

# NEWSLETTER



As spring rolls into summer, things at ACHA are in full bloom! With new projects on the horizon, new exhibits going up, new software at the museum, fundraising and celebrations, members of the Heritage Association have been hard at work.

*Laura Bonner (photo credits as well)*



The 2022 **Low Country Boil** was one for the record books. The weather was perfect, the food was delicious, the atmosphere was relaxed and friendly. We had 325 tickets to sell, and we sold 324. Table sales were the highest they have been for a long time, and the auctions were financially productive. The band was lively, and we had a few people dancing, some even singing along to the familiar

tunes. The addition of the outdoor restrooms to the venue was a terrific asset of which we are so proud. Several "old guard" volunteers steered the ship, and several new members pitched in to make it the highest producing fundraiser in many years. It definitely takes teamwork to pull off an event like this! The event generated an estimated \$12,000 for our planned **GINOVATIONS** Museum. It was immensely successful and wonderfully fun. It goes without saying that all in attendance are looking forward to the next one! *Laura Bonner (photo credits as well)*



# Low Country Boil at Buena Vista



Buena Vista was all decked out for the Low Country Boil! Thanks to our team of volunteers, the decorations were charming and festive and made the house and garden shine. We want to take this opportunity to thank the members of our community who were so generous in their sponsorship of this event.

## Gold Table

Central Alabama Electric Coop

Chambliss LLP

Day Structures (with Rebekah Sanford, decorator)

International Paper

Jackson Thornton

James Hardie Building Products

John Parks Jr.

Larry Speaks and Associates

Melanie Chambliss

Prattville Area Chamber of Commerce

Prattville Farm Center

Sheriff Joe Sedinger

Synovus Bank

Trustmark National Bank

The Cleveland Law Firm, LLC

Vernon and Lisa Taylor

## Silver Table

Central AL Sign and Banner

Debra Hill

Don Edgeworth

Durbin Auto Parts

Family Home Furniture

Jim Byard Associates LLC

John Parks Sr.

Larry Puckett Chevrolet

PCI Technologies

Prattville Baptist Hospital

River Bank and Trust

River Region Locksmith & Security

State Farm Insurance Mandi Fortner

Strock Insurance Agency

West Main Coffee House

**Food and Other Sponsors:** Longhorn Steakhouse, O'Charley's Restaurant and Bar, Blossman Gas, D2 Dirt work Dan Spires



## BIG ANNOUNCEMENT!

Here is an opportunity to showcase our phenomenal history and put Prattville on the Tourism Map!

Most of you are aware that ACHA volunteers have spent the last several years preserving the massive collection of historical documents & artifacts from the Daniel Pratt/Continental Gin Company. Now, we are announcing our intent to establish museums to make this history accessible to the public.

Our first effort will be to transform the Research & Development Building on the Gin Shop complex into a hands-on museum, **GINOVATIONS**, for students and the general public. The industrial history is the story of the local men, inventors, engineers, & mechanics that created & patented the industrial designs & machinery that pushed the company to the forefront of the worldwide cotton industry. The collection is filled with patents, engineering drawings & stories of their aim to be on the cutting edge. Through hands-on activities and lessons, ACHA aims to ignite an inventive & creative spirit in the students & others to make them aware that they, too, can be designers & inventors!

Later, the formation of a **PRATT LIBRARY & MUSEUM** will secure & and make accessible the historical documents for research & genealogy. Museum quality exhibits will be on display to share the significant international history of Alabama's first industrial village, and its place in the Industrial Revolution. Community support, volunteers, and educators will make this endeavor a reality! Spread the word!

For more information, visit our YouTube channel (Autauga County Heritage Association - the video is entitled Ginovations2 )to see an in depth video on the project! Or, you can type this link in directly to go straight to it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0aE6OtVxz7o>

Thanks to Tommy Brown, Paul Bonner and Discovering Alabama for their work on the production. *By: Ann Boutwell*

## City Fest

The return of City Fest this year was exciting! After having been shut down for two years for the pandemic, people took to the streets en masse. It was a hot, sunshine-y day and the Museum was open for visitors!

