Welcome to the Banner

Bringing you information every Thursday on 200 years of statehood. Highlighting news and events celebrating Alabama.

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Alabama has been a state for 200 years, and its people are stepping up to commemorate its bicentennial. We’re here to keep you up to date on events and programs throughout the state and help you tune in to the state’s diverse cultural and historic heritage.

To stay on top of everything that’s going on, check out our community calendar at ALABAMA200.org, and to get the full scoop, like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram and Twitter. Encourage your friends and family to do the same.

Your participation helps us reach as many people as possible and is an easy and effective way to show pride for our state, from Bay Minette to Tuscaloosa, Huntsville to Old Cahawba, and the many other towns and communities joining in the celebration. Don’t miss out on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to celebrate with us. Join the party!
A Portrait through Postcards:  
Postcards used to examine history

From the article by Catherine Godbey on DecaturDaily.com:

Peering through the handheld loupe at the magnified images on the 1904 postcard, the writing on the poster hanging in the Second Avenue store window became clear.

“I could see the words ‘Wang’ and ‘Hopper.’ All of these questions started running through my mind. What was ‘Wang?’ Who was Hopper? That is what I love about postcards, any little thing can give you a fuller picture of what was going on in daily life at that time,” Jonathan Baggs said.

After hunting down hundreds of common and rare postcards, closely examining them and researching their depictions of Decatur, Baggs released “Decatur,” a book of
postcards, in celebration of Alabama’s bicentennial.

A project 19 years in the making, the book examines the city’s architectural, religious, transportation, infrastructural, recreational and societal history through postcards.

“Yes, it’s about postcards, but it’s not really about postcards. What it’s really about are the stories on the back of the cards along with the history seen in the pictures on the front of the cards. This is a different way of telling our history,” said Baggs, a history buff and former journalist.

Unlike most deltiologists — postcard collectors — who prefer unused, pristine items, Baggs searched for used cards sent through the mail.

“It’s like reading other people’s emails. Some of them are from people stopping through, others are from people who just moved here. The back of the card is where a lot of the history is. It tells you what they were talking about at that moment in history,” Baggs said.

Sifting through thousands of postcards at antique stores and through online sites, Baggs found cards sent from Decatur to Illinois, Oklahoma, Texas, Ohio, New York, Wisconsin, Holland, Germany and more. The messages talked about the weather, going to the picture show, the bullet holes in the pillars of the Old State Bank, the bales of cotton heading to market, the dams, the “flying machines” and the Miss Alabama pageant.

In a 1908 postcard to Germany and written in German, the sender asks the recipient how she liked the look of her church. The postcard depicted St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, which, at the time, stood at Sherman Street and Fourth Avenue Southeast.

“For more than 100 years, this card sat in someone’s desk drawer. It survived World War I and World War II. Somebody managed to hang on to this little piece of paper stock all this time and it finally made its way back to Decatur,” Baggs said. “What’s also interesting is that eight years after this postcard was sent, the church started holding sermons in English because of the anti-German sentiment.”

Along with churches, the postcards featured images of Bank Street and Second Avenue at the turn at the 20th century, the city’s railroads, bridges, dams, hotels, restaurants, schools, hosiery mills, plantations and iconic landmarks — Point Mallard Park, Big Bob Gibson’s, Carnegie Library, the Old State Bank, the Tavern, the Hotel Lyons and Albany Station, where president-elect Franklin Delano Roosevelt stopped in 1933.
“In the early 1900s, before the radio and the TV, the centerpiece when you visited someone’s home was the postcard album. Nobody knew what these places looked like because they had never been there, but they had the postcards,” Baggs said.

One of Baggs’ favorite finds depicts a black woman and two young girls working on the Wilder Plantation, which sat on the city’s southeast side.

“Look at the countenances on their faces. The smallest girl is smiling. But the other little girl and the woman, they know what work is. It’s not a happy time. The youngest girl doesn’t know that yet,” Baggs said. “These people are just trying to survive daily life, and the message on the back talks about walking in the woods and listening to the frogs singing. I hope people will pick up on that disconnect.”

Another special postcard featured a message written by the owner of the Wilder Plantation, Lelia Seton Edmundson.

“This is important because you can see the handwriting and signature of Lelia Seton Edmundson. She was so important to Decatur. She ran for Congress, championed the League of Women Voters, donated land for Wolverine, was the largest contributor to the building fund for St. John’s and gave the Old State Bank to the American Legion,” Baggs said.

Each card, which ranged in price from $8 to hundreds of dollars for the rarest ones, offers a glimpse into the lives of Decatur’s residents.

