

BIRMINGHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

October 2025

Join Us for Our Fall Festivities

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU AT OUR OFFICES. On the 19th of October, we join with the Highland Park Neighborhood to host those curious to see and enjoy the grand homes along the avenue. The welcome includes porch and garden parties, music, and refreshments and open houses at Birmingham Historical Society and Alabama Audubon. Annie Leardine and Elizabeth Sanfelippo with the Friends of Highland Park are heading up the planning crew for this second annual event. Randy Merritt and Bob Mc Kenna have crews working daily on their homes: the Jordan and Sisters' Houses (the Warner and Harris Homes). We hope you will challenge yourself to try our Highland Heritage Hunt and win the prize: a copy of one of our bestselling books: *A Guide to Architectural Styles featuring Birmingham Homes*. Chalk markings on the sidewalks will help you negotiate the route. BHS Trustees Kaydee Breman, Jim Emison, Max Kunstmann, Henry Ray, Brian Rushing, Liz Saunders, Barbara Shores, Carol Slaughter, Katie Tipton, Karyn Uptain, Gerry Waters, and Dan Weathers will be here to greet you.

At our offices, we will be showing our exhibit *Architectural Styles featuring Birmingham Homes* illustrated by Cheryl Morgan, AIA. Linda Nelson will be present to guide you through *Marker Minutiae*: how to get a Jefferson County historical marker. BHS books will be for sale, and we'll have extra copies of the Highland Heritage Hunt.

Society Calendar

October 19, 3-5 p.m. *It's Nice to Have You in Highland Park*, 2827 Highland Avenue and in and about the homes lining the Horseshoe Bend of the avenue at Rhodes Park.

November 16, 2 p.m. *A Traveler's Tales: William Bartram's 1775 Journey ... through the Southern British Colonies and the future state of Alabama*, as told by Brian Rushing, naturalist and Bartram admirer... and celebration and release of *Building Birmingham's Industrial Base*, our 2025 Members Book, BHS Offices, 2827 Highland Avenue.

November 17. Members Books not picked up at the Sunday event will be mailed to you.

January 18, 2 p.m. Showing of the *Tuxedo Junction* documentary by Katie Rogers, Virginia Samford Theater.

February 23, 7 p.m. Annual Meeting, celebrating the release of *BIRMINGHAM by the BOOK*, Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

March TBA, 2 p.m. Showing of the film *1776*, Virginia Samford Theater.



Enjoying *It's Nice to Have You in Highland Park*, ANNIE LEARDINE 2024.

On Sunday, November 16, our double header will feature Brian Rushing, aka William Bartram, the famed naturalist-explorer, plant collector, and illustrator (1739-1823) who traveled through the southern British colonies in 1775 and recorded his journeys in his famed narrative known as *Bartram's Travels*. Bartram's account also features detailed descriptions of Native American life. Brian's costumed presentation is entitled: *William Bartram and His Travels through the Southern British Colonies and the Future State of Alabama*. 2025 is the 250th Anniversary of Bartram's travels through our state. For what was going on in the future Birmingham area 250 years ago, turn to *The Creeks at the Founding of the United States* on pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter. This excerpt comes from our forthcoming book, *BIRMINGHAM by the BOOK*.

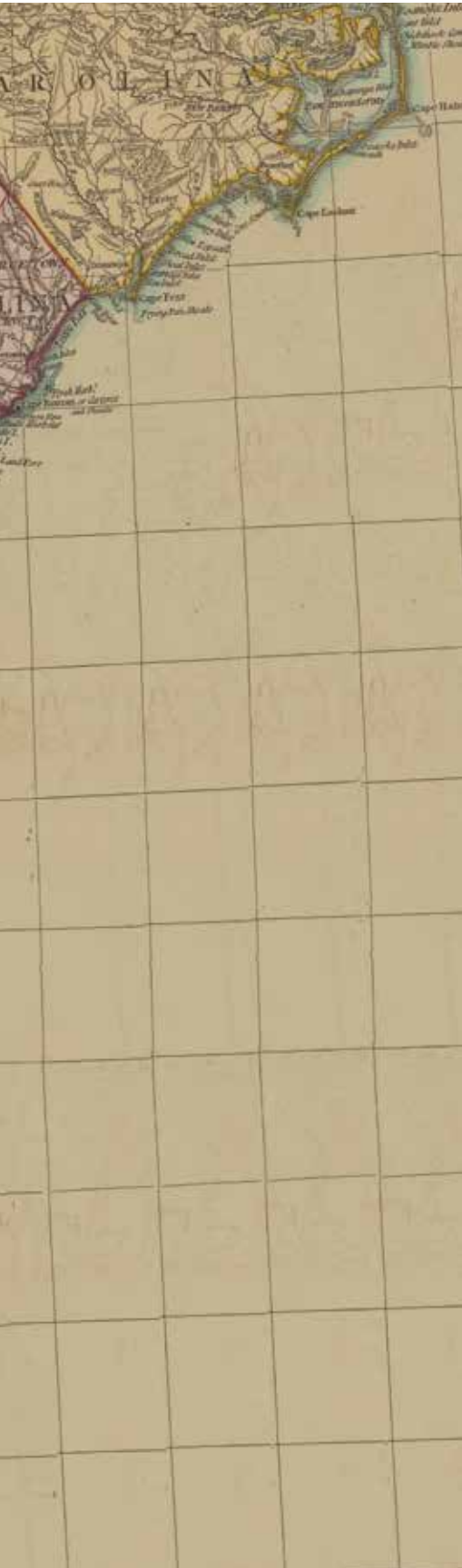
And on November 16th we will release our 2025 Members book: *Building Birmingham's Industrial Base*, a collection of essays by Newcomen Society of North America's Alabama Chapter members: Thomas Martin, William Davis Moore, Barney Monaghan, and Robert Gregg. These gentlemen and scholars lived the stories of the flowering of Birmingham's iron and steel, cast iron pipe, power, and aggregate industries and recorded them in this highly readable prose. We are excited to share this reprint of the original Newcomen monographs published from 1939 to 1961 and now held by bibliophile and collector Jay Draper.

