

S P R I N G 2 0 1 4

Hoover Historical Happenings

The Official Newsletter of the Hoover Historical Society and Archive



The Magic of Marble featured at HHS March 18

Marble became the state rock of Alabama in 1969, but its heritage in this state dates farther back than that. Come hear how marble was first discovered by Shawnee warriors who used it for arrowheads, then was quarried for monuments and buildings by a series of entrepreneurs including Edward Gantt, for whom the Alabama Marble Company village was named, and Giuseppe Moretti, who carved marble sculptures from his own quarries in addition to creating Birmingham's landmark statue of Vulcan.

Alabama marble can be found in many of this country's finest buildings, including the ceiling of the Lincoln Memorial, the upper floors of the U. S. Supreme Court building, and --closer to home-- the Brown-Marx building and the state capitol in Montgomery.

Today Alabama marble is ground to a fine powder by Imerys and Omya corporations for use in all kinds of applications, including paint, toothpaste, and roof tiles. For the past five years, the City of Sylacauga has brought back the artistic heritage of Alabama marble with a festival that celebrates sculptors from Alabama, other states, and even from Italy.

At left, Ruth Cook stands by Giuseppe Moretti's *Head of Christ* which is on display at the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery. Below, *We're All in the Same Boat*, by Italian Sculptor Rino Gianinni at the Sylacauga Marble Festival in 2009; now on display at the B.B. Comer Memorial Library.





Our Spring Trip ...

The HHS spring trip will be to Montgomery this year. We have 5 spaces remaining. Scheduled for Tuesday, April 8, our first stop will be the State Capitol. From there the group will tour the new Archive--Alabama Voices-- which has been designated as Alabama's top tourist attraction for 2014. Lunch will be at Central Restaurant followed by a tour of the F. Scott Fitzgerald Museum. The all-inclusive cost is \$50. Make checks payable to HHS and mail to Charlotte Laggy, 127 Newgate Road, Alabaster, AL 35007. Departure time will be 7:30 AM from the Hobby Lobby parking lot in Hoover. Please call Tom or Charlotte Laggy at 663-6370 to reserve your space today.

Left: When Montgomery native Zelda Sayre married F. Scott Fitzgerald, they became THE Jazz Age couple of the 1920s. They lived in Montgomery from 1931-32 in the home that is now the ONLY museum in the world dedicated to these authors. Here, she wrote "Save Me the Waltz" and he, "Tender is the Night."

And a Spot of Tea!

Members of the Hoover Historical Society will gather with Monte D' Oro residents, the public, and Mayor Gary Ivey for a ribbon cutting ceremony for the dedication of the new historical marker commemorating the neighborhood's fiftieth anniversary on April 27th at 1:30 PM. Following the ceremony, the Annual Membership Reception will be held at the historic home of Michael and Eileen Lewis. The neighborhood, public, and membership may sign in and tour the home and enjoy the refreshments.



BARBARA LYONS**09/22/44 - 02/16/14**

How does one even begin a memorial to Barbara Lyons, a person who was so busy loving God, family, city, and country? As I read her obituary, I saw in writing the list of her many accomplishments. Barbara was a Charter Member of Hoover Historical Society, so I knew of her many achievements within the HHS, and that she was involved with many societies within Hoover. But, that list was astounding!

Barbara was in the middle of every project undertaken by each of our projects and the correct way to perform each detail. Even when she could no longer walk, she put many miles on her motorized scooter as she attended each function of the Hoover Historical Society. When the dread disease of cancer again afflicted her, we already missed Barbara and her wise instructions.

This has been a very difficult year for the leadership of Hoover Historical Society as we attempted to keep things going without Barbara. And, when we visited her at Golden Living Center, the subject of discussion was HHS, not of her illness. Barbara, we will miss you!

--Inez McCollum



A letter from our president ...

Dear Members:

Are you surviving this changeable Alabama weather? For us natives these changes have become a way of life. Even with its ugliness, the snow has been beautiful. Oxymoron aside, this is especially so on the inside looking out! Spring will come!

This month, I wish to recognize more Board Members who have served HHS faithfully as officers or on committees for several years. One of these is Betty Bagby. She is so supportive and accepts responsibility whenever asked. She is Assistant Treasurer; but has been on the nominating committee, the budget committee and is a Library/Archive Volunteer. Another Library/Archive volunteer is Jean Butterworth. She is Parliamentarian, but has served on committees as well. Over the years Jean has served as President and was Chaplain for two years. Charlotte Laggy has put together enough HHS Spring Trips to write a travel journal. She and Tom work together on these, and this year's trip promises to be another interesting event. Judy Casey is on the Board, for the first time this year, as Publicity Chair. She is on first name basis with several of the local editors as she works with them to get coverage for our meetings. Faye Walker is Ways and Means Chair—again—for the umpteenth time!

Please plan to be at our March 18 General Meeting. We will meet at 2:30 PM in the Cafetorium at Artists on the Bluff. Pam Thompson has another unusual program planned. This one is about our Alabama marble. On one of my trips with Friendship Force, we visited a capitol building with a floor of Alabama marble—in Oklahoma! Hope to see you on the 18th!

Inez

*Neighborhood celebrates 50 years***Monte D'Oro neighborhood predates Hoover's incorporation**

In July 1964, before the City of Hoover was incorporated, developer William M. "Bill" Humphries began work on a new neighborhood of homes around Wisteria Drive. He hired Cordray Parker to design the homes. Bill and Cordray had both graduated from the School of Architecture at Auburn. They wanted no two homes to be alike and placed them on tree-lined streets. Cordray had also studied in Italy and other countries in Europe and was inspired to name the new neighborhood Monte D'Oro. Cordray went on to become a noted sculptor and many of his works are displayed at several local venues. 158 homes were built along six streets. Viva Chumbler was signed as the exclusive agent for sale of the homes.

