



Huntsville/Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau

## “Civil War Experience for Groups” Huntsville, Alabama

### Sample Itinerary

Although its location insulated the state from much of the major Civil War military activity, Alabama hosted the infant Confederate States of America and fueled the Southern military effort with its young men and critical iron industry. In North Alabama, visitors have the opportunity to experience battle sites as well as a different side of the war. In Huntsville, you can experience an occupied city, see many structures that survived because of the occupation, explore the importance of supply lines and railroads and learn of the Civil War experience through the eyes of the women and slaves.

#### Day 1:

Enjoy lunch at Main Street Café in **Downtown Madison, AL**, originally the city’s town hall and jail! The city was originally known as Madison Station and grew up in the 1850s around a stop of the Memphis & Charleston Railroad. Madison was the site of a battle in the Civil War on March 16, 1864, when Col. Josiah Patterson's 5th Alabama Cavalry, supported by Col. James H. Stuart's cavalry battalion and a section of horse artillery, drove Col. Adam G. Gorgas's 13th Illinois Infantry Regiment from the city. Patterson's men captured the 13th Illinois Regiment's wagon train, taking 66 prisoners. They also burned Union supplies and destroyed railroad tracks before retreating. Portions of the 5th Ohio Cavalry, the 59th Indiana Infantry and the 5th Iowa Infantry were sent in pursuit from Huntsville and skirmished with Patterson's rear guard that evening at Fletcher's Ferry south of Madison.

After lunch, travel to Huntsville to continue your Civil War journey with your first stop being a visit to the **Historic Huntsville Railroad Depot**. Because of Huntsville’s strategic location on the Memphis & Charleston line, General O.M. Mitchell made capturing and occupying the town a key objective. The Depot was occupied by Union forces beginning in 1862 and was used as a prison and hospital for Confederate soldiers. See Civil War era graffiti from both Union and Confederate soldiers, hear tales of the Phantoms of the Depot and of a lady who visited frequently carrying a “basket of food” always followed shortly by the mysterious disappearance of a Confederate prisoner! What was really in her basket? (Guide)

### **THE PAST PRESERVED FOR THE FUTURE: Twickenham Historic District, Alabama’s largest collection of Antebellum homes**

Enjoy intriguing stories told about the early merchants, bankers and attorneys who built the fashionable brick homes in the **Twickenham Historic District**. Many of the homes were seized by the Union Army in 1862. There is a wonderful story of a young lady who, while visiting the Mayhew home, hid a Union soldier in the basement, only to have him return after the war and marry her. Pass by the homes of Leroy Pope Walker, the first Confederate States Secretary of War, who issued the orders for the firing on Fort Sumter which began the American Civil War, and John Hunt Morgan, a Confederate General best known for Morgan’s Raid which reached the farthest point north of any uniformed Confederate soldiers. George Washington Lane was pro-

Union and to this day the Union flag flies over this beautiful antebellum home. (Step-on guide or walking tour)

### **THE WEEDEN HOUSE MUSEUM**

Built in 1819, the **Weeden House** was home to the poet and artist, Maria Howard Weeden, and was occupied by Union soldiers. History comes to life through the words and art of Miss Weeden as she captured the spirit of an era across cultural divides. Visitors learn how Maria Howard Weeden tried to support her impoverished family after the war and used art, literature, tradition and values to contribute to the development and transmission of culture. Visitors will also learn how people survived during the Civil War and how individuals and groups responded differently to their physical and social environments. View Weeden's exquisite portraits and learn how she captured the spirit of her models.

Visit online at [www.weedenhousemuseum.com](http://www.weedenhousemuseum.com)

Check into your hotel. Enjoy some rest and relaxation before dinner.

### **MURDER IN THE MANSION – BURRITT ON THE MOUNTAIN**

Dr. Burritt built his mansion in the early 1930s and several log houses have been moved to the site to create the Historic Park complete with barnyard and animals. Enjoy touring the museum, but be careful because sinister things are happening! A murder mystery is the game. That's *Murder in the Mansion* of course. The Burritt Mansion will witness a crime most foul, and you can be there! Guests receive a character description in advance, which is necessary for participation in a night full of surprises, danger and lots of laughter.

Visit online at [www.burrittonthemountain.com](http://www.burrittonthemountain.com)

## **Day 2**

Breakfast at your hotel. Tour additional attractions in Huntsville.

