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What Happened to the Huntsville Jaycees Part 3?

By John H. Allen and John H. Ofenloch

Part 3, with information that is available, covers the Huntsville Jaycees from 1982 until its demise in late 2000, and why that demise came about. During this period the Federal Courts ruled that the U.S. Jaycees were discriminating by not allowing women into the organization and would have to change its membership requirements. This was also the time when the Jaycee land in West Huntsville was sold and the Fair was moved to the old Huntsville Airport, now known as John Hunt Park. The third change was a culture shift, wherein the attitude of young adults in the country turned away from active participation in the community.

1980-81, Ernest Kaufmann, President

Huntsville became the largest Jaycee Chapter in the State and had another Blue Chip year. The world horseshoe pitch tournament was held at Braham Spring Park. Four single project awards were won at the State Convention with the Northeast Alabama State Fair named Project of the Year. Paul Grieb served as the Fair Manager and VP.

1981-82, David Williams, President

Huntsville became the largest Jaycee Chapter in the State and another Blue Chip year. Allen Green was elected to be President of the Alabama Jaycees. This

was the year that the Fair had an amusement called “Victor the Wrestling Bear.” Any adult citizen could wrestle the Bear. One army soldier went up to Victor and put his finger through the muzzle and into the bear’s mouth, where upon Victor bit off his finger tip. Victor was quietly moved from the fairgrounds that night and did not return the following year.

1982-83, M. R. “Mickey” Rosenblum, President

Doug Woods was Fair Manager. After the city had offered us use of the old airport, construction was officially stopped on the new, northwest property. The Fair made a net profit of \$21,000.

1983-84, Randy Morris, President

Rick Lighthall was Fair Manager. Federal Courts ruled that Jaycees must allow women in the organization. Joyce Tittsworth was the first female member to join and was the wife of a current member.

1984-85, Jeff Hymer, President

David Moore was Fair Manager

1985-86, Bo Bohannon, President

Butch Starnes was Fair Manager

1986-87, Mike Newman, President

Butch Starnes was Fair Manager

1987-88, W. H. “Butch” Starnes, President

Billy Gann was Fair Manager

1988-89, Fred P. Schuler III. President

Bobby Benefield was Fair Manager

1989-90, Clark Hereford Jr., President

Paul Prosser was Fair Manager

1990-91, Patrick Jones, President

David Marmon was Fair Manager

1991-92, Shawn McFall, President

James Evans was Fair Manager

1992-93, Billy Gann, President

Ron Stephens was Fair Manager

1993-94, Ghrista Milam and Bobby Benefield, Presidents

Roy Bearden was Fair Manager

1994-95, Bobby Benefield, President

Phillip Beardon was Fair Manager

1995-96, Ron Stephens, President

Steve Citrano was Fair Manager. Many successful programs were conducted, this being the 50th year of the Huntsville Jaycees. Some 147,000 people lived in Huntsville and 173 of them were members of the Jaycees. Twenty-three needy children were taken shopping for toys and each was outfitted with a full set of clothing. The Exceptional Children's Day at the fair entertained 240 children, escorted by military volunteers from Redstone Arsenal. Six houses recommended by CASA were winterized by the club and a total of 16 community projects were also conducted.

At the same time, 15 other projects were conducted to provide funding for the above. The NEASF (fair) had revenue of over \$100,000 and a net profit of \$19,000. Two months later the Haunted House netted \$14,000.

1996-97, James Evans, President

Richard Michell was Fair Manager

1997-98, Barbara Prosser, President

Mike Blackmon was Fair Manager. Money was donated to several programs, such as \$1,000 to Cerebral Palsy and Alabama Adult Literacy Program; \$15,000 to the Sheriffs Ranch, and several more organizations. Eight community fundraisers were held, the most significant being the Fair. \$50,000 was raised and another \$6,000 was raised from the Fair concessions. A total of \$78,800 was raised for the projects. But membership was down to 82 members.

A total of 19 children were taken on a shopping tour to purchase clothes and toys. A complete dinner was provided to the 10 families of the children. During the

Fair more than 500 physically- and mentally-challenged individuals were treated to rides and games, thanks to the help of soldiers from Redstone Arsenal. This year also included a circus for the children.

1998-99, Ginger Schrimsher, President

Mike Schrimsher was Fair Manager. Membership dropped to 53 during this administration.

1999-03, James Henley, President

Deborah Hudson was Fair Manager in 99-00 and Ron Stephens was Fair Manager 2001 until the Fair closed for the season.

2003-04 Miranda Vines, President

2004- Run by Committee

Into the 2000s, the Huntsville Jaycees continued to do their good works in the community, although membership continued to decline. Donations were made to a variety of charities and new projects were run. The annual Haunted House continued until around 2010. The annual Fair, which supplied the financial means for all the other programs, underwent a major overhaul and was changed to more of an urban fair in 2001. The population make-up of Huntsville changed from quilting and canning to soccer players. The same evolution resulted in lower membership in the Jaycees. In 2004 the local membership had declined to 20 members. The nationwide drop began around the late 1980s. The

changing economy, the rise of single-parent homes and two-parent homes with both parents working, plus a move away from National projects, resulted in lower membership. This trend seems to be true for most civic and fraternal organizations around the country, thanks to the New Culture.

However the Huntsville Jaycees may still exist today with six-to-eight members who have aged out of the National Organization but continue to provide aid and support to some of the local organizations. Some of the donations have helped in the following areas: Cerebral Palsy, Kids Space, the Huntsville Police for purchasing equipment, diaper-changing stations for the City's baseball parks, and thermal imaging cameras for the Huntsville Fire Department.

In July of 2006 a new corporation was formed by some former Jaycees and called the Huntsville Junior Citizens Civic Foundation. In October of the same year, the Huntsville Jaycees former president sold its land in northwest Huntsville to the newly formed Junior Citizens Civic Foundation. The new corporation, along with the former president of the Jaycees, then sold the property in January 24, 2022, to Citi Capital Holdings LLC for \$675,000. After harvesting the timber on the 70 acres the land was put up for sale with an asking price of \$6,000,000 or \$85,000 per acre. This land had originally been purchased while still in the county, before it was annexed into the city limits.

So, as of this date, the \$675,000 remains in the hands of the Huntsville Junior Citizens Foundation.

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The authors would like to thank the following who contributed information or helped research the information included in this article. Parts 1-3 are available in the Huntsville Public Library Archives, along with all of the source data used in this publication.

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Jaycees involved in Politics:

Members who served in city politics: Bob Orand, Sid Saucier, Leon Crawford, W. L. "Chief" Waters, Bill Kling, Hall Bryant, Ernest Kauffman

Members who served in State Politics: Bill Smith (Senator), Bill King (Senator), Steve Hettinger, (House and Mayor), Doug Hale, (House), Tom Butler, (House and Senate), Gene McClain, (House)

Epilogue

The Jaycees and the other service clubs, once the backbone of community life in America, have been in significant decline over the past few decades. And in Huntsville, the Jaycees have vanished.

According to Robert Putnam, it is not that the clubs changed; America has changed.

In his 2000 book, *“Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,”* Robert Putnam documented that attending club meetings, such as those held by Rotary, Kiwanis, and Jaycees groups, had declined by 58 percent in the period 1975-2000. This trend continued and even accelerated into the 21st century. Putnam notes it is part of an overall trend by Americans who also have 43% fewer family dinners. Furthermore, he adds, 35% fewer of us have friends who drop in to visit us at our homes.

