

The Huntsville Historical Review

Spring-Summer 2004

Volume 29

Number 2



James B. Lewis

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The Huntsville Historical Review

Spring-Summer 2004



A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John B. Callis".

Honorable John Benton Callis
Congressman, 5th District, Alabama
40th Congress

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President's Page

Since the last publication of the *Huntsville-Madison County Historical Review*, two historical markers have been erected in Madison County. One was placed at the old Fifth Avenue Elementary School site on Governors' Drive. It commemorates the first elementary school to be integrated in Alabama. The second marker was placed in Triana, a small African-American community on the Tennessee River in the southwestern part of the county. We congratulate those who worked to establish these markers.

The Society has been saddened to learn that the editor of the *Review*, Mr. Edwin Cochran, has accepted a position in Germany and will be transferring there in August. This is the last issue with which he has been associated.

Mr. Brian Hogan has generously consented to serve in the interim until a permanent editor is named. Brian has assisted Ed with this issue and will serve until the position is filled with a permanent editor.

We appreciate very much the excellent job Ed has done since the society lost Dr. Frances Roberts in 2001. He will be sorely missed.

Virginia P. Kobler
President

Editor's Notes

Welcome to the Spring / Summer 2004 edition of *The Huntsville Historical Review*. In this issue of the *Review*, we present four original works authored by Mr. Norman Shapiro, Mr. Dex Nilsson, Ms. Nancy Rohr, and Mrs. Phylliss O'Connell, focusing on various aspects of Huntsville and Madison County history.

Our lead article, by Norman Shapiro, examines the political career of John Benton Callis, North Alabama's post-Civil War Republican Congressman. Dex Nilsson's article, "More of Why Is It Named That?" explores the history behind the naming of several Huntsville landmarks and streets, while Nancy Rohr demonstrates the use of archival records for local history research. Finally, as part of our commitment to make genealogy an integral part of local history, Phylliss O'Connell tells the story of the Drake, Robertson, and Brooks families

Ed Cochran
Editor

Interim Editor's Note

It has been a pleasure to work with Ed on this issue. I had no idea of the effort that went into editing and publishing the *Review*! On behalf of all members of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society I thank Ed for his dedication and hard work over the last several years, and wish him well in his future endeavors.

Brian Hogan
Interim Editor

John Benton Callis: Madison County's Republican Congressman

NORMAN M. SHAPIRO

The reconstruction period between the cessation of hostilities in May, 1865, and the establishment of Alabama's new government in July, 1868, the interregnum, was characterized by Walter Lynwood Fleming in his signature volume, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama*, as a period of lawlessness, disorder, strife and uncertainty.¹ The establishment of the new government did not end this discord or reconstruction; the military occupation by Federal troops and the continued domination by the Federal government in the affairs of the State lasted for another six years. It did, however, place the State on a protracted path to normalcy.

On June 25, 1868, Alabama was re-admitted to the Union. The re-admission was implemented on that date when the Federal Congress passed the bill, H. R. No. 1058 by the required two-thirds vote, notwithstanding the objections of President Andrew Johnson.² In his veto message, the President detailed several objections to the bill which also proposed the re-admission of North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, Georgia and Florida. He wrote, "In the case of Alabama it violates the plighted faith of Congress by forcing upon that State a constitution which was rejected by the people, according to the express terms of an act of Congress requiring that a majority of the registered electors should vote upon the question of its ratification." This statement will be seen to be significant in this account describing in part the role played in these events by an almost forgotten figure in the history of Madison County, Alabama, General John B. Callis. For 224 days in 1868-1869 he was Madison County's only Republican Congressman.

John Benton Callis was born in Fayetteville, Cumberland County, North Carolina, January 3, 1828.³ His farming family moved to Carroll County, Tennessee in 1834 and then as pioneer settlers to Grant County, Wisconsin, in 1840. He attended common schools and studied medicine for three years, but then abandoned further study and went to Minnesota in 1849 where he obtained a contract with an associate to build Fort Gaines (later named Fort Ripley). He moved to California in 1851 and engaged in mining and the mercantile business; went to Central America in 1853 and then



John B. Callis
Lt. Col., 7th VRC-Bvt.
Brig. Gen.

returned to Lancaster, Wisconsin in the fall of that year where he again engaged in mercantile pursuits. He was Lancaster City Treasurer from 1854-1858. He married Mattie Barnett of Lancaster in 1855 and they were the parents of five children.

Callis was First Lieutenant of the Grant County militia when the Civil War broke out. He raised a company and began a distinguished military service as Captain, Company F, 7th Wisconsin Infantry. The 7th Wisconsin was part of the Iron Brigade which won fame on battlefields from 2nd Bull Run (2nd Manassas) to Gettysburg and beyond, seeing action in nearly all of the major actions of the Army of the Potomac. At Gainesville (VA) on August 28, 29 1862, all officers ranking Callis were killed or wounded giving him the responsibility of commanding the regiment there and on the next day at 2nd Bull Run. He led the regiment at South Mountain, Antietam (where he received his first wound) and at Fredericksburg, and as acting commander, he often wrote the Lancaster, Wisconsin newspaper with news and casualty reports.⁴ He was promoted to Major on January 5, 1863, and to Lt. Colonel on March 4, 1863,

The three days of Gettysburg, July 1-3, 1863, changed John Callis's life - forever. The Iron Brigade lost 1212 of its 1883 effectives, the highest casualty rate of any Union brigade.⁵ Some of this experience is described in his correspondence with Col. Thomas S. Kenan, 43rd North Carolina Infantry, some thirty-two years after the battle. Colonel Kenan had comforted him as he lay badly wounded on the battlefield, and he had given Kenan his spurs. Kenan hoped to arrange a subsequent meeting with Callis at Gettysburg. The correspondence which was illustrative of many similar occurrences between officers and men of the opposing forces was published in a North Carolina military history and in abbreviated versions in other sources including a very recent book.⁶ Callis's letter, which also gives a good account of some of the first days fighting at Gettysburg, follows and Col. Kenan's letter appears as Appendix I:

Lancaster, Wis., 3 September, 1893

Colonel Thos. S. Kenan, Raleigh, N. C.:

MY DEAR COLONEL: - Your favor of a recent date is before me and its contents highly appreciated. It contains convincing evidence of the fact that we met in deadly combat on the historic field of Gettysburg 1 July,

1863, over thirty years ago – I now carrying a souvenir in the shape of a minie ball in my right lung, and you bearing honorable scars, evidencing the fact that we both fought desperately for the causes we individually thought just. And now after thirty years we are exchanging friendly greetings. Thus it is *paratur pax bello*. [peace is prepared by means of war.] I have always admired a gentleman who never forgets he is a gentleman no matter what his environs may be, and I must say that I took you to be such, when you kindly treated me as your prisoner of war on the field at Gettysburg, hence the presentation of my spurs, I thinking I would have no more use of them. I was doubtless somewhat delirious with pain when you came up to me, but the facts were so indelibly fixed on my mind that they are as fresh to me as though they were of yesterday, and are as follows: On the morning of 1 July, 1863, about 9:30 o'clock, the Iron Brigade, composed of the Second, Sixth and Seventh Wisconsin, Nineteenth Indiana and Twenty-fourth Michigan charged General Archer's Brigade on Willoughby's Run and captured General Archer and most of his brigade. In this charge my horse was killed and I was slightly wounded, and not taking time to shed my spurs, I went in on foot. We held Willoughby's Run until 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when we found ourselves in the little end of a "V" being flanked on the right and left by A. P. Hill's and Ewell's Corps. General Reynolds, of our First Corps having been killed and General Meredith, commanding our brigade, and most of our field officers, having been wounded or killed in the morning, what was left of our brigade was in a tight place. We moved by the right of companies to the rear, making the Seminary on the Ridge our objective point. Being closely pursued by the Confederates, we faced, wheeled into line into line and fired; then again by the right of companies to the rear, loading on the march, and, as before, wheeled into line and fired. We executed the same movement with terrible effect.

Many a brave North Carolinian bit the dust in that movement before we reached the Seminary. At this juncture I was shot in the right breast, the ball entering my lung, where it still remains. Captain Hobart, of my regiment, made a detail, with himself, to take me off the field. They carried me over the pike into a field near the old railroad grade, where they were compelled to surrender and were taken prisoners to the rear, leaving me where you found me. The first thing I remember, I was surrounded by private Confederate soldiers, who were curiously examining my uniform, they taking my coat off, in the side pocket of which was my pocket book containing \$220

in greenbacks and gold, with papers by which I might be identified should I be found dead on the field. They went and sat down on the railroad grade nearby and were examining the contents of the pocketbook when an officer came to me and saw my condition. He interrogated me as to my rank, regiment, name and nativity, and in stooping over to catch my words I thought I could see signs of pity depicted on his face, which gave me hope. I asked him to unbuckle the spur from my boot. He did so and seeing the other foot bootless, he asked its meaning. I told him some of the men had pulled it off without unbuckling the spur and that it nearly tore the leg off. He looked around and found the boot with the spur on it; he took it off and threw the boots and spurs by my side, asking at the same time if they had taken anything else from me. I told him they had taken my coat and money. He inquired who they were, and I, pointing to them on the railroad grade, said, "There they are now." He looked and saw them and ordered them to restore the pocketbook and money, which they did – he placing the book and money in an inside pocket of my coat. I told him to take the money and send it to my family, as I feared it would be an incentive for the men to finish me and take the money as soon as his back was turned on me. He replied, "I will see that you are taken care of," and I soon found myself in charge of two Confederates, one a German and one an Irishman, with a negro to bring water and pour on my wounds, and faithfully too, they did their whole duty. I looked around and found that you were not in sight. I told the men that I was glad that I had given you my spurs as a partial reward for your kindness, and the Irishman replied, "Yis, sor, he's a mighty foine man, so he is sor." And the German said, "Yah, he bin so better as gude." I think this was the first thing that provoked a smile since I had been shot. You know it rained that night, which was a God-send to me, for it cooled the fever that was burning in me. In this condition I lay on the field until the afternoon of 3 July, when the Confederates commenced falling back over me, and I fearing the cavalry and artillery might crush me, begged the men to take me to some place of safety, and they took me to a little house just across the pike and left me on the porch until the owner of the house came, who was a kind-hearted old Pennsylvania German, and he took me in and placed me on a straw bed in the corner of the room. The two men having heard that you were killed dodged into the cellar and remained there all night. On the morning of the 4th, General Buford's Cavalry came in pursuit of the Confederate forces and his chief surgeon caused me to be taken into the city where I received the best of care in a private house for three months before



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I could be removed to my home. ... (Here followed a short summary of his life before and after the incident which was missing from the sources)

Keep the spurs, Colonel, with my blessing, but I hope the occasion may never come for you to use them so vigorously that you will think yourself criminally guilty of cruelty to animals, as I have many times. Pardon me, if I have deployed my skirmish line of thought on untenable ground, in this my disconnected answer to your tersely written communication of 22 August. With assurances of my highest regard and sincere desire for mutual and perpetual good feeling and friendly relations, I am very respectfully yours,

John B. Callis.

P. S. – I shall be more than glad to meet you at Gettysburg as indicated in your favor, my health permitting.

The two “old” veterans never did meet again, probably because of Callis’s bad health. John Callis died five years later on September 24, 1898 and Tom Kenan, who was some ten years younger, lived until January 9, 1912.

The specifics of Callis’s wound and some of his convalescence are described in *Medical and Surgical History of the Civil War*.⁷ After a series of improvements and setbacks and various hospitalizations he was discharged from the service on December 28, 1863, for physical disability and was pensioned, his disability being rated total and permanent.⁸ His return to civilian life was only temporary, however, and he joined the Veterans Reserve Corps (V.R.C.) on May 24, 1864, exhibiting again the restless ambition of his early life.⁹ He was assigned to the 7th Regiment V.R.C. as Major, with duty at Washington, D. C. The information in the copies of his V.R.C. Muster Roll cards received from the National Archives is incomplete but notes the following: He was present as commander of the regiment for most of the next year and a half; he was promoted to Lt. Col. in May 1865; he was Superintendent of the War Department building for some period ending in July, 1865; and last, he was appointed Bvt. Col. for efficient and meritorious service by War Department General Order No. 148, dated Oct 14, 1865. The *Biographical Record* indicates that he participated in the defense against Jubal Early’s raid on the city in July, 1864,

in revealing that “during the raid of Early he was carried in an ambulance to Fort Sumner where he was in the fighting made effective by timely aid from the 6th Corps of the Army of the Potomac.”¹⁰

On December 18, 1865, per S.O. No. 644, Bvt. Col. John B. Callis was ordered to report for duty to Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard, Commissioner, Freedmen’s Bureau and this assignment proved to be another significant milestone in his career and his life. General Howard then assigned Callis to the Alabama Bureau which led to:¹¹

Office Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Refugees Freedmen
and Abandoned Lands.

Montgomery, Ala. Jan 5th 1866

Special Orders No. 4

The 101st U.S. Colored Troops having ordered to be mustered out, Chaplain T. M. Goodfellow of that Regt., Supt. of Freedmen &c at Huntsville, Ala, is hereby relieved from duty in this Bureau. II. Bvt. Col. John B. Callis 7th V.R.C. having in compliance with orders from Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard, Commissioner, Bureau Refugees, Freedmen &c. reported at this office is hereby assigned to duty as Superintendent of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands for the District of Huntsville, Alabama, relieving Chaplain T. M. Goodfellow, 101st U.S. Colored Troops. He will proceed at once to the station assigned him. Q.M. Dept. will furnish transportation to self and authorized number of servants. ...

By order of Bvt. Maj. Gen. Wager Swayne

The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands was established in the War Department by act of Congress, March 3, 1865, “for the purpose of the supervision and management of all abandoned lands, and the control of all subjects relating to freedmen from rebel states, or from any district of country within the territory embraced in the operations of

the army, under such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the head of the bureau and approved by the President. The said bureau shall be under the management and control of a commissioner to be appointed by the President.”¹² The actual surrender of the Confederate Army at Appomattox occurred on April 12, 1865, and all the remaining Confederate forces east of the Mississippi were surrendered by General Richard Taylor at Citronelle, Alabama on May 4, 1865, at which time some 439,000 former slaves in Alabama became wards of the Bureau. The Bureau’s organization began in May when Major General Oliver O. Howard was appointed commissioner with headquarters in Washington, D. C. and assistant commissioners were appointed to serve in the affected states.¹³ Alabama was first placed under Assistant Commissioner (and Chaplain) Thomas W. Conway of Louisiana but in July, Brigadier General Wager Swayne was appointed Assistant Commissioner for Alabama and in August organized the counties under his authority into five districts.^{14,15} North Alabama, which was originally part of the Tennessee Bureau, was reassigned in October 1865 as Alabama’s Sixth District with headquarters in Huntsville and comprising the counties of Jackson, Marshall, Limestone, Lawrence, Lauderdale, Morgan, Franklin, Blount, Madison, Cherokee, Dekalb and Winston.¹⁶ Chaplain Thomas W. Goodfellow was superintendent of the North Alabama District at the time of its transfer and until he was replaced by Col. Callis in January 1866 as indicated above.¹⁷

The Bureau was established in the face of the interregnum and conditions at that time were further complicated by the mustering out of Federal volunteer forces. This left many parts of the state managed by an inept civil government in process of organization and without means to control the situation. In North Alabama conditions were also aggravated by the fighting and occupation during the war and a devastating drought in 1865. General Swayne, under instructions from General Howard, proceeded to organize the work of the Bureau to rationalize the situation by establishing systems for handling compensated labor, providing for the destitute, initiating schooling for the freedmen and insuring justice for all parties.¹⁸

Two weeks after his assignment as Superintendent of the North Alabama District in Huntsville, Col. Callis wrote the first of his many “communications” to the Assistant Commissioner. These included personal letters, weekly reports and reports of special operations and many of them were, unfortunately, illegible. The following letter is typical of the ensemble: complaints, pleas and/or reports of actions.

