

Summer

Three Dollars
1995

THE HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE
QUARTERLY
Of Local Architecture & Preservation



The Community as Classroom

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THE HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE QUARTERLY

of Local Architecture and Preservation

Vol. XXI, No. 2

Summer — 1995

CONTENTS

From The HHF Board Chair—Suzi Bolton.....	54
From The Editor—Elise Stephens.....	55
From The Guest Editor—Carol Kamback.....	56
Letter To The Guest Editor—Anna Williams.....	57
Take A Walk.....	58
<i>Carol Kamback</i>	
The Weeden House.....	62
<i>Ginger C. Mouse (as told to Melissa Howard)</i>	
The Church of the Nativity.....	66
<i>Alex Ealy</i>	
Big Spring Lion.....	68
<i>Marnie Galloway</i>	
Church Street Church.....	70
<i>Dorothea Littlepage and Holly Rodes</i>	
The Huntsville Depot.....	74
<i>Jessica Fortune and Marsha Francis</i>	
Memories of Lincoln School.....	76
<i>Adam and Erin Johnson</i>	
Why We Like The McCormick House.....	78
<i>Aaron Anderson, Cyrus King, and Fletcher Kurtz</i>	
Oak Place.....	80
<i>Kellie Corder and Ellen Richardson</i>	
Interview with Dot Johnson.....	84
<i>Tho Nguyen and Kathryn Wilburn</i>	
An Interview with Chuck Weber.....	95
<i>Allison McLeroy with Marnie & Lori Galloway</i>	
Why Should We Preserve Our Trees?.....	104
<i>Allison McLeroy</i>	
Chapman Elementary's Sycamore Trees.....	105
<i>Allison McLeroy</i>	

From the Chair:

Dear Foundation Members:

The privilege and responsibility of serving as Chair of Historic Huntsville Foundation has been mine for two months now. We have had our first meeting with the new Board of Directors and committees are being formed. There is much to accomplish as an organization, and I am excited to be working with the Foundation and its members in the challenging task of preservation in Huntsville and Madison County.

B. J. Robinson and Pat Ryan and their committees are busy planning HHF's 7th Annual Trade Day on the Square. This family-oriented event, to be held Saturday, September 9, has gained popularity each year and last year drew an estimated 20,000 from surrounding cities and states.

The Foundation is sponsoring the return of the Little Lion to the newly renovated Big Spring Park. Research has been conducted to try to learn the exact date of the Little Lion's first appearance in Big Spring Park, but our sleuths have been unsuccessful in establishing his origin and we still do not know when he came to the park. Search your memories—or those of your grandparents—and call me at 830-9962 if you have any information about this little guy.

Interest in the lion has been sparked by memories of those who, as children, were photographed astride and beside him. After years of storage, he has now been spruced up and a concrete pad has been installed in the park awaiting his return. HHF extends our special thanks to city engineer, Mark Seeley, who has gone to extraordinary lengths to assure the accuracy of the lion's renovation and reinstallation. HHF will celebrate the lion's return to the park with a special ceremony on Trade Day. Don't miss this mini-attraction that day!

Historic Huntsville Foundation is your organization. Several committees work to assure the accomplishment of our goals. Among them are Awards, Education/Speaker's Bureau, Long-Range Planning, Preservation, Programs & Meetings, Publications, and Publicity. Committee membership is not limited to the Board of Directors. If you would like to serve on any of these committees, please let me know. I will need a great deal of help from each of you and urge you to contact me if you can serve on any committee or if you have suggestions or questions of any kind.

I wish to thank Suzanne O'Connor for the fine job she did as HHF Chair for the past two years. Her direction and suggestions have been invaluable to me, and I know she will continue to serve the Foundation in a variety of ways.



Suzi Solton

From the Editor:

When I read in the October 5, 1994, *Times* about the great things Carol Kamback was doing with students of all ages to make them "Street Smart," I invited her to become the *Quarterly's* guest editor for an issue and to turn her munchkins loose on putting together their own architectural and preservation journal. This, it turns out, was a brilliant idea. After you read these pages and enjoy the students' art and thought, I'm sure you will agree. Don't think for a moment that any of this is 'old hat.' You will learn something new on every page and Huntsville will never appear the same to you, as these fresh, young eyes offer novel perspectives.

Their four-point preservation criteria is a useful tool for us all. Interviews with Dot Johnson and Chuck Weber offer gems of wisdom about bull snakes, Goldie the cow, fertilizing with earthworms, and the value of forethought in preservation to make a tree "a feature instead of a problem." Forethought exercised by Harvie Jones helped save Oak Place. Words written over a church door saved the Church of the Nativity. The Church Street Church is a home for congregations in need of sanctuary. The Depot, the Weeden House, and even the Times Building sidewalk take on heightened interest.

And, while we learn more about every subject covered, there is one that still eludes us ... the mystery of the Big Spring Lion. If you have any additional information about the origins of the Little Lion that lives by the Big Spring, please let us know.

Lastly, you will want to know that Carol Kamback not only teaches in the Huntsville City School's SPACE Program, but she also teaches the young architect program at UAH's Kid's College. In August she will be an instructor at ArchiCamp in Seaside, Florida. She is married to architect Greg. Huntsville is twice-blest. Thanks Carol. Thanks Class. You all did a super job!

FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

Many of the articles in this issue of *The Historic Huntsville Quarterly* are written by fifth grade students from Chapman, Colonial Hills, and Lincoln Elementary Schools who attend a weekly enrichment class. They were asked to choose a historic house or building in their neighborhood that they would like to know more about.

Most of the choices were easy. Oak Place and the Chapman house address each other across the valley in which Chapman Elementary sits. The McCormick House is almost equidistant between Lincoln and Colonial Hills. Other buildings—the Church of the Nativity, the Depot, the Weeden—are popular structures with Huntsville schoolchildren who have studied local history in the third grade.

The invitation to write these articles was the impetus to plan a field trip to visit and photograph the chosen houses and then go on to the Heritage Room in the Huntsville Public Library. This invitation also sparked a study of preservation and a walk around downtown with an eye out for examples of adaptive reuse. The Quarterly also offered an opportunity for two fourth graders to find out about tree preservation in our city, and, while they were at the City Greenhouse, to view the mysterious Big Spring lion.

Many of these children had never walked downtown, didn't know about the Heritage Room (with its scholarly green lamps), had never used a vertical file, and, more significantly, had never talked to their family members, historians and public officials in their community, and elders in their churches about history and public policy that affect their lives.

Their writings are sometimes whimsical (two are from the point-of-view of very old rodents) and are often filled with facts that are new only to the young who are learning Huntsville history for the first time.

The opportunity to research and talk and write about their community has taken these students out of walled-in classrooms and made learning immediate and personal for them.

Letter to the Guest Editor:

2800 Poplar Avenue
Huntsville, Alabama 35816
February 17, 1995

Dear Mrs. Kamback:

Thank you for the fun learning experience. I never knew that there are different kinds of houses but now I can brag that I live in a Federal style home and my doll house is Victorian style.

I was excited about finding "something that would not be constructed today." My mind had about one million ideas but never did I think of a step that people got onto their horse with.

I think if I had a whole day to walk around Huntsville I could probably find 15 billion brick patterns!

I learned that a Greek revival house has columns and a Federal style house has a small porch. I will always remember what a Victorian style home looks like because of its beautiful gingerbread cuttings. If I happen to have a friend who is really nice, I'll probably want to live in a duplex.

And last but not least, I have to say you are the best field trip host I've ever had!

Sincerely,
Anna Williams

Anna Williams will be a 6th grader at the Academy for Academics and Arts. Last Valentine's Day, she and her classmates from Pat McMillion's class went on a Walk Around the Block in Old Town, in preparation for designing their houses for the town that they created in their classroom. This town was just one part of a year-long microeconomy project that included lessons on city planning.

Anna obviously also learned letter writing skills in Mrs. McMillion's class.





*Drawing of the Times Building on
Holmes Avenue
by
Kathryn Wilburn
&
Tho Nguyen*

TAKE A WALK

by

CAROL KAMBACK

Last year, Huntsville City School teachers began leading their students out of the classrooms and onto the streets. And there the children learned their history, reading, science, math, and art lessons.

Supported in part by a grant from AmSouth BanCorporation and the Polaroid Corporation, over fifty teachers attended workshops to learn how to conduct a Walk Around the Block, a concept devised by Ginny and Dean Graves of the Center for Understanding the Built Environment (CUBE) in Kansas City. On these walks, students go on a visual scavenger hunt and document their findings by photographing, drawing, rubbing, and writing descriptions.

The teachers have tailored their walks to whatever they are teaching in their classrooms. For instance, second graders at Chapman Elementary recognized the ABC's in buildings in their neighborhood and found a fulcrum in a nearby park. Fifth graders from the Academy for Academics and Arts walked in Old Town, studying architectural styles in preparation for designing houses for the town they created as

they studied economics and city planning. And Chapman fifth graders, studying structures in their science class, found trusses and cantilevered canopies at the Von Braun Civic Center.

