

The Official Newsletter of the Hoover Historical Society, Hoover, Alabama

The Hoover Historical Log



The Yellowhammers present old-time music!

Our next program features old-time music, a participatory, pre-radio Appalachian genre and the predecessor to bluegrass and is primarily fiddle-led, rhythmic dance tunes featuring the Yellowhammers!

Joyce and her husband, Jim Cauthen, got interested in old-time music around 1975. Jim learned to play fiddle and Joyce took up guitar to back him up, with the dream of playing old-time music in string bands for dances and festivals.

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***HHS Board
Meeting***

***May 12th @
10 AM***

***HHS General
Meeting***

***NEW DATE
Hoover Public
Library, May 5
@ 1 PM***

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That dream came true. On May 5 they will perform with a band they formed over 40 years ago, the Red Mountain Yellowhammers. For their program they will play tunes that illustrate the history of old-time fiddling and its role rural community entertainment through the ages. Band members are Jim and Joyce Cauthen, Philip Foster, Diann Weatherly, Jamie Finley, Herb Trotman and Kathy Hinkle.

In 2000, Cauthen became the first executive director of the Alabama Folklife Association, a statewide organization that sponsors research, promotion, and preservation of Alabama's folk culture. Under the auspices of that organization she produced folk festivals and programs featuring traditional musicians and crafts makers of Alabama. She also produced books and CDs of Primitive Baptist hymn singing, African American shape note singing, and children's songs and games. In 2011, Cauthen was awarded a Governor's Arts Award by the Alabama State Council on the Arts. She is a graduate of Texas Christian University and has a master's degree in English from Purdue. As always, the Society's programs are free and open to the public! Come enjoy this special program!



Our historical society's own tour guide and research historian, Jim Langley, led his latest group to Mooresville, a small town incorporated in 1818—making it older than the state itself. The town is on the National Register of Historic Places—take a ‘step back in time and visit Mooresville!



*Annual Meeting features a man
and his dog!*

Paula Watts and Pam Thompson attended the Alabama History Association annual meeting April 9-11 in Fairhope, AL. Both are HHS officers.

“We enjoyed touring the Moser Storybook Houses, the Fairhope Arts Council Gallery, the Fairhope Museum, the Quaker Meeting House and Tolstoy Park/ Henry Stuart's Round House. We heard interesting speakers on early African American and Quaker settlers of the area, the Fairhope Single-Tax Corporation, and Diseases of the South (why Southerners were viewed as dumb and slow - they were sick!) by our friend Beth Hunter,” recalled Pam and Paula.

The keynote speaker was local author Sonny Brewer who wrote a popular book *The Poet of Tolstoy Park*, about Henry Stuart, who built a round house of concrete by himself and lived there from 1925-1944, seeking a simple life after being diagnosed with tuberculosis. Mr. Brewer has kept his story alive for the last twenty years, restoring the house at his own expense. Mr. Brewer's dog accompanied him to the dinner and answered questions at the end — (Mr. Brewer, not the dog!)





Bluff Park /Hoover: Surprising War Legacy: How a Local Leader Linked Our Community to America's 250th Anniversary

By Jim Langley

Most people assume Hoover—incorporated in 1967—has no connection to the Revolutionary War, the city's roots are surprisingly intertwined with that historic era. At the heart of this connection is Thomas Wadsworth Farrar (above), a man who not only owned land and built the first cabins in what is now Bluff Park and also left his mark by carving poetic verses by Lord Byron onto Sunset rock, a dramatic feature of the Lovers Leap formation atop the bluff.

Farrar's journey began when he settled in Elyton during the 1820s, quickly earning a reputation as a lawyer, circuit judge, legislator, Major General of the Alabama Militia, and Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge. His extraordinary life took an even more remarkable turn when he was chosen to escort Lafayette, the celebrated French hero of the Revolutionary War, through Alabama.

In December of 1824, Legislator Farrar was selected to advise Gov. Pickens on preparations for Lafayette's visit and in early 1825 met with the governor to help draft formal invitations and coordinated with local offices to ensure proper arrangements for Lafayette's arrival. In February and March, Lafayette traveled to Augusta to meet Lafayette, navigating delays due to bad weather and changing logistics while the State House Square was transformed for the grand occasion.

In 1825, Thomas Wadsworth Farrar served as the official emissary for Alabama Governor Israel Pickens to escort General Lafayette (bottom right) during his historic tour of the United States to commemorate the upcoming 50th Anniversary of the Revolutionary War. He was chosen for these key qualifications: 1) Linguistic Skills: He was fluent in French which allowed him to communicate directly with Lafayette; 2) Masonic Connection: Both Farrar and Lafayette were high-ranking Masons. Farrar was the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Alabama (serving in 1821, 1822, and 1824), a bond that provided immediate rapport with the General; and 3) Military Rank: Farrar held the rank of Major General in the Alabama militia, making him a peer of suitable status to lead the escort.

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*Local Leader Linked Our Community to
American's 250th Anniversary
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In late March, the Lafayette party and Farrar traveled from Augusta to Warrenton, GA, facing difficult roads and carriage problems. The next day, they traveled to Sparta, attended a parade, and enjoyed a local reception. On the 27th, the party reached Milledgeville, attended an official reception and Lafayette was reunited with Revolutionary War veterans. A long journey to the Creek Indian Agency was delayed by weather and carriage mishaps; they were forced to shelter from a storm but Lafayette was ferried across the Chattahoochee River by a Creek Indian delegation where he was welcomed to Alabama. In early April, the party made its way across Alabama, stopping at notable locations and participating in ceremonies, culminating in a public dinner and ball at Freeny's Tavern in Tuscaloosa. After the tour of two months, Farrar returned home and wrote about his experiences and worked to rebuild his family life. In May of 1826, along with Samuel Sydney Earle, he purchased 80.45 acres on Shades Mountain where the property was attractive for investment and retreat. He turned to a quieter period in his life focused on family and developing his property. He literally marked this period of his life on Lovers Leap in Bluff Park, linking Hoover to the nation's story and America's Revolutionary War era.

