PRESERVATION REPORT

Alabama Historical Commission

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May is Preservation Month

CELEBRATING PRESERVATION SUCCESSES

In **Dothan**, restoring a former school building's historic windows had ripple effects for the economy, the environment, and job training for a high-wage, in-demand skill.

When people in **Camden** saw what Antioch Church could look like, they pulled together and made it happen. Now they are struggling to serve the busloads of visitors who want to see it.

"These two projects show how very different preservation programs add real value for local communities," said AHC Director Frank White, as the state began celebrating preservation month.

Regulatory Review Process has Great Outcomes

"Beautiful! It turned out much better than we thought," said Dothan's Community Development Block Grant Administrator Maurice Head about the window project.

Initially Head was skeptical, but now he is spreading the word—renovating old windows is a great idea. "This is something other people can do," he said.

He is also pleased at the regulatory process that encouraged window repair over replacement. It saved the city a little short term money, gave meaningful $10.50-$15.00 an hour jobs to local workers, and generated community pride.

Credit: Hilda Dent

Additionally, the restored windows, with proper maintenance, will last another 100 years. Unlike the aluminum replacements that would only last 20 years before ending up in an overflowing landfill.

"They were taking something that looked bad and turning it into a jewel." *Hilda Dent*

"The Commission staff provided us with great guidance and education about the value of window repair," Head said.

Window repair project in Dothan's 1921 Young Junior Building was win-win. (left)

Learn how a simple drawing helped a community come together to save a landmark church. (below)

Credit: Tom Kaufmann

Last year The Alfred C. Saliba Family Services Center applied for Community Development Block Grant funds to replace half the windows in the building they rent from the city. The Young Junior Building was built in 1921 as the Young Junior High School. The center is a nonprofit organization that serves a low-income community with job training, counseling and other services.

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SUMMER ADVENTURES IN HISTORY'S PLACES

Summer is a great time to get out of the house and see something old. Alabama has a trove of treasured places offering fun-filled adventures and engaging stories about our past.

Whether you are young or old, have an hour, an afternoon, a weekend or a week, you can have fun and learn that books are not the only places where history lives.

Outdoor Recreation with a Historical Twist

Old Cahawba, near Selma, lures active visitors with canoe and bike trails. Bring your own bike, or reserve a free loaner bike. Alabama's first capitol has intriguing archaeological finds, a cemetery, and ghost stories galore.

Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson, near Wetumpka, has campgrounds, a boat launch, river access, and a nature trail. Mingle with 18th c. French soldiers, Creek Indians, and militia from the Creek War.

Confederate Memorial Park, just south of Clanton on I-65, is a great place to stretch your legs. A really great museum shows what life was like for Confederate soldiers before, during, and after the war.

Families love Old Cahawba's new bikes and tours. Bring your own or reserve one of theirs.

An outdoor lover's paradise, ***Fort Morgan*** offers fishing, beach access, birding, and astonishing brick architecture. It is also one of the nation's premier Civil War sites. Summer Twilight Tours are highlights for any beach trip.

Set out by sail in Mobile Bay and circle the iconic ***Middle Bay Light House***, which still guides ships into Mobile's port.

Way off the beaten path and hidden in the pines is ***Fort Mims***, where summer-time plans are underway to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the start of the Creek War.

Bring Your Cell Phone

And tour on your own. ***Alabama's State Capitol*** with its Civil War and Civil Rights history, brings school kids and foreign visitors alike to Montgomery. A new cell phone tour allows you to set your own schedule and hear great stories about the grounds and landscaping.

Check opening hours to visit the nearby spectacular ***Freedom Rides Museum*** in ***Montgomery's Historic Greyhound Bus Station***. It tells the story of a major turning point in our national history. Outside panels and a cell-phone tour give an overview 24/7. Inside, artworks offer a different way of exploring this history.

