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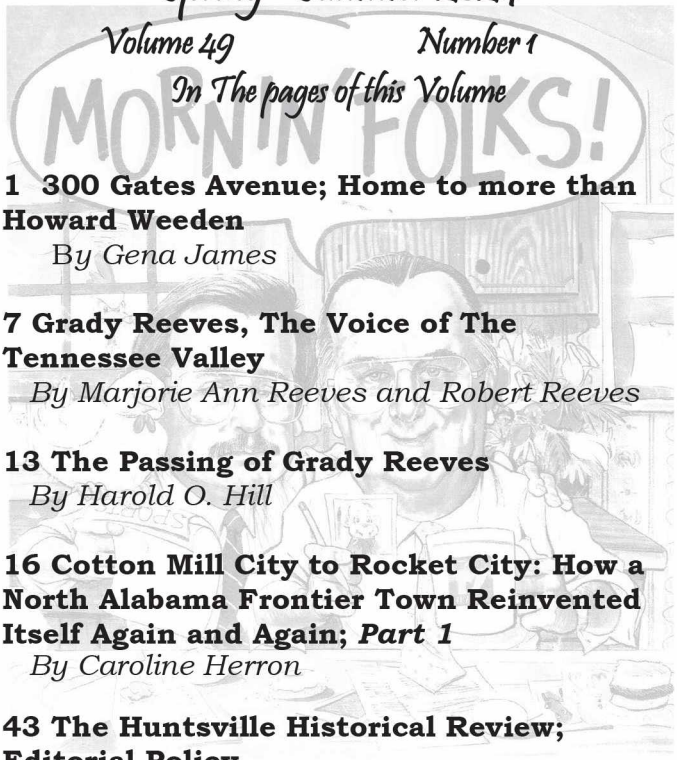

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300 Gates Ave, Home to more than Howard Weeden

By Gina James

In the Twickenham neighborhood, on the corner of Gates Ave. and Greene Street at 300 Gates, stands the historic Weeden House. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, most people living in and visiting Huntsville are aware of the fact that this beautiful example of Federal architecture was home to the famous female artist and writer, Howard Weeden. However, few people beyond local historians are aware that the Weeden family was not the only residents. Nor are the collections "living" in the house today solely Weeden creations.

There have been about 9 "residents" in the 205-year history of the Weeden House. The six-room house was constructed in 1819 by a man named Henry Bradford, a local merchant. Mr. Bradford completed the construction but only resided there for a year. Due to the economic panic of 1819, he quickly sold his new home and moved to Arkansas.

It was then purchased by John Read for $4500 in 1820. Mr. Read was also a merchant in Huntsville but proved to be more successful at the venture than did Henry Bradford. Read enjoyed the home for four years. And In 1824 the house was sold to John McKinley.

McKinley was a lawyer and businessman from Kentucky. He was very active in politics and became the first of three people from Alabama to serve on the US Supreme Court. After living there for five years, he sold the residence to Bartley M. Lowe in 1829 for the sum of $6000.

The Lowe family was a very prosperous merchant and banking family and Bartley Lowe served as the first

president of the Huntsville Branch of the State Bank in 1835. The Lowe family resided in the Weeden House for 16 years. Bartley Lowe built his home known as The Grove and sold the Weeden House to Dr. William Weeden in 1845.

The Weeden family remained in the home until 1956, over 111 years. Of course, during the time the Weeden family resided in the house, the Civil War occurred and came to Huntsville in 1862. It was then that Union soldiers requisitioned the home from the family and were present until 1865. That's why the term "residents" is used loosely. 1862-1865 were the only years that Howard Weeden did not live in the Weeden House. Other than that, she spent 55 of her 58 years in the same home.

After the death of Howard Weeden in 1905 and her sister Kate in 1921, the home was passed to their nephew, Robert Patton Weeden and his wife Mattie Beasley. Robert passed away in 1955 and his daughter Mary Weeden Bibb inherited the home. One year later the home was sold to Mrs. B.A. Stockton.

Mrs. Stockton rented the house for some years and then sold it to Twickenham Historic Preservation District Association in 1973. It was then sold to the Huntsville Housing Authority in 1976 and it became a house museum in1981. The Weeden House celebrates its 43rd anniversary as a public history museum this year.

Timeline of Weeden House

1819-1820-Henry C. Bradford

1820-1824-John Read

1824-1829-John McKinley

1829-1845-Bartley Lowe

1845-1956-Weeden family

1956-1973-Mrs. B.A. Stockton

1973-1976-Twickenham Historic Preservation District Association (THPDA)

1976-1981-City of Huntsville

1981-present, owned by City of Huntsville and operated as a public museum by THPDA

While there are no residents in the home today, it is furnished with art pieces and furnishings that reside there. Present day "residents" include several art pieces that were created by Howard Weeden. Currently, as the home serves as a public history museum, there are many items that have been donated or purchased from local auctions. Most pieces are from the era of 1840-1880. OF course, these art pieces and furnishings help educate visitors about the talent exhibited by Howard Weeden's painting and writings and about local Huntsville history.

However, just as few people realize that the home was owned by more than the Weeden family, even fewer people realize that the art in the museum is more than what was done by Weeden. As part of its mission, THPDA ensures that the history of not only Howard Weeden but also of Huntsville is shared with the community. The museum stewards 55 pieces of original Howard Weeden watercolors, sketches, and oil

paintings. And there is a total amount of 78 pieces of art in the Weeden House.

Some other artists' work that is housed at the Weeden is:

- **William Frye**-portrait artist from Germany that painted many Huntsville residents.
- **John C. Grimes**-Kentucky born artist that painted portraits of many local Huntsville residents.
- **John Heyl Raser**-famous artist born in Mobile, Al
- **William Irby Halsey**-Huntsville portrait painter
- **Kathleen Adelaid Evans**-late 1800's Alabama painter
- **Henry Byrd**-Huntsville artist
- **Effie Davis**-Huntsville artist and niece of Nick Davis Jr., a prominent politician in Alabama

In addition to the artwork in the Weeden House that portrays the history of Huntsville, there are also many fine pieces of furniture and clothing with local provenance. Thanks to many donations, the Weeden House contains pieces like

- Senator Clement Claiborne Clay's secretary
- Andrew Hertz's- local cabinet and furniture maker in 1850's Huntsville, mahogany empire serving table
- Low Country pier table thought to have been made in Huntsville, donated by Jack Burwell
- Alberta Chapman Taylor, Huntsville suffragette, period dress
- George Price and Septimus Cabiness, prominent Huntsville residents' letters

Even though the Weeden House instantly brings to mind Howard Weeden, there are pieces that pertain to the entire history of Huntsville and North Alabama residing within its walls. Through its various residents and collections spanning 205 years, the Weeden House stands today to portray the unique history of Huntsville.