For the complete article please see https://www.decaturdaily.com/life/entertainment/a-portrait-through-postcards-decatur-man-uses-postcards-to-examine/article_bd456d81-3618-54d3-a21e-eec4a61e7e63.html
Students in the Straughn High School Art Guild honored Alabama’s Bicentennial by creating a massive foam map.

Art Guild sponsor Bettina Shiver said she wanted to allow her students to become historians through the project.

“They really had to dig down and do some research for this project,” Shiver said. “I wanted them to highlight different regions on the map. So, we have different events and moments on the map. Here in Covington County, we are highlighting the Three Notch Trail. In other places, we highlighted things like different geographical features, people and historic events just to showcase the things in Alabama that we should be proud of.”

Art Guild President Dallas Inabinett said the project help his peers learn about history.

“The research really helped engage them in the project,” Inabinett said. “I feel like a lot of people ultimately enjoyed learning about Alabama’s history.”
Art Guild vice president Julia Kondraty’ev was excited about going into depth in each county.

“When you learn about history, you don’t really go deep into one state,” Kondraty’ev said. “But when it comes to art and you have to create something for one county, you have to go into depth and really learn.”

Shiver said the project has inspired many of her students to travel to the different places they researched.

“I think with this project a lot of the kids want to become more engaged with these places,” Shiver said. “There are so many actual sites that they can visit that are historical.”

Inabinett said before the project he had no clue how much of an influence Alabama had on the history of the United States.

For the complete article please see https://www.andalusiastarnews.com/2019/10/26/shs-students-learn-alabama-history-through-art/
promote the continuous beautification of the state’s natural landscapes, growing infrastructure and expanding communities. Projects for Clean Home Alabama will take place between Nov.1 and Nov. 11.

This effort is not limited to the participation of Alabama’s community college students, faculty, and staff. Clean Home Alabama is a great opportunity for individuals and community organizations to join our effort to keep our home beautiful. We need your help to identify projects, donate materials, or simply volunteer to help with a project in your community.

For more information visit http://accs.edu/CleanHomeAl/

Knob Creek Bourbon

**Knob Creek Bourbon celebrating the bicentennial now available**

From the article by Leada Gore on AL.com:

A limited-release bourbon celebrating Alabama’s 200th anniversary is now in stores.

The Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board teamed with Knob Creek Bourbon on the special release, which consists of two barrels of Knob Creek’s Single Barrel Select. Bottles from these specially selected Knob Creek barrels will be customized with a silver “Alabama Bicentennial Edition” nameplate, the barrel number and the signature of Beam Seventh Generation Master Distiller Fred Noe.
“We’re honored to partner with the Alabama ABC to celebrate the state’s 200th anniversary,” Noe said. “Aged a minimum of nine years, Knob Creek Single Barrel Select has always been a celebration of time, effort and the experience of a storied history. The ABC’s personal selection will allow people to taste a one-of-a-kind expression, worthy of this milestone.”

The bourbon was available starting Monday at Alabama retailers while supplies last. A 750 ml bottle has a suggested retail price of $54.99.

For the complete article please see https://www.al.com/news/2019/10/limited-edition-knob-creek-bourbon-celebrating-alabamas-bicentennial-now-available.html

Artifact dig in Randolph County

Handley students complete annual artifact dig

From the article by Morgan McGue on TheRandolphLeader.com:
Students in communities studies classes at Handley High School participated in their 7th annual artifact dig last month.

The dig took place Sept. 23-27. Merredith Sears was the lead teacher and was assisted by Cadie Tipton, Jennifer Kirby, Coach Chris Glass and Dana Chandler. Sears has taught community studies at Handley for six years. Accompanying them on their trip
were also students from the plant biotechnology class at Handley.

Sears excitedly reveals the artifact dig is a great way to "get out and learn about community and culture." When it came time for this year's dig, Sears explained to her students a profound statement that served as the theme for the dig, "What is lost can be found." Sears explains they want students to not just study history but uncover history. In this year's dig, students found items such as a glass bead, spear/arrowhead, barbed wire, a broken Celt and piece of a soapstone bowl that was possibly dated back thousands of years.

The plant biotech students also had the opportunity to gather water and soil samples and examine different aspects of the creeks and items within them. Roughly 50 students were in attendance for this year's dig on private land in Randolph County. The faculty chooses not to mention the specific location of the dig in order to protect the landowner's privacy. Students have also had the opportunity to partake in previous digs at an antebellum plantation from the perspective of African American plantation life, an 1800s/1900s era settlement in Louina and Native American places in Wedowee.

For this particular dig, Handley students were honored to be joined by Dana Chandler, an archivist at Tuskegee University and archeologist from Wedowee. Sears states the value of having experts present for these digs, "We need guidance because we do not have all of the answers or expertise. Therefore, we go to other people that do." Mr. Chandler and his team were gracious to join them and even commented on the great work ethic and behavior of the students.

