

» THE HISTORY BEHIND «

THE HEART OF HUNTSVILLE

LOCATION

The area that is now Madison County, Alabama was a part of the Mississippi Territory from 1789 until 1817, and a part of the Alabama Territory from 1817 until statehood in 1819. Madison County was created in a county of the Mississippi Territory in 1808. The plat for the Town of Twickenham was prepared in 1810 by John Coffee, and was ultimately selected as the county seat of Madison County.

NAME

The name "Twickenham" was reportedly suggested by LeRoy Pope in honor of English poet Alexander

Pope's hometown of Twickenham. As a part of city planning, the streets were laid out within the rectangular plat with reference to the Big Spring bluff, creating 20 squares or blocks. Each block, with the exception of the public square where the Courthouse was to be located and the Big Spring Square, was then subdivided into four lots.

INCORPORATION

In 1811 the name of Twickenham was changed to Huntsville. The city was then incorporated, making Huntsville the first incorporated town in what is now Alabama. (Source: Dr. Frances C. Roberts, unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Alabama, 1955.)

CHANGES

The layout of downtown Huntsville and the street names have remained largely unchanged for over 200 years. The following are some of the updates which have occurred to the city's original plat:

- » **Gallatin** and **Henry Streets**, which existed within the original rectangle, were renamed Church Street.
- » **Spring Street** and **Fountain Row** no longer go all the way to what is now Church Street.
- » **Fountain Row** turns south toward **Williams Avenue** and is known as Fountain Circle.
- » **Spring Street** stops at Spragins Street, which has been added.
- » The streets running east and west are now named avenues, rather than streets.

CELEBRATING 200 YEARS OF HISTORY



Huntsville/Madison County Visitor Center*
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HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE STREET NAMES



1819

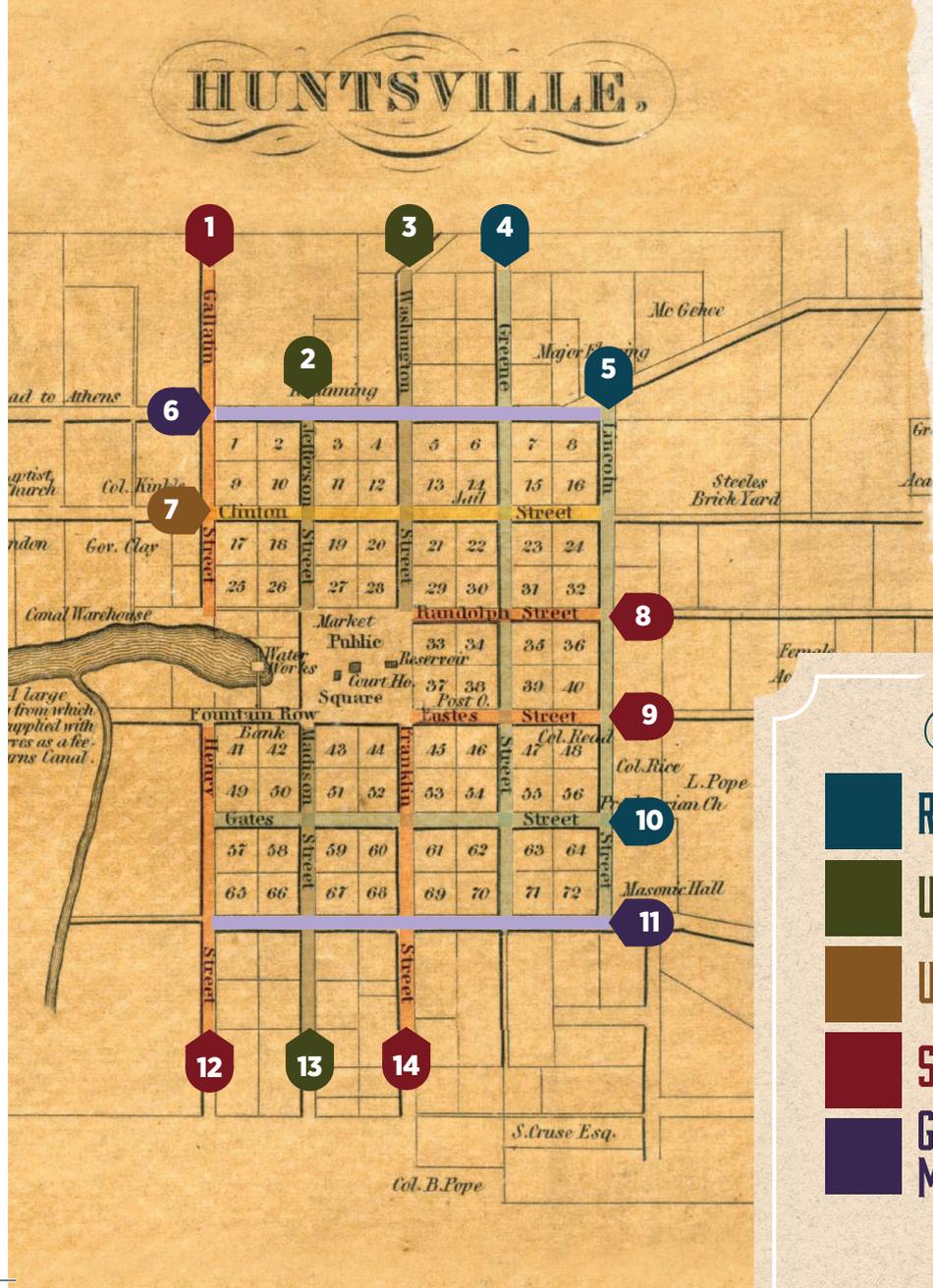
ALABAMA BICENTENNIAL

It's the Alabama Bicentennial, and the birthplace of Alabama Statehood lies in the heart of Huntsville in what is now known as the Twickenham historic district. Delegates from across the Alabama Territory met in Huntsville to draft the first state constitution. Huntsville served as the first capital of the newly recognized state and still reflects much of the history from the early 1800s.

