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# Hoover Historical Log

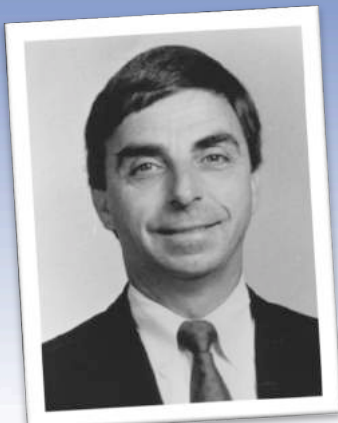
*The Official Newsletter of the Hoover Historical Society, Hoover, AL*

*Vol. 29 No. 3*

## Former Mayor Skinner to address the HHS

Continuing our focus on Hoover in its 50<sup>th</sup> year, our January speaker is former Mayor Frank Skinner, Jr. Frank's family moved to Hoover in 1963 while he was in college. After graduation, he joined the volunteer fire department and moved through the ranks as so many of Hoover's leaders have done. By the time he took office as Mayor in 1980, Skinner was knowledgeable in many facets of city government.

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## We're moving!

*By Tom Bailey*

The Hoover Historical Society is packing its archives, anticipating that at some point in the next several months it will move the collection to a new home for the first time in 20 years.

While the new home is not yet known, it is anticipated that it will be designed for our archives to grow, that it will have improved climate control to prevent deterioration of paper documents, and greater security so that our historical documents will be properly safeguarded.

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## Save the Date!

**January 16, 2018**

### **General Meeting**

1 PM for refreshments;  
1:30 for speaker Frank  
Skinner and a brief  
meeting to follow;  
Shakespeare Room HPL

**March 20, 2018**

### **General Meeting**

*The History of the  
Hoover City School  
System* with Jason  
Gaston and author  
Charles Hickman

**April 12, 2018**

### **Alabama Historical Assn.**

HHS will host an  
AHA group at The  
Folklore Center, 2-4  
PM

## Time Cabinet treasures teach about the past

By Inez McCollum

Interesting how one takes for granted an item that has been around all one's life until an editor asks you to write an article. By Googling "singletree" I found a few lines describing the item. There were many more pictures.



The singletrees I donated for display in the Time Cabinets of the Hoover Historical Society were some of those used by my Grandpa Hamrick. Grandpa and Grandma Hamrick lived in the log cabin Grandpa was raised in. They raised their nine children in the cabin. Much like the original Stinson Ole Place of HHS, they had added two rooms to the side for Grandpa's maiden sister to live in. Now you know why I am so fond of the HHS Folklore Center!

A singletree is a bar between the pulling animal and the wagon or plow that balances the weight being pulled. When we visited, I saw my Grandpa and my dad plow the fields of that farm. Grandpa and Daddy would each follow a mule that had a singletree between it and the plow they held. Working the fields would begin by daylight and would cease when Grandma would ring the dinner bell for them to take a break for dinner (the midday meal.) They would rest a little while and then return to the field and later to the farmhouse before dark so that they could feed the cattle and mules. And, oh yes, milk the cows!

What is a singletree?



Wood Singletree

During those days, only my twin uncles remained at home with Grandma and Grandpa. The other male siblings were either married and at their own homes or in the military. My Dad was employed at the steel mill in Gadsden. He and Mother bought their own home in Attalla, AL, where my Brother and I grew up. After we were both married, Daddy and Mother moved to Hokes Bluff, AL, to a house with acreage. Dad bought a mule and tended his own garden and cornfield. He probably used those same singletrees that are in our HHS time cabinets.

When my oldest son, Jay, was still a baby, my husband Mack did some traveling and on-the-job study. Jay and I lived with my parents. The home office of my husband's employer was in Birmingham. A fellow employee who was in the Alabama National Guard found out where the house and acreage in Hokes Bluff were located. One weekend when my husband was in Hokes Bluff for a couple of days—and his pilot friend on duty flying the required hours—he decided to buzz the home in Hokes Bluff. Every time he flew over the pasture, that aged mule would neigh and run at breakneck speed. Our son Jay was sitting in his highchair at the kitchen table and would scream when the plane flew over shaking the house. After the excitement was over, my husband explained the ordeal.