John Grimes
Painting of Sarah Sophia Manning Lowe
THPDA permission

Senator Clement Claiborne Clay's Secretary desk
THPDA permission

William Frye
landscape
THPDA permission

John Heyl Raser
landscape
THPDA permission

Meet the Author: Gina James is the curator for the Weeden House Museum, 300 Gates Avenue, Huntsville, Alabama. She resides in Athens, AL with her husband of 27 years, Kevin James and their three children. She earned a BA in History from Athens State University in 2000 and worked extensively for various community non-profits before briefly becoming a middle and high school history teacher. After leaving the classroom 3 years ago she became the director for the Weeden House Museum. She serves on the Huntsville Pilgrimage Association's board of directors and is active in Twickenham Town Chapter DAR, serving as the Museum Committee Chair. Her special interests are genealogy, archival methods and accessioning, and grant writing. And in her spare time, she enjoys good music, her pets, theater, classic movies and visiting cemeteries and battlefields.

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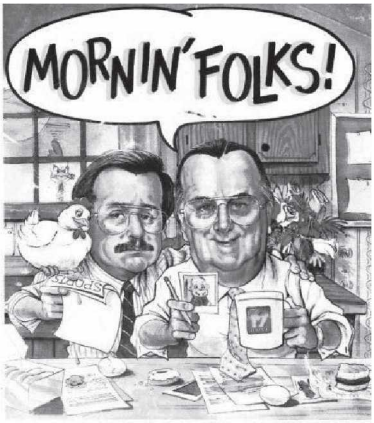
Grady Reeves, The Voice of The Tennessee Valley

By Marjorie Ann Reeves and Robert Reeves
(No relation)



Mention the name, Grady Reeves, to practically anyone past the age of 30 in the Tennessee Valley and 90% of the time the reply will be "Mornin' Folks." The terms are synonymous. Grady hosted "Mornin' Folks" for a little over twenty-five years and in the process built a legacy that remains just as strong today. "Mornin' Folks" was an early morning television program that brought the latest news, sports and weather, but more than anything else, helped you start your day in a good mood.

You couldn't help but smile when Grady laughed and he did it a lot. The great comedian, Jerry Lewis, once said of Grady, "He laughs all over and that makes me laugh. I love him."

Grady was born in Carrollton, Georgia, September 8, 1923. As a young boy, he sold Cloverine salve to buy himself a microphone which would plug into a radio. He practiced continuously and realized this was what he wanted to do for a living. This didn't sit well with his parents, especially his father, who expected him to go to seminary school and become a preacher. Grady played sports through high school, including baseball and basketball, but never quit practicing with that microphone, even when he was in college at the University of Cincinnati. In 1944, to his father's dismay, Grady got his degree in Broadcasting instead of

Religion. In fact, when asked about Grady's choice, his father said "Grady had found the ways of the Devil, but he guessed he was a pretty good radio man." His father even gave him some rather profound advice, "To be yourself is an art and I hope someday you're an artist."

Almost immediately, Grady got a job at WCKY in Cincinnati and even got to broadcast the Cincinnati Reds baseball games from time to time. He enjoyed broadcasting sports and took jobs in neighboring states calling baseball and football games. As fate would have it, in 1946 he was on the way to Atlanta through Birmingham when he made a wrong turn and ended up in Huntsville. This led to a job at radio station WFUN doing football and baseball play-by-play as well as an on-air personality. In the early 1950s, Grady would go on to work at WBHP where he really established himself as the morning radio personality in Huntsville. He signed on every morning as "The Old Man from the Mountain coming to you live from the banks of the beautiful Pinhook Creek." He painted such a beautiful picture over the radio of the Pinhook and its surroundings that people would write in requesting reservations to stay in the area. In reality, the area was one of the worst slums in Huntsville at the time. His show featured live entertainment by local musicians and well known national TV stars such as Clayton Moore, The Lone Ranger, and Duncan Reynaldo, The Cisco Kid, just to name a couple. Grady was also a local celebrity to the teenagers of Huntsville. He did a nightly live radio program from a glass enclosed booth atop a local restaurant known as the Holiday House. The booth was called the "Sky Castle" and it faced the back parking lot where the kids would park and listen to his show. He even had a bucket on a rope so the kids could request songs and dedications while hanging out in the

parking lot. Many times a parent would call Grady and ask him to tell their son or daughter it was time to come home and he would go on the air and say the person's name and tell them it was time to go home. It wouldn't be long before a car would crank up and head out of the parking lot. Grady also did some promoting and one time was contacted by a Nashville agent who had put together a group of traveling musicians who a night's gig needed while passing through Huntsville. Grady booked the Madison County coliseum and set everything up for the group: Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, and Elvis Presley.

The show was excellent but so few people showed up, Grady ended up $200 in the hole.

On June 21, 1956, Grady held a 67-hour marathon from the store front window of Southern Furniture which was located downtown on the square. It was a Trade-O-Rama promotion. The ad stated, "Catch him asleep and win a Frigidaire Range or Refrigerator!" Nobody did.

Grady also worked on WHBR which later became WAAY radio. In 1960, one of his best friends, Jerome Hughey, hired him as manager of a new station in town: WNDA-FM "Huntsville's Golden Sound."

It wasn't long before Grady answered the call from the "new kid in town," television. He started at WAFG-TV as news director and anchor before being hired in 1963 by Charles Grisham as the first employee of a brand new TV station, WHNT. He started as Sports Director and kept that position even when he was named host of a new morning program called "Mornin' Folks" which started in 1966.

Grady eventually stepped aside from the sports director position to focus on his wildly popular morning program. The show started out as a 15 minute public

service program, but soon moved to 30 minutes. It was so well received; it became an hour-long show that was the top-rated program from day one until the day he retired. Grady traveled five to six hundred miles a week taking pictures, shooting video, talking to people, speaking at all kinds of public affairs, and gathering news of North Alabama and Southern Tennessee. He loved his job and all the people he met.

One of Grady's co-hosts, Linda Duncan, said, "He could go any place, a school or a nursing home, meet some person, talk to them 30 seconds, come back, get on the show, and tell the most marvelous story. Stretching the truth, a little bit, but it was always the truth. He was by far the best I've ever seen at knowing when to talk and when to stop." Another co-worker at WHNT, Tom Kennamer stated, "Grady had a gift for gab. He knew everybody, and he'd talk to the players, and the parents. He was a rock star when you went out with him." "Gentle" Grady Reeves of WHNT-TV was named by the Chamber of Commerce as Huntsville's most courteous news announcer on October 23, 1971. Grady was hospitalized in 1980 and while there was visited by the Country Music Super Group, Alabama. That caused quite a stir when they showed up at the hospital to pay their respects. While Grady was in the hospital, his son, Robert, sat in for him on "Mornin' Folks." Grady liked the idea of them working together so he proposed the idea to Robert, who had to audition for the part in front of both the owner, Charles Grisham and general manager, Tom Percer, of WHNT. Apparently they liked the idea, because Robert ended up working at WHNT for 36 years.

