

# Historic Huntsville Quarterly



A Publication of the  
Historic Huntsville Foundation, Inc.

Vol. 1, No. 1

## HHF RESOLUTION IGNORED BY CHAMBER

by Bill Nailen

**D**espite a resolution offered by the board of the Historic Huntsville Foundation opposing such a move, the board of directors of the Huntsville-Madison County Chamber of Commerce has approved a controversial "Plan for the Improvement of Downtown Huntsville, Ala." and sent it to the city council for consideration and possible implementation.

The Chamber's board said it was sending the plan, authored by architect Edward Arnold, for the council to read and consider. It did not request the council to take any affirmative action on the plan.

The plan was drafted by Arnold for the Chamber's (cont'd on page 9)

## WEEDEN HOME RESTORATION SHAPING UP

by Claire Johnston

**T**he Weeden Home, at the corner of Gates Avenue and Green Street here in Huntsville, where the celebrated author, poetess and artist, Maria Howard Weeden lived her entire lifetime, is to have a rebirth due to the efforts of the Twickenham Historic Preservation District Association, Inc.

The restoration effort gained momentum when Floyd Rutledge, a local contractor who has demonstrated great empathy with the historic preservation movement under the guidance of Harvie Jones, a noted local architect with the firm of Jones & Herrin, combined their (cont'd on page 7)



This Found. began at the suggestion of H. Jones, by Heritage Jr. Women's Club



# Historic Huntsville Quarterly

Editor. . . . . Claire Johnston  
Associate Editor. .Nan Holloway  
Associate Editor. .Evelyn Riggs  
Assistant Editor. .Lynwood Smith  
Publisher. . . . . Kent Lee Holloway

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by Nan Holloway

## "HUNTSVILLE BATH

"The subscriber respectfully informs his customers and the public generally that the BATH is in operation. He hopes from unwearied diligence to give general satisfaction to those who may favor him with their calls.

## "TERMS OF BATHING

"For bathing during the season, to be paid in advance --- \$5.00.

Single bath, warm	25 cents
do do, cold	12 1/2 cents
do do, shower	12 1/2 cents

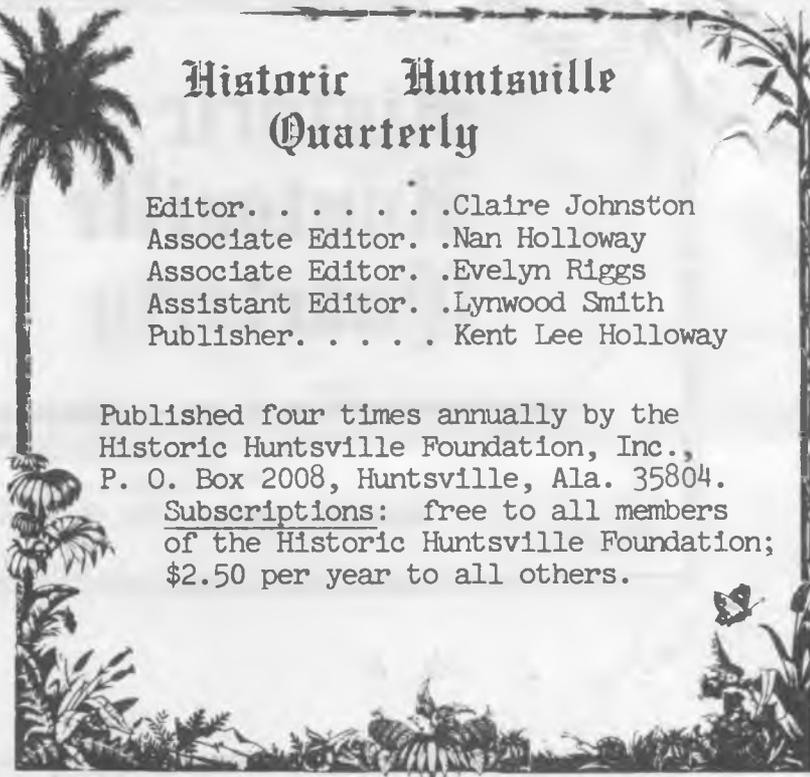
"Those who all owing on old accounts will please call and pay up. "

"Alabama Republican" ---  
March 1825

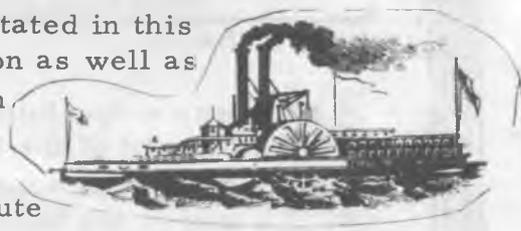


warm batn for a quarter, eight pounds of sugar for a dollar and James Monroe as president characterized the first quarter of 1825 in Huntsville.