Office Supt. R.,F.,& A.L.,
Sub-District Huntsville.
Huntsville, Ala. Jan 19, 1866

Maj. Genl. Swayne
Commissioner B.R.F.and A.L. Ala.

Genl

I have the honor very Respectfully to advise you of my safe arrival at this place and that I immediately entered on my duties. I find that I am short of Commissioned officers for agents, and that Civil agents are worse than nothing, as complaints coming in daily proves [sic] there should be a Commissioned officer acting as agent in each Co. in order to get the proper reports & to have the matters of the Bureau properly attended to. If it is possible for you to send me some nine officers I think I can promise a rich harvest for their labors. I find much difficulty in obtaining rations for the destitute. Mr. Cruikshank and myself are cooperating together to the best advantage we can.²⁰ I have written to the Probate Judges of each County asking them to assist in the distribution of Rations that might be sent to them in counties where we have no agents but in many instances they do not respond. I will send to each County the proportion of 5000 Rations due them respectively as I hear from the agents and Probate Judges advising me what point on The R. R. to ship them to, the number of rations due each Co. is ascertained from the best data within the reach of myself and Mr. Cruikshank although it is not such data as I could have if I had a reliable officer as agent in each County. I fear by sending rations to Civil agents that we will not receive the proper reports of their distribution on which to make our report at the end of the month; we can easily report the No. but the sex age and color will I fear be hard to determine, in the counties where we have civil agents. I will however endeavor to make the best of what facilities I have. I am informed by letter and otherwise that it is impossible for the civil agents throughout the districts to enforce the rules of the Bureau without the aid of a few Bayonets the sight of which I am told has a salutary effect at once. Many of the People in the rural districts feel much

alarmed because of the muster out of so many of the troops, but I apprehend no danger at present. I have this day sent by Express \$659.40 to one W. J. Clark the amount in dispute between him and Goodfellow on account of cotton which matter I have no doubt has given you enough trouble already, judging from correspondence already in this office. I merely mention it at this time so that you may know that your orders in the premises have been carried out; this payment somewhat cripples the finances of the Dist but we will survive it. I would have written you sooner except for the press of business. Freedmen are contracting rapidly hence the great rush of business at this time. But that will be over soon, when I intend to visit the counties of my Dist and endeavor to organize & perfect arrangements already on foot for a more perfect system of running the machinery of the Dist. Please write me often and give me such instruction from time to time as you may deem proper. Chaplain Goodfellow and one of the assistants in the office leave tomorrow. They both go to be mustered out of the service. I am well pleased with this place and feel under obligation to you for assigning me to duty here. I have a good Dist and hope in a short time with your assistance to have it in good running order.

I have the honor Genl
To be Very respectfully
John B. Callis
Bvt. Col. And Supt. Dist.

His letters continued in this vein throughout his administration; the need for commissioned officers instead of civilian agents and its effect on the reporting and equitable distribution of rations was a constant theme. It is interesting to note that for most of the year 1866 the number of rations issued to whites in North Alabama far exceeded that issued to freedmen.²¹ Some of the letters mention problems in the handling of funds by his predecessor, Chaplain Goodfellow, and his assistant, 1st Lieut. W. Irving Midler, but the final disposition of the issue was not found.²² The letter that follows and its remarkable enclosure, however, are obviously connected to the situation:²³

Office Bureau Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands,
District of Northern Alabama

April 27th 1866
Genl.

These papers were handed me by my friends with a request that I forward them to you. I declined to do so until Col Beacher came here. I send them now and wish you would file them subject to my order. I do not think the scam amounts to much, the effort coming from the source it is reported to emanate from. I trust Lt. M has had more sense than to send such an application but can't say as that he and Goodfellow have a multitude of sins to cover in some way.

Jno. B. Callis
Bvt. Col. & Supt.

Huntsville Ala
April 18th 1866

Maj Genl. Swayne
Montgomery Ala

Genl.

It having come to the knowledge of the Citizens of Huntsville that Lt. Midler late a clerk in the office of Col. J. B. Callis agent of the Bureau at this place is ordered to be mustered out of service. And that desire to remain in service has induced him to circulate or cause to circulate a petition to you asking the removal of Col. Callis and the appointment of Him (Midler) to fill the vacancy. We take pleasure in stating that we have found in Col.

Callis all the qualifications of a high toned Gentleman combining Honesty, integrity, Justice, prudence, Sobriety & industry in his official duties and we therefore earnestly remonstrate against any such change in the Bureau at this place. We feel confidant that Col. Callis will hereafter as heretofore administer the affairs of the Bureau with as much fairness as any man that could be chosen & hope no change will be made while the Bureau exists.

We are Very Respy Genl
Your Most Obnt.Servnts

The letter was indorsed with the personal signatures of over ninety prominent businessmen and planters of Madison County, some of whom wrote additional favorable comments. Particularly notable was the support evidenced by the signatures of Leroy Pope Walker, Secretary of War of the Confederacy from February 21, 1861 to September 16, 1861, and three long-time "Unionists" who later bitterly opposed Callis's election to the U. S. Congress: W.B. Figures (editor of *The Huntsville Advocate*), Joseph C. Bradley²⁴ and Nick Davis.

This apparent support of the Bureau was not widespread and continued animosity toward the Bureau in the South led to efforts by the whites to have it removed. Bethel notes that "Congress passed an act in February, 1866, continuing it indefinitely and greatly increasing its powers. Although this measure was vetoed by the President on February 19, it caused such excitement that General Howard warned the assistant commissioners to be prepared for an increase of hostility from the whites and of restlessness among the freedmen."²⁵ A civil rights bill was also passed by both houses over the President's veto on April 9 which essentially conferred citizenship on the blacks. In a letter to General Swayne, dated June 7, 1866, Callis begins:²⁶ I have the honor to make some representation of facts to you, relative to the state of feeling &c in my district." He continues,

A growing dislike and bitterness is very apparent. Instances of wrong and violence seem to be more frequent in their occurrence. Too many planters and other employers of freedmen persist in exercising an arbitrary control over their colored employees, and they invariably set up a terrible tirade of abuse and crimination, if the black makes an application for redress.

He goes on to cite an instance of violence against a harmless negro in Decatur, Alabama, which was simply ignored by the civil authorities and describes the incompetence and racial favoritism displayed by probate judges charged with the delivery of rations to the destitute. He then concludes,

I came here with a kindly feeling for all classes of citizens resolved to be cool and impartial in all my official acts, and I assure you, General, that the many outrages, - unblushingly committed - that have come to my knowledge daily, of late, are severely trying that goodly resolution. The Superintendent should have troops placed at his disposal to aid him in correcting wrongs that the civil laws, or those who execute them will not take cognizance of. The Statute book of the State, is a dead letter to the black skin, and the more favored pale face is rapidly becoming, if he is not already, his constitutional enemy. The blacks flock to me with complaints, some of them well, and others, not well founded, and they say they cannot even get a hearing from the civil authorities; and that no attorney will prosecute their cases; and I know it to be true, but cannot help them. I am of the opinion that the late act of Congress, relative to the Bureau, has greatly increased hostility to it. - Some subjects have been touched in this letter which do not come under my agency as an officer. But I have written in a friendly way, to advise you more fully as to the feeling in this section of the 'Sunny South'.

On August 17, 1866, General Howard ordered a change in the food distribution system in response to charges by an inspection team sent by President Johnson to review Bureau operations that persons able to support themselves remained idle in the hope of obtaining Government rations. The order (which was later modified) ruled that after October 1, 1866, rations for refugees and freedmen were to be issued only to hospitals and orphan asylums.²⁷ The effect of the order was the subject of Callis's letter to Swayne of September 7, 1866, wherein he warned of the suffering that would be endured because of crop failure and other conditions.²⁸ And also in this letter, he mentioned Freedmen schools for the first time. (At least it was the first time we were able to observe same given the condition of the microfilmed records.) Callis writes:

I am organizing Freedmen's schools throughout the Dist., in obedience to your instructions, and I find that I must have some money to buy lumber and materials for repairing school rooms &c. before I can make the thing a success.... The Pittsburgh matter of which I spoke to you, I am informed is a success: the money is secured, and an Agent is now in my office, for the purpose of making arrangements for commencing the work of building the school house. But it is work of considerable magnitude, and it will be at least one year before the building can be made available.

The Pittsburgh matter refers to the activities of one of the many northern charitable/aid societies (most of them church-related) which were critical in the development of freedmen schools throughout the South.

General Swayne replied on September 15, 1866, with the information that, "After repeated conferences between Governor Patton, Mr. Cruikshank and myself, at the instance of General Howard a project has been set on foot which will in a great degree relieve the destitute in this State, unless it fails through a certain unfortunate action of our State authorities," thus promising relief of the crop failure problem mentioned above.²⁹ (And in this connection, it was reported in *The Huntsville Advocate* of December 1, 1866, Col. John B. Callis, Superintendent Bureau R.F. & A. L. District of Northern Alabama has returned from New Orleans with 798,360 lbs white corn (17,257 bushels), 28, 238 lbs bacon for distribution to the destitute of North Alabama in the following proportions [the 13 counties were then listed as receiving allotments of 400 to 580 sacks of corn and 2000 to 2800 lbs bacon]). It is understood that Col. Callis will turn these supplies over to civil Agents appointed by the Governor, to distribute the same in the above proportions. The platforms along the Memphis and Charleston Railroad are groaning under these supplies gratuitously furnished by the Government, as authorized by an act of the last Congress, to relieve the truly destitute of this District. It is hoped that they will be distributed by the Agents with an eye single to equal justice, irrespective of color, as we believe such supplies have been issued heretofore by Col. Callis and his Agents, throughout this District." Swayne also writes, "Your activity in the matter of schools gives me much satisfaction." Callis's reply of September 24, 1866, in particular, describes in detail his "school activities" (which may very well be pretentious) and solicits his promotion to Brevet Brigadier General.³⁰

I am proceeding finely with the schools at Huntsville, commenced the schools before repairing the buildings. The bad condition of the school rooms however, make it somewhat unpleasant as the weather grows cold. I will very soon remedy that when I get the means.

I am cooperating with a Pittsburgh society who furnish and pay all the teachers but one; so the school can be run with very little expense besides rents to the Bureau; and in fact I think the society will even relieve us from that expense as soon as we get the repairs completed, which will not exceed the amount asked for in my last letter. I enclose some letters from the society for your personal and official action. May I ask that you return the letters, with instructions indorsed thereon.

The Pittsburgh Institute matter stands in this wise. In the first place, I found out through a friend, that a large sum of money was left by an old Quaker who died some years since in Pittsburgh, for the purpose of educating colored people in the United States. I immediately opened a correspondence with the Executors or trustees who held the money, which correspondence was conducted through a friend at first. In this way I soon found out that it would be easy to get the proposed expenditure of money laid out in Huntsville. They wrote me to send them the address of our Gov, the Secretary of State, and other prominent men of the State, stating that after mature consideration, they had concluded to erect the buildings at Huntsville, provided the local authorities would give the project encouragement. This encouragement I prospected for and obtained, and reported back my action, whereupon an Agent was sent to make the final arrangements for the building and who informs me that the building will be erected here. It will be a building costing some \$50,000; will have no political or religious complexion; will be controlled by trustees, two of whom will be residents of Huntsville, and will be an institution having for its object the education and preparation of colored persons for teachers &c; the expenditure in the building will be about \$75,000 for land, building and furnishing everything when the building is completed.

As to the Regular Army, I have thought I was not an applicant, but now think that if I can get a position I will take it. May I ask that you send in my name recommended for the Regular Army. Also that you send in my name recommended for Bvt. Brig. General of

Vols. I have a Bvt. Colonelcy for meritorious service during the war. The one I now ask for is service in the Battle of Gettysburg especially, where I received my wound. I have fought in eighteen battles and flatter myself that I have acquitted myself credibly. I ask for this Bvt. because I see others have it who I know have not done half the service, nor have received half the punishment in the way of wounds that I have. For the satisfaction of my family I wish to receive my share of the recognition of the Government; if I fail to do this, I lose cast even with my warmest friends. I never have used or caused to be used any influence for my own promotion before now, but if I go out I should feel that I had not done my duty to myself, without making some effort to secure what I think and my friends know I am entitled to. If you have a friend of influence in Washington, who would exert himself in my behalf a little I am sure the Bvt. will come, as a little spurring (sic) in that quarter has great weight. I feel General, that I have asked more of you than I ought to expect from one who is almost a stranger. But I trust you will give my application just what notice you think it entitled to, and no more.”

Here it must be stated that many writers have shown that activities in support of education of the freedmen had been underway even before the establishment of the Bureau. Freeman, for example, points out that before the end of the war three or four schools had been established in Alabama including one on the plantation of ex-Governor Chapman in Madison County, another at Huntsville and one at Florence.³¹ He also notes that General Swayne, who was “deeply interested in the education of blacks,” assumed control of negro education when he arrived and appointed Reverend Charles W. Buckley as “Superintendent of Schools for Freedmen.”³² Bethel writes that “The Pittsburgh Freedmen’s Aid Society was the first in the field in Alabama, taking charge of the northern part of the state. By the end of 1865 this society supported eleven schools, located at Huntsville, Athens, and Stevenson.”³³ It was noted earlier that Callis was named supervisor of the North Alabama District in January, 1866.

Superintendent C. W. Buckley describes the Huntsville situation in his annual report for the year ending October 24, 1866: “The idea of raising up Colored teachers as rapidly as possible, has been held prominently in view.

To this end, initiary [sic] steps have been taken to establish two Normal Schools in the State - one at Huntsville, the other at Mobile. On the 14th of July, a letter was received from Rev. J.S. Travelli, Secy. Freedmens' Aid commission, Pittsburgh, Pa., in which he uses the following language:³⁴

Our Board may be able to give direction to large sum of money (part of a legacy left for the benefit of the Colored People of the United States) in the way of establishment of a Colored Normal School. ... I don't think it would be out of the question to secure fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) or even a larger sum, if necessary, from this fund." He adds, the following plan was proposed: "An act of incorporation by the legislature of Alabama, embracing in its cooperators some of the officials and most respectable people of the State, with the prospect of kind and fair treatment of the institution, would probably be essential. The plan would be, if the thing went on, to secure an ample lot in or near Huntsville, and put up, at first, plain and substantial buildings, and look mainly to the preparing Common School teachers, but having in view ultimately, as the wants of the people might demand, an institution of a higher grade in the way of Education, since this would always be a monument to the good sense and foresight of the donor, and a perpetual blessing to the Colored People.

