

# Birmingham History Center

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## Images FROM OUR FIRST YEAR



**Birmingham History Center**

THOMAS E. JERNIGAN SR. MEMORIAL

To join our E-mail List send us an E-mail at:  
[info@birminghamhistorycenter.org](mailto:info@birminghamhistorycenter.org)



## Letter from the Director/Jerry Desmond

Happy New Year! What an exciting year we had in 2010. After six years of collecting artifacts, raising funds and looking for a site, we finally opened our museum to the public on April 29<sup>th</sup> at the Young and Vann building on First Avenue North in historic downtown Birmingham.

We think the finished product, with an excellent design provided by Studio LaPaglia, looks great. We have received rave reviews from visitors who are amazed with what we have accomplished with a modest budget. We also changed our name last year, created a new logo, designed a new website, approved a new strategic plan with ambitious goals for the next five years, approved a comprehensive collections policy and began developing a strong membership base for the Birmingham History Center.

These great strides forward were made bittersweet by the passing of our distinguished and beloved curator, Dr. Marvin Y. Whiting in November. His contributions to the History Center over the past six years cannot be overstated. He will be sorely missed.

DEZ

## Featured New Artifact

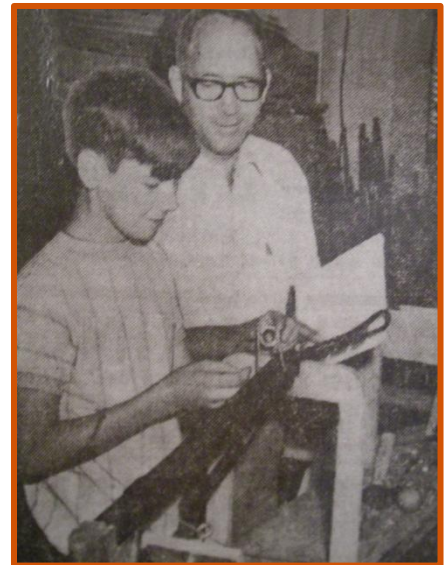
We have never actually seen anything like this in any museum. Donated by Margaret Westbrook, this No.2 Edison portable screen was produced in 1902 as a companion to the Edison ProjectoScope, an early slide projector popular in tent shows and meeting halls of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. With twenty-three parts, mostly bamboo and brass with a wood base, the screen stands 8 ½ feet tall and is 6 feet wide. The bed sheet found in the box was not the original screen. After some head scratching and false starts, our volunteer curator extraordinaire, Gary Gerlach, was able to put it all together, resulting in this photo.



## On Exhibit – Soap Box Derby Car



This soap box car was built by Keith Sides for the 1970 Jefferson County derby. The rules for building and racing a soap box car were quite strict. All work had to be performed by the entrant. The total cost of the car could not exceed \$35, not including wheels, axles, steering assembly and paint. The total weight of the car with the driver in it could not exceed 250 lbs. Seventy cars raced in 1970, Keith finished third, the winner was Mike Culwell. For several years, Keith's father and mother, Charles and Betty Sides, worked as volunteers for the Jefferson County Derby.



Keith Sides works on his Soap Box Derby car, his father, Charles, looks on. (Birmingham News Photo)

The Soap Box Derby is a youth soapbox car racing program which has been run in the United States since 1934. World Championship finals are held each July at Derby Downs in Akron, Ohio. Cars competing in this and related events are unpowered, relying completely upon gravity to move. In Jefferson County, soap box competitors rolled down the track at George Ward (Green Springs) Park in late June each year before thousands of spectators. The local winner received a \$500 U. S. Savings Bond and a trip to Akron to compete in the national races. Ottis Lee Airhart, of Birmingham, finished 8<sup>th</sup> in the 1958 national races, the best showing by a racer from Birmingham.

**Charter Members - 2010****Benefactor**

Nancy and Murray Smith

**Premium**

Deborah and William Denson, D. Paul Jones, Jr.,  
Mr. and Mrs. Allen Rushton, Rudy Vargas

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**Jefferson County Historical Association  
Reception Held at the History Center, 12/9/10**



Photos by Thomas E. Badham

## Our Corporate/Foundation and Major Individual Donors 2008 - 2010

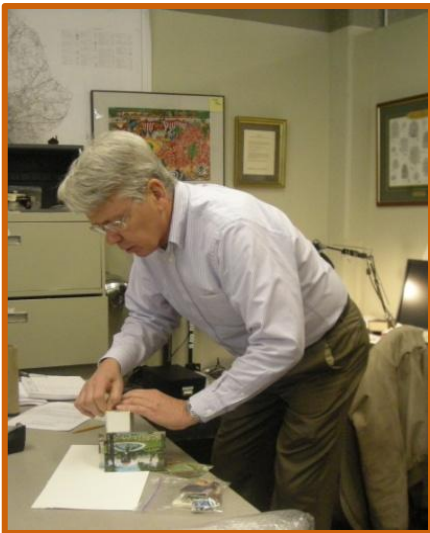
### The Thomas E. Jernigan Family Foundation

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Birmingham Jefferson Historical Society  
Caring Foundation (BC/BS of Alabama)  
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Leigh Allison, Francis Crockard, Henry Lynn, Philip McWane, Charlotte Murdock, Earle Murray, William Rushton, Garland Smith, Nancy and Murray Smith, Lucille Thompson, Dr. Bayard Tynes.

