

# *The Huntsville Historical Review*

Winter-Spring 2009

Volume 34

Number 1



*Drawing of U.S. Major Leonidas Stout  
Civil War Graffiti at the Historic Huntsville Depot*

*Published By  
The Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society*

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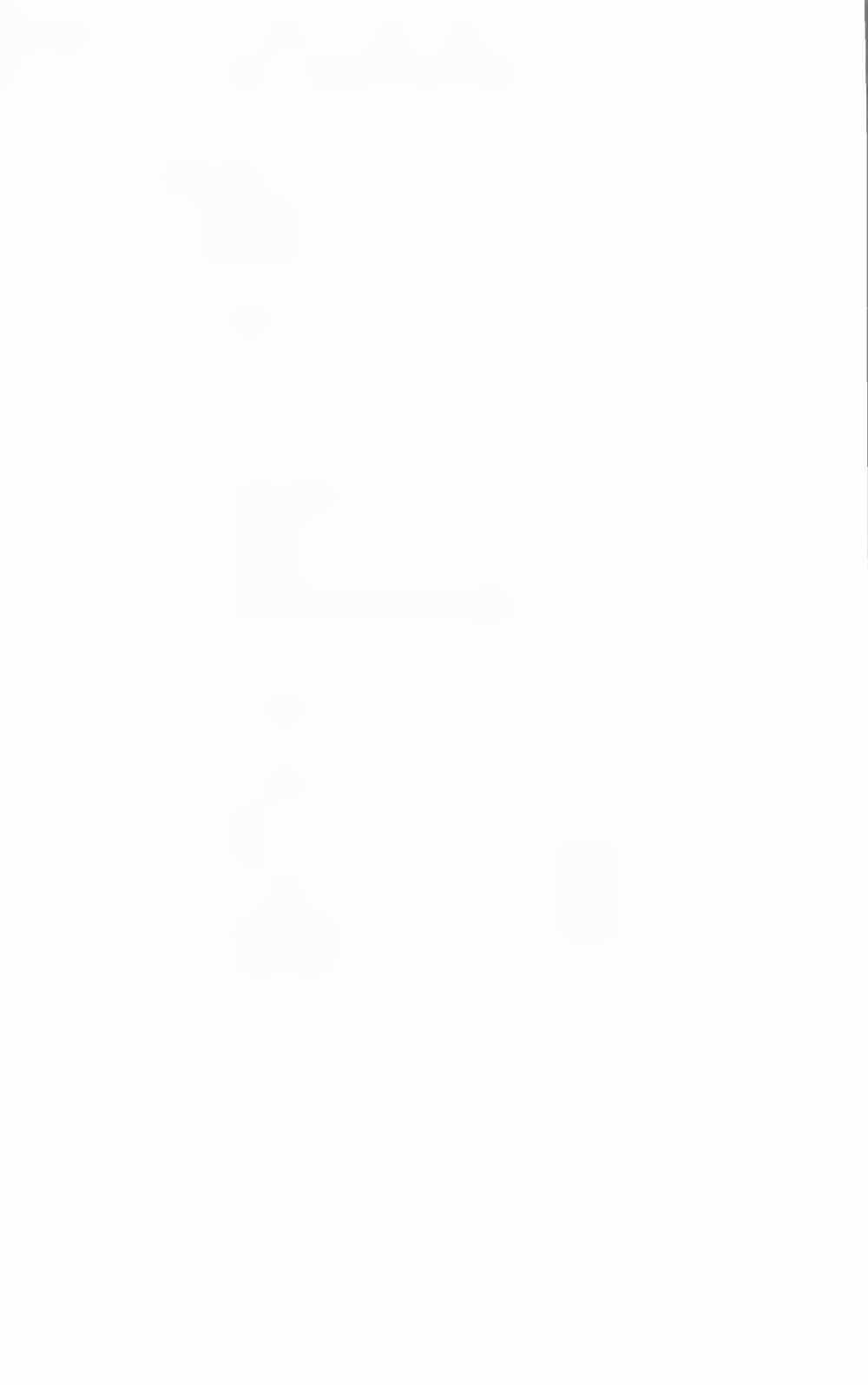
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## President's Page

As we review the past year of Society activities, it is marked with both sadness and success. I refer to the loss of several very early members of the Historical Society who played such a major role in our development and success over the many years. John Rison Jones, Alice Thomas, and Robin Brewer will certainly be missed and they can never be replaced. We owe them our appreciation for their generous contributions of time and talent.

On the other hand, we can look back on 2008 with satisfaction and progress. We had great speakers and programs, appreciated by large audiences and support at our quarterly meetings. We also published another highly successful book, developed and produced by Madison County historians. It has been widely distributed within and outside Madison County.

I want to recognize and thank Rane'e' Pruitt, archivist at the Huntsville-Madison County Library, for her vision and perseverance in bringing about this book, the many fine people who contributed to its production, and the Madison County Board of Commissioners for their financial assistance to make this book possible.

Lastly, I want to say thank you to Jacque Reeves, editor of our *Historic Huntsville Review*, for her many contributions over the past four years. Jacque will be stepping down as editor after this edition, and we will miss her. I am certain the entire membership of the Historic Society joins me in expressing our appreciation.

Bob Adams  
President





## Editor's Notes

In this issue, we are again pleased to publish a most interesting article from one of our veteran contributors, David Byers, whose research on the scourge of yellow fever has revealed yet another of the many difficulties faced by our ancestors, and largely taken for granted by people of our era.

We are also pleased to welcome three new contributors: Ken Carpenter, a well-known presence in our historic community, who has acquired a wonderful obsession with one of the hastily scribbled Civil War drawings left at the Historic Huntsville Depot 150 years ago. His research has enabled us to come to know some of the many faceless names that have passed through one of Huntsville's most treasured historic buildings.

James Hill, a veteran of World War II, has lived on Monte Sano Mountain off and on since 1930 and shares with us his extensive knowledge and research of his mountain community.

And finally, we are most fortunate to have a writer all the way from Stephenville, Texas. Dr. Ricky Sherrod's ancestors were among the many who came from Virginia to settle the frontier that would become Madison County before Alabama became a state. Although they eventually moved farther west, the Brown family left their mark in our area, and we appreciate Dr. Sherrod's willingness to share his thorough and interesting research.

We look forward to reading much more of Dr. Sherrod's work in the future, as well as Mr. Carpenter, Mr. Hill, Mr. Byers, and anyone who would like to publish the incredible history Huntsville and Madison County has to offer.

Jacque Reeves  
Editor

Additions to the *Special Issue of The Huntsville Historical Review, A History of Early Settlement: Madison County Before Statehood 1808-1819*

*Mr. Joseph M. Jones, author of the chapter entitled, "New Market – First and Fairest of them All?" asked that we include information that was removed through our extensive editing process in the special issue of the Review.*

*On Page 69, under the title "Religious Activities," Mr. Jones wishes to add:*

The three churches I refer to were: Enon, Flint River, and Jones Fork, all in the eastern part of the county and all Baptist. Enon and Flint River are well known and continue today, the first under a different name which was struck from the article. Jones Fork was for a time probably bigger and more prominent than the other two; it was eliminated altogether.

The closest meeting house (to New Market), early, probably was Enon Baptist Church on the Briar Fork of the Flint, which in 1861 moved to Huntsville and later became the First Baptist Church, now observing its 200<sup>th</sup> year, the oldest (missionary) Baptist Church in Alabama. Another closer one, named Jones Fork Baptist Church, was in the Bloucher's Ford area. It was formed about the same time (i.e., 1809) the exact date unknown, but it did not survive.

As for Jones Fork, its exact location is unknown but was likely two or three miles southwest of New Market. By 1818 it had been replaced, or renamed, Bethany Baptist Church. Sketchy records indicate it became a vigorous church, with 130 members in 1930, more than Enon's 69 members. Bethany gradually declined and faded after a major Baptist split in the missionary-antimissionary controversy of 1838. Enon sided with the missions movement which grew, whereas churches of the opposing view, including Bethany, declined. (This information is attributed to "A Third Pioneer Baptist Church" by F. Wilbur Helmbold, *Alabama Baptist Historian*, January 1967, pp 5-6; Microfilm #972, "Alabama Baptist Association Annuals, Flint River, 1814-1866," Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.)

\*\*\*

The Mount Paran facility presently exists as a non-profit corporation headed by Lowell Bates of Plevna, a Samuel Davis descendant, who has three consecutive grand-sires buried there: Samuel Davis (1842), John Davis (about 1830), and William C. Davis (1900). Two other Samuel Davis descendants with nearby Tennessee addresses, Stanley Davis and James E. Davis, are officers in Mt. Paran. A young son of one of the officers represents the 10<sup>th</sup> generation of Samuel Davis descendants in this locale, according to Bates.

# A Hoosier in the Heart of Dixie

KEN CARPENTER

The Historic Huntsville Depot is easily one of the most important and significant buildings in Huntsville's 200-plus years of history. Built in 1860 as the Eastern Division Headquarters of the Memphis & Charleston Railroad, the building, along with associated equipment, became the prized possession of the Union Army when it was captured, and thus all of Huntsville, in April 1862. Captured Confederate soldiers were imprisoned on the third floor, and Union soldiers walked the halls off and on for the next three years.

Civil War graffiti left from soldiers garrisoned in Huntsville or passing through the station during the war is just a part of the lure that attracts tourists and students of history to the Historic Huntsville Museum. Standing out among the many such signatures and illustrations left by soldiers, troopers, and railroad men of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is a drawing of Major Stout, portrayed in his major's uniform. Over the many years of the building's existence, some of the scribblings were painted over and eventually forgotten. After the closing of the depot in 1968, the graffiti was discovered during renovations to turn the depot into a transportation museum. These markings, left for visitors to see today, are found on the walls of the second and third floors of the Historic Huntsville Depot.

We are fortunate to have records available to unlock the mystery of this soldier, and although his service was not marked by any remarkable event, the drawing of Major Stout ensures he will not be forgotten. Although it took nine months to research the thread of his life and death, that time, in retrospect, is but a drop in the bucket of time.

## Who Was Major Stout?

The caption on the wall below the crude, yet impressive image of a military officer reads, "Above is a drawing of Federal Officer, Major Stout." The drawing is presumed to have been done by one of his men. Among the first drawings found in the early 1970s, it was at that time, covered by brown paint. Removal of the old paint revealed the drawing.

I have learned that the study of history is the interpretation of new discoveries about our common shared past. Discoveries begin with questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how do these discoveries impact our lives, as well as the lives of the people of that particular era? Who was Major Stout? When and why he was here, and what his impact was on Huntsville and the Tennessee Valley? And finally, what became of him?

After reviewing Dyer's *A Compendium of the War of Rebellion* for Federal regiments in Huntsville at the time of General Mitchel's invasion of April 1862, I searched the National Park Service Soldiers and Sailors on-line index for a Major Stout. I imagined there would be only a few dozen veterans, if that many, by the name of Stout, and that my search would be fairly brief. Upon

entering the NPS site, I discovered an index of Stout Union Veterans that included 792 infantrymen, 212 cavalrymen, 62 artillerymen, and six engineers. Apparently, the name Stout is a prolific surname in the Midwest. Without knowing Stout's first name, and as the ranks of soldiers are not listed in the NPS general index, I limited my search to regiments from Kentucky and the Midwest.

After hours of unsuccessful National Park Service searches, I decided to revisit Major Stout's image for additional clues. A closer look revealed another name affiliated with the drawing: James Allen. The penmanship appeared to be similar, and perhaps it was James Allen who drew the illustration. Perhaps he was in the same unit.

An NPS site search for James Allen narrowed the trail considerably. I discovered that Private James Allen of the 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry served under Major Stout of that regiment. Within days of a single phone call to the Indiana State Archives, I received, from the state's Adjutant General's Office, records of Private Allen and Major Stout of the 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry. Major Stout was a resident of New Albany, Indiana, just across the Ohio River from Louisville.

Inquiries to the New Albany-Floyd County Library, following a search of their internet site, resulted in the discovery of newspaper articles concerning Major Stout and family. Subsequent visits to the Huntsville-Madison County Library Heritage Room, the Tennessee State Archives, New Albany, Indiana and the Indiana Room of the New Albany-Floyd County Library, resulted in much of the study herein.

## Major Stout

Major Stout served in three Indiana regiments. He pursued Huntsville native John Hunt Morgan during Morgan's raid into southern Indiana in 1863 and served garrison duty in Huntsville in 1864.

The 13th Indiana Cavalry Regiment (131<sup>st</sup>) was authorized by Indiana Governor Morton. Leonidas Stout, age 37, was entered as a major on the field and staff roll of the 13th Indiana Cavalry on 22 April 1864 in New Albany, Indiana. His term of service was for three years. Captain Lehman recorded him on the muster roll of the 13<sup>th</sup> on 12 May 1864 in Nashville, Tennessee. It was this regiment that brought Major Stout to Huntsville. With the end of the Civil War, he resigned his commission on 16 April 1865.<sup>1</sup>

Leonidas Stout responded enthusiastically to his state's call to preserve the Union. He was reputed to have been a veteran of the Mexican War and of the Black Hawk War, which, if correct, may have contributed to his placement in the officer corps.<sup>2</sup> When he went to war, Stout left behind a young wife and three daughters between the ages of three and nine.

Leonidas Stout was born in Abingdon, Virginia on 28 February 1827 to David Stout and Levisca Vest, both natives of Abingdon, Virginia.<sup>3</sup>

In 1847, Stout settled in New Albany. He married Dorah Swarens on 18 August 1849.<sup>4</sup> Dorah was the daughter of David and Polly Swarens who immigrated to New Albany from Kentucky in 1832.<sup>5</sup> Just after their marriage, the couple took up residence on Upper Fourth Street, later designated 406 East Fourth Street.<sup>6</sup>



Leonidas and Dorah Stout  
(Purchased by author through Craig Dunn Enterprises)

Leonidas and Dorah were the parents of Florence, born in 1853; Dorah Elizabeth, born about 1856; and Harriet, born in May, 1859, all in Indiana. Florence married John B. Graves of Louisville; Dorah married Charles Ellmaker of New Albany; and, Harriet married Samuel H. Hood of New Albany. Son-in-law Charles Ellmaker was wounded at Stones River while serving with the 24<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry and imprisoned in Libby Prison in Richmond until his exchange.<sup>7</sup>

The 1850 U.S. Census for New Albany, Indiana listed Leonidas Stout as a 24-year-old carpenter, born in Virginia, with a real estate value of \$400. His wife Dorah was listed as age 21. Dorah's parents were listed as: David Swarens, age 66, born in South Carolina with a real estate value of \$2,500; his wife Mary, age 60, born in Kentucky; son Jackson, a 27-year-old butcher born in Indiana with real estate valued at \$1,000; and Louisa E. Fitzgerald, age 7, who was born in Ohio.<sup>8</sup>

The New Albany City Directory for 1856 and 1857 cited Stout as a grocer, whose residence and business, Stout and Hardin, was located at the northeast corner of Spring and Upper Fourth Street. His father-in-law, David Swarens, also a grocer, lived on the same block. His brother-in-law, Lewis Swarens, yet another grocer, lived between Upper 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets. Leonidas' brother, B. F. Stout, was listed as a carpenter living on Upper 1<sup>st</sup> Street.<sup>9</sup>

Stout apparently abandoned the grocery business for a time. In 1859 and again in 1860, he is listed as a carpenter living in the same location.<sup>10</sup> Although he was serving as a major with the 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry in 1863, the City Directory for 1863-1864 shows him again as a grocer at this same address.<sup>11</sup>

The 1860 census for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward of New Albany, Indiana, lists Leo Stout, age 33, as a carpenter and having a real estate value of \$4,000, as well as a value of personal estate worth \$1,000. Included in this census were his wife Dorah, age 32, their son, Benjamin Stout, age 30, (a carpenter born in Virginia with a real estate value of \$1,800 and a personal estate of \$500). In addition, in the household was Hannah Swarens, age 16, born in Indiana.<sup>12</sup>

## Sixty-Sixth Infantry

Major Stout began his Civil War experience as a second lieutenant with the 66<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Indiana Volunteers (Volunteer Militia). A copy of a report from the Adjutant General's Office, or General Orders No. 56 for July 9, 1862 stated:

Leonidas Stout has been appointed a Second Lieutenant in the 66<sup>th</sup> Regt. Ind. Vols. to be organized in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District of the State in pursuance of General order No. 49 issued at this Office. He is fully empowered to enlist for Said Regiment and when enlisted to muster them into United States service. By order of his Excellency O.P. Morton Governor, Laz Noble, Adj. Genl. Indiana.<sup>13</sup>

