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# The Hoover Historical Log

The Official Newsletter of the Hoover Historical Society  
Hoover, Alabama



Red Gap over Oporto Road

## The BMRR is subject of historic signs project

James Lowery, a locally renowned environmentalist who also serves on the Board of an historical railroad organization, will make our opening presentation on September 20th.

The Historic Birmingham Mineral Railroad is the topic for the first general meeting of the Hoover Historical

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## Mark Your Calendar!

### BOARD MTG.

**September 13**

Board members meet at the Archive/Office, 10 AM

### GEN. MTG.

**September 20**

Shades Crest Baptist Church, 452 Park Avenue, 1:30 PM

### Meet...

**James Lowery**

Our first speaker for the 2016-17-club year

## Program Schedule 2016-2017

**November 15, 2016 Terri Hicks**  
**Holiday Traditions at Arlington and the Antebellum South**  
**Hoover Public Library**

Come hear about our local Antebellum home, Arlington, and learn about the holiday traditions still being followed there and across the south."

**January 17, 2017 John Killian**  
**Wartime Jefferson County in the 1860s**

Civil War skirmishes in Tannehill & Avondale, Union sympathizers.

**March 21, 2017 Jim Langley**  
**Alabama Idioms**

Author and Oak Hill Cemetery historian shares sayings unique to Alabama in a humorous Presentation showing the history of and reasons behind lyrical words and phrases we use and misuse.

**May 16, 2017 Jim Baggett**  
**A 19th-Century Murder Mystery: The Hawes Murders and Riot**

A mob of several hundred men attacked the Jefferson County jail in Dec. 1888 in an attempt to lynch Robert Hawes, suspected of murdering his wife and two daughters. Sheriff's deputies fired on the mob, killing several men. This talk explores the events surrounding one of Birmingham's most infamous murder mysteries.

## Back to School means 'Field Trip!'

*Editor's Note: A new school year brings new opportunities for learning—and our Society offers a fun field trip for students in several grades to experience life in the 1840s setting of the Stinson Ole Place, behind Bluff Park Elementary School.*

Docent Marie Taylor greets students in the downstairs of the cabin. The children sit, facing her at the fireplace. "I begin by having them imagine what it would be like to live in the cabin in the 1840s. There would be no electricity, no TV, no electronic devices, no telephone, etc. Then I ask, 'what would you do? How would you spend your time?'"

Students respond with such activities as playing, reading, eating, sleeping...and then they run out of things to say. I ask them to think about how lucky we all are to have the 'luxuries' we have today and point out that our forebears really had to work hard just to survive; that they had to 'make do' without many of the things we have today."

**Marie Taylor, left, emphasizes that the cabin is real, not a replica. Katherine Staursky, below, teaches in the cabin's upstairs bedroom.**

Continuing, Marie asks, "If there were no electricity, how would a family see at night? The children usually point to one of the oil lamps. So I take one of these apart and ask if they know how to turn it on. After a few wild guesses (all of which are usually wrong), I explain to them how an oil lamp works. When I put the chimney on, no one knows why. I explain that the chimney keeps the wind from blowing out the flame and keeps you from touching the burning wick."

Marie explains other items in the cabin—the pie safe, the weasel, the dulcimer. She talks about the pump organ and why it's there. (The family and neighbors didn't have a church building yet, but they did like to sing hymns.) Marie also demonstrates how to churn butter.

Marie finishes her lesson by asking the children to pick up or point out an object with which they are unfamiliar. If a child selects the rug beater, I ask if anyone knows what it is. Always ready to help, several will raise hands to guess. Marie stated, "Sometimes the guess is far afield, but sometimes it is correct. I usually have to say, 'No, it's not a fly swatter' and then explain what it actually is—but I cringe when someone points out that metal fruit bowl-like object on the mantel. I have to admit that I don't know what it was for, either!"

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## A message from our president...

Welcome to a new year of activities at HHS! Over the summer Debbie, Don, and Carolyn worked to photograph and catalog the over 300 items in our time cabinets. A new strategic planning committee met to formulate short- and long-range plans.

A shout-out to three new members who are already making an impact at HHS: Don Young (mentioned above), 92 years young is our new Volunteer Coordinator; Charles Hickman, our new Web site liaison, has worked since May to write a history of the Hoover School System from its formation to the present; and Tom Bailey, author and publisher of history books, will chair the Archives committee. He has wealth of new ideas and will offer classes to our members on how to conduct oral interviews.

We plan to create new displays for Hoover's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, update the Archives and continue collecting interviews, photographs, and artifacts of Hoover. We still need to find a Curator or Archivist.

We have five great programs this year. The first will be September 20<sup>th</sup> at Shades Crest Baptist Church on Park Avenue. Be sure to attend, for there will be door prizes and refreshments!

Look for e-mails that will contain your newsletter, membership guide, and volunteer opportunities. Feel free to contact me by phone or e-mail.

Carolyn Kolar

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## 2016-2017 HHS Officers and Board

*Left to right: Arnold Singer, Gilbert Douglas, Doug Harkness, Jim Lyons, Judy Casey, Anita Dillon, Secretary Inez McCollum, Charles Hickman, Don Young, Second V-P Pam Thompson, President Carolyn Kolar, Sue Knopf, Tom Bailey, Bob Kolar, and not pictured, Treasurer, Ed Burtnett; Corresponding Secretary, Betty Bagby; and First V-P of Programs, Delores Wilkinson.*

## Volunteers needed now more than ever...

Volunteerism is the lifeblood of non-profit organizations, providing an outlet for community members who wish to donate their time and talents to an organization considered worthy that “resonates with our core beliefs and concerns.”

