


SPECIAL: Dignity for 'Georgia' Cemetery - p. 8

FREE



SITE OF THE HUNTSVILLE SLAVE CEMETERY

On September 3, 1818, the Huntsville City Commissioners purchased two acres of land from LeRoy Pope for a "burying ground" for slaves. This cemetery was located within the NE quarter of Section 1, Township 4, Range 1 West of the Base Meridian. It was affectionately known as "Georgia" within the black community. The cemetery continued to be used from 1818 until 1870 when Glenwood Cemetery was designated as the city's burial ground for African Americans. No known records have survived.

ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION 2001

Cope, Don't Dare Break! - p. 8

Friday
May 12, 2023
Vol. 9, No. 36
ValleyWeeklyllc.com

SALUTE!
Rosetta James Foundation
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Mrs. Ruby Ford



"Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much." - Helen Keller

TVW Artist Helps Lead Tribute to Sun Ra

The Valley Weekly "PowerShot" artist Jahni Moore (r) and Willoughby Lucas Hastings (not shown) are bringing to the Tennessee Valley "Southern Galactic: Celebrating Afrofuturism & Sun Ra" May 19-22.



Co-sponsors of the festive celebration include The Verdant Fund, Alabama Council on the Arts, Maitland Conservatory, Huntsville Revisited Museum, North Huntsville Public Library, the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH), Straight to Ale, and United Women of Color.

Born Herman Poole Blount on May 22 in Birmingham, Ala., Sun Ra (1914-93), was an American jazz composer, bandleader, piano and synthesizer player, and poet best known for his experimental music, "cosmic" philosophy, prolific output, and theatrical performances.

In 1936, Ra's high school mentor John T. "Fess" Whatley of Parker High, helped the budding performer get a scholarship to Alabama A&M University, where Ra briefly studied music education. Though he dropped out after only a year, records note that Alabama A&M was where Ra had a "visionary experience" he claimed that transformed his body and teleported him to Saturn. Ra's claim, source report, precedes much later reports of UFOs. Nonetheless, the incident is but the tip of the iceberg to a fascinating biography.

Most of the activities of the Sun Ra Fest are being held in coordination with UAH, including textile and sign workshops (May 8 from 12-5 p.m. and May 15 from 3-7 p.m.) at Roberts Hall.

A screening of Cauleen Smith's "Space is the Place (A March for Sun Ra)" will



be held May 19 at UAH from 6:30-9 p.m.

On May 20, the North Huntsville Public Library will hold a three-hour panel presentation (11 a.m.-2 p.m.) by Huntsville Revisited Museum founder William Hampton, NASA researcher Mason Quick, musician Nailah Hunter, visual artist Simone Taylor Cunningham and jazz scholar Howard Bankhead. Hunter and Grimey Sea will perform later at the Straight to Ale Campus 805 beginning at 5:30 p.m.

A May 21 outdoor festival including activities for children, a walking parade and musical performances by Midlife Chrysler and Amiel Univers are set for East Big Spring Park from 12-4 p.m. May 22 is Sun Ra's birthday.



OU Prepares for Spring Commencement

Oakwood University will hold its annual Spring Commencement ceremonies on Saturday, May 13, at the Von Braun Center at 8 p.m.

The Commencement is the culmination of a near-week long series of events beginning Wednesday, May 10, with the Communication Dedication Ceremony at 11 a.m.; Education Teacher Dedication Ceremony, 1 p.m.; Social Work Pinning Ceremony, 3 p.m.; Nutrition and Dietetics Pinning Ceremony, 5 p.m.; and Graduate Studies Hooding Ceremony, 7 p.m.

Thursday, May 11, will proceed with a tree planting activity by the Senior Class at Unity Pond at 1 p.m. A Nurses Pinning

Ceremony will be held at 3 p.m., and the Theology Dedication Ceremony at 5 p.m. The virtual LEAP Senior Ceremony will round out the day's events at 7 p.m.

Consecration will be held at the Oakwood University

Church on Friday, May 12, at 8 p.m.