For more than fifty years, the Huntsville Jaycees played a significant role in establishing numerous community programs here, including the Research Institute at UAH, the Space & Rocket Center, the Northeast Alabama State Fair, Brahan Spring Park, sponsorship of the Boy Scouts and construction of the Space Walk Hiking Trail, the North Alabama Kidney Dialysis Foundation, the Pathfinder House for recovering alcoholics, and many others.

The Huntsville Jaycees was chartered on March 16, 1951, with 12 members. Dr. William A. Kates Jr. served as first president. There were 34 Jaycee clubs in Alabama, but within a single year, that number would increase to 52 clubs. Another important milestone in 1951 was the formation of the Huntsville Historical Society. The city’s population was 16,437. In just ten years, with the arrival of NASA and the German rocket scientists, Huntsville’s population would explode to more than 72,000. As of this writing, Huntsville’s metropolitan area population in 2022 is 400,000, and is reportedly Alabama’s most populous city.



About the authors: John H. Allen is a long-time resident of Huntsville and is a former president of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society. John Ofenloch, is a retired engineer and held management positions at both Brown Engineering and Intergraph Corporation. He was once president of the Huntsville Jaycees and the Kiwanis Club of Huntsville, and more recently, he was president of Learning QUEST.

Alabama's First Library: Over 200 Years of History (Part 1)

by Heather M. Adkins

The Huntsville-Madison County Public Library (HMCPL) is the oldest continuing library in the State of Alabama, founded in 1818 when Alabama was still part of the Mississippi Territory. Over its 200-year history, the library developed into a multi-branch system, including outreach services to serve the spaces in between. A pillar of Madison County, HMCPL has “grown up” with Alabama, often reflecting the changes happening within the state and at times instigating its own progressive ideas.

The First 100 Years

Originally called the Huntsville Public Library, HMCPL formed a mere thirteen years after John Hunt settled in and made his home near the Big Spring in 1805 and only seven years after Huntsville's incorporation in 1811.¹ The growing town in the

¹ Revolutionary War veteran John Hunt was not the first settler in the area, having followed at least John Ditto and Isaac Criner, who settled in the southern and northern reaches of the county respectively. After Hunt settled near the Big Spring, the area became popularly known as Hunt's Spring. Prior to his arrival in 1805, it is suspected that a combination of factors – disease, land disputes between the Choctaw and Cherokee, and pressures from the U.S. government – depopulated the area. Starting in December 1809, there was also the financial influence of Leroy Pope and his dream of Twickenham, but that is altogether a different story.

Chapter V “An Act to Incorporate the Town of Huntsville, Madison County. – Passed December 9, 1811.” *A Digest of the Laws of the State of Alabama: Containing the Statutes and Resolutions in Force at the End of the General*

northeastern corner of the Mississippi Territory had already experienced a decade of political maneuvering and was burgeoning on an economic boom in the cotton trade, its fertile soil perfect for the crop. Madison County had already seen the founding of its first school, first newspaper, first courthouse, and first Masonic Lodge – all bearing witness to the leap in the Anglo-civilization of the area and priming it for the establishment of an educational institution that would outlast the businesses established in that early period.



John Nelson Spottswood Jones, whose law office served as the first public library in the state of Alabama.

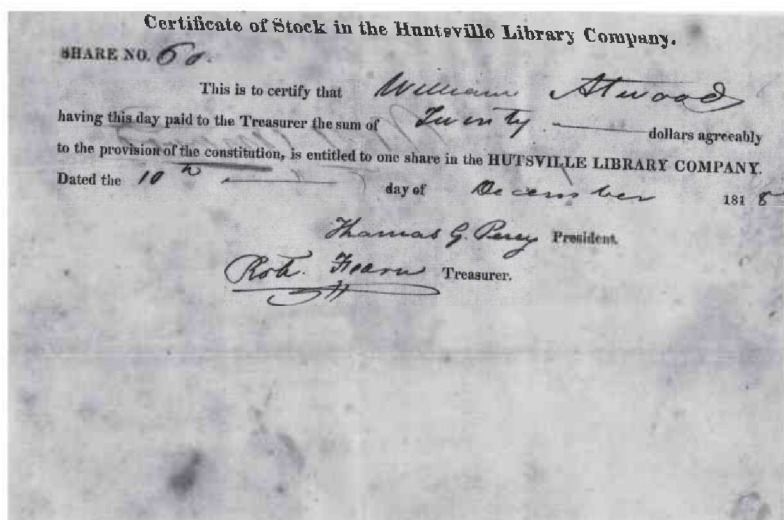
On June 20, 1818, a call went out in one of the area's earliest newspapers, the *Alabama Republican*, to form a "public circulating library."² Not long after, a library was opened at the law office of John Spottswood Jones. Jones shared a set of rooms with the printing office, in a building owned by John Boardman, who was the mayor or "President of Huntsville" from 1823 through 1824. The Boardman building stood in a section of town that probably garnered much foot

traffic: close to the courthouse and on the street leading to Ditto's Landing, a ferry service that

Assembly in January, 1823." (New York: Ginn & Curtis, J. & J. Harper, Printers), 774.

² "A number of citizens request all those who are disposed to encourage the establishment of a public circulating library in Huntsville would meet at Mr. Boardman's room on Monday 5. O'clock p.m. for the purpose of organizing an association to carry that highly beneficial object into effect." *Alabama Republican*, June 20, 1818.

transported across the nearby Tennessee River. The founding board members – John Boardman, Thomas G. Percy (the library's first president), and Thomas Fearn (a doctor and the majority investor in the "Indian Creek" Canal) – met at the courthouse on November 20 and approved the library's constitution and bylaws.³



William Atwood purchased two shares of stock in the Huntsville Library Company. This certificate is signed by Thomas G. Percy, president, and Robert Fearn, treasurer, of the company. It is the earliest record of the Huntsville Library.

Like many historical narratives, the library's early history is one of exclusion. It was founded not as a public library, as that early call in the newspaper stated, but rather as a subscription library. To loan a book, the borrower had to pay a membership,

³ "The subscribers to the Public Library in Huntsville are desired to attend at Mr. Minor's office in the courthouse on Friday evening the 20th inst. to adopt a constitution and By-Laws. John Boardman, Secy." *Alabama Republican*, November 21, 1818.

hindering the more financially-depressed (and majority of) citizens from using the library. The library also only opened on Tuesdays and Fridays from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This was probably Jones' lunch hour and may have reflected when many businesses in town broke for meal. However, for the farmers in the county who made up most of the population, it was unlikely feasible for such a break in the middle day. Finally, a testament to its time, the library was only open to white men.

The library opened during an exciting time for the emerging state. The Mississippi Territory had split in two in 1817. The western portion was admitted to the Union as the State of Mississippi in December of that year. The eastern portion became the Alabama Territory, whose seat of government was at St. Stephens on the Tombigbee River.⁴ Thus began the three-year road to statehood. In 1819, the United States Congress selected Huntsville to host Alabama's first constitutional convention. One of Madison County's first representatives in the Alabama State House, James G. Birney, would help incorporate the Huntsville Library Company. An early library advocate, Birney would eventually serve as an alderman and mayor of Huntsville. He was also an influential abolitionist and would later leave Huntsville to run for U.S. President in 1840.

Birney, along with Thomas and George Fearn, Samuel Hazard, John Boardman, Miles S. Watkins, convention delegate Henry Minor, and Thomas

⁴ Chapter LIX "An Act to establish a separate territorial government for the eastern part of the Mississippi territory." *Acts of the Fourteenth Congress of the United States*, 371-373. U.S. Congress. *U.S. Statutes at Large, Volume 3 -1815, 13th through 18th Congress*. United States, - 1825, 1813. Periodical. <https://www.loc.gov/item/lsl-v3/>.

