

The Hoover Historical Log

The Official Newsletter of the
Hoover Historical Society

Holiday Edition 2020



Volume 32, No. 2

Save the Date!

November 7 & 8th	Moss Magic Festival; new venue at the Hoover Met
November 10th	BOARD MEETING via Zoom; 10 AM
November 17th	General Meeting with Ryan Blocker, Speaker 1 PM via Zoom
December 12th	Santa/Christmas decorations at the Stinson Ole Place; open for photos

Anti-Suffrage movement challenged 19th Amendment

In 1893, the self-governing British colony of New Zealand granted voting rights to women. A year later, South Australia followed suit. Once federated, Australia granted suffrage to its women in 1902. The initiative was worldwide as some rights were granted in Sweden, Britain, Finland, and some states in the US in the early 20th century. But, did you know that there was also a movement opposing suffrage for women?

Our guest speaker for our November 17th's General Meeting, via Zoom @ 1:00 PM. Ryan Blocker, of the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery, will talk about this lesser-known movement. *Continued on Page 3*



Vintage Thanksgiving postcards, like the one at left created between 1898 and 1918, depicted Pilgrims at the first Thanksgiving, turkeys, cornucopias, and feasts. Children chasing turkeys, turkeys in cars, and patriotic turkeys with flags are also topics for these cards.



A message from our president...

On October 8th, the Hoover Historical Society finally ventured out of the house in this COVID19 time. We took a socially distanced walking tour of historic Oak Hill Cemetery in Birmingham. One of our most prominent Hoover Pioneers is buried there. Gardner Cole Hale is recognized by most as the “Father of Bluff Park.” His grave is just a grassy spot in the middle of the cemetery.

For me, personally, this is just not right. So, I take this opportunity to say to Bluff Park and other Hoover residents to STEP-UP. It’s time we start a drive to provide a grave marker for Gardner and Annie Hale.

Send your thoughts and donations to the Hoover Historical Society referencing Gardner Hale grave marker.

I researched Gardner Hale and share his story with you in this edition, pages 4 and 5.

Other HHS projects these past few months have included a cleanup of Lover’s Leap (shown above) as well as hosting photographic opportunities for the community by decorating the cabin in fall regalia...thanks to Gene and Sandra Fuller for doing this!

We are also asking for volunteers to undertake projects at the archive/office or around the community such as updating our photographic files of historical markers, government building, schools, etc., or curating our Time Cabinets for public viewing.

The Society has also assisted yet another business in the Stadium Trace Village with historic photographs requested by interior designers that have contacted us. To date, we have assisted Duluth, O’ Henry’s, and ARC Realty.

Future Eagle Scouts came to Paint Your Wagon in late October. Sergey, Joe, and Jed, under Jack Lewis’ direction, renewed our wagon with bright red and green paint. Gene Fuller built the new bench. We are ready to make holiday photographs on December 12th during the Bluff Park Parade.

We hope to see you then and in the New Year!

Jimmy Langley



Scouts restore our wagon at the Folklore Center, October 2020

Anti-suffrage movement from Page 1

Ryan Blocker is the Museum Collections Coordinator at the ADAH. She is also the most recent past President of the Alabama Museums Association. She received a degree in History from Auburn University at Montgomery, and certification in Collections Care, focusing on Textile Conservation and Preservation, from the International Preservation Studies Center in Illinois. She stated, “As the Suffrage movement gained momentum in the South, anti-suffrage groups formed to block ratification of the 19th amendment.”

Focusing on the years 1919 and 1920, Blocker will discuss the anti-ratification movement in Alabama, its leaders, and the ideology behind their opposition to women’s suffrage.



Ryan Blocker examined the Lacey Quilt found in our old archive office in 2018, identifying it as a Crazy Quilt ca. late 1800s.

Arnold, you were a blessing!

Our Past President, Arnold Singer, passed away in early August after a brief illness. However, he left behind a wonderful legacy of service to Hoover, his adopted home. His family shared this in his obituary:

Arnold was known to anyone who attended public meetings in his adopted hometown of Hoover. He regularly attended meetings of the city council, the board of education, and various government committees. He stood for transparency in government, often advocated for the underrepresented and ran for city council in 2016. He worked with others to save the Hoover school buses. He was a lifelong learner and was especially devoted to the Hoover Public Library. He was selected for the 2020 – 2021 class of Leadership Hoover. He loved Hoover and always

wanted it to improve and be the best city it could be. In addition to the countless hours he spent volunteering for different organizations and events around Hoover, Arnold served as President of the ARC of Shelby County from 2014 to 2017 and as President of the Hoover Historical Society from 2017 to 2019.