On Saturday, May 13, a baccalaureate program will begin at 10 a.m. The Aeolians will present at a mini-concert/Vespers at 7 p.m., followed by Commencement at 8 p.m.

The Valley Weekly

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The Valley Weekly

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Eighth Page	2.5x5 inches	\$150
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Classified	1 col.x1 inch	\$100/Flat Fee

The Valley Weekly
Washington
One Minute
by Ron Hamm



Here are the happenings in Washington, D.C., this week:

1. CONGRESS. The House and Senate are in session this week. The House will tackle a comprehensive GOP immigration bill this week, which would restart construction of the border wall, increase the number of Border Patrol agents, and toughen immigrant detention policies. Last Thursday, Senators Thom Tillis (R-NC) and Kyrsten Sinema (I-AZ) introduced a bill that would give the Biden Administration a 2-year extension of temporary expulsion authority to mimic the operations of the Title 42 Covid-era immigration policy, which is set to expire on Thursday (May 11).

2. THE WHITE HOUSE. On Monday, President Biden and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg announced new rules requiring airlines to pay compensation beyond a ticket refund and to cover expenses that consumers incur, including rebooking on another flight, if the airline causes a cancellation or significant delay. On Tuesday afternoon, the President convened a meeting at the White House with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-CA), House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY), Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and Senate GOP

Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) to discuss legislation to extend the U.S. debt ceiling. On Wednesday, he traveled to New York's Hudson Valley and spoke about the debt limit and then attended a fundraiser in New York City. On Friday, the President will host a meeting with Spanish President Pedro Sanchez at the White House. On Saturday, the President will deliver the commencement address at Howard University. Last Thursday, he met with the CEOs of Google, Microsoft, Anthropic, and OpenAI to discuss artificial intelligence policy and announced a new federal investment to promote trustworthy AI alongside voluntary commitments from major tech companies to participate in a public assessment of their AI systems at an upcoming cybersecurity conference.

3. APRIL JOBS REPORT. Last Friday, the Labor Department announced that the U.S. economy added 253,000 jobs in April, significantly above the 180,000 jobs that had been predicted. The unemployment rate fell to 3.4% from 3.5%, and job gains were reported in professional and business services, health care, leisure and hospitality, and social assistance.

4. COVID EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS. On Thursday (May 11), two

Covid-era emergency declarations were allowed to expire: (1) the Covid public health emergency issued by the Department of Health and Human Services in Jan. 2020 and (2) the Covid national emergency declaration issued by former President Trump on March 13, 2020. According to Forbes, Americans should expect Covid-19 vaccines, tests, and treatments to become less available and more expensive.

5. EDUCATION/WORKFORCE. On Thursday, U.S. Department of Education Secretary Miguel Cardona presented the president's proposed FY2024 budget for his agency to the Senate Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Subcommittee. Also on Thursday, the House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development held a hear-

ing entitled "Examining America's Workforce Challenges: Looking For Ways to Improve Skills Development."

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HUNTSVILLE UTILITIES' BUSINESS MATCHMAKER EVENT

May 17, 2023
Von Braun Center



Small, Minority, Women & Veteran-Owned Business Expo

Huntsville Utilities is proud to host its second Business Matchmaker event, May 17 at the Von Braun Center.

This unique expo matches large companies with local minority, women, veteran-owned, and small businesses in north Alabama looking to expand their opportunities.

Companies who want to be part of this opportunity to create jobs, relationships, savings, and community growth, should click the Business Matchmaker link at www.hsvutil.org to receive additional information and fill out the registration form.

You can register as a:

Corporate Partner (large organization looking to diversify its supplier base, routinely purchases goods or services from other, smaller businesses), or,

Vendor (small, minority, veteran, or female-owned business looking to provide goods/services to Corporate Partners).

The event is free to Corporate Partners and Vendors. Participating Corporate Partners will receive 10x10 booth space with a table and two chairs at no cost.



