

THE ALABAMA TRUSTEE

A publication of the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation

Spring 2010

Historic Preservation Facing Difficult Challenges

The historic preservation movement has scored enormous successes in the past thirty years.

So, how do we find ourselves in 2010 having to fight for the very existence of the federal historic preservation program? And why are many state historic preservation offices, including our own, struggling so? At a time when towns and cities across Alabama are desperately seeking ways to promote economic development, many significant historic assets are crumbling due to a lack of bricks and mortar money and other incentives necessary to stimulate their rehabilitation.

As a national and statewide movement, historic preservation has failed to capitalize on our most compelling argument - that historic preservation is a critical component of successful economic development.

The result: the administration's proposed budget has zeroed out funding for the two federal programs that were still providing bricks and mortar money for historic resources: Save America's Treasures and Preserve America.

The federal government is also considering cutting funding for National Heritage Areas by half.

The Historic Preservation Fund, established as part of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and authorized by Congress in 1976 at a level of \$150 million per year to be deposited from Outer Continental Shelf oil lease revenues, has never been fully funded.

Certainly, the economy is requiring that we all tighten our belts.



Selma is among many towns in the state that could capitalize on its historic resources.

But with the federal government is spending billions of dollars to stimulate the economy, shouldn't those precious dollars go to first to the programs that create the most jobs and economic activity? Noted preservation economist Donovan Rypkema writes: "the stimulus bill was about jobs, about economic development, about sustainable development - three things that historic preservation does better than almost any other activity and should have been an obvious priority. And yet we didn't make the short list; we didn't make the long list; we didn't even make the footnotes."

Rypkema recently released statistics that show that Save America's Treasures has created 458 jobs in Alabama at a cost of just over \$18,000/job, much in line with what

other states experienced. Rypkema states: "This compares with the White House announcement that the Stimulus Package is creating one job for every \$248,000. Whose program is helping the economy?"

It is also significant to note that heritage conservation is a component of the stimulus plans of most of the developed countries throughout the world. So, while the rest of the world is embracing historic preservation as an economic and sustainable development tool, we are actually cutting funding for the only historic preservation programs that we have.

The Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation is redoubling its efforts to promote historic resources as valuable economic development assets for Alabama's downtowns and small towns.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

By now you probably have noticed that our Trustee has received an overhaul. We hope that you like some of the changes we have made and that you will enjoy watching this design evolve over time as we incorporate ideas from each of you into every newsletter. Our colors have not been chosen randomly but with consideration of two ideas that speak to our mission as a statewide organization serving as the voice for the future of Alabama's historic places. The red clay represents Alabama the land in the state has shaped so much of the architectural landscape that surrounds us. The green continues to remind us that preservation is indeed green and that saving buildings helps build sustainable communities.

In addition, a new tagline has been developed that states, "historic places make life better." While this phrase may take on a slightly different meaning for each of us, I think it is one with which most of us can identify. Buildings connect us to yesterday and tomorrow, and with the loss of a building that connection is severed.

Such a connection was broken this past year for me when the Historic Talisi Hotel in Tallassee, Ala., burned. As a child vacationing at Lake Martin, I spent many many weekday afternoons eating lunch from their famous buffett. One summer when I was eight, my parents took me and my childhood friend Jacquelyn Gullede Bishop and her brother, Jeff Gullede to dinner at the Hotel Talisi. The owner saw us asking questions about the building and took us on a tour that I will never forget and indulged us as we had pictures made around the hotel. During that same vacation, my parents took me to Montgomery to tour the capitol, the Archives, the White House of the Confederacy, and to simply walk. My imagination went wild. I was hooked. I loved old buildings and their ability to help me visit the past.

In 2007, the Board of the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation met at the Hotel Talisi and once again, I was able to eat from the famous buffet. Immediately when I crossed the threshold I was eight years old and wanted to explore the building again.



Jones (left) at the Hotel Talisi

My daughter is now six, and we still travel to Lake Martin; unfortunately, I will not be able to share the old hotel with her as my parents did with me.