In the Black Belt, antebellum planters built fabulous Greek Revival homes. ***Magnolia Grove*** in Greensboro and ***Gaineswood*** in Demopolis offer two different approaches to this architectural style. Explore the grounds at both sites with your mobile device but come inside for in-depth tours.

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ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS & HERITAGE

Alabama's historic places contain information found nowhere else. They tell us where, and sometimes how and why, people settled here. The Alabama Register records these stories for the future. Recent listings (November 2012 to February 2013) are below.

Dr. Pepper Bottling Plant-Georgiana, Butler County, c. 1920

White Plains United Methodist Church-Choccolocco Vicinity, White Plains community, Calhoun County, c. 1938

Bradford-Wilson Home-Dickinson, Clarke County, c. 1900

The Tabie House-Leighton, Colbert County, c. late 19th century

Smith Mountain Fire Tower-*Dadeville, Tallapoosa County, c. 1939*

Wetumpka Municipal Airport (Elmore Auxiliary Training Field #2), Elmore County, c. 1942

Reedtown High School-Russellville, Franklin County, c. 1952

Morrison-Ellis House-Florence, Lauderdale County, c. 1895

Alex & Annie Rives Home-White Hall, Lowndes County. Moved to present location in c. 1959

Lewis-Powell House-Madison, Madison County, c. 1873

Robinson Farmhouse-Priceville, Morgan County, c. 1924

Downtown Troy Commercial Historic District-Pike County, c.1850s- 1950s

South Girard High School-Phenix City, Russell County, c. 1961

Wren Manor-Talladega, Talladega County, c. 1934

Bankhead Home-Jasper, Walker County, c. 1924

TWO SCHOOLS TELL THE STORY OF DUAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Rabb Rosenwald School, *Conecuh County, c. 1920*
Historically-black school currently under restoration

Grady School, *Montgomery County, c. 1922*
Originally built for white students in Grady

In the early twentieth century, Alabama's white and black school systems existed separately but held common educational standards. Both built schools from standardized plans in an organized effort to create ideal learning environments.

For African American communities the Rosenwald program–developed by Booker T. Washington–provided school designs and a matching fund program. White schools, funded at the city and county levels, looked to the state Department of Education for similar plans.

Two schools recently listed on the Alabama Register–***Rabb Rosenwald School*** and ***Grady School***–are examples of types built in the 1920s. While each was closed many years ago, they still bring pride to their local communities.

Although currently vacant, the local Disabled American Veterans Group plans to restore the historically-black Rabb School as a community center. Grady School became a community center in 1941. It returned to its educational roots in the 1970s when it became a private school.

SUMMER ADVENTURES continued from page one

Early Architecture and Fishing Too!

Some of Alabama's finest architectural landmarks are near great state parks, making planning easy for a family weekend visit.

Fendall Hall in Eufaula has exquisite painted interior murals and furnishings that alone are worth a trip to this antebellum river port town. Completed shortly after the Civil War, it and other great Italianate mansions illustrate the fabulous wealth cotton continued to bring merchants in the postbellum era. Nearby Lakepoint Resort is a bass fishing paradise.

In North Alabama, ***Belle Mont*** near Tuscumbia and ***Pond Spring*** near Decatur, are easy drives from Joe Wheeler State Park. See why Belle Mont is a popular site for weddings and explore the tantalizing hints of a possible link to Thomas Jefferson.

Pond Spring, the General Joe Wheeler Home, is just reopened after a long restoration. It is packed with furniture, uniforms, flags, and other memorabilia of this famous Civil War and Spanish American War hero. Planned cell phone tours will help you explore the grounds and the great collection of early outbuildings.

To learn more go to: www.preserveala.org/statemap.aspx.

All AHC historic sites are Blue Star Museums.

Blue Star Museums

CELEBRATING PRESERVATION SUCCESSES continued from page one

When federal funds are used, federal law requires a review to see if the work will harm historic places. In Alabama, the AHC provides comments about the effect the work will have on the building.