THE VALLEY WEEKLY
VALLEY DEATHS



NELMS MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME

2501 Carmichael Avenue NW
Huntsville, AL 35816 - (256) 539-8189

Funeral service for MS. NARISSA ANN DARNELL (b. 1979) was held Sunday, May 7, at Saint Mark Baptist Church with Elder Jeremiah Chester officiating.

Funeral service for MRS. KAREN BALDWIN TONEY (b. 1955) was held Saturday, May 6, at New Birth Missionary Baptist Church (4640 Meridian Street North ~ Huntsville, Ala.) with The Reverend Terence Haley officiating.

Funeral service for MS. GERALDINE SAFFORD (b. 1947) was held Saturday, April 29, at Good Hope Baptist Church (County Road 434 ~ Pleasant Hill Road - Sardis, Ala.).

ROYAL FUNERAL HOME

4315 Oakwood Avenue NW
Huntsville, AL 35810 - (256) 534-8481

Funeral service for MRS. ANDREA COLLIER (b. 1962) will be 12 Noon, Saturday, May 13, at the Blackburn Chapel C.P.C.A. Church (507 Plummer Road, Huntsville, Ala.) with Pastor Angela Anderson officiating.

Funeral service for MS. QUEENTELLA MAPLES HORTON (b. 1963) will be 1 p.m., Saturday, May 13, at the Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Association Tabernacle (6378 Pulaski Pike NW, Huntsville, Ala.) with Reverend Dennis Green officiating.

Funeral service for MASTER KOBE KYRIE THEARD (b. 2013) will be 12:30 p.m., Saturday, May 13, 2023 at the Royal Chapel of Memories (4315 Oakwood Avenue, NW Huntsville, Ala.) with Pastor Waymond Smith officiating.

Funeral service for MR. DUSTIN LAMAR HENRY (b. 2005) will be 2 p.m., Friday, May 12, at the New Life Seventh-Day Adventist (3912 Pulaski Pike, NW Huntsville, AL 35810) Pastor Nelson Stokes officiating.

Funeral service for MRS. EVELYN S. RICH (b. 1933) was held Saturday, May 6, at the Fellowship Presbyterian Church (3406 Meridian Street N, Huntsville, Ala.) with Pastor Gregory J. Bentley officiating.

SERENITY FUNERAL HOME

2505 University Drive NW
Huntsville, AL 35816 (256) 539-9693

Funeral service for MR. WILLIE "DOZIER BOY" DOZIER (b. 1970) was held Tuesday, May 9, at Serenity Funeral Home.

Funeral service for MS. DOROTHY WILLIAMS (b. 1959) will be announced at a later date.

Valley Weekly
Spiritual Game Plan
PRESTON BROWN'S



"FALSE PROPHETS"

Matthew 7:15-16 says, "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them."

You know, some people just can't help who they are. Even though they disguise themselves very well, the truth comes out in the end. These types of people know all the right things to say, to get you to "buy in" to whatever it is that they are trying to sell; however, the truth always comes out in the end.

These types of people

are masters when it comes to disguising the truth and may even appeal to your rational senses but in the end it's all a lie or a "conspiracy theory". The writer Matthew compares these types of people to "fruit trees." Matthew tells us that every good tree bears good fruit; however, a bad tree can only bear bad fruit. It's just their nature.

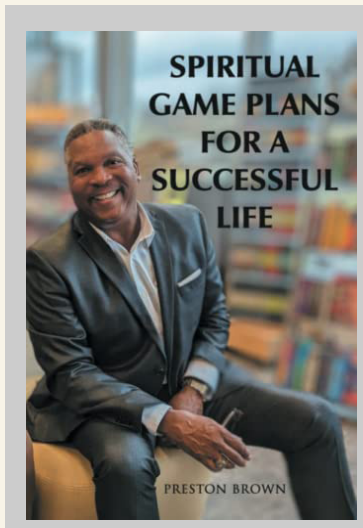
This comparison reminds me of a story about the scorpion and the turtle. Remember, the crafty scorpion couldn't swim and needed assistance from the turtle to help him cross the river. Now the turtle knew this was against his better

judgment; however, the deceptive scorpion talked him into it. And, because the scorpion was a "false prophet," so to speak, he ended up doing what scorpions do: he stung the unsuspecting turtle.