## Volunteers



**Gary Gerlach, volunteer curator, works every Monday at the BHC.**

If you're interested in history and want to get in on the ground floor of a developing museum, consider volunteering. It took many hands to get the museum open in April, 2010, and more volunteer opportunities will open as time goes by. Right now, we have work waiting for **archives assistants**. Archives assistants are curatorial volunteers who help speed record-keeping and other caretaking duties. An archive assistant gets to see artifacts as they come in and helps make sure objects, papers, and photographs are properly documented and cared for.

For more information on becoming a volunteer go to our website at [www.birminghamhistorycenter.org](http://www.birminghamhistorycenter.org) or, call for more information, (205) 202-4146.

# Donating Artifacts



From Left to Right: Lindbergh Reception Committee Pin (1927), Edison Phonograph (1903), Stain Glass from Terminal Station (1909), Elyton Land Company Stock Certificate (1890)

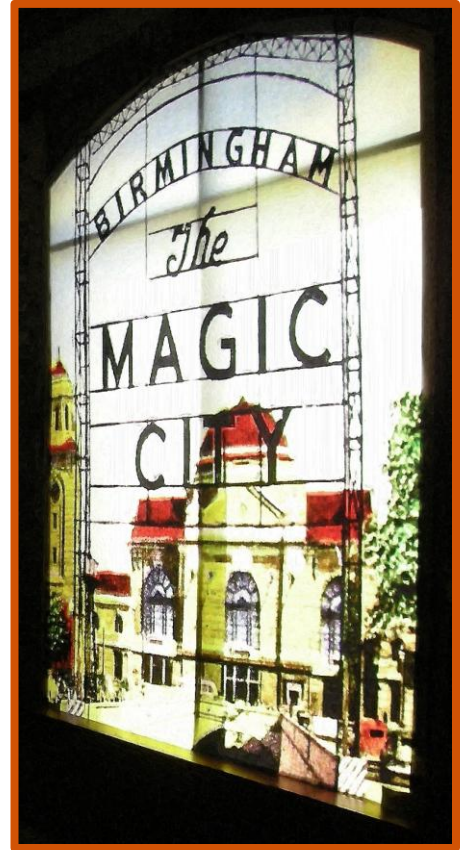
## The History Center ensures that:

- collections in its custody support its mission and public trust responsibilities.
- collections in its custody are lawfully held, protected, secure, unencumbered, cared for, and preserved.
- collections in its custody are accounted for and documented.
- access to the collections and related information is permitted and regulated.
- acquisition, disposal, and loan activities are conducted in a manner that respects the protection and preservation of natural and cultural resources and discourages illicit trade in such materials.
- acquisition, disposal, and loan activities conform to its mission and public trust responsibilities.
- collections-related activities promote the public good rather than individual financial gain.
- competing claims of ownership that may be asserted in connection with objects in its custody should be handled openly, seriously, responsively and with respect for the dignity of all parties involved.

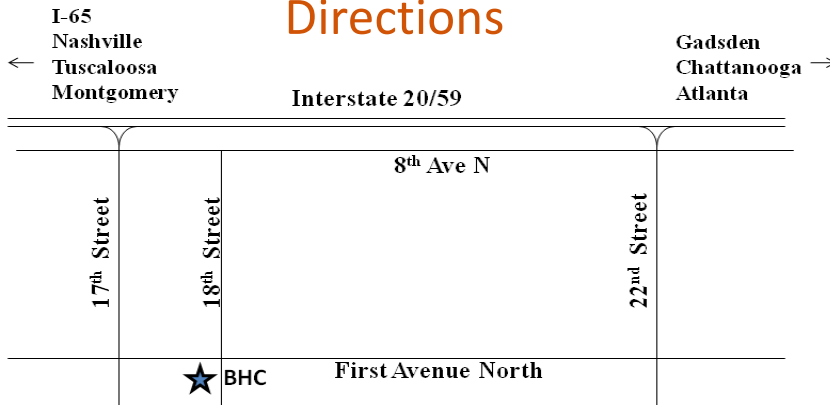
**To donate artifacts related to the history of the Birmingham region, please call 205-202-4146 or bring items to the Center at 1731 First Avenue North, Birmingham, AL**

# Birmingham History Center

Recently opened in the Spring of 2010, the BHC features exhibitions of historical events of Birmingham and Jefferson County from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Admission charged; \$4 adults, \$3 seniors and veterans, \$2 students, children under 6 free. Visa, Discover, Master Card accepted, tickets available also by phone. Group rates available, free parking. Open 9:00 am - 4:30 pm, Monday - Friday. Located at the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> Street and First Avenue North in Birmingham at the historic Young and Vann Building.



## Directions



## Birmingham History Center

1731 First Avenue North  
Birmingham, AL 35203

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