Copies of Members books not picked up at this event will be mailed on Monday, November 17. Please let us know if you do not receive your book in a timely fashion.



A New and General Map of the Southern Dominions Belonging to The United States of America. Laurie & Whittle, London, 1794. RUCKER AGEE COLLECTION, BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY.

This map shows the Creek cession of its lands in Georgia following the Treaty of New York, for which they were granted the right to attempt to keep settlers out of their remaining territory. The approximate site of Birmingham, designated by a red dot, remains in Creek territory. The English mapmaker of 1794 refers to these Creek lands as "The Creek County of the Muskogee Nation." For historical purposes, Muskogee (also spelled Muscogee) and Creek are interchangeable names.

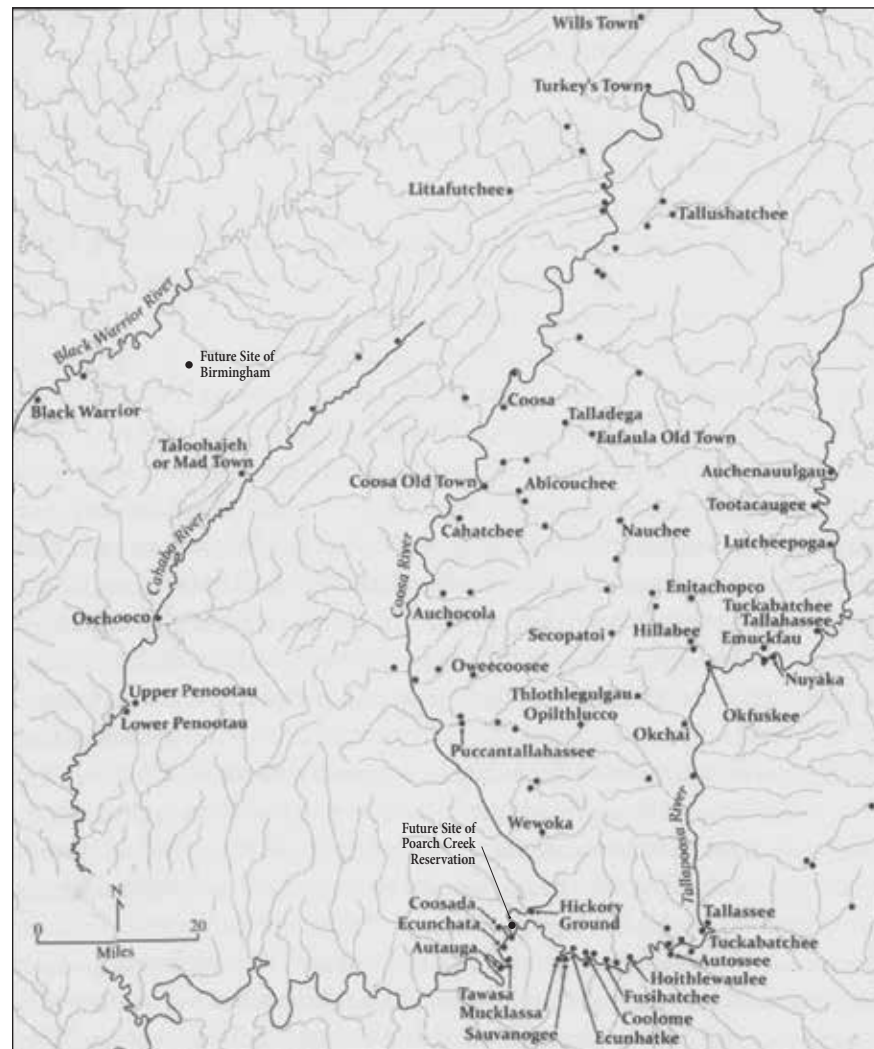


The Creeks at the Founding of the United States

The population of the Creeks was estimated at 20,000 persons at the time of the American Revolution. In his 1775 *History of American Indians* published in London, the English deerskin trader James Adair documented Creek life at the Elyton and Jonesboro campgrounds near the future site of Birmingham. Adair's account tells of cultivated lands that yielded bountiful crops as well as mineral resources lying along stream banks and of a great mountain of iron ore.

Following the creation of the United States of America in 1776, the future Birmingham area remained Creek country. In 1790, President George Washington negotiated The Treaty of New York with Muskohge leaders. Historians surmise that Washington hoped to stop their removal from their native lands, envisioning that one day Indian nations would be admitted to the United States as states.

By the 19th century, the Birmingham area, while scattered with agricultural fields, served primarily as one vast hunting ground, its forests teeming with wildlife. Nearby Creek towns were located along the banks of the Cahaba and Warrior Rivers. Noted for their advanced political organization, elaborate ceremonies, and prowess in war, the Creeks developed networks of towns laid out about plazas, ball parks, and ceremonial dance squares, these linked by trails extending across the Southeast.



The Upper Creek Country on the eve of the Creek War, 1813-1819. SARAH MATTICS, CENTER FOR ARCHEOLOGICAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA, AS ADAPTED FROM "GENERAL JACKSON'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE CREEK INDIANS, 1813 & 1814, CWMF, MISC.II, 1813 7 1814. NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION.

This map shows Creek towns destroyed by General Jackson along the Warrior and Cahaba Rivers. The future site of Birmingham lay in ancestral hunting lands.

BIRMINGHAM *by the BOOK* ... is coming soon!