Grady was the local host to the Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Telethon for fifteen years. The hosts worked 24 hours straight on air asking for pledges of money for

research to find a cure or provide help to patients. Grady felt it was the most important thing he did in his broadcasting career. Children were always his main interest in his work. He even read bedtime stories and Christmas stories throughout his career on radio for the children. Grady stated, "I tried to become a communicator, so that if your children, my children, or their children were watching, there'd be something for them. I always tried in my mind to do what I'd want my children to do."

The "Mornin Folks" hour long program was the longest running local program in the history of Tennessee Valley television. The show was able to hold a majority share of the market because of Grady. An interviewer stated, "Grady is a happy, jovial, contented man. He followed his father's advice and became an artist of the air. A few months after retiring from the show, Grady passed away, August 25, 1991. As if he could tell the future, Grady wrote a very profound article in the Huntsville Sesquicentennial Commemorative Album of 1955 that very much applies to the way things are today, just change a few words:

"Radio broadcasting is a great American institution. It permeates every phase of our daily lives. It affects the closest relationships of our national life. It will become, increasingly, an agency to be conjured with in International Affairs. Those who control this great institution and those who are affected by it must be dispassionately objective concerning its operation. It must be tolerant of many points of view, of other people and of other nations. So many different people, with different opinions, to deal with. All the prejudices, the passions, the errors of opinions, the local interests and the selfish views, which are inevitably assembled, when men come together to have the advantage of their joint

wisdom. All these are increased and amplified when we deal with the tremendous potentialities of radio broadcasting. It astonishes me, to find it approaching so near to perfection as it does. May it always be a blessing to our people, a means of preserving that which our forefathers wrought for us. May it please God, that the American system of broadcasting shall help to prevent the despotism which comes when people become so corrupted as to need despotic government.

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The Passing of Grady Reeves

by Harold O. Hill


Sunset for 'Mornin'
Grady Reeves bids farewell to the 'folks'

Grady Reeves

My special son was about to eat breakfast and leave for school when the death of well-known local television personality Grady Reeves was reported. The announcer was visibly moved as he relayed the details of Grady's passing.

There in the kitchen, this 15-year- old Down Syndrome boy got up, went to the front of the television and laid his head down as tears started to flow. He said, "I don't understand. Bring him back, please." And now he's gone. From one end of the Tennessee Valley to the other there will be many who say "I don't understand," and there will be many more tears shed. Grady supported charities and causes for all kinds, but it seemed that Down Syndrome kids had a special nook in the corner of his big heart. He never failed to show for their events and on TV he honored their requests as they hugged him and begged, "Call my name, please show my picture." The kids have lost
their champion, but he will always be in their hearts and memories.

Grady was sometimes found in the presence of dignitaries, those with fame, fortune and power, but he was more comfortable and at ease with the common man – those he called the salt of the earth.

Senior citizens adored him because he attended, supported and enjoyed their activities and them. He rambled and roved far and wide from one end of the Tennessee Valley to the other, to the farms, markets, flea markets, trade days, Christmas parades, mule days and country fairs.

His trusty video camera captured the faces of rural people – the faces of the quilt makers, cotton growers, mule breeders and orchard tenders. His legacy on video tape more than once showed the people, the common man who makes this beautiful Tennessee Valley what it is today.

Grady's love for this valley was indescribable. Always interested in the Tennessee Valley's fish and wildlife conservation, Grady kept these issues in the publics interest via TV. He spread the word to thousands of viewers on the hunting seasons, creel and bag limits. He was always the first to announce the arrival of Canada geese to the valley. His peers in fish and wildlife were like a "Who's Who" list, and right at the top was Tom Atkinson, former manager of the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge. Grady loved Wheeler; he loved the woods and the waters, he loved hunting and fishing. He was a good steward to the wildlife and the impact on the public of his love of nature brought many converts.

Should Grady's spirit take one more "on the road" venture, it will float down the Pin Hook Creek like a single golden leaf on the waters into the Huntsville Spring Branch, past the wilds of Jack Andrews Bottom and Byrd Spring, through Redstone Arsenal and the Refuge. The leaf will pause and slowly glide down Indian Creek onward to the mighty Tennessee River.

At the mouth of the river, the leaf will flow into a golden sunset and eternity and be lost in time. But Grady's

memory will live in our hearts forever. Farewell, friend, after weariness comes, sweet rest at last.

The preceding story was written by the late Harold O. Hill for the Huntsville Times about the death of Grady Reeves.

Cotton Mill City to Rocket City: How a North Alabama Frontier Town Reinvented Itself Again and Again

By Caroline Herron
Part 1

The Mill Era

Origins

In his landmark text *The Promise of the New South,* exploring the experiences of Southerners after Reconstruction, Ed Ayers meditates extensively on the dualism of the Southern experiences and the divisions between the Southern experience, culture, economy, and politics and that of the wider national experience. Even as the late 1800s fostered an economic boom, a surge of immigration and accompanying labor force, and a nationalizing culture outside the bounds of the South, the Mason-Dixon line remained a barrier. Efforts at developing manufacturing in the South mostly flopped, "to many people, Southern industry seemed more of a charade than an actuality". Southern newborn industries were competing with Northern established industry for investment capital, skilled labor, and the market even as "federal banking policy, railroad freight rates, absentee ownership, reliance on outside expertise, high interest rates, cautious state governments, lack of industrial experience- all these hindered the growth of Southern industry"[1]. Given these restrictions, the bulk of Southern industry that developed postwar was extractive; mining lumber

[1] Ayers, Edward L, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York, 1992), 104.

extraction. These materials were then sent away to other markets better able to do the more lucrative work of finishing them into sellable goods. In this way, the South remained mostly colonial in economics, reliant on the technical capabilities of distant markets while stripping its own natural resources for survival.

There was, however, one major industry that thrived in the south; still, always, cotton was king. Textile mills were possibly the most successful and most lucrative of the Southern industries; all that was needed to establish a mill was a water source, a resource that Huntsville had in abundance. Textile mills also required very little by way of startup costs, and the labor demands required very little skill, all of which made it ideal for the postwar South whose largest resource was its plethora of low-cost unskilled labor. The number of textile mills in the South began growing in 1870 and by 1900, 32% of the nation's textile workers were in the South (up from 8% in 1870).[2] Perhaps most significantly, the textile industries, as opposed to the mining or lumber industries that also gained traction in the south, employed local people and largely used local capital to produce a marketable, consistently profitable product that maintained the most consistent boost to the local economy. Huntsville was one such beneficiary from the boom in the Southern textile industry.

