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Working with Harvie P. Jones

David Hay

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Working with Harvie P. Jones

David Hay

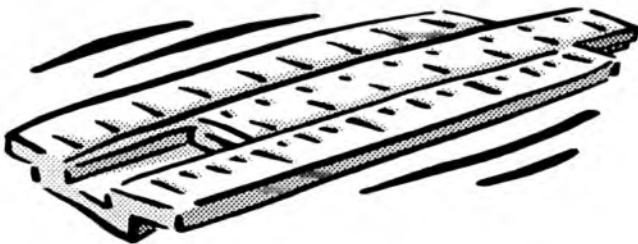
Harvie had a work ethic I have always admired.

He was often in the office when I arrived and still there when I left. I remember one afternoon he passed through the lobby of Jones & Herrin Architecture/Interior Design on a Friday afternoon at 4:55 and explained to several employees who were standing around: "I'm leaving a little early today." This was typical of his attitude towards work.

He always sat on a beautiful wooden stool instead of a chair and did all his drawings by hand, with ruler, pencil, and eraser, and still did his calculations on slide rule. (I looked into his room one day and saw him bent over something with his hand just flying; I looked closer and he was using a slide rule like I would use a calculator. Harvie had no use for modern gadgets.)

Harvie had a wind-up alarm clock with bell so that he wouldn't miss any meetings. We would be working away on our computers and his alarm would ring out in the office startling us all and off he would fly. He was a classic individual, true to himself and the historical architecture he loved.

David Hay, Huntsville native, is a partner in Hay Buchanan Architects. He has an AB in English Literature and an MS in Architecture from Mississippi State University. He worked at Jones & Herrin Architecture/Interior Design for several years and Crow and Associates before starting his own firm.



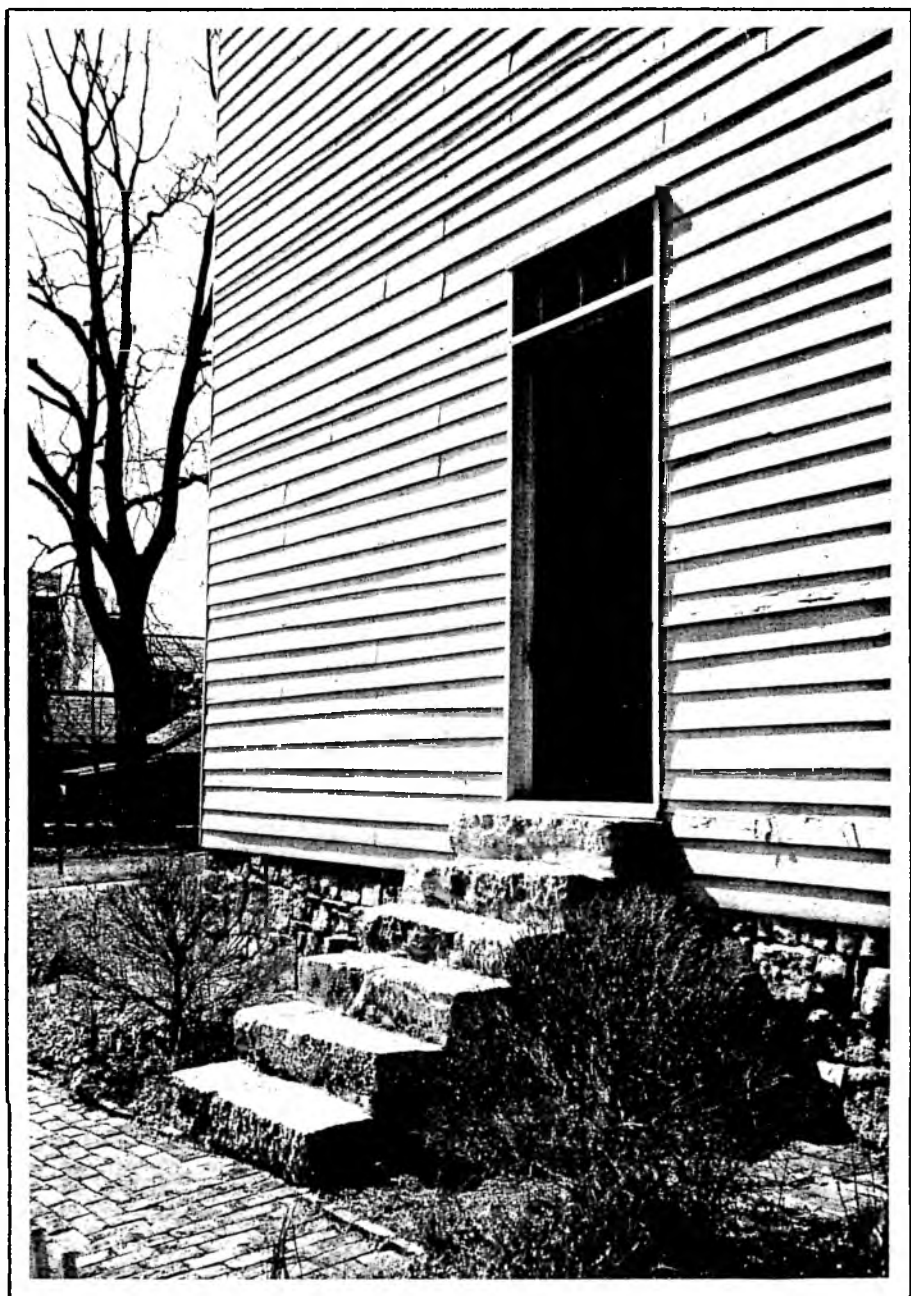
Constitution Hall Park

Introduction

Constitution Hall Park, now Constitution Village, is Huntsville's great tribute to the United States Bicentennial. That celebration of our nation's birth gave rise to many projects, none worthier or more enduring than the complex of sixteen painstakingly reconstructed structures located on the hallowed ground where delegates met to debate and approve Alabama's first constitution, in 1819.

The style of these buildings is what might be called *frontier Federal* or *Federal vernacular*. Research by Dr. Frances Roberts, Sarah Huff Fisk, and other members of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society "established the size, plan, shape, and location" of the buildings. Then Harvie P. Jones drew the plans and supervised the contractors as full-sized, three-dimensional structures emerged from the huge accumulation of data. On close inspection, each building is a treasure trove of period form and detail, from the placement of a chimney to the projection of the roof ridges away from the prevailing wind.

Begun in the early 1970s, Constitution Hall Park was an ongoing project for nearly a decade and is Harvie's first major endeavor in historic preservation. As he noted in the *Quarterly*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, Spring, 1982, most of the reconstructed buildings had "a direct relationship to the Constitutional Convention." Today, even the Library and the Sheriff Neal house/office—not considered so directly related to constitutional activities—seem intimately revealing of the lives and aspirations of those who lived or visited here, and perhaps witnessed the exciting events that led to statehood. And on an early spring morning, when traffic is still and the streets foggy, the unassuming simplicity of these historical recreations still breathes the air of 1819, of statehood, of commerce and land sales and newspapers and stables, and, yes, a scent of old roses and a faint whiff of a backyard privy.



SIDE ENTRANCE TO CONSTITUTION HALL