

# Hoover Historical Happenings

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*The Official Newsletter of the Hoover Historical Society and Archive*



Historian/Journalist Dr. Julie Hedgepeth Williams



The Caldwell Family



## Local author of Titanic survival story to address the HHS

Families were torn apart one hundred and two years ago when the custom of 'women and children first' left many men among the 1,517 dead when the *RMS Titanic* sank on its maiden voyage.

When Albert and Sylvia Caldwell and their infant son, Alden, boarded the *Titanic* in April of 1912, they were assigned to Lifeboat #13. That number proved fortuitous for their young family, one of the few to survive the tragedy intact. Dr. Julie Hedgepeth Williams, a Samford professor, historian, author, and great-niece of Albert Caldwell, published her book *A Rare Titanic Family: The Caldwells' Story of Survival* detailing their story.

Missionaries Albert Francis Caldwell and Sylvia Mae Caldwell and their ten-month old son were returning to the U.S. from Siam (now Thailand) because of Sylvia's illness—neurasthenia. The central nervous system disorder prevented her from holding her own child. A crewman motioned Albert into the lifeboat to hold the baby because Sylvia could not.

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## HHS Scholarships to be awarded in 2014

The Hoover Historical Society will once again sponsor scholarships for two area high school students. A big "thank you" to our members, Dianne and Carlo Joseph, and to Henry King of King Acura, for funding the Vadie Honea Scholarship(s) for 2014. Each \$1,000 scholarship is awarded to a deserving senior at both Hoover and Spain Park High Schools. Contact the HHS for information on how to apply for these awards.



## From the Front Porch of the Ole Place ...

*It is a quiet time around the Stinson Ole Place now that all the children are out for Christmas and New Year's vacation. Uncle Charles Shelby and I were rocking on the porch between chores and got to reminiscing about the past. You know that's what old folks do when Aunt Marie Taylor's list is caught up for the day. You know it is never finished but every now and then we get caught up or just sit down. Anyway, Uncle Charles was remembering all the effort that he and Jack Crouch went to in order to locate and move the cabin from its original location, between Columbiana and Wilsonville, AL on what was known as the Columbiana Turnpike. It was the original stagecoach route from Georgia through Alabama. The road was constructed with wooden planks laid side-by-side. That made for a rough and noisy ride but it sure beat having to pull the wagon out of that red clay*

*when it rained. Uncle Charles told me that a man named Hugh Acey Mack Stinson built the Stinson Ole Place back in the early 1840s for his family and that it served as the Stinson family home for three generations--all the way up to 1946. Can you imagine the stories it could tell if it could just talk? It survived the War Between the States and the Great Depression and lasted well into World War II.*

## The move from Shelby County to Jefferson County

The dismantling and reassembling of the home at its current location on the Bluff Park Elementary School campus took place in 1997 and was finally dedicated on November 9, 1997, with lots of dignitaries in attendance. Many of the Stinson family were also present. The city of Hoover played a major role with the reconstruction effort and everyone marveled at the skill of the original craftsmen that first assembled it without the assistance of modern machines and tools. Jack Crouch and Peggy Sturdivant were the key Hoover Historical Society people that kept everyone on schedule and organized the program for children in the Hoover School System. Jack and Peggy are no longer with us, but we owe them our gratitude. As the children tour the home today they have a hard time placing themselves into that era. When they see the one bedroom and realize two adults and six children shared that room with one wash basin, no indoor plumbing and no closets, they have difficulty processing the information. All the items in the home are original from that time period or replication of originals. Folklore visits for the Hoover city and private schools can be scheduled by contacting me at [gdhark@bellsouth.net](mailto:gdhark@bellsouth.net) or Charles Shelby or Marie Taylor.

-- Cousin Doug Harkness







## Chapel Lane Extension opens

The second phase of the Galleria Flyover opened in Hoover on Black Friday. Known as the Chapel Lane Extension, the  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile road provides an alternate route for southbound traffic west of the Galleria Mall and north of I-459 over Patton Creek. The I-459 exit relieves the congestion of U.S. 31 and John Hawkins Parkway, especially during the holidays.

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Deborah Burtnett, Editor

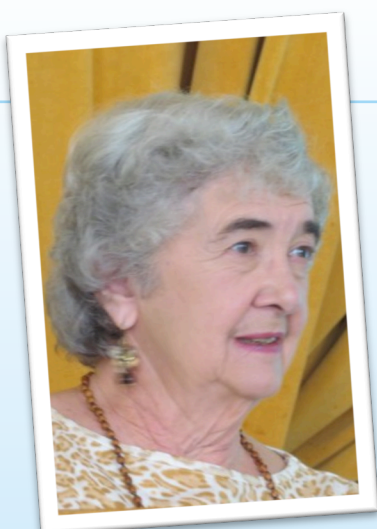
Photographers for this edition: Pam Thompson and Debbie Burtnett.  
Submit articles and news to [debbie.burtnett@gmail.com](mailto:debbie.burtnett@gmail.com)

### *In Sympathy*

*To the family of Neal Broerman*

*who passed away December 3.*

## A letter from our president ...



Dear Members:

I forgot to wish you a great Thanksgiving, a blessed Christmas, and a Happy New Year in the last newsletter. I hope you experienced each of those at its best. I definitely did. It was wonderful spending time with family and friends.

Thank you, nominating committee, for accepting responsibility to put together a recommended slate of officers for next year. At the November meeting, names were submitted for this committee. In your Member Guide, HHS Board, find the "TBA" space under Nominating Committee. Please add the names of Carolyn Kolar, Betty Bagby, Harriett Hall, Jim Lyons and Betty Tucker. Carolyn Kolar, Chairman, will announce the proposed slate of officers at the January 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

One Board Member I would like to introduce to you this month is Jim Lyons. Jim headed up the Fire Tower Committee last year and continues to be involved with our Website as liaison. He also is an elected officer as Corresponding Secretary. If you know of members who are ill, please contact either Jim or me. He has sent a number of cards this year. Two other Board Members who have worked very hard this year at the Folklore Center, as well as several years in the past, are Charles Shelby and Doug Harkness. Charles keeps tabs on necessary repair work and Doug schedules craft people and school groups. Two members of this committee, Marie Taylor and Joan Davis, are very quiet but you can see the results of their labor. Marie keeps the log cabin clean and Joan keeps the herb garden weed-free. And, thank you, Barbara Lyons, for protecting our history with the annual scrapbook the last and current club years.

Please plan to attend our Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. The meeting will be at 2:30 and Pam Thompson has an excellent program planned. Because of limited parking space at Artists on the Bluff, it would be advisable to carpool if possible.

*Inez McCollum, President*

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A photo taken of the family aboard the *RMS Titanic* and the family lore from Great- Uncle Albert inspired the research and documentation of the story for its publication in 2012. The last of the survivors, UK citizen Elizabeth Gladys "Millvina" Dean, the youngest passenger at age nine weeks, died at age 97 in 2009. Much information is available online about the *Titanic* tragedy, including *Encyclopedia Titanica*, *National Geographic* reporting on the discovery of the wreckage in 1985, and various survival stories (including passenger lists). The book can be purchased through Amazon.com and local booksellers.

Join us for an engaging dramatic presentation as Dr. Williams presents the Caldwell's story in period dress on January 21, 2014, at 2:30 PM at Artists on the Bluff.



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