

Markers tell stories of notable families and their homes

By Rebekah Davis

Limestone County Archivist

It's time for more stops on the historical marker tour of Limestone County, hitting 25 markers in all.

I'm spending a few weeks sharing the information about these markers. If you want to go ahead and check them all out, you can get maps and GPS coordinates to each one by searching for Limestone County's historical markers on www.lat34north.com.

Today's markers are:

- **Governor George S. Houston Home:** This house was purchased by George S. Houston in 1845 and was his home until his death here on 31st December 1879. Houston served the people of Alabama in public office for thirty-six years. His long and distinguished political career began in 1832 and included: one term in the Alabama state legislature, three terms as circuit solicitor, nine terms in the U. S. House of Representatives, two terms as Governor of Alabama and he was twice elected to the U. S. Senate. Due to his conservative fiscal policies while in congress, he was known as "The Watchdog of the Treasury."

Houston's most notable service to Alabama was during his two terms as governor. For almost a decade after the Civil War, the people of Alabama suffered under the rule of Radical Reconstructionists.

In 1874 the white citizens of Alabama united behind Houston in his bid for the governor's office. His election as a Democrat returned self rule to Alabama. During his two terms, the states huge debt was reduced, property owners were protected from excessive taxation and many other reforms were enacted that brought stability to the state.

After Houston's death, his home was occupied only occasionally until 1937 when it was deeded to the City of Athens with some stipulations, one of which was that it should house a library and meeting place for literary and patriotic societies and should be known as "The Houston Memorial Library."

Marker is at the intersection of North Houston Street and Market St, Athens.

- **Harris-Pryor House (Flower Hill Farm):** Build abt. 1858 by Schuyler Harris on land once owned by Henry Augustine Washington, a distant relative of the first president. Through purchases, marriages, and inheritance between the Washington, Harris and Pryor families, all from Virginia, a large plantation of over 3,000 acres was established. Long after the demise of slavery, approx. 60 tenant families lived on the land. Schuyler Harris gave this house to his daughter, Ida Maria and her husband Wm. Richard Pryor, a son of Sen. Luke Pryor II and Isabella Virginia (Harris) Pryor. It is through this descent that this historic house and farm known as "Flower Hill", is owned and held in trust for future generations by Luke Pryor IV and his wife Betty (Lamb) Pryor. It is managed through a family corporation, and is not open to the public.

Across the highway is a large spring known since early times as "English Spring." It produced enough water for a town, and the little settlement, which formed around it, was a contender for the site of the county seat. It was not chosen however and the settlement ceased to exist.

This area for several miles around was known as "Quid Nunc" (Latin for "what next")

Beat and Post Office until about 1910 when it was changed to Harris Station, a community which had formed along the RR tracks to the SW. Time and “progress” have brought about the demise of that community named for the prominent Harris Family. The Harris Cemetery is among the trees across the highway.
Marker is on U.S. Highway 31 near Tanner.

About the Archives:

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Established: 1980

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