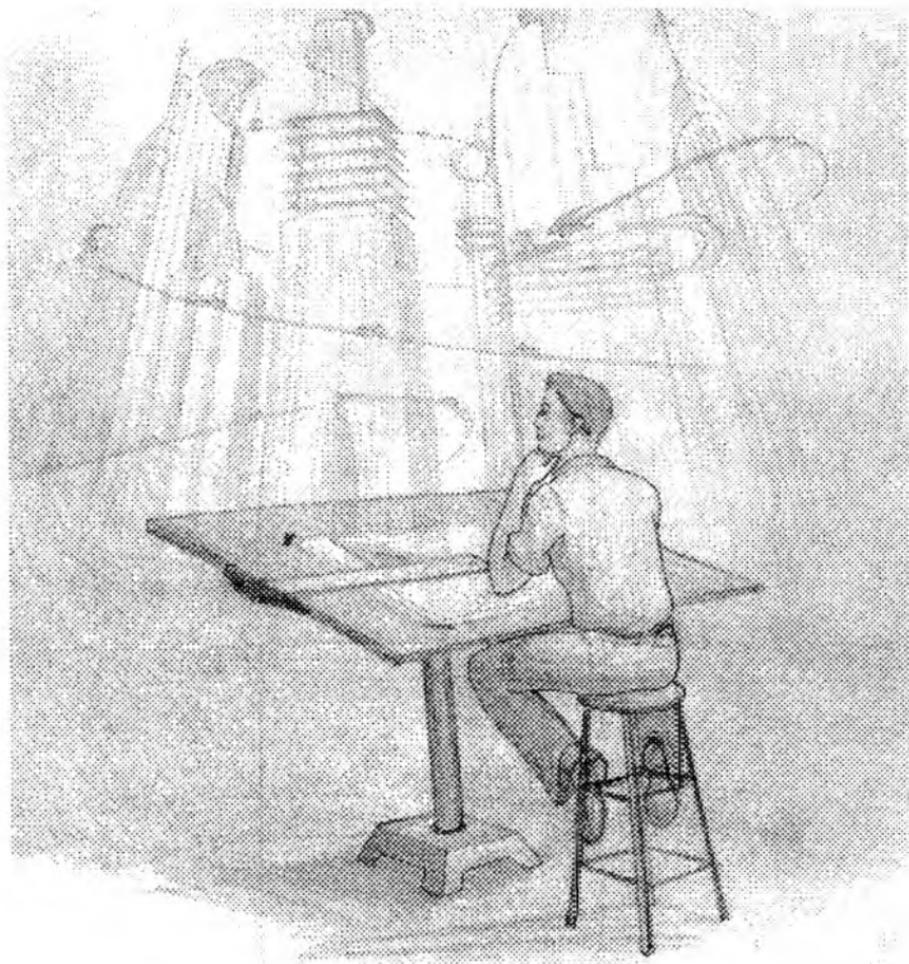


SIX DOLLARS

FALL/WINTER 1999  
VOLUME XXV, Nos.3&4

THE  
**HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE QUARTERLY**  
OF LOCAL ARCHITECTURE AND PRESERVATION



HARVIE P. JONES, FAIA, RETROSPECTIVE II

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Founded 1974

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*Cover: Drawing by the young architect-to-be, Harvie P. Jones in a letter home to his mother while he was attending Georgia Tech.*

*Courtesy Lynn Jones.*

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**The Historic Huntsville Quarterly**  
**of Local Architecture and Preservation**

Volume XXV, Nos.3&4

Fall/Winter 1999

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## From the Editor

The Fall/Winter issue of the Historic Huntsville *Quarterly* includes articles from **Mission: Progress**, a publication of the Housing Authority, no longer in print; comments by Harvie on the significance of preservation; as well as drawings by Harvie. Frances and David Robb contributed the front profiles to Harvie's articles; Elizabeth Brown, Margaret Cole, Maureen Drost, and Mills Lane have contributed letters, memories, and interviews. Harvie was winning awards as early as 1949; this issue includes a picture of the first-prize trophy won by Harvie. With Lynn Jones' permission, the *Quarterly* includes comments from condolence letters to Lynn. Friends have contributed anecdotes of Harvie and their work with him.

This *Quarterly* will feature articles from 1985, 1986, 1988, and 1990 issues. Some of the articles are facsimiles and others are reset. As I got into this second double issue, more and more information concerning Harvie came to light, and I learned what a talented artist Harvie was. I am including copies of some of his drawings.

Following are some explanatory comments by Lynn Jones:

To Harvie, architecture was an art, and he brought to the profession a deep love and commitment to the arts. Fortunate to be stationed in France during two years of military service following his graduation from Georgia Tech in the 1950s, he spent his free time traveling through Europe studying classical architecture, visiting museums, sketching, and taking photographs. After Harvie's discharge from the military, he spent an additional six months traveling and learning. This time in Europe helped lay the groundwork for what would become a lifelong dedication to the art of historic preservation.

Harvie's roots grew deep in Huntsville and Madison County; he never considered going elsewhere to establish his architectural practice. Harvie returned to Huntsville where he proceeded to make his special contribution to the place he knew and loved.

**Margaret J. Vann**

## ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The loss of Harvie Jones to the historic preservation community in Alabama is immeasurable. In his quiet, unassuming way, no one has done more to help the people of our state understand and safeguard the places that they love. Harvie served on the Commission from 1973 to 1979, and for many more years on the National Register Review Board. Through that service his knowledge and thoughtful opinions guided the policies and the work of the staff.

But it is really through his work in the field that he distinguished himself to us. He prepared National Register nominations almost too numerous to count. He met us on the worst dirt roads and at the most inconvenient times to advise us and building owners on stabilization and restoration plans.

There is hardly a set of building specifications in the Commission office that does not have at its core an idea that Harvie freely gave. Most every drawn detail we use, and good preservation is all in understanding the details, came from something Harvie sketched and gave to us. Over the years, hundreds of envelopes from Harvie have arrived containing information in his almost illegible hand about buildings he had found or new preservation problems he had noticed.

His generosity to professionals and amateurs alike in sharing the insights he gained through many years of patient and loving study of Alabama's historic architecture is simply beyond expression. This knowledge is one of the foundations from which we operate. In spite of Harvie's good teaching, so freely given, we have not learned to go on without him.

**Elizabeth Brown, Acting Director  
Alabama Historical Commission  
December 1998**



*An original drawing by Harvie P. Jones in a letter to his mother. Harvie was working on a two-bedroom design with a group of fellow Georgia Tech architecture students.  
Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



*Photograph of Harvie P. Jones and his sister, Edith Jones, looking over model of two-bedroom house shown in drawing on page 4.  
Courtesy Edith Jones Ledbetter.*

November 15, 1950

Mr. H. P. Jones  
c/o Prof. Verman Shipley  
Architectural Department  
Georgia Tech  
Atlanta, Georgia

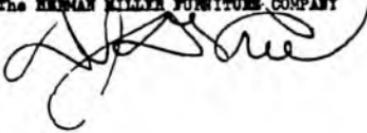
Dear Mr. Jones:

Permit us to congratulate you on being the first prize winner in the recent design problem.

The LCM chair in red, offered as a first prize, is to be shipped to you in a day or two. We trust you will enjoy it. Thank you again for your fine cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

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*Letter of congratulations from the Herman Miller Furniture Company to Harvie P. Jones for his prize-winning solution to the design problem posed by the Miller company. Harvie referred to the chair as an Eames chair as seen in Life magazine and wrote to his mother that he "...wouldn't take \$5000 for it." Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



*Photograph of the LCM chair awarded to Harvie as first prize by the Miller company. He gave the chair to his sister, Emily J. Good as a wedding present. Mrs. Good gave the to chair to her daughter Leslie T. Good, PhD, associate professor and Director, Communications Studies Program, Portland State University in Oregon.  
Courtesy of photographer Leslie T. Good.*

# The Significance of Historic Preservation

*Harvie P. Jones, FAIA*

## Introduction

In 1972, Harvie P. Jones won the Virginia Hammill Simms Memorial Award for his volunteer contributions to the arts in Huntsville.

An example of Harvie's dedication to the arts and preservation is found in this undated essay on the significance of historic preservation to our community:

The combined stresses of the 1930s Depression and World War II engendered a strong desire in the American people for a new and better world. As of 1945, essentially no new construction had taken place for 16 years, except for defense-related minimal housing, industries, and military bases. The Depression and the war shortages of materials, skills, funds, and labor had left our existing building stock in poor shape and inadequate both in amount and in modern amenities. Many areas of cities and towns were in a dilapidated condition; and slums, both housing and commercial, were abundant.

These conditions brought about a great desire to *clean up* the cities and towns and make land available for the new and better world that would surely be the result of victory over the Axis powers. A major player, in this *clean-up* attitude was the U.S. Government *Urban Renewal* program, under whose aegis entire areas, sometimes several blocks, were swept clean by bulldozers without any discrimination between shanties and irreplaceable 100- to 150-year-old houses, including some mansions. All this *progressive* demolition brought forth little protest.

By the mid-1960s, however, voices such as those of the historian Dr. Frances Roberts began to be heard. More people began to realize that the baby was being thrown out with the bathwater. The Urban Renewal program came to an abrupt end in Huntsville in the early 1970s when it was learned that Williams and Lincoln Streets would be 5-laned, cutting down all street trees, fences, front yards, literally shaving off the front steps of such structures as the 1860 First Presbyterian Church, and demolishing an 1880s house for a sweeping intersection at Lincoln and Williams. It was the straw that broke the camel's back.

Huntsville had begun to realize that something is not necessarily good just because it is new, and may well be the opposite. Old buildings, old streetscapes, and old trees help us to understand who we are by showing us our cultural roots in three-dimensional form. Buildings of all types are equally important, for if just one type—say, Greek Revival mansions—is preserved, then we get a distorted view of our past.

Since the 1960s, Huntsville has done a generally good job of this despite inevitable losses (we now have only fragments of two cotton mills, our main reason for 1830-1930 growth). We need to try to save every structure we can so that these continuing occasional losses do not become a total loss in the future.

## Epilogue

The *Huntsville News*, in an editorial enumerating Harvie's many contributions to the arts in Huntsville, ends with Harvie's justification for historic preservation in Huntsville :

“We ought to do it because we are Huntsville.

We ought to do it because we are the most cosmopolitan city in Alabama. We ought to do it, in the last estimate, not only to attract industry or publicize our city in the nation's eyes, though these and others may indeed be worthy endeavors.

We ought to do it because we have civic pride.”

1972

Moved at instigation of H. Jones to present domel.  
for a driveway to a bank. Arch. surv. donated by HJ

PAGE 4

COOPERATIVE EFFORT SPARES "STEAMBOAT GOTHIC" STRUCTURE.



*Steamboat Gothic House covers Franklin Street from curb to curb. Hand-inked note is by Harvie P. Jones, early 1974.*

*Courtesy The Housing Authority of the City of Huntsville, Alabama.*



*“A building of any period, old and recent,  
deserves to keep its own character.”*

Harvie P. Jones, FAIA

*Building Progress, 1977*

## How It All Started:

*From Mission: Progress, Vol. 1, No. 8, December, 1973*

*A publication of the Housing Authority of the City of Huntsville, Alabama*

*T. Wallace Armstrong, Editor/Publisher*

For a while there, members of the Madison County Federation of Women's Clubs were beginning to think it was "Mission: Impossible." A local TV station, Channel 19, even went so far as to play the theme music from that perennially popular series during footage shot as the old Steamboat Gothic structure on Franklin Street moved to a new location. And move it did. Inch by half inch. With alarms and sidetrips, anger and laughter, optimism and pessimism.

