

Markers tell of a governor, a justice and a sheriff

By Rebekah Davis

Limestone County Archivist

It's time for more stops on the historical marker tour of Limestone County.

I've been spending a few months sharing the information about these markers. To see the list of most of the markers and more information, you can get maps and GPS coordinates to each one by searching for Limestone County's historical markers on www.lat34north.com, or to view additional markers and directions, visit www.limestonecountyhistoricalsociety.org.

Today's marker:

- **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 state's 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."

This marker is located on the grounds of the Houston at 101 north Houston Street and corner of Market Street.

- **Coleman Family/Coleman Hill:** Wealthy and influential Virginia family settled here in 1820s. Daniel Coleman (1801-1857) built his stately home a block west about 1826. During Civil War, home was occupied by Yankee troops who took Elizabeth Coleman's teeth for their gold content. Home was destroyed in early 1900s. Coleman Hill was subdivided about 1904.

Daniel, at age 19, was appointed County Judge in 1821, served Alabama House of Representatives 1829-30, Alabama Supreme Court Justice 1851-52. He and brother Ruffin were incorporators of Athens Female Academy (now Athens State University) in 1822. Ruffin (1798-1849) elected Sheriff 1821 and 1828. He, mother Martha Cocke Coleman (1760-1842), and other family members buried here.

This marker is located on 4th Street at the corner of Grace Ave.

About the Archives:

Limestone County Department of History and Archives

Established: 1980

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