### **ALABAMA'S BIRTHPLACE**

Hear the whir of the spinning wheel...smell the enticing aroma of freshly baked bread being prepared over an open fire...turn the great wheel lathe in the cabinetmaker's shop...and visit with villagers busy with their daily tasks, seemingly unaware that nearly two centuries have come and gone. **Alabama Constitution Village** dates back to 1819 and is the actual site where forty-four delegates gathered to forge the way for Alabama's Statehood. Become a part of Alabama's history as villagers dressed in period clothing take you through eight reconstructed Federal style buildings.

Visit online at [www.earlyworks.com](http://www.earlyworks.com)

Stroll around the corner.

### **HARRISON BROTHERS HARDWARE**

Founded in 1879 by brothers James and Daniel Harrison, **Harrison Brothers** is the oldest continuously operating hardware store in Alabama. Harrison Brothers is more than a glimpse of old Huntsville. It is a shopper's delight. Cotton throws, colorful tins, marbles by the scoop, cast iron cookware, and oak rocking chairs share space with garden gadgets, bird feeders, and whirly-gigs. Goods nestled up high are reached from tall rolling ladders, the rope elevator is hand operated, and a pot-bellied stove helps warm the store in the winter. Nearby, a tall desk displays an untidy mound of old invoices, catalogs and calendars, just as the last Harrison brother left it. When you are searching for a souvenir to take home or just plain looking, Harrison Brothers is the place to visit.

Visit online at [www.harrisonbrothershardware.com](http://www.harrisonbrothershardware.com)

Take a tour of the **Huntsville Museum of Art**, and enjoy lunch at their café **Pane e Vino** featuring Italian cuisine and indoor/outdoor seating overlooking the **Big Spring International Park Lagoon**.

### **BLAST OFF IN 3, 2, 1...**

For just a moment, imagine you're an astronaut getting ready to board the Space Shuttle. It's your first flight. How are you feeling at this very moment? Are you nervous? Anxious? Scared? Excited? If you're like me, your adrenaline is pumping. These feelings and much more can be experienced at the **U.S. Space & Rocket Center**. Whether you're exploring the history and future of the U.S Space program, taking a virtual journey inside a motion-based simulator or experiencing three times the pull of gravity inside the centrifuge, you're sure to have an out of this world experience!

Visit online at [www.spacecamp.com/museum](http://www.spacecamp.com/museum).

### **WHAT'S GROWING ON?**

There is always something 'growing on' at the **Huntsville Botanical Garden**. Enjoy the Nature Center, the largest seasonal butterfly house in the nation, where brightly colored butterflies live in their natural habitat, turtles sun themselves on rocks, and the rush of a waterfall takes you to a place of serenity. The Tea Room serves light lunches and the Gift Shop is always filled decorative and useful garden items. Galaxy of Lights, one of ABA's Top Destinations, is open nightly from Thanksgiving through New Year's Eve. Several major festivals such as Spring Festival of Flowers, Green U, Scarecrow Trail plus many more, prove that at the Huntsville Botanical Garden – there's always something growing on!

Golf cart tours are available upon request.

Visit online at [www.hsvbg.org](http://www.hsvbg.org)

Return to the hotel for some rest and relaxation before dinner.

Dinner at **Limestone Bay Trading Company** and stroll through Historic **Mooreville**.

### **Day 3:**

### **OUR NATION'S MILITARY HERITAGE**

The Veterans Memorial Museum is a unique venue displaying more than 30 historical military vehicles from World War I to the present, as well as tableaus, artifacts and other memorabilia dating back to the Revolutionary War. Learn about history based on the museum's collection of unique 'one of a kind' vehicles, representative weapons, radios, uniforms and personal gear. Veteran volunteers will present fascinating first-hand accounts of America's most significant historic moments. The museum is dedicated to promoting the accomplishments of American military men and women.

Visit online at [www.memorialmuseum.org](http://www.memorialmuseum.org)

### **ALABAMA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY TOUR**

In 1873 the state legislature established **Alabama A&M University** for the education of African American teachers. It opened on May 1, 1875 as the Huntsville Normal School. The first principal and president was William Hooper Council, an ex-slave. Today the school offers bachelors and masters degrees along with other professional programs. The original campus is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. While visiting the campus tour the **State Black Archives Research Center and Museum**, which serves as a repository for material, documents and artifacts of the African American experience in Alabama from its earliest day to present. Permanent and rotating exhibits.

