



## MAY 2023

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### ***Market on Main***

Applications are currently being accepted for our 2023 Market on Main. The market will be held the first and third Saturday of each month from April to September from 8 AM - 1 PM at Simmons. Applications can be found [here](#).





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## ***Food Truck Friday on Main***

Food Truck Friday is held the second Friday from April 2023 to October 2023 from 4 PM - 9 PM at Simmons Park in Historic Downtown Oxford. Each Friday will include a variety of mobile food vendors, live entertainment, lawn games, bounce houses, and a free movie for the whole family!







COME SEE HIGHWAY 77 BAND PERFORM  
AT FOOD TRUCK FRIDAY ON MAIN

HIGHWAY 77 BAND

MAY 12TH

LOCATED AT SIMMONS PARK  
400 MAIN STREET, OXFORD AL, 36203  
HISTORIC DOWNTOWN OXFORD  
FRIDAY, MAY 5TH

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## ***Historic Preservation Month- This Place Matters***





## Downtown Oxford's Revitalization Story

by Hunter C. Gentry

In 2005, the National Trust for Historic Preservation declared May National Preservation Month to celebrate and promote historical places and heritage tourism.

The Trust began to encourage historic preservation in 1973 with National Preservation Week. In more recent years, people have understood that historic preservation is, in fact, economic and community development. Historic preservation leads to city revitalization, job creation, small business incubation, housing, and tourism that reinforces the five senses of a high-quality community.

Downtown Oxford's revitalization efforts can be traced back to the late-1970s from the leadership of city engineer Dale Garrett under the administration of Mayor Bester Adams. Garrett coordinated a multi-phase effort to revitalize downtown Oxford funded by the Alabama Historical Commission. Historic buildings are an essential part of what gives a community a sense of place, serving as a visual reminder of the past and showcasing architectural styles of different eras in time.

The first phase included surveying buildings, homes, and sites constructed before 1920. Mary Cowan was hired to assist Garrett in conducting research and overseeing most of the "legwork" for the project. Danny and Donna Hurt, owners of Hurt House of Photography, were hired to photograph the exterior and interior of each property surveyed. Robert Gamble, a noted Alabama architectural historian, and preservationist, was hired to consult and assist with physical and architectural descriptions. The survey concluded that fourteen commercial buildings and 130 homes potentially could be listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage due to architectural and cultural significance. Currently, the survey is housed at the Oxford Public Library. Historic Main Street Oxford is working with the library to digitize and update the survey. The second phase included promoting the history of Oxford and creating the foundation for the short-lived Oxford Historical Society. During this second phase, it was decided to assist downtown property owners with a clear vision of what the facades should look like. Anniston architect, George O. Parker, was contracted to create renderings of what the buildings along Choccolocco Street and Main Street could be after facade improvements and restoration.

In 1981, due to a lack of funding, the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce, along with Oxford citizens and downtown businesses, began to fundraise, creating a pool of money for property owners to use in restoration efforts. Charles Hubbard, the owner of Oxford Furniture Company, was the first property owner to utilize these funds for the facade restoration of 12 Choccolocco Street. Interestingly, the current owner of the same property is restoring the building's interior and exterior as an additional eatery for downtown. During the 1970s and 1980s, downtowns and small towns began declining due to indoor shopping malls. In 1980, the Main Street program was established under the National Trust for Historic Preservation to address and aid downtowns to bring economic prosperity back while preserving and promoting character and history. It was around this time that Billy Grizzard moved his land survey company downtown. Grizzard purchased one-half of a block on the northern side of Choccolocco Street, optimistic about the direction of downtown's restoration and comeback. In October 1987, to celebrate the success of Grizzard's facade renovations and overall promotion of downtown, Oxfordfest was created.



Noted downtown business owners during that time were James Anderson, Johnny Bentley, Sharrell Dorsey, and Oscar Cotton. The first Oxfordfest included about 150 vendors and music. It was estimated that attendance was around 6,000.

In the mid-2000s, downtown businesses gathered to create a merchant association. The group advocated for themselves and hosted promotional events. The Oxford Arts Council was instrumental in constructing the gazebo at Simmons Park, coordinating historical tours, and signage at the park and city cemetery. In 2008, June Land Reaves, Oxford City Council member, advocated for the placement of signage along Alabama Highway 21 and Hamric Drive to indicate the location of downtown Oxford. A few years later, in 2010, Oxford was granted funds for a historical marker from the Alabama Tourism Department. It was during that year that the tourism department advocated for Alabama's Small Towns and Downtowns.

Under the leadership of Mayor Leon Smith, one of the most significant projects in our downtown revitalization was renovating the former Oxford City Hall into the Oxford Performing Arts Center in 2011. The multi-level, Georgian Revival structure at 100 Choccolocco Street was initially constructed in 1921 to serve as Oxford's elementary school and later as Oxford's municipal center. Since restoration, thousands of patrons have visited downtown from over thirty states to attend top-notch performances.

In June 2014, with the hardwood and determination of Robin Leonard, Charlotte Hubbard, and others, Oxford was one of three cities in Alabama to become a designated Main Street community by Main Street Alabama. Historic Main Street Oxford was created as an economic and community development organization that focuses on the Four Point Approach Strategy of Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Vitality as outlined by Main Street America. The Four Point Approach makes Main Street an effective tool for community-based, volunteer-driven, grassroots revitalization efforts.

