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HISTORY MUSEUM TO HOST ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING NEXT WEEK

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The History Museum of Mobile will host the sixty-eighth annual meeting of the Alabama Historical Association from April 9-11, 2015. All activities related to the conference will take place at the museum and other downtown locations, including Fort Condé, Christ Church, and the Battle House Hotel, among others. Lonnie Burnett, a professor of history and administrator at the University of Mobile, currently serves as the president of AHA.

Founded in 1947, the Alabama Historical Association is the state's oldest historical organization. The AHA provides opportunities for meaningful engagement with the past through publications, meetings, historical markers, and other programs. It is a volunteer-led and membership-supported organization with a diverse membership of professional, semi-professional, and public historians, archivists, genealogists, and educators, all with a common interest in Alabama history and a belief in its value for society today.

Because of the large number of conference attendees, the History Museum will be closed to the public on Friday, April 10 and Saturday, April 11. Operation at the city's official welcome center at Fort Condé will not be affected.

"I am personally excited to welcome the Association back to my hometown," said Lonnie A. Burnett, Ph.D., Associate VP for Academic Affairs and Professor of History, University of Mobile. "This meeting will give our members the opportunity to attend some quality programs, tour local historical venues, and experience the revitalization of the downtown area. Anyone who has not visited the History Museum of Mobile in recent years is in for quite a pleasant surprise."

"As a longtime member of the Alabama Historical Association, I am thrilled to have the opportunity to welcome its members to Mobile and the History Museum," said David E. Alsobrook, Ph.D., Director of the History Museum of Mobile. "It's quite appropriate that the museum serve as the host for the association's tenth meeting in Mobile. Caldwell Delaney, the museum's founding director, served as the fifteenth president of the association, and many of the museum's current and former staff have deep ties

with the organization. I think the conference attendees will be impressed with the museum's current feature exhibition, *Ark of India*, and the many improvements made to the museum over the last several years. In preparation for the conference, the staff has undertaken a long list of improvements to the museum's facility and core exhibitions, and all of our visitors will benefit from this hard work.

The meeting begins with a workshop on publishing Alabama history at 1:00pm on Thursday, April 9 in the museum's classroom. The workshop is sponsored by the Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts and Humanities in the College of Liberal Arts at Auburn University and the Center for Public History at the University of Alabama Huntsville. The workshop is free, but pre-registration is required by visiting www.alabamahistory.net

The public is invited to register for the entire conference, and to join the organization. Registration forms and a list of conference fees may be found on the AHA website.

Mobilians will find a great deal to interest them during the two-and-a-half day conference. Many of the sessions and lectures relate to the Civil War, quite appropriate given the 150th anniversary of the final acts of the conflict.

On Thursday evening at 5pm, Frye Gaillard, writer-in-residence at the University of South Alabama, will discuss his new book, *Journey to the Wilderness*, a collection of family letters written during the war. At 7:30pm, Bob Bradley, curator at the Alabama Department of Archives and History, will give a lecture on Spanish Fort on the 150th anniversary of the fall of Fort Blakely.

Mobile historian John S. Sledge will discuss his forthcoming book on the Mobile River at the association's opening session, held at Christ Church on Friday, April 10. Later that day, concurrent sessions of scholarly presentations will include an impressive array of Mobile topics, including lectures on the antebellum Mobile Female Benevolent Society, local architecture, and former mayor of Mobile, Jones Mitchell Withers.

The annual banquet, held Friday evening at the Battle House Hotel, will feature William C. Cooper, professor of history at Louisiana State University, and one of the foremost experts on the president of the Confederacy. His address is entitled, "Jefferson Davis and the Meaning of War."

Concurrent sessions on Saturday, April 11, will also feature a hefty slate of local history, including a lecture by noted antebellum historian Harriet Amos-Doss on life in Mobile during the Civil War. A special panel discussing the diverse career of Alabama artist Roderick D. MacKenzie will be held on Saturday morning as well, in conjunction with the History Museum's current exhibition, *Ark of India*, which chronicles MacKenzie's time in southern Asia a century ago. Featured speakers include curators Jacob Laurence and Scotty E. Kirkland, and MacKenzie scholar Marlene Hunt Rikard, professor emeritus from Samford University.

Lonnie Burnett's presidential address, held at the Alabama Contemporary Art Center (formerly the Centre for the Living Arts) Saturday afternoon, also related to Mobile, is entitled, "The Cause of the Union was Lost: The Last Campaign Speech of Stephen A. Douglas."

During the conference, members of the museum's professional staff will lead special gallery tours. Other attractions featured include the Cathedral-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Condé-Charlotte House Museum, Government Street Presbyterian Church, Magnolia Cemetery, and Historic Oakleigh.

For a full schedule of events, visit www.alabamahistory.net

For more information about the museum, contact Jacquelyn Kirkland, museum relations officer, at (251) 208-7652 or e-mail museumrelations@cityofmobile.org.

Located in the Old City Hall/ Southern Market at 111 S. Royal Street in downtown Mobile, the History Museum of Mobile documents the 300-year history of Mobile and the surrounding region. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. and Sunday from 1 p.m. -5 p.m. Admission to the museum is FREE.

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