People's National Bank, in acquiring land for their new downtown building and adjacent parking lot, acquired the historic old structure at 510 Franklin Street. They weren't initially that interested in the home [of Captain John Van Valkenburgh], which some local architects consider a significant example of Huntsville architecture; they needed the land it rested on to build a parking lot.

Bank officers, however, soon became equally interested in seeing the structure preserved. They offered to give the structure to any organization, which would commit itself to buying a new site for it, moving it, and restoring it to its original style.

The Madison County Federation of Women's Clubs volunteered. Mrs. Loxie Doud, special projects chairman, and Mrs. Myron W. Cole, Jr., co-chairman, arranged details.

Land was acquired from the Housing Authority of the City of Huntsville at the intersection of south Greene Street and Lowe Avenue to house the structure following the move.

Finally came the move itself [by Don Kennedy Movers]. After about a week of delays caused by a broken drive shaft, malfunctioning jacks, and other scheduling and mechanical difficulties—all during which utility lines in the area were going up and down like jump ropes—the day of the actual move dawned.

What followed was about six hours of high and low comedy based on the theme “touch not that tree.” One broken limb caused a rather well-known attorney to shoot photographs from behind cover much in the manner of a war-painted Apache stalking the cavalry. City Planning Commission chief, Hugh Doak, after beholding the spectacle for about 30 minutes, was overheard to mutter: “People do strange things.”

Threats of suits and countersuits filled the air. As traffic lights came down to make room for the tall structure, female volunteers directed traffic; the city police had decided that the matter wasn’t within their jurisdiction.

After a series of confrontations and mediations and other negotiations, an alternate route was decided upon. The old Steamboat Gothic house cruised majestically like the river queens of old, along Williams, new Gallatin, and Lowe Avenue to her new location.



## **Remembering Harvie**

Harvie P. Jones was the guest speaker at the Heritage Junior Women’s Club in April 1973. He told the members that People’s National Bank needed the land occupied by Captain John Van Valkenburgh’s house, circa 1890, for a driveway into its proposed parking lot. Harvie mentioned that the house was one of only two Steamboat Gothic houses in Alabama.

With Lynda Doud and me at the helm of the project, the Madison County Federation of Women’s Clubs accepted the challenge of having the house moved to a wooded lot on the edge of the Twickenham Historic District at Lowe Avenue near Greene Street.

The project needed the cooperation of the city and county governments, the utility companies, and the Housing Authority of the City of Huntsville. U.S. Senator John Sparkman intervened with the Department of Housing and Urban Development so that the housing authority could donate the land to the Federation.

Many volunteers were needed. But the primary volunteer and detail person was Harvie P. Jones, who oversaw the project from beginning to end.

Margaret Cole, Huntsville

## Harvie Jones and Savannah, Georgia

### *Mills Lane*

I'm not sure how I knew about Harvie Jones—he must have been famous—for about 1988, when I was starting research on my book, *Architecture of the Old South: Mississippi & Alabama*, I paid an unannounced visit to his office and began a friendly association that would last till his death in late 1998. I was a stranger and an ignorant one; Harvie was the guide, tutor, friend, and expert I needed.

During the years that I spent exploring, researching, and writing ten books on the history of Old South architecture, Harvie was the most patient of guides, the most patient tutor, generous friend, and selfless expert. In a profession populated with pompous egomaniacs, Harvie was an unselfish servant of historic buildings, eager to learn for himself and to teach others. He told me how he had stumbled into historic preservation and taught himself, and helped teach me as well as many others.

When I first visited Huntsville, I admired Harvie's work; and in 1990 I asked Harvie to be the architect for the first of some fifteen restoration projects in Savannah, Georgia. The first projects were three Federal-era houses built by Frederick Ball about 1805. There were more Federal style and Greek Revival houses. The last projects were a pair of re-created Federal houses on Warren Square, a new house in the style of Greek Revival facing Chatham Square, and restoration of the 1850 Gothic-style Unitarian Chapel facing Troup Square.

Harvie's very last projects in Savannah were typical of his selfless generosity and impulse to teach. During the spring and summer of 1998, he made three long trips: two weeks of hard work in the increasing heat of April, May, June, July, and August to photograph and make measured drawings of the seventy most important houses in Savannah. These are to be published someday in *Restoring Savannah*, a publication that will include a history of preservation in Savannah, Historic American Building Survey-style drawings of details of the best houses in Savannah, and technical do's and don'ts for builders.

Also, during these trips, Harvie began to teach a young architect named Dirk Hardison, who had just been employed by Historic Savannah Foundation, sharing his special knowledge of Southern architectural history and restoration techniques. Typically, Harvie volunteered his services for the *Restoring Savannah* project and gave Dirk, as a gift, a small library of 19th century American architecture books.

Without a doubt, Harvie was the most skilled restoration architect who has ever worked in Savannah, though he came to us, unexpectedly, from Huntsville, Alabama. It was a privilege for me to know him, and Savannah owes him a great thank you.

Mills Lane, Director, The Beehive Foundation

Savannah, Georgia

*Mills Lane was born in Georgia and educated at Harvard. He is the founder and publisher of The Beehive Press of Savannah, Georgia, and has produced more than fifty books about the history of the South including the award-winning 9-volume series: Architecture of the Old South.*



## Remembering Harvie

I have yet to meet another historic architect like him [Harvie], and probably never will. When I work on projects now, he is the standard I measure others against.

Charlie Pautler, Spring Valley, Minnesota

# The Bungalow and Other 20th Century Residential Architecture in Huntsville: An Overview

*Harvie P. Jones, FAIA*

## Introduction

Harvie P. Jones turned his attention to distinctive architecture of all kinds and eras. His own architectural practice encompassed contemporary buildings in contemporary styles as well as historic preservation.

In 1985, he attempted to “whet our interest” in Huntsville’s 20th century houses. His article, initially published in the *Historic Huntsville Review* (reprinted with permission of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society), surveys these relatively recent buildings from a late-20th century vantage point, as he noted, “only about 15 years” from the century’s end (*Historic Huntsville Quarterly*, Vol. XI, Nos. 2 & 3, Winter/Spring, 1985).

In the last years of the century, his comments are still valid. Harvie cast his remarks in the form of a brief introductory overview followed by a “picture story” of interesting examples. From his vast files of photographs, we located Harvie’s original black and white photographs so that the images would be as clear as possible.

In September 1998, when Harvie was reviewing the picture captions he had written thirteen years earlier, he noted “Almost every caption begins with ‘this.’ Too bad, but no editor was available to point out this stylistic defect.” For this republication of Harvie’s article, *Historic Huntsville Quarterly* Editor Margaret J. Vann has made the changes Harvie would have wanted.

Harvie’s picture story is especially rich in its consideration of bungalows, that quintessentially 20th century American building type. Many readers have had some experience with bungalows, for they are found across America at every income level and in every geography. Harvie’s appreciation of bungalows is infectious: an article on a mid-century Madison County bungalow will be featured in a forthcoming issue of *Historic Huntsville Quarterly*.

The turn of the 20th century found several styles of residential architecture being built in Huntsville, including late-Victorian versions of Eastlake and Queen Anne. As a result of the 1876 National Centennial celebrations, Colonial Revival was also an influence. These influences were sometimes freely intermingled in a Free Classical style as in the 1902 Van Valkenburgh house at 501 Franklin Street and Williams Avenue. Within the first decade of the century, a number of houses—frequently fine examples designed by architects—of the Bungalow style were built. By the 1920s, the Bungalow style had become the predominant one for houses, and it even had an influence on larger buildings such as Rison School and the YMCA on Greene Street. By the 1920s, surviving Huntsville houses indicate that the major house styles were Bungalow, Tudor or English Cottage, and Colonial Revival, with a few examples of Spanish Colonial Revival and other styles.

The word *bungalow* is rooted in the Bengali (India) word *bangala* that denoted the typical 17th century native dwelling of that region of India (Winter 19). Historic drawings indicate that a *bangala* had wide, low, spreading

hipped roofs covering open verandahs surrounding the enclosed part of the dwelling. The English in India adopted both the word and the dwelling type as an actual and a symbolic retreat to the simple rural life. The type was eventually transplanted to England and then to America with its symbolism, if not its pure form, intact: a return to the simple, rural life (even when built in rows in streetcar subdivisions). The architectural historian Clay Lancaster found the first known American reference to the word *bungalow* in an 1880 issue of *American Architect and Building News* regarding a Cape Cod summer place (Winter 21). Perhaps due to its symbolism, the bungalow found enormous popularity in newly-developed California. Hundreds of “bungalow books”—stock designs—were published, and the style became popular nationwide. Regional types developed, such as the Prairie Style in the Chicago area (Huntsville has two examples of this house style).

The dominant expression of the bungalow is one of easy informality. Remarkably, this comes across whether the bungalow is large or small, expensive or cheap. The means of expression is the use of irregular low spreading forms with wide, exposed-rafter roof eaves,

usually half-timbered roughcast stuccoed walls, large porches, bay windows, etc. The roof usually slopes down to the front to keep the form low. Sunlight picks out the dot-dot-dot rhythm of the rafter ends and highlights the texture of the rough stucco and the deep shadow of the wide porch.

The bungalow's strongest period here was the 1920s, until the 1929 financial crash brought a halt to virtually all construction. The next significant period of residential construction in Huntsville was in the early 1940s when hundreds of small Cape Cod Cottages were built to house workers for the new Redstone and Huntsville Arsenals that were producing chemical warfare munitions in World War II. These houses were covered with cement-asbestos shingles or clapboards and had a simple rectangular gabled form without roof eaves. They were fast and economical to build, which was what was needed at the time.

This Cape Cod Cottage type persisted after World War II until the type the real estate ads call *Ranch-Colonial* became strong in the 1960s. With occasional exceptions, the Ranch-Colonial is the type still most commonly built today. It combines the informality and low rambling form found desirable in the bungalow, with the

tradition, reserve and formality of classicism. Its classical ancestor is the architecture of Andrea Palladio, the 16th century Italian architect. Many of the Ranch-Colonial houses are, except for their low, spreading proportions, very similar to the porticoed, hipped-roofed 16th century villa designs of Palladio. Palladio's work was revived in England in the early 18th century and his 1570 book *The Four Books Of Architecture* was republished and had a great influence in England and, consequently, in the American colonies. The Georgian and Federal period American architecture owes much to Palladio (as well as to the Baroque period in the case of Georgian and to the work of the 18th century English architect Robert Adam in the case of Federal). Many of the Tuscan-porticoed 1960-1985 Huntsville houses could fairly be called *Ranch Palladian* (see Fig. 14, page 31).

Huntsville has a wide variety of 20th century houses that will become even more interesting to us as we realize that the 20th century is now drawing to a close (only about fifteen years remain in the 20th century). It is time we study them more seriously. Perhaps this brief overview will help whet our interest.



