



Historical Marker Guidelines and Procedures

[The Alabama Historical Association](#), a private organization of people interested in Alabama's past, began sponsoring historical markers in 1950. Since 1962, the Association's Historical Marker Committee has served to encourage and assist individuals and local groups seeking recognition of the state's long and diverse past. The committee attests to the historical importance of the subject matter, reviews proposed marker text for accuracy, and assists with editing. Local people or groups pay for the marker in full.

The Association adopted a standard marker design more than four decades ago. AHA-sponsored markers are produced at [Sewah Studios](#) in Marietta, Ohio. The markers are on a double-faced cast aluminum plate with a baked enamel finish and feature the Alabama state flag at the top. The precise dimensions are 47"H x 45 ½"W. Markers weigh approximately eighty pounds. The marker's text is in gold letters on a deep blue field. Below the text, in a slightly smaller font size, are the words "Alabama Historical Association" and the year in which the marker was erected. Local groups wishing to have recognition on the marker should include it in the final sentence of proposed text. Markers should be installed between seven and ten feet in height; the post is included in the price of the maker.

The names of persons still living cannot appear on a marker except under special circumstances.

Those wishing to erect a marker should begin with the **Historical Marker Application**. This document will provide the Marker Committee Chair with the information required to begin planning for a particular marker. Below are some helpful hints that will facilitate a more rapid turnaround time for the initial application.

Format

The best way to get a sense of the Association's preferred format for marker text is to

look at existing markers. Text for more than 500 AHA-sponsored markers, divided by county, can be found on the Association's [web site](#). Look at markers in the same area to be certain your proposed text is not duplicative. A shorter selection of sample markers is included as an addendum to this guide.

The text for each side of a marker can be different. You may elect to continue the same subject on side two, or use the opposite side for another topic. Either course is acceptable to the committee. The reverse side of a marker can also remain blank.

Marker text may run up to 20 lines per side, with 62 spaces (not characters or words) per line. As a general rule, one side of a marker can be between 150 and 190 words in length. The Historical Marker Committee Chair will assist you in editing your text to ensure it conforms to the marker fabricator's formatting guidelines.

Content

Your proposed text should be concise and factual. Avoid lofty statements and sweeping generalizations. Anchor your discussion to the physical place as much as possible.

The committee serves to affirm the accuracy of proposed text, and requires the individual or group seeking a marker to provide source documentation as part of the application process. At minimum, this requires a list of sources consulted for the marker text. Photocopies of source material attached to the application is highly preferable. Information that cannot be verified by the marker committee will not be included in the marker text.

In addition to available local material, the committee recommends the following resources that may assist in preparation of text:

[*The Encyclopedia of Alabama*](#) – An online, peer-reviewed resource featuring thousands of articles on the state's history, culture, and geography.

[*The Alabama Review*](#) – The scholarly journal of the Alabama Historical Association, published continually since 1946.

[*Alabama Heritage Magazine*](#) – In publication for more than two decades, the popular magazine is a joint venture of the Alabama Department of Archives and History and the University of Alabama. *Alabama Heritage* features articles in several recurring sections such as Alabama's historic structures and the role of religion in the state's history. The magazine's feature stories each issue cover a number of topics of interest to general history enthusiasts.

Several collections at the [Alabama Department of Archives and History](#) can be of great use in drafting text for proposed markers. These include:

- *Dictionary of Alabama and Biography* – Published in the 1920s, this four-volume history of the state features capsule biographies of some of its prominent citizens and short histories of each county in Alabama. It is available online as part of the Alabama Department of Archives and History’s [Digital Collection](#).
- *Alabama Historical Quarterly* – In publication for more than three decades, the journal featured many essays on the earlier history of the state. It is available online as part of the Alabama Department of Archives and History’s [Digital Collection](#).
- [County Vertical Files](#)
- County Reference Book Collection
- [General Alabama History Vertical Files](#)
- Surname Newspaper Clipping Files
- [“Alabamians at War” Clippings Files](#)
- Regimental histories ([many available online](#))
- The largest collection of historic newspapers in Alabama

These materials can be viewed in person during the normal operating hours of the Archives’ EBSCO Research Room: Tuesday through Friday, and on the second Saturday of each month 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. The Archives is closed for all state and Federal holidays.