The Huntsville Mill Boom

The post war languishing of the city of Huntsville lingered until 1880, when businessman D. L. Love from Mississippi advertised in Providence, Rhode Island of business opportunities in Huntsville. The antebellum

[2] Ayers, 111

cotton mills in North Alabama had been small, family owned, and mostly outside of the city proper; suffering from the war, the remaining mill closed in 1885 due to competition from the new, in-town mills. Love's advertisement was answered by a Rhode Island native named Joshua Coons, a trained cotton spinner who did much of the work in assembling Huntsville's first major mill. Coons approved a mill site, found officers for the mill, and persuaded the city to waive the mill's taxes for a decade; in 1880 the mill opened with 1,248 spindles, soon to add 4,000 more.

In 1886 brothers Michael and James O'Shaughnessy formed the North Alabama Investment Company (NAIC) with a $50,000 intended to aid the local economy and bring industry such as cotton mills to Huntsville. NAIC widely distributed pamphlets and advertisements to bring investors to Huntsville, pamphlets such as the 1888 "Huntsville, the Queen City of the South", which bragged extensively about Huntsville's existing factories, mills, schools, churches, agriculture, climate, and mineral resources. [3] Between this push and the turn of the century, Huntsville gained three more significant cotton mills. The Dallas Manufacturing Company was given free water from the city and fifty acres from the NAIC in 1892. The mill took its name from Trevanion Dallas, who came from the Nashville Cotton Mill, and its investors included $126,000 from locals as well as Dallas himself and an array of investors from New York, Philadelphia, Providence and Pawtucket, Rhode Island. In the same year Michael O'Shaughnessy and Joshua Coons united with South Dakota transplant Tracey Pratt to open a 5,200-spindle West Huntsville Cotton Mills Company and then the Merrimack Manufacturing

[3] "Huntsville, Queen City of the South"

Company arrived in 1900 due to the work of Tracey Pratt. Merrimack was unique in that it was headquartered in Lowell, Massachusetts and its investor pool was quite small- only 8 men. Between 1900 and 1902, four mills opened in Huntsville: the Lowe Manufacturing Company (owned by Arthur Lowe, president of the New England Manufacturer's Association), the Madison Spinning Company, the Rowe Knitting Company, and the Eastern Manufacturing Company.

With this surge, Huntsville was finally the manufacturing capital that investors had hoped for. Though the claims that the majority of funding for the mills was local are demonstrably false, there was considerable local benefit from the mills. In addition to the thousands of jobs available, some considerable proportion of the profits stayed local, the mills paid taxes that built Huntsville's infrastructure, and secondary industries built up to support the increase in population and prosperity.

Promotion

Early historians such as Broadus Mitchel in his 1921 text *The Rise of Cotton Mills in the South* posited that the bulk of Southern manufacturing was built primarily on the back of local Southern investment, saying nothing stands out more prominently than that the Southern mills were conceived and brought into existence by Southerners. The impulse was furnished almost exclusively from within the South against much discouragement from selfish interests at the North, and

capital was supplied by the South to the limit of its ability.[4]

In fact, this claim has largely been debunked since Mitchell wrote, with Huntsville as a prototypical example of a Southern success that depended heavily on the investment and connections of Northern businessmen, some of whom relocated either part time or full time to the city. In fact, prior to the arrival of these investors, the citizens made several attempts at the sort of improvements that the city would need to attract industry, to no avail. In 1880, the citizens of Huntsville proposed to print "a twenty-five to thirty-page booklet describing the lands, minerals, water power, manufacturing facilities, markets, climate, and social advantages of the area in order to induce immigration and capital"[5]. The town formed groups to raise funds for improvement of transportation routes; the Tennessee River Improvement Committee petitioned Congress to increase appropriations for the Muscle Shoals Canal, to no avail. Discussion of new railroad lines surfaced multiple times, though none was ever built to add on to the east-west line of the Memphis & Charleston. The townspeople were clearly aware of their need for infrastructure, and there was a desire to attract industry and investment, but these desires required an outside impetus to bring them to fruition.

The development of Huntsville and its success in the textile mills industry is inextricable from the names of a few significant individuals; namely, the O'Shaughnessy's and Tracey Pratt. The O'Shaughnessy

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[4] Broadus Mitchell, *The Rise of Cotton Mills in the South.* Baltimore; Johns Hopkins Press, 1921. P 102

[5] *Northern Dollars for Huntsville Spindles, 8*

legacy in Huntsville is not immediately discernible today; aside from the quiet residential O'Shaughnessy Street in the historic Five Points district, the name is virtually invisible. And yet brothers James and Michael were the driving force and the financial backing behind many of the most successful movements for industrial development in the city. The O'Shaughnessy brothers came from Ireland with their parents before the Civil War, and both boys were employed in their father's dry goods business in Cincinnati. During the Civil War, both were employed in the Department of the Treasury, Michael in bookkeeping and accounting and James in the Quartermaster section. After the war, the brothers put their experiences to good use; the formed a commission house in Nashville and began acquiring cotton shipments in 1865. They opened a cottonseed oil factory, James moved to New York City and began making business contacts in the shipment and distribution of cottonseed oil. In 1881, Michael bought the site of the abandoned machine shops of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad in Huntsville, and built the Huntsville Cotton Oil Mill. Thus began the O'Shaughnessy's influence in the stagnant post-Reconstruction cotton village in North Alabama. The brothers recognized the confluence of the Tennessee River, the railroad, the abundant labor force, and the local cotton crop as a potential profit, and they had the means and the will to invest.