However, I can share with her the message that "historic places make life better," just as my parents did with me. When we travel, we get out and walk, and we talk about the buildings we see. This year we plan to take advantage of the Year of Smalltowns/Downtowns in Alabama to see the wonderful historical treasures that are awaiting our rediscovery. I don't think our visits would be nearly as meaningful without buildings such as the Hotel Talisi, do you?

I can't wait to return to Montgomery this year for our annual preservation conference in October. I will get to visit "old" friends and discover places that were not available for me to see as an 8-year-old, and I am sure once again my imagination will go wild as I pretend to walk in the footsteps of others and listen to the future as my daughter discovers these "friends" for herself.

You can help us spread the message that "historic places make life better" by joining us a member or increasing your membership level. Your membership helps us advocate for the future of those structures that hold meaning for each of us. To join, complete the membership application in this newsletter or visit us at www.alabamatrust.info.

Sincerely,
Tina Naremore Jones

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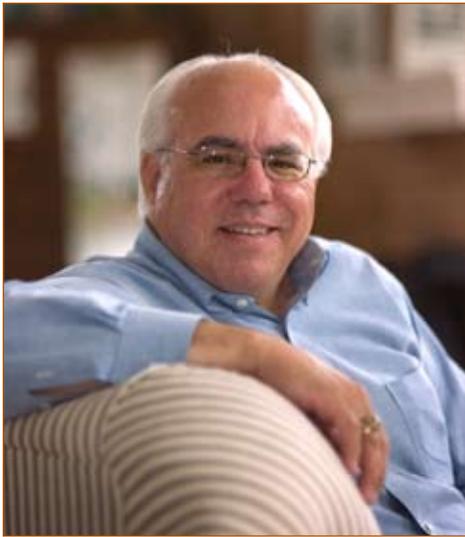
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SPEAKING OUT

Preservation is Working in Alabama!

by David B. Schneider, Executive Director

A recent editorial in the Anniston Star entitled “Plant seeds of job growth” discussed six communities in Alabama that were included in a listing prepared by Moody’s Economy of the top 100 cities in American in terms of job growth: Auburn-Opelika, Mobile, Huntsville, Montgomery, Birmingham, and Tuscaloosa. It was interesting to note that in each of these communities, historic preservation has played a key role in economic development efforts. Noted economist Donovan Rypkema stated at the 2005 annual conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation: “I cannot identify a single example of a sustained success story in downtown revitalization where historic preservation wasn’t a key component of that strategy. Not one. Conversely the examples of very expensive failures in downtown revitalization have nearly all had the destruction of historic buildings as a major element.” His observation rings true for most communities in Alabama. Those cities that are embracing their historic resources, downtowns, and neighborhoods as essential assets for community’s revitalization seem to be weathering the current economic times very well. In a recent

visit to Montgomery, I toured the vibrant collection of historic buildings that have been rehabilitated as part of The Alley. In a subsequent visit, I toured three historic buildings along Dexter Avenue that are undergoing rehabilitation in response to the successful revitalization the downtown is experiencing. Positive things are happening there because they are capitalizing on their historic assets. It’s a lesson that other cities and towns in the state need to learn from. Towns like Selma and Anniston still retain a wealth of historic resources, yet neither has recognized them as the economic development assets that they represent. Please mark your calendars for the Annual Preservation Conference in Montgomery this October 7-9 and witness first hand how historic preservation is working in Alabama. Donovan Rypkema will be the keynote speaker.

Also, My Thanks to...

- Randy Johnson, Birmingham, who has designed the new look for the ATHP
- David Walters, Avalon Studio, Anniston, for my new press photo (above)

What’s on your mind?

We would like to hear from you.

Send your opinions on preservation issues to Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation, Station 45, Livingston, Alabama 35470 or e-mail us at alabamatrust@uwa.edu. Please include your name, address, phone, and e-mail.

mark your calendar

2010 Alabama Preservation Conference • October 7-9, 2010 • Montgomery, Alabama
Keynote Speaker: Donovan Rypkema

Historic places make life better by being essential assets for the revitalization of Alabama’s small towns and downtowns. The 2010 Alabama Preservation Conference will showcase the exciting historic redevelopment activity in Montgomery using preservation as a tool in creating a vital cultural, economic, and tourism core to the city.

resources

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has created a Weatherization Guide for Older and Historic Buildings. The guide is full of useful information that can help save property owners money on their utility bills while helping to prove that historic preservation remains the *original green!*

www.preservationnation.org/issues/weatherization.