Hoover’s Mayor, Frank Brocato, stated to Jon Anderson of the *Hoover Sun*, “He loved the city of Hoover — quite a statesman, an individual that gave his heart and soul. Singer was very opinionated, but he always researched an issue before he got into a conversation about it.” And, Singer didn’t just talk—he volunteered and served with civic and charitable groups.

Another colleague and friend, Robin Schultz, wrote on his Facebook page:

In 2016 Arnold decided to run for City Council. While others ... were spending thousands in campaign money, Arnold spent a total of \$53.25 on this entire campaign— \$50 for the qualifying fee and \$3.25 for a T-shirt. Arnold didn’t win that race, but being Arnold he was back the following week speaking in front of the Council. Over the years Arnold volunteered at various organizations, always ending up in a leadership role. From the Friends of Hoover to the Arc of Shelby County to the Hoover Historical Society, Arnold always made them look great.

And, speaking for the Hoover Historical Society, one of his legacies is the Skilled Trades scholarship, offered to a qualified student who will continue education at a technical school or begin a job immediately upon graduation. Another is his support for The Folklore Center in Bluff Park. Arnold, you will be missed...



Absolutely Alabama's Fred Hunter presents talk via Zoom

Absolutely Alabama's Fred Hunter talked to members and guests of the HHS during his first-ever Zoom presentation. Hosted by the Hoover-Randle Home & Gardens, Fred described his career in broadcasting and how it came about.

Fred holds a degree in Meteorology and began his career as a weatherman. He was born in Ft. Payne and lived in many different places while growing up. He began his career in Austin, TX, where he found he had a knack finding the most interesting places and stories. Eventually, he produced a program called *Positively Texas*, the forerunner of *Absolutely Alabama*.

Fred explained that people are not watching news as much as in the past due to COVID fatigue and "so much negativity." His program offers nothing but positive stories."

Asked how he finds story ideas, Fred stated: "I'll run out of breath before I run out of stories," quoting Dr. Doug Phillips of the 30 years long *Exploring Alabama*. Some of his story ideas come from his multiple social media accounts. Examples of his stories include a 2019 feature on Pat Dye; how Hurricane Creek got its name (it's really Hair Cane Creek); 'Tennessee River,' Alabama's first hit; and attending a funeral at the Coon Dog Cemetery.

On a more serious note, he expressed his concern about studying History by quoting Marcus Tullius Cicero, the great Greek orator: "To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child. For what is the worth of human life, unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history?" Fred described Cicero as a "wise man who put this so eloquently—that history is vitally important to our own lives and times."

After his presentation, Jim Langley and Fred Hunter dedicated the new plaque at Lover's Leap, one of Jim's favorite places that William Farrar and his wife, Seraphina, loved in the 19th century.



Raising Hale...a visit to Oak Hill Cemetery

The following is a brief biography of Gardner Cole Hale.

In the 1840's Daniel Pratt, pioneer cotton mill industrialist and founder of Prattville, found himself without anyone capable of managing the day-to-day operations of his cotton mill factory. As production ground to a halt, Pratt headed north to his native New England to find a new mill boss. After stopping in New York to consult his textile factory, Pratt continued to Providence, Rhode Island, where he succeeded in obtaining a well-qualified superintendent, Gardner Hale.

Pratt seemed confident that Hale would get the

mill moving again. Gardner Hale and his family moved to Prattville in November 1848. In May 1849, Hale's wife bore a son; his parents named him Daniel Pratt.

Pratt's faith in Gardner Hale was well placed. Mill performance improved vastly in the 1850s under Hale's guidance, with the result that Pratt Manufacturing Company (PMC) became one of Alabama's most successful cotton mill factories.