Brandon, were the charter members of the Huntsville Library Company. The company received its charter in 1823. Not much is known about the Huntsville Library in its early years. It remained at the Jones law office a very short time, consisting of only a few tomes (mostly histories and political and religious works) covering one or two shelves. From 1819 to 1821, it was known as the Hermathenian Library, although whether that was a place or organization name is undetermined. After that, it was relocated to Green Academy, Huntsville's first school, where it was looked after by the Clisophic Society until the Civil War.

During the decades the library made its home at Green Academy, the economy in and around Huntsville was expanding. In the Alabama Territory years, "Alabama Fever" had brought thousands of settlers to the region, and, as a result, native Creek, Chickasaw, and Cherokee tribes were forcefully displaced by unfair land treaties favoring the federal government.⁵ Plantation owners in the new state made their living in cotton, a crop that required extraordinary labor, usually at the hand of enslaved people of color, which made up nearly half Alabama's population by 1860.⁶ A lucrative business, cotton

⁵ Alabama tribes were affected by several land cessions. Some of those affecting North Alabama counties were: Cession 64 – Treaty of January 7, 1806 (Cherokee); Cession 79 – Treaty of September 20, 1816 (Chickasaw); Cession 85 – July 8, 1817 (Cherokee); Cession 101 – February 27, 1819 (Cherokee); and Cession 203 – December 29, 1835 (Cherokee). Notated on the Alabama Land Cessions map drawn by A. Hoen & Company (Baltimore, 1896) for the 18th *Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*. Hoen's map and a more specific break down of land cession according to Alabama county and/or tribe can be found here: <https://accessgenealogy.com/alabama/alabama-land-cessions-map.htm>.

⁶ In the 1860 U.S. Census, Alabama's population according to race was 526,431 "white;" 2,690 "Free Colored;" and 435,080 "Slave." Madison County's

cultivation was a major factor in the development of transportation routes between major Southern cities. In Huntsville, this included the development of the Indian Creek Canal in 1821 and the establishment of a train depot for the Memphis and Charleston Railroad in 1860. It was also during this time that Madison County saw its first cotton production mills spring to life.

It is important to note that there existed during the Antebellum period a community of free people of color in Madison County. Several hundred individuals are enumerated in the U.S. Census between 1830 and 1860, listed as farmers and farm hands, tradesmen, barbers, laborers, animal keepers, drivers, washerwomen, and domestics and servants.⁷ Although, as any researcher of history or genealogy may point out, the census does not always accurately reflect the actual population, particularly when prejudice and suspicion are involved. Whether free by manumission or free by birth, Southern law assumed all people of color to be slaves and, therefore, available for arrest. It was for this reason, and perhaps not uncommon, for this citizenry to avoid a census taker.

The Antebellum period of economic boom for the Planter Class (wealthy white farmers owning large areas of agricultural land) came to a brief halt during

population according to race was 11,686 "white;" 192 "Free Colored;" and 14,573 "Slave." Interestingly, the population totals contains a note that "160 Indians included in white population." *Classified Population of the States and Territories, by Counties, on the First Day of June, 1860.* "Table No. 2 – Population by Color and Condition," 8.

<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1860/population/1860a-04.pdf>

⁷ Names, ages, and occupation are compiled into one chart by Nancy Rohr, *Free People of Color in Madison County, Alabama*, (Huntsville, AL: Huntsville History Collection, 2015), 33-46.

the Civil War. Upon the election of President Abraham Lincoln, Alabama along with other Southern states withdrew from the Union in 1861, forming the Confederate States of America.⁸ The country had fractured over the issue of slavery, by that time a key component of the South's cotton economy. Citizens of Northern Alabama, namely Huntsville, did not actually favor cession, although after the onset of the war most Huntsvillians were vehemently pro-Confederacy and contributed many soldiers to the Southern cause. This sense of Southern patriotism escalated under both Federal occupations of the city in 1862 and again from 1863 through the end of the war. It was during one of these occupations in 1864 that Green Academy, at the time home of the Huntsville Library, was burned to the ground.

Despite the destruction of the library at Green Academy, some books did survive the war, known by the different iterations of library book plates present in some of the oldest existing books in the present library's collection.⁹ A new library was not organized until 1870, located with the Huntsville Literary Debating Society. They used not only the surviving books from Green Academy, but also made concerted efforts to bring in new material, including popular genres like romance, mystery, and fairy tales. Perhaps it is symbolic of the time that it was the Debating Society that "remade" the image of the Huntsville Library over the next twenty years. During the late half of the Nineteenth Century, the reunified country

⁸*Ordinances and Constitution of the State of Alabama with the Constitution of the Provisional Government and of the Confederate States of America* (Montgomery: Barrett, Wimbish & Co., Steam Printers and Binders, 1861).

⁹ Book plates refers to stamps, inserts, or written messages denoting names or places. Usually this functions as a means of ownership or place of return.

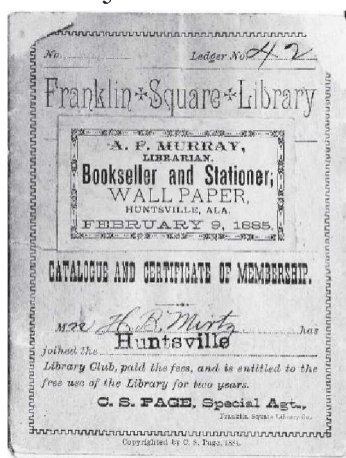
struggled through an onslaught of rising social movements, largely motivated by the economic and political upheaval of Reconstruction, the nefarious Jim Crow system, and the growing cry for universal suffrage, labor rights, and public education. It was amid this cacophony of debate that the Debating Society opened the library to white women as patrons, librarians, and board members.

Huntsville continued to grow during those chaotic decades. Slavery had legally ended in the United States with the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, although the Confederacy did not recognize this ultimate act of abolition until it was reabsorbed, and the country was once again united under a single government. Reconstruction, in its simplest terms, attempted to address the inequities of slavery through various political, social, and economic means. Even then, however, systems were put in place in the South that limited black Americans' civil liberties in the extreme. After the war, many freed people of color and other Alabamians of little means turned to sharecropping – a system of farming wherein a land owner allowed tenants to use their land in exchange for a share of the crop and/or profits. This “slavery by another name” trapped tenants in a never-ending cycle of credit for supplies and equipment and debt accrued from “high interest rates, unpredictable harvests, and unscrupulous landlords and merchants.”¹⁰ As a result, the sharecropping system dramatically reduced tenants' mobility and ability to profit from their labor. Sharecropping, in part, sustained the cultivation of cotton. However, after the Civil War, the cotton economy in Huntsville refocused to the cotton textile

¹⁰ “Slavery by Another Name,” PBS, <https://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/themes/sharecropping/>.

mills, the largest of which were Merrimack, Dallas, Lowe, and Lincoln. The big four had “villages” which served workers by providing nearby housing, schools, and shops within walking distance of the mills. The mill would become the focus of child labor rights and compulsory education in Madison County, and they would go on to contribute the home-front efforts of both world wars before closing one-by-one during the second half of the Twentieth Century.

In June of 1891, the formal Huntsville Circulating Library was established, a stark contrast to the



A 1885 library membership card for Ms. H.B. Mirtz.

original subscription library. From the 1890s through the early 1900s, Huntsville’s library began to grow in earnest, relocating as deemed necessary. This included: Murray & Smith’s bookstore and the Y.M.C.A. on Eutis Street (1891); the Gordon Building on Franklin Street (1895); a room over the Fire Hall which was in the old City

Hall-Market House building (1899); and the Hundley Building on the east side of the

square (1900). Several librarians during this time worked without remunerations. A benefit ball was thrown to raise library funds in April 1895. It was held at the Huntsville Hotel, where a band was employed and a large crowd dance in the hotel dining room for three nights straight until dawn. Some considered the three-night long party as scandalous; however, the needed funds were raised and the library continued to grow. The library board began a series of events held

twice a year as a means of raising funds for new books, and patrons were asked to contribute books as well. By 1897, book circulation had increased to the point that it was necessary to open the library every afternoon.

