

BIRMINGHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Newsletter

October 1999

## Long Live Our City Symbol

Sunday, November 7 is the opening afternoon for the VIVE VULCAN celebration at Birmingham Public Library. Y'all come. It should be triumphal!

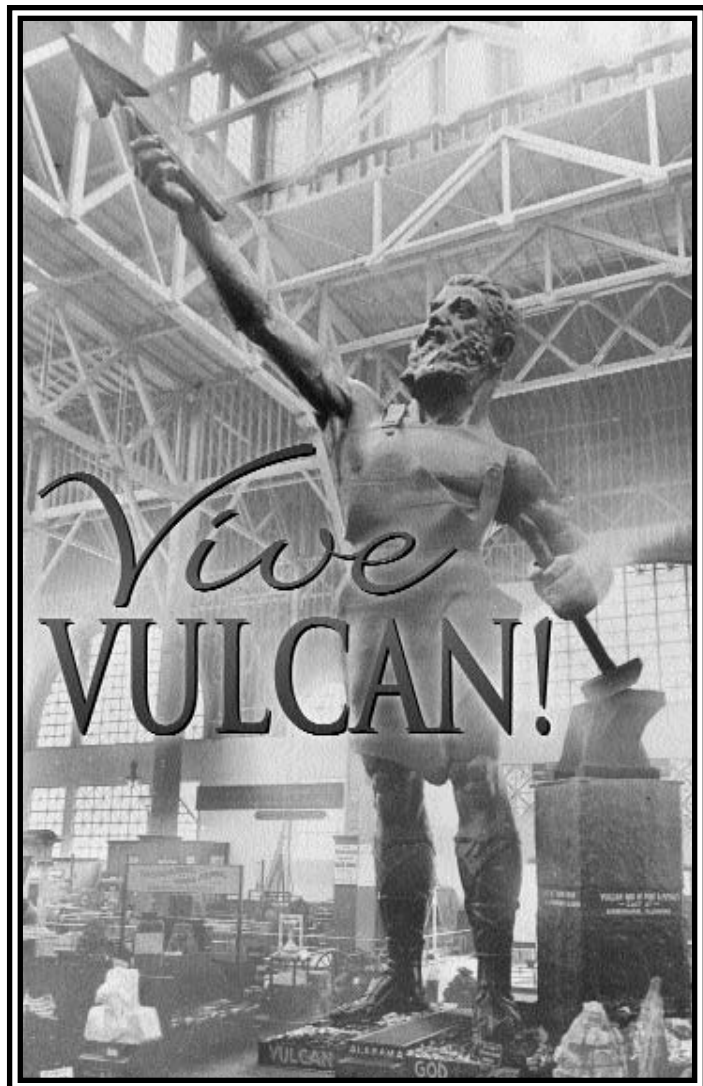
Birmingham Historical Society, the Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham School System Libraries and the Auburn University Center for Architecture and Urban Design will present photographs, drawings and models showcasing Vulcan—past and future.

The Society's exhibit *Vulcan in Triumph* charts Vulcan's debut at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904 and his rise to prominence atop Red Mountain. Photographs, newspapers and fair souvenirs showcase a Vulcan few have seen.

The Auburn architectural students under the direction of Cheryl Morgan will render schematics of the proposed Vulcan Visitor Center. What might it look like when you arrive to tour the site a few years from now? What and who will be there to welcome you and tell the story of Vulcan and Birmingham?

Assisted by Auburn and BHS Buddies and armed with reams of historic and Internet documentation, fourth grade students at Spaulding Elementary are building models of **Colossi**, including the Colossus of Rhodes, Rameses II, Russia's Motherland and the Statue of Liberty. South Hampton students are building **City Symbols**: the Eiffel Tower, designed for the 1889 world's fair; the St. Louis Arch; the Golden Gate Bridge; and the Washington Monument. Which will be the biggest? Come and see!

Hemphill School fourth graders are constructing Vulcan, his monument, cascade, mineral railroad and proposed visitor center. It is reported the red ore mine under Vulcan may be put back into service and that the visitor center will resemble a pavilion at the St. Louis Fair.



Alabama Exhibit at the World's Fair, St. Louis, 1904, Missouri Historical Society No. 1035.