*Fig.1 This 1899 house at 308 Eustis Avenue illustrates that the Victorian styles held sway right up to and partly into the 20th century. This Eastlake-style house is of unusually fine detailing and workmanship. The pressed-brick walls have extremely tight, barely invisible mortar joints, for the objective of brickwork of this period was for the wall to appear monolithic. The architect is unknown. A nearby church with similar brickwork has recently had its joints gouged out and wide, white mortar joints installed, as a sad revision to the original beauty of the walls.  
Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



*Fig.2 The architect Herbert Cowell designed this 1901 Dutch Colonial house at 603 Franklin Street, using a Dutch-Colonial gambrel roof combined with late-Victorian massing (vertical, narrow, irregular). A small Gothic vent is in the gable. The windows are quite wide and squarish in proportion, unlike those in the Victorian styles. A balustrade once ran along its porch roof, as evidenced by the base for it, and there may have been a balustrade also at the porch floor level that ran between the masonry piers that support the porch columns. Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



*Fig.3 Architect Herbert Cowell designed this finely-detailed, well-constructed, circa 1902 house at 501 Franklin Street. It is an amalgam of mostly classical elements such as Ionic fluted columns, Adamesque frieze, modillioned cornice, balustrades, etc. with some holdover influence of the Victorian period as seen in the broken flowing massing and the chimneys with vertical inset ribs—a Queen Anne device, as is the pebble-finish tympanum and use of stained glass. This house is a very free, unacademic expression of predominantly Colonial Revival elements that might best be called Free Classic in style, a recognized term of the period. Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



*Fig. 4 A free adaptation of the Colonial Revival style is represented in this 1907 house at 418 McClung Avenue. While the basic design is technically Colonial Revival (boxy shape, hipped roof, fanlighted and sidelighted entry, modillions, Palladian dormer, sash-blinds, etc.), the proportions are vastly different from the late-Georgian ancestors of this fine house. The roof eaves are about three feet wide—over three times as wide as those of an 18th century Georgian house. The modillions at the eaves are gargantuan in comparison to 18th century ones. On the other hand, the clapboards are extremely narrow, about one-third as wide as in the Georgian period. All this disregard for academic correctness comes off splendidly, and the result is an excellent early 20th century house instead of a pale copy of an 18th century one. Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



*Fig. 5 In 1909, Huntsville architect Edgar Love designed this fine early bungalow at 531 Franklin Street. Notice the kick of the roof-ridge ends—a refinement found in at least one other Huntsville bungalow. The zigzag roof and bay window give this bungalow an informal and welcoming air. Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



*Fig.6 The 1914 house at 612 East Holmes Avenue could be termed a Swiss-style bungalow. It bears a strong family resemblance to many 17th and 18th century Swiss rural houses, with its use of fieldstone, natural wood shingles, and steep gabled roof. The wide, low shed-roofed dormer is also found on old Swiss houses (Smith 52,53). These Swiss forms, including the use of rough-cast stucco and false half-timber, are found on many bungalows, and it would be fair to say that old Swiss houses were a major influence on the bungalow style. Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



*Fig. 7 Huntsville has two examples of the Prairie Style. One of them is the 1919 house at 709 East Randolph Avenue—a bungalow substyle developed in the Chicago area. Not only that, but it is closely patterned after a house designed by the famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright, published in the April 1907 Ladies' Home Journal as "A Fireproof House for \$5,000" (Brooks 123). There seems little doubt that this house was derived from Wright's design, the only significant difference being the large entry porch rather than Wright's trellis and terrace shown beside the entry. The contractor was J. Nathan Williams. Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



*Fig.8 This pair of small identical bungalows at 430 and 432 Locust Avenue were built in 1923. They were probably built from stock plans on speculation, as many houses were in the 1920s boom period. The front porches were likely enclosed later, for screened front porches are not common in this period. The builder of these houses is unknown.  
Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



*Fig. 9 The Swiss influence was strong in many bungalows. The 1922 bungalow at 418 Locust Avenue exhibits the Swiss influence (long, low swooping roof, large dormer, stucco, false half-timber), but not in a literal manner (Smith 52,53). Notice the missing porch columns—a deliberate design feature. It would be an error to replace them. This house was built by Fisk & Hopper, contractors. Its design probably came from a bungalow book of stock plans. Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



*Fig. 10 These mill-worker's rental houses on north Meridian Street were probably built in the early 1920s by Lincoln Mills. While small and modest, the houses display the bungalow characteristics of wide, low eaves with exposed rafter-ends, wide front porch and rough-cast stuccoed walls. In its squarish hip-roofed form, these bungalows are actually closer to the original Bengali bangala than most of the more elaborate Swiss-influenced versions. Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



*Fig. 11 The pair of nearly-identical stuccoed houses found at 136 and 138 Walker Avenue represent the Spanish Colonial Revival style, rare in Huntsville but very common in some other cities. The houses were built in 1929 by Harold Riggins. The ceramic pan-tile roofs are probably the 56-year-old originals. These small houses are unusually good examples of their style. Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



*Fig. 12 The sculptural chimney, dark brick, and steep roof denote this house as being of the English Cottage style. This house at 609 Randolph Avenue was built circa 1930. This style is frequently referred to as Tudor. The Old House Journal feels that this term should be restricted to half-timber versions of this English Renaissance Revival style.  
Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



*Fig. 13 A large subdivision of houses similar to this house on Sewanee Road was built in the early 1940s during World War II to house Redstone and Huntsville Arsenal workers. Its style is derived from old New England cottages, except with a front porch added, and thus could be called a Cape Cod Cottage revival style.*

*Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



*Fig.14 The 1960s house on Lucerne Drive is one of Huntsville's many latter 20th century Ranch Colonial examples. This one unwittingly relates very closely to the designs of the 16th century architect Andrea Palladio (see text) and thus is a good candidate for the term Ranch Palladian. The design may be from a stock plan or from a house-plan service (local drafting companies that work up plans for speculative builders, usually as modifications and variations on the builder's favorite plans). This neighborhood has several houses of nearly identical plans, but with exterior variations and reverses. Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



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### Credits:

Historical data on individual structures (dates, architect, contractor) are from the City of Huntsville Planning Department, Linda Bayer Allen, Historical Planner. All photographs were taken by Harvie P. Jones, FAIA.



## Remembering Harvie

...I know of no single individual more important to the progress of Judson College in this decade than [Harvie]...His work...[is] invested in the lives of young women....

David E. Potts, President Judson College

Marion, Alabama

Shortly after moving into an old house, I had the privilege of seeing Harvie P. Jones give one of his famous slide presentations. On the screen suddenly appeared a picture of our banister. I nudged the lady next to me and proudly announced, "That's our banister!" just as Harvie said: "Now this is an example of poor workmanship."

Dot Johnson, Huntsville

# A Brief Sketch of Huntsville's School Architecture: 1882-1975

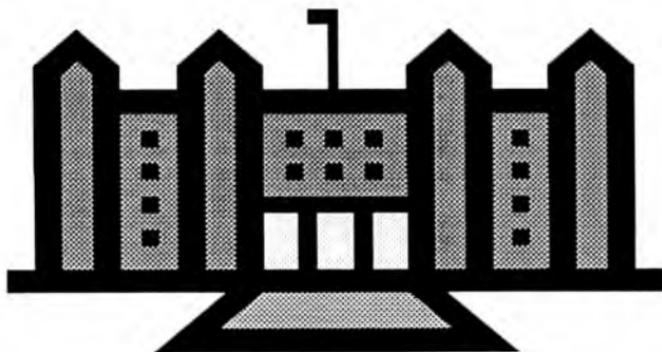
*Harvie P. Jones, FAIA*

## Introduction

“The search continues, as it always will, for the best way to create a physical environment conducive to learning,” Harvie P. Jones wrote in his essay on the architecture of Huntsville's schools. His point is that school buildings, like the schools housed in them, constantly change in response to the changing educational climate.

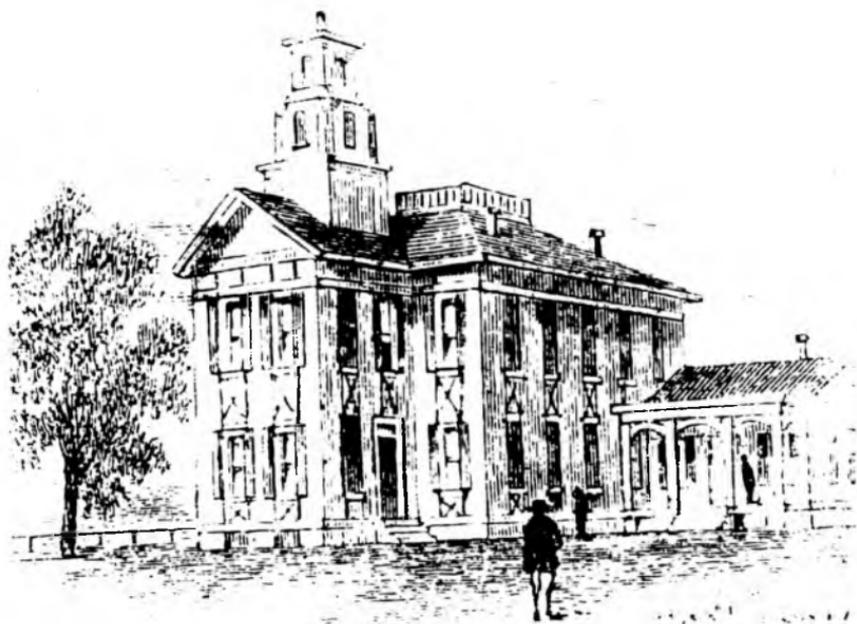
Demographic changes, shifts in educational responsibility between the private and public sectors, shifts between centralized and neighborhood schools, and changes in educational theory have affected the design of our schools as much as the hard realities of budgets and materials. Harvie's essay, and the accompanying photographs, describe the changing appearance—and the reasons underlying those changes—of our schools. Written in 1986 (Vol. XII, Nos. 3 & 4, Spring/Summer, 1986), the essay provides a means of describing and evaluating schools that have been built since then.

In view of the myriad challenges to today's schools, Harvie's underlying thesis is of particular relevance: New educational situations, he suggests, have always required, and usually prompted, new architectural remedies. His hope is expressed in the essay's last sentence: “Future architects, school boards, faculties/staffs will continue efforts to make the buildings work as well as possible as one element in aiding learning.”



Prior to 1882, Huntsville's school buildings were all private. In the early 19th century, it was widely felt that "taxing one man's property to educate another man's child" was not proper, according to Lawrence A. Cremlin's *Transformation of the School*. Others, such as Horace Mann and Catherine Beecher, viewed education as a public enterprise (Andrew Guilloford, *America's Country Schools*). By 1873, efforts were under way in Huntsville to establish a public school system. In 1875, the system was formally established and the first public school building was completed in 1882.

This first public school building was located on a site that has been used continuously for educational facilities since the first quarter of the 19th century—the block bounded by East Clinton Avenue, White Street, Calhoun Street, and East Holmes Avenue. This site has successively accommodated Green Academy, a private school of considerable reputation, built in 1822 and burned in the Civil War; the first public school building, built in 1882; a large twelve-grade public school built about 1902; and East Clinton Elementary School, built in 1938.