In 1886 the North Alabama Improvement Company was invested with $50,000 capital stock and a board of eighteen local citizens, two O'Shaughnessy brothers, and two men from Memphis, was to improve and develop the opportunities in the city of Huntsville. The local citizens came from a broad swath of Huntsville businesses: physicians, bookstores, court clerks, hotel

owners, grocers, the president of the Huntsville Female College, bankers, and a single attorney. In addition to work on bringing Dallas Mills, the NAIC also worked to build the Monte Sano Hotel, a railroad up the mountain to the hotel, the renovation of the Huntsville Hotel downtown, a road from Huntsville to Guntersville, and a new railroad from Huntsville to Gadsden. The goal of each of these projects was to attract wealthy investors and capital as well as improve conditions for businesses in the city. The NAIC, in addition to investing directly in projects in and around Huntsville, made efforts at advertising and promoting the city across the nation. One way they accomplished this was the production of pamphlets such as *The Queen City of the South*, published and distributed in 1888 offering unexcelled openings and inducements... for blast furnaces, rolling mills, steam forges, foundries, machine shops, boiler works, rail, fish-plate and spike mills, nail works, bridge and bolt works, furniture factories, planning mills, wagon, buggy and carriage works, car shops, boot and shoe factories, paper mills, starch works, and diversified industries of all desirable kinds, seeking healthy climate and good homes, cheap fuel, abundant water and raw material, with ample transportation for supplies and manufactured products, etc.[6]

In addition to their work with the NAIC, both O'Shaughnessy brothers built local residences that they used to varying degrees, and they both invested in the local Catholic church downtown. Colonel James bilt a fine home on Monte Sano called "Castle Delight", and frequently used it for entertaining friends and associates from across the country. Michael moved his wife and five children to Huntsville full time, building a

[6]*Queen City of the South, p3*

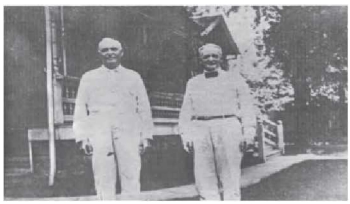
luxurious home they called Kildare, completed in 1886 and still standing today.

Michael O'Shaughnessy at Kildare *source: Ryan, Northern Dollars for Huntsville Spindles* p. 8

The most significant of the O'Shaughnessy achievements in Huntsville was unquestionably the establishment of the NAIC and bringing Dallas Mills to the city. Eventually providing 1,200 jobs, Dallas Mills also established precedent for the mills that would follow it. Named for the manager of the mill, who managed the mill from its opening until 1902, Dallas Mill was a local enterprise funded entirely with non-local funds. Of the $500,000 capital stock set, T.B. Dallas and G. M. Fogg of Nashville and S. M. Milliken of New York invested $20,000 each, $276,000 was amassed from a collection of 44 subscribers (thirty two of whom resided outside Alabama, zero of whom is a recognizable Huntsvillian), nine northern businesses pledged $110,000. A total of $90,600 was pledged by Huntsville locals, but $25,000 of this came from the NAIC and $20,000 came from the O'Shaughnessy brothers, and there is some speculation over whether these pledges were ever actually fulfilled as in 1894 Huntsvillians owned only 16.7% of the

common stock and 1.8% of the preferred stock.[7] However, 52% of the stockholders were Huntsvillians.[8] Clearly, the local population was largely invested in the mill as Mitchell says "to the limit of their ability", however, that limit was not sufficient. The bulk of investment began and continued to be outsiders for the Dallas Mill and those following.

Perhaps the next most influential achievement of the NAIC was in its death; in 1892, as the far-reaching O'Shaughnessy family finally overextended themselves (sunk, like so many others, in the Atlantic-Pacific canal project that would eventually be the Panama Canal, among other investments) the company essentially dissolved and subsequently sold off its real estate holdings in Huntsville. The properties were bought by the Northwestern Land Association, a group of South Dakota businessmen that included the next generation of wealthy investors looking to grow Huntsville. Even as Dallas Mills thrived and grew rapidly, William S. Wells, Willard I Wellman, and Tracy Pratt, as part of the Northwestern Land Association, came to Huntsville. [9]



Wellman (left) with Pratt*source: Ryan, Northern Dollars for Huntsville Spindles, 14.*

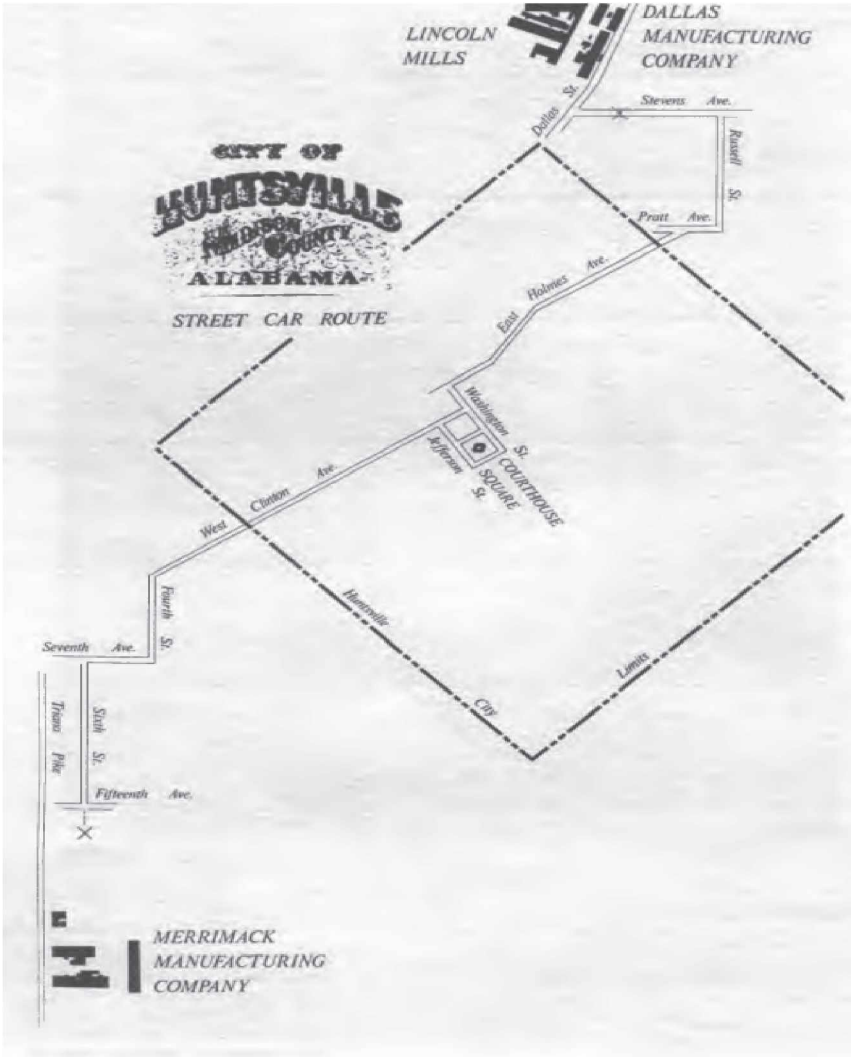
Tracey Pratt, Wellman, and Wells became the driving forces behind the next half-century of

[7] Dallas Manufacturing Co. *Record of Stockholders Meetings*, 76-79

[8] Dallas Manufacturing Co., *Record of Stockholders Meetings",* 183-185

[9] Ryan, Patricia H. (2002) "Michael O'Shaughnessy and The North Alabama Improvement Company," The Historic Huntsville Quarterly: Vol. 28: No. 2, Article 7. Available at: https://louis.uah.edu/historic-huntsville-quarterly/vol28/iss2/7