## National Trust lists Vulcan as An American Treasure

In April, *Vulcan & His Park* was designated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as an Official Project of Save America's Treasures. Dedicated to the celebration and preservation of

America's priceless historic legacy, this millennium initiative of the Trust and the White House works to recognize and rescue the enduring symbols of American tradition that define us as a nation. Sloss Furnaces National Historic Landmark was also recognized among the 250 national sites selected.

As an official and nationally significant project, Vulcan is eligible for funding through the national program and will be included in the Trust's national marketing efforts. Save America's Treasures is the title of the annual Preservation Conference held in Washington in November. A statue of Vulcan will be on display at the White House during the Christmas season.



## 80 Percent Favor Vulcan's Restoration

Since late January, the Society has been busy beating the publicity drums for Vulcan and expressing a vision of what Vulcan can mean for our area and how the restoration of Vulcan and the operation of Vulcan Park should be carried out.

A private poll of 400 residents of Jefferson County, taken during mid-September, reported that people of all ages and all walks of life want to see Vulcan restored. No other public issue has received such broad-based public support as the campaign to SAVE VULCAN!

# Vive VULCAN!

## 1999 Membership Publication

A special edition of *Vive Vulcan-Save Our City Symbols-Activities for Students of All Ages* is being prepared for November release to the Society's members. Introductory materials will chart the Society's efforts over many years to preserve and to restore Vulcan, the great symbol of Birmingham, and to elevate the statue and the surrounding park as a focus for teaching visitors, residents and school children about the history of Birmingham.

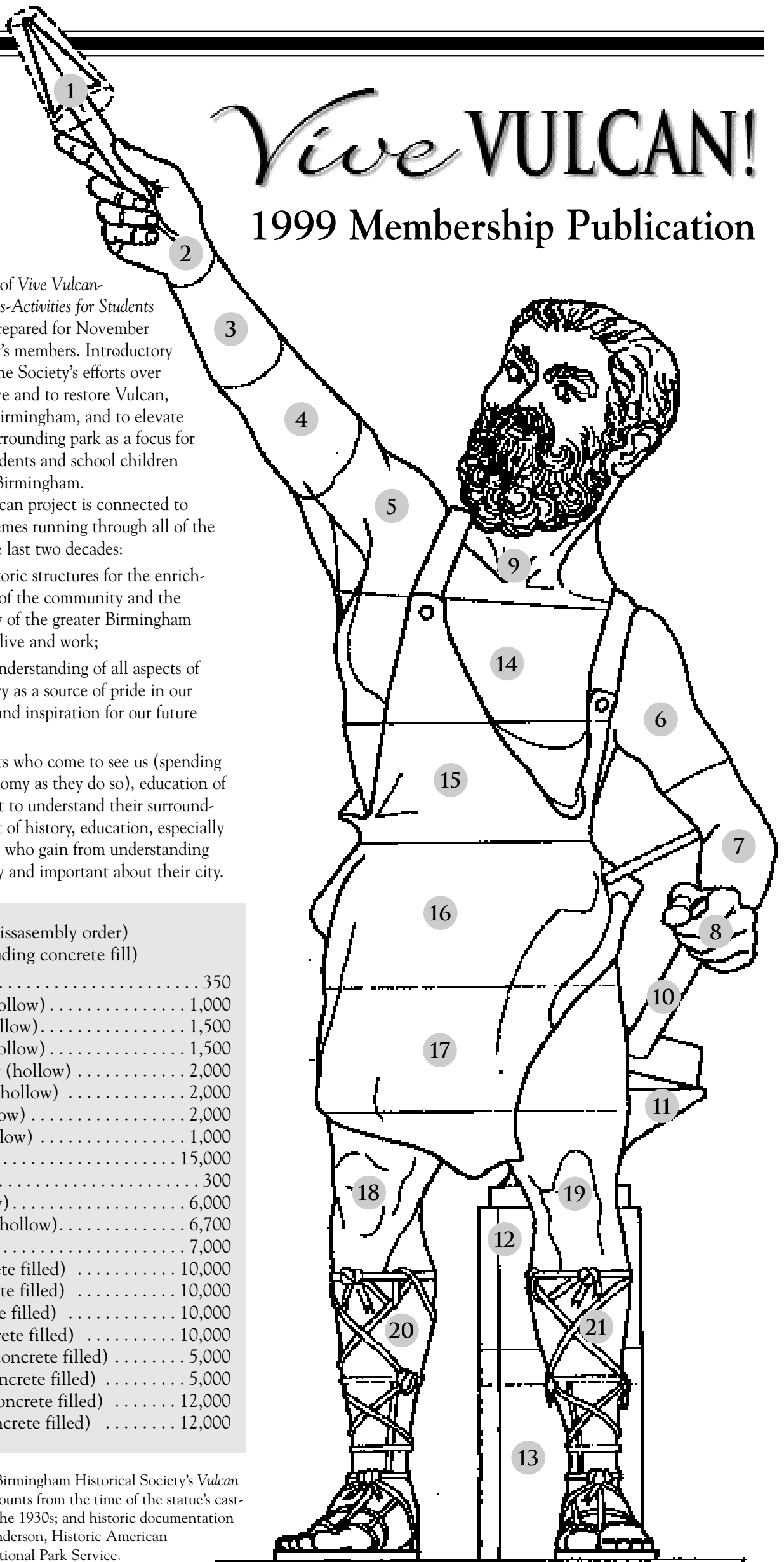
The Society's Vulcan project is connected to several important themes running through all of the Society's work for the last two decades:

- preservation of historic structures for the enrichment and interest of the community and the enhanced visibility of the greater Birmingham areas as a place to live and work;
- fostering a better understanding of all aspects of Birmingham history as a source of pride in our accomplishments and inspiration for our future endeavors; and
- education of tourists who come to see us (spending dollars in our economy as they do so), education of residents who want to understand their surroundings in the context of history, education, especially of school children, who gain from understanding what is noteworthy and important about their city.

Pieces (listed in disassembly order)  
Pounds (not including concrete fill)

1. Spearpoint	350
2. Right Hand (hollow)	1,000
3. Right Arm (hollow)	1,500
4. Right Arm ((hollow)	1,500
5. Right Shoulder (hollow)	2,000
6. Left Shoulder (hollow)	2,000
7. Left Arm (hollow)	2,000
8. Left Hand (hollow)	1,000
9. Head (hollow)	15,000
10. Hammer	300
11. Anvil (hollow)	6,000
12. Anvil Block (hollow)	6,700
13. Anvil Block	7,000
14. Chest (concrete filled)	10,000
15. Waist (concrete filled)	10,000
16. Hips (concrete filled)	10,000
17. Thighs (concrete filled)	10,000
18. Right Knee (concrete filled)	5,000
19. Left Knee (concrete filled)	5,000
20. Right Foot (concrete filled)	12,000
21. Left Foot (concrete filled)	12,000

Sources of Information: Birmingham Historical Society's *Vulcan and His Times*; press accounts from the time of the statue's casting, 1903-1904 and in the 1930s; and historic documentation drawings by Richard Anderson, Historic American Engineering Record-National Park Service.



# 4th-6th Grade Teachers Receive 3,000 *Vive Vulcan* Packets

*Vive Vulcan* consists of a collection of materials assembled by the Society in conjunction with area teachers for use in Birmingham area schools. Society volunteers and staff attended Back-to-School Teacher workshops and are visiting schools this fall in the company of Auburn architecture students to teach topics relating to Vulcan and its history from the materials assembled in *Vive Vulcan*. These materials present the Vulcan colossus as an American landmark and the world's largest cast iron statue, linking Vulcan study to state, national and interna-



Collating the 40 pages of *Vive Vulcan* are, left to right, Ashani Morgan, Karyn Emison and Laura Brown. Photo courtesy of The Birmingham News.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Vulcan: A Symbol Worth Saving</b>
<b>Grade Level</b>	Adaptable
<b>Subject</b>	Adaptable
<b>Authors</b>	Karyn Emison and Beverly Miller
<b>Concept</b>	Symbols
<b>Duration</b>	1-4 weeks, depending upon culminating activities
<b>Objective</b>	To introduce the idea that Vulcan is a symbol of our city and deserves our help