While they were drowning the confused turtle asked the scorpion, "Why did you sting me after I agreed to help you cross the river?" The scorpion answered, "It is my nature to sting."

Just like some people, they can't help who they

are; however, the truth always comes out in the end. My brothers and sisters, as we go through life, beware of "false prophets," because they will always lead you to destruction. Stay encouraged and be safe.



Make sure you purchase a copy of my books, "A CHAMPION GAME PLANS FOR LIFE" and "SPIRITUAL GAME PLANS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LIFE" at amazon.com or westbow books.

Huntsville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Meetings

The Citizens Advisory Committee of the Huntsville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will meet Monday, May 15, 2023 at 5:00 pm in the 1st Floor Urban Development Conference Room at 320 Fountain Cir. SW. The Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board meets on Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at 4:00 pm in the 1st Floor Council Chambers of Huntsville City Hall, 308 Fountain Cir. SW. To review items on the agenda for these meetings, visit: <http://www.huntsvillempo.org/about/meetings-and-agendas/>. For more information on the MPO, visit: <http://www.huntsvillempo.org/>

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"... Assume ownership of your own thinking ..."

- Anne Wortham

The Valley Weekly

VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

Thru May 20

"The Bias Inside Us"
Host: City of Huntsville
HudsonAlpha Institute

Von Braun Center
8 p.m.

Online
5 p.m.

Thru May 21

"The Bias Inside Us"
Smithsonian Traveling
Exhibition
Downtown Huntsville-
Madison County Public
Library
Huntsville, Ala.

May 15

Textile and Sign Work-
shop
"Southern Galactic" (Pre-
Sun Ra Fest)
UAH Roberts Hall
Huntsville, Ala.
3-7 p.m.

May 20

Rocket City BBQ & Soul
Fest
6001 Pulaski Pike NW
Huntsville, Ala.
10 a.m.-11 p.m.

May 12-13

Comedian
Jay Pharaoh
Stand Up Live
Huntsville, Ala.
(Times Vary)

May 18

Coffee with Patti Calla-
han Henry
Discussion & Book Sign-
ing
Downtown Huntsville
Library
10 a.m.

Sun Ra Fest
Presentations:
William Hampton, Hunts-
ville Revisited Museum;
Mason Quick, NASA;
musician Nailah Hunter;
visual artist Simone Taylor
Cunningham; and jazz
scholar Howard Bankhead
North Huntsville Public
Library
11 a.m.-2 p.m.

May 13

Camp to Amp Festival
2023
MidCity District
Huntsville, Ala.
12 noon

May 19

Beginning of Sun Ra Fest
Screening of Cauleen
Smith's "Space Is the
Place (A March for Sun
Ra)" and John Coney and
Sun Ra's "Space Is the
Place"
UAH
6:30-9 p.m.

Sun Ra Fest Evening Musi-
cal Performances
Straight to Ale Campus 805
Featuring Grimey Sea-5:30
p.m. and Nailah Hunt-
er-6:30 p.m.

Textile and Sign Work-
shop
"Southern Galactic" (Pre-
Sun Ra Fest)
North Huntsville Public
Library
Huntsville, Ala.
12-5 p.m.

Food Truck & Trailer
Rallies
Big Spring Park
5 p.m.

May 21

Sun Ra Fest (Outdoor)
Family Fun/Parade
Music: Midlife Chrysler
(2:30 p.m.) and Amiel
Univers (3:30 p.m.)
East Big Spring Park
Downtown Huntsville
12-4 p.m.

Oakwood University
Spring Commencement

Cody Jinks
The Orion Amphitheater

Hit the Brakes, But Don't Break ...

I was on Spring (not so Spring) break with the babies, and I decided to pay attention to them, not work, and relax. Put aside what my agenda was, and be ... for them.

As a single Mom, it's hard to find moments to relax and be 100% mommy only, so I decided to take that moment.