Several years later, the old mule died. After paying a fellow who had digging equipment to bury the huge mule at the back of the pasture, my Dad decided it was cheaper to operate a John Deere tractor than to feed and care for a mule. This released two or three singletrees to my ownership. (Ed. Note: Singletrees are not normally painted as shown in the image from [www.mydrafthorse.com](http://www.mydrafthorse.com).)





Caroline Boone packs artifacts; Mayor Skinner and founders of the HHS; our Time Cabinets—now empty!

## A message from our president...

Dear friends,

I first met Frank Skinner at an Aldridge Gardens dedication and invited him to speak at The Friends of Hoover in December 2012. At that meeting, George Farmer and Eloise Martin, both of whom are founding members of the Hoover Library Board were honored as Volunteers of the Year for their 30 years of service.

The Hoover Library began through the fund-raising and lobbying efforts of the Friends of the Hoover Public Library. This 1982 effort took place even before there was an actual library. Mayor Skinner challenged the five-member board to have a library opened within 9 months; they did.

Many of the facilities and services that we

take for granted are provided by its talented and dedicated employees; courtesy of the insight of Frank Skinner. Frank is a true salesman and visionary.

Frank Skinner moved to Hoover in 1963 and has been active ever since as a volunteer Fireman, member of the Planning Board, Councilman, Mayor, and member of the Aldridge Gardens Board of Directors—all while working and managing the Hoover office of Patterson Pope with his wife, Mary!

On January 16th, Mayor Skinner will be the program at the Hoover Historical Society meeting in the Shakespeare and Fitzgerald rooms of the Hoover Public Library. Come join us for refreshments at 1 PM and the program at 1:30.

Arnold Singer

## A Note to Marie Taylor... by Doug Harkness

For as long as I have been associated with the Folklore Center, an inexplicable event occurred every time the Stinson Cabin was scheduled for public use. By some magical means, the cabin was rendered immaculate! Dust did not accumulate on anything, the fireplace was cleaned, dishes neatly stacked, bed coverings washed, and the beds made. At times I felt that someone was secretly watching with a disapproving glare when I built a fire in the fireplace, but Inez was not a happy camper when the cold winds of February were blowing—so I paid little attention.

Oh, how we can take some things for granted! After all, it was always that way, so why question how it happened? For sure, I have come to the point in my life where things can no longer be taken for granted. When Charles Shelby left us, I immediately discovered that the cabin did not get unlocked or the...

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## What happens to the murals at AOTB?

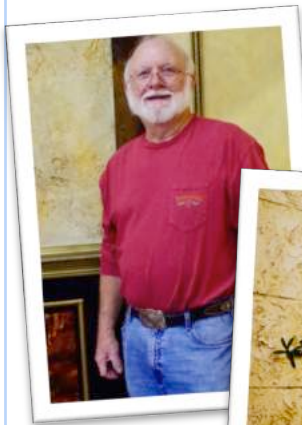
The Artists on the Bluff (AOTB) facility, formerly Bluff Park Elementary School, is home to several artistic treasures from the past. Director Linda Williams spent many years ensuring Bluff Park's history was part of the building by commissioning Shirin Kaynejah to create numerous images of landmarks in the lower hallway near the boardroom.

In addition, she was instrumental in having the large triptych painted by Elizabeth Holmes permanently mounted above the main gallery doors. Linda stated, "These murals are a treasure in the Bluff Park Community I certainly hope the Hoover City School system will preserve them for the citizens of Hoover."



Shirin Kaynejah

Rik Lazenby, one of the former artists at AOTB, is responsible for the mural in the former private dining room and the Tree of Life Donor Wall in the entryway. Rik commented, "I truly hope the Hoover School System will preserve these artistic jewels and keep the facility open as a community resource."