The 66<sup>th</sup> was raised in Indiana's Second Congressional District. Lew Wallace, from Crawfordsville, Indiana, who went on to become governor of the New Mexico Territory and author of the novel *Ben Hur*, served as its first colonel. The regiment rendezvoused at Camp Noble, New Albany, where they were put into service 19 August 1862. Stout's name however, is not found in the official Adjutant General's roster of the 66<sup>th</sup>.<sup>14</sup>

In a letter from Stout's daughter, Mrs. Samuel (Harriet/Hattie) Hood, to the Hon. S. M. Stockslager on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1927, concerning her father's military service, she wrote that he was commissioned by the Governor of Indiana as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant by Colonel J.S. Simison, United States Army Mustering Officer, to recruit men for the 66<sup>th</sup> and 81<sup>st</sup> regiments. The two regiments were recruited before he was commissioned Captain of Company A 81<sup>st</sup> Indiana Infantry regiment on August 13<sup>th</sup> 1862. He served as Captain until January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1863, and was appointed Major of the 81<sup>st</sup>.<sup>15</sup>

Having accepted a captaincy in the 81<sup>st</sup> in August 1862, Leonidas Stout was fortunate to have escaped the immediate fate of the 66<sup>th</sup>, who marched to Lexington, Kentucky to help diffuse "the danger menacing Cincinnati." At the Battle of Richmond, Kentucky on 30 August, most of the regiment was captured, then paroled and returned to New Albany on 10 September.<sup>16</sup>

The regiment was refitted at Indianapolis in November, leaving that city on 10 December 1862 to join the First Brigade of Dodge's division at Corinth, Mississippi. In August 1863, they too came to the Tennessee Valley while participating in Dodge's expedition into Northern Alabama from 15 April to 2 May 1863 at Rock Cut, Tuscumbia, and Town Creek. Following the Alabama expedition, the regiment saw service in 1864 at Colliersville and Pulaski, Tennessee, fought in the Atlanta Campaign, were part of "Sherman's Bummers' March to the Sea" through Georgia, and helped bring the war to a conclusion at the Battle of Bentonville, North Carolina. Finally, they participated in the subsequent surrender of General Joseph Johnston's army in April 1865.<sup>17</sup>

## 81<sup>st</sup> Infantry

Among the papers in the Stout collection of the New Albany, Floyd County Library is Captain Stout's Roster for Company A of New Albany. Entitled "Volunteer Enlistment, State of Indiana Form of Volunteer Enlistment and Oath," it contains the alphabetized names of 54 men who were enrolled from 22 July to 27 August 1863. It appears to be a working copy roster rather than the initial enlistment document for several reasons. It is alphabetized and not in random order, the 81<sup>st</sup> regiment is not specifically mentioned, and all names are written in the same handwriting.<sup>18</sup> A National Park Service Soldiers and Sailors site review of the men of the 81<sup>st</sup> verifies that the men on Stout's roster were part of Company A.

On 15 August 1863, Stout was commissioned a captain of Company A, 81<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Indiana. Later, he was promoted to the rank of major, and on July 7, 1863 he was commissioned a lieutenant colonel of the regiment. He appeared on the regimental muster roll, recorded by Captain Snyder, as a captain leading Company A, and entering the regiment on 12 August 1862 in New Albany. He was described on the regimental muster roll of 29 August 1862 at New Albany, recorded by Lieutenant Morris, as age 35, with grey eyes, black hair, dark complexion, and standing six feet tall. His occupation was given as merchant. He served as captain until 19 January 1863.<sup>19</sup>

On 8 September 1862, Captain Stout listed two deserters from his Company A in the *New Albany Daily Ledger*. Their ages were given as 18 and 38, and both had taken an alias. The regular government bounty was offered for their arrest and placement in the barracks at Louisville.<sup>20</sup>

Leo Stout received his major's commission for three years service, given "in the field" at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and authorized by Governor Morton. Stout served in that capacity from 18 January 1863 to 29 April 1863. He was discharged on a certificate of disability.<sup>21</sup> An outline of the regimental camp in Nashville is included in the Stout papers.

The 81<sup>st</sup> continued south, serving in the Battle of Chickamauga, the Atlanta Campaign, the battles of Franklin and Nashville, and were garrisoned in Huntsville from January to March 1865.<sup>22</sup>

## Major Stout's hunt for John Hunt Morgan

In July 1863, Huntsville native and Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan, the "Thunderbolt of the Confederacy," led his troopers in an invasion of southern Indiana. On 9 July, Morgan led his artillerymen and troopers to victory over local militiamen of the Sixth Indiana Legion in the Battle of Corydon. After pillaging the town (18 miles SW of New Albany), Morgan moved northward en route to Ohio, where he was eventually captured.

Major Stout, at home in New Albany, was on disability, but he responded to the threat to his state. Although attached to the 81<sup>st</sup> Indiana Infantry, Fred Conway's work, *Corydon, The Forgotten Battle of the Civil War* cited Major Leoida (sic) Stout of the 6th Indiana Legion Infantry Company. Also on the roll of the 6th, as

provost marshal, was Colonel John Timberlake of the 81<sup>st</sup>. Conway related the eyewitness firefight account of Morgan's crossing the Ohio at Mauckport, Indiana by 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Strother M. Stockslager of the Mauckport Rifles.<sup>23</sup>

The Stout Papers include the following accounts of his service regarding the Morgan raid and his service to December 1863:

On July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1863, Leonidas Stout was appointed and commissioned Lt. Col. In the 81<sup>st</sup> Regt. (vice Horatio Woodbury resigned) to serve as such during the period for which said regiment was called into the service of the United States and he will be obeyed and respected accordingly.<sup>25</sup>

\*\*\*

About that time, Genl. Morgan made his raid thro Indiana. Gen. Lew Wallace came to New Albany under orders through Gov. Morton gave me a battalion of mounted troops from the garrison here and ordered me to proceed without delay and form a courier and dispatch line thro' out the raid of Morgan and communicate with Louisville, Madison, and Cincinnati that they might be able to move the gunboats and forces to blockade his crossing the Ohio River.<sup>26</sup>

\*\*\*

Henryville [Indiana] July 10<sup>th</sup> [1863] 4 Oclk. P.M.

Maj. Stout

News from Memphis [Indiana] reliable that 100 Rebels have just croped the Rail Road at slote cut two miles south of Memphis and are going west. A dispatch to Memphis this P.M. says they are fighting at 6 mile island and that our forces have the better of it so far.

J A C McCoy

Henryville

P.S. dispatches sent here to night will receive prompt attention.<sup>27</sup>

**Note:** Henryville and Memphis, Indiana are 19 and 18 miles north of New Albany on U.S. 31. John E. McCoy (or John A.G.O. McCoy), Command Sergeant, 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry is found in the NPS Soldiers and Sailors site.

\*\*\*

A copy of the Post Commander

Headquarters New Albany Ind July 10<sup>th</sup> 1863

Guards pass Major Stout & forces through the lines By order of Thos. W. Fray Maj. Commanding Post.

I proceeded under the above orders and discharged my duty thro' out the raid and returned about Aug 1<sup>st</sup> 1863 to New Albany Ind. and applied to Gov. Morton for a permit to recruit enough of Infantry to bring up the 81<sup>st</sup> to sufficient number that the field officer reappointed could be mustered. He granted me permission and I commenced and raised quite a number and received the following order –



State of Indiana Adj. Gen Office. Indianapolis  
Nov 15<sup>th</sup> 1863

General orders: Authority having been granted by the Secretary of War for the organization of additional Regiments of Cavalry & Infantry in the State the same will be recruited and organized in accordance with general orders issued from this office Sept 21<sup>st</sup> 1863.

Leonidas Stout is hereby appointed a Recruiting Officer<sup>28</sup>

\*\*\*

In December the Governor was urging me to the front with my command. I applied for a Mustering Officer. He sent me W.F. Melbourne, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieut 15<sup>th</sup> U.S. Inf. Must'g officer. He reported to me without being prepared to discharge his duty. He informed me that he had applied to the Bank here and could not get the currency on a Twenty thousand dollar Draft that he had on deposit at Cincinnati. I went with him to the State Bank in this city and to impress them favorable to accommodate the mustering officer as I wanted to get to the front. They said they would do the best they could for him, but could not discount a government draft. They were under martial law and accusation of disloyalty and many arrests and would take no responsibility but if the Lieut of the mustering officer with pay \$25.00 in cash we will let him have the currency and take the draft on depository of Cincinnati. The mustering officer said he did not have the money and could not muster the men without it. I paid the \$25.00 to the Mustering Officer and he gave me a voucher for the same.

Leonidas Stout<sup>29</sup>

## **Huntsville Occupation by Major Stout and the 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry**

An overview account of the 13<sup>th</sup> Cavalry is found in the state's Adjutant General's report, published in 1866. Field and staff officers included:

Colonel Gilbert M. L. Johnson (Muncie)

Lieutenant Colonels: Wm. Pepper (Rising Sun), Ranna Moore (New Albany)

Majors: Leonidas Stout (New Albany), Hugh Stephens (Muncie),

Isaac DeLong (Huntington), John Wheeler (Rome),

Joseph Stricker (North Vernon), David Hall (Warren)

The 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry was the last cavalry regiment raised in Indiana. After recruitment (September 1863 to 29 April 1864), the regiment was mustered into service at Indianapolis. On 30 April 1864, the regiment was sent, dismounted with infantry arms, to Nashville for camp of instruction. On 31 May, it was ordered to garrison duty in Huntsville. On 16 October 1864, Colonel Johnson led Companies A, C, D, F, H, and I, and left for Louisville to draw horses and equipment for the entire command. On arriving there, these companies were ordered to Paducah,

under command of Major Moore, to aid in repelling an attack by General Nathan Bedford Forrest. On 1 November, their mission completed, the command returned to Louisville and formed into "the line of march" for Nashville.

At this time, the companies remaining in Huntsville reported to the regimental headquarters. On 30 November 1864, Colonel Johnson led his mounted companies, under orders from General Thomas, to Lavergne, Tennessee to observe the movements of General Hood's advance on Nashville. Consequent operations of Johnson's command resulted in action in the battles of Overall's Creek, Wilson's Pike, and an additional 12 skirmishes. The command's losses during these operations, from an aggregate of 325 men, were 65 killed or wounded and two missing.

On 15 and 16 December 1864, Lieutenant Colonel Pepper led dismounted companies B, E, G, K, L, and M into the Battle of Nashville, after which they were joined by the other six companies from Murfreesboro. Upon an exchange of arms and securing an entire remount, the regiment was assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade (Colonel Johnson commanding), 7<sup>th</sup> Division of the Cavalry Corps of the Military Division of the Mississippi.

On 11 February 1865, the 13<sup>th</sup> embarked on transports for New Orleans where the transports were rerouted to Navy Cove, Mobile Bay. Here the regiment reported to General Canby and assisted in operations against the forts and defenses of Mobile.

In addition, the regiment ran a courier line to General Asboth in Florida. After the fall of Mobile, the men of the 13<sup>th</sup> set out on 17 April under General Grierson on an 800 mile raid through Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, reaching Columbus, Mississippi on 22 May. During its garrison duty in Macon, Mississippi, the regiment captured immense amounts of Confederate commissary, quartermaster, ordinance stores and ordnance over 60 miles of railroad line. They returned to Columbus on 6 June where they received muster-out orders.

At this time, Colonel Johnson was assigned to the command of the sub-district of northeast Mississippi. In September 1865, for meritorious service, he was promoted to the rank of Brevet Brigadier General. The 13<sup>th</sup> was mustered out of service in Vicksburg on 18 November 1865, returned to Indianapolis on the 25<sup>th</sup> with a compliment of 23 officers and 633 men. After a "substantial dinner" at the Soldiers' Home, they marched to the state house where they were publicly received and welcomed home by Governor Morton.<sup>30</sup>

## Major Stout in Huntsville

As mentioned previously, the 13<sup>th</sup> was sent, without mounts, from Nashville on 31 May 1864 for garrison duty in Huntsville. They were engaged in several skirmishes "with prowling bands of rebel cavalry," and "held the place against the entire command of the rebel General Buford" on 1 October 1864.<sup>31</sup>

William Powell provided detailed accounts of the regiment's life in Huntsville in his work *History of the 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry Regiment, 1863-1865*. Powell noted that on 13 June 1863, Colonel Johnson was ordered to command the Huntsville post with Lieutenant Colonel William Pepper assigned commander of the 13<sup>th</sup> Cavalry.

He noted that Major Stout was acting commander of the regiment on 12 September and 4 November 1864. As such, Major Stout wrote the following order:

Hq 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry Regiment  
Huntsville, Ala.  
Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> 1864

Special Order No 69

Sargt. Thomas Riggs, K Company 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry Regiment having disgraced himself and the regiment to which he belongs by having been found guilty of theft is hereby reduced to the ranks. He will be placed in a barrel head in front of the Regimental Headquarters to stand one hour on and one hour off for twelve (12) hours. He will also be worked for nine (9) days at hard labor on fortifications or at other work and kept in close confinement under guard while not at work. It is with feelings of the greatest regret and mortification that the major commdg. is compelled to resort to such punishment but the habit the men are too readily falling into of pilfering and stealing must and shall be stopped.

By Order of Major L. Stout  
Commdg 13 Ind. Cav.

Sergeant Riggs deserted on the day of the order.<sup>32</sup>

Major Stout's Huntsville experiences are found in two other sources: his account of the Battle of Decatur as well as Huntsville resident Mary Jane Chadick's Civil War journal.

On 19 October 1864, Mrs. Chadick described him as the "Yankee Major Stout [who] shared with the ladies, [Octavia Otey and her cousin, Eliza] half a squire of paper, two pencils and a penholder each."<sup>33</sup>

A hand written note among the Stout Papers relates his account of General Hood's September-October 1864 attack on Decatur, Alabama before crossing the *Tennessee* River at Tuscumbia en route to Nashville:

The heavy firing and shelling from either side proceed during the day. At night the commanding officer of Whitesburg, Ala. dressed a soldier in citizen's clothes and sent him across the river in a skiff with orders for him to move in Hood's army and to learn his movement and return at the dawn of day under the bluff on opposite bank of Tenn. River, and wave a white handkerchief at the waters edge, and a skiff would be sent for him. He performed his duty and [brought] valuable information that Gen Hood was planting guns below Whitesburg in the cliffs and marching on to Gen. Granger's command at Decatur, Ala. The Commanding Officer at Whitesburg immediately forwarded dispatch to the headquarters of the Army of the Cumberland through Col. Lyon of the M and D.R.R. defenses. About the time the dispatches were sent,

the gunboat *Gen. Thomas* was coming up from Decatur and landed at Whitesburg. She was commanded by G. Morton.<sup>34</sup>

From the Huntsville Camp, a letter dated 6 August 1864, in German, was written by John Drexel, a bugler in Company C, 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry. He noted that the regiment “lies near the city on a hill where [there] is a fortress with 8 cannon which can be used over the city and all around the whole region. The city is very beautiful but has gained much damage through the war already....it is very hot here, but yet we have good water, there is a spring here as large and even stronger than the long branch.” The fortress John Drexel described was the Patton Hill earthen fort on McClung Street.

Fifteen members of the regiment died while in Huntsville during a typhoid epidemic. Bugler Drexel wrote of a comrade, “you know him also, he is a handsome big boy, will probably die, since he has an extreme fever. Yesterday he was admitted to the hospital, and last night he jumped from the window 3 stories high since he is sometimes out of his head....he said he had not hurt himself, that can’t be. We all regret his loss since he was an excellent corporal.”<sup>35</sup>

The attached appendix lists regimental casualties of the 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry.

