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Front Matter

Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society

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President's Letter
Huntsville Historical REVIEW
Spring 2016

This *Historical Review*, like all of them since 1971 accomplishes two goals: 1) it contains good stories for members who love local history, and 2) it captures segments of local history for researchers anywhere in the world for all time (I hasten to thank our own Deane Dayton for scanning the *Reviews* into the world-wide web). You can access them now by going to HuntsvilleHistoryCollection.org. The *Reviews* are categorized by subject matter, author, and year.

Because the *Historical Reviews* are such a rich source of local history, the Historical Society has decided to pluck out related stories and bind them into several books. The primary focus will be on stories related to the upcoming Alabama Bicentennial (2017-2019); however, there will be other categories too. These books will be available to our members at regular meetings, or for sale to anyone on Amazon.com. Jacque Procter Reeves is heading this effort.

Meanwhile, Mary Daniel has agreed to update the HMCHS history from where John Rison Jones left off in 2001. It will be published in a future Review.

Since the last issue was published, the Historical Society has been busy with these outreach efforts:

- We are continuing to work with the Huntsville Housing Authority to identify materials of historic value in its old records
- We've met with the Historic Huntsville Foundation in an effort to forge a partnership on some areas of common interest
- We've proposed to the Huntsville City Schools that we make available to their local history teachers subject-appropriate internet information, to include a human resource to help facilitate its use

- The HMCP Library has agreed in principle to partner with us in our liaison efforts with the city schools
- We're continuing to explore the possibility of offering short, recorded history vignettes to radio stations for use during the Bicentennial
- The Marker Committee is getting quotes to refurbish certain non-Alabama Historical Association markers in our area. The "owners" of those markers will then be asked to help defray the costs of refurbishment
- We continue developing the I-phone App that will provide information about the 125 historical markers located in Madison County.
- The Society's Facebook presence has been significantly impacted with thousands of "hits" per post, with about two new local history posts per week.

The Historical Society's website now includes the criteria for obtaining historical markers. And we now provide contact information for persons with genealogy questions. Also new, you can now find our Society newsletters, 2013-to-present, on our website.

Others topics continue to be works-in-progress, including the annual Ranee Pruitt Award, a history photo contest, a general history museum, and etc... Meanwhile, consider immortalizing yourself by becoming a published author in the *Review*.



John Allen, president

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From the Editor:

We are rapidly approaching the bicentennial and celebrate Alabama becoming a Territory. As a prelude, the state of Georgia gave up western claims in 1802, the Federal Road opened the western territory to more migration by 1811, the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Cherokee ceded land by 1806, and the US annexed a large swath of land that would become Alabama from the Spanish in 1810. The Green Academy was established in 1812, and after the 1813-1814 Creek Indian War, the Alabama Republican newspaper began publishing in Huntsville in 1816.

In 1817, on March 3rd, the United States Congress passed the enabling act that allowed the division of the Mississippi Territory. Mississippi was quickly accepted into the union as a state and Alabama became a Territory. With the state wide bicentennial celebration I encourage our contributing authors to take advantage of the focus on Alabama history and bring it to life in our Review. The bicentennial offers a great opportunity for our members and readers to illustrate and catch up on the forgotten, notable and not so notable people, places, and events in the community we call home.

Key Dates in Alabama's History Preceding Statehood

1802 - Georgia formally cedes western claims for its southern boundary at the 31st parallel.

1803 - 1811 - Federal Road conceived and built connecting Milledgeville, Georgia to Fort Stoddert, American outpost north of Mobile.

1805 - 1806 - Indian cessions opened up to white settlement large portions of western (Choctaw) and northern (Chickasaw and Cherokee) Alabama.

1810 - West Florida, from Pearl River to the Mississippi, annexed by US from Spain.

1811 - 1812 - Schools established in Mobile (Washington Academy 1811) and Huntsville (Green Academy 1812).

1811 - 1816 - Newspapers established in Mobile to the south (Sentinel May 11, 1811; Gazette 1812) and Huntsville to the north (Alabama Republican 1816).

1813 -1814 - Creek Indian War

- July 27, 1813 - Battle of Burnt Corn Creek
- August 30, 1813 - Fort Mims Massacre
- December 1813 - Battle of Holy Ground
- March 1814 - Battle of Horseshoe Bend
- April, 1813 - US annexed West Florida, from the Pearl River to the Perdido River, from Spain; Spanish surrender Mobile to American forces.
- August 9, 1814 - The Treaty of Fort Jackson was finalized after warring Creeks, under the leadership of William Weatherford, aka Red Eagle, surrender to Gen. Andrew Jackson and ceded their lands to the federal government. This event opened up half of the present state of Alabama to white settlement.
- September, 1814 - British attack on Fort Bowyer on Mobile Point fails, prompting them to abandon plans to capture Mobile and turn towards New Orleans.

1815 - February- British forces take Fort Bowyer on return from defeat at New Orleans, then abandon upon learning that the war is over.

1817 - March 3 - The Alabama Territory is created when Congress passes the enabling act allowing the division of the Mississippi Territory and the admission of Mississippi into the union as a state. Alabama would remain a territory for over two years before becoming the 22nd state in December 1819.

1818 -

- January 19 - The first legislature of the Alabama Territory convenes at the Douglass Hotel in the territorial capital of St. Stephens. Attendance is sparse with twelve members of the House, representing seven counties, and only one member of the Senate conducting the business of the new territory.

The Alabama, the area's first steamboat, constructed in St. Stephens.

Cedar Creek Furnace, the state's first blast furnace and commercial pig-iron producer, established in present-day Franklin County.

- November 21 - Cahaba, located at the confluence of the Alabama and Cahaba Rivers, is designated by the territorial legislature as Alabama's state capital. Huntsville would serve for a short time as the temporary capital. The selection of Cahaba was a victory for the Coosa/Alabama River contingent, which won-out over a Tennessee/Tombigbee Rivers alliance group that wanted to place the capital at Tuscaloosa. The power struggle would continue between the two sections of the state; in 1826 the capital was moved to Tuscaloosa, but in 1847 it was moved to the Alabama River at Montgomery.

1819 -

- March 2 - President Monroe signs the Alabama enabling act.
- July - Constitutional Convention meets in Huntsville. Constitution adopted with Cahaba selected as temporary seat of government for the new State.
- September 20-21 - The first general election for governor, members of the US Congress, legislators, court clerks, and sheriffs is held as specified by the Constitution of 1819. Held on the third Monday and following Tuesday of September, the voters elected William Wyatt Bibb as the state's first governor.
- October 25 - December 17 - General Assembly meets in Huntsville until the Cahaba Capitol is constructed.
- December 14 - Alabama enters Union as 22nd state.