AHC staffer Chloe Mercer reviewed the project. She made the case that restoring the windows was good preservation and would be cheaper and last longer than new windows. When the Saliba Center agreed to restore the windows, the AHC commented that the grant would not harm the historic school building.

Workers (above) repair windows of Dothan's 1921 Young Junior Building. Credit: Hilda Dent

In an inspired moment, Mercer suggested that the project could serve as a training opportunity for the Center clients. Window restoration specialist Hilda Dent immediately embraced the concept and built a crew drawn from the center's clients.

During the four month project, Dent hired and trained 16 people in a much-in-demand, high-wage trade. "They were desperate for meaningful work. They were taking something that looked bad and turning it into a jewel," Dent said. "It was work they were proud of."

According to Head, the center is applying for more block grant monies to repair the rest of the windows. "We were happy with the process. The building looks great. And it was so good to have provided paid job training for center clients," he said.

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established a state and federal partnership to encourage the preservation of our nation's historic places. It delegates authority to the state historic preservation offices to carry out the program. In Alabama, the AHC is the **State Historic Preservation Office**.

The AHC reviews and develops nominations to the **National Register of Historic Places**, which serves as the nation's list of places worthy of preservation.

Section 106 of the act insures that federal monies and actions don't do unnecessary harm to Alabama's important historic places. It requires that federal agencies seek comments from the state historic preservation office to see if their actions will harm places eligible for or listed on the National Register.

Through the 106 process, the AHC reviews around 1500 projects each year, approving 70% on the first review. Projects range from large-scale highway construction and industrial sites to smaller projects, such federal license to build cellphone towers.

To learn more: www.preserveala.org/106program.aspx.

Simple Drawing Galvanizes Community Action

Imagine a historic place with so many visitors that the owners cannot accommodate them all. That's the case with the 1924 Antioch Baptist Church in Camden.

Today, it sits high on a rise outside of Camden, its white paint glowing against the sky. Busloads of tourists clamor to visit. But five years ago, peeling paint, water damage, declining membership, and financial resources had taken their toll.

Many congregation members thought they needed a new building. In the end a drawing, showing what the old building could look like, was key to the successful outcome.

One of the oldest black congregations in Camden, Antioch served as a voting rights staging site. Protestors gathered there to march to the Wilcox County Courthouse to try to register to vote. The building also hosted mass meetings, including one where Dr. King spoke to a crowd of 200 in 1965.

Although the AHC listed the church on the Alabama Register of Landmarks in 1996, discussions tilted heavily toward building a new sanctuary, said Rosetta Anderson. She is a longtime member whose grandfather was on the committee that originally built the church.

Anderson, along with a handful of other congregation members and Wilcox County Commissioner John Matthews, set out to save the historic building. There were no available funds for fixing the building.

The small group turned to the AHC and its advocacy group, the Black Heritage Council.

The Council encouraged the group to attend its upcoming Preservation Forum. At that meeting, Anderson and her group heard about the Council's one-year visual restoration project. Organizations with an endangered local landmark could apply for matching funds to help build support to save it. Funds would pay for an architect to do drawings showing the church restored.

Montgomery Architect Thomas Kaufmann worked with the congregation. They shared their memories of growing up in the church and their dreams for its future. ***Antioch members provided the vision, Kaufmann provided the visual.***

Antioch members and Matthews used the drawing to gather broader support for the project. The community got behind it. They donated paint, repairs, and food for workers scraping and painting the building. Project leaders estimate that they raised more than $14,000 in donated services and goods. In 2010, the Black Heritage Council gave Antioch a preservation award for the work.

Today, the building provides the congregation with a sanctuary and a sense of renewed pride. Visitors come by the busload to Antioch, seeking to know more about its storied past. A landmark, in every sense of the word, it beckons to motorists passing by. Often they stop to photograph it.

To learn more: www.preserveala.org/blackheritagecouncil.aspx.

