

NEWSLETTER



Fall is here! With the dropping temperatures and full cotton fields all over the county, everything is looking ripe for harvest. Downtown Prattville is all dressed up for the Parade of Pumpkins and the [Prattaugan Museum](#) is all decked out to join in the fun! As we look back on the year past, there is much for which to be thankful, and as we look to the new year ahead, much to plan! One highlight on the horizon for Spring is the Alabama Historical Association's Spring Pilgrimage which will be hosted in Prattville this year! We anticipate between 2 and 300 historians to come to this event and learn about our great city, her people and her past. Keep a watch out for details on this after the holidays!



By: Laura Bonner

Make sure you are following us on Instagram and Facebook!

[@AutaugaCountyHeritageAssociation](#)

[@Prattaugan Museum](#)

[@BuenaVistaThenandNow](#)

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

ACHA Welcomes New Board Members



We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new Board Members! **Jeremy Day, Precious Fritz, Wayne Lambert** and **Cody Daughtry** will be joining the Board of Directors for 2023. Jeremy and Precious will be serving as Directors, Wayne will serve as Vice President, and Cody will serve as Treasurer. Each one brings unique talents and areas of expertise as well as a passion for the study and preservation of history. Thank you all for your willingness to serve your community through The Autauga County Heritage Association!

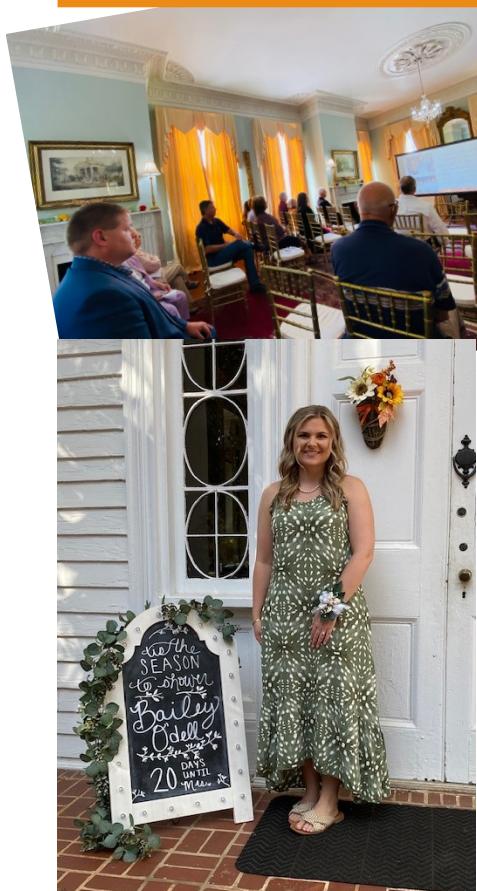
The ACHA would like to extend our deepest gratitude and thanks to **Belinda Staver, Brigitte Lee, Marty Pinckard**, and **Diane Steinhilber** for their many years of service on our Board of Directors, as they are set to roll off the Board in December. Thank you!

Buena Vista

Buena Vista stays busy as the premier event venue in Autauga County for weddings and so much more! Pictured top left is the general membership meeting for ACHA, bottom left is a Bridal Shower honoring Ms. Bailey O'Dell, and right is the Alabama River Region Ballet Youth Company who hosted an Afternoon Tea to welcome new members. For 2023, ACHA was awarded a \$26,625 Historic Sites grant from the Alabama Historical Commission to provide funding for maintenance and repairs to Buena Vista. *LB*



2022/2023 Youth Company Tea @alabama river region ballet





Mr. Everett Flynn holds his handmade Churka Gin (above).

A close up view of the Churka Gin (below).



Have you ever seen a Churka Gin?

One day recently, Mr. Everett Flynn delivered a hand-made Churka Gin to the museum. The Churka Gin pre-dates Whitney's spike gin and continues to be used in undeveloped areas of the world. Seed cotton is fed between two rotating rods and the seeds are squeezed out of the lint. This "technology" was certainly faster than hand-picking the seed from the fiber but this process was slow & laborious. A day's work of hand feeding the cotton into the Churka Gin only provided a basketful of the seed-free lint. The advantages of the Churka was it was easily transported and it did not require a power source other than the people operating it.