## **Colonel Johnson and Miss Bradley of Huntsville**

Among the Tennessee State Archive’s extensive collection of the General Gilbert Motier Lafayette Johnson papers, which includes Huntsville photographs, is a negative photocopy of an unidentified newspaper article with a tribute by Dr. S. H. Moore, a prominent post-war physician and former captain in the 13<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, to General G.M.L. Johnson. He wrote the following account of then-Colonel Johnson and Huntsville resident Miss Sue Bradley, daughter of a prominent Unionist, Joseph C. Bradley, who lived in a house located at present-day 405 Franklin Street:

In the spring and summer of 1864, the Thirteenth Indiana was encamped in a grove overlooking the beautiful city of Huntsville, Alabama. The regiment prided itself on its proficiency in drill and especially on the dress parade. Many of the citizens of Huntsville used to drive or ride out evenings to see the Indiana cavalrymen reviewed by their colonel. Among those who came to see the dress parade the officers occasionally observed a young lady of true southern type of beauty. She always came on horseback accompanied by her father, a tall, gray-haired, dignified appearing man. Before long, the officers about headquarters noticed that frequent details of “safe guards” were sent to the residence of the young lady’s father. They also noticed that these guards required much attention and instruction and that the commanding officer did not seem willing to trust these duties to any of his subordinates but preferred to attend them himself. The soldiers who were fortunate enough to be detailed as guards never tired of telling of the kind treatment they received from the

occupants of the mansion they guarded. There soon grew to be a rivalry among the men to ensure assignment on the detail. Later, in the early summer evenings, when headquarters officers were returning from rides across country, they would occasionally meet their commander and the fair occupant of the mansion together. They suspected it was not the guards alone that cause the frequent visits of the colonel to the place.<sup>36</sup>

## **Arrest of Reverend Dr. Ross in Huntsville**

Dr. Moore described another incident which has become well known in the re-telling of Huntsville's history:

Many of the officers and men of the [13<sup>th</sup> Ind. Cav.] regiment attended the services at Dr. Ross' [First Presbyterian] church on Sundays. As a rule, in deference to the Union soldiers, the preacher's utterances were devoid of anything that would give offense. On one occasion, however, the good man preached a strong rebel sermon – an exhortation that was evidently intended to arouse the animosity of his congregation against the regiment. An officer at once arrested him and took him to headquarters. Colonel Johnson, however, released him but placed him under bonds to preach no more seditious sermons.<sup>37</sup>

## **Marriage of Brig. Gen. Johnson and Miss Sue Bradley**

Gilbert M. L. Johnson entered the army on October 6, 1861 as a first lieutenant in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment Volunteer Cavalry. In the 1850 census, Lafayette Johnson was listed as age 12, living with his mother, Ann, in Wilmington, Ohio, Clinton County (about 51 miles north of Cincinnati). The census listed Ann, age 39; Josephine, age 15; Lafayette, age 12; and Ann E.; age 9, all born in Ohio. Other members of Dwelling #452 and Family #452 included: Rebecca Rail, age 24; Sarah Allen, age 20; Daniel Gilfillen, age 25; S.L. [?] whose occupation was given as teacher, born in Vermont; Julia Rail, age 7; and Anthony Junkin, age 22, also a teacher.<sup>38</sup>

Gilbert M. L. Johnson was characterized in Dr. S. H. Moore's tribute as "tall, Apollo-like in appearance with courage to spare; an ideal cavalry officer; Custerian in his impetuosity and dash on the field, and ever mindful of the welfare of his men." He noted that when attached to General Thomas' staff, Colonel Johnson escaped capture while on a dispatch mission, retraced his route, fought to the close of an engagement in progress before returning to Thomas' headquarters two days later. He was warmly received after having been given up for lost. Dr. Moore recalled many other incidents of Johnson's bravery in which he "seemed to bear a charmed life." Several times he narrowly escaped enemy bullets; he was injured as his horse rolled over on him after being shot. The injuries caused his eventual death a few years later.<sup>39</sup>

At the close of the war, Col. Johnson was promoted for his meritorious service, to the rank of Brevet Brigadier General. After the final mustering-out of the 13<sup>th</sup> in Indianapolis, he returned to Huntsville on a more joyous mission, sending the following notice to his close friends:

Married on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 1865, by Rev. Dr. Ross at the Presbyterian Church, Huntsville, Alabama, Gen. Gilbert M. Johnson of Cincinnati (formerly colonel of the Thirteenth Indiana Cavalry), and Miss Sue Bradley, daughter of Joseph C. Bradley, esq.<sup>40</sup>

The couple was married by Rev. Frederick Ross, the Huntsville minister arrested two years previously by the former colonel's officers. At the close of the wedding ceremony, Dr. Ross turned to the general and said, "Now I am even with you. When you were in command here, you placed me under bonds to refrain from giving voice to my sentiments. Now I have placed you under bonds that will, if you are faithful and true, hold you for the remainder of your life." Rev. Dr. Ross buried his animosity to the North and he and the general became warm friends.<sup>41</sup>

After his marriage to Sue Bradley, G. M. L. Johnson, now a citizen of Huntsville, served as postmaster beginning in 1869. However, Gilbert Johnson had never fully recovered from an injury he received during battle at Gallatin, Tennessee in 1862. His horse had been shot from under him and rolled over Johnson, and as a result, his kidney was ruptured.<sup>42</sup> His health continued to deteriorate from the injury, and he died on January 9, 1871 before his 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday. He is buried in Huntsville's Maple Hill Cemetery in Block 2, Lot 2.

G.M.L. Johnson's interesting story has not been forgotten. His memory is recalled annually by Huntsville historian Brian Hogan in his portrayal of the general during Huntsville's Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll held each year in May.

## Post Civil War

Major Stout returned to his home in New Albany to spend the remainder of his life in relative economic comfort, but as with many veterans, he suffered some lifetime physical distress. According to the January 1, 1883 List of Pensioners, Leonidas Stout received a military disability pension (Certificate No. 222,380) in the amount of \$20.00 per month for chronic diarrhea and lung disease.<sup>43</sup> The city directories from 1865 to 1904 list the major's means of livelihood as: collecting agent (1865-66), dealer in boots and shoes (1868), realtor (1873-74), realtor and grocer (1877-78) real estate and collecting agent (1880-81, 1882-83) realtor (1890-91, 1892-93), realtor, L. Stout & Co. (1895-96, 1897-98). His place of business was located at his residence.<sup>44</sup>

While New Albany directories for the years 1871-72, 1884-85, 1886, 1888-89, 1901-02, and 1903-04, list occupations of residents, no occupation is given for the major. His pre-war two-story residence of 406 East Fourth Street (formerly 130 Upper Fourth Street) was his home until his death in 1915. Today, the home site is occupied by an automobile dealership lot and a bank. The only 19<sup>th</sup> century home on the block is located across the street at #419. City insurance maps from 1886 to 1905 show the East Fourth Street Public School at mid-block on Stout's side of the street.

Post war census accounts add some detail to the Stout family history. The family is not found at this writing in the 1870 census for New Albany or elsewhere.

The census for 1880 listed Major Stout as a real estate agent, age 53. Dorah was 52; daughter Hattie was age 20 and single. His brother-in-law, Jackson Swarens, was a butcher, age 55, single, and resided at the same address.<sup>45</sup>

The 1900 census indicated Leonidas was a widower and owned a mortgage-free home he shared with daughter, Harriet, and her husband, Sam Hood. She was 41, and Mr. Hood, a traveling grocer salesman, was 46. At this time, they had been married for eight years. In 1910, Leonidas, age 83, was retired. Harriet was 49, and Samuel, age 54, was a traveling coffee salesman.<sup>46</sup>

In 1900, daughter Florence, Mrs. John B. Graves, lived with her husband (born April 1849) and seven children in Louisville, Kentucky's 12<sup>th</sup> Ward. John was a flour merchant and home owner, born in Kentucky. His parents were born in Virginia. They had been married for 27 years, and had suffered the loss of one child. The ages of their children living at home ranged in age from 9 to 26. The eldest son, Charles, was a bookkeeper. Son Wilber, age 20, was a traveling salesman. Florence E., the eldest daughter, was 22. The remaining children were also listed: Vera A., 18; Dorah A., 16; John B., Jr., 13; and, son Shirley, 9. In 1910, their address was West Chestnut Street, located in the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward of Louisville. John Sr., now age 60, was then a mail agent. Children Charles R., Verna A., and son Shirley, were all single and living with the family.<sup>47</sup>

Major Leonidas Stout was known as a student of history. He was active in political affairs, and although it has not been verified by this writer, he served one term as Sheriff of Floyd County. His obituary, which appeared in the *New Albany Weekly Ledger* on February 24, 1915, described Stout as a Democrat and wrote that, "he was active in the promotion of the success of his party, and never lost interest in city and county affairs. He kept informed upon current events to the day of his death. He was a great student of history and was conversant with all the principal events of the United States from the birth of the Republic."<sup>48</sup>

Stout was a prominent member of the Taxpayers' League. In 1904, at the age of 77, he edited a pamphlet, *The Public Eye*, "devoted to the interest of the city's taxpayers...to discuss those matters of public importance which come before the city council and county commissioners and everything which concerns the property interests of the city...shall be fair and outspoken in what it has to say...it has no politics and seeks no favors from the city or county."<sup>49</sup> At age 72, he was described as "spry as most men at forty-five...in good health, and carries his age remarkably, being vigorous and active, and a rapid walker."<sup>50</sup>

His February 1915 death did not go unmentioned. His lengthy obituary left us much valuable information:

Major Leonidas Stout died suddenly Saturday of a cerebral hemorrhage at his home, 406 East Fourth Street, where he lived for sixty-six years. While Maj. Stout had been in poor health all winter owing to his advanced age, he was able to be about. Shortly before 11 o'clock Saturday, he started upstairs when he reeled and fell backward. Members of the family hastened to his assistance, Dr. J. E. Lawson and Dr. I. P. Arnold, of Louisville, were called. The physicians found

that Maj. Stout's skull was fractured below the right ear, and that he had suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. He died in the afternoon without regaining consciousness.

Maj. Stout was born in Abingdon, Va. February 28, 1827, and would have been 88 years old next Sunday. He came to New Albany in 1847. Two years later he married Miss Dorah Swarens, who died March 19, 1897. Just after his marriage, he settled at 406 East Fourth Street, where he had lived since. He is survived by three daughters, Mrs. John Graves of Louisville; Mrs. Dorah Ellmaker, and Mrs. Samuel H. Hood, this city, all of whom were with him when he passed away. He is also survived by four grandsons, Charles and Shirley Graves, of Louisville, and Wilbur and John R. Graves, Jr., of Dallas, Texas.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Maj. Stout recruited and mustered into service two Indiana regiments, the Sixty-sixth and the Eighty-first volunteer Infantry Regiments. On August 15, 1863, he was commissioned a captain of Company A, Eighty-first regiment of Indiana. Later he was promoted to the rank of major, and July 7, 1863 he was commissioned a lieutenant colonel of the Eighty-first regiment, in which capacity he served until the close of the Civil War.

Maj. Stout was a lawyer by profession, but he had not practiced for many years. Several years ago he served one term as Sheriff of Floyd County. A democrat in politics, he was active in the promotion of the success of his party, and never lost interest in city and county affairs. He kept informed upon current events to the day of his death. He was a great student of history and was conversant with all the principal events of the United States from the birth of the Republic.

Funeral services were held at the family residence, 406 East Fourth Street at 3:30 o'clock this afternoon. Burial was in Fairview Cemetery.<sup>51</sup>

### **The Illustration of Major Stout at the Historic Huntsville Depot**

Corporal James Allen is believed to be the artist of Major Stout's sketch on the second-floor wall at the Historic Huntsville Depot. He died on 23 March 1885 at the age of 39 and is buried in grave #1, row #9, lot #1 in the Smith Farm Cemetery, Harrison County, Indiana. James Allen began his service with the 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry as a private in Company D on 27 January 1864. He enlisted in New Albany for three years. His statistics indicated he was 18-years-old with blue eyes and dark hair. He stood 5'10", had a dark complexion, and was a farmer from Harrison County, Indiana. James Allen was discharged as a corporal on 18 November 1865 at Vicksburg, Mississippi. The 13<sup>th</sup> muster roll of 9 March 1864 at Kokomo, Indiana listed him as a private in Company G, a native of Louisiana, and his height was given as 5'6."<sup>52</sup>

There are many drawings and scribbles on the walls at the Huntsville Depot. Other Indiana men whose names were written on the walls of the Historic



Huntsville Depot are included. Their writings are in quotations marks; extra information about the individual is included in parentheses:

- "W. Gibson" (George W. Gibson, Company I, 48<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry)
- "Col. Norman Eddy, Elkhart, Ind" (48<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry)
- "Will H. Judkins Co. Eng. P, 48<sup>th</sup> Ind. Inf"
- "Leut. Wm. R. Ellis" (2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, Company I, 48<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry, Sergeant to 2nd Lieutenant)
- "Geo. Wilson Capt. J Co., 48<sup>th</sup> Ind"
- "Ed Newton Co. J 48<sup>th</sup> Ind."
- "Miles Judkins Col. J, 48<sup>th</sup> Ind"
- "N. Childers, J Co. 9<sup>th</sup> Ind"
- "Hames T. Parrish Co. G 7<sup>th</sup> Ind"<sup>53</sup>

The year 2010 will mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Huntsville Depot. With the passage of the century and a half mark, one can assume there is nothing new to learn from this long ago past. While more information is constantly uncovered and made more easily available, the mysteries of the past will continue to provide more answers to future generations of researchers, historians, and students. Hopefully, the treasure known today as the Historic Huntsville Depot will continue to serve as the three-dimensional reminder that there is much more to come.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Cemetery Records for Stout and Swarens Families

The Stout and Swarens families are buried in the Fairview Cemetery in New Albany, Indiana. A partial list includes:

Elizabeth Stout  
Number: 3269B  
Age at death: 30  
Date of burial: August 11, 1860  
Sinex Vault  
Coroner: Dr. Sloan

Leonidas Stout  
Number: 16039  
Age at death: 87  
Date of burial: February 22, 1915  
Location of grave: grave 2, plot 4, row 12, lot 19,  
Block 12, Section 4  
Cause of death: Accidental fall  
Coroner: Dr. J. E. Lawson

Dorah Ellmaker Stout  
Number: 11578  
Age at death: 69  
Date of burial: March 23, 1897  
Cause of death: Bronchitis and Asthma  
Coroner: Dr. E. P. Easley



Stout headstone at Fairview Cemetery in New Albany, Indiana  
(Courtesy Ken Carpenter)

Chas. Ellmaker  
Number: 15234  
Age at death: 65  
Date of burial: December 26, 1911  
Location of grave: plot 4, row 12, lot 19, grave 4  
Cause of death: probably cerebral hemorrhage  
Coroner: Dr. J. F. Weathers

Jackson H. Swarens  
Number: 11389  
Age at death: 73 years  
Place of birth: Crawford County, Indiana  
Date of burial: May 6, 1896  
Location of grave: Platt 4, Range 12, Lot 20, Grave 3  
Cause of death: La Grippe  
Coroner: Dr. John L. Stewart

## APPENDIX 2

### Members of 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry who died in Huntsville

According to the Indiana Adjutant General's Report, as cited in John Powell's *History of the 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry Regiment, 1863-1865*, 15 men of the 13<sup>th</sup> fell to typhoid fever in Huntsville during an epidemic in the summer of 1864. Some Federal troops buried in Huntsville were later reinterred in the National Cemetery in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Typhoid took the lives of 17 others. The regiment lost 104 to disease (seven died of measles, 24 of chronic diarrhea). Still others, once imprisoned in Cahaba, Alabama's "Castle Morgan," lost their lives on the Mississippi River in the tragic explosion of the *Sultana*.<sup>55</sup>

Chronic diarrhea was a major killer of men on the march, in the field, and those encamped due to inadequate diet and poor sanitary conditions. Major Stout suffered from this disease for the remainder of his life. He received a disability pension for this condition as well as lung disease.