Huntsville's mill growth. With the power of the Northwestern Land Association behind them, contacts across the country, and the precedent of the O'Shaughnessy's successes with Dallas Mill, swiftly the West Huntsville Cotton Mills (often called the Coons and Pratt Mills) opened. The Northwestern Land Association, as did the NAIC before them, circulated pamphlets and booklets throughout the country advertising Huntsville. In addition to the larger mills, the group solicited small businesses as well. In 1899 the Merrimack Manufacturing Company of Lowell, Massachusetts announced their intention to build a mill in Huntsville; credit was given primarily to Tracey Pratt, with assistance from Wells, for negotiating with the Merrimack Co to bring the mill to Huntsville along with the jobs it supplied. With the construction of Merrimack Mill it was determined that the rapidly expanding city needed a system of streetcars to link the mill villages with the town proper, and once again Tracey Pratt took point on the project, investing the lion's share of the capital stock. This particular project saw Pratt unite with minority stockholders John F Waters and T Coleman du Pont, both of whom invested capital in the West Huntsville Land and Improvement Company, another organization to promote the city.



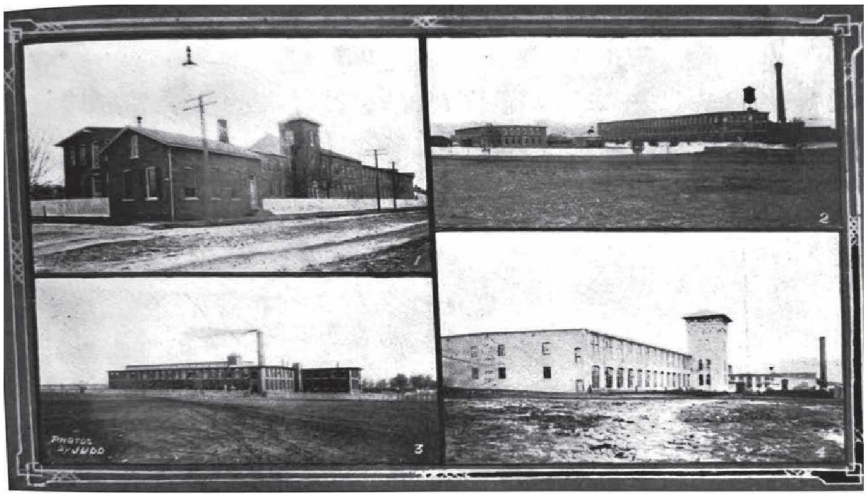
Huntsville Streetcar route, connecting the Dallas and Merrimack Villages with Huntsville proper and creating the suburb. *source: Ryan, Northern Dollars for Huntsville Spindles, 19.*

In 1900 Pratt brough Huntsville's fifth successful cotton mill, Lowe Mill. The West Huntsville Land and

Improvement Company donated nine blocks of land, Massachusetts businessman Arthur Lowe built a 10,000 spindle mill; once again the lion's share of the investment capital came from outside Huntsville. Pratt and Wellman were the only Huntsvillians on the board of directors of the mill. Later that year, Pratt was credited with bringing Rowe Knitting Company to the city as well; three blocks for the mill's village were provided by the West Huntsville Land and Improvement Company, the majority of the funding was provided from out-of-towners.

Underscoring the importance of out-of-town investment, in 1899 an attempt was made to finance"People's Cotton Mill" using local money in small increments; though $15,000 of the proposed $100,000 was raised in the first night of promotion, the project came to naught and no incorporation papers were ever filed.

The city made efforts to diversify the economy, as well, again using pamphlets primarily. In addition, the local newspapers were effective at touting the attributes of the city, often free water was offered as an inducement (as at Dallas Mills). In addition, citizens often purchased property and donated it to developers as an inducement to attract business. The Northwest Land Association and the chamber of commerce worked extensively, advertising and negotiating to attract diversified businesses, and were largely successful though the cotton mills remained predominant.



1908 Businessmen's League of Huntsville brochure collage of Huntsville mills. Clockwise from top left: Huntsville Cotton Mills, Lowe Mills, Abingdon Mills, and Huntsville Knitting Mills. *Source: Images of America: Huntsville page 83*

Evaluation of the city's population growth through this period of investment and expansion is difficult, as the mill villages weren't incorporated into the city limits until the 1950s, thus the city census records show virtually no population growth through the 1890s. Modern approximations estimate that including the mill villages into the city might result in as high as 97% population growth over the course of the 1890s. [10]

African American Experience

The experiences and opportunities of African American Huntsvillians is more difficult to decipher than that of their white neighbors. In 1860 on the cusp

[10] Northern Dollars for Huntsville Spindles, Ch 1

of the Civil War, enslaved African Americans outnumbered whites[11]. In 1870, the population of African Americans had risen to 15,740 and by 1900 (Census data on population of black people in Madison county in 1890-1900).

Though the cotton mills brought thousands of jobs to Huntsville and indubitably increased general wealth and opportunity in the county, these jobs were largely not available to the African American residents of the county. As in most other textile mills across the south, "the machine rooms of the cotton mills rapidly became the preserve of whites only"[12] Mill owners- motivated both by racial prejudice but also a desire to prevent friction within the mills- isolated black workers to jobs outside the mills. They were hired to work on the grounds as groundskeepers, construction workers, and laborers. "In 1890 African American 'operatives, laborers, and loom fixers,' including men and women, made up only 17.16 percent of southern mill workers and by 1930 had increased to only 29.82 percent"[13]. Black Huntsvillians, though a majority of the population, were largely excluded from the prosperity and opportunity that the mill era brought.

Local Reception of the Mills

Though local newspaper coverage of the movement of industrialization was largely laudatory- leaders such as Pratt and O'Shaughnessy were celebrated as local

[11] US Census 1860

[12] Ayers, 114

[13]Snow, Whitney Adrienne. "Cotton Mill City: The Huntsville Textile Industry, 1880-1989." Alabama Review 63, no. 4 (2010): 243-281. doi:10.1353/ala.2010.0006.