The library's rapid growth correlates to the expansion and diversification of certain industries in Madison County early in the 1900s-1910s. By 1915, the boll weevil, an insect indigenous to Mexico, had invaded the South. Boll weevils decimated cotton production in Alabama, with farmers losing entire crops to the pest.¹¹ However, this created an opportunity for farmers to diversify their cash crops, including introducing peanut and corn farming, as well as livestock enterprises. Expanding the variety of crops grown in Alabama greatly helped in reducing farming debts.

Education opportunities were opening up on the heels of laws passed regarding compulsory education and the political push for public funding for schools. Beginning in 1913, Rosenwald Schools were built for black children, totaling 407 schools, shops, and teacher homes in the state of Alabama by 1937.¹² In the early 1900s, the Alabama state legislature increased statewide funding for schools and established a policy of having at least one high school in every county. Compulsory education passed in the

¹¹ The agricultural, and by extension, economical, devastation wrought by the boll weevil is felt through present day. So much so, that there is specific legislation regarding their eradication in the Code of Alabama (Title 2 – Agriculture, Chapter 19 – Cotton, Article 6 – Boll Weevil Eradication in Cotton).

¹² Dorothy Walker, "Rosenwald Schools: 100 Years of Pride, Progress, and Preservation," *Alabama Heritage*, July 7, 2018.
<https://www.alabamaheritage.com/from-the-vault/rosenwald-schools-100-years-of-pride-progress-and-preservation>

legislature in 1915.¹³ However, the compulsory education laws passed at that time were often opposed by working-class families who depended on their children to contribute to the household income. When the compulsory education law was passed, it only applied to white students and did not include farms.

A revolution in transportation was happening, with the first electric streetcars appearing in Huntsville in 1901 and the manufacture of automobiles was on the rise, beginning the replacement of horses and mules. People had a new freedom to move around and more access to even move out. Around 1910, the Great Migration began, with a mass movement of black Americans to industrial centers – largely in northern states – that would continue to the 1940s. Locally, the increasing production and relative affordability of cars eventually allowed the Huntsville Library to establish a bookmobile, which catered to rural areas of the county (where early compulsory education laws were not enforced) and mill villages lacking nearby brick and mortar libraries. The bookmobile was a major step in expanding the library's regional service area.

Economic diversification, advancements in transportation, and politicking over education were the backdrop to the biggest change the Huntsville Library would experience up until that point: building its first permanent home with the help of Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie was a Scottish immigrant and a steel industry mogul. In the last 18 years of his life, he invested most of his fortune in philanthropic pursuits.

¹³ State Department of Education, "Acts of the Legislature of Alabama Passed at the Special Session in 1909, at the Regular Session in 1911, and at the First Session in 1915 – Child Labor Law: An Act" *General Public School Laws of Alabama 115* (Montgomery, AL: Brown Printing Company, State Printers and Binders, 1915), 118.

He believed it was the responsibility of the wealthy to use their wealth to improve society. Between 1883 and 1929, Carnegie funded the building of 2,509 “Carnegie Libraries” worldwide.¹⁴ Carnegie libraries were instrumental in helping underserved communities connect with public services.

One of Carnegie’s stipulations for a construction grant was that library needed to be free to all, despite economic or ethnic background. In the South, segregation laws legally prevented black and white citizens to patron the same library, presenting a problem for funding a Carnegie library in communities like Huntsville. That said, Carnegie overlooked his “free to all” policy in segregated communities, and even funded the construction of several libraries for people of color. In Madison County, Alabama A&M University (a historical black college) built their library using funds from Carnegie’s library foundation in 1904. Although the resulting building is still standing, it has been renovated and repurposed.

Huntsville did not take advantage of Carnegie library funds until twelve years later. On November 11, 1913, the local Carnegie Library Board (comprised of Huntsville citizens) went before the Huntsville City Commissioners and requested funds appropriated to support a Carnegie library. A consensus was achieved after just over a year of negotiations, and in April 1915, the Carnegie Foundation accepted plans to build a \$12,500 library. The City of Huntsville provided a property at the corner of Madison and Gate Streets, as well as \$1,500 annually for its upkeep. Huntsville’s Carnegie Library opened in February 1916 with less than 2,000 books. In its early days, the library’s

¹⁴ “Andrew Carnegie’s Story,” Carnegie Corporation of New York, [https://www.carnegie.org/interactives/foundersstory/#!/.](https://www.carnegie.org/interactives/foundersstory/#!/)

collection grew mostly through donation of books and money from the community. Additionally, there were designated days that the librarians would go door-to-door in the community to collect donations.

At this momentous marker in the library's history, it is worth reflecting on some of the major changes that occurred over the library's first 100 years. Originally a subscription library funded by membership, it was now in part funded by the City of Huntsville. The small library consisting of just a few books of limited variety now had its own two-story building, filled with a growing collection of books spanning many genres. Once a place for only white adult men, the library now had staff and patrons including white women and children. In 1819, the library was open for two hours per week, but with the opening of Huntsville's Carnegie Library in 1916, the library was open for business in the morning and afternoon every day, with evening hours twice a week. Over the years, the library had become a place to embrace community (albeit the white community) and was now available at the call of Huntsville's citizens. Altogether, these shifts were dramatic for their time, but for the library and for Huntsville, some the biggest changes were on the horizon.

This article is to be continued in Part 2: A Second Century.

Selected sources and further reading:

HMCPL Special Collections is home to the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library's archival collections, which details not only the library's history,

but also the stories of Huntsvillians and Madison Countians in their own words and personal collections.

- Huntsville-Madison County Public Library Collection, HMCPL Special Collections. Including: library board minutes, photographs, blueprints, patron statistics, circulation statistics, and published sources. Many of the details about the library's history (including specific dates and names) came from this collection.
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Meet the Author; Heather Adkins is the Manager of HMCPL Special Collections, a Certified Archivist, and the President of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society. She has nearly 15 years' experience in the archives field beginning after earning a bachelor's degree in History from Tennessee Technological University and a master's degree in Public History with an emphasis in archives management from Middle Tennessee State University. She departed a position with the Tennessee State Library and Archives before arriving in the Rocket City in 2018 to begin her current position as manager of Special Collections.

