

The early town was noted in north Alabama for providing a high quality of education. Families sent their children here to board with townspeople during school sessions so that their children would receive a good education.

Today, Madison is one of the fastest growing cities in the southeastern United States, with a school system that is recognized at the local, state, and national levels for scholastic excellence.

The “Roundhouse”

Madison was once well known for an unusual landmark called “The Little Roundhouse”. It was built in the 1890’s atop the well that supplied the town’s water. The well pump was a double hand-lever pump, like many seen on a railway handcar.



The octagon-shaped building was erected while Captain John B. Floyd, a Civil War veteran, was mayor of Madison. The building was originally located above the well on the south side of the railroad tracks. The round house served as the city hall and many activities were held there including elections, card playing and hair cutting when the barber visited once a week.

Unfortunately, this historic landmark was sold and dismantled about 1938. The building’s foundation still stands in downtown Madison next to the Main Street Café, an eatery renovated from the former police station. Today’s replica was constructed on the north side of the railroad tracks on September 21, 1986 at the annual Street Festival.

The Historical Society

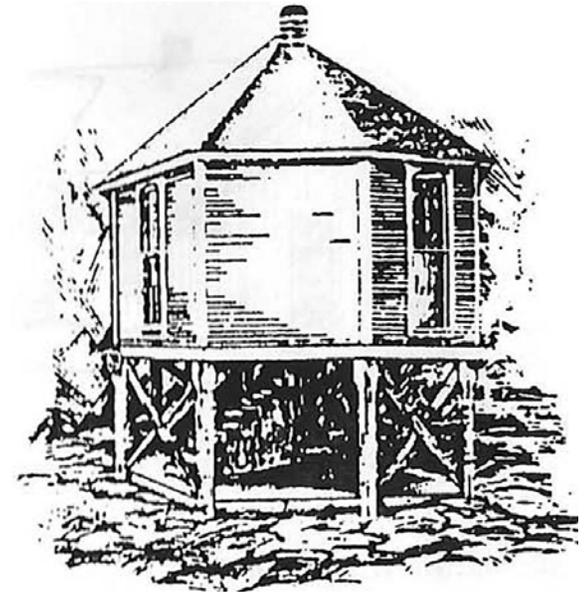
About Us

The Madison Station Historical Preservation Society was established and incorporated on March 22, 1984.

The objective of the Society is to promote the preservation of architecturally and historically significant buildings and sites located within the City of Madison, and to further the knowledge of the historic contributions made values within this area.

A variety of projects and events have been and are supported by the Society which include establishing a local historic district of the old downtown area and adjacent residences; recreating the original Roundhouse city hall; sponsor cemetery strolls, participate in the annual street festival; periodic tours of the old homes; and social gatherings for reminiscing and collecting valuable historic facts.

You are invited to attend the monthly meetings held at City Hall. Meetings are on the fourth Thursday of each month and begin at 7 pm, unless otherwise advertised.

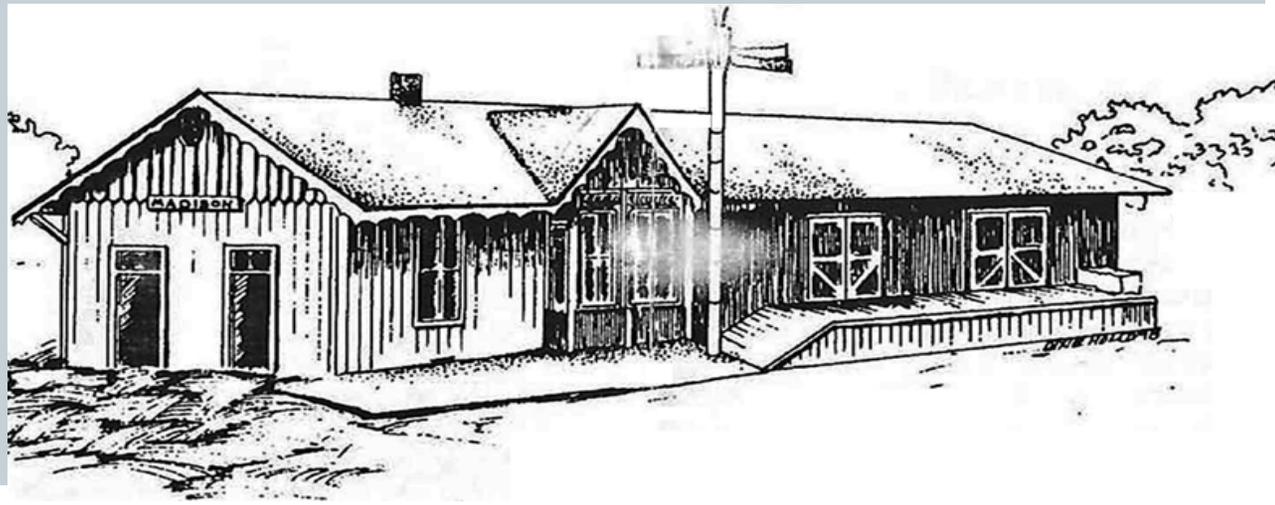


MADISON STATION HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

To preserve history, restore artifacts and bring the community together for a common good.

