

the
Hoover Historical Log

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



**HHS Programs
2025-2026**

**Wednesday, September 17th,
2025**

Bridging the Workforce Gap

The story of RC3 in the Hoover school system...with Natalie Coleman, CTE (shown left) at the Faye Anderson Community Room at City Hall

November 18, 2025

"Fact or Fiction? Hoover's History That'll Make You Look Twice" - Test your knowledge about the best place to live in Alabama and win prizes with Jim Langley! (See page 5)

January 20, 2026

'Patton Chapel memories'

with Becky Roberson.

March 17, 2026

Building Visitorship" with Nathan Anderson, Cullman tourism.

May 19, 2026

From Strawbeating to String Banjos:

The Golden Age of Old-Time Music in the South

Joyce & Jim Cauthen



RC3 - Bridging the Workforce Gap

When Baby Boomers were in high school, there were three career paths—college prep, business (secretarial, etc.), and 'greasers'—those were labeled vocational. Our speaker, Natalie Coleman (above) is a Career & Technical Education Specialist at RC3.

There were no programs to teach hands-on skills that led to immediate, well-paid employment. Racking up incredible debt for academic studies can be a burden that many students do not want to incur—hence, the need for skilled trade schools. RC3 focuses on providing 10th -12th grade students hands-on experience in a variety of fields, including automotive—a new 'academy' this year at RC3.

Skilled trades programs prepare individuals for careers that require specialized knowledge and hands-on skills, often learned through vocational schools, apprenticeships, or on-the-job training. These programs offer an alternative to traditional four-year college degrees and can lead to well-paying, in-demand jobs. —AI Overview
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Save the Date!

Board Meeting

Sept. 9, 2025

Board meeting is at 10 AM, Public Safety Center, 2020 Valleydale Rd. #108

General Meeting

Sept. 17, 2025

1 PM at the Faye Anderson Community Room at Hoover City Hall

Moss Rock Festival

November 1 & 2

Hoover Met Complex, Stadium Trace Parkway, Hoover
10-5 Sat. & 10-4 Sun.

A History of RC3

By Dr. Ron Dodson

We had been looking for a site to establish some type of career training center for several years. When Andy Craig was superintendent, we invested in a special data service that tracked college enrollment after high school graduation through two- and four- year public and private colleges. We discovered some interesting facts:

- 90% of our graduates told us they were going to college
- 80% enrolled in a college within two years of high school graduation
- 60 to 65% of those who enrolled in college graduated with a two- or four-year degree within six years.

This meant that about 45% of each high school graduating class was going to college and graduating with a degree. We were NOT preparing over half of our students for life after high school! But it was a challenge to convince the community that something else was needed—most parents thought it was a GREAT idea...for someone else's kid.



Economic conditions began to shift public opinion around 2018. Tuition was increasing annually—outpacing increases in household income, grants, and scholarships that were decreasing in number. Worker shortages in the skilled trades were driving up wages and groups that were representing businesses that needed workers were pressing us to help. Both Hoover HS and Spain Park HS were built with a focus on college preparation. We needed a new place.

At the same time, Pelham City Schools had arranged to sell their old Riverchase Middle School campus to a private Christian school, but that sale fell through. We were asked if we were interested, and after touring the property and looking at the timing of potential bus routes between the high schools, we bought the property.

Local businesses were involved in the renovation plans, and we decided to open the school as a "simulated workspace." Making the working areas as realistic as possible, students felt they were coming to work rather than attending school. Businesses emphasized that "soft skills" were most important—the ability to communicate, problem-solve, work as a team, show up to work on time, prepare to finish a job with pride—all transfer across roles and industries. Technical training was meaningless if the soft skills were not emphasized. Math and English classes were included on the RC3 campus so that applications of learning could be emphasized through shared planning between academic and career training teachers. Students would spend half their day on the RC3 campus and half at their own high school.

The renovation was completed in the summer of 2019, and of course you know what happened around February of 2020. I had overseen the renovation and opened the school as its director, but I was needed back at the district to create and implement a plan to continue student learning K-12 if schools were closed because of the pandemic. Dr. Debra Smith took over at RC3, and she has been a great leader, helping the school to recover from the pandemic and grow. Natalie Coleman has been there since the beginning and is the mother hen to the whole simulated workspace concept. She will be a great speaker, and I will do my best to attend on Sept 17! (See Natalie's photo on Page 1)

RC3...

continued from Page 1

Hoover is blessed with a program that offers on-site, professional training while completing one's academic requirements! Our late president, Arnold Singer, benefited from such training in his life and wanted to support the effort here. We began a partnership—with Signature Homes—of honoring a student who excelled with equipment for his/her chosen career. That effort has grown from benefitting one student to five in the areas of Construction Science—Welding, Carpentry, Heavy Equipment, Electrical, and HVAC.

For more information on skilled trades, join us for our **September 17th meeting at 1 PM** in the Community Room at City Hall to learn more about RC3! As always, our meetings are free and open to the public; parking is also free and available.



HHS officers attend Alabama Museum Association Conference

The Alabama Museums Association Conference was held in the Burrow Center on the campus of Wallace State Community College in Hanceville last June, and HHS members, Carolyn Kolar (VP-Programs) and Paula Watts (Treasurer), attended. Before the programs, attendees toured the Evelyn Burrow Museum that featured a multi-million-dollar collection of porcelain, pottery, glass, and bronze pieces from the Victorian era to modern times.