These digs do become expensive when gathering equipment and other necessities. However, Handley has been fortunate enough to receive grants from places such as Peach State Archeological Society, Montgomery Family Foundation and the State Bicentennial grants.

Sears goal for these digs is for the "students to become historians. We want them to understand the how and why of what that they are studying in the classroom in an outdoor setting." In addition to the artifact dig, Sears has also taken her students to visit the State Archives in Montgomery. For the state bicentennial, her students wrote five mini essays on Alabama history. They also were able to visit the home and cemetery of William Anderson Handley, a prominent former citizen of Roanoke and the man who donated the land to the city of Roanoke for school's use in 1907. On Fridays, the class visits Randolph County Learning Center and interacts in activities with the students. It is evident that the students in this class have a rich knowledge and appreciation for the history of their town and for their community.
AIDB and Gallaudet University announce partnership

From the article by Laci Braswell on AnnistonStar.com:

The Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind and Gallaudet University, the worldwide leader in deaf education headquartered in Washington, D.C., have announced a partnership in early childhood deaf education.

The purpose of the partnership is to address a lack of focus on accessible language.

For the complete article please see https://www.annistonstar.com/the_daily_home/aidb-gallaudet-university-announce-partnership-for-early-childhood-deaf-education/article_1ce0a95c-f855-11e9-897a-5788bcba66ed.html
Committee invites all to bicentennial birthday party

From the article by Ciera Hughes on FranklinCountyTimes.com:
Celebrating a bicentennial is a once-in-a-lifetime event, but Franklin County’s Bicentennial Birthday Celebration will honor three 200th birthdays – for the state of Alabama, Franklin County and the City of Russellville.

The event will be Nov. 21 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the A.W. Todd Center. Tickets are $15 a person and include a traditional old-fashioned meal of smoked chicken, pinto beans, turnip greens, potato salad, cornbread and fried pies.

The Athens Dulcimer Jam Group will provide the entertainment for the night beginning at 6 p.m.

Bicentennial Committee Chair Chris Ozbirn said the goal is to make the event feel old-
fashioned and be something for people to remember.

“This will be an event nobody should forget,” Ozbirn said.

Ozbirn said she hoped to have the event Nov. 27, the day of the City of Russellville’s founding, but she knew an event right before Thanksgiving Day would not be well attended. She said she and the committee wanted to have the event as close to this date as possible without competing with Thanksgiving week travels.

In honor of Russellville’s 200th birthday, a historical marker will be unveiled at Russellville City Hall at 5:30 p.m. before festivities move to the A.W. Todd Center.

The event will include speeches from Russellville Mayor David Grissom, Probate Judge Barry Moore and more.

Attendees are encouraged to dress in clothing from different time periods, but this is not a requirement. Historic figures will be portrayed at the event, such as Mayor William Russell and Andrew Jackson.

“I am so excited for this,” Ozbirn said. “We have tried our best to think of everything, so we hope people will really enjoy it.”

To purchase tickets, contact the Franklin County Archives at 256-332-8827. Any remaining tickets will be sold at the door.

For the complete article please see https://franklincountytimes.com/2019/10/29/committee-invites-all-to-bicentennial-birthday-party/
The Huntsville Meridian in 1818

ASPLS Marks Terminus of the Huntsville Meridian

In recognition of the bicentennial, the Alabama Society of Professional Land Surveyors took on the task of proving the terminus of the Huntsville Meridian. The meridian runs from the AL-TN line to south Shelby County. It is the basis line for all townships and sections in North Alabama. Although the starting point was known and marked, confirming the terminus will, according to Lee Y. Greene Jr., PE/PLS, “help surveyors in the area sort out claims from patents and later modified deeds.”
Archaeology Adventures: Early Alabama History

"Archaeology Adventures: Early Alabama History" focuses on Alabama pre-history and history through the lens of archaeology. Students observe archaeologists on excavations, interview historians and visit historic sites — such as Moundville, The Poarch Band of Creek Indians Archives, Old Mobile and Old Cahawba archaeological sites — as they learn about Native American societies, early settlers, and early Alabama statehood.

Archaeology Adventures: Early Alabama History will be broadcast statewide on the following dates and times:

Monday, Dec. 9 @ 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday, Dec. 10 @ 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 11 @ 5:00 p.m.
Thursday, Dec 12 @ 5:00 p.m.