Visit online at [www.aamu.edu](http://www.aamu.edu)

### **AFTER FREEDOM - A NEW BEGINNING**

A driving tour will take you on a journey through Huntsville's African American Heritage. Seeing several historical sites including the **Old Georgia Cemetery**, the burial grounds of early Huntsville slaves and a former site where church services were held by slave Bartley Harris; **Big Spring Park**, where hundreds of people were baptized by Rev. Harris before his death in the late 1800s; **Cavalry Hill**, the site where members of the 9th and 10th Cavalry, known as the Buffalo Soldiers, camped while recovering from malaria immediately following the Spanish-American War; **St. Bartley's Primitive Baptist Church**, the mother church of African-American Primitive Baptist Churches in Alabama; **Historic Glenwood Cemetery**, where early African-American pioneers are buried; and the **Historic Home of Maria Howard Weeden**, an artist who became famous for her paintings of former slaves. (Step-on-guide)

### **ONCE A SLAVE PLANTATION**

Oakwood College began as an industrial school and was founded by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1896 to educate African-Americans in the South. The first building built on the campus replaced the nine slave huts which housed the first eight male students who enrolled on the opening day of school. Dred Scott, the plaintiff in the famous Scott v. Sanford case, was brought to Huntsville in 1858 to live on the grounds of what is now Oakwood College. A slave, he sued for freedom because he had been transported from Illinois and the Wisconsin Territory, both of which barred slavery. Visit the **Oakwood College Archives and Museum** to hear the story of Dred Scott, the Take 6 Group and others. View unique collections of artifacts, biographies, documents, manuscripts and historical records about the history of Oakwood College and Huntsville.

Visit online at [www.oakwood.edu](http://www.oakwood.edu)

Dinner at one of our local eateries.

#### **Day 4:**

Depart Huntsville on I 565/HWY 72E onto Stevenson, AL.

**Stevenson** was a busy and strategic spot at the junction of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad and the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad. The pontoon bridge there allowed thousands of Union soldiers to advance into North Georgia during the Chattanooga Campaign.

#### **Stevenson Railroad Depot Museum**

207 W Main St, Stevenson AL 35772

256-437-3012

Bricks salvaged from the ruins of the original 1852 station were used in the construction of this 1872 building housing exhibits of the town's rich railroad history including the Civil War.

Open April-November Monday-Friday 8 am-4 pm; Saturday 8 am-4 pm.

#### **Fort Harker**

Near the intersection of Tennessee Avenue and East Third Street in Stevenson, Alabama

Constructed in the summer of 1862 by Union soldiers and freed slaves, the fort helped secure strategic railroad lines to ensure the free movement of Union troops and supplies in southeastern Tennessee and northeastern Alabama. Union General William Rosecrans established his headquarters at **Fort Harker** in July, 1863, from which he directed a successful

campaign against the position of Confederate General Braxton Bragg in Chattanooga, Tennessee. A self-guided, interpreted walking tour of the fort is in place.

After visiting Stevenson, continue east to Bridgeport.

### **Bridgeport Depot Museum**

114 Souland Square, Bridgeport AL 35740  
256-495-4020

Exhibits in this post-war building tell the Civil War story of this appropriately named town. Important bridges across the Tennessee River here saw activity throughout the war. Open Thursday–Friday 9 am–1 pm, Saturday 9 am–3 pm, Sunday 1–5 pm. Free.

### **To extend your Civil War experience:**

Begin with the **Civil War Battle Tour in Decatur, AL** and a stop in **Athens, AL**. After completing all that **Huntsville** offers, continue south on I65 to **Birmingham** to visit their attractions including the **Vulcan** and **Montgomery** to visit **Old Alabama Town** and the **First White House of the Confederacy**. To complete your Alabama Civil War experience, visit **Mobile**, site of the **Battle of Mobile**, and **Fort Morgan, Fort Gaines** and **Historic Blakely State Park**.

**Optional Route:** Begin at Franklin, TN Battlefield or Shiloh Battlefield, TN, and after completing the above itinerary, continue on to Chattanooga, Chickamauga Battlefield and Atlanta.

Book your Experience TODAY!



Contact Pam Williams, Tourism Sales Manager  
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