During this time, I noticed it is so easy to fall back into what you used to do when you lax your routine. I have had to "semi-do" some things to keep myself intact during the break. I didn't want to break habits, good habits, that have taken me years to develop. I didn't want to break away from everything I'd done to prepare myself for greatness.

However, it is easy to do. You can stop something that took you "forever"

"Problems are not the problem; coping is the problem."

- Virginia Satir

Millennial Moment

by Gloria B. Caldwell

to accomplish quickly. It's easy to say, "Whatever, I'll just drink this or do this!"



I have decided to flip that, and the things which aren't

beneficial for me would be what I chose to stop doing!

I will take a break but keep my stride to where I'm headed. I'll pump my brakes when I see that I need to take a moment to breathe, but I will not put it in the park! I have a mission, goal, and purpose. That includes being a

Mommy, which is not all-inclusive of who I am!

You are so much! God has allowed you to be remarkable, provide, and share. Hit the brakes to break, but don't break from what your purpose is. Don't digress. The devil will tempt you with what feels easy and good. You know better.

Stay the course. Take a break, but don't do away with the path. This, too, is part of the progress. It's a test. Pass.

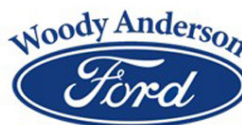


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Remembering the 5th Anniversary of How Starbucks CEO Made Lemonade from a Lemon

"A soft word turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger"
- Proverbs 15:1.

Need a role model for correcting an immediate screw-up? Remember the prompt words and near-immediate follow-up actions from Kevin Johnson, Starbucks CEO from 2017-2022.

Coffee while Black?

On Thursday, April 12, 2018, a Philadelphia Starbucks coffeehouse arrested two Black men for sitting in the restaurant and not placing an order, according to the now-fired store manager.

On May 29, Starbucks closed its 8,000 stores for employees' racial-bias training, Starbucks will close 8,000 US stores May 29 for racial-bias training.

The TOP Man used the TOP model

A right-now role model, Johnson wasted no time taking the problem to the TOP.

In my free downloadable first book, 7 Steps to Manage Ego Problems: The How-to Guide for "Somebody Else, www.timallston.com, I introduce the TOP acronym as a model for addressing problems of "ego-holism" - the addiction to self - as well as most other problems.

TOP stands for Target the problem; Own it, and then Proceed to take corrective actions. In this potential crisis at Starbucks, for example, Johnson:

- Targeted the problem, by stating - "What happened and the way that incident escalated, and the outcome was nothing but reprehensible, . . ."; then he
- Owned the problem - ". . . And I'm sorry," adding further in a statement, "While this is not limited to Starbucks, we're committed to being a part of the solution."; and then Johnson
- Proceeded to resolve the matter: "Closing our stores for racial bias training is just one step in a journey that requires dedication from every level of our company and partnerships in our local communities."

What Kevin Johnson did and promised to do with Starbucks is a refreshing how-to leadership model for all of us - defusing quickly an inflamed incident with:

- An immediate personal acceptance of responsibility from the top leader;
- Meeting rapidly with and listening directly to the incident victims; and
- Leading his 175,000 employees into company-sponsored racial-bias education and training across the diverse spectrum of historically-disenfranchised racial groups.

How quickly do you defuse a problem, before it can inflame into a crisis? Whether in your household, social group, workplace, or worship place, the sooner you can apply this TOP formula to your issue or concern, often the quicker and less damaging it will become.

Here, Johnson not only made premium coffee at Starbucks but also some sweet lemonade from a bitter lemon!



Tim Allston
Leadership Coach & Three-time
Amazon Best-Selling Author
Leading from the Middle
leadingfromthemiddle@gmail.com

Huntsville Master Chorale Fest Set June 2



Activities for Friday, June 2, will be held from 6-9 p.m., while Saturday activities will span 9 a.m.-5 p.m., with a free concert at 5:30 p.m.

Cultural Grants Program, City of Huntsville, Arts Huntsville, Mercedes-Benz of Huntsville, Landers McLarty Nissan Huntsville and the Pei Ling Charitable



Proudly celebrating 25 years, the Huntsville Master Chorale will hold a Choral Festival June 2-3 at Trinity United Methodist Church in Huntsville, Ala.

