

Hattiesburg Area Historical Society

HAHS MUSEUM
Hattiesburg Cultural Center
723 Main Street
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A NEW USE FOR AN OLD BUILDING

In August of 1880, William Harris Hardy took a lunch break under a large oak tree that stood just behind Hattiesburg's current City Hall. He was surveying for the NO&NE RR. From his vantage point on the hill, he could see a stream to his right below. After consulting his map, he realized that one day another rail line would need to run from Jackson to the Gulf Coast, and it would have to cross the NO&NE below him to the left. He would put a station there and name it and the town that he envisioned developing around it for his wife, Hattie Lott. Thus a city was born.

A look through old photographs, city directories, and telephone books provides evidence that businesses in early downtown Hattiesburg often moved from one location to another. After the great fire of October 11, 1893, a new ordinance mandated that all future buildings in the downtown be constructed of brick or stone. Although some of these circa 1900 structures have been demolished and replaced by newer buildings or parking lots, others remain to continue a cycle of providing space for new occupants within their solid walls.

The old federal building on the corner of Pine and Forrest Streets (on right) is one of these long-serving structures. It was built on the lot where Hardy's oak stood. No records show the fate of the tree, however, the building continues to add to its story. The latest remodeling included the addition of an elevator and the repaving of the driveway with the original brick pavers. Today, by agreement between Forrest County and the City of Hattiesburg, it temporarily serves as the Hattiesburg Municipal Court.

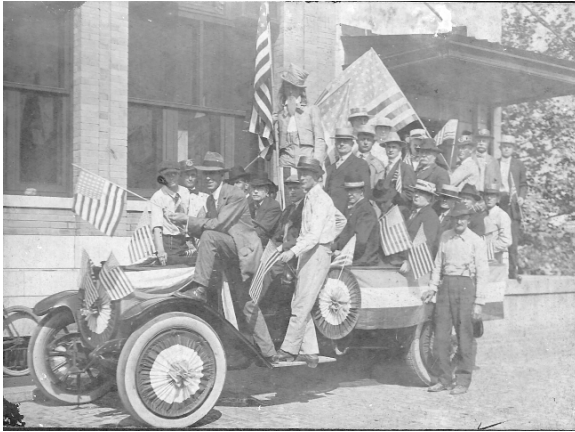


New elevator on the side of the building



Original brick pavers waiting to be reinstalled

In 1911 the Italian renaissance style building was constructed to be the third home for Hattiesburg's U. S. Post Office. It was the first federal building in Hattiesburg and was completed under the supervision of architect James Knox Taylor.



4TH of July parade 1910 Post Office employees on side brick paver driveway



Circa 1911 inside of Post Office

Pictured L to R: T. J. Shields, J. E. Watkins, J. T. Watson, Jim McInnis, W. W. Burke, Zack Slaton, J. D. Dees, Walter Jones, Ira Barksdale, H. P. Dickson, and D. B. Red.



Pictured left circa 1919: Front row L to R: Unknown, Mr. Watkins, Mr. Shields, Malcomb Dickerson, Elna Maddox, Unknown, Allie Ball. Back Row: Mr. Bond, Unknown, Mamie Draughn, Cecil McLeod, Mrs. Ima Bennett McLeod, Unknown, Tillery Watson.

By 1933 the building had become too small to handle the volume of mail. The prior year Woodruff Furniture Store, located across Pine Street, burned down and officials decided to construct a larger Post Office in its place. In 1934, postal service was closed at the old site. A new occupant was needed.



These Hattiesburg Post Office employees took time out from their schedules to pose for this photo taken April 27, 1939. Pictured are (top row, L to R) J. McMurphy, H. Turner, L. Cowan, S. Mosley, L. Young, W. Walker, G. McDonald, W. Trussell, Jim Bodman and C. Omara; (middle row, L to

R) J. May, R. Jones, C. McSwain, I. Barksdale, W. E. Lum, H. Delk, C. Shumake, Buster Pou, B. Rhodes, G. Sanderfer, J. T. Watson, and Ray Smith; (seated L to R) B. Ward, D. Hollingworth, M. Dixon, P. Arledge, B. Golden, J. F. Garraway postmaster; E. Maddux, A. B. Wedgeworth, E. Wedgeworth, and D. B. Red. (Photo courtesy of Joanne Newcomb)