Mark your calendars NOW for a wonderful walking tour of Mobile neighborhoods on September 25. Devereaux Bemis will lead tours of several neighborhoods including downtown residential areas. Space is limited, so e-mail Barbara Adkins at preservealabama@yahoo.com today to reserve your spot.

PRESERVATION WATCH

Historic Bridge Alliance

by Slate McDorman

On January 11, 2010 The Historic Bridge Alliance held its first annual conference in Washington D.C. The Historic Bridge Alliance is a community of engineers, preservationists, historians, advocates and other public and private sector members. By utilizing the expertise of this diverse base of members, the alliance promotes effective practices in the identification, evaluation, management, rehabilitation, maintenance, and continued use of historic bridges. Membership of the Historic Bridge Alliance is free and open to all.

The Purpose of the Historic Bridge Alliance is to foster an interdisciplinary, collaborative forum that advances the appreciation and retention of our nation's historic bridges.

At the conference alliance members from Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Minnesota discussed the wide variations in bridge preservation guidelines and practices from states to state. These differences underline the difficulties for creating a single policy for all bridge conservation efforts across the nation.

There are, however, common problems for all of us involved in these issues, and the Alliance is seeking solutions that will assist all preservationists in their work wherever they may be.

Historic bridge preservation is a vital, historic, environmental and, usually, a cost saving alternative to bridge replacement and demolition. Everyone in the community benefits when a historic bridge can be successfully rehabilitated so that the

historic, aesthetic and practical characteristics of the bridge are not lost.

Alabama, with its many historic bridges in sometimes-remote locations, can certainly benefit by creating an alliance of preservationists, engineers and community leaders to preserve and protect these historic structures.

The Historic Bridge Foundation works with federal, state and local entities, as well as private individuals, to promote the preservation of historic bridges throughout the United States.

Those who have an interest in historic bridges are encouraged to contact me at Slate@McDorman.com for more information.



Historic Truss Bridge, Walker County

Editor's Note: Slate is the Alabama coordinator for the Historic Bridge Alliance and has been actively involved in the Section 106 review of a proposed bridge replacement in Mentone.

Nationally Significant Civil War Site For Sale

The Magee Farm, located just north of Mobile, is for sale. Built in 1848, the house was the site of a meeting between Confederate General Richard Taylor and Union General Edward Canby where the terms of surrender for 47,000 troops in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana was negotiated on April 29, 1865. One of only a handful of sites associated with the surrender of the Confederate Army at the end of the war, it is the only documented site to retain its original building in essentially its original form. A nonprofit group operated the house as a museum until this past February. The Civil War Preservation Trust was instrumental in saving the farm in 2004.

Contact: **Henry Darnell**

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PRESERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

GRANTS AVAILABLE

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's Rosenwald Schools Initiative is currently offering **Alice Rosenwald Flexible Fund** grants for Rosenwald Schools. Ranging from \$500 to \$5,000, grants support preservation planning, engineering studies, architectural plans, rehabilitation, publications, surveys, workshops and conferences. Other funding needs will be considered. A dollar-for-dollar match is required. Applicants are encouraged to discuss their projects with Rosenwald Initiative staff in the Southern Office at 843-722-8552 or the Southwest Office (for TX, OK, AR Rosenwald School projects) at 817-332-4398.

PRESERVATION IN THE FIELD

Since the last edition of *The Alabama Trustee*, our Executive Director has continued to actively support historic preservation initiatives throughout the state.