Madison County Looney Pioneers And Sivley Cemetery

By Martha Martin McMurray, Looney Descendent



*Sivley Cemetery, West Airport Road,
Huntsville, Alabama*

Absalom Looney Jr was my maternal 4th great grandfather. He was born about 1763 in Augusta County, Virginia, but settled with his family in Madison County, Alabama, in 1811, and died in 1818 at his plantation home on Indian Creek. Perhaps his fervor about Huntsville and

Madison County was ignited by rumors of fertile soil that Edward C. Betts described as the strongest attraction luring settlers to the area, in his book about early Huntsville history.¹⁵

The formative years of Huntsville and Madison County and Sivley Cemetery are interwoven with the life of Absalom Looney (Luney, Luna) Jr. who owned the property where Sivley Cemetery is located. He is buried there with his wife in unmarked graves, along with John Hunt, Huntsville's namesake, and 20 other "first settlers" of Huntsville and Madison County.¹⁶

¹⁵ ***Early History of Huntsville, Alabama, Betts 1804-1870, 7.***

¹⁶ ***Absalom Looney Jr. Memorial. Findagrave.com, 2022.***
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/139422912/absalom-looney>

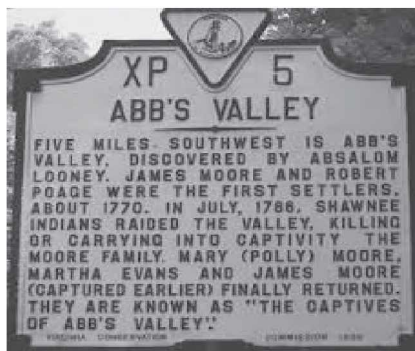
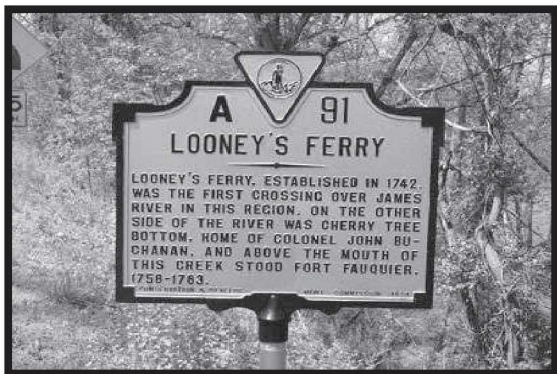
Located in John Hunt Park, Sivley Cemetery is barely noticeable amid the progress along west Airport Road.

In 1724,

Absalom's
grandparents,
Robert Looney
(1692-1769) and
Elizabeth

Llewellyn (1696-
1770) crossed
the Irish Sea to
Philadelphia,

Pennsylvania, and became the “first” Looney settlers in America. From there they moved on to Colonial Maryland. In 1755, they settled on the Virginia frontier in Augusta County, where they established a ferry crossing on the James River and raised thirteen sons on Looney Creek.¹⁷ Due to territorial conflict with



¹⁷ Edwards, *the Lure And Lore Of Limestone County (Alabama)*, 18.

France, as well as the threat of attack from American Indians, a fort was built in 1755 around the Looney home site to protect the settlers. Fort Looney was at the junction of Looney Creek and the James River. It was visited in 1756 by Colonel George Washington.¹⁸

Their son, Absalom Looney Sr., was born 1729 on the Isle of Man, an island between England and Ireland. He migrated from Augusta County, Virginia, to Bluestone Branch of New River in Tazewell County, Virginia (which later became West Virginia). Concerning early settlements in Tazewell County, it is stated that Absalom Looney, "the hunter," discovered Abb's Valley on Bluestone Branch and settled there in the valley in 1771, and possibly as early as 1750.¹⁹

The settlement was documented at least four years before the noted frontier explorer, Daniel Boone, arrived in the same area to build a fort six miles from Absalom's homestead. Absalom Sr died on September 28, 1796, in Bluefield, Botetourt, Virginia. He had married Margaret Bettie 'Peggy' Mills Moore, born 1729 in Virginia. She died in 1791 in Tennessee.²⁰

Absalom Looney Sr.'s son, Absalom Looney Jr., enlisted for Revolutionary service in Botetourt County,

¹⁸ ***Our Looney Ancestors. The Taylor Legacy. Blogger.com***
6/22/2012. <http://thetaylorlegacy.blogspot.com/2012/06/>

¹⁹Tilton, *Early Looneys In America, Part 4, Absalom Looney Branch, Second Generation*, 3.

²⁰ ***Our Looney Ancestors. The Taylor Legacy. Blogger.com***
6/22/2012. <http://thetaylorlegacy.blogspot.com/2012/06/>

Virginia, in 1780. In 1783, Absalom Jr. served as a commissioner surveying the Cumberland District lands in North Carolina that were set aside for Revolutionary veterans. In 1789, he settled in Hawkins County, Tennessee (aka Hawkins County, North Carolina), on the Cinch River.²¹

Later, he rode a horse to Huntsville, Alabama, where he purchased land on September 18, 1809. In 1811, Absalom Jr. brought his wife and children to Madison County, Alabama, by flatboat on the Cinch and Tennessee rivers to Ditto Landing, settling some 3 miles southwest of Huntsville.²²

The Track Book in the Land Office at Huntsville, Madison Co., shows an entry on 18 Sept. 1809 by Absalom Looney for the southwest 1/4 of Section 12, township 4 South, Range 1 west, 160.19 acres in Madison County. The land records in Washington, D.C., however, indicate that Looney was an assignee of John Hunt who had entered 28 Aug. 1809 and it was a re-entry by Looney on 18 Sept. 1809. Absalom Looney made final payment on his 160 acres, located about two miles south of Huntsville at Indian Creek, on 19 April 1810, and the Grant was issued, Certificate 75, on 23 Dec. 1816.²³

Furthermore, the OLD HUNTSVILLE LAND OFFICE RECORDS & MILITARY WARRANTS, 1810 – 1854, by Marilyn Davis Barefield (1985), shows that on August

²¹ **Tilton**, *Early Looneys In America, Part 4, Absalom Looney Branch, Second Generation*, 16.

²² Edwards, *The Lure And Lore Of Limestone County (Alabama)*, 18.

²³ **Tilton**, *Early Looneys In America, Part 4, Absalom Looney Branch, Second Generation*, 17.

7 of 1812, Absalom Looney became the owner of land in Section 12 of Township 4S, Range 1W as the assignee of John Hunt. (This John Hunt was, of course, the namesake of Huntsville, the man who built his cabin at the Big Spring, which was initially called Hunt's Spring.) The land that Absalom Looney acquired from the government in lieu of John Hunt is located by the intersection today of Drake Avenue with Memorial Parkway. That intersection is in almost the exact center of Section 12, T4SR1W. A check of the Government Tract Book (see below) shows that Absalom Looney acquired the Southwest Quarter (160 acres) of S12-T4- R1W, which is on the north end of the old airport runways in Huntsville.²⁴

On December 23, 1816, Absalom Looney was a purchaser at the Jacob Sivley Effects Sale in Madison Co. (Ala. book CD, 1, 89). (John Sivley and several other Sivley family members are interred in Sivley Cemetery.²⁵)

On 27 June 1817 the southeast 1/4 of Section 11, township 5 south, Range 1 east, 160 acres was granted to Absalom Looney. This quarter section was about eight miles southeast of Huntsville. On 26 Feb. 1818 Absalom Looney purchased the northern half of Section 14, township 5 south, range 2 west (Certificates 1748, 1785); 320 acres. These 320 acres

²⁴Barefield, *Old Huntsville Land Office Records and Military Warrants, 1810-1854*, 1-2.

²⁵**Tilton**, *Early Looneys In America, Part 4, Absalom Looney Branch, Second Generation*, 18.

were about 10 miles southwest of Huntsville on or near Indian Creek and nearer Triana, once called Looney's Landing on the Tennessee River.²⁶

Also in 1818 there are records of John W. Looney and Absalom Looney purchasing government land west of the Chickasaw Indian boundary line. This land was first offered for sale on February 2, 1818. However, it is known that many pioneers settled on the Indian land area before it was ceded by the tribes to the U. S. government and made available for sale. Therefore, it is quite possible (and perhaps even likely) that the Looneys, as most other settlers, had already cleared and started farming the land west of the old Indian boundary. The early history of the Looney family government land purchases in Madison County is summarized as follows: ABSALOM: * SW/4, S12-T4-R1W 9-18-1809 {75} * S/2 of NW/4, S14-T5-R2W 2-4-1818 {1473} ("Estate of") * NE/4, S14-T5-R2W 7-1-1831 {1287}²⁷



When Absalom Looney Jr. died two years after Jacob Sivley, Looney's estate was appraised 19 Nov. 1818 by Robert Beaty, William Thompson, and Archibald McDonnell. John Looney, his son, was administrator (wills and Inv. 208). His effects were

Clinton, Early Looneys In America, Part 4, Absalom Looney Branch,

Tombstone of Revolutionary War Pvt.