Buckley continues:

Letters were returned expressive of the manner in which some of the leading men of the State looked upon the enterprise, including the opinion of the Governor Patton, and letters in full from Hon. Thos. B. Cooper, Speaker of the House, and Walter H. Crenshaw, President of the Senate, pledging "Kind and fair treatment of the institution" and their influence in securing Corporate Powers. I am happy to state that that the commission has decided to lay out this really splendid donation in this State, and have already commenced operations on the plan proposed at Huntsville. About the same time a pledge of ten thousand dollars was obtained from private individuals in the North West for the establishment of a similar institution at Mobile. We have good reason to hope that the American Missionary Association will double this amount.

Travelli's letter, which is essentially as represented by Reverend Buckley, is transcribed and reproduced as Appendix II.³⁵ (Travelli is listed, not as Secretary, but as Rev. Jos. S. Travelli, General Agent, in the printed heading of other correspondence of the Freedmens' Aid Commission.) It will be noted that there is no mention of Callis's contribution to the "project" in either letter so that one wonders if his description of the project and his request for higher rank in his letter of September 24 are not additional examples of his irrepressible ambition. He won his higher rank, however, when the Senate, on March 14, 1867, confirmed his appointment to Brigadier General by Brevet for "Gallant and Meritorious Service in the Field" and dating from March 13, 1865.³⁶

By this time (the fall of 1866), the attitude of the people in Alabama and across the South with regard to educating the negro was mixed but there was widespread antagonism towards Northern teachers.³⁷ Northern teachers were only possible, at first, in places like Huntsville where troops were routinely stationed. It was reported in *The Huntsville Advocate* of December 21, 1866 that, "In Huntsville there are 500 colored children attending the different schools. The total average per day, for the month of November was 300. In these schools there are five white teachers from the north, and three colored assistants from this place. These schools are supported by benevolent societies in the North".³⁸ With regard to Normal schools, however, Holderfield cites the following interesting exchange:³⁹

An example of local prejudice against the benevolent societies and the Bureau's educational work is found in a letter from W. W. Garth⁴⁰ to Governor Patton, written in August 1866. Governor Patton had written to a Mr. Davis⁴¹ of Huntsville to inquire about the attitude of the community concerning the building of a normal school for Negroes. Mr. Garth, shown the Governor's letter, immediately wrote Patton. He maintained that one half of Huntsville's population, 4,400, was Negro and that the establishment of the proposed normal school would cause the Negro portion of the population to increase by thousands. This great influx of freedmen would destroy the community's 'high character' and produce 'pandemonium.' Therefore, the community opposed the school. He maintained that two thirds of the Northern people who had settled in the community since the war were opposed to the 'scheme.' If a normal school were located in Philadelphia, he said, his community

would 'ship' one thousand pupils to Philadelphia to reside there permanently if in exchange Philadelphia would send the same number of the city's better class of Irish to Huntsville. Finally, Mr. Garth informed Governor Patton that the Huntsville community was not opposed to the education of the Negro, if he indeed were capable of being educated.

Mr. Garth's dire predictions, of course, never came to pass. The normal school was established around 1870, however under different circumstances. Reverend Buckley's second annual report mentions, "The Pittsburgh Freedmen's Aid Commission has withdrawn, for want of funds, from Huntsville, and the Commission of the Methodist Episcopal Church carry on the work done by the former." The black-owned newspaper, *The Huntsville Gazette*, has in its issue of September 18, 1880, an advertisement for the "Rust Normal Institute" and notes: "The First Colored School Established in Huntsville;" "Tuition Free;" and "In 1870 a large and commodious Two-Story Brick Building was erected at a cost of seven thousand dollars, and well furnished with nice desks, an organ, and necessary apparatus." The school was named for Reverend Richard S. Rust who was the Secretary and Founder of the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was instrumental in establishing as many as 14 colleges for teachers throughout the South. A rather poor photo of the Huntsville school appears on Page 167 of *The Sesquicentennial Issue of the Huntsville Times*, September 11-16, 1955, with caption, "Rust Institute - This was a Negro School which was located after the Civil War on Franklin Street where Grand Cleaners is now (was) located." The school is mentioned in issues of the *Gazette* until at least 1890 and apparently had no connection with Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical College which was authorized by the State Legislature in 1871 but did not begin classes until 1875 with a student body of 61.

Callis's commitment to the well-being and improvement of the freedmen which is evident in his letters and reports is further illustrated by the following incidents described in the *Biographical Record* (noted earlier):⁴²

During his connection with the Freedmen's Bureau, he interfered with the punishment of a colored girl at the whipping post by her Legree, self-styled master, the brute never having recognized the Emancipation Act, and conducting his relations with his former

slaves precisely as if nothing had taken place. General Callis, by virtue of his authority as an officer of the Government, ordered him to desist, and on his refusing, he thrust him through on the spot with his saber. The chivalry of Huntsville appreciated the daring exhibited by the 'd____d Yankee' and presented him a gold watch, the scenes of the whipping and 'sword feat' being engraved on the back and front of the fine hunting case. In the course of the day on which the presentation by a colored man took place, a drunken fire-eater took it into his head he had been insulted by General Callis and called on him with his friends for an apology or to challenge to a duel. General Callis tried expostulation until his temper gave way, when, as the challenged party, with the right to choose conditions, he ordered assistants to bring bowie knives and some 'horses' formerly used in repairs and a plank on which himself and his Southern friend, after having donned cavalry breeches with buckskin seats were to be nailed face to face; and 'then,' said Callis, between his teeth, 'I will cut your heart out, sir.' This not suiting the high-toned ideas of followers of the code, they demurred and were ordered from the office with more force than elegance. The discomfited Southerner afterwards apologized for his conduct and became the staunch supporter of his former foe.

But before describing the "political chapter" of Callis's career it will be helpful to review the existing political and social posture of the state. President Andrew Johnson initially adopted policies almost as lenient as those of Lincoln and on May 29, 1863, he followed Lincoln's 1863 amnesty proclamation by proclaiming amnesty to all, except certain specified classes of persons.⁴³ He appointed Lewis E. Parsons of Talladega, Alabama, as provisional governor on June 21, 1865 and on August 31, 1865 called for the election of delegates to a constitutional convention. Fifty-six thousand voters elected ninety-nine delegates of whom approximately two thirds could be classified as conservatives and one third as North Alabama "anti-Confederates." (These groupings would soon evolve into Democrats and Republicans, respectively). The convention opened on September 12, 1865 and followed President Johnson's plan for reconstruction in its principal actions: It repealed the Ordinance of Secession; voided the war debt; abolished slavery by declaring that since slavery had been destroyed, it could not exist; and provided for an apportionment based on the white population.



We Accept The Situation
HARPER'S WEEKLY
April 13, 1867

By tabling a petition from blacks in Mobile asking for the right to vote, it did not address the issue of full political rights for almost half of the state's population. Although slavery had been ended (Congress had passed the 13th Amendment on January 31, 1865 and it would be ratified on December 6, 1865) Wiggins point out, "The idea of black suffrage at this time was generally abhorrent in the state. The *Huntsville Advocate* observed that the black was free, and as a freedman the government would protect him in his legal rights. The *Advocate* urged its readers to accord the black man what the war had secured for him. But 'legal rights and political privileges are essentially different. He has been granted the former—not the latter.'"⁴⁴

The convention called for an election in November for governor, members of the legislature and representatives to Congress. Robert M. Patton of Lauderdale County was elected governor and inaugurated on December 13 with President Johnson's approval. Alabama's two senators and six congressmen, however, along with those of the other former Confederate States, were refused their seats in Congress in one of the actions signifying the beginnings of "Radical Reconstruction." When the state legislature reconvened in January, 1866, it passed laws to regulate the labor condition and

conduct of blacks (as did the other Southern states) which became Alabama's Black Code. Partially in response to the Codes, Congress on April 9, 1866, passed the Civil Rights Act which extended citizenship to blacks and the long "tug-of-war" between Johnson and the radical Congress began. President Johnson opposed and vetoed the legislation but Congress overruled his veto and, concerned over the constitutionality of the Act, then proposed the 14th Amendment. In 1866, ten of the eleven Confederate states refused to ratify the amendment, but the first of the four major Reconstruction acts, the Military Reconstruction Act passed by Congress on March 2, 1867, required all seceded states to ratify the amendment as a condition of their re-admission into the union. The amendment did not extend the right to vote to black men but it encouraged states to allow them to vote by limiting the Congressional representation of any state that did not extend the right.

It was at about this time that the Union League began to dominate Alabama politics. The Union League (sometimes called the Loyal League) was a political organization of Northern whites, and later of Southern blacks, which originated in Ohio in 1862 when the Confederate military successes and political disaffection in the Northern states made the outlook for the North seem doubtful. Within one year it had spread over eighteen Northern states and among the Unionists of the South. After the war it worked for radical reconstruction of the Southern states, punishment of the Southern leaders, confiscation of property and negro suffrage. The Southern Unionists hoped to make it the nucleus of a new political party, but this was frustrated by the admission of the blacks for political purposes and Southern whites generally deserted the League. After the Freedmen's Bureau agents and other Northern whites obtained command of the League in the South it became simply a machine to control the votes of the blacks. In their overall indictment of radical reconstruction most of the early writers condemned the league for its militancy, secrecy and especially for invoking white hostility. Fleming, who was one of the most prolific writers on the subject, was particularly critical of the League (and also the Bureau) mentioning that "some of the methods of the Loyal League were similar to those of the later Ku Klux Klan."⁴⁵ Michael Fitzgerald, a current analyst of the Reconstruction period, writes that "much of this (earlier) work appears biased or downright racist by modern standards."⁴⁶ He also notes "that some revisionist historians tacitly accepted the negative portrayals established by early scholars" and deprecate the League's importance." Fitzgerald points out that the League "exercised a considerable social influence, par-

ticularly upon the relationship between the planters and their labor force” and, of course, that “the league helped establish a tradition of black Republican voting that lasted for decades.”

And this brings us to the tumultuous election of February, 1868, when Alabama’s “skewed” electorate sent to Washington two Republican senators and six Republican congressmen, all veterans of the Union army, and three of the congressmen were, or had been, Freedmen Bureau agents including John B. Callis. But concerned over the propriety of his officers actually running for political office, General Swayne asked General Howard for advice on December 26, 1867. Howard’s reply by telegraph was to relieve Callis should he accept the nomination. Swayne’s directions to Callis followed on December 28, 1867:⁴⁷

Captain [Callis’s regular army rank]:

It has been brought to my notice that at a public meeting at Huntsville recently it was resolved to present your name at a District Convention as a candidate for Congress. Instructions received from Major General O.O. Howard, Commissioner, require me unless you decline such nomination immediately, to remove you from the position you now hold. If it is your purpose therefore to become a candidate, you will at once transfer the duties of your office to Bvt. Brig Genl Julius Hayden, Commanding Post of Huntsville, who is hereby authorized and directed in that event to relieve you of the same and will turn over to him or to such officers he may designate, all Government property for which you are accountable. You will immediately report your action in this premise.

Coincidentally (perhaps) General Swayne and General Pope were relieved by President Johnson on December 28, 1867. General Swayne was replaced by Bvt. Brig. Genl. Hayden (above) and General Pope was replaced by Major General Gordon Meade (of whom, more later). Swayne was not opposed to the Bureau’s political activities, per se, as Fitzgerald notes, in another publication, “With black suffrage, Swayne used his agency to create the Republican Party and became almost single-handedly responsible for its rapid organization throughout the state. His political activities eventually resulted in his removal by President Johnson in late 1867.”⁴⁸ General Hayden then wrote to Callis on January 16, 1868:⁴⁹

General:

In accordance with telegraphic instructions of the 15th inst from the Commr you are relieved from duty in the Bureau and will at once report by letter to the Adjt General of the Army for duty. Copy of S.O. 5 Hdqrs Dist of Ala relieving you is herewith enclosed.

The election was held under the guidelines of the three Reconstruction Acts of 1867 (March 2, March 23 and July 19). These laws, in brief, abolished the southern state governments formed under President Andrew Johnson's plan for Reconstruction. They divided the ten Confederate states not yet readmitted to the Union (only Tennessee was) into five military districts each governed by an army commander and patrolled by federal troops to help enforce the acts. The laws also outlined the process by which a state would be readmitted into the Union: each state was to hold a convention, write and ratify a new constitution, allow black men to vote, elect a governor and a state legislature, and ratify the Fourteenth Amendment. Section 5 of the 2nd Reconstruction Act (March 23, 1867) required that a majority of the registered voters was necessary for ratification. Johnson vetoed the Reconstruction Acts, but Congress, controlled by the Radical Republicans, overrode his vetoes.

By this time, a schism had developed between the moderate Republicans (the native, long-time Unionists) and the League and their Radical Republican supporters which included the Bureau agents. Fitzgerald describes the circumstances of the 5th District congressional election: "Moderates complained bitterly of the Leaguers stirring up the blacks against the whites. In the words of Joseph C. Bradley, a leader of this faction, 'It is our duty to try & convince the Negroes ... to support the Union men & the Republican Party, — but go no further.' Bradley and his allies continually battled League activists."⁵⁰ Fitzgerald continues, describing the results of the campaign and election in a few words:

... Even if moderate elements sometimes packed conventions successfully, they accomplished little if they alienated freedmen in the process. For example, moderate Joseph W. Burke⁵¹ — a Bradley ally — won nomination as congressman in a northern Alabama district after a bitter struggle. His main opponent, Sub-Assistant Commissioner John B. Callis of the Bureau, bolted the party and ran as an 'Indepen



Lebanon Courthouse



dent Republican.’ Callis was an outspoken Radical and a League organizer, and he secured the nearly united black vote over the official Republican nominee. Aided by a substantial white boycott of the election, Callis crushed Burke in the February, 1868, canvass.⁵²

A description of some of the politics, events and infighting of the nomination and election in Madison County and the 5th Congressional District, as reported in *The Huntsville Advocate*, comprises Appendix III. The nominating convention of the Fifth District Union Republican Party assembled on December 30, 1867, at Lebanon, Alabama. Lebanon, the county seat of DeKalb County from about 1840 to 1877, was the scene of an apparently harmonious event which was quickly sabotaged by the unhappy, undercurrent politics then in vogue. The town, itself, is a distinct surprise. Nestled in a quiet valley, all that remains of its singular history is a lovely courthouse on one corner of a lightly inhabited crossroads. The Alabama Historical Association Marker tells the story:

Lebanon Courthouse was constructed during the 1840s when Lebanon, the county seat of DeKalb County, was a thriving community with inns, taverns, and government offices. This building, built for courthouse use, remained in use as a courthouse until 1876, when the stagecoaches serving Lebanon gave way to progress. The county seat was then moved to Fort Payne where railway service was available.