The concert will feature the winning composition from the choral composition contest.

Dr. Jeffrey Murdock, left, the 2021 Music Educator Grammy Award Winner, will be the featured guest clinician.

The Festival counts among its sponsors the Alabama State Council on the Arts, Huntsville Arts &

Trust.

The Huntsville Master Chorale, a 501(c) 3 corporation, is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all.

For additional information, contact the Huntsville Master Chorale at hsvmasterchorale@gmail.com.

Huntsville Council Meetings

Huntsville City Council's regular meetings are held in the City Council Chambers of the Municipal Building on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 6 p.m.

Council work sessions are also held in the Chambers of the Municipal Building on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. For more information, call (256) 427-5011.



This Sunday's Lectionary



Sunday, May 14, 2023

Sixth Sunday
of Easter

(Track 2, Year A)

First Lesson:

Acts 17:22-31

Psalm 66:7-18

Second Lesson:

1 Peter 3:13-22

GOSPEL:

John 14:15-21



"The United States is not a nation of black and white people. Any fool can see that white people are not really white, and that black people are not black."

- Albert Murray

MAY 12 - KIM FIELDS - Kim Victoria Fields is an American actress and television director. Fields is known for her roles as Dorothy "Tootie" Ramsey on the NBC sitcom *The Facts of Life* (1979-88), and as Regine Hunter on the Fox sitcom *Living Single* (1993-98). Fields is the daughter of actress/director Chip Fields and older sister of actress Alexis Fields. Before appearing on *Facts of Life*, Fields co-starred in a short-lived sitcom called *Baby, I'm Back* with Demond Wilson and Denise Nicholas, and appeared in a television commercial for Mrs. Butterworth's pancake syrup. She later appeared on *Good Times* as a friend of Penny Gordon Woods, played by Janet Jackson. Her real-life mother is the actress Chip Fields. Kim's episodes on *Good Times* were "The Snow Storm" and "The Physical."

- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.com



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WJAB

90.9 FM

www.wjab.org

ON THIS DAY

On May 12, 1898, Louisiana adopted a new constitution with restrictive provisions to exclude blacks from voting.

NAAACC Meetings

The North Alabama African American Chamber of Commerce (Huntsville) meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday at 12 noon.

The meeting location varies. Call (256) 564-7574.



Rosetta James Foundation "Spotlight on Our Elders" ... Featuring

Mrs. Ruby Ford

Mrs. Ruby M. Ford was born in Fayetteville, Tenn., and raised in New Market, Ala. She was born to the late Alex and Ruby Adams, the eldest of 13 children. She received her elementary and secondary education in the Madison County School System. Ford enjoyed high school and participated in several school activities. While in high school, her teachers stressed striving for excellence and empowered her to do so.

She successfully completed course work at University of Alabama in Huntsville, Athens State University and Calhoun Community College. In 2005, she graduated magna cum laude from Alabama A&M University with a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting. She retired after serving 28 years at the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources State Parks Division. Most of her state service was with Monte Sano State Park in Huntsville, Ala. While at the state park, Ford managed all recordation procedures and bookkeeping processes. She also manages accounting for Mack Ford's Construction, Incorpo-



rated, which is a business owned and operated by her husband for over 50 years.

She is a faithful member of the Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church, under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Larry Davidson, Jr., and is currently a member of the Deaconess Ministry and serves as Sunday School Teacher in the Adult Department. She has served formally in many capacities, such as president of the Deaconess Ministry and president of the Mud Creek North Alabama Missionary Baptist Association Deaconess Ministry. She enjoys being a workshop coordinator, seminar leader, event coordinator, as well as presenting at various speaking engagements. Very active in her community, Ford is a member of the Christian Cancer Support Group of

North East Madison County, Alabama Democratic Conference, Alabama New South Coalition, and Habitat for Humanity of Madison County Women's Build Guild.