In addition to these sources, the committee encourages you to visit your local library or records repository.

A Word on Marker Text

The marker committee desires to work with interested citizens and groups to erect markers which reflect Alabama’s long and diverse history. The committee’s primary responsibility is to ensure that the final text is accurate, conforms to the set style of AHA’s longstanding format, and helps promote an appreciation of local and state history. The committee will not “rubber stamp” marker text. Composed of public history professionals, editors, and experienced writers, the committee will work with you to present the best possible text for your marker.

The committee offers a short style guide as an addendum to this document for you to examine as you prepare marker text. Exceptions to this guide will be exceedingly rare.

Application Procedures

With your proposed text and sources prepared, you should complete the Historical Marker Application.

Contact Information

- * This begins with the organization or government entity sponsoring the marker. You will need to identify an individual contact person who can speak on behalf of the group or committee and supply his or her mailing address, telephone number(s) and email address.
- * If the marker is needed before a specific date, please indicate so on the application. Current fabrication times for markers is 12-16 weeks, so ideally you should have marker text submitted to the committee, and funding for the marker secured, a minimum of six months before the event to ensure timely delivery.

Marker Information – Logistics

- * While the AHA does not involve itself with marker placement, we would like to have a general idea of where the marker will be placed. You should contact local authorities if the marker will be placed along the roadside or anywhere not deemed private property.
- * The AHA publishes on its website the full text, sponsor, installation year, and GPS coordinates of each new marker. In the logistics section, please list the GPS location for the marker. You will find a helpful tool for determining GPS at this website: <http://www.gps-coordinates.net/>. New marker text will also be included in the AHA *Newsletter* the following spring.
- * You will also need to identify a commercial address where the marker can be delivered. Sewah Studios does not deliver markers to residential addresses. A local highway department, or public works office, would be the ideal delivery location.

Marker Information – Text

You can copy your marker text, and source material, into these boxes. If you are mailing in your application, feel free to simply attach the text in a separate document to the application.

Submission

You can email the application to scotty.kirkland@archives.alabama.gov or mail it to the following address:

Scotty E. Kirkland
Chair, Historical Marker Committee
Alabama Dept. of Archives and History
Post Office Box 300100
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Final Steps

Once final text is agreed upon by your organization and the committee the marker committee chair will request a quote from Sewah Studios. Current marker costs range from \$2,000 to \$2,600.

In addition to fabrication costs, the AHA assesses a \$100 administrative fee to every new marker. This money helps to build a marker refurbishment program that will pay for up to 50% of the cost of any work on the marker during its life (excluding total replacement). Think of this as your marker's insurance policy.

Once you receive the total cost of the marker from the committee chair (which will include the administrative fee), send a check to the address listed above made payable to the **Alabama Historical Association**. The committee chair will place the order for the marker soon thereafter and keep you updated on its progress. The chair will also forward to you step-by-step procedures for proper installation of a new marker. You can expect delivery of the marker within 12-16 weeks.

As you plan your marker dedication ceremony, please keep AHA and the Department of Archives and History in mind. The marker committee chair will be happy to assist you in suggesting speakers or representatives from AHA should you desire their attendance. If the marker ceremony is being spearheaded by a local library, museum, or historical society, the Alabama Department of Archives and History's field services program may be able to offer helpful suggestions and support.

Finally, the marker committee would like to receive copies of any articles, press releases, or photos of the ceremony. You may direct these items to the chair.



Sample Historical Marker Texts

Below are several different examples of markers commemorating events, places, and people. Text for more than 600 AHA-sponsored markers can be found, arranged by county, on the AHA website [link].

