



HOOVER HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

Vol. 24 No. 4

March 2013

Dates

Mar. 5 Board Meeting
10:00 am
Mar. 26 General Meeting
1:30 pm

Executive Committee

Delores Wilkinson
Tom Laggy
Carolyn Kolar
Shirley Lewis
Anita Dillon
Betty Bagby
John Williams
Virginia Cain
Jim Lyons
Charles Shelby
Doug Harkness
Peggy Patton
Katherine Staursky
Marshall Morgan
Barbara Lyons
Joy Elliott
Charlotte Patton
Joan Davis
Marie Taylor
Charlotte Williams
Inez McCollum
Charlotte Laggy
Betty Tucker

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Joan Davis and Marie Taylor,
Editors

Children's Fresh Air Farm Still Serving Children!

"In 1924 Independent Presbyterian Church purchased ten acres including the summer home of Birmingham's Charles Perry on Park Avenue in Bluff Park. This home was converted into a dormitory for the Children's Fresh Air Farm, a summer camp program for underprivileged children in the greater Birmingham area."

- from *A History Of Hoover and Its People*



Gini Williams,
Director of
Children's Fresh
Air Farm



The Fresh Air Farm has operated continually each summer with the same objectives, providing inner-city children with the opportunity to learn, play and explore. Children even had the chance to cultivate a small plot of land of their "own." The camp has grown over the years to include 35 acres.

Recently, there was evidence that something was going on at the camp. Curious to know "what," a call was made to the church in downtown Birmingham. I was directed to call Gini Williams, part-time director of the facility. It was just like opening a good Pandora's box.

After so many years as a place to give a few children a residential summer camp in a healthy environment, another focus has emerged. Ms. Williams and her volunteers, along with some paid workers, have organized and will begin a day camp this summer. The focus will be on reading and math instruction.

Eighty children from Hayes Elementary will be transported to the camp for an eight week experience in basic skills along with art, music and crafts instruction by certified teachers. There will be devotions, swimming and occasional field trips, also.

The Fresh Air Farm is located on Park Avenue south of Artists On the Bluff.

- Joan Davis

When the original Fresh Air Farm camp opened in 1924, an important action by the Independent Presbyterian Church spurred growth of the Bluff Park neighborhood. During that first year, the well went dry. Before opening the next year, a water line was laid to the camp. The water was also available for residents on the mountain to "tap on." Bluff Park then experienced a period of growth as people built not just summer homes but year-round homes.

Many Faceted March

By Inez McCollum

We are coming up on March already. The word *March* has held many places in literature and everyday conversation throughout the ages. I suppose the one that dates back farthest is “Beware of the Ides of March,” a warning soothsayers gave Julius Caesar. The Ides of March was on March 15 of the Roman Calendar. Julius Caesar was assassinated March 15, 44 BC.

Another March term is “mad as a March hare.” March is considered to be the mating season of hares. They reportedly have mad behavior during that time. A similar one, the March Hare was a guest for tea in the story of Alice in Wonderland.

March weather can be very cruel. This has earned it the title of Fickle March. We also often make the statement: “In like a lamb and out like a lion” or vice versa. We also have “March wind,” another weather related term. Back to Fickle March, it seemed that when my children were elementary school students, the week before spring break (important March occurrence) would be ideal and then reverse the week of spring break. Those sons were definitely not happy campers. March wind is perfect for flying kites if it isn’t raining. I believe the most fun my sons had flying kites was taking them to their grandparents in Arkansas during one spring break. They got out in the middle of a field away from electrical wires and flew those kites to their hearts content.

March can be a beautiful time of year here in Alabama. We have beautiful blooming spring flowers in every direction. There are the daffodils, azaleas, forsythia and many more. Besides being surrounded with flower and fauna in March, we also have March Madness basketball playoffs. If you don’t appreciate March Madness, take a stroll through some of the beautiful gardens in our area.

A Legislative Invitation

The Alabama Legislative Session starts February 5th and goes through May 20th. If anyone would like to come visit during the session I would be glad to have them down. They may contact my Montgomery office at 334-242-7666.

- Paul DeMarco, Alabama State Representative

Upcoming Meeting Of the Alabama Historical Association

The Alabama Historical Association Annual Meeting will be held April 11-13 in Eufaula, Alabama, and you are cordially invited. The annual meeting will feature talks, papers and tours of historical sites and houses. The fall pilgrimage is a Saturday picnic with a tour of a historical site.

The Alabama Historical Association, founded in 1947, is the oldest statewide historical society in Alabama. The Association sponsors *The Alabama Review*, two newsletters each year, a state historical marker program, five awards to individuals, a local historical society recognition award and a grant for graduate school research.