Bartin, James, Pvt. Co. A. Residence: Warren, Ind. Died at Huntsville of Typhoid Fever, August 8, 1864

Briner, George G., Pvt. Co. F. Residence: Paoli, Ind. Died at Huntsville of Typhoid Fever, August 9, 1864

Canada, James, Pvt. Co. D. Residence: Corydon, Ind. Died at Huntsville of diarrhea, September 14, 1864

Cutler, James M., Corp. Co. L. Residence: Troy, Ind. Died at Huntsville of Typhoid, June 11, 1864

Davis, Nathaniel S., Pvt. Co. D. Residence: Barren, Ind. Did at Huntsville of Typhoid, July 22, 1864

Dyer, James W. Corp. Co. L. Residence: New Boston. Died at Huntsville of Typhoid, September 13, 1864

Fry, James R., 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Co. I. Residence: Freeport. Died at Huntsville of Typhoid, October 16, 1864

Fullhart, Joseph H. Pvt. Co. A. Residence: Mt. Etna. Died at Huntsville of Typhoid, August 8, 1864

Hill, Eli F., Pvt. Co. F. Residence: Paoli. Died at Huntsville of Typhoid, July 13, 1864

Kennedy, John, Pvt. Co. E. Residence: New Orleans, La. Died at Huntsville of Apoplexy, October 28, 1864

Martin, William, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Co. L., Residence: Derby. Died at Huntsville of Typhoid, August 10, 1864

Meadows, Christopher, Pvt. Co. L., Residence: New Boston. Died at Huntsville of Typhoid, July 12, 1864

Myars, John Pvt. Co. A., Residence: Warren. Died at Huntsville of Typhoid July 7, 1864

Snider, Stacy R., Pvt. Co. I. Residence: Van Buren. Died at Huntsville of Typhoid, July 10, 1864

Vogle, George, Pvt. Co. L. Residence: New Boston. Died at Huntsville of Typhoid, August 8, 1864

Wood, Leonard, Pvt. Co. G., Residence: N. Manchester. Died at Huntsville of Typhoid, November 1, 1864

### **Other Casualties of 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana (non-Huntsville)**

Briggs, Joseph, Pvt. Co. B., Residence: Providence. Died at Stevenson, Alabama of Consumption, November 18, 1864

Brothers, Hiram, Pvt. Co. G., Residence: Decatur, Indiana. Captured at Decatur, Alabama October 28, 1864, imprisoned at Cahaba Prison. Died on Sultana, April 27, 1865

Burns, George M., Pvt. G. Residence: Kokomo. Captured at Decatur, Alabama, October 28, 1864. Died at Cahaba Prison January 5, 1865

Chewning, Isaac, Pvt. Co. L., Residence: New Boston. Captured September 30, 1864, Released from Andersonville Prison, April 1865

Cook, John A., Bugler Co. H., Residence: Mitchell. Died at Montgomery, Alabama of diarrhea June 6, 1865

Downs, John, Pvt. Co. G., Residence: Vigo Co. Died at Mobile, Alabama, cause and date not given

Harrison, John, Pvt. Co. F., Residence: New Baden. Died at Selma, Alabama of Typhoid, May 10, 1865

Hayboun, George, Pvt. Co. M., Residence: Charleston. Captured September 30, 1864, sent to Cahaba Prison. Lost on Sultana explosion, April 27, 1865

Holmes, Wyman, Pvt. Co. G., Residence: Maples Station. Captured October 28, 1864, sent to Cahaba Prison. Died on Sultana, April 27, 1865

Houser, Isaiah S., Pvt. Co. A., Residence: Huntington. Died at Mobile, Alabama of Fever, June 25, 1865

LaHue, Charles, Pvt. Co. D., Residence: Corydon. Captured September 30, 1864. Survived explosion of Sultana, returned to duty August 10, 1865

Leas, Alpheus G., Pvt. Co. A., Residence: Marion. Captured September 30, 1864 and sent to Cahaba Prison until March 6, 1865. Mustered out July 25, 1865

Owens, Michael J., Sgt. Co. I, Residence: Muncie. Missing in Action New Market, Alabama September 30, 1864. Mustered out July 25, 1865

Smith, Washington D., Pvt. Co. G., Residence: Huntington, Ind. Killed in railroad accident at Stevenson, Alabama, December 4, 1864

Stevens, Ira L., Pvt. Co. D., Residence: Corydon. Captured September 30, 1864, sent to Andersonville Prison until April 28, 1865. Mustered out June 19, 1865

Tow, Nicholas, Pvt., Co. G., Residence: Kokomo. Died at Mobile, Alabama of diarrhea, October 5, 1865

Watson, William, Wagoner Co. M. Residence: Jefferson. Captured October 28, 1864, died on Sultana, April 27, 1865

Whitsil, John Pvt. Co. M. Residence: Lafayette. Captured September 30, 1864, imprisoned at Cahaba Prison, lost on Sultana explosion, April 27, 1865 (Powell, pages 63-98)

### **Miscellaneous**

Dobbins, William W., Pvt. Co. M. Residence: not given. Deserted at Huntsville (Broke jail) July 1, 1864

## END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Geo. L. Russell, ed., *Greater New Albany Centennial Celebration, Oct 12 to 16, 1913* (New Albany, IN: Geo. L. Russell), p. 98.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>3</sup> Floyd County Indiana Deaths Book, Ch 23, p. 34.
- <sup>4</sup> "Matrimonial Matters," *New Albany Public Press*, April 12, 1884, p. 7, c. 4.
- <sup>5</sup> "Old Time Residents," *New Albany Tribune*, Oct. 13, 1913, p. 6, c. 2.
- <sup>6</sup> "Deaths During the Week," *New Albany Public Press*, Feb. 23, 1915, p. 5, c. 4.
- <sup>7</sup> "Sudden Death of Charles V. Ellmaker," *New Albany Weekly Tribune*, Dec. 29, 1911, p. 5, c. 4.
- <sup>8</sup> *1850 U.S. Federal Census: New Albany, Floyd Co., IN*, Family #519-520, p. 330.
- <sup>9</sup> *Grooms & Smith New Albany City Directory for 1856-7* (Indianapolis, IN: A. C. Grooms, W. T. Smith, 1856), pp. 141-143.
- <sup>0</sup> *G. W Hawes' New Albany Directory (1859)* (New Albany, IN: Jackson & Wilcox, 1859), p. 122.
- New Albany Directory, City Guide, Vol. 1 (1860)* (New Albany, IN: E. Coy & Co., 1860), p. 105.
- <sup>11</sup> *William's New Albany Directory for 1863-4* (New Albany, IN: Williams & Co., 1863), p. 87.
- <sup>12</sup> *1860 U.S. Federal Census: New Albany, Ward 2, Floyd Co., IN*, Family #560, p. 76.
- <sup>3</sup> Harriet Hood to Hon. S. M. Stockslager, Washington D.C., Nov. 19, 1927, Stout Papers, Indiana Room, New Albany-Floyd Co. Library, New Albany, IN.
- <sup>4</sup> *History of Ohio Fall Cities (66<sup>th</sup> Regt.,* (Cleveland, Ohio: L. A. Williams & Co., 1882), Vol. 2, p. 123.
- <sup>5</sup> Harriet Hood to Hon. S. M. Stockslager.
- <sup>6</sup> *History of Ohio Fall Cities (66<sup>th</sup> Regt.)*, p. 123.
- <sup>7</sup> National Park Service Soldiers and Sailors, *66<sup>th</sup> Regt. Indiana Infantry*, [www.civilwar.nps.gov](http://www.civilwar.nps.gov).
- <sup>8</sup> *Volunteer Enlistment, State of Indiana, Form of Volunteer Enlistment and Oath*, Stout Papers, Indiana Room, New Albany-Floyd Co. Library, New Albany, IN.
- <sup>9</sup> "Leonidas Stout," (military records): Indiana State Archives, Indiana Commission on Public Records, Indianapolis, IN.
- <sup>20</sup> Sue P. Carpenter, "Members of L. Stout's Co. A 81<sup>st</sup> Regt. Ind. Vols." Floyd County, IN Gen Web, roots web.
- <sup>21</sup> "Leonidas Stout," (military records): Indiana State Archives, Indiana Commission on Public Records, Indianapolis, IN.
- <sup>22</sup> *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana, Vol. III – 1861-1865* (Indianapolis, IN, 1866), pp. 37-44.
- <sup>23</sup> Fred W. Conway, *Corydon, The Forgotten Battle of the Civil War* (New Albany, IN: FBH Pub, 1991), p. 23.
- <sup>24</sup> *Biographical Directory of the U. S. Congress*, "Stockslager, Strother Madison," [bioguide.congress.gov](http://bioguide.congress.gov).
- <sup>25</sup> Harriet Hood to Hon. S. M. Stockslager.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> McCoy to L. Stout, Henryville, IN, 1863, Stout Papers, Indiana Room, New Albany-Floyd Co. Library, New Albany, IN.
- <sup>28</sup> Harriet Hood to Hon. S. M. Stockslager.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>30</sup> *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana, Vol. III – 1861-1865* (Indianapolis, IN, 1866) pp. 290-296.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup> John W. Powell, *History of the Thirteenth Indiana Cavalry Regiment 1863-1865*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Evansville, IN: John Powell, 1977), p. 114.



- <sup>33</sup> Nancy Rohr, *Incidents of the War: The Civil War Journal of Mary Jane Chadick*, ed. (Huntsville, AL: Silver Threads Pub., 2005), p. 211.
- <sup>34</sup> Whitesburg, AL letter, 1864, Stout Papers, Indiana Room, New Albany-Floyd Co. Library, New Albany, IN.
- <sup>35</sup> Drexel letter to family, from Huntsville, AL, Aug. 6, 1864 (submitted by descendant Judge F. C. Drexel, Pembroke, GA), Heritage Room, Huntsville-Madison Co. Library.
- <sup>36</sup> "Gen. G. M. L. Johnson, Tribute From Members of the Regiment to the Widow of the General," unidentified newspaper article, Johnson, Gilbert M. L. 1837-1871 Papers, Manuscript Section, Tenn. State Library and Archives, Nashville, TN.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> *1850 U. S. Federal Census: Wilmington, OH.*
- <sup>39</sup> Gen. G. M. L. Johnson Tribute.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>42</sup> Powell, p. 64.
- <sup>43</sup> *List of Pensioners on the Roll, Vol. I, Jan., 1, 1883, Floyd Co. New Albany, Certificate #222, 380/*
- <sup>44</sup> *Edward's Annual Directory in the Cities of New Albany and Jeffersonville for 1865* (Edwards, Greenough & Deved), p. 136.
- Gazetteer Containing A Directory of the City of New Albany* (Chicago: John C. W. Bailey & Co., 1868), p. 131.
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- Caron's Directory of the City of New Albany for 1892-93* (New Albany, IN: C. K. Caron Pub., 1892), p. 362.
- Caron's Directory of the City of New Albany for 1895-6 Vol. XI* (New Albany, IN: C. K. Caron Pub., 1895), p. 329.
- Caron's Directory of the City of New Albany for 1897-98* (New Albany, IN: C. K. Caron Pub., 1897), p. 332.
- <sup>45</sup> *1880 U. S. Federal Census: New Albany, Floyd Co., IN, Family #170.* p. 15.
- <sup>46</sup> *1900 U. S. Federal Census: New Albany, Floyd Co., IN, E. Fourth St., Family #242.* p. 179.
- <sup>47</sup> *1900 U. S. Federal Census: Louisville, Jefferson Co. KY, S. Chestnut St., Family #107.* p. 204.
- <sup>48</sup> "Veteran Soldier," *New Albany Weekly Ledger*, Feb. 24, 1915, p. 8, c.1.
- <sup>49</sup> "The Public Eye," *New Albany Evening Tribune*, Dec. 29, 1904, p. 4, c. 4.
- <sup>50</sup> "Maj. L. Stout's Birthday," *New Albany Daily Ledger*, Feb. 28, 1899, p. 4, c. 2.
- <sup>51</sup> "Veteran Soldier," *New Albany Evening Tribune*, Dec. 29, 1904. p. 4 c. 4.
- <sup>52</sup> "James Allen," (military records): Indiana State Archives, Indiana Commission on Public Records, Indianapolis, IN.
- <sup>53</sup> Huntsville Depot Collection, Heritage Room, Huntsville-Madison Co. Library, Huntsville, AL.
- <sup>54</sup> *The Indiana Southern Counties Collection, Fairview Cemetery Vol. VI, 1910-191, New Albany*, (New Albany, IN: So. Ind. Genealogical Soc., 1998), pp. 32, 72, 73, 113.
- <sup>55</sup> Powell, p. 64.
- <sup>56</sup> Powell, pp. 67-98.



# Planters in the Making: The Brown Family's Alabama Years

DR. RICKY L. SHERROD

In 1805, John Hunt worked his way from Tennessee into the Mississippi Territory and set up camp near the Big Spring in what is now Huntsville. He could not have imagined that in less than 15 years, this would become the largest and most important town in the newly created state of Alabama. Neither would he have suspected that a well-to-do migrant from the Broad River region of Georgia – one who brought with him “lock, stock, and silverware” – would undermine Hunt's hope of capitalizing on his “discovery” of a hospitable new place to move his family. His nemesis, LeRoy Pope, not only undercut John Hunt at the Madison County federal land sale of 1809, but Pope spent a small fortune in the process. He paid an exorbitant \$23.50 an acre for the land on which the Big Spring lay. He knew he could recover his outlay and then some by subdividing the area into city lots and re-selling the property in pieces. Thus was established the small but rapidly growing community that would eventually become known as Huntsville.

For his efforts, LeRoy Pope was soon acclaimed the “Father of Huntsville.” He was a public figure *par excellence* – a lawyer; the county's presiding chief justice; the pension agent for the District of Alabama; member of the Huntsville Episcopal Church; president of the Madison County Bible Society; and member of the original board of directors and the only president that the Huntsville's Planters' and Merchants' Bank would ever have. First among equals, Pope was the acknowledged leader of a group known as Huntsville's “Royal Party.” Like Pope, the men in this group were Virginia-born migrants who came to Alabama by way of Georgia. After making a very successful trial run at urban development in the Broad River Valley of Petersburg, Georgia, these well-to-do pioneers moved to Madison County, Alabama.

All in the group were intimately bound by extensive and intertwined ties of kinship and marriage. Members of the party included Dr. James Manning, Robert Thompson, William Bibb, Thomas Bibb, John Williams Walker, and William Watkins. While each of these men made a distinctive mark on early Madison County, none realized as much financial success as Pope did through land speculation. For reasons that remain unclear, it was September 1815 before Pope received clear title to the land he patented around the Big Spring about 1810.<sup>1</sup> Technicalities aside, Pope informally transferred possession of many city lots well before official paperwork was complete.

At least one of those sales helped create an economic foundation that the Browns, a plain-folk family just beneath the bottom edge of the planter class, used to establish themselves in Alabama. If the Brown family lacked the glamour and high profile status of the Royal Party on a per capita basis, their experience is in most respects more representative than the story of Pope and company concerning what took place in northeast Alabama during those years when “Alabama Fever” raged. The Browns were typical of the thousands of plain folk who poured into

early-19<sup>th</sup> century Madison County, seeking their fortunes on America's newest and most promising agricultural frontier. Both their financial rise and their ultimate decision, in the mid-1820s, to depart Madison County were determined by the blind economic forces which determined the temper of the time. Ironically, at the onset, the Brown family's purchases were urban rather than rural.

Very soon after Pope received his patents, John Brown from Cumberland County, Virginia, made payment for his lots on the north side of the Huntsville city square.<sup>2</sup> On 3 October 1815, in the aftermath of the War of 1812, Brown spent a paltry \$106 for a third part of Lot 28. Less than two weeks later, he sold a portion of that lot to Simon Jennings for \$1,500.<sup>3</sup> Still later Brown sold another section of the same lot to "Samuel Houston & Co." for \$1,000.<sup>4</sup> In a matter of 35 days, Brown – only recently a permanent resident<sup>5</sup> of Madison County himself – turned a lucrative profit of 2,300%. Granted, Brown had been in physical possession of the Huntsville lots for several years. He had even erected two wood frame warehouses on his lots.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, the profit margin of his sales was nothing short of staggering.

John Brown inherited his business sense and insight honestly. He was the great-great-grandson of Thomas Browne (1605-1682), the author of one of the foremost publications of the 17<sup>th</sup> century England, *Religio Medici* (*Religion of a Physician*, London, 1642). In 1671, Thomas had been knighted not only in the presence of James, Duke of York (and future James II, r. 1685-1688) but by Charles II (r. 1660-1685), the English monarch himself. With the Puritan era finally behind and England a full decade into the Stuart Restoration, Browne's knighthood came only four months prior to the birth of a grandson christened Buckenham (b. 31 January 1671/2 in Cripplegate Parish, London). Some 33 years later, that same Buckenham Browne led the Brown family to their New World immigration.<sup>7</sup>

Buckenham's business experience may well account for the considerable success - the family's inexorable rise into the lower half of planter status - experienced by Browne's 19<sup>th</sup> century descendants. The recipient of a royal land grant,<sup>8</sup> Browne left London between 1703 and 1705,<sup>9</sup> accompanied by his wife of three years, Elizabeth Mestiche (1669-1728); a daughter Mary (b. 1701 in London);<sup>10</sup> his mother, Mary Glebe Browne; and his brother, Daniel. Although the public record described Browne as a London merchant, he was no mean tradesperson. The celebrity garnered by his grandfather gave the Browne family an acquaintance with, if not ready access to, the English Throne. Moreover, as a metropolitan merchant, Browne had a familiarity with both the Virginia tobacco trade and the financial potential of establishing a turn-of-the-century plantation on Virginia's northwestern frontier. Browne probably well understood that the upper banks of the Rappahannock River, while still in the early stages of development, were not only rich tobacco lands but largely free from the Indian depredations that had threatened the area's earliest European inhabitants until the closing decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

By the time the 32-year-old Londoner set foot on Virginian soil, the Old Dominion had been an English colony for almost 100 years. Neither a fortune-seeking Cavalier nor a hopeful indentured servant, Browne was part of an extended

family immigration that came to Virginia with significant financial connections. His family settled in that part of the Rappahannock River Valley established in 1692 as Essex County,<sup>11</sup> a region that offered excellent business opportunities. Browne's landholding superbly positioned the family to move their tobacco crop - the highly demanded sweet-scented variety for which the southern bank of the Rappahannock was so widely known.

