

By the 1880s, the Norfolk Southern railroad line connected Huntsville to Memphis and Chattanooga, and the CSX Railroad line connected Nashville and Huntsville. The railroad spurred economic growth for the city, which continued to be a focus of industry and politics in the region. By the 1930s, the TVA changed, once again, how Huntsville connected with the rest of Alabama and the southern United States. The Guntersville, Wheeler, and Wilson dams on the Tennessee River changed the landscape. Bridges began to replace ferries and soon an interstate highway system would become the secondary lifeline of the region.

America's entrance into World War II impacted every state and town in the country, but it impacted Huntsville and its communities of color more than most. In 1941, the U.S. government relocated several communities located southwest of Huntsville to make room for the Redstone Ordnance Plant, later known as Redstone Arsenal, a chemical munitions producing and stockpiling facility. After World War II, the arsenal famously became home to the U.S. rocketry program and NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center.

#### Huntsville Places of Education

As the major city of North Alabama and a place of community for people of color, Huntsville has also served as a productive ground for higher education for people of color. The history of education in Huntsville begins with the first public school for children of color in the basement of the Lakeside African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in 1867. William Hooper Council, who was involved in that first public school, was later the founder and president of what became the Alabama A&M University, which started as a college near downtown Huntsville before being moved out of the city. Alabama A&M has played a pivotal role in the education of people of color throughout the South, particularly in the area of agriculture by providing courses for farmers in the region.

Two examples of Huntsville's role in the desegregation of institutions of education include the 5th Avenue School and the University of Alabama Huntsville



**(Above)** Dr. Sonnie Hereford III and His Son, Sonnie Hereford IV, Going to the Fifth Avenue School for the First Time (Huntsville Revisited Facebook Page)

(UAH). The 5th Avenue School was a grade school and the first public school in Alabama to be peacefully integrated. Following a court case against the Huntsville City School System, in September 1963, first-grader Sonnie Hereford IV was enrolled at the 5th Avenue School in Huntsville, the first person of color to attend. His enrollment was followed by Veronica Pearson (Rison School), David (Piggee) Osman (Terry Heights School), and John Anthony Brewton (East Clinton School). This prompted other Alabama school systems to begin desegregating.

The University of Alabama's campus in Huntsville was similarly integrated by a man named Dave McGlathery in 1963. A former resident of Pond Beat and veteran of World War II, McGlathery was working at Marshall Space Flight Center when he decided to pursue a degree at UAH. Although there was some reluctance by UAH to allow him to attend, McGlathery eventually enrolled and obtained a degree in engineering.

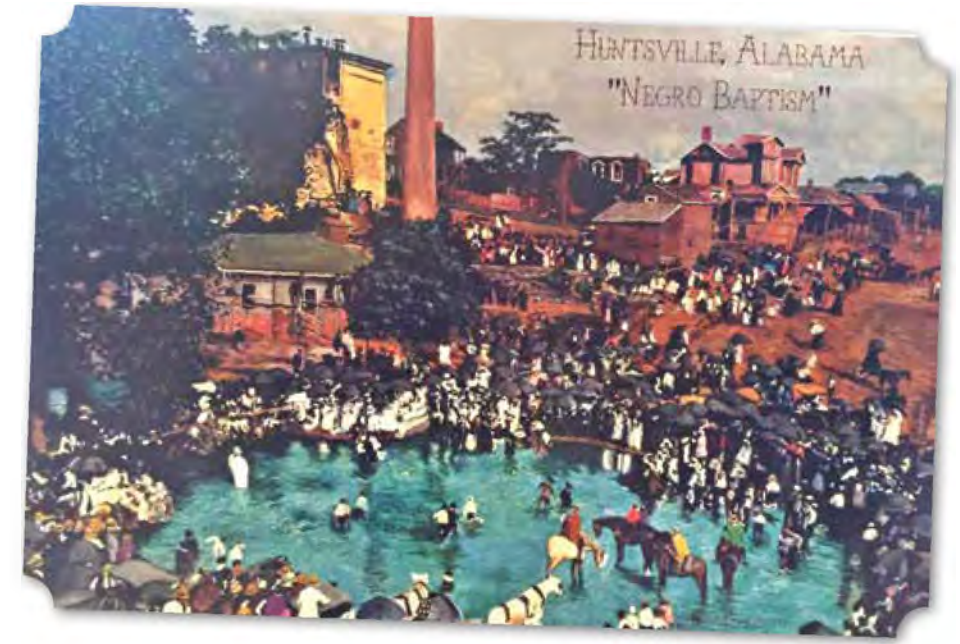
#### Historically Significant Churches of Huntsville

There are numerous churches in downtown Huntsville attended by people of color. Among the historically significant churches is Lakeside AME Church. One of

the earliest churches organized at the end of the Civil War, Lakeside AME Church has historical ties to education and politics, as well as community and religion. The site was dedicated with a historical marker from the Alabama Historical Commission in 1997.

The original location of Lakeside AME Church was on present-day Jefferson Street near the intersection of Meridian Street. The property was first purchased by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1866. The following year, the congregation built a frame church with a brick basement. Lakeside's first pastor was Reverend Howell Echols.

**(Above, Right)** A Painting of a "Negro Baptism" in Huntsville, Circa 1890s (Huntsville Revisited Facebook Page) **(Below)** Lakeside Church (Huntsville Revisited Facebook Page)



Twenty years after the first building, the church dedicated a new brick building, where the congregation worshiped until the 1960s when the property was sold due to what was known as "Urban Renewal." When the members of the church moved to the present-day location near Alabama A&M University, the new church was destroyed by fire. Lakeside lost many of their records, original stained-glass windows, and more.

Lakeside AME Church is also notable for its educational history. The brick basement of the original 1866 church provided the space for the first city-supported school for African American children in Huntsville. The school opened in 1867 with support by community leaders Henry C. Binford, Charles Hendley, Jr., and Thomas Cooper. These men were the first principals of the school that continued to serve the community at this church until 1890. The church's dedication to education did not end there. In 1940, the first public library accessible to people of color was opened here by Dulcina DeBerry.

Six of the nine African American Aldermen of Huntsville from 1880 to 1905 were members of this church: H. C. Binford, David and Daniel Brandon, Nelson Hendley, Thomas Townsend, and Dr. Burgess E. Scruggs.