More information soon at the association website: <http://www.archives.state.al.us/aha/aha.html> or contact Marlene Rickard, mhrickard@aol.com.

Welcome, New Members

Judy Casey
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rwmills98@gmail.com

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JoAnn Weber
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HHS Spring Tea Is Set For April 7

Hoover Historical Society will celebrate spring with its annual tea on April 7, 2:00-4:00, at the Carlo Joseph home, 2136 Bluff Road. This beautiful setting is one of the three historic homes in Hoover that is so designated by a historical marker. Plan to join us at the tea and bring your friends. This delightful occasion is chaired by Sandra Hart.

Annual Spring Trip to Historic Moundville & Greensboro, Alabama

April 16, 2013



Jones Archaeological Museum, located in Moundville Archaeological Park in Tuscaloosa County

Trip includes chartered bus, tours of Moundville Archaeological Park and Magnolia Grove Antebellum Home in Greensboro and lunch at the Pie Lab. We depart Ellis Piano parking lot at 8:30 am April 16, and return at approximately 5:00 pm. Fee deadline is March 15. A limited number of spaces are available.

Make your \$50 check payable to Hoover Historical Society and mail to:
Charlotte Laggy
127 Newgate Rd.
Alabaster, AL 35007

Shades Mountain Woman's Club Gives To Community

Shades Mountain Woman's Club has a history of service to Hoover that goes back a long way. On the first Saturday of October, artists' tents spring up like mushrooms in "the park," and it becomes the Bluff Park Art Show. And for 35 years, Shades Mountain Woman's Club has provided Hands-on Art for Children during the show.

In the early years, the members of the Shades Mountain Junior Woman's club were young mothers with children of their own. They saw a need for child care while the guests of the show looked at the art on display. It was also an opportunity for the club to raise some money to support worthy causes. They charged \$1 an hour per child. Children ages 3-10 could participate.

Since the late 1970's, the Shades Mountain club members have been assisted by the members of Hoover (originally Berry) High School and Pelham High School Juniorette Club members. Shades Mountain sponsors these clubs and organizes community service for the girls.

Last year, over 200 children participated in the art activities at the Bluff Park Art Show, producing all kinds of things from fruit-loop necklaces to marble paintings. In any case, they are masterpieces for parents to take home, dry or not. The club now charge \$5 per hour per child, and parents must sign a release and leave their cell phone number. There is always the risk that a child might try to go find the parents, but they have never lost one!

- Pam Thompson

Shades Mountain Woman's Club is part of the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs.

*Plan to join us at the next meeting of
Hoover Historical Society*

March 26, 1:30 pm

Artists On the Bluff Auditorium

569 Park Avenue

Program: Birmingham History Center

Jerry Desmond, Executive Director

Hoover Historical Society
P.O. Box 360233
Hoover, AL 35236-0233



Do You Know the Difference?

Recently I observed a young Boy Scout Troop performing a service project which involved putting up signs on a nature trail in Bluff Park. It was quite a busy group of boys and dads on this sort of rainy Saturday.

It was a well organized group. They all came to work on this project wearing comfortable work clothes. Dads brought all sorts of equipment in their SUV's and trucks. There were post hole diggers to dig holes, wheelbarrows to transport the rakes, hoes, picks and shovels, and hammers and nails to mount the signs by the trees. The signs were nicely done to identify the trees and shrubs on the nature trail.

They also brought charcoal grills and the items to cook hot dogs after they finished. The mothers were on hand to set up for the lunch.

One incident brought a smile to my face. One young scout came back from the group in a hurry. I supposed he was asked to come retrieve a piece of equipment needed for the project. He came over to the large wheelbarrow and began to lift all the hand tools one by one. He had a puzzled look on his face

I could tell. Quietly he walked over to one of the mothers and asked in a whispered tone, "Can you tell me which one is the hoe?" The mother pointed out the hoe. To me this was priceless! Here was a young city boy who had probably never held a hand piece of equipment in his hand had to ask which one was the hoe. I bet he will remember now after using one!

I think we forget that our young people who are raised in the city don't have the opportunity to use a hoe or the ability to grow even a tomato plant in the back yard. They think all the fruits and vegetables come from Andy's Market! Maybe they could be taught the value of working with their hands and appreciate how hard their great granddads had to work on the farm. Today was a good opportunity to learn.

I'm sure the young scouts did a great job putting up their signs that day. They sure did make my day!

May I suggest that maybe you take your young person to the Home Depot and introduce them to yard and farm equipment tools so they will know the purpose of each piece!

Which one is the hoe?

-Jean Butterworth