawrence  
B. Goldsmith,  
Annie Schiffman Goldsmith, Robert L.  
Schiffman, and Elsie  
Strauss Schiffman gave this property to the City  
of Huntsville  
for an athletic field. The gift was in memory of  
Betty Bernstein  
Goldsmith (wife of Oscar and mother of  
Lawrence) and Betty  
Herstein Schiffman (wife of Isaac and mother of  
the other  
donors). The Civil Works Administration  
provided \$6500 in  
materials and labor to construct the field, the first  
in Huntsville  
to accommodate night athletic games. The Acme  
Club raised  
funds for lighting through season ticket sales.  
Dedication  
exercises were held during the first night game on  
October 4,  
1934, when 1000 fans saw Coach Milton Frank's  
Huntsville High  
team defeat Gadsden High.

**ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
1999**

**THE CHURCH OF THE  
NATIVITY, EPISCOPAL**

The Church of the Nativity congregation was organized December 17, 1842 – the name chosen because of the approaching Christmas season. The Convention of the Diocese of Alabama, Protestant Episcopal Church, approved the congregation on February 16, 1843. The original brick church, erected in 1847, stood east of the present structure. The present church building, an outstanding example of Gothic Revival architecture, was designed by Frank Wills and Henry Dudley of New York. Erected at a cost of \$37,500, it was dedicated Easter Eve, April 13, 1859, and consecrated January 29, 1860.

**NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK - 1990**

(continued on other side)

**ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
2001**

THE CHURCH OF THE  
NATIVITY, EPISCOPAL

(continued from other side)

Bibb Chapel was consecrated in 1886 as a  
memorial to  
Wilson Carey Bibb. Ridley Hall, for parish  
functions,  
was completed in 1953 as a memorial to Dr.  
James L.  
Ridley. Joffrion Hall, dedicated in 1983 as an  
educational building, was named for the Rev. A.  
Emile  
Joffrion, ninth rector.  
For 150 years, Nativity was served by only ten  
rectors,  
two of whom became bishops. The Rev. Henry C.  
Lay,  
second rector, was consecrated Missionary Bishop  
of the  
Southwest (1859). The Rev. Randolph R.  
Claiborne, Jr.,  
seventh rector, was consecrated Suffragan Bishop,  
Diocese  
of Alabama (1949) and became Bishop of Atlanta  
(1953).

ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
2001