Jacob Sivley, 1752-1816, Sivley

Cemetery, Huntsville, Alabama.

1810-1854, 10-11.

Office Records and Military Warrants,

sold at auction on 4 January 1819 by John W. Looney; total receipts \$8,425.94. (Wills and Inv., 198.) Absalom Looney died possessed of the home plantation of 160 acres near Huntsville, 320 acres, southwest, near Triana, and 160 acres about nine miles southeast of Huntsville. These assets included Sivley Cemetery.²⁸

In 1786, John Hunt became the first Sheriff of Hawkins County, Tenn., aka NC.²⁹ In 1790, Absalom Looney Jr. was appointed Justice of the Peace in Hawkins County.³⁰ Based on these dates, it is likely that Hunt and Looney were friends and/or colleagues before coming to Alabama.

Absalom Jr.'s wife, Margaret Warren, was born 1770 in Hawkins County, Tenn., and died 1824 in Madison Co. Ala. Her name was not recorded until 1903, when Mrs. O.H. Looney confirmed that Absalom Looney Jr. had married Margaret "Peggy" Mills Warren on September 21, 1791.³¹ Although she is buried at Sivley Cemetery in an unmarked grave, her plot is described as located in Acklin (Acklen) Graveyard, the original

²⁸**Tilton**, *Early Looneys In America, Part 4, Absalom Looney Branch, Second Generation*, 19.

²⁹Joe Payne, *Claiborne County Tennessee. John Hunt, Considered founder of Claiborne County, and it's County Seat of Tazewell. Also the founder of Huntsville, Alabama.* <https://joepayne.org/claiborne/>

³⁰Tilton, *Early Looneys In America, Part 4, Absalom Looney Branch, Second Generation*, 1-5.

¹⁷**Tilton**, *Early Looneys In America, Part 4, Absalom Looney Branch, Second Generation*, 18.

¹⁸. Joe Payne, *Claiborne County Tennessee. John Hunt, Considered founder of Claiborne County, and it's County Seat of Tazewell. Also the founder of Huntsville, Alabama.* <https://joepayne.org/claiborne/>

name of Sivley Cemetery. The Hunt and Acklin families knew each other in Hawkins County before migrating to Huntsville.³²

Widow Looney died before her son sold the plantation at Indian Creek on January 3, 1825 to the Brandons.³³ Although there is conflicting information about the children of Absalom Jr and Margaret Warren Looney, the most reliable data I have found is the House of Luna Family Sheet for Absalom Looney Jr. as follows:³⁴

1. The oldest child was Jean/Jane “Peggy” Looney, born 1789, death 1849, married 1808 Jesse P. Thompson, Hawkins County Tenn.
2. Priscilla Looney, born 1794, died 1848 in Rhea County Tenn., married 1807 to Thomas K Thompson.
3. John Warren Looney Sr. was born 1795 and died 1848. He was born on the 640-acre tract that his father acquired from

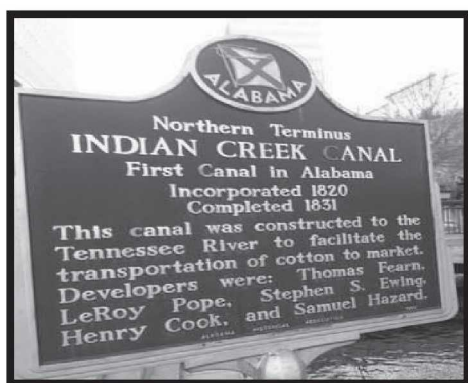


³³ Tilton, *Early Looneys In America, Part 4, Absalom Looney Branch, Second Generation*, 19.

³⁴20. *Absalom, Jr. Looney*. The House of Luna. Family Group Sheet. <https://thehouseofluna.com/getperson.php?personID=I9747&tree=001>

William Lee on August 7, 1789, in Hawkins County Tenn.³⁵ He married Nancy Campbell February 8, 1815, in Madison Co. With his brother Absalom III, John Warren Looney owned land just west of Lanier family relatives. It included the confluence of Spring Branch with Indian Creek, where Looney's Mill and Looney's Riverboat Landing were operated by John Warren Looney. He sold it to Thomas and George Fearn in 1834 for their project to transport cotton to the Tennessee River from Huntsville via the Indian Creek Navigation Co.'s canal from Big Spring.³⁶

John Warren owned some of the first cotton



warehouses at Ditto Landing, a few miles due south of Sivley Cemetery. In the Democrat newspaper of Huntsville, Ala., 28 November 1828, John W. Looney announced that his mills were in complete order and ready for the reception

of cotton. In 1848, he began a move to Goliad, Texas, with most of his family and possessions. After a short bout with dysentery, he died along the trail near Nacogdoches Texas. His last words to wife, Nancy, were "By all means, go on to Goliad," and she did.³⁷

³⁵ Campbell, *Oh, Strange New World*, 42.

³⁶ Rankin, "Indian Creek and West Madison County", 26-31.

³⁷ Tilton, *Early Looneys In America, Part 4, Absalom Looney Branch, Second Generation*, 38-39.

John Warren Looney Sr. was the great-grandfather of Madison Alabama's William Henry Looney. One of John's sons, Tuberville, married Martha Bailey in 1841, a daughter of Madison pioneers, James and Sarah Bailey.³⁸

4. Margaret Catherine Looney was born 1796, death unknown, married August 25, 1818, to Jacob Fuqua, Huntsville, Madison County, Ala.

5. Martha "Patsy" Looney, my maternal 2nd great grandmother, was born 1797 in Virginia and died June 1, 1869, on the Preuit Plantation, Lawrence County Ala. She was a descendant of Sir Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England, a Renaissance humanist, and social philosopher.³⁹



My Looney ancestors were creative people, poets, and painters. Perhaps Sir Thomas

*Martha Patsy Looney
Tombstone, 1797-1869, Preuit
Cemetery #1, Lawrence County,
Alabama.*

³⁸ Edwards, *the Lure and Lore of Limestone County (Alabama)*, 18.

³⁹25. Gentry, *Life and Legend of Lawrence County Alabama*, 107.

More stirred their artistic flair. I inherited this circa 1880 oil painting (above left), an example of their work.