The Prattaugan Museum owns two antique Churka Gins but they are for display purposes only. The model Mr. Flynn made will allow students to experience the seed removal process. Thank you, Mr. Flynn, for sharing your time, talent & skills!

Eli Whitney is given the invention credit for the cotton gin. Recent research & history have discovered there were contradictory circumstances concerning who actually was the first to invent the cotton gin. Whitney's gin was a spike gin that had wire spikes on a roll that would pull lint through a mesh, leaving the seed behind. The development of the saw gin quickly outpaced Whitney's gin design in its efficiency and the saw gin became the most popular gin. The technology of the saw gin where a row of circular saws with fine teeth were set between "ribs" (spacers) continues to be the select technology in cotton gins used in the 21st century. Daniel Pratt patented improvements to the saw gin and continued to make advances in its efficiency. The Daniel Pratt Gin Company became the largest in the world due to Pratt's successes in ginning technology.

By: Ann Boutwell



Goings On at the Museum

In July we celebrated Founder's Day at the Pratt Cemetery followed by refreshments at the Museum. Museum Director Laura Bonner gave a presentation on the many unrelated children

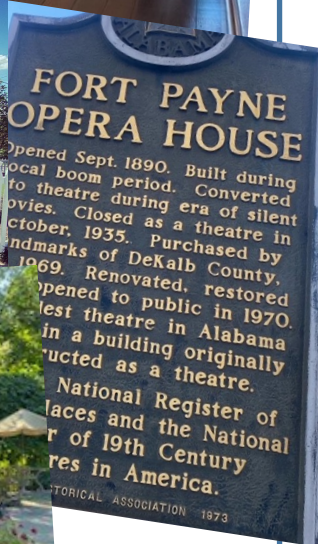
buried in the Pratt Cemetery, and how that speaks to the Pratts' Christian character. In September we had a special performance of the poem, "The Conquest of Labor," delivered by Abigail Bonebrake and Tyrone Crowley during Cake Day. The DAR hung a special banner and decorated the front fence with Flags to celebrate Constitution Week, and ACHA members and Museum Volunteers Melanie Chambliss, Donna Roberts, Terry Young, and Laura Bonner took a trip to Mentone, Alabama for the Alabama Historical Association's Fall Pilgrimage.

Don't forget we have coffee cups and jelly for sale at the Museum!

By: *LB*



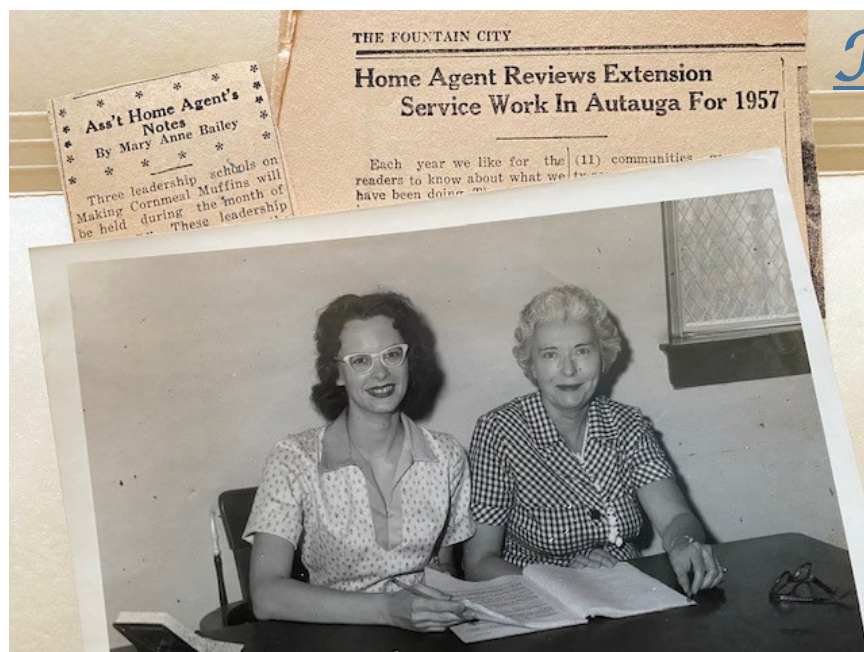
Prattaugan Museum



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.





