



# Hoover Historical Happenings

Vol. 23 No. 2

November 2011

## Dates

Nov. 1 Board Meeting  
Nov. 15 General Meeting  
Dec. 1 Newsletter articles due

## Executive Committee

Jackie Matte  
Delores Wilkinson  
Lea Pennington  
Shirley Lewis  
Christine Simonton  
Jim Lyons  
Sharon Jones  
Joy Elliott  
Marilyn Janda  
Charlotte Williams  
Jean Butterworth  
Barbara Lyons  
Inez McCollum  
Arnold Singer  
John Williams  
Betty Bagby  
Charles Shelby  
Doug Harkness  
Peggy Patton  
Katherine Staursky  
Marshall Morgan  
Joan Davis  
Marie Taylor  
Vadie Honea  
Charlotte Patton  
Charlotte Laggy  
Tom Laggy  
Betty Tucker  
Faye Walker

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Joan Davis and Marie Taylor,  
Editors.

## Hoover Historical Society To Welcome Mayor Oden

HHS will be honored to have Terry Oden as speaker for our November 15 meeting. Mayor Oden is presently the mayor of Mountain Brook, but he comes to us with a rich history of public service. For 24 years he was a Secret Service Agent protecting the lives of Jacqueline Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Ronald Reagan. He was also security coordinator for the 1984

Democratic Convention and was one of the first sky marshals. Mayor Oden will share many of his stories with us. We look forward to having him as our speaker.

***HHS General Meeting  
November 15, 1:30 pm  
Community Education Building***

## Jack Crouch Award Honors Joan Davis

Joan Davis has a gentle smile, a soft voice, and is a generous and dependable volunteer. At first glance this hides the tremendous



go-getter that Joan Davis truly is. Whether she is planting the gardens at the cabin, working in the library/archives, serving on the scholarship committee or manning the welcome desk at meetings (as Second Vice President), she always follows through on her responsibilities for HHS. On top of all those jobs, she is co-editor of this newsletter and is always coming up with new ideas. (Her other co-editor did not allow her to work on this page!) She is a retired Tuscaloosa elementary school principal and also is a volunteer at Church of the Reconciler.

The Jack Crouch Service Award was created to honor Jack for his exceptional service and dedication to the Historical Society. He served as President, urging us into our biggest and best project, the Folklore Center, to help teach history to our children. He turned his personal hobby of historical restoration and re-creation into a mission statement for the Historical Society.

-Barbara Lyons and Delores Wilkinson

## Our Membership...

...now stands at 122 with the addition of new member Suzanne Scivley. At the recent meeting of Riverchase Women's Club Charlotte Patton and Lea Pennington acquainted the ladies with HHS. Several members took membership cards, and one History of Hoover book was sold. Remember, keep extra membership cards with you so that you can effectively recruit wherever life takes you!

-Lea Pennington, Membership



### *From the President*

## **Updated Website Underway**

Fall is in the air, the leaves are turning beautiful colors of red and gold. School children are visiting the Folklore Center, plans are in the works to place the Fire Tower Cab in front of the Historic Bluff Park School complete with signs informing visitors of its history, and the new interactive HHS website is underway. Dale Gorham, of Net-to-Net, met with board members to demonstrate features of the new website and to answer questions posed by Board members. Overall, the proposed website will provide publicity, increase exposure for HHS activities, attract new members, provide interactive access to other websites and generally bring Hoover Historical Society up to date with the latest online technologies and social media networking. Go to [www.hooverhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.hooverhistoricalsociety.org).

Our speaker for the General Meeting, scheduled for November 15, 2011, at 1:30, is Terry Oden, Mayor of Mountain Brook. We are looking forward to hearing about his extraordinary career with the Secret Service. Members, please invite your friends and neighbors to this exciting program.