*Fig.1 Huntsville's first public school building was built in 1882 on the site of the present East Clinton Elementary School.*

*Courtesy Huntsville/Madison County Public Library.*

The 1882 building, based on an extant sketch and description, contained two large classrooms, two small classrooms, and a chapel [also used as an] assembly room (see Fig. 1, page 34). The cubically-proportioned two-story building was a curious mixture of stylistic influences: Italianate form and proportions, a Colonial Revival belfry reminiscent of a New England 18th century church (minus the spire), and Victorian stick-style spandrel decorations between the upper and lower windows. The windows were tall and closely spaced in the Italianate manner to provide plenty of light and ventilation for the interior. What appear to be metal stove-flues penetrate the roof at each room location. The building bears a strong family-resemblance to several of the 1880-1900 period schools shown in Andrew Guilliford's *America's Country Schools*.

In 1882, the school census indicates only 133 of 800 Huntsville students attended this public school. Apparently there were several private schools in operation at this time.

An indication of how rapidly the public school system was growing in the late 19th century was that this first small school building was demolished in just twenty short years to make way for a much larger building in about 1902 (see Fig. 2, page 35). A photograph appears to indicate that this 1902 building contained at least twelve classrooms for the twelve grades it housed, and had an auditorium at the center. This was a two-story red-brick Romanesque-Revival influenced design, with rounded-arch openings at the belfry tower and entry, and castellated parapets at the tower top and end-towers. A tall pyramidal spire topped the castellated belfry tower.



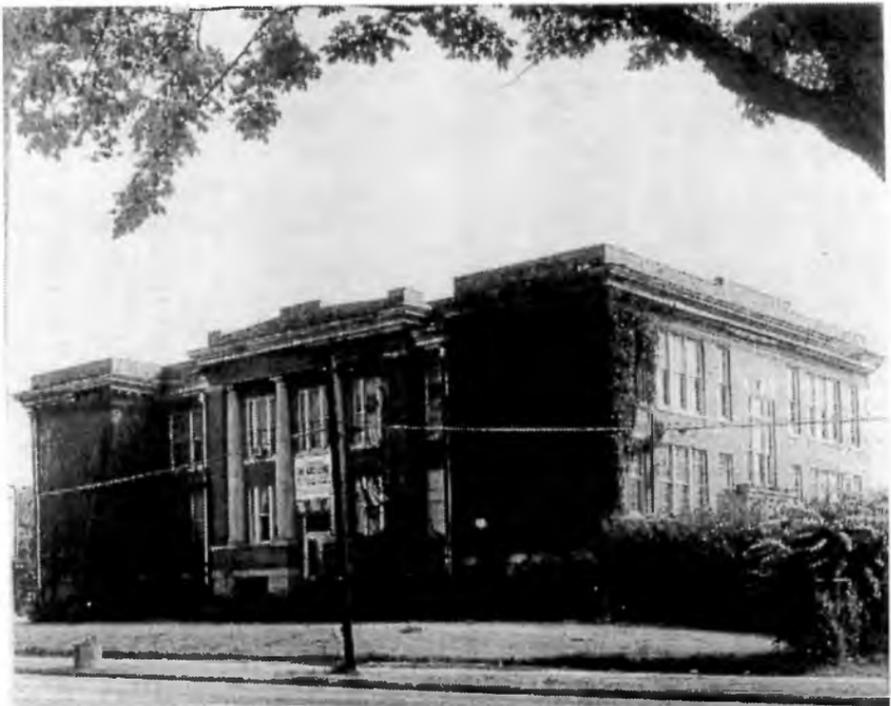
Fig. 2 This larger brick building was erected only twenty years later (1902) on the same East Clinton Avenue site as the first frame building.  
Courtesy Huntsville/Madison County Public Library.

A new and modern feature was the grouping of six windows directly together to form large continuous window-walls at the class-rooms, maximizing light and ventilation. Many classrooms had windows on two walls, further improving lighting and ventilation. The solid, monumental air of the building served to communicate the perceived importance of public education to the community and to visitors.

By 1916, public education in Huntsville had grown to the point that a separate high school was needed. It was built on West Clinton Avenue two blocks west of Jefferson Street

(see Fig.3, page 36). This school was a handsome Classical Revival brick two-story-plus-basement structure with a Tuscan-columned portico, heavy roof-cornice, roof-parapets, and a rusticated wall-base. It contained at least fifteen classrooms, plus more rooms in the basement, and a good-sized auditorium with a sloped floor and proscenium-arch stage. Unlike the previous schools, this high school had a central heating system consisting of a boiler and radiators served by distribution pipes.

This 1916 building has a fond place in the hearts of many Huntsvillians



*Fig.3 In 1916 another brick building was constructed as a separate high school on West Clinton Avenue two blocks west of Jefferson Street. Courtesy Huntsville/Madison County Public Library.*

who never attended school there. From about 1962 until 1974, it served as the temporary Civic Arts Center and as offices for the recently formed Arts Council. The building saw hundreds of plays, art exhibits, dance and painting classes, rehearsals, and arts activities of every description. Huntsville's greatest period of growth and maturity in the arts was accommodated in this building.

Only ten years later, it was necessary to expand Huntsville's high school capacity. By this time, the private schools were a minor factor in education, and the town was growing rapidly in the 1920s boom. Thus in 1927, a new Huntsville High School was built near the corner of

Randolph Avenue and White Street (see Fig.4, page 37). This was a full three-story building containing about eighteen classrooms. The stylistic influence, like that of the 1916 high school, was the Renaissance. A trio of rounded arches and Tuscan colonettes graced the raised entry, atop a flight of monumental steps. On the parapet above the entry was a double baroque scroll and urn ornament, later lost to lightning. The ornamentation at the entry, which appears to be cut limestone, is in fact "cast stone," or cement and sand cast into elaborate moulds to resemble cut limestone. The classroom windows were wood, divided-light, double-hung sashes in banks of five. These windows in the 1960s were



*Fig.4 The 1927 high school at the corner of Randolph Avenue and White Street. It will soon be renovated to serve as administrative offices for the city schools. Courtesy Huntsville/Madison County Public Library.*



Fig.5 Lincoln School, still in use as an elementary school, was built by Lincoln Mills in 1929 at 1110 Meridian Street.

Courtesy Huntsville/Madison County Public Library.

replaced with inappropriate aluminum ranch-style windows, which the school board presently hopes to remove in a restoration of this handsome building. The various wings were also added in the 1960s.

There was rapid growth in cotton-goods manufacturing in Huntsville from the late 19th century through the 1920s. The various mill villages built just outside the city limits included not only the mills, but also housing, commercial buildings, and schools. Rison School (1920), Lincoln School (1929), and Joe Bradley School were three of these. Joe Bradley is gone, Rison will be de-

molished shortly for I-565, but Lincoln is still in excellent condition and is being used as Lincoln Elementary School (see Fig.5, page 38). The monolithic reinforced concrete structure is so sound that (in the words of the School Maintenance Department) "it could probably be rolled end-over-end without hurting it much." Lincoln School's stylistic category could be termed *stripped Renaissance Classical*. It has the pilasters, stepped parapets, high central block flanked by lower wings, Tuscan colonettes, and cove-corner spandrels that can be seen in more elaborate buildings of Renaissance Revival design.



*Fig.6 By 1938 the East Clinton Avenue site had yet another school, this Art Deco style building, which is still in use as East Clinton Elementary School. Courtesy Huntsville/Madison County Public Library.*

Rison School (1920) reflects the Spanish Colonial Revival in a simplified form. It is low and rambling, stucco with brick archways, has a steep pitched roof, and is U-shaped around a central courtyard. [Editor's note: Rison School has been demolished. See *Historic Huntsville Quarterly* Vol.XXIV, No.3, Fall 1998, page 40 for picture of school.]

By 1938, the 1902 school on East Clinton Avenue (described earlier) had been demolished and replaced with the present East Clinton Elementary School (see Fig.6, page 39). Its style is Art Deco, one of the

first of the so-called *modern* 20th century styles that made a conscious effort to avoid borrowing from ancient styles. This style is exemplified in the chevrons, flutes, and circles at the entry. The light-colored one-story brick building is in an *E* shape (but not because it is *E. Clinton School*) with the assembly room in the center leg of the *E*. Thus, this 1938 building is the fourth on the Clinton Street site, which has been used only for educational buildings since the Green Academy first occupied the site in 1822, a period of 164 years.

Blossomwood and Westlawn Elementary Schools (1956) were the first Huntsville schools influenced by the modern International Style, wherein walls are treated as rectangular panels and modulation of surfaces is minimized. Variety of form is achieved by pushing and pulling the panels (walls) in and out, up and down. Planes rather than masses are emphasized. The window walls at Blossomwood consist of *curtain walls* of prefabricated window-plus-spandrel units bolted or welded into place to entirely fill the wall opening (see Fig. 7, page 41). Inside lighting is balanced by using skylights in the corridors and clerestories to borrow daylight from the corridors.

The space-boom years of 1954-1968 saw the construction of an amazing thirty-plus schools and school additions. This is about three-fourths of all school buildings existing in the City of Huntsville school system. In the late fifties, the honest boast was made that Huntsville was building schools at the average rate of "one classroom per week" to meet the huge influx of students. This large number of new schools, up until 1966, shared a number of characteristics. They were nearly all one-story, and as a consequence, rambled over their sites in a loose arrangement of low, flat-roofed wings. Many used curtain walls and all had a full wall of windows at one side of each classroom. Many had skylights

in the classrooms and other spaces. An awkward hybrid word—*cafetoriums*—was devised by some planner to describe the combination cafeteria-auditoriums used in the smaller schools. These *cafetoriums* usually were considerably taller than the rest of the building and sometimes had irregular-profile roofs, as well, to give a visual accent to the sprawling building.

In design, the 1954-66 buildings were deliberately non-monumental, in contrast to the earlier buildings. They were strongly influenced by the International Style and also by the research and design of such nationally-known architects as Caudill, Rowlett, Scott, and Perkins and Will. An influential book of 1958 was *Schoolhouse*, edited by Walter McQuade and published by Simon and Schuster. This book went far beyond style and attempted to analyze the human factors in the educational process with the hoped-for result of more humane educational spaces. These buildings did achieve an informality, but humaneness is more than mere informality. The search continues, as it always will, for the best way to create a physical environment conducive to learning.

In the mid-1960s, an organization, funded by foundation grants, called Educational Facilities Laboratories (EFL) had a strong and almost revolutionary impact on school design



*Fig.7 Blossomwood Elementary, built in 1956, was one of Huntsville's first school buildings influenced by the International Style.  
Courtesy Huntsville/Madison County Public Library.*



*Fig.8 The 1972 J.O. Johnson High School design utilizes both the pod and individual classrooms in its arrangement.  
Courtesy Huntsville/Madison County Public Library.*

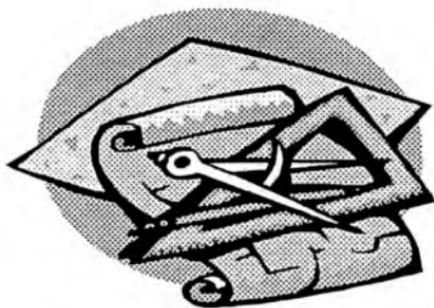
and methods of teaching here and nationally. The concept of *team teaching* was in the experimental stages, and EFL devised ways of reshaping the typical school of straight rows and self-contained thirty-student, one-teacher classrooms to work with the idea of team-teaching. EFL grouped the classrooms so that a team of three to six teachers could work with varying groups of students in a large flexible space that sometimes could be subdivided into smaller spaces. A teachers' planning room was adjacent so that teachers could indeed plan as a team. Windows, with the common advent of air conditioning and fluorescent lighting, were reduced or eliminated since uncontrolled daylight interfered with audio-visual aids such as films, television, and overhead projectors. One of the most visually startling aspects of this design revolution was that the boxy, planar International Style buildings of the 1950's were replaced by schools of many shapes.