Credit to: *The Alabama Years of Thomas W. Farrar* by Alberstadt, Milton L., Jr., his great-great-grandson.



An excerpt from a letter to the editor
re: Hale Springs

...“Birmingham is accustomed to think everything in Jefferson county is new because the town itself is of such tender years. That there is a historical interest in Hale Sprigs and other points along the Bluff Park drive is evident on every hand. For instance, Sunday I stopped at an especially picturesque place call ‘Lover’s Leap.’ It is an immense rock jutting out over the bluff with a sheer descent to the valley several hundred feet below. By the light of the midday sun I deciphered the following, carved on the rock in even and regular letters, which have begun to show the effects of time:

“Thos. W. Farrar.”

“Seraphine F. Farrar.”

To siren rocks, to muse o’er flood and fell,

Slowly to trace the forest’s shady scene

Where things that own not man’s dominion
dwell,

And mortal foot hath ne’er or rarely been.
August 20th, 1827.



HOOVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY Membership Form

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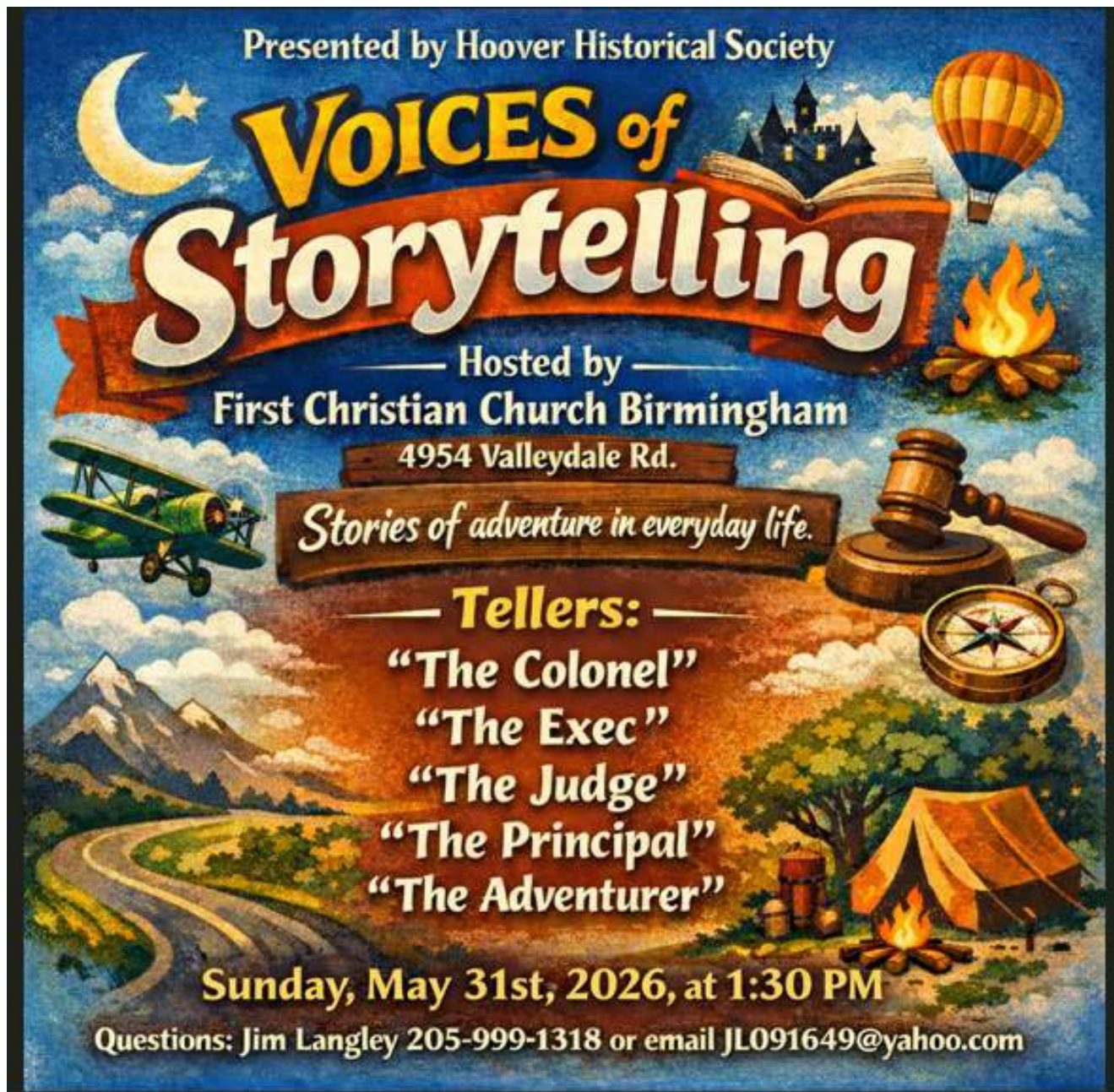
SPEAKERS/PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS: _____

The Hoover Historical Society

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The Hoover Historical Society, a 501 (c) (3) organization, publishes *The Hoover Historical Log* five times annually.
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Stories of adventure in everyday life.

— **Tellers:** —
“The Colonel”
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Sunday, May 31st, 2026, at 1:30 PM

Questions: Jim Langley 205-999-1318 or email JL091649@yahoo.com