The steamboat Steubenville arrived



regularly departing from New Orleans via Florence. It brought fresh supplies of coffee, mackerel and sugar to Huntsville. The newly completed Indian Creek Canal, chartered from Huntsville to Triana on the Tennessee River, facilitated in this transportation as well as that of cotton from the surrounding county en route to New Orleans.



Owners of hydrants took notice of an alarming announcement in the March eleventh issue of the "Alabama Republican. " The proprietor of the Huntsville Water Works emphatically informed them that if they permitted others than their own family to use water from them, their contract would be terminated immediately.

The first day of February marked the end of Huntsville's Planters and Merchants Bank. Govenor Isarel Pickens signed the death (continued on page 6)

CHARACTERS

**Officers of the Historic Huntsville Foundation, Inc.**

CHAIRMAN: C. Lynwood Smith, Jr.  
 VICE-CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Pat Laxon  
 TREASURER: Tommy Beason  
 SECRETARY: John R. Wynn  
 IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIRMAN: Harvie P. Jones

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Leroy Simms	Richard E. Oliver
James S. Wall	Mrs. Sandra Turner
Mrs. Sarah Batson	Mrs. Pat Laxon
Hall Bryant, Sr.	J. Earl Robertson
John E. Hoar	James Record
Harvie P. Jones	Mrs. Joseph C. Moquin
Richard Van Valkenburgh, Jr.	Tommy Beason
John R. Wynn	Mrs. Cynthia Caffey
Mrs. Shannon Allison	John G. Gann
Robert G. Cope	Bill Offenloch
Mrs. Linda Doud	Bill Nailen
Bill King	Lynwood Smith

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

by Lynwood Smith

It is a distinct pleasure for me to inaugurate the first issue of the Historic Huntsville Quarterly. This publication is an important event, both for the Historic Huntsville Foundation and Huntsvillians generally.

Each of us who live in Huntsville share the common good fortune of residing in a community that enjoys a rich historical heritage. Throughout its history, Huntsville's citizens have made significant contributions to our State's and Nation's cultural, scientific, economic, and governmental development. In striving for a better community in which to live and work, we can look back at, and take strength and (continued on page 8 )

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

by R. Thomas Beason

The following is a statement of the Historic Huntsville Foundation, Inc. for the nine month period ending December 31, 1974:

Income

Dues	662.00
Donations	500.00
	<u>\$1,162.00</u>

Expenses

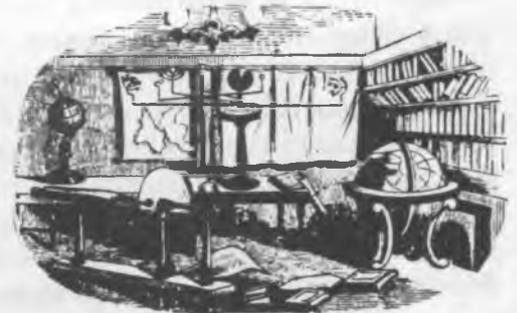
Supplies &	\$57.79	
Postage	12.00	
	<u>\$69.79</u>	<u>\$ 69.79</u>

Excess of Revenue Over Expenses & Fund Balance	
December 31, 1974:	<u>\$1,092.21</u>

Assets

Cash in Bank	\$1,092.21
Metal Cornice Trim	
American National Bank	Not yet appraised

I also wish to announce that I have selected the following members of the Foundation to serve as members of the Finance Committee: Jim Gaines; Richard Van Valkenburg; Gordon Darnell; John Wynn; Bill Rutledge; Mary Rutledge; and Jan Beason.





