

News Release

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**BECOMING ALABAMA: STATE PREPARES FOR ANNIVERSARIES OF THE
CREEK WAR, CIVIL WAR, AND CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

State agencies, museums, historical organizations, and tourism officials today announced the launch of *Becoming Alabama*, a statewide partnership for the commemoration of the Creek War, the Civil War, and the civil rights movement. Speaking in the historic House Chamber of the State Capitol, representatives of the collaborative effort invited historical societies, schools, and local governments to promote their communities' roles in the state's distinctive history.

Officials also unveiled a logo commissioned for the anniversary period that can be used by organizations throughout the state to promote commemoration activities.

"We are about to pass through a remarkable constellation of anniversaries that coincide over the next five years," said Ed Bridges, director of the Alabama Department of Archives and History. "This is a unique opportunity to focus on three interconnected struggles that shaped who we are today."

More than forty organizations of all sizes have participated in planning that began in April 2009, when tight budgets and reduced staff made the prospect of large commemorative efforts daunting. By approaching the three historical periods collectively, the partners were able to stretch limited resources. They also realized that these three periods collectively tell the major stories in the creation and shaping of Alabama statehood and society, hence the theme and name "Becoming Alabama."

Lawrence Pijoux, president and CEO of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, explained that the arrangement allows an organization to present programs that fit its mission while complementing the efforts of others. "This cooperative approach enables each partner to stress its strength while contributing to a larger understanding of Alabama history as a whole," Pijoux said. "It also means that no organization is too small to take part, and we encourage the broadest participation possible."

Alabama Heritage magazine was an early participant in the effort, and the Fall issue introduced at the press conference includes the fourth installment in an ongoing *Becoming Alabama* series. "We found *Becoming Alabama* to be an opportunity for partnership," said Donna Cox Baker, the magazine's editor. "In conjunction with the University of Alabama and the Alabama Tourism Department, we were able to develop a new department of articles written by graduate students. Each quarter, these pieces give our readers an eyewitness view of events that were unfolding 200, 150, and 50 years ago."

The Alabama Tourism Department commissioned a *Becoming Alabama* logo that was introduced by Bridges and designer Susan Gamble, a former Montgomery resident who has done extensive work for the U.S. Mint. The logo features a prominent figure from each of the three periods: Chief Menawa, a principal leader of the Red Stick Creeks; Confederate general Joseph Wheeler; and civil rights activist Rosa Parks.

The Tourism Department will use the design in a series of commemorative medallions to be released in 2011, but the image is also being made freely available to Alabama organizations for use in promoting commemorative activities. A web site to be launched later in 2010 will provide a timeline of historical events, a central listing of commemorative programs throughout the state, and links to local organizations.

Logo files and additional information on *Becoming Alabama* may be found at www.archives.alabama.gov/ba/.

Partnering Agencies and Organizations

Becoming Alabama has no formal leadership structure, but these partners have lent resources and guidance in the early phases of planning:

Alabama Department of Archives and History

Alabama Heritage Magazine

Alabama Tourism Department

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

EarlyWorks Museums of Huntsville

Museum of Mobile

Other partners include:

Alabama Folklife Association

Alabama Historical Association

Alabama Historical Commission

Alabama Humanities Foundation

Alabama Indian Affairs Commission

Alabama Museums Association

Alabama Public Library Service

Alabama Public Television

Alabama Shakespeare Festival

Alabama State Council on the Arts
Auburn Montgomery Archives
Auburn University History Department
Birmingham Public Library
Black Heritage Council
Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts & Humanities,
Auburn University
Encyclopedia of Alabama
First White House of the Confederacy
Gadsden Museum of Art & History
Horseshoe Bend National Military Park
Jule Collins Smith Museum, Auburn University
Mobile Visitors' Center
National African American Archives & Museum, Mobile
National Center for the Study of Civil Rights & African American
Culture, Alabama State University
Rosa Parks Museum
Tannehill Ironworks Historical State Park
University of Alabama History Department
University of Alabama Press
Numerous local historical organizations and libraries

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