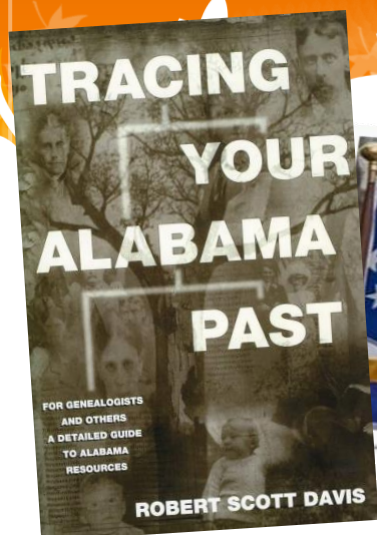


The Hoover Historical Log

The official newsletter of the Hoover Historical Society, Hoover, Alabama



"Family, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and the Secrets to Starting Your Genealogy"

"Getting into researching your family history is the most fundamental human endeavor and this talk will get you started in this hugely popular hobby in our constantly changing world of computers, DNA, and so much more. This program cuts through the popular myths and will answer questions on how to solve the mysteries of your family's past," states Robert Scott Davis, our presenter for November's General Meeting of the HHS at the Hoover Public Library's downstairs meeting room at 1 PM.

Continued on Page 4

Save the Date!

November 4 & 5

Visit our booth at the Moss Rock Festival at the Hoover Met!

November 7th

Board Meeting for officers and interested members at 10 AM @ PSC on Valleydale Rd.

November 14th

General Meeting at Hoover Public Library at 1 PM with Genealogist Bob Scott



Several weeks ago, conservationists found a rare oak tree at the Moss Rock Preserve. Alabama's Sandstone Oak is nearly extinct. Endemic to Alabama, the tree is found on sandstone outcrops from the Birmingham to Gadsden area.

First described in the early 1900s, the tree is now documented in nine counties. Patrick Thompson, Curator of the Arboretum at Auburn University, says it was a "small population impacted by the growth of Birmingham."

Thompson and City of Hoover Arborist Colin Connor hope to raise awareness of the species. "You hate to see another species to just vanish," stated Colin.

Public awareness is key to finding the trees, collecting the acorns, and "distributing them to gardens around the world," said Thompson.





Helen Hoover Holmes, Elizabeth Holmes, and Thomas Hoover with Jim Langley at the Hoover-Randle Home on Tyler Road.

The Legacy of Hoover: A Family's Perspective

Remembering the founder and his Dreams for a City

In the heart of Alabama, the City of Hoover stands today as the largest suburban area and sixth largest city in the state, as per the 2020 Census. This thriving city owes its name to William Hoover Sr., the visionary founder who gave it life in 1967. The city's story intertwines with the Hoover family's own as they gathered this summer to reminisce about their roots.

Mr. Hoover's family, including Helen Hoover Holmes, Thomas Hoover, and Helen's daughter, Elizabeth Holmes, an artist and teacher, convened at their former residence, the Hoover-Randle House and Gardens, now a city-owned historical treasure. The event was hosted by Debbie V. Rutherford, an Event Coordinator for the City, and Jim Langley, former president of the Hoover Historical Society and Melanie Posey Joseph capturing the memories on video. Helen noted that Jane, her older sister and family historian, had passed earlier this year.

Thomas Hoover, opening the discussion, expressed gratitude for the preservation of their cherished family home. He pointed out that his father personally purchased the property on which the house stood, and this fact held special significance since it was the only land her personally owned. Thomas marveled at his father's resilience, noting that he was born in the post-Civil War era and received his education in a one-room schoolhouse in Indian Territory, Oklahoma. Despite facing numerous challenges, including hearing loss and the loss of his parents in his 20s, Mr. Hoover's life took intriguing turns. He began as a pharmacist but transitioned to a career in life insurance after a chance encounter with an ex-Governor in Bessemer. His endeavors led to the founding of Employers Mutual of Alabama in 1922 and he persevered through the Great Depression, working without a salary.