In May, a group of fifth graders from Chapman, Colonial Hills, and Lincoln went on a Walk Around Downtown as a part of their study about historical preservation. Before leaving the classroom, they established their own criteria for preservation decisions. They decided that if a building meets any one of the following criteria, it could qualify for preservation:

- It has historical significance.
- It is of architectural interest.
- It contains outstanding workmanship and good materials.
- It is a candidate for adaptive reuse, thus saving money and resources.

Using these criteria, they evaluated buildings downtown.

They started by considering the Monroe Office Supply building, on the corner of Holmes and Green, which is the proposed site for the new Arts Center. The students quickly decided this building did not meet their criteria and the Arts Council would probably want to start from scratch.

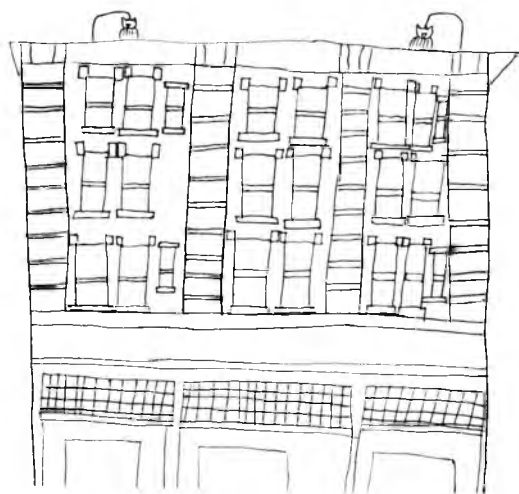
Next, they approached the old Huntsville Times Building. The first thing that fired their imaginations were the sidewalks along the building, as they thought of how exciting it would be if the glass block could be restored and the whole walk underlit. As they photographed and drew, they decided that this building fit all of their criteria and was definitely a candidate for adaptive reuse, as an apartment and/or office building, possibly with stores on the bottom floor.

They were pleased to find several existing examples of adaptive reuse—such as the Yarbrough Hotel and Dunnivant's Department Store, now office buildings, and the old Halsey Grocery warehouse, now the Smith-Holland

Gallery. They walked under the canopy leading to the Heritage Club and admired the patio behind Bubba's. (Of course, the main attraction on this walk was the promised stop at Gorin's.)

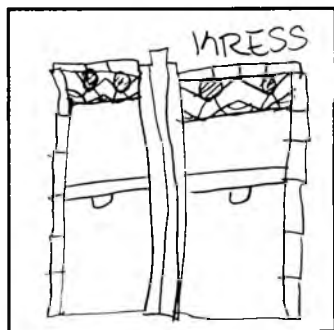
While the students saw much creative reuse of older structures, they worried over the Kress and Belk's buildings, feeling that they, with other old store sites, all would meet their preservation criteria. And the romantic imaginings of 11-year-olds, as they thought of new stores and downtown apartments and sidewalks that lit up their feet, were tempered with questions (from their teacher) about such issues as where people will park and how businesses will attract phantom customers.

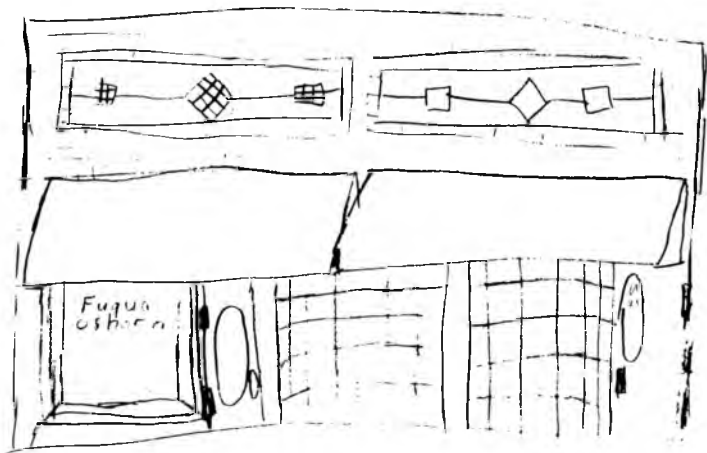
This Walk Around the Block probably raised more questions than it answered, which often happens. But as teachers continue to use our community as a visual textbook, they hope their students will grow into aware and involved citizens.



*LEFT: Yarbrough Hotel
by
Holly Rodes*

*BELOW: Windows at Kress'
on Washington Street
by
Jessica Fortune*





*Artist Unknown
(Forgot to sign name.)*





Melissa Howard

THE WEEDEN HOUSE

by

**GINGER C. MOUSE, A LONG-LIVED ANIMAL
AS TOLD TO MELISSA HOWARD**

I was sitting in my home, a thrown out tin can, watching my house being built. All the humans called the man in charge Mr. Bradford or sometimes Mr. Henry C. Bradford. I was thrilled when I saw them set to work on my house. I didn't know that humans would build such a beautiful house for a simple field mouse like me! One reason I was glad was because the tin can had barely enough room, but the main reason was because my friend, Lois, lived in a wooden crate and talked about how luxurious it was all the time. Well, not any more because I, Ginger, was getting a house of my own. I still live there today!

I could tell from the start that my house was going to be elegant. Mr. Bradford began work in 1819, and I could see lots of intriguing things being started. The strangest but most lovely feature in the entire house was the spiral staircase, which seemed one-hundred feet high. The house was L-shaped, with a gabled roof. The brick on the front of the house was more elaborate in design than that on the other sides. There were so many rooms I didn't know which I would make my bedroom once it was finished. And last, but most certainly not least, was that spectacular entrance with all the fancy carvings and the glass—what did they call it again?—fanlight on the top. My new home was going to be absolutely fantastic.

Then finally, after twenty-six years, the house was done. I settled into a fireplace, scooping up feathers and string for my bed, and then I noticed that I wasn't alone. There were a bunch of humans—imagine that!—looking through my house. But it didn't matter to me and it doesn't to this day. After all, they're just outsiders!

Many humans lived in my house, until one day a nice lady called Jane Urquhart Watkins Weeden and her husband, William, moved in. They didn't bother me, and the fireplace I slept in wasn't used much and when it was, the fire didn't reach my corner. But once when Mr. Weeden went on a trip to someplace called New Orleans, in 1846, I heard Mrs. Weeden crying and saying that he had died. What a shame. I liked Mr. Weeden.

One day six months later, Mrs. Weeden had a daughter that she named Maria Howard. Nothing much happened until 1861, when I heard Kate, another one of Mrs. Weeden's children, talking about something called the Civil War. Everyone seemed afraid, and then in April of 1862, some men in blue coats that talked funny took over my house. They let me stay because it was my house, I suppose, but Mrs. Weeden and her family had to move into the servants' quarters and later away from the house altogether. The men in blue said that they were from someplace called the Union and that they were going to smash something called the Confederacy. I hoped it wasn't something in my house, because I hated having to avoid fallen glass.

The Union men left, and two of Mrs. Weeden's daughters, Kate and Howard, came back. I thought Howard was an extraordinary person. While Kate tended those beautiful rose bushes that used to be Mrs. Weeden's and managed the house, Howard was busy painting and writing poetry to make money. They said that times were very hard. Howard's first book, *Shadows on the Wall*, was published, and everyone was very happy. Then in the next two years, two more books were published. In 1905, Howard published her last book. Then shortly after, she passed away.

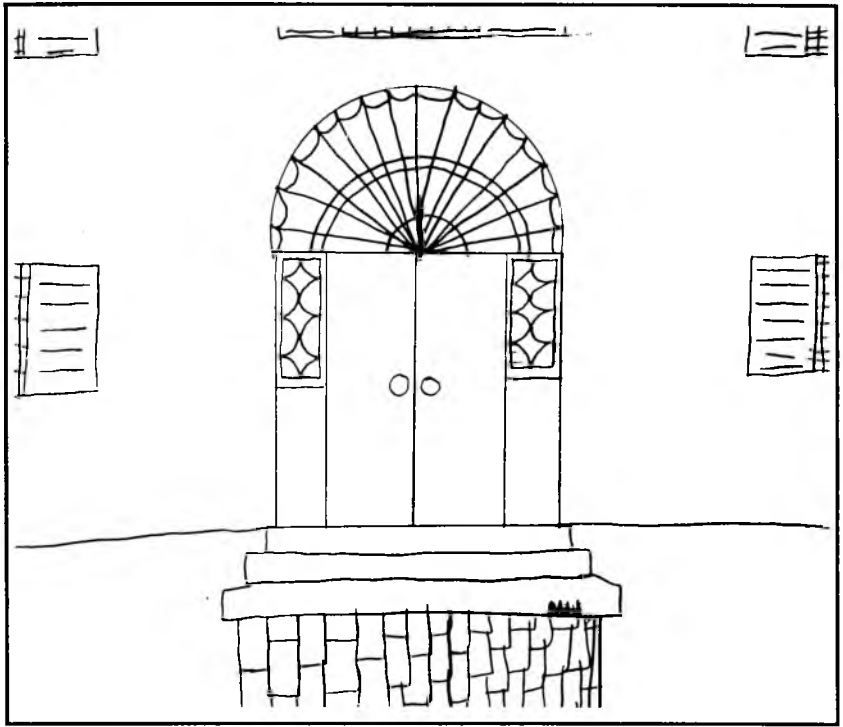
A bronze plaque was placed on my house in 1910 and they said it was in honor of Howard. Kate turned the house over to her nephew, and then I heard him say soon after to a friend that she had died.