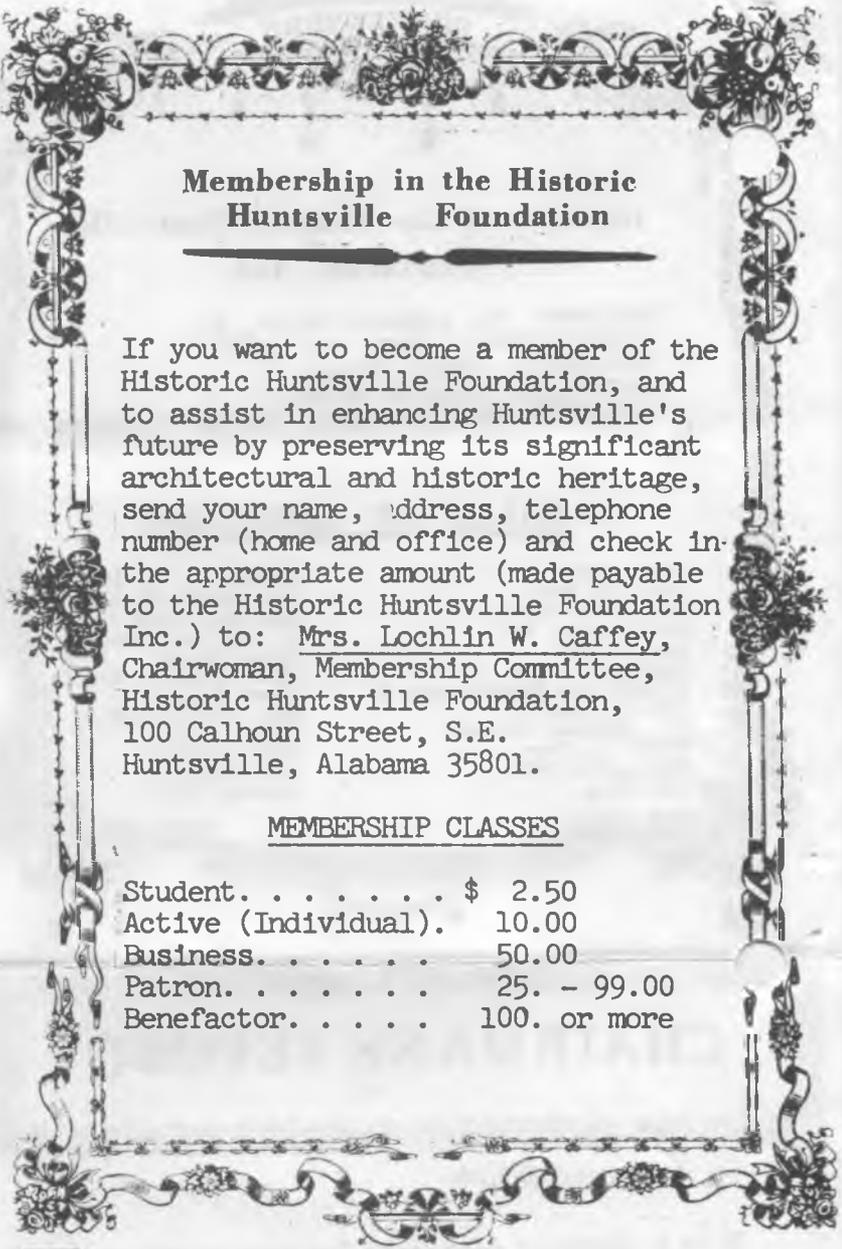
# MINUTES OF MEETINGS

A general membership meeting of the Historic Huntsville Foundation Inc., was held on December 3, 1974, at 7:00 P. M. in the United States District Court chambers, Clinton Street, Huntsville, Alabama. Mr. Lynwood Smith, Chairman, presided.

The first order of business was the Treasurer's report. Tommy Beason stated that the Foundation had cash on hand of \$600.21 and that there was an outstanding bill for postage of \$6.00.

Mr. Smith then announced that the Heritage Junior Women's Club recently made a donation to the Foundation in the amount of \$500.00. Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried unanimously, the membership directed the Chairman to prepare a resolution expressing the gratitude of the Historic Huntsville Foundation for the gift.

Mr. Smith reported that the following standing committees prescribed by the Foundation's by-laws, have been selected. The Nominating Committee shall consist of Harvie Jones, Chairman, Shannon Allison (board member); Leroy Sims (board member); Jim Gaines (general membership) and Evelyn D. Riggs (general membership). The Finance Committee consists of Tom Beason, Chairman and Jim Gaines. The Finance Committee will prepare a budget and prepare (continued on page 5)



## Membership in the Historic Huntsville Foundation

If you want to become a member of the Historic Huntsville Foundation, and to assist in enhancing Huntsville's future by preserving its significant architectural and historic heritage, send your name, address, telephone number (home and office) and check in the appropriate amount (made payable to the Historic Huntsville Foundation Inc.) to: Mrs. Lochlin W. Caffey, Chairwoman, Membership Committee, Historic Huntsville Foundation, 100 Calhoun Street, S.E. Huntsville, Alabama 35801.

