



# HISTORY HAPPENS

Official Newsletter of the Alabama Historical Commission

APRIL 2024

## A Word from Lisa

Greetings,

April is one of our busiest months of the year! Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson is preparing for the French and Indian War Encampment on April 20-21 and Confederate Memorial Park is hosting its annual Civil War Living History & Skirmish event in commemoration of Confederate Memorial Day on April 20. Both of these events will have demonstrations and reenactors portraying the lives of those who lived at these sites, so make a weekend out of it and visit both. All AHC events can be viewed on the right-side panel. ➡

The 2024 Education Trust Fund grant program closed on March 29. Applications are currently being reviewed, and the recipients will be announced soon, so stay tuned.

AHC is gearing up in preparation for Preservation Month in May and you don't want to miss what we have in store! From program success stories to how-to videos and more, AHC will be providing you a wealth of content on our social media channels, so make sure you are following along. Not on social media? Don't worry. We will also be sending out weekly email blasts to recap what you missed. We love Preservation Month and the opportunity it brings to highlight preservation and our mission. Did you know Preservation Month began as National Preservation Week in 1973? In 2005, the National Trust for Historic Preservation extended the celebration to the entire month of May to provide a greater opportunity to celebrate our country's diverse and unique heritage. You can read more on the National Trust and Preservation Month [here](#).

**Lisa D. Jones**  
Executive Director  
State Historic Preservation Officer

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**April 13**

**Kids and the Forest**  
Belle Mont

**April 20**

**Living History & Skirmish**  
Confederate Memorial Park

**April 20-21**

**French and Indian War Encampment**  
Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson

**May 1-31**

**Preservation Month**

**May 4**

**If Bugs Could Talk Tour**  
Old Cahawba

**May 10-11**

**Belle Mont Celtic Fest**  
Belle Mont

[Click here for more information!](#)



# Fort Morgan opens second gift shop location

Last month the staff at Fort Morgan held a soft opening for the second gift shop location just in time for spring break tourists.

The new gift shop is housed in a building that was historically the Hospital Steward's quarters, constructed in 1899 by the United States Army. The post hospital was adjacent to it, but was destroyed by fire in 1919. The hospital was not rebuilt due to the decrease of soldiers stationed at Fort Morgan following World War I.

The building was renovated following Hurricane Sally in 2020 and is now an additional gift shop to help with increased visitation.

Site Director Heather Tassin said "We are thrilled to have the second gift shop opened and it has already become popular with tourists riding on the ferry to and from Dauphin Island."

The gift shop features a variety of items Fort Morgan themed including shirts, hats, drinkware, toys, and more. Hours and location of the new gift shop can be found [here](#).

**Saturday, April 20**  
 9:00 am-4:00 pm

Visitors will get to experience living historian demonstrations on weaponry, flags, civilian life, cooking, and more PLUS museum tours!

**\$2 Admission | \$2 Museum**  
 Call 205-755-1990 for more information!

**FREE!**  
 Confederate Memorial Day Ceremony  
 Sunday, April 21  
 11:00 am

# Bankhead Fire Tower receives site visit for restoration efforts

On March 12, AHC staff attended a site visit to Talladega National Forest to see the historic Bankhead Fire Tower. The United States Forest Service invited AHC to attend along with the Friends of the Talladega National Forest, who have offered to rehabilitate the tower in efforts to preserve the remaining structure.

The proposed work will be to replace the treads on the stairway and also replace the fence around the compound as a way to continue preserving the tower. AHC staff encouraged the Friends group to apply for grant funding for financial assistance.

The fire tower is said to have been built in 1937 by junior African-American Enrollee Company 3477, which was housed near Heflin.



The Bankhead Fire Tower



Items displayed in new gift shop at Fort Morgan



# Fort Mims plants new trees for spring season

On March 6, the Fort Mims Restoration Association (FMRA), Baldwin County park employees, and Grasshopper's Landscaping, planted 13 trees on the property at Fort Mims. The trees, selected by President of FMRA Claudia Campbell, included live oak, bay, and red maple, which are indigenous to the area. These trees will enhance the natural beauty of the park and provide much needed shade for park visitors and reenactors during the annual living history and battle commemoration in August.

The Society of the War of 1812 in Alabama, who held their annual 2023 State Meeting at the Fort Mims event in August, made a generous donation for trees to be planted to replace those lost at the site during Hurricane Sally.

State Archaeologist Stacye Hathorn monitored excavation during planting to ensure that no archaeological deposits were disturbed.

Fort Mims is one of the historic properties owned by the Alabama Historical Commission and operated by the FMRA.



Staff work to plant trees around the property at Fort Mims

# FRENCH & INDIAN WAR ENCAMPMENT

April 20-21

9 am-3 pm

Fort Toulouse Fort Jackson

This two day event features the main protagonists of the French & Indian War (1754-1763) - France, Britain, and their American Indian allies. Daily living history demonstrations of military, Indian, and civilian life will show reenactors dressed and equipped as they appeared in North America during the mid-eighteenth century.

Concessions will be available to purchase from BSA Troop 50. (Saturday only)

Admission is \$4 for adults / \$2 for children.



Rain or shine event



# National Register Meeting

April 25 | 10:30 am | Carriage House

The Alabama Historical Commission will hold a National Register Nomination meeting for the following properties:

- The Civil Rights Movement in Montgomery, ALMPDF
- Centennial Hill Historic District, Montgomery
- First Baptist on Ripley, Montgomery
- Moore Building, Montgomery
- Whitesburg Estates Historic District, Huntsville
- Memphis & Charleston Railroad Bridge, Sheffield
- Dupree School, Houston County
- Magnolia Grove, Greensboro
- Weogufka State Park



# Happy Retirement, Linda!

The AHC would like to congratulate Linda Derry on her retirement and thank her for her dedication and service to the State of Alabama. AHC, along with the Cahawba Foundation, the Cahawba Advisory Council, and other colleagues and friends celebrated Linda on March 27 with a picnic lunch at Old Cahawba. Linda began her career with the AHC in 1985 and served as site director of Old Cahawba Archaeological Park for 39 years. She was instrumental in the development of the park, and made significant contributions to the site, including the coordination of land acquisition to complete the park; developing programming, managing the return of the historic St. Luke's Church to the site, coordinating archaeological excavations, and overseeing the construction of a ghost structure at the site of the original statehouse. Linda will return to state service as a retired state employee, and work on special projects at Cahawba.