Huntsville's first elementary school of this type was McDonnell Elementary (1967), whose pods of classrooms were a cluster of five hexagons, each accommodating 120 students, four teachers and an assistant, restrooms, and a teachers' planning room. Butler High School (1967), Chaffee (1969), Grissom (1969), and Ed White (1969) were similarly

more free in geometric form than the pre-1967 schools.

Huntsville's first school that was a result of an extensive programming study was J.O. Johnson High School (1972). An educational consultant was engaged. A large study committee was formed from staff and faculty members. A year's effort resulted in a highly detailed program whose philosophy was to encourage initiative in students, then to aid the student in highly flexible ways in achieving his goals. While pods and team-teaching were involved, it was in a more flexible arrangement than in the latter 1960s plans. It contained both pods and individual classrooms where they were appropriate (see Fig. 8, page 41).

The best that any school building can do is to interfere as little as possible with the learning process. Buildings cannot educate anyone—they can only make the process a little more pleasant. Future architects, school boards, faculties/staffs will continue efforts to make the buildings work as well as possible as one element in aiding learning.



**The Winston-Orgain-Sammons House**  
**Historic Huntsville *Quarterly*,**  
Vol. XIV, Nos. 2 & 3, Winter/Spring, 1988

**Introduction**

This reprint features only Harvie P. Jones' drawings of one of Alabama's earliest houses, the circa 1815 Winston-Orgain-Sammons house, 401 Lincoln Street. Harvie made the drawings in 1984 and 1985 when, as preservation architect, he researched and restored the Federal-style house for the Calame Sammons family.

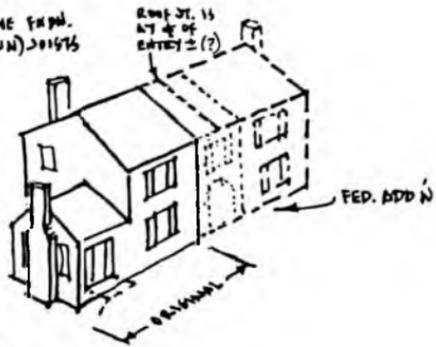
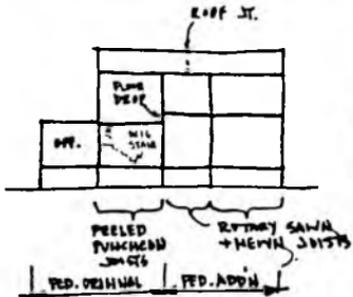
Studying Harvie's drawings, it is possible to trace the evolution of the house from the circa 1815 half-house (one room down, one up, at the north end of the present structure) to a symmetrical two-story residence. Several years after the original construction, another pair of rooms and a connecting stairhall were built to the south of the half-house, and a one-story office was added on the north side. In the late Victorian period, a bracketed front porch and two closets were built; a large enclosed back porch was added after 1913.

Discovery of interesting details confirming the house's history afforded some reward for the tedium and mess involved in opening the sealed fireplaces and removing wallpaper and plaster. The Sammonses lived in the house during restoration and did much of the preliminary work themselves, fully experiencing the challenges of restoring an old residence. Their pleasure in their accomplishment is vividly conveyed by writer Aida Reinbolt, whose article on the house's evolution and restoration accompanied Harvie's drawings.

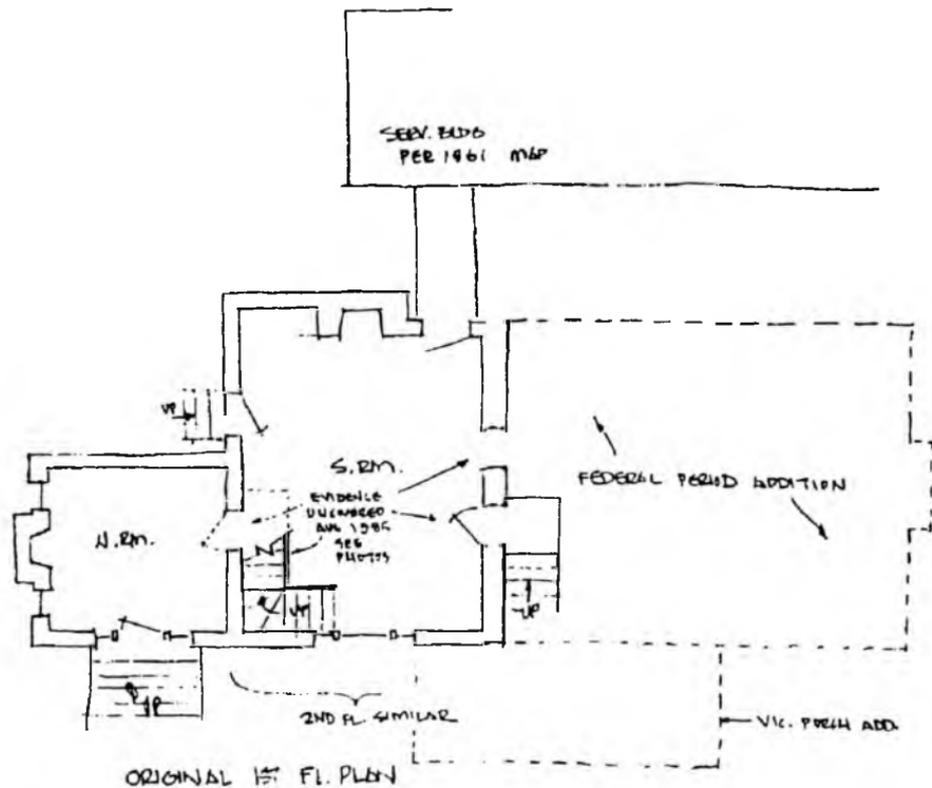
As Reinbolt notes: "Tracing the outlines of a historic home is similar to solving a mystery." Harvie's preliminary visualization, she noted, proved gratifyingly correct when "the old wallpaper and plaster were removed and the floorboards taken up during renovation." The drawings of the Winston-Orgain-Sammons House prove once again Harvie P. Jones' remarkable abilities as an architectural sleuth.



**ORIGINAL HOUSE:** 401 Lincoln Street  
 PLYMOUTH BOND, EXPOSED STONE FRM, PUNCHED FL JOINTS  
**FED. ADDITION:** 17  
 BUNNING BOND (NO HEADIES) HT. EXPOS. STONE FRM. SAWH (+ HEAVY) JOISTS



3117 N. 199A  
 HR Jones  
 Revis. 7 Sept '85



ORIGINAL 1<sup>ST</sup> FL. PLAN

1815 WINKLIN-OGGIN HOUSE  
401 LINCOLN ST., HUNTSVILLE, AL.  
NO SCALE - APPROX. 1/8" = 1 FT.  
7 SEPT. 1985 H.P. JONES, PH.D.







## Art in Architecture Some Huntsville Examples

*Harvie P. Jones, FAIA*

### Introduction

In the late summer of 1989, David M. Robb, then director of the Huntsville Museum of Art, invited Harvie P. Jones to present a lecture on “Art in Architecture” at the museum, in connection with a temporary museum exhibition about contemporary architectural ornament. In late 1989, when Elise Stephens became the *Quarterly’s* third editor, she was “keen on securing this [presentation] as the *Quarterly’s* first article under its new editor,” and she wrote the delightful biography, which appears at the end of Harvie’s text in the Historic Huntsville *Quarterly*, Winter/Spring, 1990.

Harvie’s slide lecture was stimulating and informative, especially as it featured many fine view and detail color slides taken by Harvie himself. He was a meticulous and thoughtful photographer. One of his more evocative views, seen from an upper window of Dallas Mills, was acquired by the museum for its regional photography collection.

From the Federal period on, Huntsville is included in Harvie’s architectural history. Details from many Huntsville buildings, visually stripped of their environmental context, could as easily be those of buildings in London or Philadelphia. Taken out of context, these details help Harvie show that Huntsville’s architectural history is part of the impressive achievements of 19th and 20th century architecture. And recent examples—up to the 1980s—suggest that these connections are still present, even if a discerning eye is required to perceive them.

Many of us recall Harvie’s walks to and from his office, and his pleasure in guiding walking tours of Huntsville’s architectural past. Walk, he urged. Look carefully at details. “You will not see such things at 15 m.p.h. in a car,” he advised. He is right.

## ART IN ARCHITECTURE - SOME HUNTSVILLE EXAMPLES -

Harvie P. Jones, F.A.I.A.

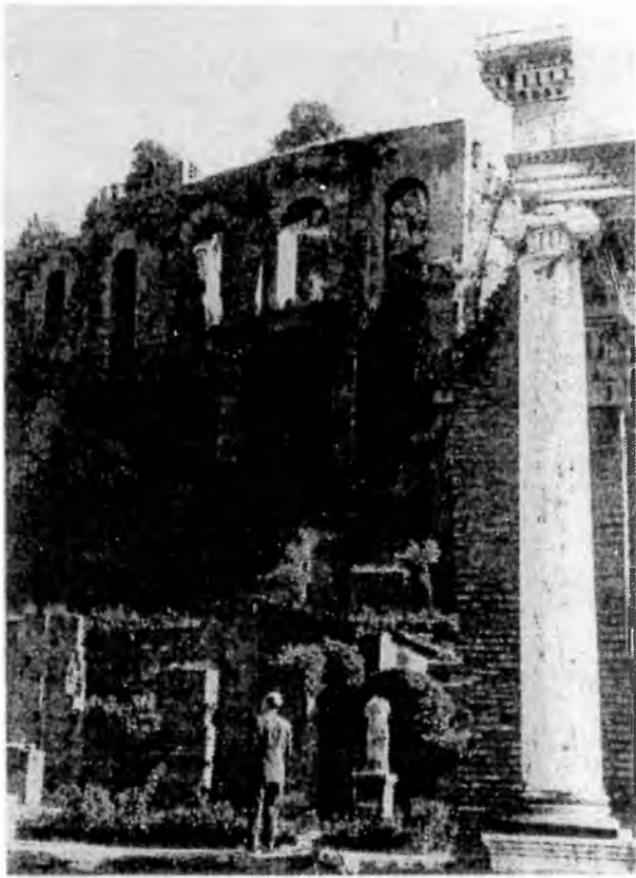
People throughout history have used art to raise the spaces they occupy to a cultural and symbolic level above that of mere shelter. The definition of the art of "architecture" versus "building" is that architecture goes beyond bare functional needs and attempts to address the human spirit and esthetic sense. "Art in Architecture" could be defined as architectural features which require artistic skills of sculpture, mosaics, or painting that are different from those of the architect.