### MEMBERSHIP CLASSES

Student. . . . .	\$ 2.50
Active (Individual). . . . .	10.00
Business. . . . .	50.00
Patron. . . . .	25. - 99.00
Benefactor. . . . .	100. or more

## EXPRESSION OF THANKS

The members of the Historic Huntsville Foundation wish to express their gratitude to Kent Lee Holloway of Huntsville. The kind donation of his printing facilities will enable our organization to bring to you this quarterly newsletter.



## ATTENTION

All Artisans, Carpenters & Craftsmen

Wishing to Advertise  
Trades & Skills  
Useful in the Restoration  
of Historic Homes  
Are Invited  
to Submit Notices to  
the Historic Huntsville Quarterly  
Phone: 534-1404 or 881-2174

Town and other similar organizations will be urged to become members of the Foundation.

Mr. Smith reported that the American National Bank has given to the Foundation a cornice blown away from its building during the April, 1974 tornado. Jim and Nancy Gaines have some doors that they want to donate to the Foundation. A



general discussion followed pertaining to whether the Foundation should conduct warehousing activities for various items such as the cornice and the doors. John Gann was selected as Chairman of a committee to determine the feasibility of the Foundation engaging in such warehousing activities.

Pat Laxton made a report to the membership pertaining to office space available for the Foundation. She reported that there were several possibilities under consideration, including space in the Russell Erskine, space offered by Sophie Young behind her home, and the second floor of the law library. Mrs. Laxton will follow up on these possibilities.

Upon motion made by Harvie Jones, duly seconded and carried unanimously, it was resolved that the Historic Huntsville Foundation, Inc. get in touch with the Chamber of Commerce regarding development of a walking and driving tour of the areas of historic interest in Huntsville and, further, to discuss with Slim Landrum the feasibility of the Chamber of Commerce supplying office space to the Historic Huntsville Foundation, Inc. for this purpose, with the Foundation supplying the personnel to staff this office. (Continued on pg 6)

## EXPRESSION OF THANKS

The members of the Historic Huntsville Foundation wish to express their gratitude to the Heritage Junior Woman's Club for their generous donation of \$500.00. This contribution came from part of the proceeds of their annual Tour of Homes held in the Fall of 1974. This donation will be used for the future publication of a Walking Tour Guide.

Minutes of Meetings  
(Continued from page 4)

projects for the Foundation. The membership Committee is chaired by Mrs. Lochlin W. Caffey. She will select the members of the committee to work with her. Its primary responsibility will be to collect dues and to obtain new members for the Foundation. Those who are members of Twickenham,

Mr. Jones will report back to the membership after talking with Mr. Landrum.

**M**r. Smith stated that several proposals were made at the last Board of Directors' meeting concerning a fund-raising project for the Foundation. The proposals discussed were: (1) republication without revision of a survey of historical structures in five North Alabama counties, compiled by the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments; (2) republication of the TARCOG study with substantial revision of the text and format; (3) republication, with or without revision of, only the Madison County portion of the TARCOG study; (4) publication of a "lavish" hardback book showing both interior details of selected Huntsville buildings; or (5) publication of a small pamphlet-type book, such as a walking tour booklet. After extensive discussion and upon motion duly made, seconded and carried unanimously, it was resolved that the Foundation publish a walking tour pamphlet (provided such a pamphlet can be published without deficit financing) which will cover the hub area of Huntsville, Twickenham, Old Town, the Courthouse Square, and the Constitution Hall area of downtown. Bill Nailen was appointed Chairman of the Publishing Committee. Harvie P. Jones, Jim and Nancy Gaines

and Catherine Gilliam were selected as members of the Committee. Mr. Smith will also serve as ex-officio committee member.

**C**laire Johnston gave a report of the proposed quarterly newsletter. It will contain general news, minutes of the board and general meetings, articles on current restoration techniques a classified section on items of historical or architectural value, events concerning anything of historical significance in the Huntsville area, and the names and addresses of sources of materials and workmen who can do restoration work. The Credit Bureau of Huntsville will provide free publishing facilities for the newsletter. Each member will receive a free copy, and interested persons who are not members may subscribe. Mrs. Johnston stated that she would make a recommendation to the Board concerning the cost of the newsletter to nonmembers. Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried unanimously. Claire Johnston was authorized to subscribe to the Old-House Journal, as a research aide to the newsletter staff.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, and upon motion duly made, seconded and carried unanimously, the same was adjourned.