Sometime in 1976, my house was sold to the Huntsville Housing Authority, which turned it into a museum. I think that humans are lucky that a nice mouse like me owns the house and lets them use it. I am glad the the humans preserve it, for they are bigger than a mouse and could always tear it down. But they keep it, I guess because they know it is mine and they cannot rightfully destroy it. I hope they keep all the other homes, too. Do you know if the Confederacy was ever broken? If so, it must have been cleaned up fast, because I never noticed.

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“The Maria Howard Weeden House.” *Historic Huntsville Quarterly*. Spring 1981. Articles by Harvie Jones, Sara Fisk, and Frances Roberts.

Melissa Howard is 10 years old. Her hobbies are herbalism, making computer programs, and writing. Her favorite building type is Federal.





**THE CHURCH OF THE
NATIVITY**
by
ALEX EALY

Hi, I am Sam the squirrel. I have lived at the Church of the Nativity ever since it was built, and I'm going to tell you about some of my favorite little places and small rooms.

I was born in 1846, the same year the church was built, so I guess I am pretty old, 148 years to be exact. That was a fun year, watching the bricks being laid and the walls going up. In 1847, the first service was held. The congregation was small, but it was the beginning of a beautiful church.

By the 1850's the congregations had grown larger, and the building couldn't hold all the people. So plans were made and money was raised to build the big main sanctuary standing now.

During the Civil War, Union soldiers came and took over most of the mansions and churches in Huntsville. When they got to my church, they refused to enter because over the front door a mantel said "Reverence my sanctuary." I saw this from high up in a maple tree. That was probably one of the most important times in the history of the church because if the soldiers had occupied it, it might have been damaged or burned. That happened to the First Methodist Church.

The church building didn't change much between the 1860's and 1950's. In 1953, Ridley Hall was built. They have parties, dinners, and wedding receptions there. I usually get to eat leftover cake.

In 1982, Joffrion Hall was constructed in honor of Emile Joffrion. It has classrooms and conference rooms. Sometimes I listen to the lessons.

Now I can tell you about my favorite places. Right now I am in the main sanctuary on the communion table. I like it here because I can see the whole church. Now I'm going to the old chapel. This is like an old church house because everything is wooden and old. Next I'm going to the courtyard. I love all the little benches and plants. The last place I want to go is to the steeple. I like it up here because you can see the whole city. I'm sorry you can't follow me up here. I have to go now. Hope you enjoyed the Church of the Nativity. I sure do.

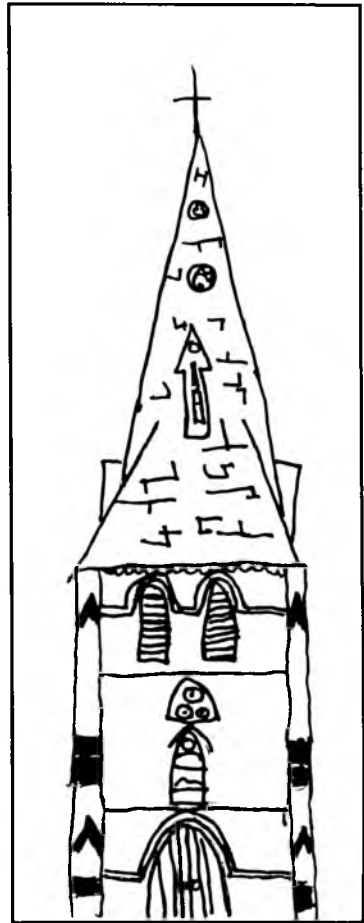
Bibliography

Roberts, Francis C.

*Sesquicentennial History of
the Church of the Nativity.*

Numerous articles from the
Vertical File, Heritage Room,
Huntsville Public Library.

*Alex Early is 11 years old and enjoys
playing baseball, football, and soccer.
His favorite building style is Gothic.*



BIG SPRING LION

by

MARNIE GALLOWAY

Did you know that a lion used to live in Big Spring Park? For many years, this cast iron lion lounged in the park while children played on him. No one knows exactly when he first appeared, but some people remember him from the turn of the century.

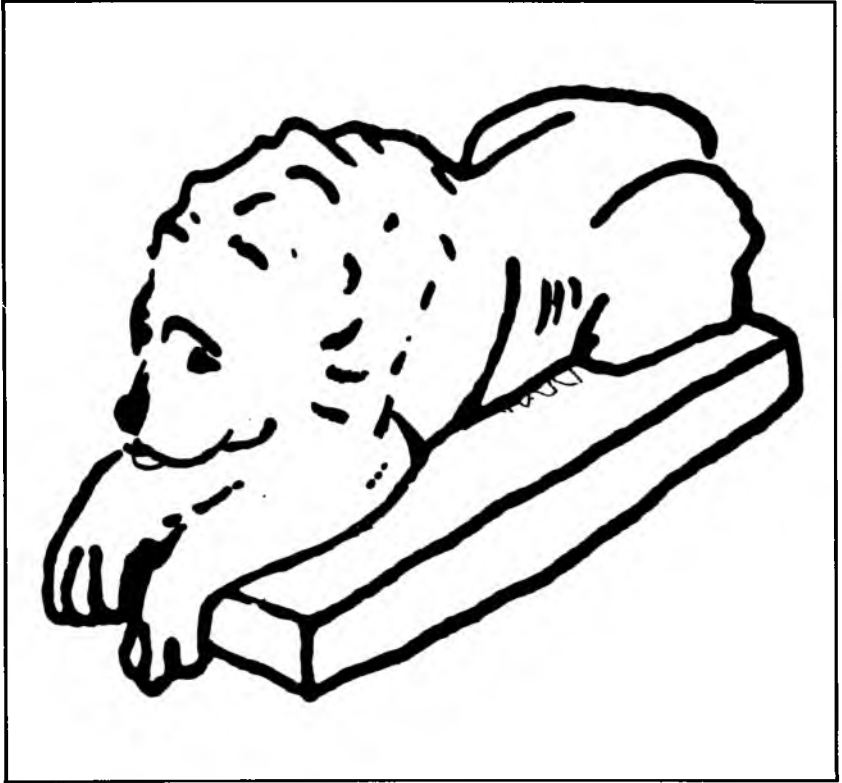
Five years ago, he was recovered from the spring where someone had thrown him. I visited him in the shed of the City Greenhouse, where he lay among boxes, rusty weed eaters, and other discarded items. He is about one foot tall and three feet long and is in a reclining position.

He looked very sad, even though pictures show he was once gold and proud. Now he is whitish-gray, with many rust spots on him from the water.

But after he is sandblasted clean, we will see him again in Big Spring Park. He will lie on two slabs of limestone, designed by the people in the office of Mark Seeley, the city engineer. They have to find a way to protect him from people who might skateboard over him or try to throw him back in the water.

This lion is a landmark or a tradition. With all the new stuff at Big Spring, it will be good to have some old things that will tie the past to the present.

Marnie Galloway is ten years old and will be in the fifth grade at Chapman Elementary. She loves to draw, climb trees, and write poems.



The Big Spring Lion
by
Marnie Galloway



*Left to Right:
Dorothea Littlepage and
Holly Rodes*

CHURCH STREET CHURCH

by

DOROTHELLA LITTLEPAGE AND HOLLY RODES

The Church Street Church is a building that should be preserved because it has historic significance as well as architectural interest.

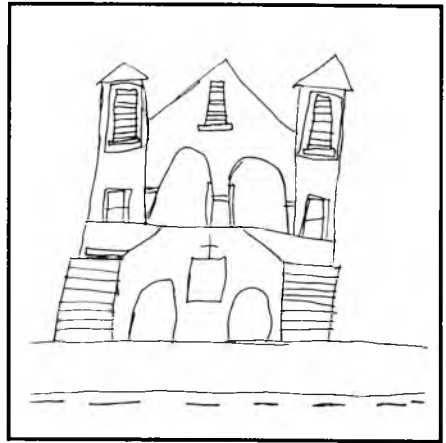
The congregation [which first occupied the building] was organized before the 1880's by a group of Christians from Aberdeen, Mississippi. When they came to Huntsville, they couldn't find a church so they just worshiped in an old home on West Clinton Street. The congregation prayed and hoped for a real church building to worship in. Then, sometime in 1880, with help from the Muscle Shoals Missionary Baptist fund, they bought land and built a church on Steele Street. The Church was the First Baptist Church, but it was known as the Steele Street Baptist Church. While at this location, many pastors came and went doing what was necessary.

*Church Street Church
by
Holly Rodes*



Church Street Church
by
Dorothella Littlepage

After a while, the congregation got too big for the church so they had to build a new building on Church Street. It was still First Baptist Church, but it was known as the Church Street Church.