Like Daniel Pratt, Gardner Hale married into a New England family of some prominence. Hale's wife, Ann Susan Ballou, was a relative of Adin Ballou, the well-known nineteenth-century Universalist minister, Spiritualist, and founder of



Gardner Cole Hale who was born 9 June 1809 in Swansea, Bristol County, Massachusetts to Levi and Eunice Curtis Hale. He married Ann Susan Ballou on 05 Dec 1829, Cumberland, RI. He married secondly Nancy Jane Thompson on 13 June 1875 in Hale Springs. He eventually divorced her. She was born in Perry County, Alabama. He died in 1880 and is buried in Oak Hill.



Ann Susan Ballou, whose mother's family came to America on the Mayflower, was born in Cumberland, Rhode Island on 25 December 1811 to Absalom Ballou and Anna Jenckes. Ann Susan Ballou married Gardner Cole Hale and had 11 children. She passed away on 12 July 1873 in Hale Springs, Jefferson, Alabama from a Cholera epidemic on Shades Mountain.

Ann Susan was buried on the property and when the son Henry died and Gardner died the same year, Susan was removed and buried alongside her husband, son and eventually their daughter Hannah Williams at Oak Hill.

After Gardner died, the estate was put up for auction, and daughter Hannah bought the house and 7 acres of land and continued renting out rooms until her death after the turn of the 19th century.

Bio of Gardner Hale continued

the utopian Christian community of Hopedale. Adin Ballou, who knew the Hale family very well, related that Gardner Hale was "a superior man in his sphere of life," possessing "eminent skill, judgment, and moral integrity." he viewed Ann as "the flower of [her father's] offspring" and a "superior woman" possessing "an admirable physical and mental constitution."

While several of his children joined the Methodist Church, Gardner Hale did not join. According to Shadrack Mims, Hale "was not a Christian," although he did believe "in the overruling of providence in earthly matters". Gardner Hale appears to have qualified as a religious skeptic, at the least.

Hale was a Unionist, and the Southern Rights crowd became angry because he turned a [mill] hand off who voted that ticket. Hale responded to the allegation, "the great trouble with this is getting and drinking too much liquor."

One of the more shocking family incidents of the day was when Henry Hale (Gardner's son) married one of the factory girls. The Hale family was very much chagrined. Henry Hale's "factory girl" bride was eighteen-year-old Mary Medlin and she worked as a spinner in one of the mills.

An even greater scandal— because it involved the crime of bigamy— occurred when Gardner Hale's daughter Susan Frances married a Dr. Custer from Tennessee. Sue Hale's husband had a wife and four children living. Gardner Hale received a letter from someone in Shelbyville, Tenn. telling him all about it. He had the marriage annulled.

In the early 1860s, Daniel Pratt became a major investor in the Oxmoor Furnaces at the base of

Shades Mountain below the bluff in Oxmoor Valley. It is probably not coincidental that Gardner Hale bought acreage at the top of the mountain then known as Spencer Springs at about the same time. He renamed it Hale Springs. Gardner saw the property while on his way to visit his daughter Susan in Jonesboro (now Bessemer).

Because Pratt Mill Company was a major supplier of uniforms and blankets for the Confederacy; the Civil War caused Hale to spend most of his time in Prattville until he retired after the War in 1866. Before he retired to Hale Springs, Gardner Hale and his wife traveled "to England to contract for and superintend the building and shipping of a large outfit of machinery," presumably for both of Pratt's factories and the newly started mill at Allenville.

He and Annie moved into Liberty Hall, which had been built by Octavius Spencer as part of a hilltop resort. Hale took over the resort that boasted two medicinal springs (the Freestone and the Chalybeate Springs) that attracted residents from the surrounding area to the healthy mountain air. Liberty Hall was like a bed and breakfast of the day that took in boarders as other resort clients rented the rustic cabins or camped on the property. Under Gardner Hale's skilled oversight, the resort was developed to a greater level and popularity.

After the railroad was completed in 1870, people rode the train to Oxmoor Station from far and wide to vacation at the resort. From Oxmoor Station, the guests had to be transported through the gap in Shades Mountain and up the mountain from the east side until Oxmoor Road was extended up the mountain in 1892. Gardner's daughter Hannah would stand on the top of the mountain with a horn and blow it so that the carriage could be brought up the mountain. Gardner Hale is considered the "Father of Bluff Park" because of his efforts to develop the resort but also because his sons and grandsons took over the effort and developed the Summit into not just a resort, but also the community of Bluff Park.



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