After a welcome from Brian Mast, AMA president, the Keynote speaker Nathan Anderson, executive director of Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism, addressed the group. His topic —“Building Visitorship”— was an exciting and interesting program that he will repeat for the HHS in March 2026. He was followed by Graydon Rast, Grants Director of the Alabama Humanities Alliance, whose topic “AHA Statewide Initiatives” took quite a different tone as he explained the loss of federal funding in terms of major grants of \$10K and \$15K; however, some mini grants are still possible.

Carolyn attended a session on Maximizing Social Media for advertising and Audrey Creel from the Huntsville Museum of Art who discussed building a docent program. Paula attended AAM resources for Museums; Accreditation and Map that grades museums on collection, education, and other factors.



RC-3
Class of
2025



HHS's very first intern!

Officers Pam Thompson and Deb Burnett met via Zoom with Dr. Britney Murphy of UAB this past Spring to discuss the opportunity for an intern at our archives/office. We entered into an agreement with UAB for our very first intern, Maddie Smith. A History major, Maddie was looking for experience in archival work while our group was looking to begin the digitization project of our collection. The internship, unpaid and lasting 120 hours, achieved both goals.

Thank you, Maddie and UAB!

Happenings in Hoover...

Pete's Print has served Hoover 43 years!

Pete's Print is a full-service print shop that provides a diverse range of printing products and services including business cards, banners, signs, labels, and more! Pete's has been serving Hoover for 43 years! Owner Pete Petroff, Jody Mundy, and staff also publish the Society's newsletter! Thanks for all you do, and Happy Anniversary!



The Story Quilts of Yvonne Welles

Two HHS members, Barbara Larkin and Deb Burnett (right) visited the Murphy African-American Museum in Tuscaloosa last February to celebrate the work of quilter Yvonne Welles. The museum is truly a step back in time, and the quilts reflect historical events in African-American history. Her work has displayed all over the world and was the feature story in the Summer 2025 edition of *Alabama Heritage* magazine.



Ribbon cuttings are a weekly event...

Mayor Frank Brocato and the Chamber of Commerce are 'christening' a new business with a ribbon cutting ceremony in Hoover about every nine days! The HHS attends as many of these official openings including OsteoStrong, Ashley Mac's, Knox Grocery & Deli, Arise Knox Square Apartments, and others. Check out the Chamber of Commerce website for more info!



Faye Anderson honored at City Hall

Speaking of ribbon cuttings, the City hosted one of their own when the Community Room was renamed the Faye Anderson Community Room. We lost Faye last December, but she was a member of the HHS, founder of the Hoover Belles and as Mayor Brocato's Executive Assistant, Ellen Williams, stated "the first female city councilor from 1984-88."

The Belles are official hostesses for the city to this day beginning with the original eleven members. Mrs. Anderson established a strict code of conduct for these young ladies who represent the City of Hoover.



Hoover, Shades Mountain, and the End of the Appalachians

By Jim Langley

Geographical Setting

Hoover, Alabama, is nestled in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, with Shades Mountain serving as a prominent geographic landmark. The city extends along the slopes of this ridge, while the Cahaba River defines its southern boundary. Shades Mountain stretches from Shades Creek to Alabama Highway 150. Shades Crest Road runs the length of the ridge, connecting Bluff Park in Hoover to U.S. Highway 280 in Mountain Brook.

Appalachian Legacy

Shades Mountain, alongside neighboring ridges like Red Mountain, represents the vestiges of the ancient Appalachian range. The dramatic cliffs and escarpments were shaped by the erosion of softer shale, leaving behind resilient layers of sandstone and quartz pebbles. Exposed rock faces along Shades Mountain reveal a record of the region's geological history, with layers formed in prehistoric seas and uplifted over millions of years.

Early Inhabitants and Resource Development

Before white settlers arrived after the Creek Cession of 1814, the area was home to the Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw, and Chickasaw peoples. Early European settlers exploited the region's rich natural resources, notably coal mining in the Cahaba Coal Fields of the Hoover Valley foothills, an industry that grew in response to Civil War demands. The arrival of the L & N Railroad in 1869 further spurred coal mining and contributed to local development.



Left: Jim Langley

Upper Right: Located at Tannehill, Shades Mountain is Geographic Terminus of the Appalachian Mountains, (west).



Community Growth and Shades Mountain's Influence

Communities such as Bluff Park, originally called Summit, emerged on Shades Mountain, known for their scenic vistas and as resort destinations. Shades Crest Road—once an indigenous wagon trail—became a vital route. Initially, the rugged terrain of Shades Mountain made railroad construction difficult. However, in 1871, Brock's Gap was finally breached using nitroglycerin, which was pivotal for the area's growth as a transportation hub.

Preservation Efforts and Future Vision

Contemporary initiatives aim to establish the Bluff Park Preserve on Shades Mountain, protecting open spaces and historic sites like Hale Springs and Lover's Leap (Sunset Rock) from encroaching development. These efforts reflect Hoover's ongoing commitment to preserving green spaces and honoring its unique history, ensuring that Shades Mountain continues to shape the city's identity and future. Shades Mountain stands as both a testament to the region's Appalachian roots and a central force in Hoover's heritage, development, and conservation initiatives.



**HOOVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Membership Form**

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

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

Types of Membership	
Individual	\$20
Couple	\$30
Sustaining	\$50
Patron	\$100
Corporate	\$150

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

Phone: (HOME) _____ (WORK) _____ (CELL:) _____

INTERESTS: Archives/Historical Research Folklore Center Volunteer Other

SKILLS: Computer Fundraising Publicity Leadership

SPEAKERS/PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS: _____



The Hoover Historical Society

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