

The Historic Huntsville Quarterly

Volume 23 | Number 4

Article 2

12-21-1997

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Recommended Citation

Stephens, Elise (1997) "From the Editor... Elise Stephens," *The Historic Huntsville Quarterly*. Vol. 23: No. 4, Article 2.

Available at: <https://louis.uah.edu/historic-huntsville-quarterly/vol23/iss4/2>

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From the Editor...Elise Stephens

This Winter issue of the *Quarterly* is entitled "Preservation For the Common Good: Land, Art, and Memories." Running through each article as clear as water is the assumption that we are all sharers, partakers, and contributors to the common good. The role of the Historic Huntsville Foundation is to focus attention on our man-made environment, but where would we be without nature's gifts to us. At best we preserve the bounty of field and forest, as it is fundamental to all further art and science.

In this, my last issue as resident *Quarterly* Editor, I want to tie together some loose ends and wrap them in browns and greens. Hence, our first article is a tip of the pen to the Huntsville Land Trust celebrating 10 years of achievement as the public defender of our natural beauty, assuming ownership of acres contributed by citizens for the common good.

The articles about the Alms House and Three Caves were prepared by volunteers and staff a few years ago. This 10th Anniversary offers a way for all of us to gain a deeper appreciation of our gifts and the Land Trust's contribution.

The article on Beulah Land was written by my student at A&M a number of years ago. I asked permission then to keep the paper for possible publication. Now is the time. This year the Huntsville-Madison County Library's Heritage Room and the Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society are sponsoring a series of seminars and speakers on African-American genealogy. The field is rich. Pam Bridgeforth adds not only to family archives but offers a valuable lesson about our land and those who have tended it so faithfully and productively.

When I was putting together the issue on the Central Presbyterian Church for Spring '97, I was fascinated by the complexity of picture restoration and the artistic dexterity required to achieve best results. Among the articles I readied for that issue were the ones featuring Christine Young. Anyone in the preservation business knows that art, too, must be lovingly and painstakingly protected.

Lastly, memories are the common store of us all. Shared ones make us all richer. Gary Griner first introduced us to George Plummer in the Summer 1994 issue of the *Quarterly*. This man who did so much to build homes for the common man reminds us that Huntsville is more than Twickenham, Downtown, or any one segment of the population.

Ann Maulsby's interview of Mill Village Memories involving the little-known first Merrimack School brings us to an exciting new chapter in the Foundation's history. Forth-coming issues will highlight the Foundation's new initiatives in Mill Village surveying and restoration.

As I begin a new chapter in my life, it gives me deep pleasure to see the Foundation beginning a new chapter in its worthwhile career. For it, as for me, success has been measured in myriad contributions made by so many in great and small ways. Preservation calls for a shared faith in a future bright with the promise of the inheritance of our richly-endowed past. We are blessed. God Speed and heartfelt thanks to all.