Sweet-scented tobacco could not, however, protect Virginia producers from the bane of the soil exhaustion that inevitably overwhelmed plantation lands after about three seasons of aggressive cultivation. In the final analysis, many 18<sup>th</sup> century Virginia planters, particularly sons of original emigrants like Buckenham Browne, chose literally to look for greener pastures. Many Essex Countians, including some of Browne's own sons, traded depleted plantations for new and fertile soil by migrating.

They found such lands to the southwest. Several second generation Brownes were part of a general mid-18<sup>th</sup> century migratory flow out of the Tidewater and into Virginia's Piedmont.<sup>12</sup> Although the descendants of Buckenham Browne never rose to the stature of better known Piedmont families like the Jeffersons or Randolphs, on the Cumberland County frontier the Browns (as land records attest, about this time the family dropped the "e" from their surname) enjoyed a comfortable existence just beneath the bottom rung of planter status. In the mid-1750s, two of Buckenham Browne's sons, James (1726-1814) and his oldest brother Samuel (1710-1782), joined an extended family migration out of Essex County. The result was a 60 year residence in the tobacco growing valleys and plateaus between Virginia's coastal plain and the Appalachians.

James was less than nine-years-old at the time of his father's death (1 February 1735 in Tappahannock in Essex County, Virginia). Before James reached age 30, he bid farewell to Essex County. Between 1755 and 1776, he became head of a family of four sons and three daughters. As the youngest child of Buckenham Browne,<sup>13</sup> perhaps migration was the only choice to ensure James favorable financial fortune. He competed for both attention and inheritance<sup>14</sup> with eight older siblings. If he was to have a future, the developing frontier held the greatest promise. Not surprisingly, James chose a river valley in which to settle.

Near the banks of Piedy Rock Creek, which flowed into the James River tributary, the Willis,<sup>15</sup> James Brown put down roots. In the image of family patriarch Buckenham, the James Brown family built its home "Red Rock"<sup>16</sup> in Southam Parish. He raised his children, grew tobacco, acquired slaves, filled the occasional county office, and supported the Revolutionary cause. The fertile soil along the Piedy's banks proved a hospitable location where the migrant Brown family planted and harvested the tobacco crops providing a livelihood during the final half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

From the family base at Red Rock, both the families of James and his brother, Samuel Brown, waxed large. Samuel's only son Clement, (b. abt. 1750, had a sizeable family that remained steadfastly in the area. Samuel and his children stayed on the south side of Willis River in the eastern half of the county, in proximity to Cartersville Road.<sup>17</sup> James' offspring did the same, all except for one.

Initially, his son John (b. 16 March 1764) appeared destined to remain, like all his siblings, near the extended family. At age 22, in 1786, his first land purchase was a 40-acre tract “on the South side of Willises [sic] River on the branches of little Piedy Rock Creek at small south branches of Willesees [sic].”<sup>18</sup> Five years later, John added another 100 acres in the same vicinity.<sup>19</sup>

In 1803, however, about three months after the ink had dried on the paperwork transferring the Louisiana Territory to the United States, John Brown set his compass in a different direction. John’s place in the birth order likely stimulated a migratory spirit. His father, James, was age 37 when John was born. John himself was the fifth of eight children. John’s oldest brother, William, was nine years his senior.

John’s move may also have been inspired by the fact that his wife Elizabeth was pregnant with twin boys, a development that in October 1803 brought the number of Brown’s children to eight. Whatever his inspiration, at age 39, for £512, John Brown purchased a 256 acre tract “together with all woods, Buildings, and Improvements” on the north side of the Appomattox River (the southeastern boundary of Cumberland County) and bounded by Little Guinea Creek.<sup>20</sup> This acquisition took him significantly south of the family’s principal Red Rock holdings. In 1804, 1805, and 1806, John continued to purchase property in Little Guinea Creek’s environs.<sup>21</sup>

By 1810, John Brown enjoyed a relatively comfortable, although never opulent, lifestyle. The Cumberland County census of that year found him living next to his father-in-law, Thomas Moore, and only a single household from two members of the Piedmont’s celebrated Randolph family: Martha (who held 19 slaves) and William (who held 21). Brown himself declared ownership of 17 slaves—an increase of 16 since 1787 when the Cumberland County tax assessment listed him with only a single slave. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed, whatever John Brown may have lost through geographic separation from his extended family, his financial circumstance steadily improved. His county property taxes reflect an unbroken upward trend from 1798 to 1815. In real dollar value, the worth of his assets rose by over four-fold.

John Brown’s departure from Red Rock did not spring from family conflict. The distance separating Piedy and Guinea Creeks was modest at best. Moreover, John was included in his father’s will,<sup>22</sup> confuting any notion that a father-son rift had developed. Rather, John’s departure was the product of the push-pull theory of migration that led thousands to the 19<sup>th</sup> century American cotton frontier.<sup>23</sup> Preservation and expansion of family wealth was the force driving Brown’s migratory movement. Indeed, for families grown large in number, westward migration was not so much a choice as an economic imperative. As promise paled in the Virginia Piedmont, there were attractive options elsewhere.

When, how, and why did the family move occur? John Brown’s departure from Virginia was, of course, in part a mechanical response to the playing out of Cumberland County tobacco lands. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century began, tobacco cultivation along Cumberland County’s rivers and streams had far less promise than when John’s father, James, arrived in the 1750s. But other factors were involved as well. Rapid growth in turn-of-the-century Cumberland County may have

distressed the Browns. When the Brown family kinship group arrived in mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Cumberland County, the county was a developing frontier with boundless opportunities for early arrivals.

In short order, all that changed. Indeed, the very capital of Virginia seemed in pursuit of the stream of settlers flowing into Virginia's Piedmont. Brown family properties were only 40 miles upstream from Richmond, the town that replaced Williamsburg as the state capital in 1780. Perhaps the Piedmont simply became too big for John Brown's comfort. If so, by the second decade of the new century, he had attractive options on the promising, thinly populated agricultural frontier lands coming open in the west.

At the national level, there had long existed a growing awareness of the potential of Alabama's Great Bend area of the Tennessee River. Planters from Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee were especially attracted. A host of slaveholding-Virginians were quick to exploit these fertile frontier reaches. During the early-19<sup>th</sup> century, these men, their families, and their slaves poured into Madison County, Alabama, an area that at the time was the northeastern corner of the Mississippi Territory. Many among that number were intrigued by prospects of profit, not from tobacco, but cotton cultivation. Eli Whitney's 1793 invention of the cotton gin had made viable the transition from one crop to the other. John Brown was among the group that made the change.

Frank L. Owsley's observation describes, at least in part, where Brown fit into the period's general migratory pattern:

Studies show that in all parts of Alabama as late as 1828, most of those immigrants whose origin could be ascertained came not from tidewater regions of the South Atlantic states, but from the piedmont, where they had been cultivating short staple cotton.... Few of the tidewater planters migrated into the Southwest during this period.<sup>26</sup>

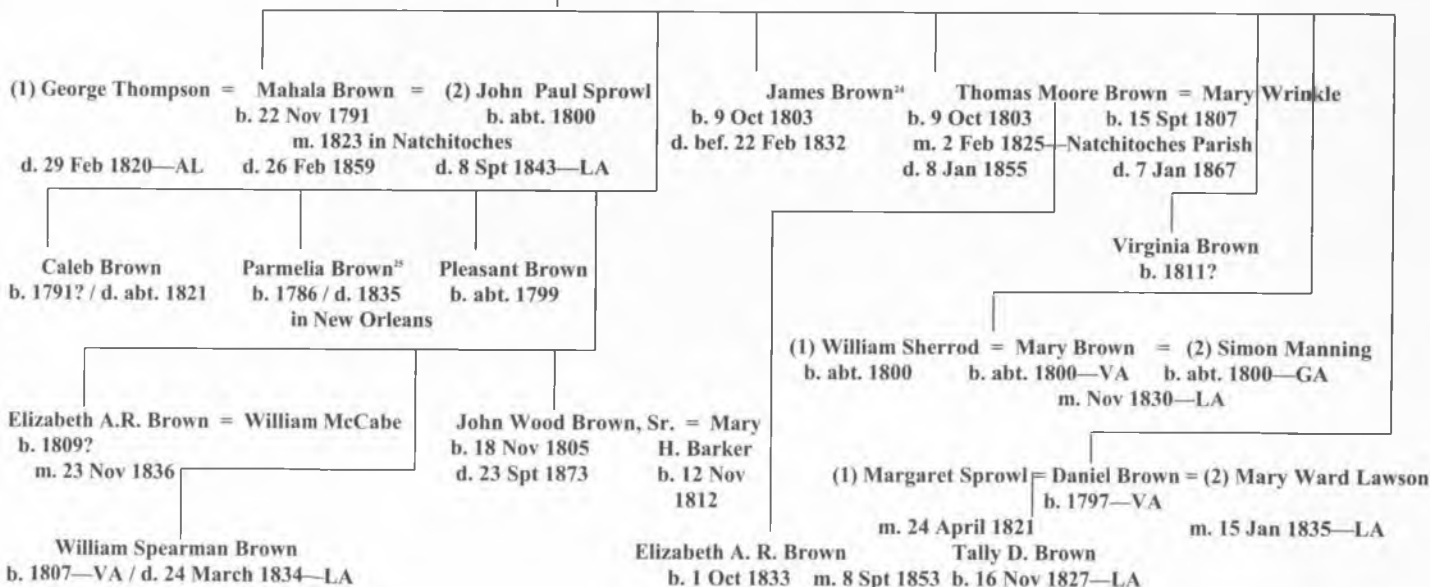
John Brown was among the many that migrated to Alabama from the Virginia Piedmont. He may or may not have experimented with cotton planting before his departure. Agriculturalists from his area in Cumberland County focused primarily on tobacco. Nevertheless, Brown was certainly well-acquainted with cotton's cash crop potential from other Virginia planters and farmers who had already made the switch.

Like most Virginia planter-migrants or, as Marion Nelson Winship styles them, "portable planters,"<sup>27</sup> Brown came with at least some of the 17 slaves that he listed in the 1810 Cumberland County federal census. Although his brothers and sisters remained in Cumberland County, John could not resist the Alabama Fever that characterized the time.<sup>28</sup>

Brown actually followed his father-in-law and Cumberland County neighbor, Thomas Moore, to Alabama. When Brown, his wife Elizabeth Ann Roe Moore, and their family of 12 children moved southwest out of Virginia, Alabama offered hope and promise. Over the next few years, the Brown family gathered to itself rich agricultural Alabama tracts including some 350 acres along Madison County's Flint River.<sup>29</sup> Not surprisingly, in Alabama, the Browns chose a location similar

# Brown Family Tree

John Brown = Elizabeth Ann Roe Moore  
 b. 16 March 1764 — Cumberland Co., VA b. 1767  
 d. 1830 d. abt. 1825





to their former Virginia home. As Piedy Rock Creek and the Willis were to the James, so was the Flint to the Tennessee.

These former Virginians were nestled comfortably in an attractive river valley, flanked by the properties of George Thompson and John Sprowl. Both families, sooner or later, became tied by marriage to the Browns. "Brown's Mill" stood on family acreage. The Browns' residence was on an island situated on a tributary to the Flint. One conveyance described the boundaries of the family property in idyllic terms: running down to the Flint River, and from there along that river "to the place where a bayou or creek leaves said river, thence across said river and down said bayou or creek, which forms an island, including the island to the said John Brown line; thence west to the aforesaid George Thompson<sup>30</sup> corner of the beginning." Predictably, the Browns prospered.

Life in early Brownsboro where John Brown settled is well-captured by Mia Taylor, the son of a migrant family that moved into the area in 1810. After the Revolutionary War, Mia's father, war veteran George W. Taylor, took his family to Oglethorpe County, Georgia. By 1806, the growing population of that region compelled Taylor, who never felt comfortable in a crowd, to continue west. In the spring of that year, he settled in south central Tennessee on the Elk River not far from the Tennessee-Alabama line.<sup>31</sup> Although the Taylors remained in Tennessee for another three years, they found compelling the stories of "adventurous hunters" who reported streams that flowed southward, merging into one strong and clear rapid little river, that they called the Flint.... Men now living in this country can have but little conception of the richness and beauty of the region between Brownsboro and Huntsville....It was one continued grove of magnificent Poplar interspersed in the lowlands with Oaks, Walnut, and Hickory.

In this halcyon setting, John Brown's father-in-law, Thomas Moore, carved out a plantation "along the base of Monte Sano near" a "cool sparkling spring" where he and his family lived, like everyone else in the area, in a log cabin.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, 1810 Madison County tax records, the 1816 Alabama Census, and Moore's own 4 March 1813 last will (which left his son-in-law, John Brown in charge of his Cumberland County, Virginia estate) all suggest that Moore—not Brown—led the family migration to the nation's newest and most desirable real estate in northeast Alabama.<sup>33</sup>

By presidential proclamation, the celebrated land sale of Madison County acreage began in Nashville on the first Monday of August 1809. The 47-year-old John Brown was among the earliest patentees of federal land in the southeastern portion of the county. So was his father-in-law, Thomas Moore. No later than 1811, John Brown had patented 319.2 acres literally along the Flint River.<sup>34</sup> An important tributary stream, the Flint flowed southward out of Tennessee and through Alabama before eventually emptying into the Tennessee River about eighteen miles south-southwest of the John Brown homestead near Brownsboro.<sup>35</sup> It was amidst this area's fertile and hospitable hills, about 11 miles east of the fast-growing town of Huntsville, that the Brown clan lived for about a decade. Considering the family's habitual location on the periphery of settlement, it is no surprise that the official border of Cherokee Indian Lands ran only a short distance to the east of the John

Brown property. Nevertheless, by the time Browns permanently left Virginia, any threat of conflict with Alabama's Indian population had diminished. Rule of law in Madison County was both in place and functioning.

At the same time John Brown purchased potential cotton lands, he also acquired prime real estate in city of Huntsville itself,<sup>36</sup> buying from Pope his two lots on the north side of the city square.<sup>37</sup> Anticipating the impending explosion of cotton production in Madison County, he forthwith erected two warehouses. Brown's foresighted construction project reflected the business sense evident within the Brown family since its arrival on early-18<sup>th</sup> century Virginia shores. Meanwhile, within only about four years, Brown parlayed his city property into working capital to develop a successful cotton planting operation.

Not all was easy. Evidence suggests that John Brown's permanent relocation in Madison County came in fits and starts. Relevant to that process, historian Sam Bowers Hilliard observes:

Parts of the Old Southwest, such as the Tennessee River Valley, the area around Mobile, and the Natchez District of Mississippi, were settled by a few farmers and planters who raised cotton on a small scale before 1812. After about 1815, a host of ambitious planters and farmers dispersed from these small nuclei searching for new lands from which they hoped to wrest a living or perhaps a modest fortune.... The cotton producer found northern Louisiana better suited to his needs.... Many bypassed the low-lying [Mississippi] floodplain in their migration westward, some pushing into Texas even before it became a state.<sup>38</sup>

The coming of the War of 1812 complicated John Brown's migration to Alabama. He retained both slaves and property in Virginia for at least a few years after his initial purchases of Madison County lands.<sup>39</sup> Brown probably was hedging his bet in case the lands of the then-Mississippi Territory treated him unkindly. Moreover, the outbreak of the war probably gave him second thoughts about a wartime migration to the very edge of American civilization. The Anglo-American conflict injected an unexpected uncertainty which likely explains Brown's continuing presence on the annual Cumberland County tax rolls through 26 February 1816.<sup>40</sup> If Brown intended to move to Alabama immediately after his initial land patents, the War of 1812 shook his confidence, at least temporarily. Whatever his motivation, he deferred until the conflict's favorable outcome. *Mia Taylor's* recollections about early Brownsboro support this notion:

In the year 1810 and 1811 there was but little increase in the population of the Flint River Colony. There were rumors of Indian wars.... Many who had sought land at the land sales in 1809, delayed bringing their families to the new territory at a time when the temper of the Indian tribes was unsettled, and war appeared probable.... But with the year 1811 [the year of John Brown's initial patents in the area] hostilities seem to have passed away, and settlers began pouring into the

county east of the Flint River....[Then,] in the year 1812 our peaceful community was disturbed by rumors of war with the Indians [and the 'war with Great Britain']....Many settlers who had bought their lands in the new country had delayed removal of their families until the trouble had passed.<sup>41</sup>

Little wonder that Brown's permanent move came only after Andrew Jackson's victory over the British at New Orleans (January 8, 1815), a triumph that decisively secured American territories west of the Appalachians.