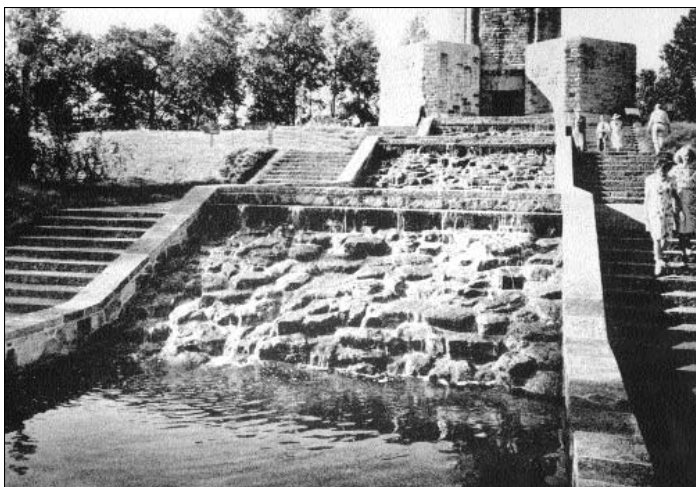
tional history. Packets were delivered to teachers in 11 public school systems as well as private and parochial schools. A gift from an anonymous donor supported preparation of *Vive Vulcan*.

Among educators serving on the **Vulcan Schools Committee**, chaired by Society Trustee Lillie M. H. Fincher are: Beverly Miller, Advent Day School teacher, her students especially Abbey Miller; Martha Boyer, Jefferson County Schools; Robbie Weeks, Annette Lanier, Bessemer Schools; Dr. Waymon Shiver, Sadie Denson, Otis Dismukes, Birmingham School System; Mike Hawthorne, Regina Thompson, Homewood Schools; Jo Wiseman, Hoover Schools, Dr. Gloria Dennard, Jefferson County Schools; Lisa Beckham, Linda Church, Paulette Williams, Shelby County Schools; Dr. Fred Perkins, Tarrant; Karen Emison, Carol Slaughter and Marjorie White, BHS.

*Continued on page 4*

## VULCAN & THE SOCIETY

Members of the Society should know that the Society's interest in Vulcan pre-dates most of the current membership and leadership. The Birmingham Historical Society was established in 1942 with John C. Henley as its first President. Henley died in 1943. Press reports from 1938 record Henley's effusive comments on the importance of Vulcan and the Vulcan Park Improvements then being completed. Henley appears to have



The original Vulcan Park Cascade is to be restored, complete with the Japanese carp. Birmingham's Vulcan, 1938.

had a busy schedule speaking to civic groups around the city on the subject of Vulcan and its history.

Also in 1938, Henley's Birmingham Publishing Company printed, with underwriting from the Birmingham Kiwanis Club, the pamphlet: *Birmingham's Vulcan*. Henley is probably the author of this pictorial essay released at the time of completion of Vulcan Park. The prose of *Birmingham's Vulcan* is optimistic in the manner of all of Henley's writings, and the publication puts Vulcan in the same rank as other national landmarks, such as the Statue of Liberty and the Washington Monument. In 1940, Henley published *This Is Birmingham*, a collection of optimistic reflections on the founding and growth of Birmingham, seen as a major Southern city by a grandson of families that were prominent risk takers in the city's earliest commercial enterprises.

Complimentary membership copies of *Vive Vulcan* and *Birmingham's Vulcan* may be picked up at the Birmingham Public Library reception on November 7. Those copies not picked up will be bulk mailed to members from the downtown post office the following week.

### ***Vulcan Park Foundation Established***

Organized in June to raise funds and to manage Vulcan Park, this private non-profit foundation is headed up by Directors Steve Yoder, Chairman; J. Mason Davis, Bill Gilchrist, Victor Hanson III, Steve Smith and Gary Youngblood.