Rik Lazenby



## Mayor Skinner to speak

*Continued from Page 1*

He remained in office till 1991. Both the city budget and the population grew under Mayor Skinner—\$1.9 million to \$29 million in ten years—and from fewer than 20,000 to 32,000 in population. The former mayor plans to share "some information about Hoover's past and some of the things that took place in the beginning." The public, as well as members, is invited to the general meeting of January 16<sup>th</sup> at the Hoover Public Library's Shakespeare room at 1 PM for refreshments and 1:30 for our speaker's presentation. We hope you'll join us!

Artist Elizabeth Holmes created three made-to-fit custom panels situated above the entrance to the Soon Bok Lee Sellers Gallery which opened in 2005 at AOTB. Mrs. Sellers was a great champion of the Community Education Center that became AOTB. Elizabeth recalled her AP Art Teacher (Sellers) "promoted her students" over her own artwork. Her *View from the Bluff* memorializes a "particular place on the bluff that was well-known...looking out then on not very much but now overlooks Ross Bridge." She hopes that her work will remain in the Bluff Park community.

The answer to the question posed in the headline above? *Unknown.*



Elizabeth Holmes

# HHS archives to relocate, but where?

*Continued from Page 1*

The need to move from quarters at the Historic Bluff Park School came when the Hoover Board of Education determined that the building needed to be vacated because it did not meet government codes and standards, and that a number of aging systems would require substantial investment.

The Board's decision quickened the pace of already-underway HHS discussions that a move would be a good thing. Those discussions began well before the Board's action. HHS Board members already had noted poor climate control, less than ideal security and the need for a space more suited for storage and maintenance of the HHS archive collection.

Discussions are ongoing related to a location for the archives new home and office. This discussion stage is providing time for the collection to be reviewed, cataloged and packed for moving.

Some items have been deemed no longer essential to the HHS mission and may be donated to other organizations. Before that, HHS members may come to the archives room, review those items not being retained and take any that they wish to keep. They include old periodicals, publications not related to Hoover or the surrounding area and out-of-date materials.

City officials have said on several occasions that they will help with the move and with finding a new home for the HHS archives. It has been heartening to HHS that the city has been quite complimentary of HHS, its role in preserving Hoover's history, and its importance as a city institution. Officers feel comfortable that they want to work with the group to enhance HHS activities and locate a new home for the archives. It is hoped that they may also provide logistical assistance with the move, and possibly, temporary storage of the archives if delayed in moving the collection to a new home.

The Society was not a part of Artists on the Bluff, other than to occupy space in the same building. They were our neighbors and we enjoyed sharing the building with them, and wish them well in their future endeavors. However, the move and wherever the new location turns out to be will not be connected with plans by the artists. We are a different organization, both in our mission and in our organizational structure.

This move of the archives does not affect HHS meetings or other HHS activities. Please rest assured in that fact. This is an exciting opportunity for the membership, not something to worry about. The HHS plans to continue to meet at Hoover Public Library with the same format and on the same schedule.

Ultimately, this move is requiring a increase in the workload of HHS volunteers, and in future HHS planning for the new home, this is a happy chance to grow the Society, to showcase to the community what HHS does, to enhance the archive collection—the official memory of our city's history—and to better protect it, and to strengthen an already strong relationship with our city.

Please contact HHS office with any questions, comments, and especially to volunteer to help with the move. You may reach us via e-mail at [info@hooverhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@hooverhistoricalsociety.org) or by phone 205-822-9392.

## A Note to Marie Taylor...

*Continued from Page 3*

windows flung open just in time for visitors. Nor did the wash pot magically appear—filled with water up to the appropriate level—over the fire that just sprang up in the yard.

Now I have been told that the invisible cleaning lady (after all I never saw her at work!) will not be keeping the cabin spotless anymore. It is truly a time for reflection and thankfulness for the Invisible Friend, Marie Taylor. The many years of faithful service to the Historical Society and all the time she spent keeping and stocking the Folklore Center passed without notice or fanfare. Now that service has come to an end. She will be greatly missed by all the folks that support the activities of the center and we express our thanks and appreciation for a job well done. Marie, you are appreciated and will be missed!

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*The Hoover Historical Log* is published five times annually by the Hoover Historical Society.  
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## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Hoover Historical Society

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*Recipient*