Martha's 1st marriage 1823 was to AL State Senator Colonel Fleming Hodges Sr., who served 1819-1821 in the AL General Assembly.⁴⁰ Brother, William Mason Hodges, served in the AL House of Representatives. Brother, Asa Hodges, was an Arkansas state senator and congressman. Fleming Hodges Sr. is buried atop the Copena Indian Burial Mound in the Old Settler's Cemetery at Oakville, Lawrence Co., Ala.⁴¹



Pruit-McCaa Cemetery, Hazelgreen, AL



Copena Burial Mound and Old Settler's Cemetery, Oakville, Lawrence County, Alabama

Martha's 2nd marriage, February 7, 1831, was to William Madison Preuit (Pruit, Pruitt, Prewitt), a veteran of the War of 1812.⁴² He was the grandson of CPT William Beauregard Pruit Sr. Along with his son, Captain Jacob Pruit, and grandson, William Madison

⁴⁰Gentry, *Life and Legend of Lawrence County Alabama*, 107

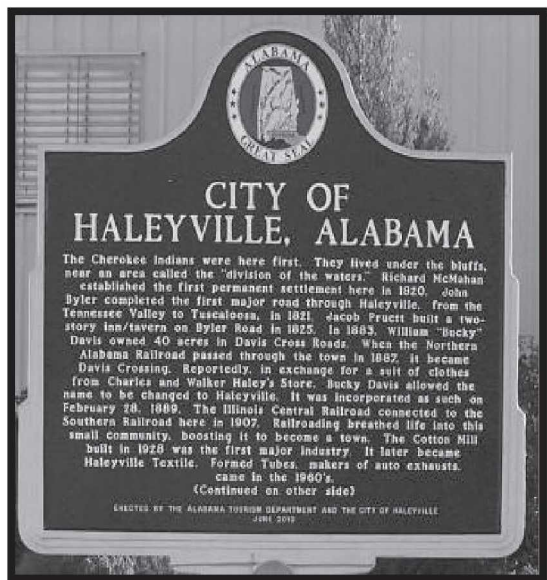
²⁷Causey, *The Hodges Pioneers*.

<https://www.alabamapioneers.com/biography-the-hodges-pioneers-of-lawrence-county-alabama/>

⁴²Gentry, *Life and Legend of Lawrence County Alabama*, 107

Pruit, he was an early settler 1807 in Madison County AL from Tennessee. William B. lived to be over 100 years old. He fought in the Revolutionary War and hunted in the wilds of Kentucky with Daniel Boone and others for 9 months. He is buried in Pruitt-McCaa Cemetery, on or near his land at Hazelgreen, Al.⁴³

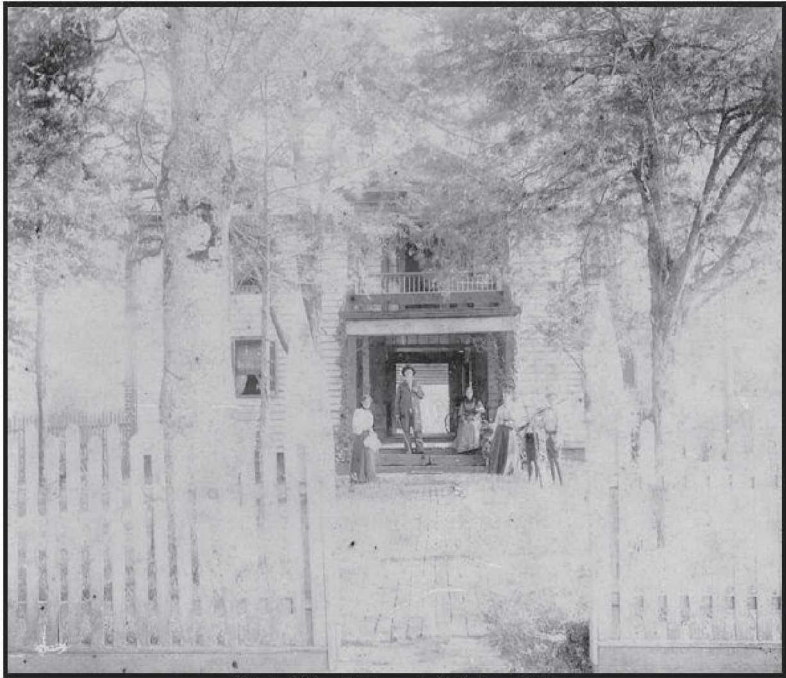
His son, Captain Jacob Pruitt, fought in three wars, including the Revolutionary War at age 14, War of 1812 as a Captain in the Mounted Volunteers of Tennessee, and the Creek War 1813-14. James E. Saunders, in "Early Settlers of Alabama", wrote of Captain Pruitt's death: "The old gentleman, hale and hearty, still active and past 80, when chasing a bear, his horse fell in a pine hole and threw him on the pommel of his saddle which caused his death three days later."⁴⁴ The May 21, 1845, obituary in the Huntsville Democrat newspaper described him as "AN OUT-



⁴³ William Beauregard Pruitt, Sr. Geni.com.
<https://www.geni.com/people/Captain-William-Pruett/6000000011263580867>

⁴⁴Saunders, *Early Settlers of Alabama*, 116-117.
<https://archive.org/details/cu31924102201641/page/116/mode/2up?view=theater>

STANDING American soldier and citizen.” He was a colorful early settler in Haleyville, Winston County AL, where he was a philanthropist and community leader. He spent seventy thousand dollars financing construction of Byler Road through Winston County, where he is buried at Pebbly Branch. This was Alabama’s first state road enacted in December, 1819.⁴⁵



Original Preuit House built before 1815

Preuit Plantation Home, 1815-1959, Lawrence County AL. Photo Details: On the porch, William Madison and Martha Looney Hodges Preuit. In the yard are two young women. One is showing off her embroidery work. Also, there are three boys displaying their musket.

⁴⁵**Shirley**, *Captain Jacob Pruitt, Tavern Of Old Byler Road Recalled*.
<https://www.freestateofwinston.org/jacobpruitt.htm>

Jacob's son, William Madison Preuit, purchased the Preuit Plantation in 1825, and moved with wife, Martha Looney Hodges Preuit, from Madison County to Lawrence County, Ala. The two-story plantation home was built around an 1815 Indian cabin.⁴⁶



Sallie Octavia Preuit, great granddaughter of Absalom Looney Jr.

My grandmother was Sallie Octavia Preuit Burleson-Martin, 1868-1951, granddaughter of William Madison and Martha Patsy Looney Hodges Preuit. She was among 33 Preuits born in the Preuit home between 1825 - 1959. Her father, John William Preuit, inherited the plantation from his parents, William Madison and Martha Patsy Looney

Preuit.⁴⁷

Other children born to Absalom Jr. and Margaret Looney were Absalom Looney II, born 1799, married March 1, 1826, Alsadorah A. Winn 7, Susan Elizabeth Looney, born about 1803, and 8, Abe Elijah Looney, born 1805, death unknown, married June 7, 1828, Susan Dickey, Huntsville, Madison County AL.

⁴⁶ Gentry, *Life and Legend of Lawrence County Alabama*, 105

⁴⁷ *Sallie Octavia Fruitt Burleson-Martin Memorial*. Findagrave.com. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/50774712/sallie-octavia-burleson-martin>

I resided in South Huntsville for 17 years prior to moving to Morgan County AL. in 1993. Living in Huntsville was a very enjoyable time in my life. Whenever I return to Huntsville, it feels like I am going back home. Perhaps, it is because my Looney and Preuit roots are there.



*Ms. Martha Martin
McMurray*

Meet the author:

Martha Martin McMurray graduated from the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa and was an adjunct instructor at the University Of Alabama School Of Social Work. Later, she worked for the Alabama Department of Human Resources in Montgomery as a Special Projects Development Consultant and retired from that position. By default she has a minor in history because she took so many history courses in undergraduate school, often early Alabama history. After retiring she focused on preserving her family history and the history in her community, all while developing a 501c3 tax exempt nonprofit for the

Oakville Mid Woodland Indian Mounds and raising \$360,000 for the Indian Mounds Education Center. The mounds are located on land once owned by her Preuit family.

While a consultant to the Byler Road Association, she was instrumental in acquiring a resolution, signed by the governor, that recognizes the significance of Alabama's first state road—the Byler Road. Her ancestor, Jacob Preuit, was a principle financier for the road's completion. And she has promoted numerous other noteworthy historical projects. She has also worked with others to obtained Alabama historical markers for a family cemetery and for notable ancestor's graves. She worked on developing the Morgan County Child Protection Act and stays busy completing projects that seem to find her.