CHURCHES and SYNAGOGUES

First Baptist Church Holly Pond

First Baptist Church of Holly Pond was organized in 1885 as Holly Pond Missionary Baptist Church. Charter members included the families of P. R. Tennison, William Jefferson Hazelwood, Bill House, Seaborn Shaw, and Isaac Barnett. Over the course of the church's life, the congregation worshipped in three different locations and five different sanctuaries. The first, destroyed by fire in 1895, was a wood-framed structure located in the triangle formed by HWY 278 and Blountsville Road. The second, destroyed by a wind storm in 1914, was a wood-framed building located 1/10 mile west of the first site. The third sanctuary was white, wood-framed, and located at the triangle formed by HWY 278 and New Hope Road, as was the fourth, a brick, Georgia Colonial structure built in 1939. The last was built on this site in 1978, the same year the church's name was changed to First Baptist. Many preachers and missionaries have been sent from here to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Dedicated October 2015 on the occasion of the church's 130th anniversary.

Sponsored by the Holly Pond Historical Society

[2015: Highway 278, Holly Pond]

Temple B'nai Sholom

Huntsville's first Jewish citizens arrived during the 1840's. Congregation B'nai Sholom ("Sons of Peace") was founded July 30, 1876 by 32 families.

They affiliated in 1877 with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Reform Movement. Construction of the Temple began in 1898, and it was dedicated on November 26, 1899. Chairman of the Building Committee was Isaac Schiffman. Architecture is primarily of the Romanesque Revival style, with influences of the Renaissance Revival in the west front gable. The Temple was designed by architect R.H. Hunt of Chattanooga. Extensive restoration was completed in 1994. Temple B'nai Sholom is the oldest synagogue in Alabama in continuous use.

[1997: Clinton Ave. at Lincoln St., Huntsville]

BUILDINGS

Alabama Department of Archives and History

In 1901, Alabama created the first state-funded, independent archival and historical agency in the United States. Its founding director, attorney Thomas McAdory Owen, combed the state to acquire and preserve both public and private materials that document Alabama's past from the prehistoric period forward. The agency has since continued Owen's mission, preserving the records that guarantee the rights of citizens and serve as the basis for educational programs for schools and the general public. Originally housed in the State Capitol, the agency moved to this building upon its completion in 1940. Generations of Alabamians and visitors from around the world have come here to explore the state's rich history and its many contributions to the history of the nation.

-----REVERSE-----

Archives and War Memorial Building

A monumental structure to house the Department of Archives and History was envisioned at the close of World War I and again in a 1930 Olmsted Brothers plan for the Capitol Complex, but inadequate resources delayed its construction. In 1937, Marie Bankhead Owen, second director of the Archives, secured New Deal funds to build the central portion of a design by architect William T. Warren of Birmingham. The building opened to national acclaim in 1940 and was dedicated as the state's World War I memorial. The addition of an east wing in 1974 and a west wing in 2005 fulfilled Warren's vision for the complete structure. In 2014, the state dedicated an expanded and updated Museum of Alabama on the second floor.

[2015: 624 Washington Avenue, Montgomery]

The LeRoy Pope Mansion, 1814

During the original Madison County Land Sales of 1809, LeRoy Pope of Petersburg, GA, secured among other purchases a majority of Section 36, Township 3, Range 1 West, the site of the future town of Twickenham, as Huntsville was originally known. Pope created Poplar Grove Plantation on this site and erected his home in 1814 in time to entertain Gen. Andrew Jackson on his return from the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. The residence was among the earliest brick structures in Alabama. Inherited by his son, William H. Pope, the mansion was sold in 1848 to Dr. Charles Hays Patton, who commissioned George Steele to add the handsome Classical Revival portico. Nearby during the Civil War, Federal forces built an earthen breastwork to defend the eastern approaches to the city.