The earliest known examples of what could be called art in architecture are perhaps the cave paintings of France, which date back to the Cro-Magnon period, up to 35,000 years ago. The cave paintings are thought to be ceremonial and religious rather than mere decoration or a recording of successful hunts, and much of the history of art in architecture to the present day addresses these same symbolic purposes. The ancient temples of Egypt, Greece, and Rome served the



(1) Egyptian relief carving in stone, 1370 B.C. The Egyptians used murals, reliefs and sculptured architectural elements in their buildings. Their tapered columns with base, shaft and plant-like capitals must surely have influenced the development of the later Greek forms, for the basic elements and ideas are quite similar.

same symbolic and ceremonial ends in a vastly more refined and ambitious way. Much architectural art has also been devoted to glorifying particular rulers, their battles, and power. Yet, we know that art was used to make ancient dwellings (be they palaces or ordinary houses) more pleasant places in which to live. The excavated Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, covered by volcanic ash in A.D. 79, have provided us with many intact examples of such domestic art in the form of murals, mosaics, and sculptured architectural elements.



The best "art in architecture" is that which is inseparably integrated into the building elements rather than merely applied like an afterthought. A Greek ionic column is a structural member, yet it is much more. It is a work of high art, involving a sophisticated yet simple use of geometry in plotting the gentle swell of the column shaft, the spiral curve of the ~~vaults~~ and the elliptical cross-

(2) **The Roman Forum.** These 2,000 year-old sculptured "orders" (columns & cornices) were influenced by those of the conquered Greeks, but were altered in proportion to express the power of the Roman civilization.

sections of the base-moulds. Its proportions were refined over a considerable time period. The earliest examples were quite crude in comparison to the later ones.

The ancient Greek temples have

an air of restrained intellectual sophistication (except in their coatings of wildly bright paints such as turquoise and red-orange, long ago washed off but evidenced by paint traces and excavated intact structures). By contrast, the medieval Gothic churches and cathedrals exuded a feeling of vigorous but crude spirituality (which effectively overwhelmed the intellectual aura of their highly sophisticated structural systems). The Renaissance saw a return to sophistication and refinement with the new and original use of the classical forms and "orders" first developed by the ancient Greeks, and then modified by the Romans 1,500 years before the Renaissance.

The Baroque period following the Renaissance retained the ancient classical elements but used them in a highly exuberant and experimental manner. The word "baroque" originally meant a misshapen pearl, and was a term of derogation for the "misshapen" Baroque architecture. "Gothic" was similarly a derogatory term. In our own era, the now-beloved post-Impressionist painters of early-twentieth century France were initially labeled "wild beasts" (Les Fauves) by a critic. New art is apparently never comfortable art, at first.

Frank Lloyd Wright, probably America's greatest architect (and who integrated abstract art into an inseparable and organic part of his buildings), was not accepted and recognized by the architectural establishment until he was an old man.

The 18th century American version of the English Georgian style was an outgrowth of the 16th century Baroque. Its elements of sculpture included broken pediments, urns, and heavy-turned and sculptured balusters: all classical elements derived from the ancient Roman/Greek forms but heavily modified to suit 18th century tastes.

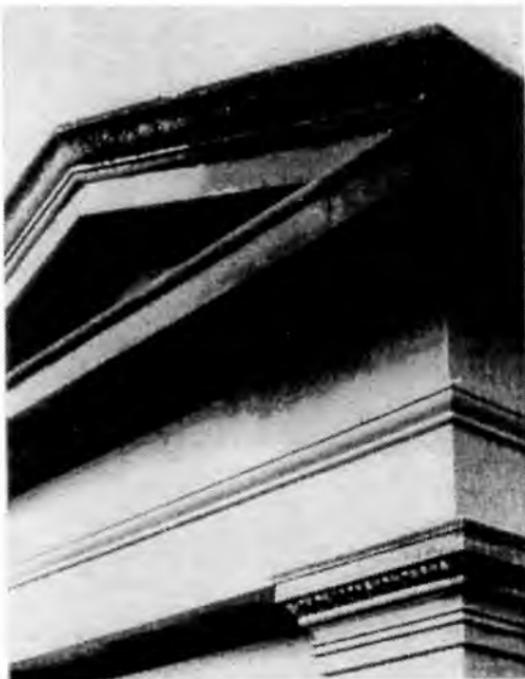
Perhaps as a reaction to the heaviness of the Georgian, the Federal Period (called Neoclassical in England) emphasized lightness and delicacy. Classical elements were still used in the Federal Period but were totally transformed in effect by extreme attenuation. Columns were very slender and mouldings were thin, stretched, and light. Paint colors were rich, bright, and multi-hued (George Washington's recently restored dining room at Mt. Vernon is a good and carefully-researched example). Huntsville has a number of fairly intact Federal Period examples. One that is both re-

stored and accessible is the 1819 Maria Howard Weeden House museum. Another accessible example is the reconstructed Constitution Hall Village.

The Greek Revival of circa 1835-55 (in Huntsville) saw a return to heaviness of scale, this time based more on ancient Greek proportions and forms.

Architecture, along with all esthetic endeavors, has always been see-sawing from one extreme to another, and as the 19th century wore on, the see-saw speeded up to a dizzying pace with several competing styles proceeding simultaneously, and with admixtures of several sty-

listic influences incorporated in many single buildings. The latter part of the 19th century included such styles as Gothic Revival, Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Egyptian Revival, Queen Anne, Eastlake, Stick Style, Second Empire, Beaux Arts Classical, and others, all loosely lumped together as "Victorian."



The first half of the 20th century was the heyday of both abstract art and "abstract" architecture. It was felt that buildings of pure geometry, properly proportioned, were all the "art" that was needed, and were expressive of modern machine

(3) 1835 tomb in Maple Hill Cemetery signed by the Huntsville architect George Steele. A small and elegant example of the Greek Revival in sculptured limestone. Maple Hill Cemetery is a vast sculpture-garden with statuary, stained glass, cast iron, and a 170-year assortment of funerary art. In the 19th century, cemeteries such as Maple Hill were designed as places for pleasant Sunday strolls, and if you can subdue any hangups about death, they are still so. Many strollers can be seen in Maple Hill, for they know a pleasant and interesting place for a walk when they see it.



(4) The Church of the Nativity, 1859. Detail of ornament cast into the Gothic-Revival gatepost. This gatepost is an example of mid-19th century industrialization; an identical design can be found at a Mobile cemetery. Cast-iron building components in 1859 could be picked out of catalogues just as most parts for buildings are today.



(5) Overall view of the cast-iron gate at the 1859 Church of the Nativity.



(6) First Methodist Church, circa 1870. This Romanesque-Revival church building has characteristic round-top windows whose arch bolection-moulds rest on sculptured heads, just as seen in the 10th century European Romanesque works. The grouping of the windows in pairs is an Italianate device, an example of two stylistic influences in a single building.

(7) Victorian porch, corner of Randolph and White Streets. Architects today should relearn the use of shadows in design. The Victorians understood very well, as this example attests.



technology. Where conventional art was incorporated it was usually as an independent object used as counterpoint, a famous and successful example being the German architect Mies Van Der Rohe's 1929 "Barcelona Pavilion" wherein a modern statue's organic forms, carefully placed in a courtyard, set off the crisp and planar geometry of the small and elegant exhibition building.

The later half of the 20th century has seen a return to exploration of classical forms (in a new and shallow "post-modern" fashion already declared "dead" by the arbiters of architectural fashion). The plethora of recent buildings with triangular-top gable appliques with a circular or semi-circular opening in the triangle is the "hallmark cliché" of "Post Modern." It is a motif first used (elegantly) by the Italian architect Andrea Palladio in the 16th century and now used in a casual knee-jerk fashion on buildings of every sort.

The latest architectural movement, about 10 years old, is "Deconstruction," which looks suspiciously close kin to the old "Constructivism" of the early 20th century. We also have with us "Modern Revival" where the early 20th-century idioms of the

architect Le Corbusier are warmed-over, expanded, and presented as something brand-new. In sum, the later half of the 20th century is an age of architectural eclecticism rivaling that of the Victorian latter 19th century (not even mentioned are "New Brutalism," "High Tech," the "Metabolists," or several other now-forgotten latter 20th century "movements"). There are no accepted current "right answers", so the architectural journals generally attempt to judge buildings on their design quality rather than on their philosophy or antecedents. If history is any guide, a new "right answer" is just around the turn of the century. Whether it will incorporate art as an organic part of the building or as an afterthought add-on, we will have to wait and see.

When first approached by the Huntsville Museum of Art about the subject of Huntsville "Art in Architecture" my offhand and unthinking response was "I don't think we have any of that." I was wrong. A few minutes' reflection brought to mind many examples of all types. Communities which are bigger and richer will have both more and finer examples. Until the mid 20th century, Huntsville was a small town of about the present population of Athens, and rich and

numerous examples of art in architecture are not to be expected. But the collection is well worth a tour to see. Walking is required. Nothing of any detail can be seen or appreciated from a moving

automobile.

The best areas to tour are the historic downtown areas (with public entry available into the several churches and museums), the

Twickenham and Old Town historic districts, and Maple Hill Cemetery. Guide books are available at the Madison County Tourism Board in the Courthouse. Instead of generally and vaguely looking, as most of us normally do, look at details. The form and shape of a column capital, cornice, cast-iron fence post, or even a shadow of an architectural element can be quite beautiful. You will not see such things at 15 m.p.h. in a car.



(8) Adams Street, shadows of a fence combining cast and wrought iron elements enliven an ordinary concrete walk. The shadow is more attractive than the object itself.

The following photographs, all but two from Huntsville, deliberately blank off general views to force you to see the details, which

I wager most viewers will not recognize without reading the captions.

This small selection of details is just a taste of what there is to see for those with an eye for beauty.



(9) Fence of cast and wrought iron elements combined, 310 Williams Avenue, date unknown, perhaps late 19th century. An example of decorative elements economically mass-produced by casting in a mould.

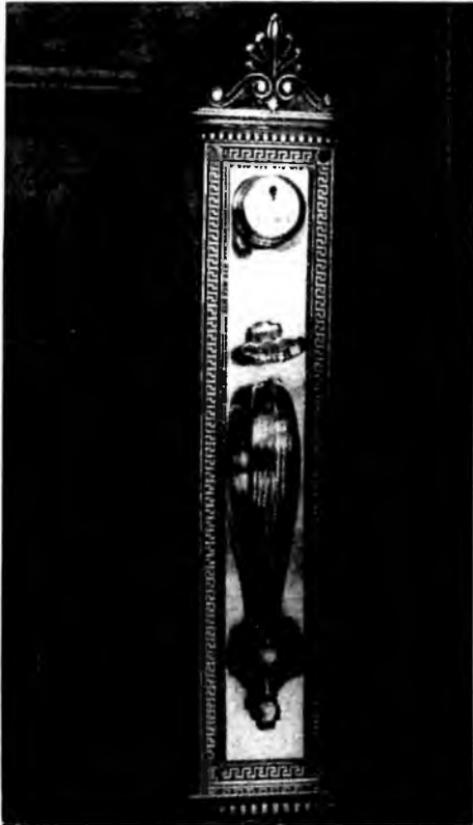


(10) Schiffman Building, 1895, East Side of Square. A fine, lively example of Romanesque Revival, where the idea seemed to be that absolutely nothing lines up or matches, with results that brighten the day of the observer. This is a bracket, carved in stone.