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Huntsville - 150 Years Ago  
(Continued from page 2)

producing proclamation declaring its charter null and void. The bank's failure to pay specie prompted this action.

On March 4, 1825 Huntsvillians witnessed from afar a very unusual culmination of the Presidential election of 1824. Although Alabamians had voted in large numbers for

Andrew Jackson, and Jackson had more electoral votes than any other candidate, no candidate had a majority of presidential ballots. The matter had been referred to the House of Representatives as provided for in the Twelfth Amendment and as a result of their action (and to the consternation of many Huntsvillians) John Quincy Adams was inaugurated President of the United States.

## Weeden Home Restoration Shaping Up (Continued from page 1)

talents and interests to produce a coordinated approach to the many problems of restoring a historic home.

Records disclose that Henry C. Bradford built the home in 1819 and lived there until 1821.

It was occupied for a period of time by John McKinley, one of the early United States Senators from Alabama and later an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court.



Bartley M. Lowe came into possession of the home in 1829 and Dr. William D. Weeden acquired it in 1845. Here Miss Howard Weeden was born in 1847, and it remained her home until her death in 1905.

The Weeden family retained possession of the home continuously until 1956 when it was acquired by Mrs. B. A. Stockton.

During the ownership of the Weeden's they were in it without interruption except for a period of three years, 1862-65, when Mrs. Weeden, like many other North Alabamians, "refugeed" with her family and some servants to South Alabama. During the family's absence, the home was seized by invading Union troops to be used as a headquarters.

The Weeden home is an outstanding example of the Federal period of architecture. The home has the finest detailing and trim of any of the ante-bellum homes. Most of the elaborate carved woodwork and baseboards have survived through the years and have only been replaced where necessary.

In the latter part of the mid 19th century a Greek Revival style porch was added to the structure. This extraneous addition has been removed to more



completely authenticate its original state. Happily, in the process of removing the porch, the original brick sidewalks were discovered and are being re-created.

Restoration of the exterior of the Weeden Home is the principle concern at present. Originally the house had a wood shingle roof. An unfortunate fire about six years ago destroyed part of the roof framing making restorations necessary. The composition roof which covers the rest of the home will remain temporarily. It is expected that wood shingles, which have been utilized in a small area, will eventually cover the entire structure. The restoration is being accomplished on a limited budget. Contributions have come from generous and public-spirited citizens and it is hoped that others will join them in large numbers.



A very helpful part of the restoration came when John Martz and other members of the Huntsville Chapter of the Alabama Archaeological Society undertook a "dig" of the area.

It was their purpose to uncover the exact lay-out of the grounds, out houses and gardens of the Weeden Home. Their efforts were successful in a striking degree, discovering where the garden walls stood, the location of the smoke-house and other significant finds. They even found the original wall caps typical of the Federal period, providing a pattern that could be followed in reproducing the wall.

The well that supplied water to the premises was located along with artifacts and hardware of the period when the Weeden home was perhaps at its state-liest. Five unbroken bottles, two of which still bore labels declaring the contents to be "Dr. Williams' Compound Pulmoric Balsam" and "Dr. King's New Life Pills" were among other findings. (cont'd on page 9)

Chairman's Report  
(continued from page 3)

inspiration from our proud past. In this regard, the many, gracious structures which ornament our downtown area are physical reminders of that heritage. As such, they are worthy of preservation.

Unfortunately, when Huntsville made its headlong rush into the Twentieth Century, many structures of historical or architectural significance were sacrificed on the altar of "Progress." However, in recent years, many of our citizens have realized that Huntsville's explosive transition from a sleepy, agricultural market-center to "Rocket City, U. S. A.," may not have been "progress" in a qualitative sense at all.



In seeking to diversify our economic community, Huntsvillians may have overlooked a very important asset for the attraction of investment capital from other sections of the country: our architectural and cultural heritage. If Huntsville can offer those tired of the urban problems associated with the North anything, it is "a better place in which to live, work, and rear children."

Indeed, Huntsville has the opportunity to be unique. We can offer a juxtaposition of space-age vibrancy with the more relaxed, gracious heritage of the southern way of life. As the only tangible link with that style of life which now, truly is "Gone With the Wind," our remaining historical structures are worthy of preservation.

In order to further the foregoing aims, the Historic Huntsville Foundation was created in April, 1974, as a non-profit corporation "to acquire, hold, improve, sell, exchange preserve, develop, and restore sites,

buildings, residences and other structures of historical or architectural interest in and around Huntsville, Madison County, Alabama, and to increase knowledge and greater appreciation of such sites, buildings, residences, and other structures."

