

Take a historical marker tour of Limestone County

By Rebekah Davis

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The weather's getting warmer in Limestone County and the mosquitos haven't buzzed up full force yet... it's the perfect time of year to go on a historical marker adventure around the county. Did you know that there are 25 signs marking historic locations in Limestone County? Various groups, including the Alabama Historic Commission, Alabama Historical Association and the Limestone County Historical Society, have placed markers throughout the county. Over the next few weeks, I'll share the information about these markers. If you have a hankering to check them all out before then, you can get maps and GPS coordinates to each one by searching for

Limestone County's historical markers on www.lat34north.com.

1. **A County Older Than the State – Limestone County:** Created Feb. 6, 1818, by Alabama Territorial Legislature from lands ceded by Cherokee Nation 1806 and by Chickasaw Nation in 1816. Named for creek (and its limestone bed), which runs through county. Few settlers here until Indian treaties. Athens became county seat in 1818. Limestone was the first Alabama county to be occupied by Federal troops during the Civil War. Marker at the intersection of South Jefferson Street and Market Street, Athens, Alabama.
2. **Abner Alloway Strange, Sr.** — 1761-1835 — Veteran of the American Revolution: Approximately 200 yards east of this site are the unmarked graves of Abner Alloway Strange, Sr., and other family members. (The markers were moved to Salem Methodist Cemetery in 1977.) A Sergeant in the Virginia Militia, Strange was at Yorktown under General LaFayette during the American War for Independence. In 1825 he moved from Fluvanna County, Virginia, and erected his log house approximately 100 yards west of this site. At least three of his married children came along in the caravan to settle here: Abner Strange, Jr., Ann (Mrs. Charles M. Bernard), and Martha (Mrs. Simpson Flanagan.) Marker on Buck Island Road (State Highway 99) north of Sugar Way, Salem.
3. **Albert S. Johnston:** General, CSA. March 9-20, 1862. In a dash to repel invasion of Mississippi Valley he led Army of Tennessee across the river here. While here he planned campaign for the Battle of Shiloh. Marker on U.S. Highway 31.
4. **Athens Big Spring Memorial Park:** Dedicated to the early settlers, men and women who served in the armed forces and kept our country free. Marker can be reached from Beaty Street North east of Market Street/Buck Island Road, Athens.
5. **Athens College:** A liberal arts college — 1822 — Athens Female Academy founded by patriotic citizens 1843. Raised to college level under Methodist patronage. First college building, Founders Hall (1842-3), still used for classes. Unbroken service since 1822. Marker is on Pryor Street just from N. Beaty Street, Athens.
6. **Athens First Presbyterian Church:** This church was organized in 1829 as a Cumberland Presbyterian church by the Revs. Robert Donnell, John Morgan and Allen Gipson. After first using an interdenominational building, a church was built on West Washington street in 1852. This was badly damaged during the Civil War and worshippers met at the Baptist Church. Sufficient money was raised to begin the building of the present church, "On the Square", which was completed in 1895, less than ten years before this church joined the majority to merge into the United Presbyterian Church. In

this church in 1982, commissioners from the UPC and the PCUS Presbyteries voted to merge in the first joint meeting of the two Presbyteries. The resulting Presbytery was called the North Alabama Union Presbytery. Marker at the intersection of South Jefferson Street and West Washington Street, Athens.

About the Archives:

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