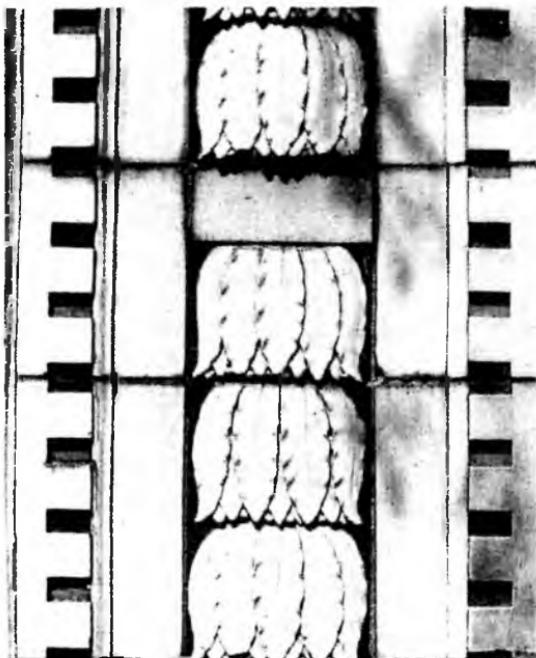
(11) Schiffman Building, 1895, wrought iron basement grille. A utilitarian device treated in an artistic way. A lesson that needs to be relearned.

(12) Schiffman Building, 1895, side-entry stone arch. The fact that only the springer stones of the arch have foliated carving makes them seem more elegant than if all the stones were carved; an example of the power of contrast.

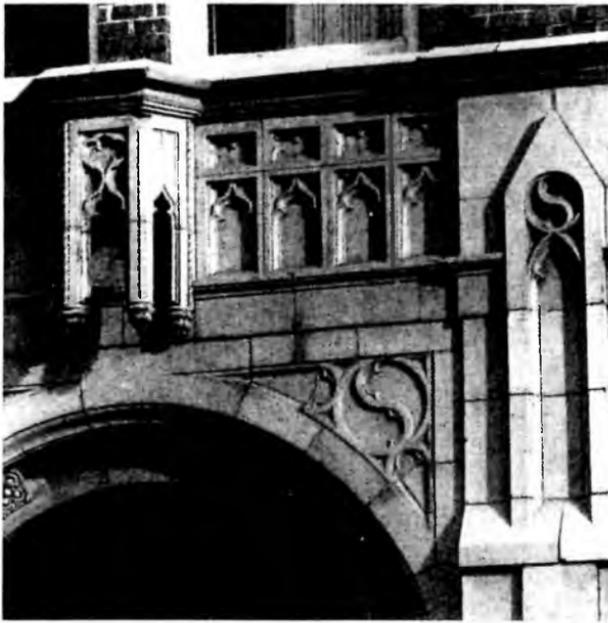


(13) Schiffman Building, 1895, polished brass entry lock.

(14) Struve Building, 1900, Washington Street and Clinton Avenue. Again we see familiar classical elements such as floral swags, an acanthus leaf, and moulded cornices, this time in painted stamped sheet-metal. This method of making fireproof and inexpensive large-scale ornaments for commercial buildings prevailed in the latter 19th century. A number of examples survive in downtown Huntsville, but the naked-looking building tops on the south side of the Square have unfortunately lost their large and elaborate metal cornices.



(15) May and Cooney Dry-Goods Store, 1913, East Side of the Square. Terra cotta floral and geometric forms combining several bright ceramic fused colors. The feeling here is Art Nouveau, particularly in the "M & C" logo at the arch ends. The use of multiple bright glaze colors is unusual for terra cotta.



(16) Terry-Hutchens Building, 1925, Clinton Avenue. An example of "Commercial Gothic" in terra cotta, like the 1928 Times Building but completely different in feeling. The difference is the absence here of the Art Deco influence that is strong in the Times Building.

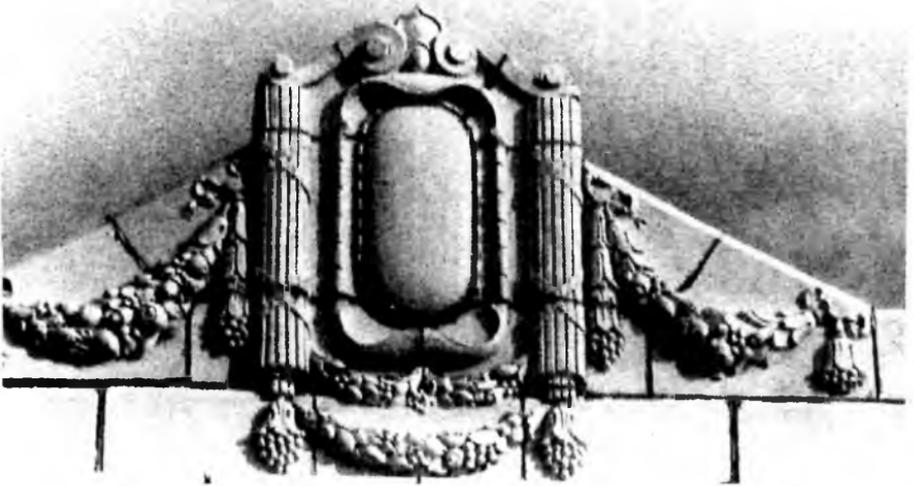


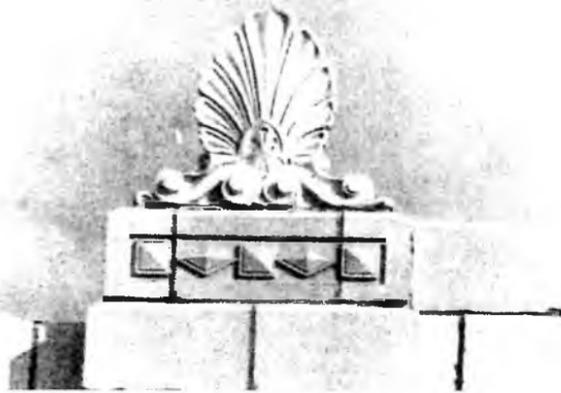
(17) Terry-Hutchens Building, 1928, Clinton Avenue. The top floor window sills of this "Commercial Gothic" office building have gargoyles of bright green glazed terra cotta frogs, each about 12 inches tall. A delightful example of humor and fun in architecture, as was true of their original use in Romanesque and Gothic structures of medieval Europe.



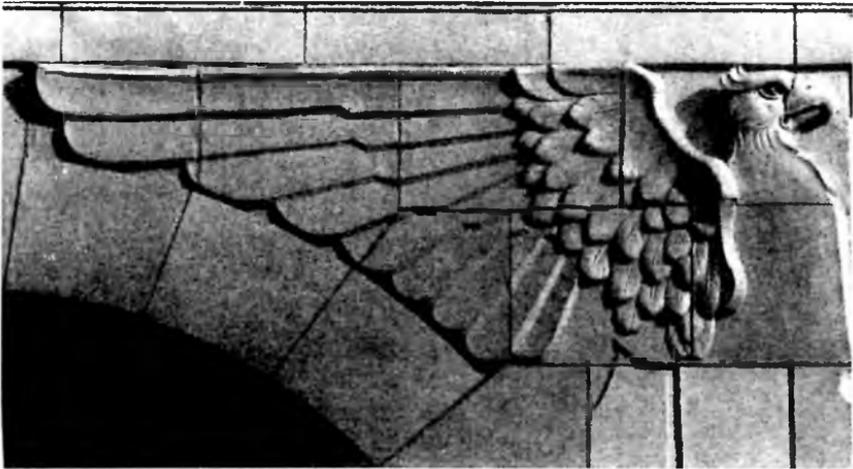
(18) Wall of concrete inverted arches and chain swags, McClung Avenue. Probably 19-teens, as is the house it fronts. A case of an attractive shadow cast by an architectural element.

(19) (below) The Huntsville Times Building, 1928, Holmes Avenue. This Baroque-like cartouche contains classical elements such as floral swags and bundled reeds. It is made of the ancient ceramic material terra cotta ("cooked earth") that was revived and much-used in the latter 19th and early 20th century.





( ) The Huntsville Times Building, 1928, Holmes Avenue. This Baroque-like cartouche contains classical elements such as floral swags and bundled reeds. It is made of the ancient ceramic material terra cotta (“cooked earth”) that was revived and much-used in the latter 19th and early 20th



(21) The Huntsville Times Building, 1928. Four terra cotta eagles like this one guard the two entry arches. The Times Building was Huntsville’s first tall building, and used modified Gothic motifs in an Art Deco way to emphasize the building’s then-audacious twelve-story height.

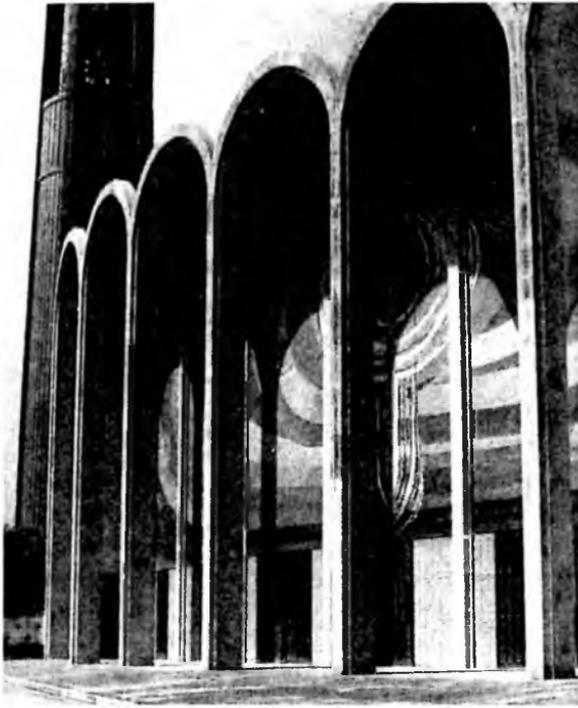


(22) Pediment, old 1932-35 post office (now Federal Court-house) on Holmes Avenue. The *palmette*

element at the corner and the peak of the Pediment is called an acroterion. The proportions and decoration of this Beaux-Arts Classical entry are derived from ancient Greek antecedents.

(23) Greek Orthodox Church, University Drive, 1970's. In contrast to the modern idioms of the mural at the First Baptist Church, these contemporary icons are done to a strict set of stylistic rules laid down in medieval times and still used in Greek Orthodox Churches.





(24) First Baptist Church, 1960, Governors Drive. This ceramic-mosaic mural is probably Huntsville's largest example of architectural art. It is an ancient art form dating back to thousands of years before the time of Christ. This mural was planned as an integral part of the building.

(25) General Shale Brick Co. Office, Whitesburg Drive, 1980's. A carved-brick mural produced by gouging the soft unbaked bricks into the desired profiles, firing them, and laying them up like a conventional brick wall (more tricky than it sounds).



Harvie Jones is the quiet, professorial-looking good citizen people often see picking up litter on his daily treks home to lunch and back. One of Huntsville's most outstanding citizens, his work has brought Huntsville and himself national recognition. The City may dote on the recognition, but Harvie just keeps working, always looking for good architecture to save and restore for future generations.