At stake in the state-wide election that took place February 4 – 8, 1868 were state and federal offices and the ratification of the state constitution, the latter being one of the principle actions required for readmission and seating. The results and the circumstances leading to the State’s readmission that follow are essentially as outlined on “The Official Website Of The Alabama Legislature:”⁵³ At that time, there were approximately 170,000 voters in the state. The final tally was 70,182 for the constitution and 1,005 against - a clear majority of those voting, but short of the requisite majority of registered voters. Of approximately 95,000 registered black voters, over 63,000 participated in the referendum; of approximately 75,000 registered white voters, only 6,700 chose to vote. Analyses suggested that a majority

of registered voters had not participated because of the successful Conservative campaign of intimidation of potential Republican voters and boycott of the election by their own members.

The *Advocate* published the partial results of the election on February 14, 1868 and apparently never published the final results:

Madison - Callis – 2100 Burke – 23; Constitution – For - 2124

Against - 42

Jackson - Callis 617 Burke 300

Marshall - Callis 250 Burke 237

Amidst charges of corruption from both sides, General Meade, Commander of the Third Military District which included Alabama, Georgia and Florida, conducted an investigation and finally concluded that the election had been fairly conducted and that ratification had “lost on its own merits”. He forwarded the results of the election, along with his suggestion that Congress provide for the convocation of a new convention.

Meade’s opinions were ignored. On March 11, 1868, Congress passed the Fourth Reconstruction Act over President Johnson’s veto. Among other features, the Act repealed the provision of the Second Reconstruction Act, requiring participation by a majority of a state’s registered voters in ratifying new constitutions. As Alabama was the only former Confederate state to have held its constitutional referendum under the provisions of the Second Reconstruction Act, Congress was presented with the choice of accepting Meade’s report, or making the new Act retroactive. While not formally doing so, Congress chose the latter.

Delayed in its immediate consideration of the Alabama situation by the ongoing impeachment proceedings against President Johnson, the matter was essentially shelved until June, 1868. By that time, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina and South Carolina had ratified new constitutions under the provisions of the Fourth Reconstruction Act. When the United States House of Representatives originated an Act of Admission for these states, an amendment was adopted, adding Alabama to the group. The bill passed the House, 109-35, and all of these states were conditionally re-admitted to the Union, pending ratification by their General Assemblies of the Fourteenth Amendment. The Senate passed the bill, 31-5, and it became law after it was re-passed over another veto of President Johnson.

The Alabama General Assembly ratified the Fourteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, in a special session held in July 1868 and Ala-

bama was re-admitted to the Union. Alabama's six congressmen were seated on July 21, 1868 and the two senators took their seats on July 25, 1868.

Callis's duty stations or location from January 16, 1868, when he was ordered to "report by letter to the Adjt General of the Army," to his taking his seat in Congress, are unclear. His Military Service Records obtained from the National Archives do not include this period. According to *Heitman's Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, he resigned February 4, 1868.⁵⁴ In the Bureau files, however, there is a letter from Capt. Jno. B. Callis, 45th Infantry Regt., dated April 28, 1868, from Nashville, Tennessee, replying to a request for a recommendation of a W. H. Hyde who had served under Callis as Bureau Agent from Winston County, Alabama. Also, there was some interesting testimony in 1871 before "The Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States," (Ku Klux Klan Investigation) that indicates he was assigned to the 4th Military District (Mississippi and Arkansas) when Alabama was re-admitted to the Union: Representative James B. Beck (D, KY) in questioning witness, Lionel W. Day of Huntsville, states, "His (Callis's)own testimony before Congress was that he was in General Gillem's [Major General Alvin C. Gillem was Commander of the 4th Military District] army when the news came that Alabama was admitted, and came and took his seat and took his pay; but the general fact of the large number of men coming and seizing the offices did create a prejudice, and made men suspicious of all who came." Mr. Day's complete testimony about Callis, with its obvious errors about Generals Burke and Thomas, appears in Appendix IV. Callis's testimony before Congress was not found in the *Congressional Globe* which contains the congressional debates of the 23rd through 42nd Congresses (1833-73).

Callis's "home town" newspaper, *Grant County Herald*, published the following on March 10, 1868:

ALABAMA ELECTIONS

A lot of Huntsville, Alabama newspapers are received dated in December ? containing election results. We copy some of the results: Huntsville, for the Constitution 2,124; against 42 –For Congress, Gen. J. B. Callis, 2,100, one Burke 23. Jackson County, for

Congress, Callis 617, J. W. Burke 360. Marshall County, for Congress, Callis 250, Burke 237. Gen. Callis is therefore very largely elected to represent Alabama in Congress, chiefly colored votes of course.

It will be noted that the above are exactly the partial results published by the *The Huntsville Advocate* on February 14, 1868. The *Advocate* apparently never did accept the results of the February election and on June 23, 1868, two days before the State was readmitted, published the following:

NEW STATE GOVERNMENT

Should the bill now before the President become a law, Alabama will have a new set of officials, as it will be the inauguration of a new State Government, provisional at first, and aided by the military, and then regular and permanent, until modified by new elections and changes in the organic law, as provided for in that law. We therefore, give a list of the new State officials: Wm H. Smith, Governor: A.J. Applegate, Lieut. Gov'r.;—Congressmen: F.W. Kellog of Mobile, 1st District; Chas.W. Buckley of Montgomery, 2nd; B.W. Norris of Elmore, 3rd; Chas. W. Pierce of Marengo, 4th; Jos. W. Burke of Madison, 5th; Thos. Haughey of Morgan 6th. [We publish Gen. Burke as elected from this District, because he is legally so, although Gen. J.B. Callis may have received a few more of the votes cast. But the latter is clearly not eligible. He was and is yet an army officer, was ordered here on duty as an officer of the regular army, his name as such was struck off the registration list, and he never acquired any citizenship in Alabama. He was mustered in as a citizen of Wisconsin, where his family resided during his service here as an officer; last year he was mustered in at Louisville as a captain in the regular army, and a citizen not of Alabama, but of Wisconsin. He was not only not a citizen of Alabama but not even an inhabitant at the time of the election, for he was ordered away to his regiment in Nashville before the election, and was not in the State when it was held. In no sense of the word

eligible, under the laws and constitutions, of course Congress will not admit him to a seat, but give the right to Gen. Burke, or order a new election. It is true Gen. Callis was an aspirant for the nomination at Lebanon, was defeated there, pledged support to the nominee (Gen. Burke) then allowed himself to be run, and by so doing seriously injured the Republican party in this District. Many of our best men, believe his course for two or three months previous to the election, as then Chief of the Bureau in this region, lost the Republican party near *ten thousand white votes in North Alabama*].

As noted earlier, however, General Callis and the other Gentlemen from Alabama did take their seats on July 21. The Committee on Elections of the 40th Congress ruled that their credentials were in order and after some debate, by a vote of: yeas – 125, nays -33 and not voting – 52, the report of the Committee was agreed to and the Gentlemen took their oaths.⁵⁵ Congressman Callis served only 224 days until March 3, 1869. He did not stand for reelection to the 41st Congress and was replaced by Peter Myndert Dox, Democrat, of Madison County who served two terms.

The *Biographical Record* states that Callis was made a member of the Committee on Enrolled bills and introduced three bills providing for the establishment of mail routes in Alabama and five bills for the removal of political disabilities from Southern citizens; he also introduced a bill granting a loan of \$5,000,000 of the five per cent Bonds of the United States to the New Orleans & Selma R. R. and Immigrant Association, and a bill granting lands in the State of Alabama to the Tennessee & Coosa R. R. Co. The same source indicates that “he was the father of the original ‘Ku Klux Bill’ which passed the House to be killed in the Senate of the 40th Congress, but which was passed in the 42nd Congress. The *Congressional Globe* documents the first ten bills above and shows, “By Mr. Callis: A joint resolution (H. Res. 408) to provide for the appointment of a special Committee for the investigation of certain outrages committed on loyal Citizens of Alabama by the Ku-Klux Klan, to the Committee on Reconstruction and ordered to be printed,” but no further record of this Resolution was found and it is not known if this is the described bill.⁵⁶

General Callis returned to Lancaster, Wisconsin, at the conclusion of the 40th Congress and established a real-estate and insurance business which he conducted until 1874 when he was elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly as a Democrat. As a member of the Assembly he served as Chair-

man of the Committee on Incorporations and on State Lands, and he was a member of the Joint Committee to settle the Excise Law – a formulated bill passing both Houses.⁵⁷

General Callis was a member of the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic), the Union veteran's organization, which was (on occasion) politically significant in the Western States. When the "Iron Brigade Association" was established in 1882 with its first annual reunion in Milwaukee, he became active in that organization and his activities were described in a paper by Richard H. Zeitlin, Director of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.⁵⁸

He sent a regretful letter to the organizers of the La Crosse reunion in 1883 explaining that the crippling effects of multiple wounds prevented his own appearance. But the Lancaster politician's comments were read to the veterans. Callis summarized the Democratic position on the Civil War experience, on veterans' gatherings, and on what was hoped for in the future. He explained that the Union soldiers of 1861-1865, 'regardless of . . . political opinions or party affinities,' had been 'actuated by ... patriotism and love of country: In short we had no political axes to grind. . . .' The war, its suffering and the bonds of comradeship it created could never be forgotten, but 'now that the war is over. . . I for one can freely forgive' the 'misguided' Confederates. Callis concluded with an appeal to end postwar bitterness: '*No More Bloody Shirt* ... of that I have had quite too much.'

The reunion was in Lancaster in 1884, and Zeitlin continues:

John Callis touched off the speechmaking. The ailing Lancaster Democrat greeted the veterans and sentimentally reminded them that the reunion meeting had 'no political significance other than to teach the world ... that loyalty to this government and the union ... has been the shibboleth of our faith in, and love for one another.

The *Biographical Record* concludes:

From the foregoing the character of General Callis may be inferred. His temperament is impetuous, but his discretion is of a type to preclude

hasty and ill-advised action, although in emergencies he is not a man to pause to counsel with tardy caution. He is still a sufferer from his wounds, the bullet in his lungs causing great pain and danger to life. But he has, nevertheless, continued to take unabated interest in the affairs of active existence and especially in matters relating to soldiers.⁵⁹

John Callis died September 24, 1898 in Lancaster, Wisconsin, and is buried in Hillside Cemetery in Lancaster.

APPENDIX I⁶

Raleigh, N. C.,
22 August, 1893

General John B. Callis, Lancaster, Grant County, Wisconsin:

MY DEAR SIR:

Upon a recent visit to Gettysburg and going over the ground where the first day's battle was fought, I was forcibly reminded of the circumstances under which I met you, and have been related by me to others, numbers of times in the last thirty years.

You and I were in opposing commands. You were Lieutenant-Colonel of the Seventh Wisconsin, and I was Colonel of the Forty-third North Carolina Infantry, Daniels Brigade, Rodes' Division, Ewell's Corps. After the engagement continued for some time the Union forces fell back and occupied Seminary Ridge, and later in the afternoon this became the point of attack by the Confederates and was carried by them. The firing having ceased and comparative quiet restored, Lieutenant Shepherd, of my regiment, reported to me that among the wounded in our front was Lieutenant-Colonel Callis of the Seventh Wisconsin, and that he (or his father's family) was from Fayetteville, N. C., Shepherd himself also being a Fayetteville man. This fact no doubt interested him. Thereupon I went forward and found you lying a little beyond the crest of the ridge, and about the spot where I stood the other day at Gettysburg. After some conversation and doing what I could on your behalf, I caused you to be carried to the building near by, in which the wounded Union soldiers were placed for immediate treatment. I think it was the large brick Seminary building. And shortly

afterwards one of my men handed me a pair of splendid spurs which he said you had presented to me. I sent them home and have prized them highly ever since. I well remember telling you that "You are now my prisoner, and I'll treat you well; I may be yours later on." And so it happened for I was wounded on Culp's Hill on 3 July, taken off the field, placed in an ambulance and captured on the retreat on the night of 4 July, with many other wounded Confederates, and was a prisoner until the war closed.

I hope we will meet at Gettysburg again, not on a hostile, but on a friendly historic field, when our performances will be impressed with a character different from that of 1863. A committee has been appointed by the government, charged with the duty of marking the lines of the Confederate troops in the interest of history, and I have been in correspondence with Colonel Bachelder, its chairman, in reference to that matter. I may therefore go to Gettysburg again, and, if so, will write you, and request your presence at that time.

I will be pleased to learn your military career after the time referred to above. The Adjutant-General of your State, upon my application, gave me your address.

Yours truly,
Thos. S. Kenan

APPENDIX II

Pittsburgh, July 14, 1866
C. W. Buckley Esq
Supt. of Education
Montgomery Ala.

Dear Sir:

Yrs of last month reached me some days ago. I am rejoiced to hear that things are improving in Ala. for the Freedmen. In our regress I regret to say we find it difficult to keep up our collections – all our ability of course

depends on this. We hope to send out our teachers in Sept. again. So far as we can now see we shall hardly be able to occupy any new fields. In your State, Huntsville & Stevenson have been our only points & I trust we shall be able to continue to operate there. But unless in the way of plantation schools more or less connected with our present stations I don't see that the way is likely to be open for us to do much.

One topic has come up recently which in its results may be important. There has been a good deal of talk about establishing a normal school at Huntsville & for which it has important advantages. Our Board may be able to give direction to a large sum of money, part of a legacy left for the benefit of the colored people of the U.S. in the way of establishment of a Colored Normal School. Huntsville is the place that strikes us most favorably now. An act of incorporation by the legislature of Alabama – embracing in its corporation some of the officials and most respectable people of the State – with the prospect of kind & fair treatment of the situation – would probably be essential. The plan would be if the thing went are to secure an ample lot in or near Huntsville and put up at first, plain & substantial buildings and look mainly to the preparing common school teachers – but having in view ultimately as the wants of the people might demand, an institution of a higher grade in the way of education — that would always be a monument of the good sense & foresight of the donor & a perpetual blessing to the colored people. One object of my writing is to ask how such an enterprise would be looked on by the leading people of Northern Alabama & the state authorities – whether there would be likely to be any difficulty in the way of procuring the necessary legislative action – & who would be the higher person to hold communication with on the subject. I am not authorized to say anything on the subject & simply write in the hope of aiding in bringing the matter about. If things should work favorably in Alabama I don't think it would be out of the question to secure \$50,000 or even a larger sum if necessary from this fund. Still unforeseen difficulties may arise. The money is here. My whole object & that of those interested in the matter is solely that it may do the most good permanently to the colored people, especially the Freedmen. \$10,000 of the funds has been appropriated to Berea College, Ky, the last week. This is Rev J. G. Fee's* enterprise. He has been here the last week.

Respy yours
J. S. Travelli

If things look favorably, I think it likely that two of the Executors and our President – all prominent Pittsburghers might visit Alabama in the fall.

[* Reverend John G. Fee, an ardent abolitionist, was the founder of Berea College in 1855.]

APPENDIX III

The Huntsville Advocate - Jan. 18, 1867

Remarks by Callis at Union Party Meeting at Moulton, AL which was held to initiate, organize and construct a platform for the Union Party of the State of Alabama:

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention:

I come before you today not as the “distinguished orator” you have represented me in the call for this convention. I appear before you not as a citizen of your State, but as an officer of the Army, and as such, do not deem it becoming in me to take the initiatory in a purely political movement like the present. – That, gentlemen, is left for you to do. I meet you, however, as an unconditional Union man, and am truly glad to meet so large an assembly of the same sort here today, and to acquiesce in their action. ...He then continues, advising the Convention to “come to terms with the terms” [author’s words] of Congress.