-Jackie Matte, President

## **Library/Archives Is Open**

Remember, the Library/Archives is now open on Tuesdays from 10am until 2pm. If you are a quilter, we have a beautiful collection of about 200 books from a member of the Birmingham Quilters Guild. A copy machine is available to copy patterns or articles.

There are also some interesting oldies about the history, folklore and recipes of early Alabama and the Southeast. And don't forget to peruse the Time Cabinets in the hallway of our home, the old Bluff Park School located on Park Avenue.

-Charlotte Patton, Library/Archives

## **Scholarships Are Out There**

Hoover High School and Spain Park High School have something in common! They both have an on-line bulletin board that features available scholarship opportunities. Go to the Hoover City Schools website and find one of the high schools. Then travel to the college counselor and you will find the on-line board. On the scholarship board at Hoover High and Spain Park you will find Vadie Honea Hoover Historical Society Scholarship. This is the second year that a scholarship has

been sponsored by the Hoover Historical Society. It is a one-year scholarship which is awarded to a student who will be attending a two-year or four-year college.

Academic performance, community awareness, and community involvement are the specific criteria. A 600-700 word typed essay is also required. Peggy Patton, Joan Davis, and Charlotte Patton serve on the Scholarship Committee.

### *From the Folklore Center*

## **Front Porch News**



Uncle Charles and I just got back from squirrel hunting this morning. I don't know why we always have to get up so early but that is the way my daddy did it, so I guess it must be the right way. The acorn crop is good this year and the squirrels are fat. We were lucky this morning so there will be squirrel mulligan tonight. I can't wait till Aunt Marie Taylor gets her prize homemade biscuits and sorghum syrup on the table. I saw Aunt Joan Davis picking collards when we got back, and the sweet potatoes are ready for digging so I know tonight will be a feast to remember. I just hope the preacher doesn't hear about this. I don't know what all they learn in preacher school but eating must be covered in every class.

Well, now that summer is over and fall is in the air it's time to get back to welcoming all the school children for a visit to the Ole Stinson Cabin. We welcomed Shades Mountain Independent on October 13, Prince of Peace on October 31 and Bluff Park on November 3. Everybody sure had a good time!

-Cousin Doug Harkness

## **Time Cabinet Additions**

Have you seen the latest Time Cabinet additions?

**50's roller skates and record player**, donated by Mary Ross Searcy.

**Beverly Hillbillies lunchbox and standing telephone**, donated by Julia Norton.

**Macintosh computer**, donated by Charles and Betty Morgan.

**50's and 60's trading stamps**, donated by Betty Bagby.

**Campaign stickers** of Gov. Robert Bentley, donated by Joan Davis.

Many thanks to all who contribute and help with the cabinets. Keep looking!

-Betty Tucker, Time Cabinets



## No Hotels In Gee's Bend

by Jean Butterworth

Gee's Bend is located on the Alabama River which forms a large loop in the river near the Boykin Community in Wilcox County. An attraction, of course is the ferry that carries vehicles across the river from Gee's Bend to Camden, the county seat. Also, what brings tourists to Boykin is the location of the Gee's Bend Quilters which has made the art of quilting famous for their small community.

Recently, I went with the Hoover Historical Society on a one day trip via chartered bus to visit Gee's Bend and the Quilt Shop. It is quite a drive from Birmingham. It was a lovely day when we arrived to visit the ladies at the Quilt Shop which was located in a former day care building.

We were received cordially and enjoyed our visit to their shop. They demonstrated how their quilts are made and gave us some history of quilt making in the community. In olden times the quilts were made from scraps of cloth. Their houses were very cold in the wintertime and families used many quilts on their beds to keep warm. They would even drape the quilts over the windows and doors to keep the cold air out.

These handmade quilts made here are often taken by the ladies to large cities in the US to display their art. The quilts are beautiful and are quite expensive. Some of us bought placemats and pot holders as souvenirs.