After the war, the price of cotton ascended to extraordinary heights. The quickening pace of textile production in the English Midlands, combined with "the high price of cotton during the years following the close of the second war with England....gave Alabama her first great influx of population."<sup>42</sup> Renewed international stability, combined with the promise of quick and easy profits, drew John Brown who probably traveled down the Great Valley of Virginia into Madison County. After the war, he returned in earnest.

In October and November 1815, Brown sold his Huntsville lots on the square at a handsome price, giving him liquid capital to transfer his family, slaves, and moveable assets to Alabama. By 1816, the price of cotton had climbed to 30¢ a pound. That same year, Madison County produced 10,000 bales of cotton. Although the price fell the following year to 27¢, the value of prime cotton-growing land in Alabama river bottoms—land originally sold by the federal government for a mere \$2 per acre—rose by 1818 (the year Alabama land sales peaked) to between \$50 – \$100 an acre, a price more than double the average cost of good cotton land in other locations.

Thus, in March 1818, having at long last abandoned the tobacco-growing cash crop culture of Virginia, John Brown, enjoyed his island home in the midst of a tributary to the Flint River, becoming a cotton planter.<sup>43</sup> The timing was auspicious. In 1817, successful lawyer and future presiding officer over the State Constitutional Convention, John Williams Walker declared: "With lands making a hundred dollars worth of cotton to the acre, with the cheapest system of labor in the world, no part of the Union offered a better investment of capital than Madison County."<sup>44</sup>

The Brown family was well-positioned to exploit this circumstance. As part of that wave of settlement following the initial squatter era, John Brown was also among the first to import civilization and internal improvements to the Flint River Valley. Brownsboro (Brownsborough) located in east-central Madison County was established in 1821. John Brown built a mill there on the Flint River and later sold it to Robert Scott. First settlers were Benjamin Lawler who bought land there in 1818 and Charles McCartney who established a business in 1820. Brownsboro was incorporated in 1825. The Flint River Navigation Company shipped cotton on flatboats down the Tennessee River and on to New Orleans.<sup>45</sup>

Given John Brown's fertile acreage along the Flint River, he hoped the Flint might one day become a shipping lane on which his cotton crops could be easily ferried to the watery highway of the Tennessee River. These

expectations are well-captured in a 13 July 1821 advertisement in the *Alabama Republican*. John Brown's neighbors, James and John McCartney, announced the establishment of Brownsboro:

The highest point of Boat Navigation on the Flint River...has been laid off into Lots by the Proprietors [the McCartneys], and will be sold on Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of July next, on the premises. The situation of this town warrants the calculation that it will improve and flourish. Several boats loaded with cotton were shipped the last season from here, and passed into the Tennessee River without impediment; and by an act of the last Legislature, Flint river was made a public highway, and a company has been incorporated for opening and improving the navigation to this place. The country around the town is good and fertile. Here will be shipped and disposed of the surplus produce, and here will be had the family supplies for the adjoining country of both Madison and Jackson counties....A plan of the town can be seen in Huntsville in the counting room of Bierne & Patton. June 22

The McCartneys' advertisement captures the contemporary optimism about opening the Flint to transport cotton downstream. This prospect inspired John Brown, his neighbors John Sprowl, James McCartney, David Walker, Stephen Pond, and eight other Brownsboro area residents to charter the Flint River Navigation Company.

On 20 December 1820, the recently formed Alabama Senate and House of Representatives convened in General Assembly and enacted legislation to incorporate the entity.<sup>46</sup> Its purpose was to direct "the improvement of the navigation of the Flint River in Madison County from Capt. Scott's Mills, to the Tennessee River." Section 2 of the legislation stipulated "that if any person, or persons shall cut, or fall a tree into said river, and shall not remove the same, or shall otherwise obstruct the navigation of said river, shall for every such offence forfeit and pay the sum of three dollars for every day the same is thus obstructed." Money collected as fines was, of course, to be "applied to the improvement of the navigation of the river."

Efforts to open the Flint to navigation expressed the general American enthusiasm of the age for canal building and internal improvements. While John Brown and his neighbors devised their scheme to turn the Flint into a major transportation artery, in Huntsville to the west, the leading city fathers guided by LeRoy Pope crafted a similar plan. Their Indian Creek Navigation Company, chartered one day after the legislature established its Flint River counterpart, aspired to complete a 17-mile-long canal connecting Hunt's Big Spring at the center of Huntsville to Triana on the Tennessee River. In fact, according to some sources, neither the Indian Creek Navigation Company nor the Flint River Navigation Company succeeded. Regarding the latter:

Large trees grew in profusion on the banks of this stream [the Flint]. It was thought advisable to remove all growth and timber from near the

water's edge; thereby preventing any possible hindrance to navigation, resulting from the falling of these trees into the stream, with the fallacious hope that the force of the spring freshets would wash them out of the channel into the Tennessee. It was fortune's bitter irony, however, that these spring freshets which were considered by the company to be inadequate to the task of clearing the stream of fallen trees after navigation had begun, were commensurately inadequate to this same task, before navigation was begun. So it was that the first work done was that of destruction rather than construction. History records the projected accomplishment of the Flint River Navigation Company's efforts with the ugly, yet appropriate, term 'failure,' spelled with a capital 'F.'<sup>47</sup>

In an ironic twist, the well intentioned efforts of John Brown and his partners actually blocked free and open navigation of the river.

Internal improvements to serve the interests of Madison County planters remained unrealized until the age of rail. Even if Brown and his neighbors had cleared the Flint, problems with marketing Madison County cotton remained legion. The difficulty was less getting their fleecy fiber of Flint River Valley cotton to the Tennessee River than the physical obstacle encountered some 70 miles downstream. Passage along the Tennessee through northwestern Alabama was highly uncertain due to Muscle Shoals, a 40 mile stretch of rapids filled with rock reefs, gravel bars, log snags, and shallow channels.

This difficult-to-navigate corridor not only slowed the trip; it made the passage dangerous and unpredictable. If the water was too low, pilots had to portage. Madison County planters risked the loss of an entire crop should a cotton barge crash along the rocky labyrinth as the barge pilot negotiated the shallow waters of the rapidly flowing Tennessee. Whether portaging or moving upon the water itself, getting through the narrow bottleneck often damaged or soiled the cotton. This commonplace misfortune both lowered the asking price in New Orleans and gave Alabama cotton a reputation as a poor quality product. In hopes of high water, Madison County planters generally shipped cotton to market in the late winter—January or February—when water levels were sufficient to facilitate safe passage. This restrictive time frame impinged on the cotton factor's ability to get the best product price for the planter.

Before steamboat travel reached Madison County—something which postdated the Brown departure from Alabama—not only was transporting cotton to New Orleans an ever-present challenge; getting consumer goods into the upper Tennessee River Valley took several months and involved numerous portages. The cost of goods shipped from the metropolis rose accordingly. Describing conditions as they existed in 1824, Daniel S. Dupre wrote:

With work progressing on the Muscle Shoals canal, that scheme offered the prospect of stepping on board a boat in Huntsville and disembarking in New Orleans, effectively shattering the isolation of Madison County.... [Another] possibility excited some in the community; building a railroad either directly to the Tennessee or to connect with

the small Tuscumbia, Courtland, and Decatur Railroad, a rival project to bypass Muscle Shoals.<sup>48</sup>

Obstacles like those described above eventually weakened the Brown family's will to remain in Alabama. Some migrants to Madison County recognized the potential of better areas, particularly the Louisiana frontier, almost as soon as they arrived in Alabama. Even before his migration from Petersburg, Georgia to northeastern Alabama, lawyer-politician John Williams Walker wrote: "We shall soon have it in our power, if we go on at this rate, to send out a colony to Louisiana, without diminishing our present stock."

It is possible that John Brown explored the potential of Louisiana first-hand. Alabama cotton planters sometimes accompanied their crops to market. It might well be that John Brown first recognized Louisiana's promise on a business trip to New Orleans. Perhaps he or some of his older sons tarried on their return trip to Madison County, taking time to probe possibilities, identifying vacant new cotton lands along the Mississippi and Red rivers. If so, they found an abundance of relatively untapped virgin soil along the banks of the Mississippi's substantial tributary, the Red River. Any such scouting expedition revealed many advantages that the Red River might one day have over the Tennessee.

However the Browns "discovered" Louisiana, by the early 1820s, John Brown was warming to the thought of trading the uncertainties of the long and unpredictable farm-to-market flow from the Flint to New Orleans for the shorter and more promising route of the upper Red River to the Mississippi and out through the Crescent City. In addition, the development of an effective cotton factorage system in New Orleans probably partly inspired the Brown extended family move to Louisiana. Easier access to New Orleans was simply a good idea.

The Red River Valley provided proximity to the men who sold the family's cash crop. A trip down the Red from Natchitoches Parish was measured in days, not months. Living along the Red not only improved the prospect of getting a cotton crop to market; it made possible annual or semi-annual trips, sometimes combining business and recreation, to "The City." It also provided for face-to-face contact with cotton factors. All these considerations made marketing a cash crop along the banks of the Red far more viable than the long downstream journey from Madison County, Alabama.

By the 1820s, there were other compelling reasons that made a move to Louisiana attractive. The boom years of postwar cotton prices collapsed in 1819. The price paid for cotton plummeted some 60%. Cotton that fetched Madison County planters 25¢ a pound in 1818 brought no more than 10¢ in 1820. Unrestrained postwar speculation, followed by the land sale of 1818, made the effects of depression in Madison County particularly pervasive. The county no longer offered unbridled prosperity and a limitless future. Dupre describes the mentality that evolved:

The economic collapse that followed the Panic shattered the citizens' dreams of wealth and prosperity and exposed the fragility of their self-sufficient independence. Struggling to cope with the aftereffects of the

Panic, they searched for ways to pull their rough-and-tumble frontier community into a prosperous future and to regain a sense of mastery and control over their lives.<sup>49</sup>

The Panic of 1819 was the nation's first major crisis tied to the business cycle. Buffeted by a combination of foreclosures, a tightening of credit, failure of banks, and the collapse of the economic expansion fueled by the recent war, the country reeled economically. The economic downturn precipitated unemployment as well as a crippling slump in both agriculture and manufacturing. In the Brown's specific sector of the economy, the falling price of cotton pounded thousands of farmers who had moved to Alabama, hoping to make their fortune in a bull cotton market. Instead, many found themselves saddled with crushing, impossible debt.

The contrast between prosperity of the postwar period and the economic dislocation after the Panic eventually inspired the Brown family's decision to seek more favorable circumstances in a new more auspiciously located river valley. The family also simply may have longed for a new and refreshing setting without the political strife and economic uncertainty that had become the norm in their little corner of the world. Pulling the 61-year-old John Brown, then, was the realization that fertile cotton lands with more reliable transportation—down the Red and Mississippi and out to the international marketplace—might secure the future he hoped to bequeath to his sizeable band of offspring coming to maturity. The same impulse that moved him from Virginia to Alabama carried him further southwest to Louisiana.

It may well be that one additional factor contributed. From the initial federal land sale of 1809, Madison County experienced extraordinarily rapid population growth. Reflecting on the disorienting speed at which the population of Madison County had expanded, one commentator observed, "In many respects Madison County grew like a hungry adolescent. It practically attained its full size within its first 20 years. By 1820 the population had swelled to 17,481: 8,813 whites, and 8,668 blacks. Ten years later it reached its peak for the antebellum years at 27,990: 13,855 whites and 14,135 blacks."<sup>50</sup> Why such expansion? The second federal land sale—this one held in Huntsville—began on 2 February 1818. Easy credit and high cotton prices multiplied the number of migrants flowing to Madison County. The sale became "one of the greatest speculative booms in frontier history."<sup>51</sup>

During the early 1820s and the collapse of cotton prices, many extended family discussions no doubt ensued, debating whether Alabama was the place of the future—whether it had become too claustrophobic for the Brown kinship group. In the final analysis, family members decided to migrate. This would be the third time that John Brown moved from a burgeoning, developing environment to the edge of the raw frontier.

Circumstantial evidence suggests that Brown's move to the Pelican State was conceived not long after the Panic of 1819 engulfed Madison County freeholders. Brownsboro area gossip alleged that John Brown intended to vacate the county to escape a hopelessly impossible debt incurred in October 1818.<sup>52</sup> Brown, of course, denied any intention to depart. Whether or not the idea of a migration to

Louisiana dates from this event—whether his financial predicament inspired the idea of moving to the newest cotton frontier—the details of this story are both remarkable and representative of a general trend.

On 9 March 1819, John and Elizabeth Brown sold 350 family acres to their eldest son Caleb (b. ca. 1791) for \$17,500.<sup>53</sup> Within 13½ months, things changed dramatically. The Panic engulfed Madison County. More personally, Caleb Brown died without heirs. The Flint River acreage reverted to Caleb's father, John who held the property in trust for his remaining children. By June 1820, value of the Brown's Madison County riverfront holdings was \$57.14 an acre or an aggregate total of \$20,000. But the family's fortune—its property, slaves, and cash—stood in jeopardy of catastrophic loss.

The detailed story emerges primarily from an April 1820 lawsuit that Brown brought against Raleigh, North Carolina land speculator John Evans. The litigation preserves a fascinating anecdote capturing the heady mentality driving reckless Alabama land purchases on the eve of the Panic. According to Brown's account, Evans craftily seduced him into an irresponsible 640-acre purchase a little less than two miles south-southwest of Brown's principal family holdings on the Flint River.<sup>54</sup> One of those who came to John Brown's aid during his legal wranglings with Evans was his loyal friend and neighbor, John Sprowl. Bound by ties of friendship and intermarriage, in Alabama, Louisiana and Texas the fortunes of these two families remained tightly intertwined for half a century.

**KNOW all Men by these Presents, that we**

are held and firmly bound unto  
Sheriff of \_\_\_\_\_ county, or his assignment, in the  
just and full sum of \_\_\_\_\_ lawful money of  
the State, to which payment well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves and each of our heirs  
firmly by these presents, sealed with our seals, and dated the 25<sup>th</sup> day of March

1820 The condition of the above obligation is such, that the said  
hath undertaken in behalf of the said  
to be \_\_\_\_\_ special bail in an action now instituted in the  
court of said county of \_\_\_\_\_ wherein

plaintiff and  
defendant; and in case said \_\_\_\_\_ should be cast in the  
action, \_\_\_\_\_ shall pay and satisfy the condemnation of the court, or surrender \_\_\_\_\_ bod  
in custody, or that the said \_\_\_\_\_ will do it for

GIVEN under our hands and seals this day and date above written.

*John Brown* SEAL  
*John Sprowl* SEAL  
*John M. Brown* SEAL



Amidst the claims and counterclaims hurled by both Brown and Evans, the latter's charges led to Brown's arrest for failure to pay the money Evans claimed he was owed. John Sprowl, as well as Brownsboro neighbor, John McCartney, assisted posted bond on 25 March 1820 allowing Brown to go free. By this time, the Sprowls and Browns had begun to work hand-in-glove in many of their enterprises and endeavors. Although Sprowl arrived in Alabama several years in advance of Brown, the two must have developed a comfortable relationship quickly. From 1820 through 1822, Sprowl's name regularly appeared alongside several members of the extended Brown kinship group in a variety of documents, including the *Brown v. Evans* litigation, as well as the estate sales for both John Brown's father-in-law, Thomas Moore, and Brown's son-in-law, George Thompson (d. 29 February 1820). Thompson's widow, Mahala Brown, would become John Sprowl's daughter-in-law in 1823. On 10 June 1822, Sprowl joined his son-in-law, Daniel Brown (husband of Mary Margaret Sprowl), acting as security for John Brown's Madison County Orphan Court appointment as guardian of Sarah Ann Thompson, William Waddy Thompson, and Alexander M. Thompson, the minor children of the widowed Mahala.

Little wonder that Sprowl rendered moral and financial support when Evans threatened to ruin the Brown family fortunes. The terms of Evans' transaction specified that Brown, following the 1818 Huntsville land sale, make an initial 28 October payment of \$3,800 to Evans. Thereafter, Brown owed on four subsequent notes, each for \$8,650. Payments came due on 25 December in 1819 – 1822. The total sale price came to a whopping \$38,4000 or \$60 an acre.