This map shows the original, and in many cases current, layout of streets in Huntsville around the time of the Constitutional Convention in 1819. While some of the streets have names that may be familiar, many pay homage to Revolutionary War heroes, elected officials, or statesmen.

STEP INTO THE PAST

STREET NAME ORIGINS



KEY

- REVOLUTIONARY WAR GENERALS
- US PRESIDENTS
- US VICE PRESIDENTS
- STATESMEN
- GOVERNORS OF THE MISSISSIPPI TERRITORY

1 GALLATIN STREET

Attracted to the potential for human liberty, Albert Gallatin immigrated to the US from Switzerland. Despite his foreign birth, he had a successful political career and served as a member of the House of Representatives, a Senator, and Secretary of the Treasury under President Jefferson and President Madison.

2 JEFFERSON ST.

Thomas Jefferson authored the Declaration of Independence, served as the first Secretary of State, the second Vice President, and the third President. He also founded the University of Virginia and was known for his fiery ideology and curiosity.

3 WASHINGTON ST.

George Washington served as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, as the first President from 1789-1797. He believed in the simple dignity of being a citizen servant of the people.

4 GREENE ST.

Nathanael Greene served as a Major General during the Revolutionary War, and was Washington's choice to take command of the scattered and demoralized remnants of the Continental Army's southern forces. He executed a strategic retreat, allowing the continental forces to regroup and inflict heavy casualties against Lord Cornwallis' troops. This strategy in time liberated most of the area of the Southern colonies, and left Cornwallis vulnerable to the combined forces of Washington and the French.

5 LINCOLN ST.

Benjamin Lincoln, Major General during the Revolutionary War, returned to his post as soon as he could despite taking a musket ball to the leg in the Battle of Saratoga. He was later captured during the siege of Charleston. He would then be ransomed in a prisoner exchange and served as General Washington's second in command, receiving the surrender of Lord Cornwallis' second in the siege of Yorktown. After the war, he served as first Secretary of War.

6 HOLMES ST.

David Holmes was the fourth Governor of the Mississippi Territory and the first Governor of the State of Mississippi. He would later represent Mississippi in the United States Senate.

7 CLINTON STREET

George Clinton was a Revolutionary War general, the first Governor of New York, and the fourth Vice President of the United States. During his services as General, he successfully led an effort to repel the British reinforcements that had been coming to the aid of British General Burgoyne. This led to Burgoyne's surrender at the Battle of Saratoga, and in turn convinced the French to join the war effort.

8 RANDOLPH ST.

John Randolph served as a member of the House of Representatives and as a US Senator representing Virginia. He was a talented orator and a flashy showman, who connected with the common farmers of his state to build political consensus.

9 EUSTIS ST.

William Eustis served as a military physician during the Revolutionary War. After the Revolution, he turned to political life, eventually becoming a member of the House of Representatives for his state of Massachusetts, and President James Madison's Secretary of War.

A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

10 GATES STREET

Horatio Gates served as a Brigadier General and Adjutant General of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, and commanded the army that won the Battle of Saratoga. He was a rival to George Washington, seeking to have him relieved of his position as Commander-in-Chief. After suffering a brutal defeat at the Battle of Camden, Gates never again took command.

11 WILLIAMS ST.

Robert Williams was appointed by Thomas Jefferson to be the first Governor of the new Mississippi Territory. Williams served in that capacity until 1809. He would later serve as an Adjutant General of the North Carolina militia during the War of 1812.

12 HENRY ST.

Patrick Henry was an attorney, an orator, and the first Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. He is most remembered for his radical anti-British rhetoric, most famously his address to the house of Burgesses in 1775, which he ended with the bold statement "Give me liberty or give me death!"

13 MADISON ST.

James Madison authored the first ten Amendments to the Constitution, "The Bill of Rights." He also served as the fifth US Secretary of State and the fourth President. Known as "The Father of the Constitution" due to his central importance in pushing for the states to ratify the replacement to the Articles of Confederation, Madison formulated many of the political freedoms that we Americans continue to enjoy to this day.

14 FRANKLIN STREET

Benjamin Franklin was a man of many talents: he published scientific findings, notably on electricity and the Gulf Stream; he was an inventor, creating bifocal lenses and the lightning rod; he served as an ambassador; he helped draft the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution; he was an early and fervent abolitionist who petitioned Congress in 1790 to abolish slavery; and he was a prolific author and printer, publishing *Poor Richard's Almanack*, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, and numerous political pamphlets. Above all, he was a patriot, who was deeply committed to America and the advancement of human liberty.