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Front Matter

Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society

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President's Letter

Huntsville Historical REVIEW

Spring 2017

Our Society charter dictates that we collect, preserve, record, and promote the area's history; and our *Historical Review* editor, Arley McCormick, is certainly holding up his end of the bargain. This semi-annual repository of what happened during six different windows of time in Huntsville's and Madison County's past is hereby consigned to the ages. And it is appropriate that one of the articles begins a series on our local boys who served in The Great War, later renamed WWI, which the USA entered 100-years-ago on April 6, 1917.

The Bicentennial Review, Vol. 1, will soon go to press. It contains the best-of-the-best articles from previous Historical Reviews, with particular attention to subjects relative to the Alabama Bicentennial (territory in 1817 and statehood in 1819). Volumes II and III will follow during the next two years. My thanks to Arley McCormick and Jacque Reeves, who spearheaded this project. Jacque Reeves is the editor for this project. This is a value-added benefit to all HMCHS members; it won't be free, but you will get a discount. It should be out this summer.

The Society officially kicked off its Alabama Bicentennial effort on March 22 when State Sen. Arthur Orr addressed a packed-house luncheon at the Huntsville Country Club. The occasion was the HMCHS's first-ever awards ceremony to honor noteworthy historians. Sen. Orr updated the assembled historians on the state's

Bicentennial efforts up thru 2019. Orr was introduced by Huntsville's Mayor Tommy Battle.

There were two recipients of the Raneé Pruitt Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation:

- Nancy Rohr – is the author or editor of four books and ten articles on local history. She is also a prolific researcher and lecturer. She and John Rankin have worked together to preserve old records in various repositories that are deteriorating.
- John Rankin – has been a member of the book committees for development of county heritage books about Madison, Morgan, Marshall, Lawrence, and Limestone counties of north Alabama. And for the last 15 years he has been digitizing the historical records in the Tax Assessor's archive, the Probate Office's Madison County Records Center, and lately concentrating upon the Dr. Frances Roberts historical papers

Certificates of Appreciation from the Society went to:

- Joyce Markwardt Smith – for her dedicated service to the Society for 56 years, from 1961 to present, including serving as president on two different occasions, plus serving as president of the Alabama Historical Association in 1999.
- Alex Luttrell – for his 20 years of dedicated service to the Society as chairman of the Historical Marker

Committee, erecting 43 new markers and repair or refurbishment of 48 markers.

- Certificates were also awarded by the Descendents of Washington's Army at Valley Forge (Jim Maples), the William Hooper Councill Alumni Association (Richard Crimes and Laura Clift), and the Hartselle Historical Society (David Burleson). Congratulations to all.

For the first time in the Society's 66-year history, it now has a supportive relationship with all area schools. As of late March, every social studies and history teacher in this area should have received a 5x8 information card about HOPE, or History Outreach Program for Educators. The card explains how teachers can now go to a single website for digitized local history resources, including music, photographs, oral histories, books, videos, journals, places, archives, contests, and more--all ideally suited for embellishing lesson plans for the three-year Bicentennial. Huge thanks go to the HOPE committee of Deane Dayton, Kelly Hamlin, & Arley McCormick.

The HMCHS Marker Committee has reviewed a plan for participating in the Bicentennial. At the top of the list was the re-erection (following refurbishment) of two markers: John Williams Walker Home Site and City of Huntsville. Both of these markers have direct ties to early statehood. Discussions are underway for additional new markers to celebrate the Bicentennial.

Marker refurbishment continues to be a major thrust, as well. Restoration Huntsville completed the refurbishment of three additional markers: St. Mary's Church of the Visitation, Buckhorn Tavern, and Town of Gurley. Each of these markers was re-

erected in late 2016. The company is now working on four additional markers: First Presbyterian Church, Town of New Market, General John Hunt Morgan, and Harrison Brothers Hardware. Big thanks to Alex Luttrell.

Finally, remember that everything about us today is a consequence of our history. And please, please consider immortalizing yourself by becoming a *Review* author.

John Allen, president

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