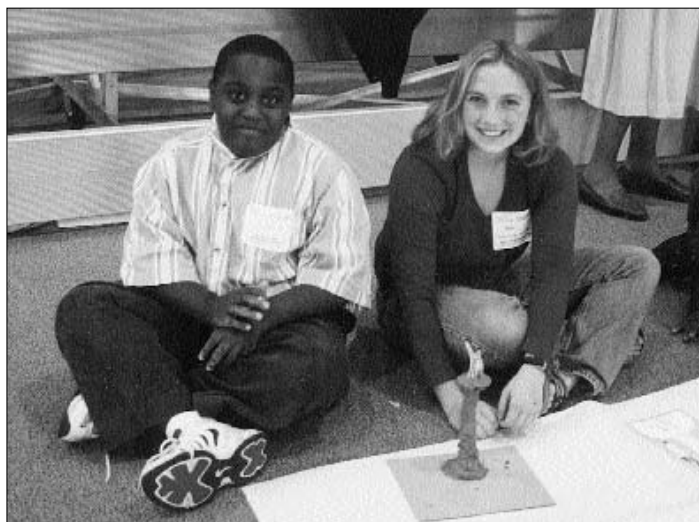
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## Colossal Thanks to Fall Buddies

These Buddies are working with the **Vulcan Teams** in Mrs. Pritchett's class at **Hemphill School**: Michael Kane, James Kirkpatrick, Tina Lindamood, Beth Manguso, Michael McCallum, Jim McDougal, Craig Peavy, John Root, Brad Shelton and Marjorie White; the **Colossi Teams** in Mrs. Satisfield's class at **Spaulding School**: Charebi Baker, Robert Bateman, John Benham, Marnie Bettridge, David Bonn, Robert Bruner, John Cline Jr., Gabriel Comstock and Michelle Crunk; and the **City Symbols Teams** in Mrs. Nashville's Class at **South Hampton School**: Charles Cooper, Justin Donovan, Joseph Flournoy, Rick Hess, Chris Humphries, Heather Johnson, Mark Joyner and Peggy Scott and Laura Brown. Sadie Denson has coordinated the project with these Birmingham schools.



*Mineral Railroad Team: Robbye Tartt, Walter Robinson, Davin Ross, Reginald Taylor and Auburn Buddy Brad Shelton, Hemphill School Gym*



*Vulcan Monument Team Member Justin Lewis with Auburn Buddy Beth Manguso, Hemphill School Gym*

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VIVE VULCAN PACKETS – *Continued from page 3*

Proofreading *Vive Vulcan* packets were stalwart helpers: Cathy Adams, Lee Brewer, Rhonda Covington, Stewart Dansby, Hugh Rushing and Joe Strickland.

Helping at summer Camp Birmingham sessions—drawing and sculpting Vulcan from Alabama clay at Hemphill, MacArthur and Whatley schools—were First Look and BHS volunteers including Karen Emison, Marjorie White, Margaret Fox and her children.

Collating and distributing the 3000 packets to the schools were volunteers: Emma Bell, Lee Brewer, Bess Coleman, Rhonda Covington, Michelle Crunk, Karen, Kathy and Libby Emison, Alvin Hudson, Peggy Scott, Carol Slaughter, Sara Vaughn, her grandson and his friend Josh; Laura Brown and Ashani Morgan.

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## ASPIRATION-Birmingham's Historic Houses of Worship Photography in the Works

Distinguished architectural photographer Richard Payne is making three trips to Birmingham to capture our the rich architectural treasures among our city's churches. Payne who lives in Houston is also currently photographing projects for Philip Johnson worldwide.

Photography for ASPIRATION—the Society's projected publication for the year 2000—is supported by a grant from the Susan Mott Webb Charitable Trust. Dr. John Schnorrenberg, Philip Morris and Marjorie White are coordinating the venture.

## Notification of Dues Due

If your 1999 Dues have not been paid you will receive notification with this mailing.

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## Landmarking Civil Rights Sites

National Register Program Head, National Park Services-Atlanta, Cecil McKeithan, met in Birmingham with representatives of the city's civil rights sites and supporting institutions. Dr. Wilson Fallin, Jr. hosted the July 20 session at the Birmingham Baptist Bible College.

McKeithan discussed the recommendation of the Park Service that Birmingham sites be considered for a National Historic Landmark District that would tell "the whole story" of the civil rights movement in Birmingham.

Pam King, Carol Poe-Harris, Lola Hendricks, Colonel Stone Johnson, Ellen Mertins, Laura Walker, Marjorie White, Loretta Wimberly and Odessa Wolfolk agreed to serve on a Planning Committee to be headed up by BHS.

*Mailer Photograph: Berry Middle School Students at Banner Day, 1999*

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