We asked the ladies to sing for our group and they complied, singing old songs such as, "Do Lord" and one about "Don't Put Flowers On My Grave When I'm Gone." To imply, give me flowers when I'm alive! We clapped our hands with them as about six of the ladies entertained us in song.

We invited two of the ladies to ride with us on the bus to sight-see in the community. We learned as we rode by small box-like houses that these were "Roosevelt houses." It took us a minute to realize that these were WPA houses built during the depression years in the 1930's. Some of the houses had large signs out front displaying a certain quilt that the lady of the household had made,

We had another treat in store for us as we boarded our bus for a ferry ride across the Alabama River and on to eat at Gaines Ridge, circa 1827. We enjoyed the tasty lunch and the atmosphere of the home and gardens.

Camden is the county seat of Wilcox and has about 2,500 residents. It is known to be one of the poorest

counties in the state. My dad grew up in Sunny South not far from Gee's Bend but left the area in the late 1920's to find work. Our guide told us that the young people are not learning the art of quilting, but are leaving to find work in the big cities. The question is, "Will quilting become a lost art?"

On our way home we pondered the fate of Wilcox County and the need for economic development. The U.S. Census data of 2005-2009 stated that about 36% of the county's 12,500 residents live below the poverty line. As of August 4, 2011, the unemployment rate is at 23.4%, which is the highest in the state.

When will economic development come? As of right now, there is a river, and there are plenty of pine trees and wildlife. According to a family member of one of the quilters... "There are no hotels in Gee's Bend!"

## Trees

by Inez McCollum

I have always had an eye for beautiful trees. As a child, I decided to climb a tree one Sunday afternoon, even though I was wearing a new dress my mother had made for me. That isn't as adventurous as it sounds. This was one of those trees that formed a "V" close enough to the ground that I could scoot up high enough to think I had climbed a tree! After sitting between those two sections for a while, I made my way back down... and tore the dress. Mother removed the torn section from the waist down and inserted a new piece of fabric. Even though the mended section wasn't noticeable, I remembered that tree whenever I wore the dress.

When I was in junior high school a literature assignment was to recite Joyce Kilmer's poem, *Trees*. It has been a favorite of mine ever since. Recently while in North Carolina for a weekend, the friend I was traveling with drove through the Nantahala National Forest. When we arrived at a conference we were attending, I found a brochure giving directions to the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest which was nearby. The descriptive brochure also contained the poem, *Trees*.

My husband and I raised three sons, but the youngest was the climber. When John was around four years old, his brother Joe came into the house and told me that John was in a tree and was higher than the house. That tree became known as John's climbing tree.

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Return Service Requested



## Bluff Park's Glynn Dance Studios



Bluff Park's Glynn Dance Studios began somewhere around the late 1960's. It was owned by Glenda and Lynn Wright and was located downstairs in the shopping center on the bluff on Shades Crest Road. Glenda's mother, Mrs. Mary Lou Perdue, was the secretary. Glenda was the dance instructor, and Lynn played the piano and did the musical arrangements. The studio was a huge success and had many young children enrolled. The first annual review presenting a recital of all the students was held at Berry High School in 1967. Master

of Ceremonies was Harry Mabry of WBRC-TV.  
An annual recital was held each year for many years.

-Jean Butterworth

*(from p. 3)*

Alabama Power removed some limbs that were near the electrical wires. They were instructed to leave enough length of the limbs for John to climb.

One nice spring day, John and I were at Samford University waiting for Jay while he was at piano lessons. John decided to climb one of the nearby trees. It was a live oak with tiny, dense limbs. When John was up too high for me to feel comfortable, I gave him instructions to get down. The problem was that there were no limbs strong enough for him to stand on as he came down the tree. That took some maneuvering and directions from me for him to disembark.

We are fortunate enough to live in an area that has four seasons. Fall is the season to get out and enjoy the colorful trees around us. I don't recommend attempting to climb one, but take a drive in search of tree color. It might be up the block, around the community or to Oak Mountain State Park.