In his 1820 suit, Brown declared that he had been "drawn into the aforesaid contract by a deep laid and premeditated scheme of Fraud on the part of the Defendant,"<sup>55</sup> Evans. Describing himself somewhat inaccurately as an "ignorant hard laboring man," the legally astute Brown related a tale of treachery in which Evans cloaked his greedy designs in Christian garb. The Tar Heel speculator gained admission to Brown's home by presenting himself as a minister of Brown's own Methodist "church & persuasion. He remained some time with our complainant endeavoring to give his confidence by religious conversations." Then, Evans artfully led the conversation to the probable prospects and improvement in value of the Lands in this County and more particularly of those above mentioned [the acreage that Evans proposed to sell to Brown], said that he had on the best information from abroad of the state of foreign trade and of the cotton market that the price of cotton must continue to be high, that the Town of Evansburg laid out on the lands aforesaid must become an important and flourishing place and that your complainant must make a fortune by buying these lands to enable him. To affect his scheme of deception he induced a certain John Hammer (who also professed to be a Methodist) to come with him to your complainant, and to pretend that he had purchased of said defendant some land, about a quarter section lying in said County, for which said Hammer said he had given the defendant about sixty dollars per acre.<sup>56</sup>

Brown subsequently discovered that Hammer never made any such purchase. In fact, the tract of land supposedly sold by Evans to Hammer was given by the



John Brown's original homestead lay in section 20 on the east bank of the Flint River; the property Evans purported to sell lay in nearby sections 30 and 31 lying along both banks of the Flint.

North Carolinian to Brownsboro area resident, James McCartney, in lieu of a debt that the former owed the latter. Brown further accused Evans of falsely promising to erect a warehouse along that portion of the Flint River which passed through the eastern edge of the property purchased by Brown from the defendant.

Brown admitted that “said defendant by his conversation almost infatuated” him. Brown was quick, however, to inform the Court that prior to the sale, Evans had “positively and unequivocally agreed” that the buyer had the right to withdraw from the transaction if he the “said complainant should at any time before the first land sale, to take place in Huntsville, thereafter informs said defendant that he... was dissatisfied with his bargain.” Brown charged that “the price aforesaid is fully if not more than double what the aforesaid Bonds were worth or could have been sold for during the highest State of the Land market in this County.”

Brown’s *coup de grâce* came when he produced a written agreement between himself and the defendant showing that the latter had promised the former a “clear title to the Lands” within five weeks of “said Sale.”<sup>57</sup> The main reason that Evans failed to produce such documentation was that Stephen Lee owned at least a portion of the acreage which Evans purported to sell. More importantly, Lee had no intention whatsoever of selling the disputed acreage to Evans. Upon learning of the conflicting claim, Brown personally confronted Evans, declaring that the defendant’s bad faith had “nullified the original contract.” Nevertheless, Evans “even then acted with a view to conceal his true character, still, talked of the golden harvest which this complainant might reap from the crops which he had sown.”

With the encouragement and “aid of his friends,” Brown persisted in his determination to cancel the transaction. Evans temporarily relented, according to Brown, “from fear of being exposed to the world, which might prevent the function of some other scheme of baseness.” But rather than formally annulling their bargain, Evans stalled, hoping to persuade Brown to make good his annual payments. Before the end of 1818, Evans left Madison County, returning to North Carolina. Suspecting that Evans might attempt to hold him to the payment of his specious notes, and worse still, fearing that his good name might be tarnished, Brown published a notice in the *Alabama Republican* proclaiming that the notes “had been fraudulently obtained and forewarned all persons from taking assignments of them some time in the year 1819.”

In spite of his predicament and far from planning his departure from Alabama, Brown affirmed that he had ample resources to make full payment to Evans. Brown believed that “he could give sufficient security in almost any amount for his appearance and for his fair conduct in this or any other transaction yet he believes he could not give security subject to the risk of paying so large a sum of money and he would be very unwilling to subject any of his friends to this risk.” Brown’s ultimate goal in his suit against Evans reads thus:

That said Evans may be decreed to refund to your complainant the money received from him as aforesaid on receiving a Conveyance from Your Complainant of the Land which has been conveyed by him to your Complainant, and that your Complainant may have such other further

relief as to this Honorable Court may seem fit & right may it please your Honor to grant.<sup>58</sup>

An April 17, 1820 court ruling granted Brown his wishes, ordering Evans to restore to Brown by the same calendar date in 1822 the sum of \$4,000. A July 18, 1825 conveyance housed in Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana but sent from the Madison County Circuit Court confirms that by February 1823, Evans made full payment to Brown—\$4,000 with the interest that was due him. Both the document and its detailed marginalia demonstrate that the payment was equally dispersed as inheritances amongst Brown's ten surviving offspring, almost all of whom migrated to Louisiana with him in the mid-1820s.

John Brown did not live many years after his trek to the Pelican State. He died in 1830. Evans payment ultimately went to Brown's sons and daughters. At the time of the litigation, five of them were over age 21: Parmelia, Mahala, Daniel, Pleasant, and Mary. Five were not. The \$2,000 that Evans paid Brown in 1820 went to those children who were already of age.<sup>59</sup> Two notes were to be paid after April 17, 1820, each for \$1,000 with interest. This remuneration went to the remaining siblings—James, Thomas Moore, John Wood, William Spearman, and Elizabeth Ann Roe Brown—children who, in 1820, were still legally minors.

The money that the Browns recovered from Evans gave John Brown and his children a running start in their migration from Alabama to Louisiana. If Alabama proved a promising but disappointing frontier on which to cross the threshold from plain folk to planter, it *had* provided the extended Brown family with the seed capital and resources not only to move on to northwest Louisiana's Red River Valley, but soon to become numbered among that fertile frontier's most successful planter-citizens.

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## END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> James Record, *A Dream Come True: The Story of Madison County and Incidentally of Alabama and the United States*, Vol. I (Huntsville, Alabama, 1970), 49, 50, 55. See also Judge Thomas Jones Taylor, Intro. by W. Stanley Hoole and Addie S. Hoole, *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732-1840* (Confederate Publishing Company, 1976), 33-39, 44; Old Huntsville Magazine, s.v. "Purchases of Huntsville town lots from original owners," <http://www.OLDHuntsville.com/p588.htm>.
- <sup>2</sup> Madison County Deed Book A, 204—November 8, 1815. See also Old Huntsville Magazine, s.v. "Purchases of Huntsville town lots from original owners," <http://www.OLDHuntsville.com/p588.htm>.
- <sup>3</sup> Madison County Deed Book B, 134 (October 20, 1815).
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 206 (November 8, 1815).
- <sup>5</sup> Interestingly, Brown named his daughter born about 1811 "Virginia," an act that suggests affection for the State that he would soon depart.
- <sup>6</sup> Sarah Huff Fisk, *Civilization Comes to the Big Spring: Huntsville, Alabama 1823* (Huntsville: Pinhook Publishing Company, 1997), 71-76. See also Old Huntsville Magazine, s.v. "Purchases of Huntsville town lots from original owners," <http://www.OLDHuntsville.com/p588.htm>.
- <sup>7</sup> See Cumberland County Historical Society. *Cumberland County, Virginia and Its People*. (Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1983), 81-85. See also "Life of Sir Thomas Browne," [http://penelope.uchicago.edu/browne\\_bio/wood\\_1692.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/browne_bio/wood_1692.html) and The Life of Sir Thomas Browne, Kt. [http://penelope.uchicago.edu/browne\\_bio/rep\\_life\\_1712.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/browne_bio/rep_life_1712.html).
- <sup>8</sup> Volume IV of *The Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography* indicates that Buckenham Browne received "from the king a large grant of land in Essex" County "where he settled and spent the remainder of his life" (Cited in RootsWeb, "Carl Rush Family of Virginia," January 17, 2004, Ord. Bk. 5, 737).
- <sup>9</sup> Essex County Deeds, Book 12, 99 (August 21, 1703).
- <sup>10</sup> See *Cumberland County, Virginia and Its People*, 81.
- <sup>11</sup> See Essex County Deed Books 2, 228; 4, 260; and 10, 102; Warren M. Billings, John E. Selby, and Thad W. Tate, *Colonial Virginia: A History* (White Plains, New York: KTO Press, 1986), 25.
- <sup>12</sup> On the Piedmont as frontier, see Billings, et. al., *Colonial Virginia*, 16-17, 200, 224, 251, 272, 370-371. On the rapid growth of the Piedmont, see 208, 252-253; Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo, eds., *Colonial Chesapeake Society* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 434-437, 447-449, 479, 482-483; Thomas Perkins Abernethy, "The Southern Frontier, an Interpretation," in Wyman and Clifton B. Kroeber, *The Frontier in Perspective*, 132-133.
- <sup>13</sup> Regarding the "younger son syndrome," see David Hackett Fischer and James C. Kelly, *Bound Away: Virginia and the Westward Movement* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 37.
- <sup>14</sup> See RootsWeb, "Carl Rush Family of Virginia," January 17, 2004, Will Book 5, 344-346.
- <sup>15</sup> See "John Guthrie, Emigrant to America in the Seventeenth Century, and Descendants." <http://www.brightok.net/~lguthrie/Bookone.htm>.
- <sup>16</sup> *Cumberland County, Virginia and Its People*, 83.
- <sup>17</sup> See Cumberland County Deed Book 3, 191-192—August 24, 1761; Deed Book 6,

408-409 and Deed Book 7, 218; Deed Book 10, 50; Deed Book 13, 13.

<sup>18</sup> Cumberland County Deed Book 8, 56-57—June 26, 1786.

<sup>19</sup> Cumberland County Deed Book 7, 116-117—September 24, 1791.

<sup>20</sup> Cumberland County Deed Book 9, 244-245—July 17, 1803, a date only three months after the Louisiana Purchase.

<sup>21</sup> Cumberland County Deed Book 10, 55—63  $\frac{3}{4}$  acres on April 2, 1804. See also Deed Book 10, 127—40  $\frac{1}{2}$  acres on December 10, 1805 and Deed Book 10, 251—120 acres on April 3, 1806.

<sup>22</sup> See RootsWeb, “Carl Rush Family of Virginia,” January 17, 2004, Will Book 5, 279; Deed Book 17, 267; Natchitoches Parish Conveyance Book 3, 1.

<sup>23</sup> See Daniel S. Dupre, *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 12, 47. Cf. John Solomon Otto, “The Migration of the Southern Plain Folk: An Interdisciplinary Synthesis,” *Journal of Southern History*, 51 no. 2 (May 1985), 196, 198.

<sup>24</sup> At the time of his death (no later than 22 February 1832), he owned 83 acres in T11N R9W, section 16, bounded above by Simon Manning’s land in T11N R9W.

<sup>25</sup> Her husband was named John Sprowl and was the father of the John Paul Sprowl who wed Mahala Brown.

<sup>26</sup> Frank L. Owsley, “The Pattern of Migration and Settlement on the Southern Frontier,” *Journal of Southern History*, 11 (May 1945), 170.

<sup>27</sup> Cited in Fischer and Kelly, *Bound Away*, 163, 173. See also 228.

<sup>28</sup> See Thomas Perkins Abernethy, *The Formative Period in Alabama, 1815-1828*, rev. ed. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1965), 37, 74, 84, 171. See also 29-30, 39, 182 footnote 14; James David Miller, *South by Southwest: Planter Emigration and Identity in the Slave South* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 2-7, 21, 33. Cf. 4, 7, 39, 48, 51, 54, 58, 60-61, 76, 78, 82-83, 124.

<sup>29</sup> Section 31, Township 3S Range 2E (Madison County Deed Book F, 260, 297-298) and U.S. Government Patents 516-517 cited in Government Entries, Madison County, Alabama, 190 as T3S R2E. On January 5, 1819, John Brown purchased S  $\frac{1}{2}$  NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  in section 31 of 3S 2E for \$1,600 (\$24,429) from John Calvert.

<sup>30</sup> Madison County Deed Book F, 260, 297-298.

<sup>31</sup> Mia Taylor, “Early Recollections of Madison County” *Huntsville Historical Review*, 2 no. 2 (April 1972), 21-28.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 29, 32.

<sup>33</sup> *Tennessee Valley Leaves*, “Madison County, Mississippi Territory Tax Lists, 1810-1813, 1815,” Vol. 4 No. 4, 3-55.

<sup>34</sup> Brown’s initial purchases came on January 25, 1811 and are listed in the Tract Book for Madison County, 217, 220—159.3 acres in NW  $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 29 T3S R2E (number 516) and 159.9 acres in SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 20 T3S R2E (number 517). The latter is cited in Government Entries, Madison County, Alabama, 190 as T3S R2E.

<sup>35</sup> On the early settlement of Brownsboro, see Judge Thomas Jones Taylor, Intro. by W. Stanley Hoole and Addie S. Hoole, *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732-1840* (Confederate Publishing Company, 1976), 18, 20, 29, 79-80, 84-85. See also Dupre, *Transforming the Cotton Frontier*, 15-16, 19-22, 32.

<sup>36</sup> Brown officially purchased these lots in the fall of 1815. See Madison County Deed Book A, 204.

<sup>37</sup> On the sale of town lots in Huntsville, see Taylor, *A History of Madison County*, 39-41, 49; Elise Hopkins Stephens, *Historic Huntsville: A City of New Beginnings* (Woodland Hills, California: Windsor Publications, 1984), 31; Edward Chambers Betts,

*Historic Huntsville from Early History of Huntsville, Alabama, 1804 to 1870* (Southern University Press, 1966), 14-15, 23-24.

<sup>38</sup> *Hog Meat and Hoecake: Food Supply in the Old South, 1840-1860* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), 16-17.

<sup>39</sup> Brown is listed as a Madison County taxpayer as early as 1813. See *Tennessee Valley Leaves*, "Madison County, Mississippi Territory Tax Lists, 1810-1813, 1815," 3-55.

<sup>40</sup> In addition to Cumberland County tax records, Madison County estate records (Volume 115, 2 relevant to George Brown, deceased) make reference to "receipt of John Brown of Virginia, 4 Oct., 1815, for accounts to be collected." Interestingly, John Brown's father-in-law, Thomas Moore, who lived next to Brown in the 1810 Cumberland County census, is found in the 1816 Alabama census. John Brown is not listed in that record.

<sup>41</sup> Taylor, "Early Recollections of Madison County," 30-32, 34-35.

<sup>42</sup> Abernethy, *The Formative Period in Alabama, 1815-1828*, 82-83.

<sup>43</sup> Madison County Deed Book E, 9. Brown purchased this property from George W. Taylor on March 6, 1818.

<sup>44</sup> Taylor, *A History of Madison County*, 36, 42, 54.

<sup>45</sup> *Heritage of Madison County, Alabama* (1998), 5.

<sup>46</sup> See "An act to incorporate the Flint River Navigation Company," [http://www.legislature.state.al.us/misc/history/acts\\_and\\_journals/Acts\\_1820/Acts\\_51-55.html](http://www.legislature.state.al.us/misc/history/acts_and_journals/Acts_1820/Acts_51-55.html). See also Betts, *Historic Huntsville*, 69-70.

<sup>47</sup> Betts, *Historic Huntsville*, 69-70. See also Lou L. Sams, "The Cobb Families of Madison County, Alabama," [http://freepaes.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~cobb/cobb\\_madal\\_main.htm](http://freepaes.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~cobb/cobb_madal_main.htm).

<sup>48</sup> Dupre, *Transforming the Cotton Frontier*, 13-14, 19, 107, 113-114, 127, 129, 234.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 6. See also 49.

<sup>50</sup> Stephens, *Historic Huntsville*, 17, 36.

<sup>51</sup> Dupre, *Transforming the Cotton Frontier*, 42, 44, 46, 48, 101.

<sup>52</sup> In a March 27, 1820 suit brought by John Evans against Brown, the former alleged: "John Brown gives it out in speeches that he intends removing himself out of this state with all his property & estate for the purpose of defaulting the payment of said debt to your orator" (Madison County, Alabama Chancery Superior Record A [1811-1821], 178).

<sup>53</sup> Madison County Deed Book E, 353.

<sup>54</sup> Section 20 of T3N R2E. Brown resided on his original federal purchase in section 20 of T3N R2E along the Flint River. The acreage Evans sold was SE ¼ and SW ¼ of section 30 and NE ¼ and NW ¼ section 31, all in T3N R2E.

<sup>55</sup> The quotation comes from Madison County, Alabama Chancery Superior Record A (1811-1821), 175. Brown believed himself to be "the victim of a plot . . . greatly deceived and completely taken in when he made the trade" (174).