The Huntsville Advocate - May 7, 1867

Letter from Callis to Union League meeting of Athens dated Huntsville, April 28, 1867, containing remarks similar to the above.

The Huntsville Advocate - August 20, 1867

Union Republican Club formed on 13th Inst. on motion of Gen. Burke. Colonel Jos. C. Bradley was called to Chair & W. B. Figures, Secy. And on August 17 with Col. Bradley in Chair, the Club met to complete organiza-

tion and Judge Lewis moved that Gen. John B. Callis be made permanent president of Club which was unanimously adopted.

Figures, Secy.

L. Robinson, Treasurer

The Huntsville Advocate - Sep. 18. 1867

Convention of Madison County Republican Party.

Callis reluctantly named Chairman in a contest with D. C. Humphreys Columbus Jones, Lafayette Robinson, A. J. Applegate, named as delegates to the Constitutional Convention

The Huntsville Advocate - December 13. 1867

Constitution of the State of Alabama revised and amended by convention assembled at Montgomery on November 5, 1867.

The Huntsville Advocate - December 24. 1867

Mass Convention of Republican Party of Madison County at Huntsville, Ala, December 21, 1867, resolved to nominate Gen. John B. Callis as representative of 5th District of Alabama and that Madison County Delegates to District Convention at Lebanon be instructed to support his nomination. Resolved that the county Executive Committee be instructed to organize "Callis Clubs."

The Huntsville Advocate - January 3. 1868

The Lebanon Convention met on Monday and every county in the District was represented. We have not yet received the official proceedings but learn that Gen. J. B. Callis, Gen. W. A. Austin, Col. J. D. Jenkins and Gen J. W. Burke were placed in nomination for Congress.

The first ballot was Burke 16, Callis 12, Jenkins and Austin 4 each. General Austin withdrew after the second ballot in favor of Gen. Burke who was then nominated, which was made unanimous.

General Burke was the choice of the counties on the other side of the Tennessee River, who brought him forward and secured his nomination.—Madison voting for Callis.

General Burke is an Irishman, possessing the warm heart and genial manners characteristic of the Sons of Erin. He has been a resident of Huntsville since 1864, engaged in business, and identified with our people, and ever ready to help them.

Concluded ...

We trust, for the well being of the people, that he will have no opposition, which would be fruitless, and only stir up strife.

We are glad to know, that several Confederate soldiers and officers, as well as many prominent and influential gentlemen from the various counties were members of the convention, and present as outside sympathizers.

The Huntsville Advocate - January 7, 1868

EDITORIAL: The Douglas and Sibley faction, who seek to be the Dictators of Madison County, and the ostracism of its old white citizens, by the aid of the colored voters, or rather a portion of them, had a meeting of about 250 Friday nite, at which they repudiated the Lebanon Convention, Called Gen. Burke, its nominee, a Rebel, declared that the Convention was a Rebel concern etc., and that the Advocate was not sound!

They nominated Gen. Callis for Congress, resolved to organize "Callis Clubs" over the District, sent to Decatur to have an Address printed, telling the People how and who to vote for. Two or three white men are said to belong to the clique, who are dividing among themselves the County offices! Burke's nomination was the result of their first meeting – his election will be aided materially by this attempt of Bolters to defeat the action of the party.

The Lebanon Convention was called at Montgomery, not by Gen. Burke or his friends, or those of Gen. Austin or Col. Jenkins. The Delegates from all counties, except Madison, went there un-pledged and uninstructed – those from Madison were instructed to go for another. The nomination fell on Gen. B. and was made unanimous – the Madison delegation voting to do so! Now these very men who were in the Convention, agreed to abide its action, voted to support its nominee, now head a Bolter's caucus in Huntsville, and seek to stir up the colored voters against Gen. Burke! We call on the friends of the cause at Washington and elsewhere to notice this matter.

A letter addressed by Gen. Callis to the Lebanon Convention.
Written from Huntsville Ala Dec. 28, 1867

“Gentlemen of the Convention”

I avail myself of the opportunity to forward to your honorable body a letter by the Hon. A. J. Applegate and not having interrogated him as to his choice relative to a candidate for Congress, in the 5th Congressional District of Alabama, I am not advised to his preference, but knowing him to be a loyal man, and true to the Union Republican Party, I do not hesitate to in trust to him the care of this communication:

I regret exceedingly that indisposition, caused by a wound received during the late war, prevents me from being in Lebanon today, to join with you in discussing the political issues of the day, and as my name has been mentioned for nomination for Congress, I feel that it is doing justice to myself and to my friends, to state, that if nominated and elected, I shall fully carry out the principles enunciated in the platform of the party, and shall work for the speedy return of peace and progress to our citizens, who are today smarting under the withering effects of the war, and in doing so, I shall never recognize any measure tending to proscription further than the Congress of the United States has proscribed. I shall work for universal suffrage, universal freedom, without regard to race, color, antecedents or obscurity of station. I care not whether a man comes from the icy North, or be bronzed by the torrid sun, so he be a man, I shall work incessantly for the removal of political disabilities from men who have aided in the reconstruction of the State under the military bill and reconstruction acts of Congress.

I deem it unnecessary for me to write more further than to state that I shall work faithfully for the party and principles above mentioned, whether nominated or not, and shall work for the nominee if loyalty is his standard, as fully and vigorously as for myself, were I the nominee of the Convention.

Jno. B. Callis

Letter to Editor

Lebanon, Ala Dec. 30, 1867

Proceedings of Union Republican convention which assembled at this place today for the nomination of a candidate for Congress from this District, Judge of the District Court etc. They are sent to you for publication pursuant to a resolution of the Convention.

... The most perfect harmony and unanimity prevailed; all agreeing to give cordial support to the nominee, and for ratification of the Constitution. ...Speeches were made by General Burke, Capt. Applegate, Judge Haralson and others, urging the ratification of the Constitution, and exhorting the people to adopt it, and return to their constitutional relations to the general government etc.

W. J. Roberts, Secy.

The convention was called to order at 10:AM by the Hon. A. J. Applegate of Madison, Chairman of the Executive Committee. (He was subsequently elected permanent Chairman of the Convention)

J. G. Winston of Marshall and I. D. Sibley of Madison were appointed a Committee of Credentials.

A communication to the Convention was read from Gen. J. B. Callis, of Madison, a candidate for Congress. (see earlier note)

The Committee on Credentials reported, from which it appeared that the County of Madison was entitled to 9 delegates, Jackson 6, Marshall 3, Calhoun 3, Cleburne 3, Baine 3 and St. Clair 3.

Nominations for Candidates for Congress were made.

Gen. J. W. Burke Madison

Gen. J. B. Callis “

Col. J. D. Jenkins Jackson

Gen W. A. Austin “

Mr. Jones of Madison supported the claims of Gen Callis.

Tellers to conduct the election were J. G. Winston, A. W. Woods and I. D. Sibley.

1 st Ballot	Gen. Burke	16
	Gen. Callis	12
	Col. Jenkins	4
	Gen. Austin	4
Necessary to a choice 19 (a plurality)		
2 nd Ballot	Gen. Burke	16
	Gen. Callis	13
	Gen. Austin	4
	Col. Jenkins	3
3 rd Ballot	Gen. Burke	19
	Gen. Callis	11
	Col. Jenkins	6

Austin having withdrawn Gen. Burke was declared duly nominated.
The Huntsville Advocate - January 14, 1868

From the Editor - "Shameless - We understand that the Bolters have prepared and are circulating as secretly as possible among the colored voters a nameless Address or Circular charging Gen. J. W. Burke with having whipped on the public square of Huntsville, in 1862, a negro man or women, etc. This is done to prejudice the colored voters against him as the Republican nominee for Congress and is done by those who seek to array the colored voters against native white Unionists! General Burke pronounces the charge infamously false. We were here in 1862, and never heard of the alleged occurrence. We mention the thing merely to notify the white people of the District of the sort of warfare against Gen. Burke, and to warn the colored voters how their confidence is abused by some who wish to use them to get office for their own dear selves!"

The Huntsville Advocate - January 14, 1868

General Election Notice

Pursuant to General Order No. 101 From Gen. John Pope, Commander of

the Third Military District, the polls will be opened On the 4th and 5th days of February, 1868 to vote on New State Constitution, etc. and members of Congress.

The Huntsville Advocate - January 17, 1868

Letter to Editor from A. J. Applegate, Chairman of the Lebanon Convention states

A letter received by me today signed by Committees of Cleburne and Calhoun Counties, says that a report is in circulation, in those counties, that certain parties in Huntsville are charging that the Lebanon Convention was a rebel convention conducted in unfairness, and in a manner prejudicial to the claims of Mr. Callis. And said Committee ask that I publish a card, giving the proceedings of the Convention, and state whether there was any unfairness, or exhibition of fraud or disloyal element.

...follows a brief description of the proceedings... (see earlier notes) — but I have heard that there is some dissatisfaction in the Union Party and opposition to some of the candidates nominated and that Gen. Callis should, probably, be run as an independent candidate.

The Huntsville Advocate - January 24, 1868

An Incendiary Document – Handbill addressed:

“ To the Republican Voters of the 5th Congressional District” which has been secretly circulated over it by L. M. Douglas and Columbus Jones. We copy a portion of it to show its incendiary character. The only names connected with it are I. D. Sibley and W. Gaston, and it was printed in Decatur....

We remember that when he wore the Federal uniform, we sought his protection only to be spurned with contempt, while known rebels received passes and permits, and other favors that were denied to true and reliable Union men. Colored men were by his orders, arrested and returned to slavery.

In the year 1862, he arrested an escaped colored woman who had taken refuge within the Union lines, and ordered her to be whipped “in the public square” where she received 100 lashes and then returned to her master to be taken to his plantation to be whipped again.

Ordered a man (negro) to be whipped 200 lashes which order was ex-

ecuted with a cruel ferocity worthy the slave-driving times of former days. And so far we learn his whole military career was spent in bare subservience to the rebel aristocracy of the community.”

The Huntsville Advocate - January 24, 1868

The determination of the Secession leaders and opponents of the Reconstruction Policy of the nation to abstain from the polls on Feb. 4 and 5 was and is a public confession of weakness and inability to defeat reconstruction.

The Board of Registration for this county struck the name of Gen. John B. Callis from the list of registered voters – being an officer of the regular army, and on duty here therefore requiring no citizenship.

The attention of the military authorities is called to the incendiary document (see earlier)

Editor declined permitting the columns of the *Advocate* to be used by such mischief makers as the Bolters of the Lebanon Convention who were trying to excite the colored voters against Gen. Burke and against all native white Unionists.

APPENDIX IV

TESTIMONY OF LIONEL W. DAY

October 7, 1871

Lionel W. Day being questioned . - Was in Federal Army away from the state of Illinois – After war came South, with a view of remaining here – Was appointed clerk of the U. S. District Court (Northern Alabama District) – Lived in Huntsville since Feb. 1866 – Was Adjutant of 1st Alabama Cavalry.

Mr Beck doing the questioning.

In response to a question asking if it was “true that very many agents of the Bureau , by means of their influence over the colored population, had them placed in positions that the people, if all black and white had been free to select, would not have instructed them with.?”

He responded: I think so. I think that the member of Congress from this district, General John B. Callis, who was an agent of the Freedmen’s Bureau, secured the influence and political hold that enabled him to be elected to that position by means of using his Freedmen’s Bureau to secure it. The natural feeling of the community consequent on an act of that character resulted. I think that is part of the political history of this community.

Q. In that connection, and as to that same gentleman, is it not further true that Col. John B. Callis, after he had secured an election to Congress, in 1868, at the time Democrats did not vote, as you remember_____.”

A. Yes, sir

Q. After Congress refused to admit Alabama, left the State and went with his regiment to Mississippi, and was in command of his regiment, at Jackson, MS, when Congress put Alabama in, and he left his regiment and went to Congress, and took his seat from Alabama? Do you recollect that fact?

A. I think that General Callis was away from here, subject to military orders, but where he was I do not remember. I remember that General Burke, of whom I have testified before, who was his rival for the position in Congress, had him ordered away from here. for some sort of political misconduct or subterfuge he was indulging in his position in the Bureau. General Burke was recognized as a Republican. I remember there was a repetition of the order – perhaps peremptorily. General Thomas, I think ordered him away.

Q. After his election?

A. I am not certain. It was about that time, but whether after or not, I cannot say. I remember it only with the fact that General Burke was his rival in that congressional race. I cannot say it was before or after his election.

Q. Do you recollect that, after Alabama applied for admission by virtue of

the vote in February, Congress at first refused to admit her, but afterward you were admitted in June, under what was called the omnibus bill?

A. Yes, sir. I do not remember the dates.

Q. During the interval after the election in Feb., and before the admission of Alabama, was not General Callis away from here?

A. I do not know. I think he was. I have very little doubt on that subject. Callis was away, and I think he was away under military orders. He was still an officer of the Federal army.

Q. Had he not domiciled in the state at all?

A. I do not think he was a citizen of this State.

Q. Yet he got one of the highest positions?

A. I do not think he ever claimed it.

Q. His own testimony before Congress was that he was in General Gillem's army when the news came that Alabama was admitted, and came and took his seat and took his pay; but the general fact of the large number of men coming and seizing the offices did create a prejudice, and made men suspicious of all who came?

A. Yes sir; I have no doubt of that whatever ..."

ENDNOTES

¹ Walter. L. Fleming, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* (NY: Macmillan Co., 1905), p. 262.

² Cong. Globe, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess. House, p. 3484 (1868); Senate, p. 3466 (1868).

³ *Soldiers' and Citizens' Album of Biographical Record* (Chicago:Grand

Army Publishing Co.,1890), p. 391-394, Internet: <http://www.geocities.com/heartland/prairie/2089/callis.html>.

⁴Wisconsin Historical Society, Digital Library and Archives, Internet: <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/wlhba/articleView.asp?pg=1&orderby=&id=14315&pn=1&key=callis&cy=>.

⁵ Alan T. Nolan, *The Iron Brigade: A Military History* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1975) p. 256.

⁶ Walter Clark, Editor, *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-1865* (Goldsboro, NC: Nash brothers, 1901), Vol. 5, p. 611-616. Roger Long, *A Gettysburg Encounter* (Gettysburg Magazine: Articles of Lasting Historical Interest) No. 7, July, 1992, p.114-118. Daniel N. Rolph, *My Brother's Keeper: Union and Confederate Soldiers' Acts of Mercy During the Civil War* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002), p. 41-43.

⁷ *Medical and Surgical History of the Civil War* (Wilmington,NC: Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1991), Vol.VIII, p.584,585.

⁸ Special Orders No. 575, Adjutant General's Office, War Department, Washington, December 28th, 1863. (from Military Service Records, John B. Calliss).

⁹ The Veterans Reserve Corps was established by the War Department in March 1864 to replace the previously established Invalid Corps, in order to provide non-combat and garrison troops to relieve able-bodied men for frontline service.

¹⁰ *Soldiers' and Citizens' Album of Biographical Record*, p. 392.

¹¹ Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Alabama, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1870, Roll 17, Special Order No. 4, Film No. 0084.

