



HISTORY HAPPENS

Official Newsletter of the Alabama Historical Commission

MAY 2024

A Word from Lisa

Hello everyone,

The Alabama Historical Commission appreciates all the work of the preservation community in Alabama! Since May is Preservation Month, our staff would like to draw attention to how our agency can assist citizens in preserving Alabama's historic places through preservation programs and grants. We would like to celebrate the wonderful work you are doing in your communities, so please connect with us by tagging us on social media to share your stories of past, present, and future historic preservation projects in your own backyard!

One of our favorite Preservation Month activities is the AHC photo contest. This year's contest will highlight AHC-owned historic sites. Winners will be featured on the AHC website along with a variety of print materials, social media, and more. To view the full details of the contest, click [here](#).

In other news, AHC is excited to announce another listing has been added to the National Register of Historic Places. The Bank of Columbia located in Houston County was listed in April 2024. You can view the full list of National Register properties in Alabama [here](#). To learn more about the National Register, click [here](#).

Both Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson and Confederate Memorial Park saw success from their April living history events with high attendance from school groups and the community. These events help showcase our efforts in educational programming at our historic sites.

Happy Preservation Month!

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 1-31
Preservation Month

May 1-October 31
Places in Peril Nominations Open

May 4
If Bugs Could Talk Tour
Old Cahawba

May 10-11
Belle Mont Celtic Fest
Belle Mont

May 18
Headstone Cleaning Workshop
Confederate Memorial Park

May 18
Living History
Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson

June 27-29
Art of the Dish
Belle Mont

[Click here for more information!](#)

Places in Peril Program Highlighted in Alabama Heritage Magazine

Since 1994, the Alabama Historical Commission and the Alabama Heritage Magazine have partnered together to promote Places in Peril, a public awareness program highlighting significant endangered historic properties in Alabama.

As awareness yields commitment, and commitment yields action, these threatened properties can be saved as treasured and preserved landmarks. The Places in Peril program has encouraged the preservation of important places in Alabama that may otherwise have attention to nominated places that rally local and statewide support.

The 2023 list highlights an array of resources, including an early twentieth century residence, a historic Black school, a former U.S. Army facility, a small-town commercial property, and one of the oldest African American communities established in the United States. By documenting the history of these places and many other places like them, we can learn more about Alabama's exceptional residents and the stories they have to tell. As more of these places are emphasized through programs such as Places in Peril, previously unfamiliar histories and stories will come alive and allow current generations a glimpse into a past they otherwise would not have known. The Alabama Historical Commission is committed to encouraging the preservation of these tangible connections with the past so that stories are not lost but instead are cemented into Alabama history for both current and future generations.

The 2024 Places in Peril nominations are NOW OPEN between May 1-October 31, 2024. For more information on the Places in Peril program, please contact Paige Thomas at paige.thomas@ahc.alabama.gov or click [here](#).



Dunbar High School, Bessemer is one of the Places in Peril properties featured.

AHC Staff Attend Historic Weapons Course

To preserve the stories of the past, the National Park Service (NPS) conducts a training course for historic weapons every two years. Since 2008, the Historic Weapons Safety Course has been held in Anniston, Alabama, at Fort McClellan, the Alabama Army National Guard's training center.

Approximately over a hundred attend the course including participants and instructors from NPS parks across the country. The park rangers dress in the historic clothing of time periods ranging from the 1500s through 1945. In March 2024, Ove Jensen attended the artillery portion of the course to learn how to safely fire an American Civil War cannon such as the 12 pounder Napoleon gun, the 1841 6-pounder gun and the 3-inch Ordnance Rifle. Using the knowledge he gained at the course, he plans to help Fort Morgan State Historic Site restart their cannon firing program this summer.

Along with Fort Morgan, other AHC sites host living history events where historic weapon reenactments take place including Confederate Memorial Park, Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson, and Fort Mims.



Left: Ove Jensen receives his certificate for training.



Right: Class attendees pose with historic weapon and instructors

BELLE MONT
Celtic Fest
May 11, 2024

Experience live music, handmade crafts, children's activities, museum tours, Celtic bakery treats, food vendors, and more!

AHC Staff Attends Annual Meeting

In April, the Alabama Historical Association (AHA) hosted its 76th Annual Meeting in Huntsville, known as the Rocket City. During the 3-day meeting, AHC staff experienced the rich history of Huntsville by visiting several historic sites and learning about their history, including the Episcopal Church of the Nativity, First National Bank, Harrison Brothers Hardware, St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church, and more.

The meeting sessions included a wide variety of topics including documenting Rosenwald Schools, history of rocketry in Huntsville, mapping Black towns in Alabama, and many more. In addition, AHC staff promoted the agency's programs and mission in the exhibit hall. The staff also networked with fellow history enthusiasts from across the state.

AHC staff looks forward to the 77th Annual Meeting in Opelika in 2025.



AHC staff Andrew Parker (left) and Joseph Massey (right) promote AHC programs.

Pond Spring Receives Property Upgrades

The Alabama Historical Commission has been actively working on repairs and upgrades at Pond Spring: The General Joe Wheeler Home.

The restoration project on the Wheeler Home has begun and will continue over the next few months with some upgrades including new paint, shutters, a brand-new wheelchair ramp and a new HVAC system. Additionally, there will be smaller repairs performed both inside and out.

This work is part of a multi-year restoration project that began in 2021 with the Hickman Cabin and continued in 2023 with the repair of the 1830's Icehouse.

These improvements are a continuation of the AHC's preservation efforts at Pond Spring and the staff looks forward to welcoming new and returning visitors.



Contractors install the new wheelchair ramp to the Wheeler home porch.



Contractors prep Wheeler Home for exterior paint.

May is Preservation Month!



It's our favorite month of the year! AHC will be celebrating Preservation Month each day with content on various statewide projects, sites, and programs with a preservation focus. We hope you are following us on social media like [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for our daily posts! PLUS we will be sending out weekly recaps via email! Not signed up? Sign up [here](#)!