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to 1955*

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## Exerpts from M and C Stations and Stops

Catherine K. Gilliam

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**Excerpts from M&C Stations and Stops**  
**Historic Huntsville *Quarterly*, 1981, Vol. VII, No.3**

Catherine K. Gilliam

### **Huntsville Freight Depot**

This was the Eastern Division (all track in Alabama) headquarters for the Memphis & Charleston Railroad, thus Huntsville received lots of attention and money from the railroad company. According to newspaper accounts, grading work began in Madison County in 1852; however, the first train did not arrive in Huntsville until October 1855. It is probable that some temporary wooden structures had been erected on the Huntsville depot grounds by 1855; however, they do not show individually in the M&C reports.

Beginning in 1856, the M&C reports show construction in Huntsville every year until the Civil War as the fine brick buildings were built for use of the road. These included the freight depot, built in 1856 and still in use [Note: The freight depot stopped receiving freight July 1996 and was almost demolished in October 1998], the machine shops and engine houses, all gone now, and the three-story passenger depot and Eastern Division Headquarters, which is now on the National Register of Historic Places. Railroad buildings built in Huntsville, as taken from the M&C annual reports, are as follows: 1856 Brick FREIGHT HOUSE built, no cost given in report. This building is still in use by Southern Railway System and is very likely the oldest railroad building in the country in continuous use as a railroad facility. It has had only two owners, the Memphis & Charleston Railroad Company, 1856-1898, and Southern Railway System, 1898-1981. [Note: The current owners of the building are Norfolk-Southern.] It is known to be the oldest railroad building still in existence in Alabama.

## Status Update: Huntsville Freight Depot

From the Executive Director

We have been in negotiations with a Norfolk-Southern Railroad representative in Atlanta regarding transferring the depot from the railroad to Historic Huntsville Foundation. The representative has asked us to submit our final proposal, and we are preparing information for that proposal. Although we are more optimistic than ever about our chances of taking possession of this historic building, nothing is certain until an actual agreement is signed.

Diane Ellis

Note: Linda Bayer Allen works for the City Planning Department and as part of her job works in historic preservation. She was past editor of the *Quarterly* from the fall issue in 1978 to the summer issue in 1983. She is a native of Tacoma, Washington, and has been a resident of Huntsville since 1967. Linda has been active in Historic Huntsville Foundation (HHF) from its earliest days.

Note: Catherine Kelly Gilliam is a native of Madison County. She was born in Huntsville, but grew up in Jeff, Alabama. One of her earliest memories is of helping her great uncle Lawson Kelly, who furnished all the flowers, make arrangements for Confederate Memorial Day services in Maple Hill Cemetery. Catherine's interest in preservation and HHF came from her participation in the Civil War committee, 1960-1965. She says that she was "just born doing it." For her services to the community, HHF nominated her for a Lifetime Achievement Award from the North Alabama Girl Scouts Women's Scroll of Honor, which she won in 1996.

**Preservation Alert: structures on the endangered list**



**Fig.5 Eastside Community Center, Dallas Street, 1999.  
Courtesy Diane Ellis.**



**Fig.6 White cottage, 406 East Clinton Avenue at Lincoln Street, 1999.  
Courtesy Diane Ellis.**