



HISTORY HAPPENS



Official Newsletter of the Alabama Historical Commission

DECEMBER 2022

A Letter from the Director

Greetings all,

What a busy year it has been for all of us here at the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC)! While COVID-19 has been trying, the staff has begun traveling again throughout the state to assist communities with their preservation efforts. In addition, the Education Trust Fund (ETF) grant program has given \$2.3 million to assist in historic preservation projects across Alabama.

The year was filled with many exciting events including further exploration efforts on the Clotilda slave ship, the return of our annual event Frontier Days at Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson Park and continued expansion of programming at AHC historic sites.

As the year comes to a close and we prepare for the 2023 year, I want to thank you for being invested in the great work we are doing here at AHC and continuing to support our sites and programs.

I look forward to the opportunities our agency will have in the next year to further protect, preserve and interpret the history within our great state. Wishing you and your family a warm and happy holiday season!

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

Frontier Days 2022

Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson Park, a historic property of the Alabama Historical Commission, and the Friends of the Forts celebrated the 27th Annual Alabama Frontier Days that took place Nov 2-5 at Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson Park near Wetumpka.

With over 7,000 in attendance, people from across the state got to experience one of the largest and most authentic living history events in Alabama!

Thank you to all who made Frontier Days a success! We are already counting down the days until November 2023!



Ironclad ships officially listed in National Register of Historic Places

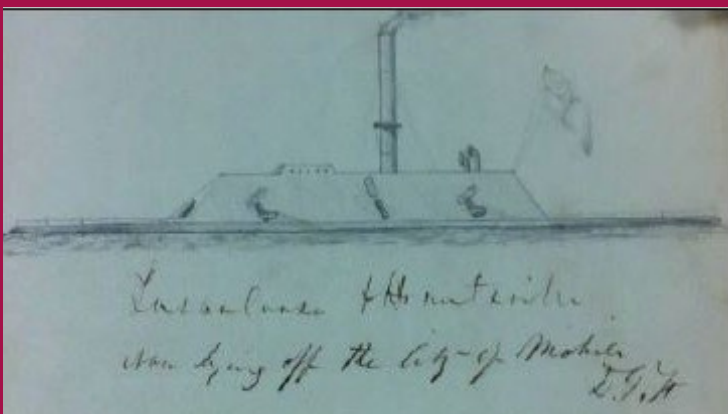
The submerged wrecks of the Confederate ironclad ships *CSS Huntsville* and *CSS Tuscaloosa*, located in waters near Mobile, Alabama, were officially listed in the National Register of Historic Places on July 18, 2022.

The vessels participated in the defense of Fort Powell in 1864 and in the Union siege of Mobile in 1865. As the Confederate forces retreated in April 1865, the vessels were abandoned and scuttled near a pre-war jetty to block Union access to inland waterways and the retreating Confederate navy.

The wrecks of the *CSS Huntsville* and *CSS Tuscaloosa* were first excavated and identified in 1985. In 2019, a survey, funded by the Alabama Historical Commission and conducted by maritime archeologists from SEARCH, Inc. used remote-sensing technology to assess the shipwrecks and the jetty. The two vessels are the most intact examples of Confederate ironclad warships in the nation.

“The Mobile and Tensaw Rivers continue to add to our state’s history as more sophisticated technology discovers and reveals many of the delta’s secrets. These ironclads promise to provide important components to the rich history of Alabama and the United States,” said Jim Day, Chairman of the Alabama Historical Commission.

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation and part of a nationwide program to protect historic and archaeological places.



Drawing of *CSS Huntsville* and *CSS Tuscaloosa* (National Archives of the United States)



PLACES IN PERIL SPOTLIGHT The Pink House, Homewood



The home was built in 1921 by artists Eleanor and Georges Bridges. The land was a wedding present from her father, Richard Massey, one of the 1871 founders of Birmingham and the man who coined it, “The Magic City.” The Bridges owned the property until their deaths in 1975 and 1987.

In 2018, the developer who purchased the property made plans to demolish the house and replace it with new homes. The plan was never approved by the Homewood Planning Commission due to the passion that the Homewood community had to save the house. In the fall of 2019, a local family bought the house in an effort to preserve and restore it. Through the publicity of Places in Peril and the dedication of passionate individuals, one of Alabama's architectural treasures was saved!

For more information on Places in Peril, click [here](#).

Preserved for a Purpose

A look back at Certified Local Government grant projects

The Certified Local Government (CLG) grant program was established in 1983 by the National Park Service in response to the 1980 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. These amendments recognize the value of local preservation programs and created a partnership between the National Park Service, state historic preservation offices, and local governments. Recently funded projects by the Alabama Historical Commission include:

- Bessemer - Resurvey of the Downtown Bessemer Historic District
- Decatur - Revision of Design Guidelines
- Foley - Training presented by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions
- Huntsville - Prepare National Register nominations for Terry Heights and Whitesburg Estates neighborhoods
- Homewood - Development of an educational app
- Montgomery - Training presented by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions
- Prattville - Resurvey of the Daniel Pratt Historic District
- Selma - Staffing
- Dothan - Revision of Design Guidelines
- Mobile - Staffing

For more information on the CLG program, click [here](#).

BE SURE TO CHECK AHC SOCIAL MEDIA FOR AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 2023 PHOTO CONTEST CALENDAR!



Happy Holidays

Save the DATE!

Dec 10
Santa's Post Office
Confederate Memorial Park

Dec 11
Christmas at Pond Spring
The General Joe Wheeler Home

Dec 11
Holiday Open House + Artist Market
Magnolia Grove

Dec 26
Offices Closed

Jan 2
Offices Closed