



30th Anniversary Special Edition

The Hoover Historical Log

The Official Newsletter of the Hoover Historical Society
1989-2019



Crazy Quilt discovered in the old archives

Anyone who has moved their home or office knows it is a grueling experience, but when volunteers were packing and sorting the belongings of the historical society, they made a delightful discovery last summer. In the corner of a back room, rolled in a muslin sheet and closed with safety pins, was a quilt—a very old one we thought! We immediately laid it out, photographed it, and started researching the names and initials found on the quilt.

We posted photos on our Facebook page and asked for input from followers. We got lucky with information received from a post by Cherrill Morgan:

According to my husband, Marshall G. Morgan, Elizabeth Reid Lacey lived at 349 Shades Crest Road. She was a member of Bluff Park Methodist Church.

James Harwell bought her house on Shades Crest several years ago. She left the house to the church. The Methodist church may have information on her family.

Local historian Heather Skaggs put us in touch with Rev. Mike Holly, current pastor of Bluff Park Methodist Church. We visited him and shared the quilt; he invited us to share with the quilters' group at the church the following week.

Edna McWilliams contacted Rev. Reid Crotty, now at Trinity UMC, who had been Senior Minister at Bluff Park UMC for 25 years to see if he knew Mrs. Lacey. His response:

“Elizabeth Lacey was one of my favorite people. She was a brilliant woman. She grew up in Bessemer and graduated from

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Crazy Quilt discovered

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Bessemer High School around 1925. Her father had gone to the school and persuaded them to let her take mechanical drawing, which was off-limits for women back then. She wanted to be an engineer, but neither Alabama nor Auburn would admit women to their engineering schools. So she attended Birmingham-Southern. She rode the streetcar from their home in Bessemer and got off somewhere near Princeton Baptist Hospital and walked up the hill to the college. She drew the plans for the home she and her husband built on Shades Crest Road in Bluff Park. They never had any children, and she lived into her 90s. She died somewhere around 1995. I conducted her funeral. She did leave her house to the church. When it was sold, some of the proceeds were used for the Rose Window in the front of the “new” sanctuary, which was dedicated in honor of her and her husband. James Harwell did purchase the house. Elizabeth was quite a character. There are many stories about her. She was a notoriously bad driver. All of her friends were afraid to ride with her and invented excuses to avoid doing so. She was an accomplished artist. I was visiting her one day and admired a painting on the wall of her house that she had painted. So she took it down and gave it to me. It now hangs in our bedroom at our house. She had a great sense of humor and could keep a crowd in stitches. She still makes me smile every time I think of her.”

But, how did Mrs. Lacey come into possession of the quilt and what did the initials mean? How old was the quilt—as old as the 1805 date embroidered on it? It was time to contact the professionals!

Members of the sewing circle at BPMC inspected the quilt when we visited with them. Pam Bray, Reba McFee and Marilyn Milstead took a look at the quilt, calling it a “Crazy Quilt.” They described the making of a crazy quilt—choose a theme and everyone makes a square with that theme...” However, the squares on the quilt didn’t match when the pieces were stitched together using “decorative embroidery stitches.” We needed to confirm if the quilt was a genuine “crazy quilt.” Marilyn suggested we contact the Alabama Department of Archives in Montgomery and the Birmingham Museum of Art. The BMA sent information about the preservation of antique fabrics. However, calls to the Archive in Montgomery led to Ms. Ryan Blocker, Museum Collections Coordinator at the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery. Ryan and her daughter, Victoria, came to Hoover in October and met with HHS members at the Hoover Public Library to examine the quilt.

Ms. Blocker was able to confirm that indeed Mrs. Lacey’s quilt was a “crazy quilt” and dated the quilt as post-Civil War, probably made in the late 1870s. She based that dating on the use of “variegated yarn”

which was not available until the mid-19th century; the variegated thread used in the quilt was more recent than 1805, the date on the quilt. She stated that after the Civil War, most Southerners had very few [resources] but “crazy quilts were a way for women to make a quilt and express themselves...[they] pieced together odd shapes [of cloth] “to show off skills and handwork.” This was significant in that manufactured quilt kits were made at the turn of the 20th century comprised of ready-made embroidered pieces.