All broadcasts will be on APT’s Main HD channel.
October 31, 1954

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. became the twentieth minister of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery. Founded in 1877 and constructed between 1883 and 1889, the red-brick church has a long history of serving the African American community under the leadership of well-trained, ambitious preachers such as King, Charles Octavius Boothe, and Vernon Johns. The church was designated a national historic landmark in 1974 and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. Today, visitors can tour the church and parsonage, which served as home to twelve pastors of the church, as well as a museum, garden, and interpretive center.

http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1849
Nov. 1-11 – Clean Home Alabama Initiative (State-wide)
Community college students, faculty and staff will serve alongside residents and members of several community organizations on Clean Home Alabama days for a number of beautification and litter pickup projects in Alabama’s counties. Several community organizations have already committed to projects. Visit www.accs.edu/CleanHomeAL.

Nov. 2 – Butler County's Bicentennial Celebration (Greenville)
Celebrating Alabama's bicentennial as well as 200 years of Butler County's existence, our celebration event will include: Center Stage, a flag ceremony, local history displays, local tours, a vintage auto show and children's hands on history discovery area. Visit http://alabama200.org/events/butler-county-bicentennial-celebration

Nov. 3-Dec 31 – We the People: Alabama's Defining Documents (Montgomery)
Celebrate Alabama’s bicentennial with the documents that defined our state and shaped its history. All six of Alabama’s constitutions will be on view together in a special exhibition presented by the Alabama Department of Archives and History. The exhibition will also highlight intensive conservation work recently completed on the constitutions and the 1861 ordinance of secession, which declared Alabama’s separation from the Union on the eve of the Civil War. The ordinance will also be included in the exhibition. Visit https://www.wethepeoplealabama.org/

Nov. 6 – The Story of Alabama in Fourteen Foods (Dothan)
Wallace Community College Learning Resources Center Presents author, Emily Blejwas. Her new book, The Story of Alabama in Fourteen Foods explores well-known Alabama food traditions and reveals salient histories of the state in a new way. In this book that is part history, part travelogue, and part cookbook, Blejwas pays homage to fourteen emblematic foods, dishes, and beverages, one per chapter, as a lens for exploring the diverse cultures and traditions of the state. Visit https://www.wallace.edu/

Nov. 6 & 7 – Teacher Professional Development Workshops on Alabama's Six Constitutions (Montgomery)
Featuring the Alabama Department of Archives and History's new bicentennial exhibition We the People: Alabama's Defining Documents, these day-long workshops for grades 3-12 teachers will delve into the history of Alabama's six constitutions and provide valuable tools and resources for incorporating them into your classroom curriculum. Visit http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=rmg54lcab&oeidk=a07egmle02j3eae74a2

Nov. 11 – Veterans Day at Battleship Memorial Park (Mobile)
Battleship Memorial Park will be a great site to celebrate Veterans day. The Alabama Bicentennial Commission will be hosting a free admission day at the park. You are invited to come and celebrate Alabama’s veterans and spend a day touring the park. Please make plans to participate in our special events throughout the day. Parachutists will be jumping onto the field in the early afternoon. Veterans Day Celebrations and the Parade of Flags in the Aircraft Pavilion is at 3:00 p.m. The Veterans Day Concert by the Mobile Pops is at 7:00 p.m. All events are free of charge. Tents will be set-up on the grounds for food service. Kennels are available for those traveling with pets. Visit www.ussalabama.com

Nov. 14-16 – Bearing Witness: Art of Alabama (Montgomery)
On the occasion of the bicentennial, the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts will hold a symposium that will celebrate the rich visual arts traditions of the state—from the creations of Alabama’s native peoples to those of today. Free to attend, but you must register. Visit https://mmfa.org/discover/adults/bearing-witness/

Dec. 13 – "Music of the South" A Concert with Bobby Horton (Montgomery)
The Alabama 200th Birthday Celebration weekend will open with a special benefit concert with renowned musician and music historian Bobby Horton at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec.13, at the Capri Theatre.
Horton, widely recognized as one of the country’s leading authorities of music from the Civil War period, will paint a musical portrait of life in Alabama from the earliest days of our statehood through the 1850s. Tickets are $12 for general seating and $10 for Capri members. They can be purchased here beginning Nov. 12. Visit Capritheatre.org or Alabama200.org for more information.

Go to Alabama200.org/events for more information on these and other events.

Exhibitions

Unframed Images: Photography from the collection of P. H. Polk

Nov. 1 - Nov. 29  Dale Co., City: Dothan, Venue: Troy University Dothan Campus Library
Dec. 2 - 30  Jefferson Co., City: Birmingham, Venue: Springville Road Public Library

Alabama Justice: The cases and faces that changed a nation


Making Alabama: A Bicentennial traveling exhibit

Nov. 3 - Dec. 12  Tuscaloosa Co., City: Tuscaloosa, Venue: Tuscaloosa Co. Public Library
Nov. 4 - Dec. 20  Washington Co., City: Chatom, Venue: Washington Co. Public Library
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For other Bicentennial news related articles, click here.

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