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Book Review for "Through the Garden Gate -- The Gardens of Historic Huntsville" by Donna McPherson Castellano

Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society

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**Book Review for "Through the Garden Gate –
The Gardens of Historic Huntsville" by Donna
McPherson Castellano**

Another outstanding book deserves recognition for the talented people behind it. Author Donna McPherson Castellano writes in a manner that is very descriptive and appealing. In interviewing the owners of the 27 gardens featured in "Through the Garden Gate – The Gardens of Historic Huntsville," Donna was able to pull out facts that probably came out by accident, and then turned them into gems of extreme interest.

Donna had help from very able and equally talented individuals: Charles Seifried took amazing pictures with some rather interesting angles. Designer Betty Altherr Howard expertly combined and arranged pictures and words. Copy Editor Jeannie Robison made sure it all went together well with a talent few people possess. Assistants Katie Castellano and Nathan Castellano, who coincidentally share Donna's last name, were her assistants! The gardens featured in this book are the product of decades, or even centuries in some cases, of the imaginations of several generations. They showcase favorite flowers, textures, colors, and even eras. Some were designed to be enjoyed personally, others designed to share with guests. Each and every garden, as well as photograph, is a true work of art.

Gardens have always reflected the current times. There was a time when people spent much time outside – long before the days of air conditioning and televisions. Porches with views were popular. When streets became noisier, the porch life moved to the back of the house and by then the family milk cow was gone and the back yard landscaping deserved a second look. Our lives got busier, our jobs more demanding, and central air and heat beckoned us back indoors. The tide has turned once again. Improved technology has given us more free time and stressful lives have demanded that we take a break to refocus our energies. Each one of these gardens represents a safe haven and though we may not all possess the skill and imagination to create our own garden, we appreciate the opportunity to enjoy them through this beautifully created book.

"Through the Garden Gate, The Gardens of Historic Huntsville" is available for \$30.00. Proceeds go to the Historic Huntsville Foundation, an organization that promotes restoration of historic buildings. See their website for more information on this outstanding organization.