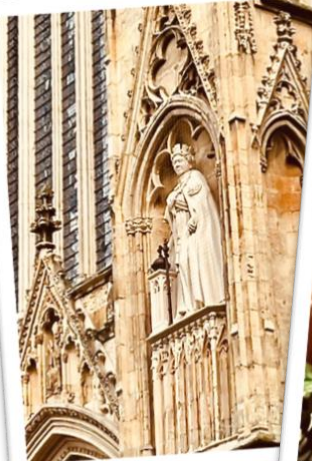
In the early 1940s, Mr. Hoover recognized the trend toward suburbanization, purchasing 160 acres on Tyler Road. He initially built a two-room cabin for his family and employees, which became the center of countless gatherings, from picnics to possum hunts and family spaghetti dinners. As times improved, he sold land in Shelby County, generating income to build the family home on this very site. His ambitious project earned the nickname "Hoover's Folly," but as his daughter Helen recalled, her father wasn't one to be discouraged by critics.

Mr. Hoover's contributions extended beyond his family. He established the Employers Insurance Company of Alabama in 1929 and moved his headquarters to Hoover in 1957-58. This move benefited not only the company but also the future city itself, its shareholders, and its residents.

Continued on Page 4



Pam Thompson (R) and I met with local historian Heather J. Skaggs (middle) to learn about increasing and improving HHS's Social Media presence. Right, Queen Elizabeth's newest statue at York Minster, York, UK, and the Dog Wheel at a restaurant in the village of Lacock.



History is in our Genealogy!

As you may know, my father's side of the family—the Hamners—arrived in this country early on with records of lands in Virginia dating to the early 1600s. My maternal side is much more recent: My mother was a WWII war bride. All her family remains living in England. When my husband offered a tour of the United Kingdom recently, how could I say no? We began in London, where we passed by the street where she grew up. We walked the parks and streets where she walked and saw the same River Thames and bridges she would have seen. In fact, her paternal family's church is in Trafalgar Square, St. Martin in the Fields, and we were able to glimpse inside as a wedding party was gathering. (As a side note, they really know how to dress up for a wedding!) We went down to the crypt and had a lovely lunch and conversation with some of the local teens who kindly told us about "must see" places. I felt quite at home, not at all like a tourist.

Our tour continued with many National Trust historic sites, too many to mention, but you must visit the village of Lacock, which you've no doubt seen in numerous movies, and have dinner at The George. Inside this restaurant is a dog-wheel, where much like a hamster wheel, dogs ran to generate power. This led to the old saying, "Every dog has its day." Thankfully that practice ended ages ago.

One other place I must mention is York, which has the second largest cathedral in Northern Europe and where we observed the concluding eulogy and parting of a funeral, obviously a heroic veteran. A very recent statue late Queen Elizabeth was recently installed just above and left of the front door. York is considered the most haunted city, and to celebrate that fact, they sell little ghosts in a shop so small, people queue up for two to three hours just to purchase one. Do a search for York Ghost Merchants. Fascinating place. The entire tour was full of interesting places and history. So, you can imagine how excited we are to offer Robert Scott Davis's program on Genealogy in November!

The Folklore Center continues to draw interest as groups request tours of the log cabin and outbuildings. We are always grateful for volunteers who make the past come alive for the students who visit. If you'd like to be a part of this, just let us know.

Linda Joseph

Starting Your Genealogy Research Continued

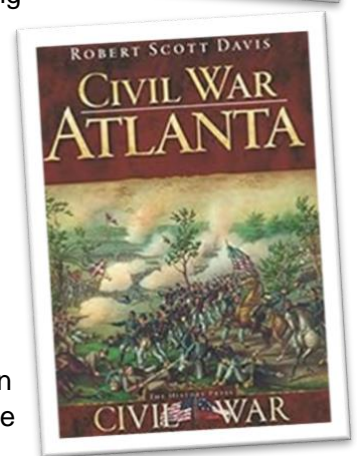
from Page 1

Robert S. Davis has spoken and written on genealogy for almost fifty years, with numerous articles awards, books, speaking engagements, and television appearances to his credit. He has taught family history research for decades. His work has also included many local and state history works, including recently on Bessemer and Cullman.

Davis is a retired professor of Genealogy and History. He holds a master's in education and history from North Georgia College and a Master of Arts degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He is also a graduate of the Institute of Documentary Editing of the National Historical Records Publications Commission.

For his work in family and local history, in 2006 the American Association for State and Local History awarded the program he built with its Outstanding Leadership in History Award of Merit and gave him the same award in 2007. The National Genealogical Society has given him its National Award of Merit twice, and he received the Lloyd W. Bostruck Award from the Dallas Genealogical Society.