Peeling paint led parishioners to question building's future.

Restored exterior is generating visitors and local pride.

SUMMER FUN AT THE HISTORIC SITES

May 17, *Montgomery*
NEW EXHIBIT OPENING: ROAD TO EQUALITY, THE 1961 FREEDOM RIDES
Freedom Rides Museum
Taken from Eric Etheridge's book *Breach of Peace*, the exhibit contrasts Freedom Rider's Mississippi mug shots with contemporary portraits and commentary. It offers deep insight into young people who went to jail to end racial segregation in public transportation. *Open Friday and Saturday, 12pm-4pm and by appointment for 10 or more. Admission charged. Contact:334-242-3188.*

May 25-26, *Hillsboro*
FAREWELL TOURS
Pond Springs-The General Joe Wheeler Home
Five "behind the scenes" tours led by retiring site director Melissa Beasley explore the restoration of the General's homestead. *May 25 (9am, 12pm, 2:30pm) and May 26 (1pm, 3pm). Admission charged. Contact: 256-637-9291.*

May 18-19, *Wetumpka*
FRENCH COLONIAL GARRISON
Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson
Costumed re-enactors portray daily lives of 1750s French soldiers and Creek Indians. *9am-3pm. Admission Charged. Contact: 334-567-3002.*

May 27
MEMORIAL DAY TRIBUTE
Fort Morgan
Uniformed interpreters from various periods of Fort Morgan's history conduct guided tours. Artillery, small arms, and talks by re-enactors portray Fort Morgan's occupation. *9am-3pm. Admission charged. Contact: 251-540-7127.*

June 1-2, *Wetumpka*
WAR OF 1812 MILITIA CAMP
Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson
Encampment of Creek War and War of 1812, including the Tennessee militia in period dress, will exhibit camp life and weaponry. *9am-3pm. Admission charged. Contact 334-567-3002.*

June 4, 11, 18, 25
July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
TUESDAY EVENING CIVIL WAR TWILIGHT TOURS
Fort Morgan
Visitors experience historical vignettes of mid-19th century fort life. Each tour concludes with the firing of one of the fort's artillery pieces. *7pm-8:30pm. Admission charged. Contact: 251-540-7127.*

June 15-16, *Wetumpka*
FRENCH COLONIAL GARRISON
Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson
See May description of event. *Admission Charged. Contact: 334-567-3002.*

July 15-17 and 22-24 , *Eufaula*
HANDS ON HISTORY DAY CAMP
Fendall Hall
Hands on History day camp is held for 1st through 5th graders. Light refreshments served. *Program: 9am-12pm. Admission charged. Contact: 334-687-8460.*

July 4
SALUTE AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE
Fort Morgan
Celebrate 4th of July historic military style. Uniformed interpreters from various periods of Fort Morgan's history conduct guided tours. See artillery, small arms, and other demonstrations. No fireworks. *9am-3pm. Admission charged. Contact: 251-540-7127.*

August 3
COMMEMORATION OF THE BATTLE OF MOBILE BAY AND SIEGE OF FORT MORGAN
Experience the 1864 heroic struggle between Union and Confederate forces via authentically clothed and armed re-enactors. View the newly-reconstructed Union siege lines and reproduction field and siege artillery pieces. *9am-3pm. Admission charged. Contact: 251-540-7127.*

August 30-September 1, *Tensaw Delta*
200TH ANNIVERSARY
Fort Mims
This event begins on the actual 200th anniversary of the attack on Fort Mims and marks the beginning of the Creek Indian War. Memorial and dedication services occur Friday 30th.

Living history demonstrators include settlers, militia, and Redstick Creek Indians. Experience battle re-enactments, basket weaving, blacksmithing, pottery, period music, and Creek Indian crafts. Observe an archeological 'dig' by University of South Alabama. *9am-3pm. Admission charged. Contact: North Baldwin Chamber 251-937-5665 or visit www.fortmims.org.*

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