heroes and the advent of the mills was regarded as a positive- the mill workers themselves were not entirely welcomed by Huntsvillians. The newspapers covered a number of violent events in the mill villages- including the 1900 lynching of a black man named Elijah Clark. Accused of assaulting two Dallas Mills girls, Susie and Nellie Priest, the twenty two-year old Clark was arrested and taken to the jail. The night of July 25, a mob of Dallas millworkers armed themselves, dynamited the jail, dragged Clark back to their village and, in front of a crowd of 6,000 men, women, and children, hanged the accused. They then proceeded to fill his body with bullets and leave it as a warning. The violence was largely regarded by the local newspapers as disgraceful and reflected poorly on the mills and millworkers; though such lynching were far from unheard of in Madison county, this particular one was seen as the failing of the Dallas mills management, for failing to control their workers. This linguistic separation occurred frequently in newspaper reports of violence in the mill villages, demonstrating the lack of assimilation of the mill workers and the town at large. The mill villages weren't incorporated into the city limits until 1910, despite their significant growth. In the hierarchy of the city, the townspeople were at the top, then the millworkers decidedly below but also decidedly more elevated than both black Huntsvillians and farmers.[14] As Ayers put it, "The town people saw the operatives from the very beginning as people unlike themselves, as helpless women, benighted rustics, or failed farmers. For some, that perception of the workers fed a desire to minister to them, to help bring them into the fold of the

[14] Snow, 268-170

progressive New *Comparison to other textile mill cities in the South*

The issue of establishing a thriving textile mill economy in the south was a pressing one; textile mills were one of the only truly successful southern industries to come out of the plethora of "New South" attempts. The South could provide plentiful cheap labor, there was more than enough water sources for the mills themselves, and there was interest across the South. The problem, then, was investment capital. Even in Texas, the largest cotton producer in the country with a rapidly increasing population and plenty of will to develop the nascent industry struggled to amass sufficient investment. Even as eastern capitalists pledged hundreds of thousands of dollars in mills across Texas, they required local investment as well and nothing came of the schemes. [15] Though Ayers claims in his *The Promise of the New South* that "the textile mills were built with local capital and employed local people", this assumed a level of ability. Towns like Huntsville, which had precious little capital to invest to begin with, could never have formed a cotton mill (much less the five mills that Huntsville boasted by 1900) without extensive outside investment. Despite its own assurances to the contrary, Huntsville mills were not primarily locally funded; even the key figures like Pratt, O'Shaughnessy, and Wells were out of towners who adopted the community for investment. The later leadership like Pratt, Wells, and Wellman were all

[15]Shennette Garrett-Scott. "'The Hope of the South': The New Century Cotton Mill of Dallas, Texas, and the Business of Race in the New South, 1902–1907." *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 116, no. 2 (2012): 139–66. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24388316.

transplants who moved full-time to the city and remained there long-term. South; for others, perhaps most, that sense of otherness bred only pity or contempt."[16]

Death of the Mills

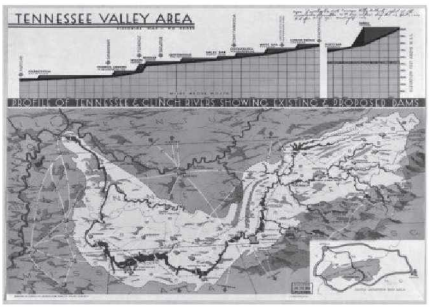
The 1930s were difficult for everyone, but perhaps especially so for textile mills; the 30's not only held the Depression, but also boll weevils and plunging cotton prices, national strikes in both 1934 and 1936. Huntsville's mill workers participated in the 1934 strike which was largely unsuccessful. The fluctuating fortunes of the textile industry at large (increased demand with World War II, a postwar slump, a 1951 national strike) led to widespread closure of textile mills through the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. Huntsville paralleled this experience closely. The 1934 strike was most significant, beginning nearby in Gadsden, AL on July 12 and spreading to Huntsville on July 16. In the end, though the United Textile Workers considered it a victory, it was largely hollow. The strike left fourteen dead, hundreds arrested, and 420,000 idle nationwide and achieved virtually no gains for workers. In Huntsville, the strike cost the 4,500 strikers about $600,000 in wages, the strikers faced widespread discrimination afterwards with no increase in wages and worsening treatment. Though a case could be made for the strike having some impact on the social consciousness of Huntsville's 'lintheads', as textile workers were derogatively referred to, making some gains in the social inequality they had faced since the

[16] Ayers 113

mills opened, that is the only gain they could honestly claim.[17]

In the wake of the strikes, and while floundering financially, the mills began to topple one at a time. The Rowe mill closed after the 1934 strike. Lowe closed in 1937. Dallas closed in 1949. Lincoln closed in 1955, leaving only Merrimack in the former Cotton Mill City. With the dissolution of the city's industrial backbone, the threat hovered of becoming a no-industry ghost town as did so many Southern towns.

Tennessee Valley Authority



Proposed TVA dam projects in 1939, showing proximity to Huntsville. *Source: Tennessee Valley Authority. Tennessee Valley Area: pictorial map. [Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939] Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/2008628288/.*

Huntsville is located in Northern Alabama, at the tail end of the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains and just north of the Tennessee River, which originates in the Appalachians at Knoxville before wandering southwest to Chattanooga, then further south across Northern Alabama, then looping northwards again to meet the Ohio River in Kentucky. Prior to 1933, the Tennessee was not navigable as far as Huntsville. In May 1933 as a part of President Roosevelt's New Deal, the Tennessee Valley Authority was founded as an

[17]Snow, 269

attempt at regional economic stimulus to lift the agricultural regions of the Tennessee River Valley that were hard-hit by the Great Depression. The Tennessee Valley Authority was a unique endeavor; a government agency tasked with the total development of a region, the TVA's mandate was vague and broad-reaching. Among other endeavors, the TVA attempted to control flooding, harness hydroelectric power opportunities, make the waterways of the Tennessee watershed more navigable, and generally take the Tennessee Valley from an underdeveloped agricultural backwater with virtually nothing to offer potential industry to a region of opportunity.[18]

In Huntsville, the TVA made the Tennessee River navigable up to the city itself, offering another transportation opportunity to add to the city's railroad line. By the 1940s, the TVA was embarking on the massive hydroelectric project that was to become its chief legacy; the dams that would bring inexpensive electricity to the Valley, and power the industry that was to shift Huntsville's future.

Amidst the threats of the 1930s arose a powerful force that would come to dominate the next century of Huntsville's existence: federal spending. The Tennessee Valley Authority became the predominant spender in the area and made changes that would echo through the entirety of North Alabama in virtually every way. However, federal spending is not arbitrary, and the TVA was the first experience many Huntsville leaders had

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[18] National Archives. "Tennessee Valley Authority Act, 1933." Milestone Document. National Archives. July 19. 2023, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/tennessee-valley-authority-act#:~:text=President%20Roosevelt%20signed%20the%20Tennessee,and%20businesses%2C%20and%20replanting%20forests.

with maximizing the government's dollars, but it was surely not the last. Just as the leadership of a few significant characters united with a general willingness to press for change, the TVA era was characterized by a sense of local advocacy that had huge impacts.