Professor Davis has over 2,000 publications, including more than 100 articles in professional journals. Bob has appeared on the History and Discover Channels and is quoted in several national publications. The Sons of the American Revolution, Southern Campaigns of the American Revolution, and the South Carolina Historical Society have recognized him for historical scholarship.



Hoover family, Continued from Page 2

The family shared heartwarming memories of their father and grandfather. Helen remembered him as a devoted family man who always made time for his grandchildren, while Elizabeth, his granddaughter, spoke of his approachability and encouragement of her artistic pursuits. According to Elizabeth, "Granddaddy was approachable...when we went to the office, he would stop what he was doing for us, had a great belly laugh, and gave us a dollar to get a treat."

The reminiscences also included charming anecdotes about peacocks, rattlesnake encounters, unique culinary experiences like possum and festive family tradition. Living in close proximity, the nine grandchildren or cousin, created a tight-knit family in the "boondocks."

As the descendants prepared to tour their beloved family home, they were asked what Mr. Hoover would think of Hoover today. Thomas believed that Hoover had surpassed his father's wildest dreams, emphasizing quality over size. Elizabeth added that her grandfather would have admired the Hoover Met, and Helen reiterated her father's advice, "Don't let other people judge you...with hard work, good values, doing what is right, you won't fail and you can live with Yourself; don't let other make you into something you are not."

In the legacy of Hoover, the city's history, and the family own intertwine, creating a lasting tribute to the vision, perseverance, and values of William Hoover Sr.

Fall Trip to Selma 2023



Louretta Wimberly, left, discussed Selma's history at the First Baptist Church Colored.

The first stop on the Hoover Historical Society tour of Selma was the Spanish moss draped Live Oak Cemetery—a place of historical significance and poignant beauty. This cemetery is a unique testament to Selma's rich past, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its roots trace back to 1829. In 1879, it was officially named Live Oak Cemetery with the planting of 80 Live Oaks and 80 Magnolias. Prominent figures from Selma such as U.S. Vice-President William Rufus King, one of its founders, rest in this cemetery.

As the HHS embarked on their tour of Sturdivant Hall, they delved into a journey through time. The mansion's history unfolded, dating back to its construction in the 1850s for Colonel Edward T. Watts, an iconic figure of the Old South. Our group marveled at the Greek Revival architecture and opulent interiors of a bygone era. During the tour, our guide shared the mansion's rich Civil War history and its role during both Confederate and Union occupations.

Lunch was served at the Downtowner Restaurant, a local gem, capturing the essence of Southern hospitality, offering a taste of authentic Alabama flavors.

After lunch, Louretta Wimberly, an unsung hero in the voting rights struggle, met with us at First Baptist Church Colored, a significant hub for activists that served as a gathering place for African Americans who fought for their right to vote. Louretta and others from the congregation, organized meetings and rallies to support the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Their efforts in mobilizing the community contributed to the historic Selma to Montgomery marches. Louretta and the First Baptist Church Colored were instrumental in pushing for the changes that eventually resulted in the voting rights legislation, a testament of resilience and determination of those fighting for equality in Selma.

A taste of the old-world charm is found at the St. James Hotel, a beautifully restored historic building. The Old Depot Museum's diverse exhibits ensure that the tapestry of Selma's past, from the Civil War to the Civil Rights era is on full display for all to explore and learn from.

A visit to Selma wouldn't be complete without walking along River Street, where the Alabama River adds a serene backdrop to the picturesque scenery. The riverside promenade is a place for peaceful contemplation and a chance to reflect on the town's role in civil rights history. Just a stone's throw away is the iconic Edmund Pettus Bridge, which played a pivotal role in the civil rights movement. Standing on this historic bridge, you can't help but feel the weight of history and the bravery of those who marched across it for equality.



HOOVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY Membership Form

Make checks payable to Hoover Historical Society
P.O. Box 360233 Hoover, Alabama 35236-0233

Or pay online via Pay Pal at our website:
www.hooverhistoricalsociety.org

Types of Membership

Individual	\$10
Couple	\$20
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Patron	\$100
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SKILLS: Computer _____ Fundraising _____ Publicity _____ Leadership _____

SPEAKERS/PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS: _____

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[Recipient]



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