Ms. Blocker suggested that the quilt was probably in commemoration of an anniversary for the couple whose initials were embroidered in the squares. Special features she noted included the use of silk twill, the variegated thread, the trim around the baby, and the cotton fabric including the back of the quilt. There is no batting. Fabric damage included insect damage where the “hole is clean” or ragged edges, meaning torn, and “shattering,” where silk disintegrates resulting in a pattern similar to pieces of broken glass. Where thread was missing, one can see patterns traced onto the fabric; Ryan remarked that the wool braid used was typical of the latter 19th century.

Before she left, Ms. Blocker taught us how to fold the quilt in thirds, and using archival tissue, folding it to create an accordion with storage in an acid-free box. Ms. Blocker referred us to preservationist H. Sutcliffe at the Archive for more research.



Ryan and Victoria Blocker examine Crazy Quilt at the Hoover Public Library last Fall.

The Stinson Ole Place became The Folklore Center

Twenty-one years ago on November 6, 1997, The Folklore Center was dedicated as an educational resource for the children of Hoover. Since that time, thousands of students from Bluff Park Elementary and many other schools have come for field trips to learn about life in Alabama in the 1840s. The Hoover Historical Society has preserved and maintained the log cabin and outbuildings, along with providing craftsmen who share spinning, weaving, quilt-making, laundering clothes outside in an iron pot, preserving food, and other old-fashioned skills.

None of this would be possible without the vision and expertise of HHS Member Jack Crouch. He used his interest and experience in restoring old cabins and houses to bring the Stinson place to life again in Bluff Park. He was aided by the hard work of the Hoover Public Works employees including Tommy Daniel, Wesley Bean, Kenny McElhenny, and others. Mayor Frank Skinner supported the project and saved the Society a great deal of money by allowing them to work with Jack on the project.

The family of Rev. A. Mac Stinson decided in 1996 to donate the cabin to the Society to preserve this part of their past and save it from vandalism because no one lived in it any more. Rev. Stinson fondly remembered the house from his childhood, and believes his grandfather, Hugh A. Mack Stinson, built it around 1840 on a farm near Columbiana, off Hwy 25. After a tornado in 1953 destroyed the outbuildings, only the cabin remained. Stinson's father and uncle began restoring the house in the 1960s, and used the area for family picnics.

Daniel and Bean remember traveling with Crouch to load up the logs and bring them to the current site behind Old Bluff Park School. They completed

the cabin with logs Crouch had on his property in Centerville. Crouch also bought planking for the floors and windows from Burgess Demolition in West End. The cabin was assembled like a jigsaw puzzle—then the logs were chinked with a plaster/concrete mixture. The rocks for the chimney came from Blount County. Someone was hired to put on the cedar shake roof.

When the cabin was finished, the city employees built the outbuildings—the barn, the corncrib, the smokehouse and the outhouse, from old lumber Mr. Crouch had on his property. After that, Jack and Charles Shelby

traveled around to antique shops looking for items to furnish the cabin. They were especially proud of the iron hook they found for the fireplace.

Daniel said “Jack was a good man, and a character.” He took them out to eat at his favorite restaurant in Centerville on several of their trips down there. “He was always getting something done.” He was excited when he found pennies under the threshold and

the fireplace, saying they were good luck. He even had a plaque made for Skinner with the pennies to commemorate the gift of the cabin to the city and the city's help in turning the house into a folklore center.

We owe him a debt of gratitude for the incredible resource we have to teach our children about the old days before electricity, and all other modern conveniences. The Folklore Center is available for field trips for the young and old. Contact us at info@hooverhistoricalsociety.org and visit our Website to see a video about the reconstruction of the cabin. There is also a teacher's lesson plan on the Website.
—Pam Thompson





Moving the historical archives took months!