Early on, many young professionals from UAB brought their families to live in Monte D'Oro. The homes were spacious, reasonably priced and convenient. The size and layout of the neighborhood contributed to a close-knit community. In 1971 the *Monte D'Fleurs* Garden Club was organized. Soon a second club called the *Monte D'Oro Planters* was established and met at night. Both were members of the Federated Garden Clubs. Eventually the two merged and became the Monte D'Oro Neighborhood Association. The neighbors believe the Monte D'Oro Neighborhood Association is the oldest continuously meeting neighborhood group in Hoover.

In July the neighborhood will celebrate its 50th Anniversary. The Hoover Historical Society has met with the neighborhood since last summer to discuss recognizing the milestone with a historical marker. The neighborhood will also host the Hoover Historical Society Membership Tea at the home of Eileen and Mickey Lewis in Monte D'Oro on April 27th. More details will follow about the tea as well as dedication of the historical marker. The neighborhood has also put up street banners commemorating the anniversary. It will also celebrate at a July event at Aldridge Gardens.

Older neighborhoods have many advantages and should be encouraged to come together to preserve their heritage.



*The Hoover Historical Society
members wish to express
condolences to:*

*Lucy Willis in the death of her
husband, Tommie;*

*Tommy Tucker in the death of
his daughter, Chalice; and*

*Jim Lyons in the death of his
wife Barbara, a Charter Member
of HHS.*

Have you heard of the historical marker database?

By Debbie Burtnett

A new book recently published waxes philosophically about historical markers. The author, Andrew Carroll, in *Here Is Where: Discovering America's Great Forgotten History*, writes wistfully "knowing an era has passed."

His mission was great in scope when you consider the numbers of markers, known and unknown in the United States; e.g., 15,000 in Texas alone. He set out to find the history of events and accomplishments that **aren't** in standardized history books and to document "unmarked history sites throughout the country."

Examples? In 1864, a young man fell off a Jersey City train platform in front of a moving train. He was Robert Todd Lincoln. His rescuer was Edwin Booth, actor and brother of President Lincoln's assassin, John Wilkes Booth. On the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement, Rosa Parks' historical markers range from AL to TN to Michigan. However, eleven years prior to the Montgomery event, a Virginia woman, Irene Morgan, was arrested for not giving up her seat to a white person. Her lawyer was Thurgood Marshall, the future Supreme Court justice, who argued the Linda Brown case for desegregation in schools before the Court in 1954-55. Mr. Carroll's book is filled with such stories of the ordinary man in history. Such strange coincidences are woven throughout its chapters.

An Idaho policeman, Sergeant Mike Miller, is quoted: "I think the more that people, especially young people, know more about where they live, the more pride and ownership they feel about the place, and the less likely they are to disrespect or vandalize it." Andrew Carroll called it "History as crime fighter."

This sentiment is often expressed at Society meetings. Getting the younger generations interested in state and local history takes a back seat to their jobs, families, and the price of gasoline!

Definition/The Historical Marker Database

An historical marker is a plaque or sign that commemorates events or persons of historic interest and to associate that point with a specific location we can visit. You can 'collect' them by using your camera and entering your 'finds' on a website founded in 2006—the Historical Marker Database. A group of "self-directed volunteers" organized into a Board of Editors and Contributing Editors, along with over three hundred active contributing correspondents, created an illustrated searchable online catalog of historical information "gathered from roadside and other permanent outdoor markers, monuments, and plaques." (Hmdb.org) Adding to the database is a great hobby for history enthusiasts. Even if a marker is already in the database, new photos and directions are welcomed. Your photo, date, and name will be credited unless you wish to remain anonymous. Editorial guidelines are detailed on the site. Locally, of the 1,473 markers for the state of Alabama in the database, Jefferson County has 185 entries. These range from various markers about communities and neighborhoods such as Homewood, Vestavia Hills, Five Points and the Morris Avenue Historical District to business interests—North Birmingham Land Company, Rickwood Field, Oxmoor Iron Furnaces, and the Bright Star Restaurant in Bessemer. Many cemeteries are honored on historical markers as well as medical facilities such as the First Tuberculosis Sanatorium. Markers to individuals are also around Jefferson County—ranging from war hero Osmond Kelly Ingram to notorious "Mountain" Tom Clark.

NOTE: If readers of *Here Is Where* would like to recommend unmarked sites across America, go to www.HerelsWhere.org to describe your own "little-known spots ... worthy of attention." Contributors to the Historical Marker Database may access the archive by going to hmdb.org to search a state's historical markers by county; or download a mobile phone app, www.hmdb.org/mobile (Android users must type in the www...) for markers within 15 miles of your location. Sign up and you can become a contributor to the Historical Marker Database!



Opportunity knocks ...

Opportunities to Get Involved at HHS: We will have several openings on the Board for next year. What are you interested in? Scrapbooking? Time Cabinets? The Library? Parliamentary procedure? Scholarships? Have new ideas? Please contact Pam Thompson, 979-8952 or pamrayt@gmail.com. For more information on the HHS, see our website at hooverhistoricalsociety.org or our Facebook page.

We are also looking for great speakers for the meetings next year. If you have heard someone who is interesting, or want to hear about a specific topic, contact Inez McCollum, 822-8659 or inezhm@aol.com.



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