She has received several honors in recognition of outstanding accomplishments in her profession and contributions to her community. In 1998, she received a Certificate of Appreciation from Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church for Educational Services rendered from 1997 to 1998. In 2005, she was honored as an Outstanding Employee from the State of Alabama, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. In 2009, she received the Habitat for Humanity Women's Build Guild Award for dedicated service and unselfish contribution.

Ford enjoys reading and traveling. She and her husband are world travelers who have toured six of the seven continents in the world. She is married to Mack Ford and they are the proud parents of two children Vanessa and Michael. They have four grandchildren. Michael, Mone', Ruby and Maya.

"2023 Sponsors" is a weekly feature sponsored by the Rosetta James Foundation to promote volunteerism and activism in our community among those who are 70-plus. The Foundation also provides scholarships. Learn more about us at www.rosettajamesfoundation.org. Know an outstanding elder (70+) that you would like to see featured? Send us a photo and 250-word write-up to info@valleyweeklyllc.com.



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Huntsville's 19th Century Black History Telling Our Stories

The Slave Memorial: A Circle of Remembrance

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The Circle of Remembrance



Throughout the nation cities and counties are seeking reconciliation by creating museums and memorials in recognition of the human travesties suffered by African Americans during the eras of slavery and Jim Crow. Birmingham has established the Civil Rights Museum; Montgomery, the Legacy Museum and Lynching Memorial; and Mobile, an exhibit entitled Recalling Their Names: Racial Terror in Jim Crow Mobile. These museums and memorials were created in an effort to educate and heal wounds of the past.

Huntsville's Slave Memorial with 15,000 names will recognize the deep trauma of slavery. It will also honor the enslaved people brought to the Mississippi Territory (which later became Huntsville, Alabama), in chains and shackles. They were brought here by early Huntsville pioneers, such as LeRoy Pope, Dr. David Moore, Governor Rueben Chapman and architect George Steele, to clear land, plant and cultivate crops, and build the infrastructure of this city and county. Born during the 18th and 19th centuries, they lived, worked and died often without ever experiencing freedom.

The city of Huntsville purchased land from LeRoy Pope in 1818 to use as a burial site for these enslaved persons. The resulting burial ground, Georgia Slave Cemetery,

became a sacred place, one of peace for those who never knew the same during their lifetime. This peace, however, has been disturbed on many occasions. In 1879 the city allowed hogs and cattle to graze on the graves. In 1887, according to William Gaston, a former enslaved person, the fence around the burial ground had been moved and graves were being plowed over. In 1921, the city gave the Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs permission to build a tourist camp on the grounds despite that it held approximately 2,000 graves. (By that time the cemetery was often referred to as the "old colored cemetery.") During the 1950s the city gave Huntsville Hospital permission to build a parking garage over the cemetery. There is no record as to where or if the bodies were re-interred before the erection of this structure. This treatment of the cemetery by the city of Huntsville has resulted, at a minimum, in the gross desecration of the grounds and a loss of history for all of the city and its residents, but especially including African Americans.

The Memorial honors the people forced into servitude to build this city and county without compensation. The wills and property inventories of their "owners" contain most of the available public information about them. These documents state their first name, gender, disability, age and

"value." As this significant but limited information shows, with slavery came a loss of personhood. That personhood was sacrificed at the altar of Huntsville's founding.

This Memorial endeavors to help to bring reconciliation and healing by recognizing the humanity of enslaved people and paying homage to their contributions to the building of the city and county. It testifies to the strength, fortitude, intellect, integrity and spirituality of people who came here in bondage and endured the harsh conditions of slavery. These attributes are reflected in the lives of formerly enslaved people such as Daniel Brandon (alderman, in Huntsville, in 1880) and Dr. Burgess E. Scruggs (first licensed African American physician in Alabama) and the descendants of enslaved people like Chessie Harris (founder of the Harris Home for Children), Dr. Sonnie Herford (civil rights activist), Dr. Richard Showers (first African American city councilman, in Huntsville, since Reconstruction), and Mr. LeRoy Garrett (first African American owner of a radio station, WEUP, in Huntsville). This Memorial will attract, inspire and inform people throughout the nation. It will bring about reconciliation through the recognition of the contributions and humanity of enslaved people in Huntsville and Madison County.