The Hoover Historical Society held a grand opening of their new headquarters at the old Bluff Park Elementary School on March 18, 1997. The new space was in the school library. Over the years, the bookcases were filled with Alabama History books, Foxfire books about life in the time of our Folklore cabin, quilting books, genealogies of Hoover families, and many other genealogical periodicals. We housed display cabinets of items found at Brock's Gap, Hoover Fire Department items, and the Miss America from Hoover, Heather Whitestone, one of the most popular Miss Americas in pageant history.

Five file cabinets housed important papers and newspaper clippings related to the history of Hoover. Paintings by our founder, Vadie Honea adorned the walls and shelves—along with old photographs of Hoover, the Overseer's house and maps. The map case was full of maps and oversized items and wooden cases displayed crocheted items.

A quilt made by the Hoover Service Club was on display as well as a flag of Hoover. Scrapbooks from area garden clubs, and civic clubs filled many shelves. Archival boxes of newspapers, computers and supplies were housed in the back room. Large glass displays, known as "Time Cabinets," lined the hallway near the cafetorium, displaying items by decade from the 1900s to the year 2000.

In 2018, the Society learned of the planned departure of the Artists on the Bluff and our own departure as well. The first step was to take an inventory of everything we had. Don Young, Debbie Burnett and Carolyn Kolar photographed and listed every item in the time cabinets in the summer of 2016 and since these items were already documented, they were boxed and labeled first.

In early 2017, the HHS hosted an Open House in

conjunction with the Friends of Hoover. Pictures of the Archive (left) show it at its best!

In January 2018, Liz Wells, Carolyn and Debbie inventoried every book and periodical and book on our shelves. They were listed in alphabetical order. Books were packed in small boxes gathered by Tom Bailey. There were so many books! And, genealogical periodicals were culled and "discards" offered to members.

By February 2018, the time cabinets were emptied with help from Caroline Boone, Liz, Carolyn and Debbie. A master list was made from the labeled boxes.

Many months were spent sorting, discarding, and packing. Photographs and small-framed items were packed in foam envelopes courtesy of Faye Anderson. We had so many! The large portrait of William Hoover was put into a special box designed to transport a large TV. Pam Thompson and Debbie cleaned and painted large wooden cabinets for use as our scrapbook storage.

While searching through a back room, a Bridal Quilt belonging to Elizabeth Reid Lacey surprised and delighted us! Research on the quilt continues.

Society members visited the new space on Valleydale Road in May 2018. It was apparent that this was a smaller space; so decisions were made about larger items. The map cabinet was sold. Large glass and wooden display cases were given to Jaime Thursby for use at his Alabama Peanut Company downtown in exchange for his corporate membership. One table was covered with a glass display case. When it was removed, a plaque was revealed identifying it as the table used to sign the City of Hoover Incorporation papers in 1967! Another great find!

The Society ordered cantilevered shelving for our books and periodicals, as the shelving at the Bluff Park location was attached or damaged. The shelving was purchased from Patterson-Pope Company. Former Mayor Frank Skinner, Doug Harkness, Arnold Singer, Gilbert Douglas and Jim Langley delivered and assembled the shelving in the new space, as well as archival box shelving needed for large items.

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Mayor Skinner generously donated five of these units that were assembled in February 2019.

Changing Spaces Moving Company was hired to move the largest and heaviest items such as the time cabinets. Moving Day was July 13, 2018—when these items were transported to the Public Safety Building. Workers from the City of Hoover helped transport all of the other items in the following days. While this location may not be our last ‘home, we are enjoying the climate-controlled space that is needed to preserve archives. Visits are by appointment!



Large wooden chairs were donated to The Regional Library and Arts Center in Warrior, Alabama, thanks to Sue Knopf. Linda England arranged for moving them and the chairs are being enjoyed in their new home.

A Dedication

The Hoover Historical Society is celebrating 30 years of archiving Hoover’s history in July of 2019. Our founder, Vadie Honea, gathered seven friends interested in organizing an historical society at her home on March 8, 1989. During the months of March through July in 1989, 110 Charter Members organized the HHS by choosing officers, conducting fundraising for a history book, established the group as a non-profit, and created an Archive from donations. Today, the HHS serves the City of Hoover as its Archivist.