From December through March, Schneider has been involved in preservation activities in eighteen communities in as many counties as well as participating in two statewide issues. Among the highlights for this period are:

- **Marion Elementary School**, Marion, Perry County, Endangered Properties Trust emergency loan
- **Hanceville Historic Preservation Commission**, Cullman County, meeting to provide technical assistance
- **Log House**, Flomaton, Escambia County, site visit and assessment
- **Brierfield Ironworks**, Bibb County, provided letter of support for grant application
- **Clarke County Museum**, Grove Hill, Clark County, presentation
- **Anniston City Land Company Building**, Anniston, Calhoun County, working with local partners in an effort to stabilize and market the property
- **“Big Jim” Folsom Birthplace**, Elba, Coffee County, site visit, assessment, and preliminary restoration planning
- **Alabama A&M University**, Huntsville, Madison County, participating in planning for a preservation conference



- **Choccolocco Preservation Society**, Choccolocco, Calhoun County, presentation
- **Alice White School**, Grady, Montgomery County, site visit and assessment
- **Kappa Sigma Fraternity House**, Auburn, Lee County, site visit

IN MEMORIAM

Former Alabama Trust President Jim H. Waters, Jr., passed away on Monday, January 11, 2010. Husband to Elsie Sue Waters and patient father to Brad Waters, he also served as an architect and a civic leader in the area of architectural preservation.

A past president of the Alabama chapter of the American Institute of Architects, he was owner of his own firm since 1972.

Waters helped start the Sloss Furnace Association, which led the movement to save this historical

site. Later, when the plan was in jeopardy, he took over the reins of architect and venue planner leading the restoration and even insisting on the installation of a stage so that the furnaces would be a center of civic activity as well as preserving a unique historical site.

Some of his most recent work included the renovation of “The Villa” at Avondale Park. An active member of the Friends of Avondale Park, Waters served as an advisor on other projects in the park as well.



Spring Ramble: Eufaula & West Georgia

This year's Spring Ramble visited Westville, an 1850s village created from endangered properties relocated from throughout Georgia.

ON THE ROAD

with the Historic Garden/Landscape Interest Group

We would like to include your events here. Send event notices to the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation at Station 45, Livingston, AL 35470 or email us at alabamatrust@uwa.edu. Please include contact information with submission.

Eufaula Annual Tour of Homes
April 9-11 • Eufaula • www.eufauapilgrimage.com

Southern Garden History Society, Annual Meeting
April 30-May 2 • Mt. Vernon, VA

Huntsville Pilgrimage Association Annual Homes Tour
May 1-2 • Huntsville • www.huntsvillepilgrimage.com

Historic District Spring Garden Tour
May 2 • Decatur • www.decaturovb.com

Historic Tuscumbia Walking Tour
June 5-26 • Tuscumbia • www.colbertcountytourism.org

PRESERVATION: PLACES IN PERIL

Saved

The Houses of Noble Park, Anniston (2006). Preservation challenges sometimes seem insurmountable, and in Anniston 50-year debate about the future of four historic houses that represent the very essence of the community's early history seemed positively hopeless. The Anniston City Board of Education acquired the houses in the late 1950s and early 1960s with the intent of demolishing them for the expansion of their "educational park." By the time they abandoned those plans in 2006, decades of neglect and decay had taken their toll. The property was eventually acquired by Noble Park Investments, LLC, a partnership of local

businessmen who hoped to redevelop the site and stabilized and secured the houses. Their plans never materialized, but a local couple, Dr. Carla Thomas and her husband Cleo, saw the potential in the houses and purchased three of them. Dr. Thomas envisioned moving her medical office to the site along with husband's law office and a professional meeting center. Work is nearing completion on the project and Dr. Thomas has now acquired the fourth house. This seemingly "lost cause"



has been transformed into a highly visible success story that local preservationists hope will inspire similar projects.

Endangered

Y.M.C.A. Building, Selma (2004). The YMCA Building, among Selma's many irreplaceable landmarks, also has both architectural and historical significance to the state and the region. Constructed circa 1885, and often referred to as "the first YMCA building built in the South," the building in its original form was an rare example of the Second Empire style. A proposal to demolish the building that resulted in listing the building on the 2004 Places in Peril was successfully averted. Unfortunately, a partially collapsed roof has caused extensive structural deterioration and the new owners recently applied for a demolition permit. The Selma Historic Development Commission denied the request and local preservationists are exploring alternatives for the site.