The church building changed over the years as the congregation was able to make improvements and respond to the needs of its members. At first, in 1925, only the basement of the church was dedicated. A couple of years later, under the pastorate of Reverend J. M. Butler, the upper story of the church was started.

In 1941, the mortgage was paid under the leadership of Reverend Oscar Tucker. And in 1950, the church got a central heating and cooling system, an indoor baptismal facility, and a modern kitchen.

In 1955, the steps were remodeled to permit a rest between the two flights of stairs, making it easier for older members to attend. And in 1957, a clinic was opened, new windows were installed, and Bibles and hymnals were placed in the pews.

During the 1960's the church became a refuge for people striving for freedom. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. visited the First Baptist Church several times during the civil rights movement. We talked to Mrs. Horace Snodgrass, whose husband was pastor for many years, and here is what she told us about one of Dr. King's visits. "It was a Monday night

during a garbage workers' strike. Children from all over the city had formed a choir to preform for Dr. King. Dr. King spoke at Oakwood College before he spoke at First Baptist. He spoke after the choir sang.”

On July 29, 1973, a tragedy took place in the pulpit of the church. Reverend Snodgrass, who had led the congregation for 24 years, died while leading a funeral. The assistant pastor, Reverend Emanuel E. Cleaver, became the pastor.

As time passed, the church grew and grew, and in 1981 the congregation had to move to a new building on Blue Springs Road, which is their present location. Led by Dr. Julius Scruggs, the membership of First Missionary Baptist is now at about 2,000.

The Church Street Church building is presently being used by Hope Community Church. This church has been in use ever since it was built. It has been used by many congregations as a place to grow until they are able to get in their own church building. In other words, it helps churches get on their feet. This Church Street church is very important to our community because for over seventy years it has continually been a place of worship.

***Dorothella Littlepage** will be in the sixth grade at Chapman Middle School. She is a member of First Missionary Baptist Church and her parents were married the Church Street Church building. She loves to read and also enjoys making things with paper such as origami cranes. Her favorite part of studying architecture was learning about different materials and their strengths and weaknesses.*

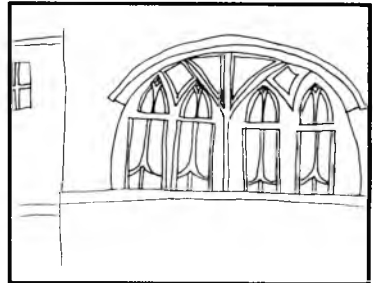
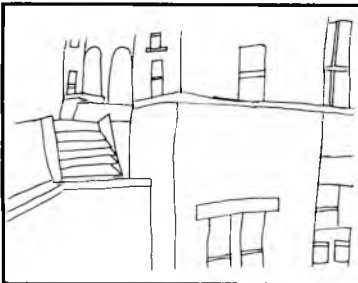
***Holly Rodes** was at Colonial Hills Elementary last year and will also be a sixth grader at Chapman Middle School in the fall. Her hobbies are reading books and collecting porcelain figures. He favorite building type is Queen Anne.*

Dorothella and Holly would like to thank Mrs. Horace Snodgrass, Mrs. Lilly Winston, Mrs. Ann Benson, and Mrs. Veronica Curtis for helping them with this article. They also found information in the Huntsville Heritage Room at the public library.



*LEFT: Church Street Church details
by
Dorothella Littlepage*

*BELOW: Three Church Street Church detail drawings
by
Holly Rodes*





*Marsha Francis
and
Jessica Fortune*

THE HUNTSVILLE DEPOT
by
JESSICA FORTUNE AND MARSHA FRANCIS

Built in 1860, this building's cost was \$10,500. It was built as a lobby for passengers and a place for railroad workers to sleep. The building we are talking about is the Huntsville Depot. Some of its distinctive architectural features include brick walls with a stone foundation and a pitched roof with brackets under the eaves. There are two-over-two rounded windows with eyebrows and also a dentil cornice. Inside, the concrete flooring on the first floor was the first concrete floor made in Huntsville and there is a large concrete arch on the 2nd floor. The third floor dates from 1860 and is made from heart of pine.

One of the most exciting events in the Depot's history could have happened like this. The station master will tell you more:

Chu-Chu-Chugga, Chugga, Chugga. Attention, all passengers, we will be stopping at the Memphis & Charleston Railroad Company in Huntsville, Alabama. Blue coats have been spotted. Don't panic, we will be pulling into the station in two minutes. We suggest you hide. Chu-Chu. Please exit quickly. Attention all, blue coats were sighted 3 miles from here. Take cover now! Bang! Pow! Help! Not my husband, please no! Are they gone? I think so! What a mess. Conductor, we have counted at least 100 cars and 18 locomotives captured. Right now we estimate 150 soldiers captured. It is horrible!

At 6 a.m. on the morning of April 11, 1862, the Federal troops came and captured the Depot. They took 159 soldiers captive. The Confederate soldiers were jailed on the third floor, before they were shipped to jail up north. If you come to the Depot today, on the 3rd floor you can see the graffiti left by some soldiers. Writings include "Happy New Year to All" and "Monday Breakfast, October 13th til' November 13th."

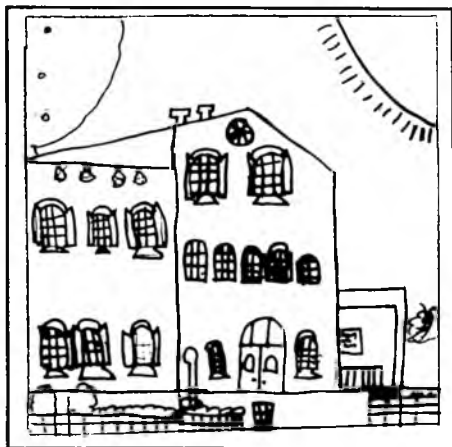
We think it is wonderful that the Depot was preserved. It has so much there to enjoy and see and learn about, such as the strange writing, the architectural features, the interesting history. If you want to enjoy the Depot as much as we did, visit today.

Bibliography

Articles from *The Huntsville Times*, October 29, 1971; January 26, 1980; December 1, 1994. *Historic Huntsville Quarterly*, Spring 1995. Tour of the Depot, May 19, 1995.

Jessica Fortune is 10 years old. Her hobbies include swimming, singing, and loving kids. She likes Federal antebellum homes because of the beautiful arched windows and the balustrades.

Marsha Francis is 11 years old. Her favorite hobby is babysitting, reading, and writing. Her favorite kind of house is a Queen Anne mansion because she likes the decorated porches, gables, conical towers, and steep roofs.



Huntsville Depot
by
Marsha Francis and Jessica Fortune



*Adam and Erin
Johnson*

MEMORIES OF LINCOLN SCHOOL

by

ADAM AND ERIN JOHNSON

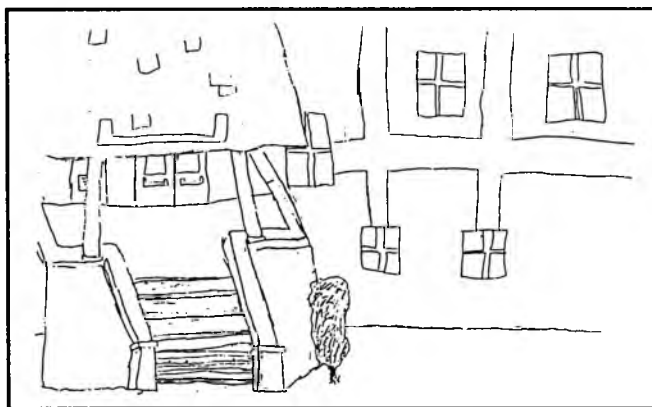
In 1929, Lincoln School was built. It was a different kind of school because Lincoln was a mill school. That meant that the children whose parents worked at the Lincoln Mill went to the school. Lincoln went from 1st to 12th grade. The class of 1934 became the first high school graduating class at Lincoln. In the early 1940's, the first kindergarten class was formed.

Our grandfather went to Lincoln while his mother worked at the mill. The school still went through the twelfth grade when he was there. At that time, school let out right after lunch. One of our grandfather's most vivid memories of when he went to Lincoln was during World War II. Lincoln held a scrap-iron drive to help factories make the guns and ammunition for soldiers. They exchanged the iron for playground equipment.

In the school year of 1948-49, the first Lincoln cafeteria was built. It was on the bottom floor. It was still in the basement when our father and his older sister were there in 1966-69. Our dad remembers that when he went there, the patrol was only for boys.

We are the third generation to go to Lincoln. Today Lincoln has a hi-tech computer lab and state-of-the-art electronics.

Adam and Erin Johnson are 11 years old and will leave Lincoln to enter Chapman Middle School in the fall. Erin's hobbies are reading, drawing, and dancing. Adam likes basketball, football, and wrestling. In preparing this article, they talked with Becky Boteler, Leonard Johnson, and Terry Johnson.





*FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
Cyrus King, Aaron Anderson,
and Fletcher Kurtz*

WHY WE LIKE THE MCCORMICK HOUSE

by

AARON ANDERSON, CYRUS KING, AND FLETCHER KURTZ

We like the McCormick House because of its interesting architectural features like the large conical tower, the fish scale shingles, its asymmetrical roof, the intricate brick design, and the tiny window panes.

Another neat thing about the house is its history—a history dealing mainly with the rich, but not completely.

The mansion took about thirty years to be built for M. J. O'Shaughnessy who was from New York. It had 39 rooms, 19 fireplaces and 12 baths. The second owners were the Cyrus McCormick family who were in the farm equipment trade. When the McCormick family unloaded their furnishings, children got out of school to watch. Miss Virginia McCormick, Cyrus's daughter, was obsessed with music and organized legendary Easter egg hunts where some of the prizes were real gold and silver eggs.

After Miss McCormick died, the mansion went through many changes. At different times it was a hotel, a boarding house, a hair salon and a head shop run by hippies. The house has already been an example of adaptive reuse.

Now it is a home again, occupied by the James Reeves family.

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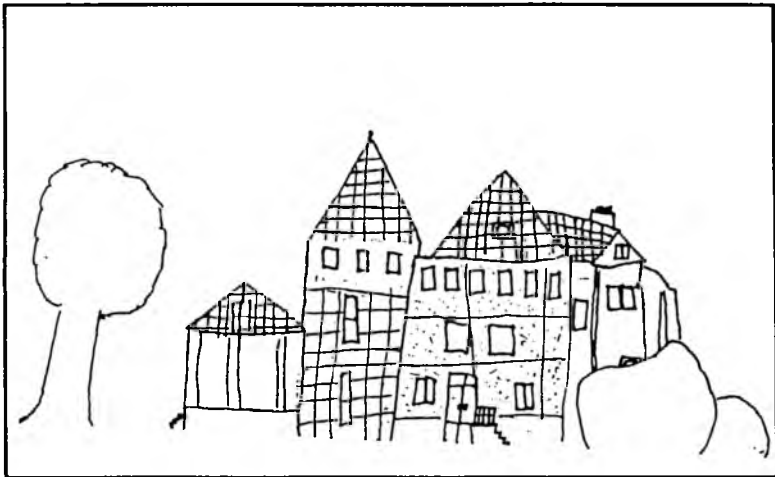
Articles from the Vertical File, "Huntsville Houses," Heritage Room, Huntsville Public Library.

The authors wish to thank Cedric Reeves for giving them a tour of his home.

Aaron Anderson likes to draw, play soccer, and wrestle. He also likes rock and country music, along with the "grand designs" of Queen Anne houses.

Cyrus King is 11 years old and enjoys football, baseball, and sometimes school. He likes Queen Anne houses because of their large towers.

Fletcher Kurtz is 12 years old, likes classical music, and loves Queen Anne style houses.





*Ellen Richardson
and
Kellie Corder*

OAK PLACE

by

KELLIE CORDER AND ELLEN RICHARDSON

If we could go back in time, we would go to about, oh, 1841. Fields of cotton and pasture would be visible for miles around and clear blue skies would greet you with a smile. That is how we would have wanted to feel, looking out of a window of the only one-year-old Oak Place, built right on a hill overlooking a valley.

What wonderful parties Mr. George Gilliam Steele must have had. Little children playing and screaming with happiness, while more sophisticated men and women lounged in the parlors and party rooms, talking about the latest gossip, livestock, or politics. Oak Place would survive many happy and hard times before this architectural masterpiece would become a decaying eyesore to its surrounding community.

Through the years, Oak Place has been put through many trials. Unfortunately, unpaid debts forced the Steele heirs to sell the house after the hard times of the Civil War. And the property changed owners a number of times through the years.

One of the most dramatic and most remembered events in Oak Place's history started in 1960 when the East Huntsville Baptist Church bought the Maysville Road mansion. When they bought it, they never thought they could use the building without tearing it down. In 1965, a building program was begun and a gym was built just east of the worn down, decaying house.

In 1977, when the growing congregation needed more space, they voted to tear down Oak Place and construct on its site.

It was then that Harvie P. Jones, a Huntsville architect, became involved in the long, sad story of Oak Place. Mr. Jones worked to find out how the house could possibly be made into an education and administrative building. He only had a short time to save the antebellum house.

Without the drawings from the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and a Thanksgiving holiday, Mr. Jones says the job would not have been completed in time.

With his finished plan, Mr. Jones went and explained to the church that they could fit all of their needs and wants within the house's boundaries. They could also make the church so it could follow the city codes. Mr. Jones had won. The church voted and followed the plan.

After the church and the congregation voted to restore Oak Place, many crucial events happened that would be very important to the survival of Oak Place.

Since Oak Place is over fifty years old and is registered in the National Register of Historic Places, the church qualified for a 50/50 grant for restoration from the Department of the Interior. The East Huntsville Baptist Church received a grant of exactly \$55,000 and, to top that, the congregation matched it. They donated their time as unskilled workers.

As a fund raiser, the tour of George Steele buildings was sponsored by the Huntsville Historic Foundation. All proceeds were donated to the church. The remaining money needed was borrowed from a bank.

The major construction was nearing completion in the fall of 1980. At that point, the church realized that they would not have enough money to complete the interior of Oak Place. Nancy Van Valkenburgh, then president of the Historic

Huntsville Foundation, decided to contact the Women's Guild of the Huntsville Museum of Art. She suggested that Oak Place be used as the 1980 Decorator's Show House to raise money for Oak Place. The guild and the church agreed. One dollar out of every four was donated to the church. On July 19, 1981, the completed Oak Place was dedicated.

We would like to dedicate this report to all who have helped Oak Place become an "architectural masterpiece" once more. We would like to thank Mr. Harvie P. Jones, Mrs. Nancy Van Valkenburg, Mr. D. Lee Kilbourn, the congregation of the East Huntsville Baptist Church, and the surrounding community for saving Oak Place. We believe that Oak Place is an important part of Huntsville and that if we do not respect our history, then our future generations will not respect us. We thank those that believe that also.

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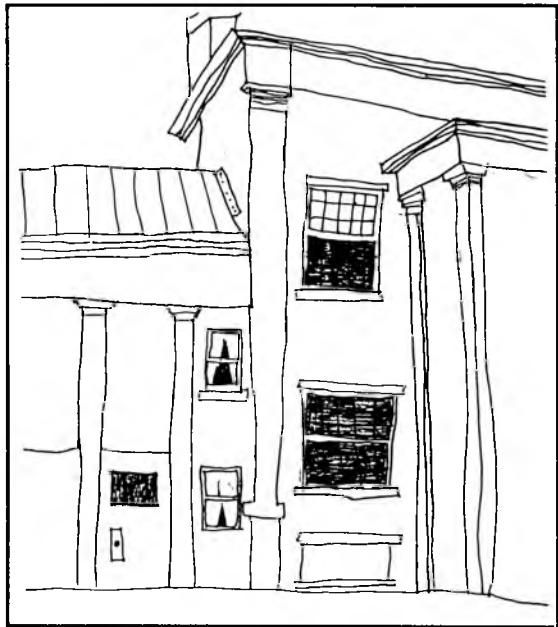
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Kellie Corder is 11 years old . Her hobbies are softball, swimming, and babysitting. Her favorite house style is Queen Anne.

Ellen Richardson, also 11, loves to collect anything having to do with unicorns. Her favorite architectural style is Gothic.

*RIGHT:
Oak Place
by
Kellie Corder*



*BELOW:
Oak Place
by
Ellen Richardson*





*Tho Nguyen
and
Kathryn Wilburn*

**INTERVIEW WITH DOT JOHNSON,
OWNER OF THE REUBEN CHAPMAN HOUSE**

by

THO NGUYEN AND KATHRYN WILBURN

We chose the Chapman House to report on because we both go to Chapman Elementary School (Tho only goes to Chapman Elementary for SPACE class) and since Governor Chapman was an early governor of Huntsville. We picked the Chapman House also because the land that Chapman Elementary is on was once owned by the Chapman family.

One May morning, we went to visit Mrs. Johnson at the Chapman House. We were nervous, yet excited. When we got there we looked around in amazement. We walked through the boxwoods that made you feel like you were entering a palace, looking at a white house, smelling the boxwoods, wondering, and looking at all the little details we might not have noticed before. We rang the bell, Mrs. Dot Johnson opened the door and smiled. We stepped inside, said hello, and got to work.

KW:

How has the neighborhood changed?

DJ:

Well, when the house was built, there were no neighbors. None. That was in 1830. And down through the years others were built like Oak Place. When we moved here there were houses on Rosalie Ridge, that's all. There were no other

houses around us. We had the best of both worlds. We had country without houses; in fact at one time we had two cows.

Then about seven or eight years ago, it started building up and it has changed the way we do things in that, well, we don't go out in our pajamas anymore. We don't have horses anymore. We put our two horses to sleep. They were very, very old and that's why we put them to sleep. But the neighbors enjoyed them.

There are good things. All the neighbors are very, very nice. And we did not have a sewer, we had a septic system and when they put the street in they put in the sewer. And there are conveniences. Before we couldn't have a disposal before, and now we have a disposal.