GIFTS TO THE SOCIETY

Mar 10, 2016 – Jan. 5, 2017

- Circa 1960 ICH Banner (Girls Club Independent Chicks of Hattiesburg) – Ellen McCurdie
- Photos of South Central MS Bar Association for 1997, 1992, 1988, 1970 – Web Heidelberg
- Various Framed Photos of the Black Creek Bridges & 5 Photos of Forrest County Supervisors, etc. - Jerri Simmons
- Postcards of Camp Shelby circa 1945 and a Souvener Booklet circa 1942 – Harry C. Ward
- Book: *Trinity Episcopal Church, Hattiesburg, MS 1895-2012* – Alice Gray
- USM Alumni Directories 1913-1984, 2010, 1998; USM Yearbook “The Southerner 1953, 1954 - June Collier
- Photos from the House on Corner of 3rd Ave. and Nora Street 1976, 1975, 1969 - Raylawni Branch
- Collection of Letters, Telegram, and Various Other Rail Road Items belonging to Leonard J. Caldwell, Machinist who was Grandfather of the giver; 1955 Drug Center #14 Ball Uniform – Richard Forte, Sr.
- Bay St. Louis Pictures after Katrina, 2005; Hennington House of Walnut St.; Information Art Festival – Harry C. Ward
- Roll of Honor WWII of First Baptist Church Members Serving in the Military (circa 1945)– Dr. & Mrs. Bennett Smith
- Newsletter: “The Prescence” Nov. 18, 2007, Temple Baptist Church 100 Years 1907-2007 - John L. Pendergrass, Jr.
- Book: “The German People of New Orleans” by Dr. John F. Nau; 1943 “Lil Miss” Annual; 1937 Hattiesburg City Directory; 4 copies of girls in front of Hattiesburg Library – Drew & Lelia Wilson
- Victorian Doll House, furnished; Victorian Flat form Cradle circa 1900 with Handmade Quilt; Antique China Head Baby Doll; Various Dolls and Children’s Toys including 1939 Tea Set – Laurie C. Crowson
- Office Supplies – June Collier
- Medical Photos, Scrapbook with cover made by Mrs. A. T. Tatum, Sr., Scrapbook compiled by Mrs. T. E. Ross III – Barbara Ann Ross
- Assorted Photos and Clippings of Hattiesburg People, and FCAHS School Memorabilia – Sylvia Obert-Turner
- Hattiesburg Centennial Flag and Police Photos – David Byrd
- Photo Albums, Books about Area People and Court Street Methodist Church, and Assorted Newspapers and Clippings – Estate of Gloria and Janette Coleman
- Various Books, Archival Materials and Artifacts pertaining to the History of the City of Hattiesburg – Estate of Dee Thornton Abbott
- Framed Certificate State of Mississippi of J. J. Thornton as Mayor of Hattiesburg Jan. 15, 1886 - David Smith & Estates of Frances Smith & Dee Abbott
- Framed Watercolor circa 1967 by Charleen Null – James F. Freeman, Jr.
- Circa 1952 Aerial Photos of Hattiesburg Area shot by Charles Lewellyn Charbonneau, Jr. - Paul Cook Charobonneau
- DVD Documentary of the Odd Fellows Building, ©2016 – Brandon Harrison
- Book: “Gordon’s Creek Anthologies Vol. II ©t2013 – Sharon B. Schamber-Jones

RECENT MONETARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Mar. 21, 2016 – Jan. 5, 2017

LIFE MEMBERS

Rebecca C. Bourdene
Nancy Murphy
Dorothy Cook
Adrienne Carter
Barbara B. Mann
Betty Thomson
Mary Ross Daniels
Kym Waldrup
Lynn O. Hall

HONORARIUMS

M/M C. G. Meador III
Ursula Ruth Jones

DONORS

Ann Georgian
Janet & Ellen McCurdie
Lynn Meador
Lavona S. Currie
Penny Kochtitzky
M/M Albert C. Jones
Sherman Brown
Ursula Ruth Jones
Betty Ross Thomson
Mary Margaret Tatum
Elaine Bullock Arnold
Twentieth Star Chapter DAR
Norvell Robertson DAR
William L. Douglas
Richard Hinton

MEMORIALS

Harold Lane Winters
Joe Tatum
Tat Ott
Raymond Chapman Bishop
T. E. Ross, Jr.
T. E. Ross III
Jimmy Daniels
Jeanne Smith Dews
Ann Georgian
Ima Jo Gardner
James Westbrook
John Bedenbaugh
Dee Thornton Abbott



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 39403-1573

MUSEUM HOURS
 Mon., Tues., Thurs.
 2:00 - 4:30 p.m.
 Or by Appointment
 Call 601-582-5460

Located in the
**Hattiesburg Cultural
 Center**
 723 Main Street
 Downtown
 Hattiesburg, MS

Web site:
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 megagate.com](mailto:hahsmuseum@megagate.com)

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The beautiful building with its red tile roof, marble walls and floors, and tall columns was remodeled in 1939 and became the U.S. District Court until the current federal building on Main Street was completed in 1974. On September 24, 1974, the Hattiesburg Area Historical Society placed a marker on the site to commemorate Hardy's vision. The 63-year-old showplace had become the "Old Federal Building" and was again in need of new residents.

In 1976 ownership of the building was conveyed to Forrest County. Since then the edifice has been home to many, including the Forrest County Youth Court, Forrest County School Truant Officers, Forrest County Coroner, and DREAM of Hattiesburg, a drug abuse prevention agency. Now the Hattiesburg Municipal Court convenes there.

As 2017 begins, downtown Hattiesburg buzzes with young and old businesses, churches, restaurants, homes, schools, galleries, museums, courts, and government buildings. The "Old Federal Building," now in its 106th year, stands as a testament to Hattiesburg's ability to remodel, renew, and reuse its downtown. One must wonder if Hardy (the teacher, husband, father, soldier, surveyor, businessman, lawyer, statesman, judge, and father of South Mississippi) also may have envisioned this.



Tat Ott
 Dec. 7, 1917
 Nov 9, 2015



Dee Abbott
 Oct. 21, 1918
 Sept 24, 2016



Barbara Johnson
 May 9, 1934
 Sept 8, 2016

Since our last newsletter HAHS has lost three major contributing members. These ladies freely gave their time, expertise, and resources to the HAHS over many years. They all recorded local information and saved artifacts that would have been lost without their efforts. Tat worked many hours at the museum and assisted with our book publication. Dee provided program ideas and purchased audio-visual equipment. Barbara spent hours negotiating the purchase of mannequins and spearheading our Hometown Heroes exhibit. The HAHS has benefited from their constant participation and advice. Their contributions have gone down in history.