MadisonStationHPS@gmail.com
www.historicmadisonstation.com
www.facebook.com/MadisonStationHPS

Madison Station Historical Preservation Society
P.O. Box 2114 • Madison, Alabama 35758



Madison's Roots Remembered

Early Settlement

When the pioneers came in the early 1800s to the area around what is now Madison, they encountered a place with rich soil, abundant springs, and good topography. Madison sits on a well-drained plateau west of the Appalachian Mountains of northeastern Alabama. Sales of land around the future town of Madison began in February of 1818.

Many of Madison's original settlers came from the river port town of Triana and surrounding areas to be near the railroad. It meant a faster and less expensive way to travel and to ship their leading agricultural product, cotton, along with other farm products. Madison continued to see steady growth until the onset of the war.

Influence of the Railroad

In 1856, the Memphis & Charleston Railroad was built between Decatur and Huntsville and according to the railroad engineer's report, "The track laying was commenced at Decatur early in April last; it reached Huntsville on the 18th of October; and the regular trains commenced running on that part of the road the 22nd of the same month." Dr. William B. Dunn was appointed the first depot agent and continued until his death in 1871.

Prior to the railroad was built and the station was established, the nearest Post Office was in Triana. But After completion of the railroad a Post Office was established at Madison in Mr. Clay's store, and he served as the first Postmaster. Soon after the station was in operation, Mr. George W. Martin and Mr. Thomas J. Clay opened stores on opposite sides of the railroad along with a blacksmith shop, a saloon, and a post office.

Affair at Madison Station

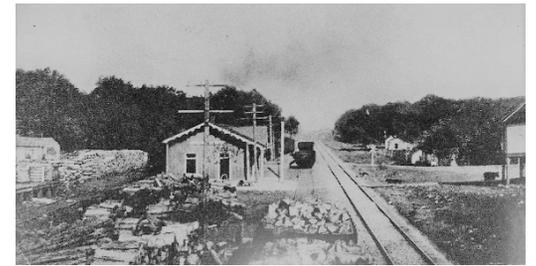
As most of the young men had left for the war, Madison again became a quiet place until the winter of 1862 when Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston's army passed through North Alabama in route to Decatur. Not long after this Madison fell under Federal occupation until May 17, 1864 when Colonel Josiah Patterson, commander of the 5th Alabama Cavalry and an artillery section of four 12-pound howitzers crossed the Tennessee River below Triana and came to Madison.

There he attacked the Union soldiers, drove them out and burned the depot which stored Federal supplies. Unfortunately, 50 bales of Alabama cotton, at that time worth \$1.00 a pound, were also casualties of the depot fire. Other U.S. Army weapons captured in this skirmish, to later be called the "Affair at Madison Station", were dumped in an old sink hole. Since then, many cannonballs and other artifacts have been found in and around Madison.

Growth and Prosperity

In 1868, Robert Spragins, executor of the estate of James Clemens, sold the lots belonging to the estate in and around Madison at public auction. The lots sold well and soon purchasers began building a thriving town with several stores, two churches, a school, and even blacksmith shop. Madison became the most prosperous town in the county other than Huntsville.

On November 2, 1869, James Bibb and other citizens petitioned the courts to incorporate the town and change the name from Madison Station to just Madison.



Cotton bales stacked on the loading dock behind the third railroad Depot in Madison. Circa 1900.

Over the next 30 years Madison's growth was slow but steady. At one time Madison's economy depended on cotton and practically all businesses were directly related to it. Cotton remained all important until the late 1950's when Redstone Arsenal began to grow.

The Madison area population remained steady over a period of many years with little variation between four and five hundred residents. Businesses remained about the same with later additions of service stations and a telephone office. Madison did not see any appreciable growth until 1955 when Redstone

Arsenal began to enlarge and the population began a steady increase. Lands were surveyed for modern subdivisions and by 1957, Madison officials were making modern improvements such as curbs, gutters street lights, and the purchase of the town's first police car.