Drawing on the wealth of historical knowledge amassed by Birmingham Historical Society over the years, *Birmingham by the Book: A Guide to the Magic City* will offer insightful narrative, detailed maps, and captivating photography. Readers will embark on a journey through time, exploring the landmarks, districts, neighborhoods, parks, and preserves in the city and its surroundings. The guide opens with a topographic map of the region and proceeds chronologically to the present. It provides links to individual sites open to the public for further information and to the Convention & Visitor Bureau's BIRMINGHAM for guidance on where to eat, sleep, and shop.

Despite copious online information, the market for print guides to cities remains. Americans bought more than 5.8 million guides in 2023. *Birmingham by the Book* will be a first for the Birmingham region and will, hopefully, circulate in this and updated versions for many years to come.

Work in earnest on our guide began in 2020 before COVID when a Trustee Committee, including Gail Cosby, Julius Linn Jr., Rebecca Moody, Carolanne Roberts, Wilhelmina Thomas, Katie Tipton, and Marjorie White, convened to set the parameters of what to include. We began researching, visiting, and photographing the sites and places to be showcased. Karla Calvert, Jim Emison, Louise McPhillips, Brian Rushing, Liz Saunders, Carol Slaughter, Marjorie Lee White, and James White joined us to make site visits. Our editors Julius Linn Jr. and Katie Tipton worked with our graphic designer Scott Fuller to finalize format, size, type style, and design.

We are grateful to the Mary Smith Slaughter Foundation, the Mayfield Ezekiel Slaughter Foundation, The Daniel Foundation of Alabama, The Robert R. Meyer Foundation, The Hugh Kaul Foundation, the Susan Mott Webb Charitable Trust, Carol L. Slaughter, and the Alabama Power Company for their gifts of funds to cover professional photography and pre-press costs.



Birmingham, a region born from this mountain. STEVE DUNLAP, 2025.

Here's what one reader given a recent layout of the print pages shared: "I haven't had a chance to read this carefully, but my first impression is that this is SUPERB! Readable (even for those with short attention spans, LOL), very well organized, and not likely to be outdated. This will endure as a long lasting and imperative addition to any library about Birmingham and development of the region. Definitely a best seller and definitive guide!"

It is our intent to release *BIRMINGHAM by the BOOK* at our Annual Meeting on February 23, 2026.

Birmingham Historical Society
P. O. Box 321474
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*Join us on Sundays this fall:
October 19, 3-5 pm. It's Nice to Have You*

on Highland Avenue Open Houses

*November 16, 2 pm Celebrating Bartram's Travels
and our 2025 Book*