Lost

Pension Row (2003): The historic character of the Pension Row neighborhood in Madison continues to be eroded by disinvestment and decay which have resulted in city-sponsored demolitions. Statewide, African-American neighborhoods like Pension Row are suffering from a lack of recognition for their historical significance and a resulting lack of effective preservation planning.

KUDOS

National group honors 12 places for their rich heritage

by Deborah Storey, *Huntsville Times Travel Editor*

Huntsvillians already like to think of their city as a distinctive place. Now it's official.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has named Huntsville one of America's Dozen Distinctive Destinations for 2010.

The honor recognizes the city "for offering cultural and recreational experiences different from the typical vacation destination," trust officials said.

"Huntsville features dynamic neighborhoods, a rich architectural heritage, cultural diversity and a strong commitment to historic preservation and revitalization," according to the preservation group. All that gives the city "an abundance of character and an authentic sense of place."

Sam Frazier, Alabama adviser for the National Trust and board member of the Alabama Trust, presented city and tourism leaders a plaque in the historic Regions Bank Building on the west side of the Courthouse Square.

Huntsville was selected "for its diligent efforts to protect and share the city's heritage, which ranges from deep Southern roots to space exploration, and for its remarkable leadership in sustainability, serving as a role model for cities across America," the trust said in a news release.

Huntsville is the first city in Alabama to become a Distinctive Destination.

"Huntsville has beautifully preserved and protected so many of the diverse stories of its past, from its

Southern culture and heritage to its role as 'America's Space Capital,' and its citizens are not stopping there," said Richard Moe, National Trust president.

"More recently, Huntsville citizens, including over 15,000 volunteers, have transformed their city into a leader in the green movement," by creatively reusing abandoned buildings, preserving a large area for greenspace and developing public transit, the group noted. For example, travelers to Huntsville will find five historic districts, many antebellum homes, factories turned into arts centers, museums, outdoor activities, local shops and restaurants. Other specifics cited: the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, Huntsville Depot Museum, Harrison Brothers Hardware, Merrimack Hall and Alabama Constitution Village.

Judy Ryals, president and CEO of the Huntsville-Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau, said her department is thrilled. "This designation brings well-deserved attention to the efforts of past and present Huntsville city officials and residents alike who understand the importance of remembering and preserving our past and leaving a legacy for future generations," Ryals said. The designation should help attract more visitors, she added.

Jennifer Moore, vice president of tourism for the Convention Bureau, said a team has been working on this goal for three years. Just applying takes effort and still doesn't guarantee success.



The 175-year-old Regions Bank building features Ionic columns and pediments.

SUPPORT THE TRUST

Save Historic Places!

Many of you receiving this issue of *The Alabama Trustee* have let your membership in the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation lapse. Others of you may never have supported us financially.

In these difficult economic times, it is all the more critical that we seize the opportunity to promote historic places as essential assets for economic development and environmental sustainability. This message is resonating with many communities, but others are using the economy as an excuse to allow historic places to deteriorate or to be demolished. Time is clearly of the essence if we are to get our message across before it's too late for many irreplaceable historic places.

If you agree that historic places make life better, we urge you to make a contribution using the form in the newsletter. We can't save these places without you!

keep us posted

The Alabama Trustee wants to hear about your local issues and successes. Please send information to the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation UWA Station 45 Livingston, AL 35470, or alabamatrust@uwa.edu.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

ALABAMA TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
Station 45 • Livingston, AL 35470

Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation is the voice for the future of Alabama's historic buildings, neighborhoods and places. We invite you to join us. Member benefits include quarterly newsletters with event listings and the latest preservation news; opportunities for preservation conferences; organized tours statewide; networking opportunities with other preservation minded people; a statewide advocacy program for preservation.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

E-MAIL _____

Your membership contributions and gifts are tax deductible to the extent of the law. Please make your check payable to Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation, or choose one of the following:

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Exp. date _____ Signature (as it appears on card) _____

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