Huntsville Slave Cemetery

1818

On September 3, 1818, Leroy Pope sold property to the city of Huntsville. It was described as "two acres more or less," sold for the express purpose of a graveyard for the town of Huntsville. The land was swampy. After four years it was soon deemed unsuitable for burials. So Leroy Pope sold an additional parcel of land for Maple Hill Cemetery. However, they continued to bury enslaved people at the original site.

The graveyard became the center of the community for enslaved people. In 1820, William Harris, an enslaved man, established the Huntsville Baptist Church there. The church was later renamed St. Bartley Primitive Baptist Church. It is the oldest African American church in the state of Alabama.

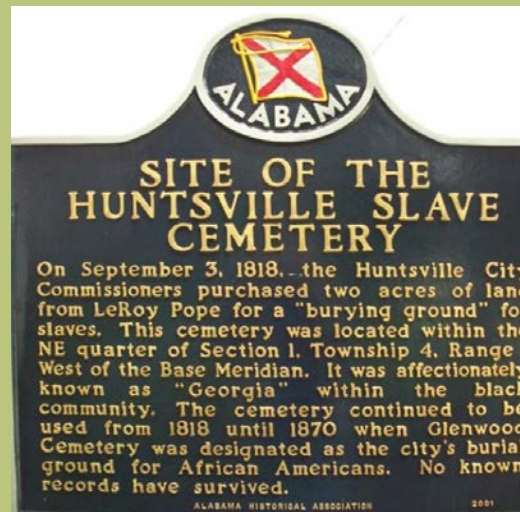
In 1870, another colored cemetery was established. According to the 1901 city council minutes, the name was changed to Glenwood Cemetery as requested by Henry C. Binford. It still exists on Hall Ave. Many 19th century politicians, educators, ministers, artisans and businessmen are buried there.

1885 – The following article appeared in the Huntsville Gazette:

The opposition to Mayor Mastin stated that he should be defeated for spending a few dollars of the city funds to repair the fence around the Colored Cemetery in Georgia (name given to the

Slave Cemetery protecting the graves from being run over by hogs and cattle.

1887 – Alderman William H. Gaston, a civil war veteran called attention to the boundary fence of the old Colored Cemetery. He indicated that it



had been moved some 30 feet or more, leaving the graves in the fields to be plowed over.

1921 – The Huntsville Telegram: TOURISTS' CAMP OLD CEMETERY - Local Committees Will See to Removal of Bodies to Colored Cemetery

Committees representing the Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanians and Rotarians, appointed to see to the establishment of a tourists' camp, have made arrangements for using the ancient cemetery on Madison Street. The few bodies remaining in the old cemetery will be removed to the colored cemetery immediately.

The committee in charge will have sanitary fixtures and electric lights provided as soon as possible and the camp site will be ready before the spring rush of tourists from the south to the north begins, it is expected.

1925 - Harry Rhett stipulated in his deed: The lands

hereinafter specifically described upon condition that the party of the second part, or its successors or assigns, would establish and continuously maintain a hospital thereon, and upon further condition that the land immediately north of the property therein conveyed, known as the Colored Cemetery, would be acquired, held, and kept up by the party of the second part, its successors or assigns.. Deed dated Jun 30, 1925.

1947 – Dr. Grote, chairman of the hospital board speaking before the Optimist Club at

the hospital stated: In 1924, all clubs joined in an effort which resulted in paying for the cost of construction of the main part of the present hospital, and again in 1929 clubs led the drive for subscriptions to pay for the nurses home, the home was built, the expense also covered removal of a Negro cemetery located on the site.

During the 50's people started parking cars on the graves. Lastly, Huntsville Hospital built their parking garage over the gravesite.

In 1980, two bodies were found during excavation for an addition to the hospital. We don't know where or if the bodies were re-interred. What can we do? How can we make a difference? The Circle of Remembrance's mission is to document, institutionalize their history and tell their stories. Do you have a story? Help us give them life!!