This publication marks one, great step toward the achievement of the Foundation's goals. We hope that it will focus attention on the historical redevelopment movement in our community, and bring to our organization additional members and financial support. In addition to serving as the organ for presenting announcements and news of interest to HHF members, this newsletter will, from time-to-time, publish articles about current restoration in and around Huntsville; practical articles on restoration techniques; a classified section for advertisement of architectural components and antique furnishings; and listings of artisans and craftsmen who are interested in the restoration of historic structures.

The editors, of course, solicit your suggestions and comments regarding any topics you feel should be included in forthcoming issues.



In closing, I must add that a great debt of gratitude is owed by all of us to Mr. Kent Lee Holloway and the Credit Bureau of Huntsville.

Mr. Holloway has exhibited a compelling interest in the goals of our Foundation and an unusually magnanimous nature by agreeing to publish this, and forthcoming issues of the Historic Huntsville Quarterly at no charge to the Foundation other than the cost of postage. I sincerely hope that each of you will, when the opportunity presents itself, express to him your personal thanks.

In like spirit, I wish to express to the members of the Heritage Junior Woman's Club the gratitude of the entire Foundation membership for the Club's (continued on page

Chairman's Report  
(continued from page 8)

continued support. The Foundation is the outgrowth of a project of the Arts Department of the Heritage Junior Woman's Club. Many of our members also are members of the Woman's Club. And, as reported elsewhere in this issue, the Heritage Junior Woman's Club recently donated \$500 to the Foundation, thereby boosting our treasury over the \$1,000 mark. If the Historic Huntsville Foundation succeeds in having a positive impact on the quality of life in Huntsville, that success will in large measure be due to the unswerving devotion of the kind and gracious ladies of the Heritage Club who, already, have earned the respect of Huntsville for their many civic activities. We salute, and thank you one and all.



HHF Resolution Ignored by Chamber  
(continued from page 1)

Downtown Improvement Committee, and in places seemed highly critical of the historical restoration movement in the central city.

It said, for example, that downtown Huntsville "should communicate solidarity as a vigorous financial center, government seat, and major shopping district. The quaint, remodeled village square does not answer this set of criteria. We need high quality contemporary buildings."

It also stated that the current image of downtown being promoted is one of "20th century nostalgia." It claimed that the majority of redevelopment downtown to date had consisted of the historic restoration of facades of existing buildings, and stated "as works of architecture, the old facades along downtown streets are neither historically significant nor of high architectural quality."

The plan was completed in September and

Weeden Home Restoration Shaping Up  
(continued from page 7)

Mr. Martz is quick to give credit for such success as has been achieved in the excavation to a group of about 50 young people who volunteered their services. The aid proffered by the Huntsville Garden Club should not go unrecognized and certainly Harvilee Harbarger, landscape designer, who has donated her services to make the garden as authentic as possible.

Have any Experiences to share with other readers? Send your ideas and hints to:  
The Editor, Historic Huntsville Quarterly  
412 Zandale Dr. S. W., Huntsville, Ala.  
35801.

presented to the Chamber in October. At the board meeting of the Historic Huntsville Foundation held Sunday, October 20, 1974, this "plan" was thoroughly discussed and a critique of the plan authored by board member Harvic Jones was read.

The board then passed a resolution asking that the board of the Chamber of Commerce not forward the document to council, but rather send it back for further consideration.

In the resolution, it was pointed out that the so-called plan was not really a plan, but rather an expression of sentiment. The resolution also pointed out that many assertions and assumptions in the plan were erroneous.

Jones' critique, which went into a point-by-point evaluation of erroneous data and conclusions found in the plan, was appended to the resolution.

It was hand-carried to the executive vice president of the Chamber. (continued on page 10)

HHF Resolution Ignored by Chamber  
(continued from page 9)

When the plan was brought before the Chamber in its November meeting, however, no mention of the resolution by the Historic Huntsville Foundation was made.

The Chamber's board subsequently approved the plan and sent it on to the council. Nothing has been heard of it since.

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THE  
SCHOOL

1900

1900

1900

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

There will be a GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING of the Historic Huntsville Foundation on SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 1975, at 2:00 P.M., on the FOURTH FLOOR of the Madison County Court House: Room 410-B.

Please make plans to attend this meeting.



### FROM:

The Historic Huntsville Foundation, Inc.  
P. O. Box 2008  
Huntsville, Alabama 35804