



HISTORY HAPPENS

Official Newsletter of the Alabama Historical Commission

AUGUST 2023

A Word from Lisa

Hello everyone!

August is here and schools are back in session. It has been a busy summer here at the AHC with the kickoff of Preservation Month in May, the new Preservation of Alabama's Significant Sites (PASS) grant program and the grand opening of the [Africatown Heritage House!](#)

The PASS Grant Program produced \$635 million of requested funding from applicants for buildings built before 1840 and modern-day Civil Rights sites. This shows us the continued need for protection and preservation of these important structures and sites across Alabama.

Recently, we have had a significant increase in our newsletter subscribers, and I would like to give a brief description of the AHC and our work. The AHC is the state agency charged with the protection, preservation, and interpretation of historic sites across Alabama. This is accomplished in two ways. One is through our federal programs such as the [Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage](#) and [National Register of Historic Places, Cemetery Register, Certified Local Government, Section 106 Regulatory Review, Tax Credits, Archaeology](#), and many more. Second is through owning and maintaining [historic sites](#) across Alabama that you can visit.

We hope you will enjoy more time outdoors during the upcoming fall season and make a trip to these unique places full of history!

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

Save the DATE!

[August 21](#)

[Speaker Series-Carolyn Crawford at Courtland Train Depot](#)

[August 26-27](#)

[Battle of Fort Mims Reenactment Fort Mims](#)

[September 9](#)

[General Wheeler Birthday Event Pond Spring](#)

[September 9](#)

[History & Nature Walk Old Cahawba](#)

[September 18](#)

[Speaker Series - Clayton Davis Pond Spring](#)

[October 1](#)

[Archaeology Month Begins](#)

[October 7](#)

[Cemetery Walking Tour Old Cahawba](#)

Terra Mare Conservators Work Closely on Clotilda Artifacts

In July, AHC staff visited with Terra Mare Conservation for the latest conservation efforts for the four artifacts pulled from the Clotilda during the fieldwork last May.

These artifacts were selected for conservation and eventual display in *Clotilda: The Exhibition at the Africatown Heritage House*, a site of the [History Museum of Mobile](#). The artifacts include a lead hawse pipe from the bow, a small section of hull planking held together by iron drift pins, and a section of planking that retains marks from a circular steam saw. AHC worked with Terra Mare conservators to transport the largest artifact, a timber with an iron pulley and fragments of a braided metal and rope cable in the pulley from the ship's steering mechanism.

Conservators Claudia Chemello and Paul Mardikian of Terra Mare Conservation, who are leading conservation efforts for Clotilda, are treating each artifact differently based on its component materials and recovered condition. Following the technical and scientific conservation process, these artifacts will be exhibited at the Africatown Heritage House where they will help illustrate the story of the 110 enslaved people aboard the Clotilda.

"Treatment of metal and composite artifacts is one of our specialties and working with the AHC and the History Museum of Mobile has been a unique and rich experience as we continue our conservation efforts for these artifacts to help tell the story of the Clotilda," said Project Lead Paul Mardikian. Read the full press release [here](#).



Conservators examine timber with iron pulley from Clotilda.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program Makes Major Change

The National Park Service (NPS) is the federal agency that administers the Federal Historic Tax Incentives program, and the Alabama Historical Commission is the point of contact for anyone who applies for tax credits for properties in Alabama. As of August 15, 2023, all applications for the federal historic tax credit program must be made in electronic format to the AHC. Hard copy submissions will no longer be accepted. Visit the [AHC's website](#) to learn more about the new submittal process. Applications and supporting documents must follow NPS electronic file format standards and naming conventions.

Visit the [NPS website](#) for more information about this change and to find out about upcoming training webinars.

For more information on the federal tax credit program, please contact Chloe Mercer at 334-230-2669 or by email at Chloe.Mercer@ahc.alabama.gov.

Join us for a History & Nature Walk Saturday, September 9th 10 am Old Cahawba

Take a tour of the accessible Clear Creek Nature Trail and learn about various plants and trees used as substitutes for lack of common goods during the Civil War.

Call for tickets or purchase on site.
334-872-8058



LaFayette Main Street Hosts Tax Credit Workshop

During the summer, LaFayette Main Street invited AHC staff to present a tax credit workshop at an after-hours information session in downtown LaFayette.

AHC Certified Local Government Coordinator Paige Thomas introduced the staff and spoke on the economic benefits of rehabilitating historic properties. Chloe Mercer and Andrew Parker explained the state and federal tax incentives available to historic property owners. They also shared success stories of recently rehabilitated properties that took advantage of historic tax incentives.

The workshop was geared towards property owners, developers, municipality leadership, and local historians and how they can benefit from tax credits being applied to a historic property. For more information on these programs or speaker requests in your area, please call 334-242-3184.



Visitors participate in historic tax credit workshop in downtown LaFayette.

Commission Member Breland Joins Speaker Series

In July, Alabama Historical Commission Member Judge David Breland was the highlighted speaker for Pond Spring's Speaker Series.

Breland's presentation focused on Col. Benjamin Sherrod and the Tuscumbia, Courtland, and Decatur railway that once ran in front of the General Joe Wheeler Home at Pond Spring. Judge Breland emphasized how the railway impacted the Tennessee Valley both now and then.

The speaker series is typically held once a month at Pond Spring, however Breland was hosted by the Decatur Parks & Recreation at their property: Old State Bank in Decatur.

Judge Breland is the historic resource and event coordinator for Decatur Parks & Recreation and oversees the Old State Bank and Historic Decatur Union Depot.



Top Left: Visitors at Breland's presentation
Top Right: Col. Benjamin Sherrod
Bottom Right: First railroad sign

Sites Find Their Place on the National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the nation's official list of cultural resources, 50 years or older, worthy of preservation. Properties listed in the NRHP include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture at the local, state, and national level. The AHC oversees the NRHP in Alabama and forwards nominations approved by Alabama's National Register Review Board to the NPS who completes a final review and approval. NPS recently added the following properties to the NRHP. The Review Board will review the next round of nominations on September 28, 2023. More details to come!

- Noojin House (Etowah Co)
- Selma University (Dallas Co)
- Automobile Alley Boundary Increase (Mobile Co)
- Campsite 3: The Gardner Farm (Lowndes Co)
- St Paul Baptist Church and Armstrong School (Macon Co)