Now and Then!

By: Precious Fritz

ACHA Board of Directors

Museum Volunteer

One afternoon while going through the vertical files in the archive room at the Prattaugan Museum I came across a picture of two women with no label or identification. I was lucky enough to be there when Mr. Gene Kerlin

was working and I asked him if he recognized either of the women. He was unsure of their names yet he knew one of them worked for the Department of Agriculture. He then told me how the Department of Agriculture had women who would travel around and teach other women how to cook or clean, and other homemaking skills.

I became intrigued by this since I work with families, and the Department of Agriculture was not what I thought of when I thought about families and homemaking. I started to look into the history and impact the Department of Agriculture has had on the social welfare of our nation. I found that they still play a huge role! Our food assistance programs are still funded and managed by the Department of Agriculture. When the department was established, 150 years ago (1862), they were called "the people's department". Along with traditional food assistance the Department of Agriculture still funds programs to help families learn how to better take care of themselves. In the social welfare community, we call these life skills programs. These programs are very similar to the one Mr. Gene talked about. They focus on education about family values, parenting, and healthy food choices of course.

From now on when I think of the Department of Agriculture I will have a more encompassing view of all they do for our nation, and not just think they are for the farmers, they are the people's department!



Upcoming and Ongoing Events

Sports Exhibit

Remember the good old days of high school sports? We do! Going on right now at the Museum is an exhibit all about school sports in Autauga County. We have a wide variety of memorabilia from many sports and many schools! If you have a minute to browse, you can look through our Jimmy White collection of statistics and newspaper clippings that cover his long career as statistician for Prattville High School. Come on by and see the exhibit before it gets packed away for the holidays.



Veteran's Day Event

You are invited to attend a Veteran's Day Program at the Museum on November 11 at 10 o'clock in the morning. Along with the DAR and SAR, we will gather to honor all Autauga County American Military Veterans, and unveil a stone of remembrance beside the magnolia tree in the front garden of the Museum. After the brief ceremony, please come into the Museum to see a special exhibit on Autauga County Veterans.



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Autauga County

Heritage Assoc.

**102 East Main
Street Prattville, AL
36067****334-361-0961**www.autaugahistory.org

Mission Statement: *The mission of Autauga County Heritage Association is to collect, preserve and disseminate information and display artifacts concerning the history of Autauga County and its people.*

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Name _____

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◇ Individual Membership \$50

◇ Couple Membership \$75

◇ Contributing Membership \$100

◇ Lifetime Membership \$1000

Make checks payable to ACHA and mail to: 102 E, Main Street, Prattville, AL 36067.
You can also join and pay dues online at
www.autaugahistory.org.

Thanks to all of you who joined or renewed your ACHA membership for 2022. Please renew your 2023 **membership** as soon as possible. Membership dues are used to carry out ACHA activities including newsletters, events, general meetings and Museum improvements.





Prattaugan Museum Volunteer Spotlight!

Our Volunteer Spotlight for November is **Mrs. Nell Motley**! Nell was born in Pike County, but has lived the last 41 years as a resident in Autauga County. She has one son and has recently retired from the Water Works Board. She loves to read, cook, and go on cruises! Mrs. Nell volunteers at the Museum through the Easter Seals program which helps retired Seniors re-enter the work force. Her favorite part of working at the museum is giving the tours, and if you ask around, everyone agrees that her tours are the best! We love having her here at the Museum. Come by and see her for a great tour of Autauga County History!



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