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From the Executive Director

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From the Executive Director

ANNETTE PHILPOT

As long-time HHF members well know, since 1974 the Foundation has worked to preserve architecturally and historically significant sites and structures in Huntsville and Madison County. What's probably not well-known is that the Foundation began its work four years prior to the landmark Penn Central decision, which upheld preservation law on the local level, and sixteen years before the State of Alabama enacted statewide enabling legislation that allows municipalities to establish laws to protect their historic resources. We can pat ourselves on the back for being ahead of the curve early on regarding historic preservation. Over time, the Foundation's focus has expanded from the restoration of prominent landmarks and districts to projects diverse in scope and partnership, paralleling the national preservation movement.

Preservation of an early plantation house such as Cotton Hill, the subject of this *Quarterly*, like restoration of residential and commercial historic districts, celebrates our heritage and conserves our resources. Moreover, it's now well understood by most cities and counties that preservation serves as a catalyst for economic growth. Communities that safeguard their historic assets experience improvement in many areas of community life.

Since Historic Huntsville Foundation was formed, an array of laws and preservation programs have been established that provide better direction and support for local programs such as ours. In June 2005, Gale Norton, the Secretary of the Interior, designated twenty-four new places in America for inclusion in the "Preserve America" program. Supported by the current administration, this program was designed to foster local involvement in the preservation of America's "cultural, natural and heritage" resources. These visual legacies of our past provide a clearer understanding for citizens and visitors of the individuals, influences, and forces that shape the present and influence the future.

Many resources help the Foundation respond to and work with its membership and partners. Programs available to aid in preservation include the National Register of Historic Places, which designates properties deemed worthy of national significance; The Historic Artists' Homes and Studios program, designed to help American historic sites that have connections to art; Century Farms, which designates farms in Alabama that have been cultivated by the same family for 100 years or more; and The Alabama Cemetery Alliance, which provides education for the preservation of Alabama's cemeteries.

Historic preservation is always changing and never finished. Groups such as the Historic Huntsville Foundation, and individuals such as Cecil Armstrong, Cotton Hill's owner, and Wayne Kuykendall, its restorer, are key to saving the past for the future.