Many came in to enjoy the air conditioning and found themselves getting a fantastic history tour. We had first time visitors from town, tourists, and old friends stop in during the day. The Museum was open from 9-3, and saw at last count 254 visitors. Some bought souvenirs and books, and everyone left better for having stopped in - either from the chance to cool down, to learn something new, see something interesting, have a sip of cool artesian well water, or just having met the friendly faces of our volunteers. *Laura Bonner*



*Prattangan Museum*



Our Integrated Library Software, purchased through our grant from the Mid-South RC&D council is up and running! It is a tremendous asset at the Museum for research, and because it is hosted online, you can even access it at home! Check it out at

<http://autaugahistory.booksys.net/opac/achc/>

The cataloging project is ongoing, so new things are being added every week! We hope to have all materials in our archive room cataloged by the end of the summer. Stay tuned! *Laura Bonner*



## EASTER

First Presbyterian Preschool has an annual Easter hat parade through downtown. This year, we invited them to come to the Museum for an egg hunt! There were over 68 students, plus teachers, parents, and chaperones—easily over 100 people at once on the grounds! We had a team of volunteers present to assist the classes, and all of the eggs were donated—over 400 eggs were hidden in the garden! The Kindergarten class stayed after the hunt for a tour of the Museum. This was fun for all and a great introduction for these families to our wonderful Museum! *Laura Bonner*



Make sure you are following us on social media!

[@AutaugaCountyHeritage Association](#)

[@Prattaugan Museum](#)

[@BuenaVistaThenandNow](#)

[@AutaugaHistory](#)

Weekly posts on Facebook and Instagram will keep you up to date between Newsletters!



The Museum often finds itself a center for historical research questions, particularly in regards to ancestry. Our volunteers enjoy this type of research, but often find that their other duties keep them from having the time to devote to this. ACHA has partnered with the Autauga Genealogical Society to use their excellent researchers to help our patrons with their questions. In return for their generous assistance to the Museum, AGS will be hosting their monthly meetings at Buena Vista. This partnership has already proven to be very fruitful and we look forward to working together in the future! *Laura Bonner*, photo credit: *Tyrone Crowley*

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### Museum Volunteers

Have you considered becoming a regular volunteer at the Prattaugan Museum? You should! Our volunteers work either 3 or 6 hours shifts, as often as 1 day a week or as little as 1 day a month! Duties involve answering the telephone, giving tours (with a script), visiting with patrons, research requests, organizing and tidying up. Some of our volunteers enjoy helping to create new exhibits, while others enjoy cataloging in our library. Most will tell you the tours are their favorite part. We have a cake day once a month to visit together and catch up on the goings on of the Museum. It's a fun group to be a part of and takes just a little bit of your time! Drop by the Museum one day and let us know if you are interested. You can shadow a volunteer to see if it's something you might enjoy doing. Hope to see you soon!



### Baby Exhibit

There's a new exhibit on display! Margie Fallen, one of our board members and volunteers has curated a delightful Baby Exhibit which is showcased in the main hallway and in the Pratt Room. In the above photo with Donna Wells, one of our volunteer docents, you can see some of the delicate and dated artifacts which are on display. Included are some Pratt descendant baby items you can't see anywhere else! The Baby Exhibit will be up through the end of the summer—come by and see it! *Laura Bonner*

Photos: *Laura Bonner*



## Upcoming Events



### Founder's Day

As many will know, July 20th was Daniel Pratt's birthday, and is the day we celebrate Founder's Day in Prattville. There will be a ceremony at 9 a.m. at the Pratt Cemetery hosted by ACHA and the City of Prattville to honor the memory and legacy of Daniel Pratt. Descendants of the Pratt family will come to lay a wreath at the cemetery, and a short presentation will be made. More details on the program of events will be made public as we get closer to the day. Following the program at the cemetery, the Museum will be open with light refreshments for those who wish to visit in a cooler locale! We hope you will make plans to join us on this special occasion.

*For more information on either of these events, please call the Museum at 334-361-0961.*

### July 4th

July 4th will be here before we know it! The city parade will be on Monday, July 4 at 9 a.m. Last year we had a great crowd at the Museum during and following the 4th of July parade through downtown. This year, we have a special treat planned! Members of the SAR and DAR are coming to set up a historical display on the grounds at the Museum in full period attire! It will be a great way to showcase our Revolutionary heritage as we celebrate our National Independence. Hope you can join us!





## Prattaugan Museum Volunteer Spotlight!

Our Volunteer Spotlight for June is Mr. Gene Kerlin! Gene has been a resident of Prattville since 1938, and is an invaluable resource on Autauga County History. He graduated Autauga County High School in 1949, the University of Alabama with a BA in 1953, served in the National Guard Reserves, got his Masters at Auburn, and had a 35 year career with the State Department of Education working in Vocational Rehabilitation. He lobbied extensively for the Americans with Disabilities Act which passed the same year he retired, and is a cofounder of the Ms. Wheelchair Alabama pageant. He has been a volunteer with the Prattaugan Museum since the late 1980s. Come by and see him and get a living history lesson!

VISIT US ONLINE @  
WWW.AUTAUGAHISTORY.ORG

**Autauga County Heritage Association**  
102 East Main Street  
Prattville, Alabama 36067  
(334) 361-0961

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