We don't have nearly as much mowing to do. Before we kept all the pasture mowed in front of our house and mowed all the way down to the spring. All that we kept mowed, so it's cut down on our work tremendously.

KW:

What was this house originally used for, just to live in?

DJ:

Yes, it was always a residence, never used for the storage of grain or hay like some of the old houses.

KW:

When was the house built?

DJ:

The house was built by a man named Christian around 1830. In 1809, Mr. Christian bought the land from Rosalie Ridge to Oakwood, thinking that he had this land with the spring on it. But when it was surveyed, much to his disgust and surprise, he found that he was a couple of city blocks away, so it did not belong to him after all.

So the man that first bought this land was named George Kaiser. And he only kept it for about a year and then Mr. Christian bought it from him. Now Mr. Christian had bought his land from the government and he paid cash for it. When this land came for sale he didn't have any money left, so he couldn't pay cash for this 160 acres where the house is and the spring is. So it took him ten years to pay for it. He made a payment to the government every year. He bought what we call equity. He paid Mr. Kaiser enough money that he was happy, a down payment. Then he finished making Mr. Kaiser's payment to the government. In other words, he bought Mr. Kaiser's equity in the land.

So by 1820, he had it paid for, and at that time, or some time in there, he started cutting the trees and making lumber out of the trees and started cutting these stones out of the area right behind us to make the foundation of the house. And he let the wood dry for up to 10 years before he started to build the house.

And one of the things about this house, or any house this age, is that the lumber they used is called first growth lumber. Now the soil has all kind of minerals in it and when a tree grew, it took up all those minerals to make it very strong. Termites wouldn't eat it, so they had no termite problem. And another thing he did was let it dry naturally in the air for many, many years. So today, the wood up in the attic and upstairs, all the wood in this place, is just as good as it was the day it was put up there.

The lumber we use today does not have all those minerals in it because when a tree would die in the old days, it would rot back on the ground and those minerals from the tree would go back into the soil for another tree to take up. So even though a tree they used in this house may have been the ten-millionth tree in that spot, it still had those minerals in it.

That's one of the good things about an old house.

KW:

How many rooms are in this house?

DJ:

There are six rooms, plus two halls, a breezeway and a kitchen. If you count the halls and the breezeway, there are ten rooms.

Now the doors are very wide and the reason they are wide is because ladies at that time wore voluminous skirts and they needed big, wide doors to get their skirts through.

The reason the ceilings are so high is that in the summer, the heat rises and it would make it much cooler. Also in an old house you always have north, south, east, west openings for cross ventilation. Windows were on all sides of the house, so that when you opened windows you could get a breeze going through.

And another thing the old timers did was build on the side of the hill, not at the top of the hill and not in the valley, but half way up the hill.

KW:

How did each of the owners inherit the house?

DJ:

Some of the Chapmans, I believe, rented it out for a while. That was back in the 1890's and Mrs. Chapman's husband died and she and her children moved to Huntsville. They leased the land to another family, but the family took care of it very well. They did a lot of things to it. They had the Victorian mantle put in here. We found there's a crack in the floorboards behind the sofa and when we we first moved here, we found a newspaper dated 1893 that had been stuck down in the crack so we knew that was the date they did some change.

TN:

Have you ever found any bones?

DJ:

Under the house we have found bones, but they were chicken bones for some dog, or a ham bone, that a dog had carried under there. We haven't found people bones.

KW:

Was this the Chapman house that burned?

DJ:

No, this was not the one that burned. In fact, Governor Chapman did not buy this house until after the Civil War, after his house was burned. His house was across Maysville road. It was a big, brick two-story mansion, and the Northern army burned it to the ground on the last day of the Civil War.

TN:

How long have you lived here?

DJ:

It will be 24 years in a couple of months. Now the Mrs. Chapman that lived here before we did, lived here 49 years. After Mr. Christian died, his wife continued to live here and then she died and they sold the farm, sold this place. It went through two or three different hands in a period of two or three years. And then a man bought it for his daughter when she married. Augustine Withers and her husband lived here for many years, but they never owned in. Mr. Withers' father-in-law owned it. And then Governor Chapman bought it. And then we bought it. It had not been out of the Chapman family from the time of the end of the Civil War until we bought it. It had been in that family a long time, hadn't it?

KW:

Do you know when any of the owners inherited the house?

DJ:

I don't remember the exact date Withers took over the land from the Christian estate except that it was in the mid-1840's and Withers lived here until his father-in-law died and Governor Chapman bought it, I believe, in about 1873 or 1872.

KW:

Did Governor Chapman actually live here?

DJ:

No, he didn't. He was old and in ill health and he lived in a hotel downtown. During the Civil War he was arrested and put in jail in Massachusetts. After the war he came home and he and his family moved into one of the hotels.

TN:

Has anything exciting or interesting happened here?

DJ:

Yes, you've heard of Lily Flagg? Well, this is where Lily Flagg was kept, the cow. And in 1890, when she supposedly won the world's championship butterfat contest, (Which she didn't win, but they said she did.) she was pastured here and two little girls lived here and they were about your age. And there were two cows, Lily Flagg and Goldie. And they loaded them up one morning in trucks to take them to the fair and the two little girls rode down--one had a pink ribbon and one had a blue ribbon--and one of them put blue ribbons on one of the cow's horns and the other put pink ribbons on their other cow's. And there were a lot of parties here because the women who lived here were always great cooks except me.

KW:

Did any of the other owners have any pets that they kept here?

DJ:

Yes. Reuben Chapman, the last Reuben Chapman that lived here, had a pet bull snake . And we had one. We called him Slippery Sam. We had horses out in the stable. They would dribble corn on the floor and that would lure the rats and mice in. And one day I went out and there must have been at least 30 or 40 rats on the floor eating the corn off the floor of the stable. The horses were out in the field at that time. And I picked up a brick and threw it and it killed one of the rats. I didn't aim, I just threw. And we put out poison and nothing got rid of the rats. And, finally, old Sam came to live there, this snake, this bull snake. And within a month, we had no rats, no mice. Bull snakes are truly a friend to the farmer. So we took care of Sam, we'd feed Sam.

One day my husband was filling the water tank for the horses and Sam had a habit: He'd come around the corner of the smokehouse, across the garden, down over the hill and into the woods. Day after day at the same time. We'd had a drought and that particular day when Walt was filling the water tank, Sam came slithering by and he said he just had a feeling that the snake wanted water, so he put the hose on the ground and let the water drain on the ground. The snake came up, lapped up some water and went on his way.

So when they started building the first house down here, I came home one night and somebody had killed Sam. A lot of people kill all snakes, no matter what they are, and that's wrong. Now, poisonous snakes, I see no harm in killing, but you should never kill a bull snake, because they are really a friend since they eat the rodents.

Now Mr. Chapman had a bull snake to keep the rat and mouse population down. And one day he had gone to town and two of the little tenant-farmer boys killed that snake. And they told me, when we first moved in, that was the only time in their lives that they saw Mr. Chapman mad.

The Chapmans always kept ponies here and they kept cattle. This was a dairy. This dairy was the Chapman Dairy. It took care of all of Huntsville; it furnished milk for all of Huntsville and much of Madison County.

Then after the second World War, about 1948, a law was passed that all dairies had to have homogenization and the Chapmans felt they were too old and it was just too expensive for them to go into it and buy all that equipment. So they gave up the dairy.

People tell me that the woods up here were just like a park because that's where the cattle grazed. They grazed up here and across the road and all the way down to where your school is.

From Maysville Road probably to about where your school is, there was a cornfield. Mr. Chapman has told me that, during the Depression in the 1930's when times were so hard and people were hungry, that people would walk up Maysville Road and look around to the right and then left and jump into the cornfield and get an ear of corn and eat the corn raw. They were so hungry.

We have a plat [of the property]. Let me show you. I'll get it for you. In 1884 Governor Chapman had this plat made of the place. It shows the house, the barn, the spring. Over here across the road where the houses are now, that was a vineyard. They raised their own grapes and made their own wine. And on the other side was an orchard. And then where Rosalie Ridge is was the cornfield and then the pastures.

KW:

Do you know any of the professions of the Chapmans?

DJ:

They were all lawyers. All the Chapmans had law degrees. Mrs. Chapman was a school teacher, the Mrs. Chapman that we bought our house from. And her husband was a lawyer, but he didn't practice law; he farmed and ran the dairy.

The Withers that lived here, he ran the Huntsville Democrat. He was editor and owner. The Christians, he was a farmer. It started off with a farmer, went to an editor, then the Chapmans were all lawyers, and my husband is an engineer.

KW:

Do you own all the land that the Chapmans had?

DJ:

No. The Chapmans had 800 acres altogether. That's a lot, isn't it? They owned land from Oakwood up to the top of the hill on the east and to the top of the hill on the north. Mr. Chapman gave the state the land for the road, for Highway 72.

We own 2.2 acres. We only bought the two acres that the house and buildings stand on. We didn't buy the spring. The spring belongs to the people who bought lots from the subdivision above us. And everyone who lives up there and owns a lot has the privilege of going to the spring. So it doesn't really belong to any one person, but to everyone in that subdivision.