[1998: Echols Ave. at Adams St., Huntsville]

PEOPLE

Governor William Calvin Oates

Born in Pike County into a poor Alabama family in 1835, Oates practiced law in Abbeville when the War began. Elected Captain of the "Henry Pioneers," Co. G, 15th Alabama Infantry. He saw service in Jackson's Corps and was appointed Colonel of the 15th Regiment in 1863. Given command of the 48th Alabama infantry in July 1864, Oates' right arm was shattered by a mini ball at Petersburg in August 1864. He later served Alabama as a legislator, Congressman, and Governor. Oates served stateside as a Brigadier General, USV in the Spanish-American War.

-----REVERSE-----

Colonel W. C. Oates, CSA at Gettysburg

July 2, 1863: General Law's Alabama Brigade of Longstreet's Corps arrived on the field, having marched 23 miles in 11 hours. The 15th Alabama Regiment commanded by Oates became the extreme right flank of Lee's Army. It made five charges up Little Round Top against withering fire of the enemy and engaged in fierce hand-to-hand combat with Col. Joshua Chamberlain's 20th Maine Regiment and other Federal troops before being driven off the hill by a final desperate bayonet charge from the high ground against its flank and rear. Oates always attributed his regiment's failure to take its objective on the shortage of water and fatigue from the forced march.

[1994: 829 Columbus Street, Montgomery, 32.38472 N 86.29429 W]

HISTORIC EVENTS

Desegregation at Auburn

The first African American student entered the library to register at Auburn University at this site. Acting on a court order, Auburn president Ralph Brown Draughon accepted the application of Harold Franklin as the first African American student in 1963. Hoping to avoid conflicts as had occurred during the desegregation of other universities across the South, Draughon scheduled the registration for Saturday, Jan. 4, 1964, and closed the campus to the public. University officials and FBI agents met Franklin at the nearby Auburn Methodist Church to escort him to campus. State troopers sent by Governor George Wallace blocked their access, forcing Franklin to proceed alone and unprotected. Some protesters assembled nearby, but no violence occurred and registration was concluded peacefully. A century of institutional segregation effectively ended that day, clearing the path for other African American students to enroll and attend Auburn University.

Erected to commemorate 50 years of desegregation at Auburn University.

[2015: Draughon Library, Auburn]

Rousseau's Raid

Along Stow Ferry Road on July 16, 1864, a column of five federal cavalry regiments led by Major General Lovell H. Rousseau passed on their way to destroy the railroad at Opelika. Captain Thomas A. Elkin of the 5th Kentucky Cavalry in the lead detachment rode into Youngsville about 6:00 P.M. on the 16th. The Yankees scavenged and burned four tax-in-kind warehouses containing grain, cornmeal, and bacon.

Crossing the Tallapoosa River in the darkness on the 16th, Col. William D. Hamilton of the 9th Ohio recalled: "Ever after we referred to the crossing of that river in the night with shudders. . . unpleasant as that of any battle."

[Tallapoosa County: 1999]



Historical Marker Style Sheet

(Adopted April 2016)

In addition to this document, the committee will refer to the *Alabama Review* style sheet [link] and the most recent edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*

act/Act (Restrictive Act of 1832, but 1832 act)

African American (no hyphen in any case), not negro or colored except in direct quotation. Black is also acceptable.

amendment, but Twenty-fourth Amendment

antebellum (lower case)

circa abbreviated as ca. not c.

century – numerical designations (i.e.: 19th century) are acceptable except when beginning a sentence.

Civil Rights movement

Civil War or sectional crisis (not War Between the States or any other iteration unless in direct quotation)

dates: use month, day, year form, i.e., October 22, 1948, in headline, use all numbers for a spread of years. i.e. 1933-1940, questionable date: (1868?-1941)

Jr. – do not set off with coma: Martin Luther King Jr.

military grades: abbreviate with full name, but do not abbreviate with surname only; for example, Maj. Edward Nicholls, but Major Nicholls

military regiments: Eleventh Alabama, 137th Alabama. Spell out numbers under 100.

nicknames: Charlotte “Lottie” Barnes

Sr. – do not set off with coma (i.e.: Ben Davis Sr.)

she or her – Do not use when discussing anything but women. A boat is “it,” and so is Alabama.