¹² U.S., *Statutes at Large, Treaties, and Proclamations of the United States of America*, vol. 13 (Boston, 1866), pp. 507-9.

¹³ Elizabeth Bethel, *The Freedmen's Bureau in Alabama*, Journal of Southern History, Vol. IV., No.1, (Feb. 1948) p. 49.

¹⁴ Horace McLean Holderfield, *The Freedmen's Bureau in Alabama in 1865*

and 1866, Masters Thesis, Auburn University, (June 1970), p. 11.

¹⁵ Wager Swayne, son of United States Supreme Court Justice Noah H. Swayne and also a lawyer, was born in Columbus, Ohio, November 10, 1834. He was appointed Major of the 43d Ohio volunteers on 31 August, 1861, became Lieutenant-Colonel on 14 December, 1861, and Colonel on 18 October, 1862. He served in the Atlanta campaign, lost a leg at Salkahatchie, South Carolina, and was brevetted Brigadier-General, United States Volunteers, on 5 February, 1865, becoming full Brigadier-General on 8 March, 1865, and Major-General on 20 June, 1865.

¹⁶ Holderfield, p. 11.

¹⁷ Federal military chaplains were frequently utilized in supervisory positions in the Bureau. Chaplain Thomas W. Goodfellow, a Methodist minister, was born in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania in 1823. He was appointed Chaplain of the 4th Iowa Infantry in 1861, Nashville Hospital Chaplain in 1864 and was Chaplain of the 101st U. S. Colored Troops when he was named Superintendent and organized the North Alabama Freedmen's Bureau on July 31, 1865. He was discharged from the service on January 21, 1866 and was engaged in farming and other activities in Lawrence County, Alabama, until September 1868 when he moved to the Chicago area and resumed ministerial duties. There is an indication of a problem with regard to the handling of funds of the Bureau in some of Col. Calliss' Bureau correspondence. Reverend Goodfellow died December 29, 1871, when he was thrown with horse and sleigh from a bridge while returning with his wife and two youngest children from a visit to a neighbor.

¹⁸ Bethel, pp. 50, 51.

¹⁹ Records of the Assistant Commissioner, Roll 7, Letter Dated January 19, 1866 Film No. 0340.

²⁰ Marcus H. Cruikshank (1826-1821) was mayor of Talladega, Alabama, and Representative from Alabama to the Confederate Congress (1864-1865). The Alabama Legislature created the office of Commissioner for the Destitute in December 1865 to distribute supplies provided by the state and the Bureau for the indigent. Governor Patton (1865-1868) appointed Cruikshank, Commissioner for the Destitute.

²¹ Fleming, p.282.

²² Records of the Assistant Commissioner, Roll 7, Letters dated: Feb.19, 1866, Film No. 0376; March 20, 1866, Film No. 042; April 18, 1866, Film No. 0450; May 2, 1866, Film No.0478.

²³ *Ibid.*, Letter dated April 27, 1866, Film No. 0463.

²⁴ Joseph C. Bradley was the protagonist of an earlier paper by the author, *The Pardons of Madison County*, *The Huntsville Historical Review*, Winter-Spring 1995, Vol. 22, No.1. A personal friend of President Johnson, Bradley prepared personal recommendations to Governor Parsons and/or President Johnson for most of the pardon applications from Madison County and many from throughout the state.

²⁵ Bethel, p. 65.

²⁶ Records of the Assistant Commissioner, Roll 7, Letter dated: June 7, 1866, Film No. 0546.

²⁷ Bethel, p. 72.

²⁸ Records of the Assistant Commissioner, Roll 18, Letter dated Sept. 7, 1866, Film No. 0356.

²⁹ Records of the Assistant Commissioner, Roll 1, Letter dated Sept. 15, 1866, Film No. 0362.

³⁰ Records of the Assistant Commissioner, Roll No. 18, Letter dated Sept. 24, 1866, Film No. 0359.

³¹ Fleming, p. 456.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 458. Charles Waldron Buckley was born in Otsego County, New York on February 18, 1835 and served as Chaplain, 47th U.S Volunteer Colored Infantry and of the 8th Regiment Louisiana Colored Infantry. He served as Superintendent of Education of the Freedmen's Bureau in 1866 and 1867 and was elected to the Fortieth Congress with Callis in 1868 He was reelected to the Forty-first and Forty-second congresses and later served as probate judge and postmaster in Montgomery, Alabama. He died there in 1906 and is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, New York City.

³³ Bethel, p. 61.

³⁴ Records of the Superintendent of Education for the State of Alabama, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen & Abandoned Lands 1865-1870, Roll No.1, Annual Reports 1866-1868, Annual Report for Year Ending Oct 24, 1866.

³⁵ Records of the Superintendent of Education for the State of Alabama, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen & Abandoned Lands 1865-1870, Roll 3, Unregistered Letters Rec'd Dec. 1865-July 1870, Letter dated July 14, 1866.

³⁶ Cong. Globe, 40th Cong., 1st. Sess. Senate, Senate Journal p. 452 and *Huntsville Southern Advocate*, March 26, 1867.

³⁷ Henry Lee Swint, *The Northern Teacher in the South 1862-1870*, (NY: Octagon Books, Inc., 1967).

³⁸ *Huntsville Southern Advocate*, December 21, 1866.

³⁹ Holderfield , pp. 66, 67.

⁴⁰ William Willis Garth (1826-1912) – Huntsville lawyer; served in the War with Mexico and as a Lt. Col. on Longstreet's staff throughout the Civil War. He was elected to Congress as a Democrat for one term in 1876.

⁴¹ Nicholas Davis Jr. (1825-1874) – Athens and Huntsville lawyer; served in War with Mexico. He was elected to the Secession Convention in 1861 and was a long-time Unionist.

⁴² *Soldiers' and Citizens' Album of Biographical Record*, p. 393.

⁴³ Norman M. Shapiro, *The Pardons of Madison County*, *The Huntsville Historical Review*, Vol. 22, No.1, 1995.

⁴⁴ Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins, *The Scalawag in Alabama Politics 1865-1881*, (University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1977), p. 8.

⁴⁵ Fleming, p. 565.

⁴⁶ Michael W. Fitzgerald, *The Union League Movement in the Deep South*, (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1989), p. 3.

⁴⁷ Records of the Assistant Commissioner, Roll No. 2, Letter Dated December 28, 1867, Film No. 0159

⁴⁸ Michael W. Fitzgerald, *Emancipation and Military Pacification: the Freedmen's Bureau and Social Control in Alabama*, in *The Freedmen's Bureau and Reconstruction* *Reconstructing America* (Series), No. 4, edited by Paul A. Cimbala & Randall M. Miller, (N. Y., Fordham University Press, 1999) p. 61.

⁴⁹ Records of the Assistant Commissioner, Roll No. 2, Letter Dated January 16, 1868, Film No.0162.

⁵⁰ Fitzgerald, *The Union League*, p.76.

⁵¹ Joseph W. Burke was Lt.Col. of the 10th Ohio Infantry of Brig.Gen. Ormsby Mitchel's Division during the April – August, 1862, occupation of Huntsville. He was mustered out with the rest of the regiment June 17, 1864, moved to Huntsville and entered business. He was Bvt Brig. Gen. Of Volunteers March 13, 1865.

⁵² Fitzgerald, *The Union League*, p. 72

⁵³ Official Website of the Alabama Legislature, Internet:<http://www.legislature.state.al.us/misc/history/constitutions/1868/1868rat.html>

⁵⁴ Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army : from its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903*, (Washington, Govt. Print. Off., 1903), p. 275.

⁵⁵ *Cong. Globe*, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess. House, p. 4293,4294,(1868).

⁵⁶ *Cong. Globe*, 40th Cong., 3rd Sess. House Journal, p.166, (Jan 16, 1869).

⁵⁷ *Soldiers' and Citizens' Album of Biographical Record*, p. 394.

⁵⁸ Richard H. Zeitlin, *Beyond the Battle: The Flags of the Iron Brigade, 1863-1918*, *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 69 (Autumn 1985), pp. 36-66, Internet: <http://www.secondwi.com/wisconsincivilwarflags/Beyond%20the%20Battle.htm>

⁵⁹ *Soldiers' and Citizens' Album of Biographical Record*, p. 394

More of “Why Is It Named That?”

DEX NILSSON

Editor’s Note: Last year Dex Nilsson wrote and published a book titled *Why Is It Named That?*, which presented the stories behind 250 of the named places in Huntsville and Madison County. Here are a dozen more stories, presented alphabetically, that the author found after the book had been published. Dex says he wishes “everyone would pay more attention to places commemorating, memorializing, or just simply named for folks.”

Ardmore Highway

Northwest of Huntsville, Jordan Lane becomes the Ardmore Highway, or Alabama 53. This road connects Huntsville with Ardmore, whose main street runs east-to-west along the state line. Cutting through the city is Railroad Street and the railroad line itself. Virginia Foscoe wrote that the town was originally named Austin, for Alex Austin, who selected the site for a station on the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. (Austin Cemetery is just north of Main Street.) In 1922, the railroad changed the name of the town to Ardmore, reportedly after Ardmore, Pennsylvania.¹

Ironically, the city in Pennsylvania also got its name as the result of a railroad name change. In 1873, the Pennsylvania Railroad had wanted to change the name of its Athensville station and asked for suggestions from the public. The name “Ardmore” – a Gaelic word that means high ground or hills – was selected by the Irish immigrants who lived in the area.²

B.W. Blake Memorial Bridge

Benjamin William Blake came from County Mayo, Ireland, to the United States in 1837. About 1849 he settled in Huntsville along Pinhook Creek on what is now West Holmes Avenue. He and his descendants have lived in the area ever since.

B.W., who was married to Sarah Hall, served as Huntsville’s Superintendent of Streets both before and after the Civil War, and also served two terms as a city councilman. In 1870, the city purchased part of the Blake estate to create Glenwood Cemetery.³

B.W.’s son, J.W. Blake, also served as street superintendent too. In the 1880s, J.W. founded the J.W. Blake Plumbing Company, then he and his

son, Hall C. Blake, made it Blake Brothers Plumbing. Finally, Hall took over the company completely, renaming it the H.C. Blake Company - the name it has today.⁴ Originally located on Court House Square, its building now occupies a site on Holmes Avenue near the original Blake home site. (Today, the company is operated by Hall Bryant, a grand-nephew of B.W. Blake.)

In 1909, J.W. built the first bridge in that area, over Pinhook Creek. In 1989, the Huntsville City Council named the Holmes Avenue Bridge over the creek as the B.W. Blake Memorial Bridge.⁵

Charles H. Stone Agricultural Center

Charles Stone attended school in Huntsville and Auburn University. In 1956 he joined his father Roy Stone, long-time chairman of the Madison County Commission, in dairy farming in the Gurley area. During that period he was recognized as Outstanding Young Farmer in America, and became involved in local government. He was elected to the County Commission from District 2 in 1976, and re-elected in 1980 and 1984. He also served one term as President of the Association of County Commissioners in Alabama. In 1986 Charles died of cancer at the age of 51.⁶

The center that commemorates his name was built the year Stone died. It is on Cook Avenue across from the Madison County Farmers Market. It houses offices of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency, National Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development Office, as well as the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service and Forestry Commission.

Cook Avenue

This three-block-long street is home to the Madison County Farmers Market. Originally the western portion of O'Shaughnessy Avenue, it acquired its current name as a result of a city ordinance in 1958 that renamed streets throughout the city.

Cook was a common name in both Huntsville and Madison County. Perhaps the first Cook here was John Cook, who came to *Madison County* from South Carolina with his wife Margaret Shackelford in 1808.⁷

It would make a good story if the avenue was named because of the cooks who came to the Farmers Market. This does not seem to be the case. The avenue was named in 1958, and the market did not move to Cook Avenue from the Big Spring area until 1960. The name was probably arbitrarily selected. One fact seems certain: no person named Cook ever lived on Cook Avenue.

Easter Posey Recreation Area

In 1994 on Redstone Arsenal, the U.S. Army Missile Command honored World War II women defense workers by renaming a military recreation area for Easter Posey. She was the first woman killed in an accident while on duty at the arsenal during the war, on April 21, 1942.

Easter Posey was born on Easter Sunday, 1920. In 1942, she and her sister, Stacey, went to work for the Chemical Warfare Service, partly to be patriotic, partly because of the relatively good money. But they were put on production lines without training. On the day of the accident, Easter was working on a mixing machine on the pilot line that made four-pound gel-type M54 thermite incendiary bombs. There was an explosion and fire, and the building was completely destroyed. About 30 women suffered burns. Easter was the only fatality. Production of M54 bombs was halted and never resumed. Because the work at the Arsenal was secret, no report of the accident or death was made public at the time.

The 1994 proclamation dedicating the recreation area reads: "Dedicated to the women workers of Redstone and Huntsville Arsenals who gave their lives to their country."⁸

Fort Jackson M. Balch

After the old National Guard Armory on Dallas Street burned down a site on today's Airport Road was selected for a new one. It was completed early in 1971,⁹ but, like its predecessor, it had no name. When Colonel Jackson M. Balch died in 1980, National Guard members here requested it be named for him.¹⁰

Jackson Balch was born in Nova Scotia, Canada, the son of Henry and Josephine Balch of Huntsville. In 1941 Balch enlisted in the infantry, served through World War II, and in 1946 left active duty as a Lieutenant Colonel. In 1951 he joined the Alabama National Guard and commanded the 279th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion. Balch is said to have done more for the Alabama National Guard than anyone else.

Balch also worked at Marshall Space Flight Center, on Wernher von Braun's staff. In 1965, he was instrumental in establishing NASA's Mississippi Test Facility, eventually becoming laboratory director. He was employed at that facility when he died.¹¹

Grimwood Road

In 1899, six Grimwood brothers moved from Kankakee County, Illi-

nois, to Madison County. All six bought 80-acre plots in the north central part of the county. According to James Record, Rolland and Glen Grimwood grew the first lespedeza (a bush clover used for forage and soil improvement) in the county in 1911-12.¹²

One of the first roads in the county extended west from Hazel Green to Briar Fork of the Flint River, then from that spot further west.¹³ In 1922, Rolland Grimwood filled in the spot and used logs to provide the necessary bridge. It was known as Grimwood's Bridge, and it was soon after that that the entire road became known as Grimwood Road.¹⁴

The Harvey Jones Building

Harvey P. Jones was born in Huntsville in 1930. He grew up in New Market, graduated from high school there, and then attended the Georgia Institute of Technology where he earned B.S. and B. Arch. degrees. He returned to Huntsville, worked as a designer for G.W. Jones & Sons, and in 1957, he joined W.R. Dickson, Architect. He became a partner in 1964. In 1967, he and Billy Herrin formed Jones & Herrin Architects/Interior Design.

Jones' contributions to historic preservation were enormous. Diane Ellis, former Executive Director of the Historic Huntsville Foundation, has written, "Perhaps more than any person, he influenced the look of the city. Without Harvie there might have been no historic downtown business district. No Twickenham Historic District. No Old Town Historic District... No Alabama Constitution Village. No historic passenger depot."