Have you been to the spring? Oh, we really don't have time today, but some weekend if you want to come up here, I will take you to the spring.

The spring buildings were built long before this house was built. I think those buildings were put up around 1809 and are some of the oldest in the state of Alabama, and definitely the

oldest in north Alabama. The only place where there would be older buildings would be down in Mobile.

KW:

Which is older—Oak Place or the Chapman house?

DJ:

The Chapman house. That's another thing. We know that George Steele built Oak Place as his residence, but there are so many details of this house that are identical to Oak Place that we think that George Steele was either the architect or the builder. We haven't been able to prove it. For instance, the style of the doors was identical. Identical. There are closets in this house, like there are closets in Oak Place. Oak Place has a built-in medicine cabinet; this house has a built-in medicine cabinet. Oak Place has hidden transoms; this house does too. Come, I'll show you.

Soon, we had to go back to school. As we stepped out of the house we could remember everything Mrs. Johnson told us—the cows, the hidden transoms, the dairy, the bull snakes, and especially the things she found. She found things like doll arms, broken pottery, arrowheads, and figures from the second floor. We took a piece of plaster—with horsehair in it—back with us.

We still wonder one thing. How does it feel to have an open country side all around, with cows and horses in sight, yellow and pink flowers, pastures, cornfields, and the blue sky.

Background Reading

Maroney, Mickey. "The Withers-Chapman-Johnson House: A Plantation Cottage." *The Historic Huntsville Quarterly*. Spring 1989.

Tho Nguyen is eleven years old and will move from Colonial Hills Elementary to Chapman Middle School this fall. She likes to collect photographs of her family, friends, and herself. Her favorite architectural style is Queen Anne.

Kathryn Wilburn is eleven years old. Her hobbies are bike riding, swimming, playing with Pogs, and playing softball. Her favorite building style is also Queen Anne.



*Drawing of the Chapman House
by
Tho Nguyen and Kathryn Wilburn*



*From Left to Right: Allison McLeroy
and Marnie Galloway
in front of the dogwood tree
on pre-moving day.*

**AN INTERVIEW WITH CHUCK WEBER
(MAY 9, 1995)**

by

**ALLISON MCLEROY
WITH MARNIE & LORI GALLOWAY**

Recently, we talked with Mr. Chuck Weber. He is Supervisor of the Urban Forestry, Horticulture, and Landscape Support for the City of Huntsville. Some of his duties include fixing up your yard after the public works department has fixed a sewer or put in a gutter. His department also takes care of trees along the streets and in the parks. He will go out and look at trees that have problems. He takes care of about 240 square miles and about 40- to 80,000 trees. He helped save the dogwood that is about 100-150 years old. It was on Old Madison Pike. The tree is now in the Botanical Gardens. The following includes excerpts from this interview.

Allison:

What laws have you passed to help save trees?

C. Weber:

What laws have been passed? OK. The city has a tree ordinance that was passed in 1981 and it did some things, [but] it really didn't do much to save trees. We don't have a tree protection ordinance. Now the tree ordinance was revised in 1985, and it's a little better. But there's still nothing that says that I can't cut all of the trees down. Let's say that I've

got a piece of land with trees on it and I'm going to build a house there, I can cut them all down if I want to. If I'm not smart enough to see some value in those trees, then there's nothing to stop me from cutting those down. Now. If we were to change that to where we had a law that says you can't cut down just any tree, then we'd have to have somebody to enforce that. . . .And, any kind of enforcement needs to be done by an intelligent, informed person.

A:

How did you get the laws passed?

CW:

The City Council for Huntsville is like the Legislature or Congress, and it would have the city's legal department take a look at it [a proposed ordinance] and it might make some changes and so forth, and then it would vote on it. It would either vote it up or vote it down. The tree ordinance passed 5 to nothing in favor. We did a good job on it. Or did we? You know, maybe it would have been better if it had been a little bit tougher and the vote was 3 to 2 or 4 to 1. We had a whole lot of support for something that might not have been as strong as it needed to be. I mean, that's one way to look at it.

A:

Are the laws working as you hoped?

CW:

Yes and no. As far as the parking lot landscape ordinance is concerned, all you have to do is drive along the Parkway and you can see that one is not working the way we want it. The intention was that we wanted to have certain standards that people would have to live up to. But we still wanted to have it loose enough so that they could take a designer and come up with something really creative. They wouldn't have to use a cookie cutter and have every parking lot look like every other parking lot. And that has worked in some cases, but it hasn't worked in some.

A:

Are there particular trees you try to save or encourage people to plant? Why?

CW:

You asked two questions. One has to do with what kind of trees we recommend people to plant? OK. The other what kind do you keep? To some extent, that's the same question. In some ways it's two different questions. As far as what to plant, you want to plant species that will grow and become good strong trees. People usually say, "What's a good fast-growing tree?" Usually if you plant a tree that's known to grow very, very fast, you're going to have a weak tree that's going to blow apart or fall apart when the weather's bad. So the secret is to plant a tree that's going to be strong, but do a real good job of planting it so that it will grow as fast as it can grow.

If you've got a big area, and you want a lot of shade, then instead of planting a silver maple, and they'll grow fast but they fall apart, you plant something like one of the oaks. We have a lot of oak trees around here, and they're good trees. Sugar maples, green ash, there are a whole bunch of trees like that, that are basically good trees. If you do a good job of planting them, they will grow fast. If you don't do a good job of planting them, then nothing's going to work out very well.

Now, as far as the strength of a tree is concerned, what we're looking for in a tree is: I look at it kind of from a mechanical engineer standpoint. I want one that has real strong branches, and let me get a couple of wood samples over here and I'll show you something.

[Returning with a piece of cedar trunk and a Bradford pear branch.] This is the difference between a fork and a real branch. You can see [pointing to the cedar] that a true branch is tied in all the way with the center of the tree. I would trust my life on a branch like this any day.

Now, this right here is a fork [pointing to the Bradford]. As you know, the leaves are up there trying to collect sunlight and competing with each other. So that means that this fork is going to tend to grow this way, and this one's going to tend to grow that way. So you've got more and more pull right on that fork. The growth is taking place there, and as these guys get fatter they're going to squash each other here and here, and this part down between the fork is probably already dead.

This is a perfect place for fungus to grow, and so you're going to get decay here. So as the two parts up here get heavier and heavier, they're going to pull more and more on a joint that's getting weaker and weaker.

Lori:

And one of these storms comes through . . .

CW:

Exactly. And everybody says, "Why don't you plant these Bradford pears?" Well, that's exactly why. They do this an awful lot and then they fall apart.

That's the kind of thing I wish more people understood. Because the fast growing trees will tend to have a lot of forks in them. So I like a tree that's got a strong central leader, then real wide branch angles, and true branches, like the cedar tree you just saw there.

A:

Have you got community support for your work?

CW:

Yes.

A:

Do people like the laws?

CW:

It's not a question of laws, it's more a question of programs. I don't enforce any laws. My job is to help the city have better trees and shrubs and things like that. And to some extent, if you've got a problem with a tree, part of my job is to help you understand the problem and find out who to get to help you with it.

L:

So the public can just call out here and ask questions about their trees?

CW:

I wouldn't say that, but they do anyway. You know, I try to give people either a good answer to their question or the name of somebody that can go and look at the problems.

A:

What projects are you most proud of, and why?

CW:

The things that I'm most proud of you can't see. One of them is this group of guys that work here. Before, oh, say, 10 years ago, there was a lot of work done and so forth, but there really wasn't much attention paid to training, learning how horticulture and forestry really work, and the guys that are here now have really started doing a good job of learning that.

As far as specific projects are concerned, there's one that I really like. We got a grant to do some tree planting, and we did it over in, do you know where Northwood subdivision is? It's a low income housing project that's west of Pulaski Pike, and north of University Drive. It's where the Calvary Hill magnet school is. We went through that area, and some of the people who did a lot of the planting were kids who lived in

the area that needed jobs. We planted about 350 trees, which is the first time that anything much had been planted in there.

L:

And that gave those kids a stake in their community.

CW:

Yeah, I think so. We went through there not too long ago, and you know, some of them had been broken or whatever, but [on the whole] it really worked out well. The people that did the planting did a good job of it, and I'm real happy with the outcome.

A:

Last question: Is it better to keep trees where they are, or to move them?

CW:

[Laughing] Which tree are you speaking of?

A:

The dogwood. [Referring to the 100-year old dogwood that was moved from Madison Pike to the Botanical Garden . Huntsville school children helped raise money to save the dogwood.]

CW:

That particular tree should have been recognized as an unusual tree five years ago. That is an uncommonly large and uncommonly old dogwood. It has been on a good site and apparently they took good care of it. If we had done our homework right, or let's say if the State Highway Department had done its homework, or whoever it was, it would have been better to plan with the tree specifically in mind. It could have been a feature instead of a problem. But it dropped through the cracks, so at this point what we have to do is learn from it. And I think we're doing that. You probably wouldn't

be sitting here right now, listening and learning about trees if it wasn't for that dogwood. So in that sense, it has been a really good thing.