On the 30th anniversary of the HHS, we wish to recognize the efforts of our Charter Members with this special edition of The Hoover HistoricalLog.

The Hoover HistoricalLog is published five times annually by the Hoover Historical Society, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Copyright 2019. Editors: Deborah Burnnett and Edna McWilliams

Contact us at info@hooverhistoricalsociety.org

Organization of the Archive

The Hoover Historical Society (HHS) is grateful for its archive space at the Public Service Center at 2020 Valleydale Road. Positive factors for preservation include having no windows and a reliable HVAC system for temperature and humidity control. HHS is the official Archive for the City of Hoover.

Our archives consist of several groupings:

- Historic documents, including letters
- Books about the history of Hoover and its environs
 - Collections of bound records of various civic organizations in Hoover
 - Collections of related but unbound records
 - Exemplars of items used by previous generations

File cabinets, cantilever shelving, sturdy wooden shelves, box storage shelves, and display cabinets provide storage and/or display. Acid-free storage boxes and/or acid-free papers are important tools for historic preservation.

We initially purchased cantilever shelving (seen in background of photos below) from Patterson-Pope, and its manager, the former Mayor Frank Skinner. In our previous location, the shelving was attached to the walls and could not be moved.

Archivist Elizabeth Wells and Carolyn Kolar have been instrumental in unpacking, organizing and shelving our book collection while eagerly awaiting the arrival and assembly of the box storage shelving.

Mayor Skinner donated used—but attractive— box shelving which was declared surplus by one of his clients. Gilbert Douglas III and Arnold Singer transported the shelving components from the Patterson-Pope warehouse to our new location.

The HHS relies totally upon a volunteer staff; the Board wishes to thank (former) Mayor Frank Skinner for his donation and the work of the key Board members—including Bob Kolar, Doug Harkness, Membership Chair Jim Langley and President Arnold Singer.



Mobile has its Azalea Trail Maids; Hoover has its Belles!

The Southern Belle outfit was made popular by the 1939 movie *Gone with the Wind's* female characters. Pre-Civil War, the dresses were large hooped skirts with corseted bodies, with sleeves for daywear and sleeveless for evenings. Ruffles, flounces, drapes, bows, and flowers decorated the plain dresses into fancy attire. A lady wore gloves, bonnets or sun hats, and laced footwear. To deal with southern climate, ladies used parasols and hand-fans to stay cool. Scarlett O'Hara looked elegant in the green curtain gown she made during hard Civil War years in the Antebellum era. Fast forward 100+ years....

In 1979, Faye Anderson presented the idea of forming the Hoover Belles to the Hoover Beautification Board. Mrs. Anderson contributed hoop skirts from her own closet, and from the UAB theater closet. The first presentation was at the Hoover Mall. Hoover's mayors have always been active participants in the presentation of the Hoover Belles. The presentation balls have also been held at Green Valley (now the Hoover Country Club), Shoal Creek, and Riverchase Country Clubs.

Mrs. Anderson not only trained the girls in proper etiquette, but she instructed their escorts in proper decorum for the events. A Mother-Daughter luncheon is held each May. The Hoover Beautification Board promoted the Dogwood Trail Days activities in April

1980, according to Chairwoman Jane Rayburn. Eleven Hoover Belles acted as hostesses during the grand opening celebration. They were coordinated by Faye Anderson of the Beautification Board. The Hoover Belles continued to participate in subsequent Dogwood Parades.

During her term of service, each Belle is required to work a minimum of 30 hours of community service through the Hoover Belle program. A Belle must conduct herself in a manner that will bring honor to the program and will be required to sign the Hoover Belle Pledge vowing to be drug, alcohol, and tobacco free during her tenure as a Hoover Belle. Each Belle selected is responsible for the cost of her antebellum gown and accessories.

There are strict rules for becoming a Hoover Belle. A Belle must be a resident of Hoover, of exemplary character, have a pleasant personality, be continuously enrolled in school, and enjoy the civic responsibility of serving her city and local charities.

A Belle must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5 for her full term as a Belle and sign a pledge to adhere to very high standards throughout their two-year term of service.