Jones served on many professional and civic organizations and their boards. He also authored many articles on historic architecture and preservation. He worked on over 600 preservation projects. He was a member of the Huntsville Historic Preservation Commission from its beginning in 1972 until his death in 1998.¹⁵

The Historic Huntsville Foundation (HHF) is known for operating Harrison Brothers store on South Side Square, but HHF has also bought the building next to it, at the corner of Franklin Street. The first floor houses a restaurant, the second architectural offices. A plaque on the Franklin Street side indicates that HHF named the building for Harvey Jones in 2001.

L&N Drive

This road is a popular shortcut for drivers who want to travel between Bob Wallace Avenue and a point about a mile south without getting on

Memorial Parkway. It takes its name from the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, which once owned and ran on the adjacent railroad tracks. On January 1, 1959, the railroad sold part of its right-of-way to the city so that the street could be built. It initially served the back of what was then Parkway City Mall.

In 1892, the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis (NC&StL) Railway expanded its line from Tennessee through Huntsville to Hobbs Island. From there, a ferry system was used to move rail cars to and from Gunter's Landing, about 20 miles upstream, and to points south. In 1957 the L&N took over the NC&StL. By 1982, it had become part of the Seaboard Coast Line. That was when Seaboard announced it wanted to discontinue service on the line through Huntsville. To keep rail service for industries in the Hobbs Island Road area, the Huntsville and Madison County (H&MC) Railroad Authority was created. In 1984, two weeks after abandonment by Seaboard, the Rail Authority purchased the property and assets of the line that ran from Holmes Avenue to Hobbs Island Road. The 13.2-mile-long H&MC rail line still operates today.¹⁶

L. R. Patton Apartments

Along with Johnson Towers, Searcy Homes, Sparkman Homes, and Todd Towers, the Huntsville Housing Authority (HHA) operates the L.R. Patton Apartments on Seminole Drive. They are named for Leander R. Patton, one-time member of HHA. Mayor Joe Davis appointed Patton to the Huntsville Housing Authority's board of commissioners in 1977. Patton was the first black member of the board.¹⁷

Patton was born in Perry County and grew up in Marion, Alabama. After high school Patton served four years in the U.S. Army, becoming a Master Sergeant. In 1946, he received his B.S. degree from Alabama A&M College. A year later, Patton joined A&M as veterans' coordinator. He later served as financial secretary and business-manager treasurer. In 1971, Patton was named Vice President for Business and Finance. That same year, the Alabama legislature named the school's administration building the L.R. Patton Building. Patton retired in 1985 after nearly 40 years of service, after which Alabama A&M University awarded him an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. Patton died in 1989.¹⁸

Robert E. "Bud" Cramer, JR., National Children's Advocacy Center

"Bud" Cramer was born and raised in Huntsville. In 1972 he earned

his law degree at the University of Alabama. For ten years, Cramer was Madison County's District Attorney. He became aware of the trauma that child victims experienced when they had to be interviewed repeatedly in different locations by law enforcement, child protective services, prosecution, mental health, medical, educational, and other well-meaning groups responding to child abuse. In 1985 he established the first children's advocacy center to bring such agencies together and stress their cooperation.¹⁹

In 1991 Cramer was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he represents Alabama's Fifth Congressional District. He has seen his advocacy program enacted into law. The center here in a modest home was the model for what are now over 400 programs in 50 states, collectively known as the National Children's Alliance. In 2003, the local center moved into this new national facility on Pratt Avenue, and it bears Cramer's name.²⁰

Wheeler-Pruitt Forensic Science Laboratory

In 1935, long before forensic science became a present-day staple of television crime shows, the Alabama Department of Toxicology and Criminal Investigation was established, with headquarters at Auburn University. Today its name is Department of Forensic Sciences. In 1964, the Huntsville laboratory was opened. Today the laboratory shares a building with the Alabama Department of Public Safety and Madison County Sheriff Investigation and Patrol. It's on Acadia Circle, a street most people don't travel, a block north of the Farmers Market.

Van V. Pruitt, Jr., a native of Gadsden, obtained his B.S. degree from Auburn in 1953. Pruitt became the first laboratory director in Huntsville, and he served here from 1964 to 1975. Afterwards he was deputy director of the department until his retirement in 1988 after 35 years of service. Pruitt spent many years teaching, and while here, taught at Calhoun Community College and at the University of Alabama - Huntsville.

Brent Allen Wheeler graduated from Lanett High School in 1964, and obtained B.S. and M.S. degrees from Auburn. He began his service with the department in Huntsville in 1971. He became laboratory director in Huntsville in 1975 and served in that capacity for 25 years. He became expert in firearm and tool mark identification, like his predecessor he taught, and he is known for his expert testimony in court cases throughout the state. Wheeler, with 30-plus years in the department, now serves as its deputy director at Auburn.

The Huntsville laboratory was officially named the Wheeler-Pruitt Laboratory of the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences by resolution of the Alabama Legislature in 2000.²¹

ENDNOTES

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²⁰<http://cramer.house.gov/HoR/AL05/about+Bud/biography/Biography+page.htm>, Congressman Bud Cramer's website. Link to Press release dated July 22, 2003.

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Using Archival Account Records to Tell Their Story, Or Some of It at Least: The Huntsville, Alabama Waterworks, 1839-1843

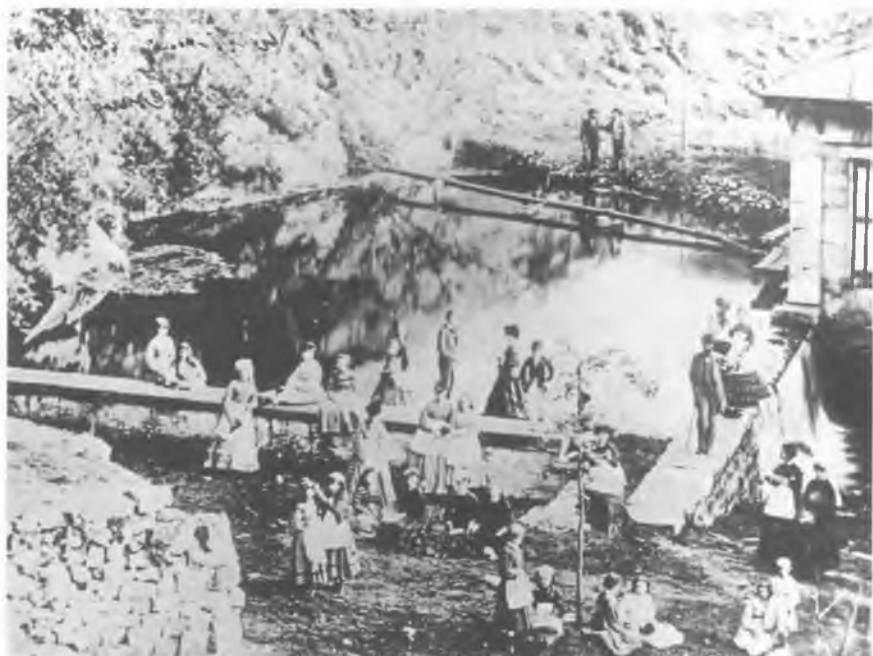
NANCY ROHR

Often some of the information we are looking for has already been preserved. Although primary sources are considered rare, many documents and records still exist that have not been fully developed. One such example is the ledger of the accounts of the brothers, Robert and Dr. George Fearn, who acquired the Huntsville town waterworks in 1836.¹ Established in 1823, by Hunter Peel, it is the oldest public water system in the United States west of the Appalachians. Hollow cedar log pipes carried water from the Big Spring to homes and businesses around the Square. The utility also provided a supply of water for the city fire fighters. In those days the volunteer firemen, needing water, dug down to the pipeline at the site of the blaze. They drilled a hole in the pipe and hauled the water by hose and bucket to the location. Afterwards the men hammered a wooden plug in the hole of the pipe when the fire was extinguished. And fire hydrants are still called “fire plugs” today.² During excavations and repairs downtown, the original pipes are still occasionally uncovered.

In this case the safekeeping has already taken place. These kinds of records, as do countless others, exist all over the country in local libraries and repositories. These particular waterworks accounts are housed in the archives of the Madison County/Huntsville Public Library. The data is already recorded and is just waiting for interpretation. It is ready to be used by someone, perhaps a curious, but attentive, researcher. And then, what can be learned from the information, and how can it be applied to the understanding for instance of home ownership, genealogy or local history? Questions are often answered by more questions; the tale is never complete. On the other hand, a great deal can be discovered to give a description of people long gone from the original scene, to tell their story, if you will.

Some of the data is simply quite apparent. The ledger clearly states the “wages” of the water works or what today would be the “rates” for service. For instance, a family of five and under paid \$15 per annum, a family of six and under would pay \$16. The rates peaked at a family of 10 for \$20 per annum. Moreover each additional person in the establishment, perhaps a

servant, was to count for 50 cents more; day boarders 25 cents; a private bath house \$2.50, each horse or cow \$1 more. If that seems unusual, one must consider at that time most of the homes downtown were complete and self-sufficient, but all of them needed fresh water. Every house might face on the street, yet the lot behind most likely included an area for a horse, a dairy cow, chickens, and a small garden. Of course domesticated pigs ran freely about most small towns everywhere. Business offices and stores were listed separately from family service, and all fees were to be paid in advance. In all, 122 accounts were mentioned. Of those, only 51 were noted specifically as for family use. The remaining had office or business connotations; some few were not categorized. And, according to the regulations, the “works” were allowed to stop one day per month and one hour per week.³



HUNTSVILLE FEMALE COLLEGE AT BIG SPRING
(ca 1860)

Obvious information can be gathered about some of people who were actually living in Huntsville in this narrow time frame. This would not suggest who was not living in town because the record is limited to those



BIG SPRING
WILLIAM FRYE - LANDSCAPE PAINTER
(ca 1850)



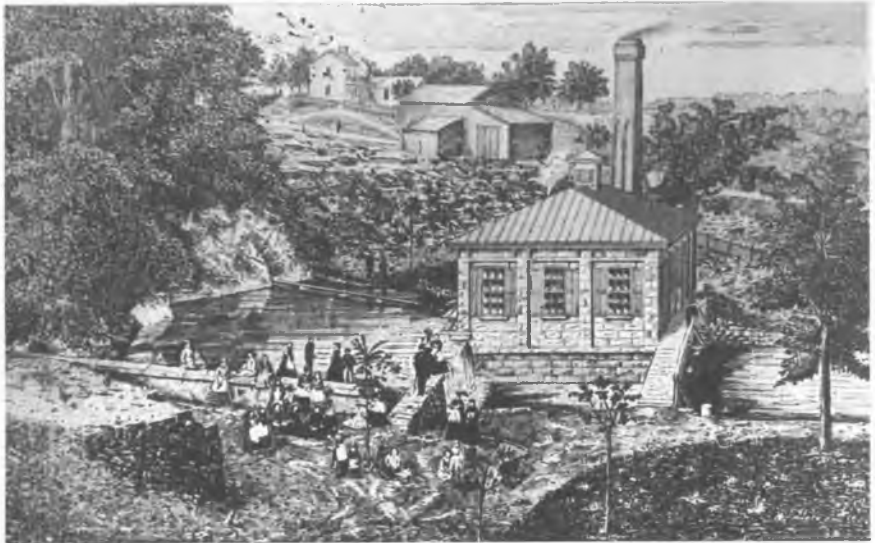
**WATERWORKS PIPES - 1878
CARRIED WATER FROM THE BIG SPRING TO
THE SQUARE RESERVOIR**

who signed up for the water service. Likewise, because it is an alphabetical listing, one cannot assume the next name is the nearest neighbor as often-implied in census records. So, the size of the household of Caroline Atwood and John Y. Bassett can be estimated rather well by the amount of their bill. Some families had the actual count of members beside the entry. Jos. B. Bradford was listed as a family of twelve. One can only assume, without further information, Mrs. Martha Betts and Mrs. Clarke might be widows. From the listing it is very evident that no surnames ended in a, i, o, or u, and most likely the water utility customers were all of hearty Anglo-Saxon background.

Cash was always at a premium on the frontier, and some customers made other arrangements for payment of their bill. Thomas Cain paid his account by barter with beef. Just as today, many customers appeared to pay their bills in a timely fashion, but just as today, others were sometimes overdue. Certainly this would suggest, in these difficult times, after the recent panic and depression, who had cash available and who didn't. D. Fariss was one of those who didn't. His family account was late, and he paid interest of 40 cents on his \$10 bill.

Some occupations can be determined from the ledger. Blount and his partner ran a grocery, as did Mr. Berry. Mrs. Childs and James Talum

operated schools. (Did Mr. Talum have no scholars? The balance of his amount due was denied for one half of the year in 1840. Perhaps his students daily washed their hands at the pitcher and bowl with water carried in a bucket from the town well.) Mr. Steger also operated a school for one year and enjoyed the water service. The L. Downs family lived within their shop premises, but John J. Fackler had two separate accounts, one for the family and one for his store. A newspaper, the *Democratic Herald*, was listed for only the 8th of March 1842, and no fees were paid. (Did it ever even print an issue? With other established newspapers in town it was a risky venture.)



BIG SPRING (ca 1895)

In those days before standardized spelling, the occupation of Fred K. Elgin was listed as “plaistering,” but Mr. Steele as “plastering.” (Two plasterers in the village might suggest there was a great deal of construction going on.) Likewise the name Clemens is spelled one way and right below it on the same page is Clemins. (They most likely are one and the same man.) Rueben Rogers ran a Confectionary and Mrs. Yeatman the Bell Tavern. (Where was Mr. Yeatman? Was he busy with the store listed under Yeatman and Cox, leaving the management of the tavern to his wife? Or was there a second Yeatman family?) Mr. Robinson was listed as a sadler. W. B. Lloyd was charged for four horses and grain. (Perhaps he operated a



WATERING THE HORSES
(ca Early 1860's)

stable and rented horses.) One can see that answers often lead one to more questions.

Even though their individual names are not known, the rate list implied there were men in town who plied their vocations at the lawyer's office, or the doctor shop, the store, blacksmith, shoemaker, cabinet [maker], taylor [sic], apothecary, printing office, confectionery, with or without liquors available, and the tavern. Partnerships were created and dissolved often with shopkeepers forming new business arrangements frequently. Likewise law partnerships dissolved. The brothers-in-law, Edwin Wallace and John H. Lewis, apparently broke up their arrangement. The name Lewis was marked out, but Wallace kept the office account.

Other additional forms of local preservation already exist that will help interpret this ledger. For instance, census records are easily accessible. Every county maintains legal records at the courthouse of marriages, civil and criminal court actions, and probate records. A yearly copy of the city directory can provide factual material. Madison County is particularly fortunate to have indices of courthouse and cemetery records prepared by local researchers who generously shared their results. Almost every county has published historical accounts and local genealogies to help interpret archival material.