Featured recently in Clem Labine's Traditional Building, May/June 1989, the magazine recognizes Harvie as "one of the South's leading preservation architects." His training at Georgia Institute of Technology was typical of architecture schools in the 1950's. Harvie was prepared, when he paired up with William Herrin in 1967, to design houses and buildings for Huntsville's space-age future. He and the firm have done plenty of that, the bulk of their business in fact. But as Huntsville expanded its population and spread its city limits, it left much of the older central city intact. This core soon had Harvie all wrapped up in its preservation.

The historical reconstruction of Constitution Hall Park followed by restoration of the Howard Weeden House inspired Harvie to learn every thing he

could about buildings and building techniques in the region's Federal period. These projects lead to others. Now Harvie can count "a library of over 5,000 annotated photographs of more than 200 historic structures," (Shouldn't we have an archives for those photographs?) but he has lost count of the structures he has looked at and advised about.

He has served numerous years on the Alabama Historical Commission and the AIA Committee on Historic Resources. Always happy to share his knowledge and enthusiasm for historic architecture, Harvie has helped produce five audio-visual programs on the subject.

What would he have us learn? "Harvie's approach to restoration is to leave as much original material as feasible, patching in only where necessary." He would stress that "old buildings teach us what wears well over time, both technically and esthetically." Aged bricks, for example, are patinated and look better than new. "Old buildings," he reminds us, "have many lessons to teach about human scale, warmth, and friendliness." Above all, Harvie stresses, "A building of any period, old or recent, deserves to keep its own character."

JONES&HERRIN  
Architecture/Interior Design

July 23, 1996

Mr. Bob Gamble  
Alabama Historical Commission  
468 South Perry Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900

Dear Bob:

Here is another "Perils of Pauline" thriller. The 1880's Bernstein House on Steele Street in Huntsville is a rare and probably unique type in this area—a tiny one-room over one-room Italianate. There was a fire in the early part of the 20th century which destroyed the front veranda (shown on the Sanborn maps) and in doing repairs a makeshift porch and short inappropriate 20th century ranch-house sashes were installed. The chimney base remained to tell us the chimney size, and a patch at the roof cornice gave the size at the top. Most of the roof brackets remained. The stair had been altered, and the crown of the roof cornice had been removed. Enough remained to give good clues except for the details of the veranda. The veranda had a deck on the roof as evidenced by the front upper door trim to it that remained. The veranda roof height was indicated by the second floor door sill. The original window heights and widths were evident by the remaining Italianate jamb-trim. The 1913 Sanborn map gave the approximate size of the veranda.

The low site had been filled-in about a foot in c. 1960, making the crawl space into a pond under the house, causing some wood decay and a stubby sunken appearance to the house.

The house was *homely* indeed, and as the street gentrified I could see what was coming. So in May 1993, I got permission to photograph and study the house, from which I drew a conjectural restored view and sketch-plan to show that the house was once attractive and how it could be adapted to modern living by building a new *background* house behind it, leaving the Italianate house as the *foreground* building. This was distributed with some interest but no results.

In 1995 a young builder, Joe Watson, came before the Huntsville Historic Preservation Commission with a request to demolish the house, which was “beyond saving.” I offered to help him (*pro bono*), and he then expressed strong doubt that anything could be done. We went immediately to the house and went over all the *problems*. He reluctantly agreed to proceed in a tentative way, and I agreed to furnish all architectural details and advice at no cost as a member of the Commission and the Historic Huntsville Foundation.

I later learned that the 1993 sketch planted a helpful seed, for the speculative owner of the lot, Jack Charlton, ended up agreeing to buy the restored and expanded house for his own residence and has just moved in.

This is about the tenth or fifteenth time I’ve seen a *goner* building saved by working on it before the demolition became imminent. The technique I’ve found that works well is to make a restored view sketch such as this (traced over the ugly current photograph) to give people an apples-to-apples comparison. I currently have three other such sketches out for endangered Huntsville houses, on behalf of the Historic Huntsville Foundation.

Also attached is a photo of the 1848 Humphreys-Rodgers House with its rebuilt rear wing (assembled from original components)—another *goner* saved not once but twice (1971 and 1990). On the other hand, the Blevins-Mastin House is now cut into four or five pieces to be moved to the Birmingham area. We can’t win them all, but I’ve found that an advance effort (as opposed to lying down in front of the bulldozers) can save a good percentage of them. After the bulldozers arrive it is almost always too late.

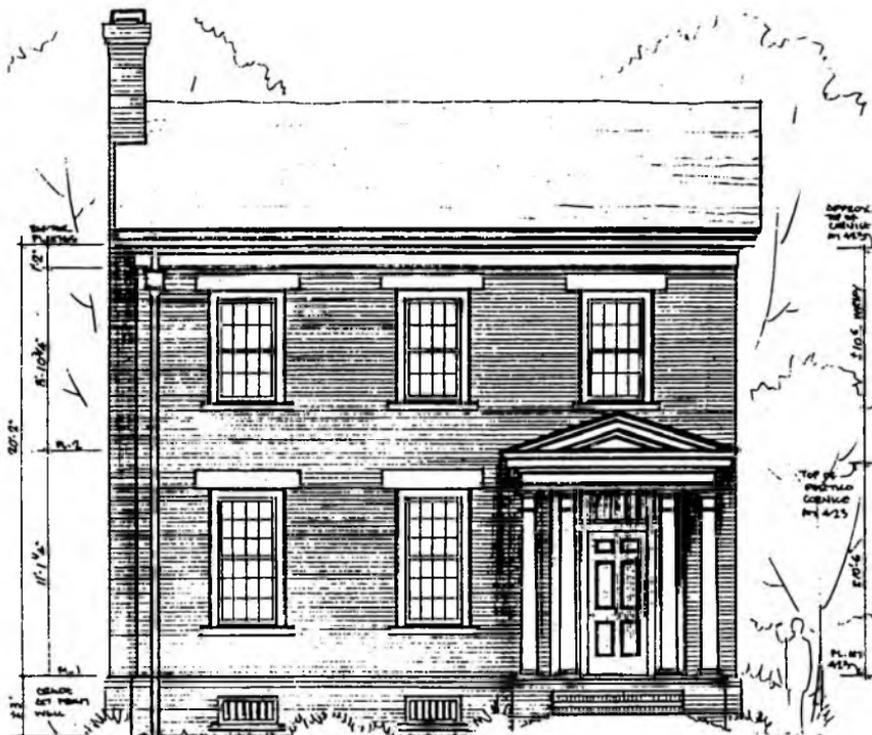
Respectfully,

Harvie P. Jones, FAIA  
HPJ/tm copy: HJ attachments

*Fig. 1 Letter sent by Harvie P. Jones, FAIA, to Robert Gamble of the Alabama Historical Commission explaining his process for saving goner buildings. Courtesy Lynn Jones.*



Fig. 2 The 1993 sketch of ca. 1881 Bernstein House at 110 Steele Street by Harvie P. Jones showing conjectural restored view with sketch plan. Courtesy Lynn Jones.



JOHN & PATTY CLINE RESIDENCE - 421 EUSTIS AVENUE - THICKENHAM HISTORIC PRESERVATION DISTRICT  
 HUNTSVILLE, AL LATE-FEDERAL STYLE, NEW HOUSE  
 HARVIE P. JONES, P. A., ARCHITECT 6 FEB. 1998

*Cline home sketch: Caption reads John & Patty Cline residence – 421 Eustis Avenue – Twickenham Historic Preservation District Huntsville, AL Late-Federal style, new house Harvie P. Jones, FAIA, Architect 6 Feb 1998 Courtesy Patti and John Cline.*

*Note from Lynn Jones: Patti said that Harvie did this drawing to illustrate that the roofline and portico would be in line with the 2-story house next door (423 Eustis) and not look like the house was towering over 423 or out of proportion. Harvie was always conscious of how a building fit in with its neighbors.*

## The Cline Home

*Maureen Drost*

Patti and John Cline's home at 421 Eustis Avenue was the last house Harvie P. Jones designed before his untimely death in early December 1998.

A Huntsville native, Patti didn't meet with Harvie until she, John, and the architect gathered to begin discussing the house they wanted him to design. "We didn't realize when we started this project that this was going to be the last house Harvie designed," John said. During the initial months of construction, Harvie came by to look at the house and told the Clines that the portico was nine inches too long for the design of the house. The Clines examined the porch and realized that Harvie was right, as Patti related. "The crew had to take the portico off and saw it" to fit the specifications from Harvie. After Harvie died, the couple realized the significance of doing the porch trim and the trim inside exactly as Harvie drew it.

According to John, "Carpenters custom-made the Federal-style columns on the front porch and the vents under the front windows." Harvie wanted the vents made of Honduran mahogany, but John and Patti decided to use redwood because of its lower cost. The Clines chose wooden lintels to top the front windows. The couple decided to use the brick and mortar style of the Horgan home on Greene Street.

The cornice work proved difficult for the workers, taking approximately three weeks to build. "Harvie had to come help. He knew proportions," John said. "that's what the Federal period is about."

The flooring in a number of rooms is heart pine cut from old beams that Patti and John found at American Hardwoods in Louisiana.

Patti and John's lengthy search for the front trim on their home finally led them to Birmingham. The trim was placed on the home two months after they moved in.

A double set of two columns divides the dining area from the living room. "Those columns are not Federal," said John, "Harvie was most concerned about the outside of the home."

Upstairs are an attic, a study, a large bathroom, the bedrooms of the Cline's two children, now grown. a utility room, and Patti and John's room.

Looking out of her bedroom window across Eustis, Patti could often see Harvie working in his study at his drawing board in the house. It was that study where Harvie drew many of the plans for the Cline home.

"The greatest compliment we receive about our home from others is 'You know your house does not look new.'" With Harvie's renowned talent for historic preservation, he probably would have appreciated that compliment as well.



*Maureen Drost works as a free-lance writer in Huntsville. She wrote two feature stories for the spring/summer issue of the Historic Huntsville Quarterly, which was also devoted to Harvie Jones.*

*Ms. Drost started her home-based writing business in December 1998. A 1977 Auburn University graduate, she worked previously as a journalist for the Huntsville Times and received many awards during her 18 years there. Her first professional writing was for the Decatur Daily.*

*Ms. Drost won her latest honor Sept. 26, 1999, from the state Senior Citizens' Hall of Fame for her collective journalism at the Times about senior citizens. In October, 1998 the state Alliance for the Mentally Ill recognized Ms. Drost for her collective writing at the newspaper on serious mental illness.*

## **Corrections & typographical errors**

Volume XXIV, No.3, Fall 1998, page15: The picture, identified as Wernher von Braun's Big Cove Road house, is of someone else's house.

Volume XXIV, No.3, Fall 1998, page55: The pictures for figures 2&3 are reversed.

Volume XXIV, No.4, Winter 1998, page 23: Billy Hauer's name is misspelled as Dilly. My apologies to Billy and his brother for the typographical error.

Volume XXV, Nos. 1&2, Spring/Summer 1999, page 6: Although Harvie is given credit for the design of the Huntsville/Madison County Library, Billy Herrin is the architect.

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 Historic Huntsville Foundation warehouse is located in the basement of Harrison Brothers Hardware Store and is open 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays, from 10 until 11:30 a.m. The warehouse accepts donations of architectural items and offers the items at reasonable prices to people restoring Madison County buildings 50 or more years old. Warehouse volunteers can help restorers choose pieces appropriate to their building's time. For more information, call 539-0097.

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