The Alabama Historical Commission approved Historic Main Street Oxford's commercial district application to the Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage in 2018. The boundary includes buildings in the core area along Choccolocco Street and Main Street. The registry is an official listing of buildings, sites, structures, and districts worthy of preservation. The designation is honorary and carries no restrictions or financial incentives. Historic Main Street Oxford is working on expanding the boundary and exploring options for National Register designation. It should be noted that eight structures and places, including the downtown district, are currently listed in the Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage.

In 2018, Historic Main Street Oxford Board Members advocated establishing a permanent facade grant program. Since launching the program, 21 buildings in the downtown district have utilized the program with public investment of under \$30,000 and private investment of over \$100,000. The first property to undergo restoration with these funds was Oxford Cleaners.

Oxford's Mayor Alton Craft and city council members saw the potential of our historic downtown and invested over \$3 million towards revitalization and preservation. A streetscape project completed in the fall of 2019 resulted in new sidewalks along Choccolocco Street and Main Street lined with brick pavers, underground placement of utilities, landscaping, and lighting that captures the historical aesthetic, character, and charm of downtown.

It has been the hard work and determination of those countless citizens, leaders, and those named above that have played an integral role in downtown Oxford's revitalization. A thriving downtown revitalization program does not happen overnight.

It has spanned six decades, from initial plans in 1978 by then-city engineer Dale Garrett to survey our structures to an award-winning, accredited Main Street program in 2023. Throughout May, Historic Main Street Oxford will be highlighting and featuring places that matter and the people that have a passion for the preservation of Historic Downtown Oxford.







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## ***Marketing Assistant - Siri Thackston***

Meet Siri Thackston, the Marketing Assistant for Historic Main Street Oxford. She is a Wedowee Native, an animal lover, and a soon-to-be graduate of Auburn University at Montgomery. Siri is proud to serve Historic Main Street Oxford and the community!



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## ***Downtown Discount!***

[The Main Olive](#) is offering a 10% discount at checkout if you present a receipt from ANY business located in Historic Downtown Oxford.

Please be on the lookout for more details on other businesses offering this discount!

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## ***Keep Oxford Beautiful hosts Earth Day Litter Cleanup***

In honor of Earth Day, Keep Oxford Beautiful hosted a litter cleanup. Starting at Simmons Park, it covered the surrounding neighborhoods around the historic district. We want to give a special thanks to everyone who volunteered, including the group of students at The Donoho School! Your acts of service are greatly appreciated and keep the city of Oxford beautiful.



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## ***Historic Downtown Oxford has a Recycling Container***

Did you know Historic Main Street Oxford houses a recycling container?

Its grand opening took place last summer!

We encourage the residents of Oxford to keep our city clean. The recycling container is a material recovery facility that is currently accepting cardboard,

mixed paper, and aluminum cans only. This project was funded by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management which is an affiliate of Keep Oxford Beautiful.

Located at 600 Berry Street, adjacent to the Oxford Water Department.



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## ***Main Street Alabama Day In Montgomery***

Governor Kay Ivey proclaimed April 12 as Main Street Alabama Day! Main Street Alabama coordinator, staff, and board members, along with local program directors were invited to Montgomery to join officials on the special occasion.

Historic Main Street Oxford Director, Hunter Gentry, along with Main Street Anniston board chair, Christa Morphis, and Heflin Main Street Director, Tammy Perry, had the opportunity to meet with local legislative members.

A special thanks to Representative Chad Robertson, Representative Barbara Boyd, and Senator Keith Kelley for taking the time to meet with us on such a busy day at the state house.







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## ***Calendar of HMSO Events & Committee Meetings***



# MAY 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Market on Main 8 AM - 1 PM
7	8	9 Market Committee Meeting 5:30 PM	10	11 Organization Committee Meeting 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	12 Food Truck Friday on Main 4 PM - 9 PM	13
14 Mother's Day	15 Peace Officers Memorial Day	16	17 Market on Main Committee Meeting 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM	18 Design Committee Meeting 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	19	20 Market on Main 8 AM - 1 PM
21	22 HMSO Board Meeting 4 PM	23 Downtown Business Meeting 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	24	25 Promotion Committee Meeting 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM	26	27
28	29	30	31			



## About Historic Main Street Oxford (HMSO):

Historic Main Street Oxford (HMSO) is an economic and community development organization that focuses on the Four Point Approach strategy of organization, promotion, design, and economic vitality as outlined by Main Street America. The Four Point Approach makes Main Street an effective tool for a community-based, volunteer-

driven, grassroots revitalization efforts. HMSO was created in 2014 when Oxford became a Designated Main Street Community by Main Street Alabama.

***Vision Statement:***

Historic Downtown Oxford will become Northeast Alabama's destination for arts, dining, entertainment, shopping, and special events.

***Mission Statement:***

The mission of Historic Main Street Oxford is to enhance downtown vibrancy, preserve its history, empower its community of business, and foster a center of activity for residents and visitors.



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