She has two daughters with post graduate education/careers and 3 grandchildren. They appreciate her family history projects and she passes her love of history to them. After residing in South Huntsville for many years she moved to her horse farm in Morgan County and finds rural life is good too!

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Brigadier General Ormsby McKnight Mitchel & Huntsville's Introduction to the Stars

By Arley McCormick



*Maj. General Ormsby
McKnight Mitchel*

The notorious Union General that Huntsville historians love to hate, Maj. Gen. Ormsby McKnight Mitchel (August 28, 1810, or possibly 1809, – October 31, 1862) was raised on a backwoods farm in Western Kentucky. The sibling nearest his age was a 20-year-old school teacher and became Ormsby's tutor. The youngster became an avid reader, spent much of his time alone, and in the absolute darkness of the wilderness was mesmerized by the stars. His

troops would, affectionately, refer to him as “old stars”.

He graduated from West Point and prior to the Civil War, became an attorney, surveyor, professor, and publisher but his most enduring accomplishment was an aggressive astronomy salesman that enticed the rich, famous, and politicians of America and Europe to fund his passion.

Mitchel believed the United States needed a world-class observatory. U.S. President John Quincy Adams, also an astronomy buff, advocated for one during his term as president, but failed to get Congress to fund it. With the patronage of the rich and famous, he created an observatory in Cincinnati, Ohio and traveled to

Europe speaking to audiences with similar interest and money, including royalty.

Mitchel organized the Cincinnati Astronomical Society with dues set at \$25. Successful fund raising led the professor to Germany to buy the second largest telescope, at that time, in the world, with plans to bring it back to Cincinnati, but he needed a building.

Mitchel worked tirelessly to raise the money for a building. He was given the land for the structure and former President Adams, at 77 years old, gave the keynote speech at the cornerstone dedication.

Mitchel's schedule was demanding. He taught classes each day at a local university and changed roles to work on fundraising for the observatory building in the evenings and weekends. He sold his vision by telling people all over the country about the Moon and the stars, sometimes speaking to 2,000 at one time. In addition, he started three publications devoted to the study of astronomy.

Soon after the Civil War began, with his vast connections to politicians and wealthy patrons, he received a political appointment to Brigadier General and was placed in Command of the Department of the Ohio but he was commanding a division under General Carlos Buell when he captured, undefended, Huntsville in April 1862.

General Mitchel was accustomed to getting his way; consequently, he was frequently at odds with Huntsville residents and in professional disputes with his boss. He frequently by-passed General Buell and expressed his military perspective to well positioned politicians and friends in the Washington D. C. and the War Department.

While in Huntsville he exaggerated official reports to promote his military career and was directed to Court-

martial one of his Infantry Brigade Commanders, Colonel J.B. Turchin, for the “Sacking of Athens”. He imprisoned twelve prominent citizens of the community in part in retaliation for partisan assaults on the troops guarding trains and tresses in his area of responsibility, was investigated for confiscating and selling cotton for personal gain, and the citizens believed he was accountable for numerous other infractions of their civil liberties. He imposed “Martial Law”.

He was reassigned from his post in Huntsville and sat in Washington D.C. until a position became available where he could serve silently till the war was over. The position became a command at Hilton Head, South Carolina, where he contracted malaria and died in the fall of 1862.

It is thanks to Ormsby Mitchel’s effort that the study of astronomy came to the forefront of 19th-century America. Mitchel and his advocacy, in part, would lead to our nation’s continued interest in the Moon and the stars, with the establishment of NASA and eventually a Moon landing.

Nearly a hundred years after Mitchel entered Huntsville, the Rocket City became home to NASA and a leader in the space race. Mitchel had nothing to do with it but he may have been the first national figure in Huntsville that had a vision of a future in the stars and would share his views with anyone that would listen.

He did leave a legacy, mostly silenced by silence and time. Astronomers named, in his honor, a persistently bright region near the Mars south pole that was first observed by Mitchel in 1846, ‘The Mountains of Mitchel’ located near 70°S, 40°E. An impact crater on Mars was also named in his honor.

A new town (and later city) Mitchell, Indiana was named for him after he surveyed it for the owners while working on the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad in the 1850s. (The second "L" was added later). And, the first post-Civil War freedmen's town created in the United States (on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina), "Mitchelville", was named for him.

In Huntsville he remains a villain of ill repute.



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The Huntsville Historical Review; Editorial Policy

The Huntsville Historical Review, a biyearly journal sponsored by the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, is the primary voice for local historians to document Madison County history. This journal reflects the richness and diversity of Madison County and North Alabama and this editor will endeavor to maintain the policy established by his predecessor with regard to the primary focus of the Review as well as material included in it. A casual examination of every community in the world reveals the character of its citizens and, if you look closely, voices from the past express their expectations for the future. Today is based upon our collective experience and the socialization of our ancestor's existence.

Although this publication focuses on local history, we cannot forget that what happens here has roots often connected by state, regional, national, and international events. In an effort to build on past traditions and continue the quality of our *Review*, an editorial policy will be implemented to guide contributors who wish to submit manuscripts, book reviews, or notes of historical significance to our community. The Historical Society wants you to submit articles for publication. We will assist you toward that goal.

Presentations to family and acquaintances become oral history. Publishing your story in the Review insures you and your story are immortal. You can contribute to our history through the *Huntsville Historical Review*.

Manuscript Preparation and Submission

Please submit an electronic copy of your article or book review to arleymccormick@comcast.net or send to:

Huntsville-Madison County
Historical Society
Box 666
Huntsville, Alabama 35804

Review Content and Style

- There is no limit on word count. The manuscript can be divided into parts published in separate volumes of the Review.
- In matters of form and style, a good guide is *The Chicago Manual of Style*.
- If you choose to include footnotes, the preferred citation method for full articles would be best.
- Manuscripts should be in Times New Roman 12-point font. Microsoft Word (not PDF)
- This is a guide and not intended to discourage the creative process nor constrain authors from contributing to the Review.

Book Reviews

Please limit your book review to topics relevant to local, state, or southern history. A good review should clearly and concisely describe the nature, scope, and thesis of a book that would be relevant to Madison County history. Emphasis on local and regional history will be given in order to help readers expand and contextualize their knowledge. Your review should be helpful to the general reader interested in Madison County or North Alabama and these are good rules to follow when writing a book review:

- Your first obligation for a book review is to explain the subject of the book and the author's central thesis or main points.
- Your second obligation is to evaluate how successfully the author has made his/her point. Is the author's argument reasonable, logical, and consistent?

- Your third obligation is to set the book into a broader context. If you can, place the book into a wider context by looking at broader issues.
- Your fourth obligation is to render a judgment on the value of the book as a contribution to historical scholarship.

News and Notes Submissions

- Please limited to 250 words and include contact information.
- The editor has the right to change or delete wording or information.

Little Reminders . . . Good Writing Rules

- Write in the active voice and past tense.
- Cast your sentences in the positive.
- Topic sentences should be clear and straightforward statements of what the paragraph is about. Every sentence in a paragraph should work to explain the topic sentence.
- Write in the third person.

An Invitation to Membership

Membership in the Society will give you an opportunity to express your interest and participate in preserving the history of Huntsville and Madison County. Enjoy the opportunity to be with other individuals who share your interest in our history by attending the Society's four meetings a year, each one featuring a speaker of local or regional note. A membership includes subscription to *The Huntsville Historical Review*.

If you know someone who may be interested in becoming a member, please share this application.

Huntsville Historical Society Reviews on line: [HHC \(huntsvillehistorycollection.org\)](http://huntsvillehistorycollection.org)

**Huntsville-Madison County
Historical Society**

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