More than any other Tennessee Valley city, however, Huntsville embraced the booster ethos with a civil leadership dedicated to building a prosperous economy on a foundation of federal investment... no longer a sleepy southern cotton-processing center, Huntsville emerged as a regional nexus of high-paying, high-tech jobs, forcing the surrounding community to work ceaselessly to keep up with the economic, political, and social consequences of rampant growth[19]

Downs, in his text on the development and activity of the Tennessee Valley Authority, highlights the importance and effectiveness of local leadership in connecting and amplifying federal spending. "North Alabama had a number of draws for businesses interested in relocating: pleasant weather, ample resources, cheap non-unionized labor, and cooperative civic and state governments, promising lax regulations and financial incentives. Yet these benefits were prevalent in the emerging Sunbelt... For the Tennessee Valley to best its competition, TVA knew that enthusiastic and organized local and regional developers would be essential"[20] In fact, despite the obvious need and poverty in the south, the region received the lowest level of per capita spending during the New Deal Era (Figure X). This was in part due to Congress, but also attributable to a lack of local

[19] Downs, 10

[20] Downs, 148

support for federal investment: "complaints about the threat to local wages and labor discipline were common".[21] Huntsville was a notable exception to this rule. As was the case with the NAIC and the Northwestern Land Association, North Alabama relied on the development of organizations that could amplify the voices of North Alabama's needs and the effectiveness of the TVA's dollars. Huntsville's embrace of federal spending was unique in the south, and it allowed for the explosion of growth seen in the next half-century.

Per Capita Federal Expenditures, 1933-1939

	Expenditures per capita	Percentage of US average
U.S.	$224	
West	306	137
Midwest	224	100
Northeast	196	88
South	189	84
Alabama	175	78
Arkansas	256	114

[21] Wright, 260

Georgia	171	76
Louisiana	221	99
Mississippi	228	102
North Carolina	143	64
South Carolina	198	88
Tennessee	183	82
Texas	205	92
Virginia	175	78

Fig. 6: Data adapted from Wright Old South, New South p. 260

Boosterism Controversy

Rocket City Era

Wartime Development

World War II was the lifeline that Huntsville- and the nation- needed. Between 1941 and 1944 the new chemical ordnance plants in Huntsville employed more than 17,000 people, many former mill workers. After the war, the shuttering of the wartime plants again could have left the city a ghost town. As the US began quietly preparing for war in the early 1940s, the Chemical Warfare Service requested the War Department acquire

to prepare to furnish an extensive standing army with offensive chemical munitions. Congress obliged, passing $53,000,000 for procurement and supply in the supplemental appropriations bill passed in June 1940. On the whole, the southeastern textile states ranked lowest in the nation for federal spending; southern political representatives "gave low priority to attracting federal funds to their states and districts, if indeed they were not actively hostile"[22]

On June 8, 1941 Lt. Col. Charles E. Loucks, soon to be Executive Officer of OC Chemical Warfare Services and Major General Walter C. Baker, a former Chief of the Chemical Warfare Service visited Huntsville and, upon returning to Washington, filed a report with the Chemical Warfare Service. Shortly thereafter, the CWS recommended that of the nine suggested locations the Huntsville site was "more desirable, considering the matter as a whole, than any other location considered". The decision was based on the availability of 33,000 low-priced acres, access to transportation facilities, labor conditions, construction materials, power supply from the Tennessee Valley Authority, operating personnel and raw materials, fuel, water supply, climate, health, living conditions, and sewage disposal. By July 3, 1941, the *Huntsville Times* was announcing the decision to construct a Chemical Warfare Manufacturing Arsenal near the city;

> Information received by The Times from Washington states that there will be two plants- separate and apart but adjacent. One will be the Chemical Warfare Service Plant, while the other will be the Ordnance plant for

[22] Wright, 259

> storage and care of the shells." The Chemical Plant will cost $41,000,000 while the other will cost $6,000,000. It was also reported that approximately 5,000 men will be required to operate the plant and approximately the same number of men for construction purposes.[23]

Shortly thereafter, the Ordinance Department decided to place a large chemical shell assembly plant and related facilities adjacent to the established Huntsville Arsenal. Thus the two facilities, abutting the Tennessee River to the south and adjacent to one another, formed what would become the 30,000+ acre Redstone Arsenal.

Ground was broken on the Arsenal on August 5, 1941, and the path of the Cotton Mill City changed irrevocably in ways the residents could hardly imagine. Over the course of the war the Arsenal peaked at 6,707 employees, 90% of whom were civilians and almost 65% of whom were women. January 1945 saw another milestone with the origins of the Fred Project, which was tasked with investigating chemical combinations as a propellant for the JR-2 bombs. This early foray into missile development would prove prescient.

Though the end of the war decreased the work done at the Arsenal, it did not entirely stop. Unlike many other production factories post-war, the chemical munitions produced on the Arsenal had to be destroyed and stored, and they returned to the point of origin for this task. By February 1947, this task was completed and Redstone went into standby status with a permanent force of 225 people.

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[23] July 3, 1941 Huntsville Times

The only factors that likely prevented the Arsenal from being shut down and sold during 1948-49 was the slow process of demilitarization and decontamination; with the size of the workforce, the process moved slowly. In addition, several Arsenal buildings had been leased to private industries, and the leases required the arsenal to furnish utilities. In fact, the arsenal came so close to its own doom that there are anecdotal accounts of For Sale signs being hung on the fences multiple times, before the sale was delayed each time. Thus, the large Redstone Arsenal limped through the meager years of the later 1940s, surviving until its next calling fortuitously arrived in 1950.

In 1948, the Chief of the Ordnance Rocket Branch persuaded the Chief of Ordnance to centralize the Ordnance rocket research at a "rocket arsenal", and furthermore that this arsenal should be located at Redstone. By November 1949, the Huntsville Arsenal and the Redstone Arsenal had been united under the Redstone Arsenal command, now called the Ordnance Rocket Center. With a civil servant workforce of 720 people, Huntsville's Rocket City identity was born.

From this humble origin grew the Thiokol Chemical Corporation and Rohm & Haas began doing research and development for rocket propellant at Redstone, then the Ordnance Research and Development division of guided missiles moved to Redstone from Fort Bliss, Texas.[24] In 1950 Werner Von Braun and his team of German rocketeers moved to Huntsville. In 1960 the Marshall Spaceflight Center was established at Redstone, building the rockets that would take

[24] Cleo Cason and Winona Stroup (1971) "The Early Years of Redstone Arsenal," Huntsville Historical Review: Vol. 1: No. 3, Article 12.

astronauts to the moon and back. The Cotton Mill city was reinvented as the Rocket City.

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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 and the material it includes.

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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.
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- The editor has the right to alter or delete wording or information.

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

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- Ron Bledsoe
- Blake Dorning
- David Hitt
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- Joyce Smith
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