However, several studies since the millennium have shown that volunteerism is at its lowest level since the initial sociological study published in 2000 by Robert D. Putnam in which he found that “active involvement in local clubs and organization of all sorts fell by more than half in the last several decades of the twentieth century and the trend is increasing.”

During the last third of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, several things happened that caused a dramatic drop-off in volunteerism. According to Putnam, four trends caused this. First, pressures of time and money, two-career families, and a hectic life style left little time for community activity; second, suburbanization required more time for commuting and daily errands around the community; third, electronic entertainment and communication kept people home (television, Internet, etc.), narrowing interaction and the diversity of friends; and last, but most important, generational changes in values—the civic generation was replaced by less-involved children and grandchildren.

According to a Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS) 2013 report, volunteerism crosses all age boundaries. The study found that 42% of those ages 45 and up volunteer at religious organizations, education groups, and social/community groups, in that order.

The HHS offers opportunities to volunteer

### SOURCES:

American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) *History News*, Autumn 2015, pp. 24-27

Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Volunteering in the United States* (Web site): [www.bls.gov/news.releases/volun.toc.html](http://www.bls.gov/news.releases/volun.toc.html).

while learning and preserving Hoover’s history. “This next year, officers of the HHS want to update the files in the Archive/Office; increase volunteerism to help digitize the collection and preserve our documents; and interact with the public as Hoover approaches its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an incorporated city.

## Vadie Honea Scholarships Awarded

Thanks to the generous support of Carlo and Dianne Joseph and Henry King of King Acura in Hoover, the Hoover Historical Society administered the Vadie Honea Scholarship competition, awarding \$1,000 to the college or university the winner attends. Each of the two public high schools in Hoover participated in the process.

Criteria for the scholarship included academic excellence and a record of extracurricular activities at school and in the community in addition to an essay about an Alabamian or event that greatly influenced the student’s life. Each of the 2016 winners—Holly Taylor Dunbar and Cassidy Johnson—was eloquent in her essay about the individual that influenced her choice of college and career



Cassidy (left) will attend Middle Tennessee State University to follow her passion for music while Holly (right) is attending the University of North Alabama, majoring in pediatric Physical Therapy.

## Mineral Railroad served iron industry in Birmingham

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Society's 2016-2017 club year.

Birmingham's iron industry history is an important part of its overall history, and the BMRR was a significant part of that history. "People drive, walk, and bicycle every day in areas where the historic Birmingham Mineral Railroad (BMRR) ran throughout the Birmingham and surrounding areas without ever being aware that the BMRR was located in those places," said Lowery.

Lowery's PowerPoint presentation describes the Birmingham Mineral Railroad and its various branches that were part of the iron industry in the Birmingham area and beyond. The network transported raw materials from the mines and quarries to the furnaces, coke from the coke ovens to the furnaces, and products from various facilities to major rail lines. Although the BMRR's primary purpose was serving as a Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company industrial railroad, it also provided passenger service on several of the major BMRR branches.

This presentation features maps and photographs from the steam engine era; will describe its route in the Birmingham area; and where former roadbeds can still be seen. Lowery will also describe the BMRR Signs Project that is installing historic signs showing where the BMRR was located.

## In Memoriam

James Harwell, a long-time member of the HHS, passed away in July.



## B'ham Quilters Guild at Stinson Ole Place

*Editor's Note: Students 'visit' five learning stations inside and outside of the cabin, downstairs and upstairs. One of their favorite activities is the hands-on experience of quilting, offered by the Birmingham Quilters Guild.*

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"Each year the Birmingham Quilters Guild enjoys imparting some of the history, art, techniques, and the joy of quilting to area students at Stinson's Ole Place.

Not only will they get to see completed quilts, but also they get to try their hand at quilting a square of their own! Representatives from the Guild are on hand to help with this," explains Karen Weaver.

"After answering the question: 'What is a quilt', a Guild member explains the joining of pieces to make the top, then the choice of material for the batting, and the backing. Since there are many designs and ways to put tops together, we will give the students time to look at the variety of pieced and appliquéd quilts on display and make comments."

In pioneer Alabama, the uses for quilts were not just for warmth or decoration, but for showing the skill of the seamstress, burial garb, reminders of home or family, insulation, room partitions, protective padding, for sitting or passing, picnic spreads, etc. "These uses are understood better in our overview of the period from 1800 to 1900. Using a simple timeline, docents highlight the Industrial Revolution, the invention of the sewing machine, the Civil War, covered wagons and Westward Expansion, and the invention of the light bulb, as they apply to changes in quilting," added Karen.

By this time, each student is eager to try his/her hand at quilting, and members of the Guild are happy to help! To book a tour for your private, parochial, home, or public school, contact Doug Harkness at [gdhark@bellsouth.net](mailto:gdhark@bellsouth.net) or leave a message at 205-822-9392.





## HOOVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Membership Form

Make checks payable to **Hoover Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 360233 Hoover, Alabama 35236-0233**  
 Archives /Office: 205-822-9392

#### Types of Membership

Individual	\$10
Couple	\$20
Sustaining	\$50
Patron	\$100
Corporate	\$150

NAME : \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

**Interests:** Publicity \_\_\_\_ Archives \_\_\_\_ Speakers' Bureau \_\_\_\_ Historical Research \_\_\_\_ Newsletter \_\_\_\_

**Other interests/skills:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SPEAKER/PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS:** \_\_\_\_\_



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[Recipient]

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