Let me say one other thing, and that is that we've got some real good people that are going to move it. It's going to get good care when it gets out to the Botanical Garden. If I were a tree, I'd want to live at the Botanical Garden. We have good chances.

THE MOVING OF THE DOGWOOD

by
MARNIE GALLOWAY

Chuck Weber arranged to have Allison and Marnie be on site for the uprooting and moving of the dogwood. Their mothers, Denise McLeroy and Lori Galloway, accompanied them .

Because Mr. Weber had drawn diagrams and given a full explanation about the moving, Allison and Marnie were able to report to their classmates at Chapman about the procedure and the actual experience. This article includes some of Marnie's impressions of the event.

On May 10, 1995, we went to see the 20-foot tall, 40-foot wide and 35-ton dogwood. The dogwood we are talking about is about 100 years old. Old Madison Pike was its home then. While it might be unusual for it to be this old, the most special thing about this dogwood was that it was about to be moved to a new home.

When we got there, the workers had tied up the lower branches so they could get to the ground. Then they dug around the roots, creating a root ball. They drilled a mole, a machine that digs through the dirt so that they could put poles underneath the roots. They planned to tie the poles together with chains and then connect the chains to the crane, then lift the whole tree out of the ground.

As they were digging, a storm arose, lightning flashed, and hail poured down. A tornado was coming! The workers and Mr. Weber and the TV cameramen didn't even notice, but Mrs. McLeroy did. She kept listening to the weather report on her car radio. Finally, she said, "I'm sorry, Mr. Weber, but Allison has to go to a practice." Quickly," Mr. Weber replied,

“You take Allison to handbell practice, and I’ll take Marnie home.” Since the weather was getting worse, Marnie went home with Mrs. McLeroy.

The next day, we went back to see the dogwood being moved. It was slow, but exciting when the tree dangled in the air on a wire! It took so long! It took about six hours to move the tree from Old Madison Pike to the Botanical Gardens. When they finally got to the gardens, they put about 1,000 earthworms in the soil to fertilize it. With all of this hard work, we hope it likes its new home.



*STANDING, LEFT TO RIGHT:
Teela Pongpakdee, Jeremy Fanning,
and Allison McLeroy*

*SEATED:
Marnie Falloway*

WHY SHOULD WE PRESERVE OUR TREES?

by
ALLISON MCLEROY

Why should we preserve our trees? We should because you can climb trees and we can play around them. Trees also give us shade and, boy, do we need that on hot days. Trees give us oxygen so we can breathe. Trees beautify the landscape. Trees help hold the soil in place so it will not wash away. Trees also provide a home for many animals.

Flowering trees are beautiful when they bloom, such as dogwood trees at Easter. Old trees bring back good memories of the past. For instance, if you took a picture under a tree when you were young, and then you grow up, when you look at that tree, you may remember the picture you took and what was happening at the time. Trees provide a special space just for you.

Allison McLeroy will be in the fifth grade at Chapman Elementary. She likes to swim and watch TV. One of her favorite architectural features is a fanlight over an entrance.

CHAPMAN ELEMENTARY'S SYCAMORE TREES

by
ALLISON MCLEROY

At Chapman, we have three sycamore trees that we like to sit and play under. Sometimes teachers sit under them and grade papers. Sometimes students sit under them and read a book or do their school work. At the end of the year, we have picnics in their shade.

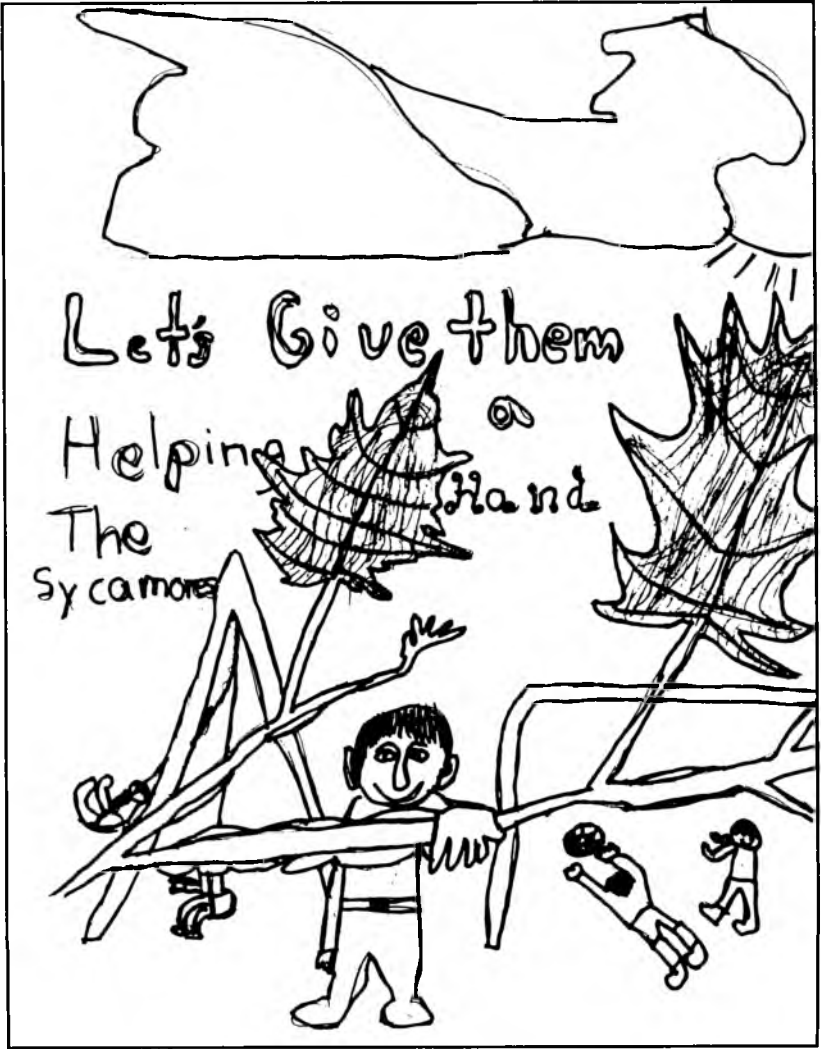
We have been concerned about our sycamores because they have little flecks on their branches in the spring and black stuff on their leaves in the fall. We called and reported this to the central office of Huntsville City Schools and they are getting help from Auburn University. We hope we can save our sycamores.

Allison McLeroy will be in the fifth grade at Chapman Elementary. She likes to swim and watch TV. One of her favorite architectural features is a fanlight over an entrance.

Artists

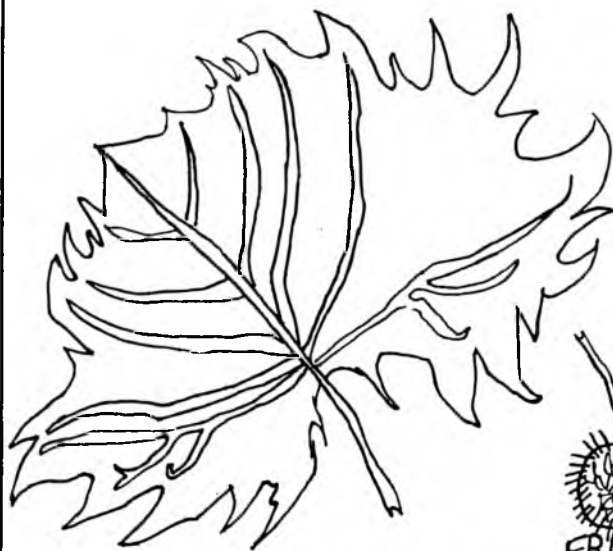
Teela Pongpakdee is a fifth grader who likes to draw and to study history and science.

Jeremy Fanning is a fifth grader who has taken a number of drawing classes and has shown his work in both group and solo exhibitions.



Drawing by Teela Pongpakdee

SYCAMORE



LEAF

Drawing by Jeremy Fanning

HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE FOUNDATION, INC.
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The HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE FOUNDATION was established in 1974 to encourage the preservation of historically or architecturally significant sites and structures throughout Huntsville and Madison County and to increase public awareness of their value to the community. The FOUNDATION is the only organization in Huntsville concerned exclusively with architectural preservation and history. Membership is open to interested and concerned citizens from across north Alabama and beyond.

The writers and illustrators would like to thank all those who helped them in preparing this issue of *The Historic Huntsville Quarterly*: Dot Johnson was, as always, especially generous in sharing her home and her knowledge; Chuck Weber not only took time for an extensive interview, but made special arrangements for Marnie and Denise to participate in the dogwood moving; Margaret Anne Hanaw provided information and a video about the Big Spring Lion; Lori Galloway was expert in interview transcription; teachers Veronica Curtis, Cathy Vasile, Becky Boteler, and Lisa Urban, and principal Deborah Baker offered support; many friends and family shared information; and parents helped with transportation, interview preparation, and editing.

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*"... If we do
not respect
our history,
then our future
generations
will not
respect us."*



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