Advertising was important, then as it is now. Newspaper ads of the day fill in some information about the kinds of offices and the merchants available. Joseph B. Bradford promoted his shop as a “Cheap Cash Store” where the “new style” was just arrived with a splendid assortment of yard goods, Valencia Lace, Paris kid gloves, Black Italian Scarves, Irish Linen, and an indispensable item all southern women needed - Parasols. Irby and Mastin presented fresh drugs, paints, oils, dye-stuffs, surgical instruments, fancy articles &c. Charles, John, and M. M., the Patton Brothers, announced dissolution of their partnership that year. Those who owed the firm money should settle up – soon.⁴

This kind of inquiry fills out some of the information already in the ledger. For example, the entry for the Posey family on page 20 is for water service from April 11, paid through October 1842. The next dated entry beneath Mr. Posey’s name is scratched out. Under that is a separate entry for Mrs. Elizabeth Posey from the 1st of October through January 1843. Is there information hinted at here? A researcher might learn from a reference work of local information that Phares J. Posey died October 2, 1841.⁵ This explains the change of names in the account book for the now widow Posey.

A more complex story begins to unfold with just a little more effort about the journal entry for John Y. Bassett. Information from a volume about Maple Hill Cemetery cited Bassett’s tombstone, “In memory of John Y. Bassett, born in Baltimore, Maryland, June 12, 1805, died in Huntsville, Ala. November 2, 1851.” The marker for Bassett’s sister, Margaret, is also there but not that of his wife. The Maple Hill book includes a note that Sir William Osler, the distinguished British physician, wrote *An Alabama Student*, based on Bassett’s life and letters. To continue with the search, a book of local newspaper excerpts gives Bassett’s marriage to Isapheena P. T. Thompson, daughter of Dr. Asa Thompson of Huntsville, and her death in 1871.⁶

In that source there is a death notice about “...the lingering pulmonary complaint [of] Miss Margaret Bassett, no ordinary woman...gifted...attached to her brother and the cultivation of his children...” If one continued to look for more insight, a vastly different opinion appeared. Sir William Osler said of Bassett’s sister, “Margaret, a maiden lady of advanced age, a woman of education, *disappointed hopes* and endowed with a liberal share of bitter sarcasm, was a weight which hung upon [him]; she was a terror to the community, the bitterness of her tongue stirred up strife, and her brother had to bear the brunt of it all.”⁷

In the reference work of newspaper notices, there is a notation about the death of a youthful Francis B. Bassett due to of an explosion of a bursting musket. The Guards resolved to wear crape on the left arm for 30 days in respect.⁸ Was he related to Dr. Basset and Margaret? One would have to do more research. But answers are available in already preserved material.

The entry for Samuel Coltart was very slim in the ledger. Another library source showed he was listed as a merchant and tailor in Huntsville in 1825. His wife, Jane, was born in Philadelphia, in 1802 and died before him in Huntsville in 1868. Some of the record for this family reflects the sorrowful rate of mortality and premature deaths with the listing of Catherine Caledonia, age 18, Caledonia, age three years, Mary Jane, two years, and James, 17 days. When Coltart died in 1873, apparently successful and admired, the Mayor and Alderman offered a tribute of respect in the minutes of the town meeting. However an additional enticing note appeared in the same book as it mentions the death in 1855 "at Octagon Villa, city of St. Johns Antigua, Andrew Coltart, Esquire, brother of Samuel Coltart, third son of the late John Coltart, manufacturer, Gate-house-of-Fleet, Scotland."⁹ One wonders in this wandering family if the third and unknown Coltart brother also settled somewhere far from home.

The name of Fred Elgin was a single journal entry. Something can be learned about the family even though there were no markers at Maple Hill Cemetery according to records. There was a notation in the newspaper about the death of his son Albert in 1845, "a promising lad." So where to look for the Elgins? A clue is offered with the marriage notice of Juliette E. Elgin, daughter of Fred Elgin, to Thomas Duncan of Corinth, Mississippi. The answer is hinted in the announcement, in 1879, of the death in Corinth of Elgin, an "aged and well known citizen" who died a few days ago, aged 70, a member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, ordained an elder in 1836. Of course! The old gentleman had gone to live with his married daughter in his last years.¹⁰ For further evidence one could now look in Mississippi for various preserved sources to learn about the Elgins.

So the material is already preserved. It is always a treat to read original documents, and one should try for several reasons. Certainly later editors sometimes repeat errors of transcription or typing made by an early researcher who misread or misjudged the information. A fresh eye and improved technology can help give new interpretations to old material. And there is something infinitely satisfying about holding the original paper written 150 years earlier with faded ink containing arsenic, spots that one

doesn't even want to speculate about the source of, and crumpled pages of history just hidden away waiting to be rediscovered and put to use. Safekeeping takes many forms. We must not overlook what may have already been saved and is just waiting to be picked up and read, studied, and interpreted for its content. There is so much yet to be built on; whether brick, wood or paper, there is still so much to learn.



**SECTION OF
CEDAR WATER PIPE**

ENDNOTES

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⁶ Diane Robey, Dorothy Scott Johnson, John Rison Jones, Jr., and Frances C. Roberts, *Maple Hill Cemetery Phase One* (Huntsville, AL: Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, 1995), 23; Gandrud, 472 and 249.

⁷ Gandrud, 508; Charles C. Thomas, *The Medical Reports of John Y. Bassett, M.D.* (n. p., 1941), 58-59.

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¹⁰ Gandrud, 485, 224, and 276.



DRAKE, ROBERTSON, AND BROOKS BURIAL PLOT

**FRONT ROW: THOMAS P. ROBERTSON, ANNIE BUELL DRAKE ROBERTSON,
W. P. ROBERTSON**

**BACK ROW: P. HOLMES DRAKE & JAMES PERRY DRAKE
GENERAL W. T. H. BROOKS, AND JAMES DRAKE BROOKS**



A Huntsville Family: Drake, Robertson, and Brooks

PHYLISS O'CONNELL

A repaired white cross in Section 9, Row 10, of Maple Hill Cemetery begins the fascinating story of a Huntsville family:¹

DRAKE: P. Holmes Drake, born June 18, 1812 – died Feb. 11, 1892
James Perry Drake, born in Robinson Co., NC Sept 15, 1797 – died in Huntsville, AL, Aug 12, 1876

ROBERTSON: Thomas P. Robertson, born July 1840 – died Jan 1886
Annie Buell Drake Robertson, born Nov. 17, 1840 – died Feb 13, 1930
W. P. Robertson, born Aug 15, 1874 – died Feb 5, 1889

BROOKS: Genl. W. T. H. Brooks, born Jan 18, 1821 – died July 19, 1870
Alme Drake Brooks, born Oct 1836 – died Sept 1921
James Drake Brooks died July 19, 1864 aged 13 months

Annie Buell Drake Robertson, the last member of her family to be buried in this plot, begins the history of this family.

Mrs. Robertson was a “beloved and a distinguished lady (of Huntsville).”² In 1904 she gave the Confederate memorial shaft located in the CSA Unknown Soldiers enclosure of Maple Hill Cemetery. She was an Honorary Life President of the Virginia Clay Clopton UDC Chapter. She knitted for our WWI soldiers with the same needles used for knitting for soldiers in the War Between the States. Mrs. Robertson donated silver and table linen to help furnish the dining room in the Madison County Courthouse used by CSA veterans. Mrs. Robertson was a member of the League of Women Voters and an ardent supporter of women’s suffrage.³ In 1895 Mrs. Robertson and other prominent Huntsville ladies sponsored and entertained Susan B. Anthony and Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt.⁴ Mrs. Robertson’s obituary states “having no surviving children of her own, her

tender heart prompted the adoption of a son and daughter” and lists only two “surviving nieces, Mrs. Leva McClung of El Paso, TX and Mrs. Madge McClung Russell of Louisville.”⁵

Beside Annie Drake Robertson lies her husband Thomas Paul Robertson. The *Huntsville Democrat* published his obituary which read “...died January 17, 1886...son of the late Parson Robertson...he leaves a bereaved wife.”⁶

Thomas was the son of John Murray Robertson, an Episcopal minister who moved to Huntsville from Cambridge, Maryland. He was the rector of the Church of the Nativity during the Civil War while Union forces occupied Huntsville. The Federals (Union) ordered him to stop praying for the President of the Confederacy and to pray, as formerly, for the President of the United States while conducting services. He refused and was made prisoner; but still continued to pray for the President of the Confederacy.

He enlisted in the Confederate Army and served under Generals Wheeler and Ewell., and was taken prisoner in 1864 and condemned to death for being a spy but escaped and returned to his unit.⁷

The Madison County, Alabama, 1880 census, confirms a natural son, W. P. Robertson, who died in 1889, age 15 years, and rests in the family plot.⁸

An obelisk marks the graves of P. (Priscilla) Holmes Drake and James Perry Drake, the parents of Annie Buell Drake Robertson. James Perry Drake was born in Robeson (Robinson) County, North Carolina, to Albrittain Drake and Ruth Collins of Edgecombe and Nash Counties, North Carolina and Muhlenburg County, Kentucky.⁹

Albrittain Drake had served in the American Revolution from Nash County, North Carolina, as a Private and Lieutenant and was one of the Nash County Company of Light Horse which escorted the Governor of North Carolina to Fayetteville, frequently encountering Tories.

Both Albrittain and his father were taken prisoner in a skirmish but later released.

Ruth Collins Drake received her husband's Revolution War Pension from 1843 until her death in Muhlenburg County, Kentucky in 1847.

When Silas Drake, a son, applied on May 9, 1851 for his father's pension on behalf of himself and his seven brothers and sisters—the pension was allowed.¹⁰

James Perry Drake and George L. Kinnard, a surveyor, were early land developers and speculators and co-founders of the city of Lebanon, Indiana

in Boone County, Indiana. Upon learning of the planned organization of Boone County, they purchased 3 tracts of land near the geographic center of the “new” county, knowing that this location would be the most likely site for the county seat. With the land acquired they set about platting a town of over 19 blocks surrounding a town square.

Kinnard surveyed a road from Indianapolis to Lafayette with an “expedient eight block jog” to Lebanon’s Main Street before continuing to Lafayette. In 1832 the Indiana General Assembly agreed to the county seat being within 2 miles of the county’s geographic center. Drake and Kinnard, to insure their property’s selection, donated every third lot, the town square, an additional 40 acres and furnished, at NO cost, the bricks and shingles for the original courthouse.¹¹

James Perry Drake was a prominent Indiana lawyer and served as the Indiana State Treasurer from 1850-1853.¹² Drake’s war record consisted of service in the Marion County, Indiana, militia to include the Black Hawk War (1832) and the Mexican War where he mustered in June 20, 1846, 1st Regiment, Co H, Indiana Volunteer Infantry. He mustered out 1847 in New Orleans with the rank of Colonel.¹³

He married Priscilla Holmes Buell in Dearborn County, Indiana, January 23, 1831.¹⁴ Priscilla’s family roots were in New York, Ohio and Connecticut.

Upon the death of Priscilla’s brother and sister-in-law, she and James reared and educated their nephew, Don Carlos Buell, later to become a U.S. General in the War Between the States and noted as the Commander of the Army of Ohio at the battle of Shiloh.¹⁵

The Drake’s only son, James P. Drake, Jr., died in Tennessee from a lingering illness in 1862. Family tradition says Priscilla and her daughters were pro-North and James and son James, Jr. were pro-South. Priscilla filed for a pension February 8, 1887, residing in Tennessee, as the widow of James P. Drake for his service as a Colonel in the 1st Indiana Volunteers (Mexican War).¹⁶

The two remaining graves in this family plot belong to Priscilla and James Drake’s daughter and Annie’s sister, Almyrce/Alme Drake.¹⁷ She married bachelor U.S. General William Thomas Harbaugh Brooks who came to Union-occupied Huntsville, after resigning his commission in 1864, to restore his health. Brooks also served in the Seminole War (1842-43), the Mexican War, various Indian battles on the frontier and is noted as the

commander of the First Division, VI Corps, at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville in 1863. In Maple Hill Cemetery Phase One, he is listed as "one of two of 587 Union (U.S.) generals buried in a former Confederate state." Their only child, James Drake Brooks, age 13 months, rests with his family.¹⁸ This article gives a brief family history of a small plot in Maple Hill filled with romance, heartache, war, shrewd business acumen, public service and devotion to ideals and country.

ENDNOTES

¹ Diane Robey, Dorothy Scott Johnson, John Rison Jones, Jr. and Francis C. Roberts, *Maple Hill Cemetery, Phase One* (The Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, 1995), 66.

² *The Huntsville Times*, February 13, 1930, Obituary for Mrs. Annie Buell Drake Robertson.

³ Mattie MaCadory Huey, *Alabama Division United Daughters of the Confederacy History* (The Post Publishing Co., Opelika, AL, 1937), 92 and 289.

⁴ Elizabeth Humes Chapman, *Changing Huntsville 1890-1899*, 27-29. Susan B. Anthony is noted for helping organize the women's suffrage movement in the U.S. and was instrumental in the passage of legislation leading to the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote. Carrie (Lane) Chapman Catt noted as an organizer and lecturer in the women's suffrage movement in the United States, Canada and Europe. She founded the (National) League of Women Voters in 1919, one year before the 19th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution was ratified.

⁵ *The Huntsville Times*, February 13, 1930 Ibid.

⁶ *The Huntsville Democrat*, January 27, 1886, Obituary for Thomas P. Robertson

⁷ George Norburg MacKenzie (ed.), *Colonial Families of the United States, Vol. 2* (Genealogical Publishing Company, Baltimore, 1966), pg. 541-554.

⁸ 1870 Madison County, AL Census for Thomas (Paul) Robertson; 1880 Madison County, AL Census for Thomas (Paul) Robertson.

⁹ Otto A. Rothert, *A History of Muhlenburg County, KY*, (John P. Morton & Co., 1913), 67 and 130.

¹⁰ American Revolution War Record of Albrittain Drake (Pensioned and widow's pension); also *Daughters of the American Revolution Patriot In-*

dex, Centennial Edition, Part 1, 1990: Muhlenburg County, Kentucky Abstracts of Wills and Administration, pg. 47.

¹¹ Internet site: <http://Bccn.boone.in.us/lebanon/history.html> , *History, City of Lebanon(Boone County) Indiana*

¹² 1850 Marion County, Indiana, Census in *ibid*; Otto A. Rothert, *ibid*.

¹³ Indiana Historical Society, *The Hooosier Genealogy*, Vol. 15 No. 3, 48-53 and *Mexican War Index to Pension Files 1886-1926, Vol. 3*; Internet site: <http://Aztecclub.com/toc.htm>, Aztec Club of 1847, for biographies of *William Thomas Harbaugh Brooks. and James P. Drake, Indiana Soldier, 1st Regiment, Mexican War.*

¹⁴ *Mexican War Index to Pension Files 1886-1926, Vol. 3, Ibid.*

¹⁵ Internet site: Civilwarhome.com/buelbio.htm, Shotgun's Home of the American Civil War, for biography of *Don Carlos Buell*; American Council of Learned Societies, American National Biography, (Oxford University Press, Inc. 2000) *Gen. William Thomas Harbaugh Brooks and Gen. Don Carlos Buell.*

¹⁶ *Mexican War Index to Pension Files 1886-1926, Vol. 3, Ibid.*

¹⁷ 1850 Marion County, Indiana, Census; 1860 Marion County, Indiana, Census for James P. Drake.

¹⁸ Internet site: <http://Aztecclub.com/toc>; American Council of Learned Societies: Diane Robey, et. al.

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