Community service activities for the Hoover Belles included Aldridge Garden events, Autism Walk, Hoover Mayor's Prayer Breakfast, The Summit Christmas Parade, Decorator's ShowHouse, Buddy Walk for Down Syndrome, seasonal festivals, Distinguished Young Women of Shelby County, and Belles are available to grace Spring events as they do for the HHS's Spring Tea.

The 2019 class of Hoover Belles was recently hosted at The Hyatt Regency (The Wynfrey) Hotel Grand Ballroom. Forty-two high school sophomores will represent the City for the next two years. Once again, Hoover's Mayor Frank Brocato welcomed the families and friends of the honorees with congratulations on their selection as Hoover Belles!

In addition to sponsoring the Hoover Belles, Faye Anderson was active in the working with the Miss Alabama pageant. In the early 80s, Hoover did not qualify to have a Miss Hoover contestant, so working with the director, Nora

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Symbols of HHS updated

Our Society has undergone a renaissance of sorts in the last year. Along with our new address, we have a new Website, brochure, logo, and postcard. Volunteers are working to organize the new collections at the archive.

The Website www.hooverhistoricalsociety.org debuted in August 2018. A committee decided to move our Website service to Plexamedia—based on their portfolio and a review of some of their client Websites. Plexamedia uses WordPress, one of the most robust and customizable development platforms on the Internet today. We are now up to the standard called “responsive” Web design. The layout changes to read well on a small phone screen or a big desktop monitor. And, we own the domain name. As a non-profit organization, we have the SSL Certification with no additional charge.

Among donations to the Archive in 2018-19 was the Shirley Bridges Knight Collection. Her daughter donated scrapbooks kept by Mrs. Knight at Bluff Park Elementary School from her homerooms of 1968 through 1990; a Faculty scrapbook from 1972-1988; and an American Bicentennial scrapbook of the celebration at the school in 1976.

The Karen King collection arrived from Rocky Ridge Elementary School, featuring hand-painted works in a series of PTO scrapbooks dating to the 1950s. We also hold many other scrapbook collections.

We scanned 92 photographs of the preparation and construction at Trace Crossings and Brock’s Gap taken by member Beth Galloway in the early 2000s. She is annotating those photos for us.

Pam Thompson created a new brochure using the Hale-Joseph Home as its centerpiece in a tri-fold, published by VistaPrint. Carolyn Kolar created an up-to-date postcard featuring 15 images.

Lastly, a new logo was designed by Jerry Bates of South Hill, WA state to celebrate the most visible sign of the Society—The Folklore Center, featuring the Stinson Ole Place (illuminated and welcoming!) as well as Alabama’s blue skies and puffy clouds, with a hydrangea in the foreground, a symbol of our City’s official flower.



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Chapman, of the Miss Alabama pageant, Faye created and directed the 'Miss Hoover Area' pageant for three years, that girls could enter from other towns. In 1984, Tammy Little, from Section, Alabama (on Sand Mountain) entered and won Miss Hoover Area. Tammy had participated and won in several regional pageants, and had previously competed in the Miss Alabama pageant, placing as high as 4th runner-up. This year, having gained much experience, Tammy chose a song that was given to her by Six Flags in Atlanta, "Hit me with a Hot Note". Tammy was named Miss Alabama 1984!

Tammy stayed with Faye until time for the Miss America pageant. This was a delight for Faye and her daughters, Laura and Beth. Tammy has returned to Section, living on Tammy Little Blvd. In her own words: *On July 4, 1984, I had the honor of welcoming President Reagan to Alabama. I was honored to be seated with him on stage and sing at several rallies. He and Mrs. Reagan invited me to Washington D.C. where I spent a week touring the*

memorials and museums and the White House. I also met with President Bush in the Oval Office and appeared with him at several events. He gave me the nicest compliment after I finished singing the National Anthem. He told me I have perfect pitch!



While I am often defined as Miss Alabama and certainly proud to have been Miss Alabama 1984, my philosophy is, "Queen for a day, Mom for Life."

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