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## Front Matter

Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society

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## **President's Letter**

### ***Huntsville Historical REVIEW***

### **Fall 2016**

Since he took over as editor, the *Historical Review*'s Arley McCormack has been evangelizing for articles on significant, local history, and it is finally paying off. In addition to a back-log of articles, he now has a pile of compelling historical notes that cry out for writers to transform them into *Review* articles; guidelines for doing that appear elsewhere in this journal. Please consider immortalizing yourself by becoming a *Review* author. All *Reviews* are digitized by HMCHS member Dr. Deane Dayton and are accessible by researchers from anywhere in the world from [www.HuntsvilleHistoryCollection.org](http://www.HuntsvilleHistoryCollection.org)

Your Historical Society Board has been very busy since the last *Review*.

- On June 9<sup>th</sup> we held a meeting at the EarlyWorks Children's Museum for approximately fifty historians or historical entities in the Huntsville-Madison County area. The purpose was three-fold: 1) to connect the historians, 2) to give them an update by Exec. Dir. Bart Williams on refurbishment plans for Constitution Village, and 3) to brief them on the upcoming Bicentennial – Alabama's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- We held a follow-up meeting on August 18<sup>th</sup> for historians from 21 cities and towns in a five-county area around Huntsville. Dubbed the *Confederation of Historians*, they

heard local attorney and Madison County Bicentennial Chairman Julian Butler tell of plans for the local celebration in 2019. The historians also brainstormed in groups, devising ways they can generate Bicentennial initiatives in their own communities and organizations.

- In an effort to raise the Society's visibility with local educators, we have launched the History Outreach Program for Educators (HOPE). The program includes a website that is being shared with local public schools, private schools, and homeschools in the current term. This website brings together useful digital resources on local history from the collections of the Historical Society and the Huntsville History Collection – supplemented with high quality Alabama history resources from across the internet. The HOPE website also includes 16 books provided by a variety of local authors and associations; Dex Nilsson has authorized HMCHS to return his book to print: *Why Is It Named That?* The very capable Kelly Hamlin has been designated as the HOPE coordinator.
- At the general membership meeting on Sept. 11, we announced the inauguration of the annual *Ranee Pruitt Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation for Huntsville and Madison County*. A nominating committee consisting of David Byers, Ron Bledsoe, Jacque Reeves, and Suzanna Leberman has already made a selection and has been approved by the Board. The award will be presented at a banquet-like luncheon on March 22, 2017, in Huntsville at a location to be determined. A note-worthy speaker will be sought for the occasion. Ranee Pruitt, now

deceased, was the go-to person on local history in her office at the HMCP Library's Heritage Room on the third floor. Everybody came to her. She was the portal for Huntsville history, so we are pleased to name this award for her.

- The Historical Marker Committee is continuing with restoration of several existing markers in preparation for the Bicentennial. Three of them are: 1) St. Mary's Church of the Visitation, 2) Buckhorn Tavern, and 3) Town of Gurley; five more will be refurbished over the coming year. Marker committee chairman Alex Luttrell says they are also working with other organizations to fund the restoration of some markers. And the committee is looking at new marker possibilities, including the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Apollo moon landing. The Committee is collecting ideas for other new markers to be erected during the 2017-2019 time-period. Please let us know if you have an idea for a new marker.

John Allen, president

## Table of Contents

Title	Page
<b>President's Letter, <i>Huntsville Historical REVIEW</i>, Fall 2016,</b> By John Allen .....	i
<b>A Technical Perspective of Greater Huntsville's First 150 Years,</b> By Raymond C. Watson, Jr, .....	1
<b>Huntsville, Alabama 1963 "The Year of the Dog",</b> By Arley McCormick.....,	40
<b>Alabama's Six Constitutions,</b> By Julian D. Butler.....	49
<b>And a Good Time Was Had by All: Celebration and Barbecues in the Early Days of Madison County, Alabama,</b> By Nancy Rohr .....	61
<b>Milton K. Cummings,</b> By Raymond C. Watson, Jr,.....	115
<b>From the Editor</b> By Arley McCormick .....	124
<b>Editorial Policy .....</b>	125
<b>Board of Directors 2016.....</b>	128