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 172-179. The depth of Brown's Methodist conviction is evident in his declaration, "Your complainant before and at the time of said Contract of Sale was and yet is a member of the Methodist Church" (173-174, 177).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* 173.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 176-177.

<sup>59</sup> Madison County Deed Book F.260, 297-298.





# Yellow Fever and Huntsville

DAVID BYERS

Few remember yellow fever as the horrible disease it once was. It belongs in the list of those killers that had great influence on the development of the world, and especially, America. Smallpox, malaria, and cholera may have killed more people, but the terrible 200 years of yellow fever brought uncontrolled alarm, deaths, long-lasting after-effects and created panic unlike any other threat. In those years, approximately 500,000 Americans were sickened and possibly 20% of those died. For the most part, Huntsville escaped the widespread devastation.

Yellow fever developed in West Africa centuries ago. Blood, containing the virus, was exchanged by mosquitoes (*aedes aegypti*), between monkeys and the occasional human. The disease found fertile victims in the Europeans who had never been exposed or even heard of the disease. Slaves, brought to America from Africa, often had been exposed, sickened and perhaps immunized by the sickness. Those slaves were carried to the Caribbean islands and the coastal areas of the United States. A second group of passengers also came in the ships. Mosquitoes, carrying the virus in their system, perhaps several generations removed from Africa, traveled in the air and water with the slaves. The mosquito found its preferred environment in the warm, humid lowlands and swamps of the New World.

Although perfect conditions for mosquitoes exist in the Far East, no yellow fever outbreaks ever occurred because no slaves were ever taken to those countries. This country was already being punished for its position on slavery.

Yellow fever was seen in Europe briefly in the Middle Ages. It had been prevalent in Cuba since 1650. A full-blown outbreak occurred there in 1762 and again in 1763. Large epidemics were recorded in 1793 Philadelphia, 1802 Haiti, 1820 Savannah, 1822 New Orleans, 1839 Galveston, 1848 Mobile, 1853 New Orleans and Selma, 1855 Norfolk, 1858 Mobile, 1864 Bermuda, 1867 Galveston, 1878 Memphis, Tusculumbia, Grenada City in Mississippi, Fulton County in Kentucky, 1886 and 1888 Jacksonville, 1897 Montgomery, and the last major outbreak in 1905 in New Orleans. The Texas Gulf Coast was struck 19 times between 1833 and 1907.

The first major yellow fever event in this country occurred in Philadelphia, which was at that time the Nation's capital and its largest city. Henry Adams observed in his *History of the United States*, "Compared with Boston and New York, Philadelphia was relatively clean, safe and prosperous by the standards of the 1800s. But Yellow Fever reminded all of the physical danger of urban life." In June 1793 about 1000 refugees, white, black, rich and poor, fled Santo Domingo, where the slaves were fighting against the French who had taken Hispaniola from Spain, and came to Philadelphia. They spoke of a fever epidemic. In the busy port city of Philadelphia, 55,000 people were experiencing a dry summer with an abundance of flies and mosquitoes. Poor sewage management, privies, and cisterns for drinking water made wonderful breeding spots for the insects. This unknown disease sickened many citizens. Two thousand people died.

In the usual pattern of the disease, after a mosquito bite, a person would be fine for a few days while the virus built up in his system. Other mosquitoes would bite this victim, transfer tainted blood to other victims and the epidemic was underway. In the worst cases, in the first three days, the victim would suffer with high fever, headaches, bruises on the skin, back pain, fast pulse, and extreme fatigue. Nausea, vomiting and constipation would appear on the second or third day. Usually then the symptoms would recede and the temperature and pulse would drop to normal. The climax came with internal hemorrhage, bloody vomit, delirium and coma, followed by death. People with mild cases would suffer from fever and headache. Jaundice of the eyes and skin contributed the name “yellow fever.”

In Philadelphia, Dr. Benjamin Rush ordered residents to “leave the city.” Congress recessed and most members fled. George Washington went to Mount Vernon. Many congressmen went to the higher lands of western Pennsylvania. Alexander Hamilton remained, was bitten and sickened, survived but suffered lifelong troublesome effects from the attack. Earlier, the congress fled to York, Pennsylvania when the British threatened Philadelphia.

As the French army fought in 1802 for re-enslavement and control of the black population of Hispaniola, 24,000 of Napoleon’s soldiers died from yellow fever. Eight thousand more were sickened. Perhaps this major loss of forces led Napoleon to forgo his dream of a French empire in the Mississippi Valley of the Americas and sell the Louisiana Territory to Jefferson.

The Civil War was fought, as a Union Army Surgeon General described, “at the end of the medical Middle Ages.” Twice as many men died of disease than of gunshot wounds. Elementary sanitation and a connection between hygiene and health were ignored. The primary killers were diarrhea and dysentery, followed by typhoid fever and malaria. Other troubling diseases were smallpox, cholera, pneumonia, mumps, chicken pox, whooping cough, measles, tuberculosis and even some scurvy. Yellow fever lagged in those war torn years. Small outbreaks occurred in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, New Orleans, Baltimore, and Washington. As luck would have it, there was never an epidemic outbreak of yellow fever in the troops on either side.

Many cities across the country experienced large sporadic outbreaks. It became clear that the disease occurred in humid, damp coastal areas, but the vector was unknown. Some thought yellow fever spread from contact, coughing, food, and other methods. Spread of the epidemics followed rivers and railroads. A single infected traveler could bring trouble to an area thought to be unthreatened. As the disease moved from one location to another, many commercial interests would prevent the local authorities from declaring quarantines that might stop all traffic and business, as well as the threat of epidemic. Other cities, expecting to be a target because of their location, would use military or police to stop all entrance. Usually efforts of that kind failed as someone or some mosquito would get across the lines.

With no clear explanation, someone noticed that prisoners confined within a 15 foot wall were less susceptible to the disease. Those who slept on higher floors usually escaped the infection. There were many ideas about how the disease was

transmitted. In 1900, Dr. Walter Reed and a few courageous doctors and volunteers finally proved, without a doubt, that mosquitoes were the agent of transmission. This work was at their station in Cuba following the Spanish American War. He carefully eliminated all other possibilities, then infected and re-infected using only mosquito bites as the exposure. About half of the American troops stationed in Cuba were infected by either yellow fever or typhoid fever. Sources of unclean water were removed and the typhoid was slowed. After an aggressive effort to dispose of the stagnant water in pools, tires, and other places of standing water, mosquitoes were greatly reduced and Cuba's yellow fever problems were greatly reduced. Insecticides also helped to bring the disease under control.

Major General William C. Gorgas, the Surgeon General, against much political opposition, controlled mosquitoes in the Canal Zone and prevented both malaria and yellow fever so the Panama Canal could be completed in 1914. In 1937, Dr. Max Theiler of the Rockefeller Foundation developed a safe and effective vaccine for yellow fever.

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Memphis in 1878 was quite aware of the epidemic in New Orleans, just a short boat ride to the south. Although efforts were made to stall the onset, the checkpoints failed and Memphis had a major outbreak. Earlier exposures in the mid-century did little to prepare for what was coming. A mild winter and a long and wet spring followed by a hot summer provided the mosquitoes perfect conditions for breeding. From late July until frost in October, 17,000 people were infected and 5,150 died. Twenty-five thousand fled the town. "The wealthy fled, the fearless or indifferent remained from choice, the poor from necessity." The blacks were thought to be immune to the disease, but that was proved untrue. Seventy percent of the affected whites died, only 7% of the sickened blacks died. Perhaps some resistance had built up with the repeated exposure of generations to the fever in Africa.

Huntsville's yellow fever experience is best told by quoting from two newspapers in the city. The *Huntsville Advocate*, the Republican paper, and the *Weekly Democrat*, published by J. Withers Clay, the son of Clement Comer Clay, were both delivered on Wednesdays.

The *Advocate* reported on June 12, 1878: "A sanitary measure of more than ordinary importance has been passed as the 'National Quarantine Act of 1878.' It is particularly designed to guard against those two scourges to humanity – Asiatic cholera and yellow fever – the ravages of which have frequently been so appalling."

That same day, the *Democrat* reported: "Savannah has had a sad and sufficient experience in the yellow fever business. It is determined not to have it again. The sanitary condition of the city is represented as excellent. The quarantine regulations are more rigidly enforced than ever before. An improved apparatus is used for fumigating vessels from infected ports."

An update appeared in the *Advocate* on July 31: "That terrible scourge Yellow Fever has made its appearance in New Orleans. Up to Monday night there had

been 80 cases with 33 deaths. Memphis, Vicksburg, Mobile, Montgomery and Galveston have quarantined all trains and vessels against the city, and trade and travel is seriously interrupted. We trust the authorities may be able to confine it within the limits of the city and they may soon get the disease under control."

Helpless to stop the spread and frightened by rumors, citizens pursued every idea, no matter how far-fetched, to limit the damage. In Montgomery, the mail from Mobile and New Orleans was perforated and vapor blown into the envelopes in an effort to kill the germs that could be transported on letters. Still, a postal employee died of yellow fever. Huge bonfires were lit in the streets in the hope that the smoke would drive germs away. After the fever struck Montgomery, neighboring counties posted armed guards at the county lines to prevent anyone from leaving the county.

The *Democrat* reported on August 14, two weeks later: "The Yellow Fever prevails in malignant form in New Orleans and at Grenada, Mississippi and both places have been dreadfully scourged. Memphis and Mobile have established quarantines. In Grenada hundreds have taken it including the Mayor. There is great panic in Memphis and thousands have fled. Some of them have come to Huntsville and many more are expected. There is talk of establishing a quarantine in Huntsville."

On the same day, the *Advocate* wrote: "Yellow fever has made its appearance in New Orleans. We do not expect it here but every property holder should proceed to organize himself into a committee of one to see that his premises are free from garbage and filth of all kinds. Forewarned is forearmed." Another report said: "The prevalence of yellow fever in New Orleans is attributed to the coming of fruit vessels to the city with clearance papers made out from an uninfected port, while they are known to have touched at infected ports in transit. In these precarious times it would be better to disinfect every vessel coming from Cuban, Mexican or South American ports with carbolic acid, even if her papers indicate that she is all right. The risk is too great."

The *Democrat* reported on August 21: "This plague is raging at New Orleans, Vicksburg, Grenada, Canton, and Memphis. We hear reports of it appearing at Leighton and Chattanooga, but doubt their truth because similar reports have existed as to Huntsville and they are entirely without foundation. The panic in the fever-stricken districts has been awful and the stampede general. A family, coming from Mobile, was not permitted to stop at Decatur on Sunday last, and they went to Athens and came through by private conveyance to Huntsville."

The *Advocate* reported on the same day: "Hundreds of the people from the low lands of Mississippi are fleeing to the mountains of North Alabama. Our city will be crowded before another week. Our officials are on alert to prevent the introduction of the fever." And, "The New Orleans board of health has adopted a resolution declaring the mode of quarantine adopted by Mobile is unnecessarily harsh and the request is made that Mobile authorities permit the passage of through freight and passenger trains after being fumigated."

A writer from the *New Orleans Times* stated: "The extraordinary haste made by many surrounding towns, little and big, to quarantine against New Orleans,

thereby subjecting their own citizens as well as ours to great and unnecessary inconvenience, is a striking illustration of the recklessness and selfishness of frightened humanity. This irrational panic appears to be a studied effort to make their so-called precautions as irritating and injurious as possible." Another news item reported: "The Memphis board of health will keep no secrets, but will announce every case of yellow fever appearing." After a long discussion of the appearance and treatment of a patient, the paper reported: "As to the cure, no remedy has yet been found, and all treatment so far, even by the best physicians, is as empirical as the causes of yellow fever are unknown beyond conjecture." Another article stated: "As to the causes of the scourge, the old atmospheric theory has gone by the board, and the best writers seem to believe the poison is of animalcular origin, these animalcules generating and spreading over surfaces like grasshoppers and caterpillars, and being introduced into the human blood. If they exist the most powerful microscope has been unable to discover them. One fact that seems to point to their existence is that the same extremes of heat and cold that kill all other insects also kills yellow fever, whose contagion cannot exist and becomes innocuous at 32 degrees and 212 degrees. Yellow fever is always killed out after a good freeze and never spreads above 600 feet about the level of the sea. Acclimatization does not prevent and no person has a second attack."

From these newspaper reports, the reader can sense the terror and threat of the unknown. Every responsible person had to decide on the measures he and his family would take to avoid this disease. The always-asked question was, "What is the truth?" Yet life went on. The candidates in the race for the congressional seat were given much more space in the papers and letters from readers never were about sickness but reflected the strong feelings between the two political parties. Reconstruction (declared officially ended by the new President Hayes) was still progressing slowly thirteen years after the war ended. The Democrats, including General Joe Wheeler, strongly supported Colonel William Willis Garth. The Republican Party, including many Negro citizens, loudly held for Colonel William H. Lowe.

On August 28<sup>th</sup>, the *Advocate* reported: "The scourge is spreading rapidly over a wide section of the country. The fever seems to be abating somewhat in Memphis. The Negroes are stampeding from Granada leaving the stricken with no one to pass a drink of water or wait upon them but a handful of nurses. It beggars all description. Total deaths over 80 and increasing rapidly. Two nurses are down and the survivors are in great stress. New York and Brooklyn have had cases. Nashville refuses to quarantine. Louisville opens her gates to all afflicted districts."

That same day the *Democrat* wrote: "Yesterday Dr. Dement received a telegram from Memphis, asking if the Huntsville city authorities would receive and take care of 40 children of the Memphis Orphans' Home till November." Three doctors, of the Board of Health, suggested to the mayor: "In view of the contingency of yellow fever cases appearing here, to provide a hospital there would be no danger in admitting the orphans in the city after 14 days quarantine two miles outside of the city limits and rigidly enforcing the sanitary laws." "The Mayor and Aldermen met and appointed a Health Committee to select a hospital.

They telegraphed Memphis the orphans should be provided with quarters for 14 days outside the city limits and then be located at the Donegan House if desired.” The home of James J. Donegan, a brilliant and wealthy entrepreneur, then sat empty on the lot of the present-day Annie Merts Center, the office of the Huntsville School Board. Approximately 30 people, family, guests and servants, had once occupied the very large home until the illness of the owner. Huntsville had no real hospital at the time. A committee of ladies appointed to solicit subscriptions for the orphans met at the Huntsville Hotel. After the meeting, a telegram from Memphis was received stating that the orphans would not be sent.

The paper also reported: “A lewd woman from Memphis reached Huntsville last night, went to a bawdy house in Pin Hook, took sick, and the case is pronounced yellow fever. It has created no panic, and our physicians apprehend little or no spread of the disease. Its prevalence depends more on altitude than latitude. It has extended no higher than Memphis about 272 feet above sea level, except once at Fort Smith, Arkansas, 460 feet. Huntsville is 612 feet at the R. R. depot and 690 on the square by official measurement. Our city authorities have fenced in the yellow fever case in Pin Hook and forbid communication with the house where it exists.”

No one knew the real cause of the epidemic. Medical doctors, who were on the scene, tried diligently to compare symptoms and treatment methods and results, but often were way off the trail. A New Orleans physician wrote: “Only ten per cent of fatal cases of yellow fever are the direct results of the disease. Fifty per cent are the results of improvidence in eating. When the fever has been checked, twenty per cent from improper treatment, and five per cent resulting from not taking the remedies in time.”

From the *Memphis Avalanche* on August 27<sup>th</sup>: “Dr. Alex Erskine was taken with fever yesterday. His fever was reduced last night and Dr. John Erskine hopes the attack will not prove yellow fever.” Several Huntsville doctors traveled to the areas where their help was badly needed. It took real courage to face the uncertainty of this horrible and unknown threat.

The *Weekly Democrat* on September 4 published a story entitled **The Scourge in Mississippi**: “Leaving Huntsville at one o’clock, I arrived in Grand Junction at 10. One lady had died there a few days before but no cases were there then. An acquaintance of mine had poured carbolic acid in his hat, in the first fever excitement, put the hat on and the acid trickled all down his face. It took the skin off until he resembled a peeled onion. Passing Grenada at night the car windows are tightly fastened, the doors closed, and the train moved at 20 miles an hour. A brave operator sat in the telegraph office to tell the world the tale of pestilence and death. I spoke with Dr. Mauderville of New Orleans who was returning home from Memphis. He said it was the most malignant type of fever he has ever had to contend with. Five deaths occurred in Grenada today. Judge R. Watson, U. S. District Attorney for Northern Mississippi and a very prominent Republican politician is down with the fever today. In Canton it is not so bad. Nearly everybody left town. Six new cases and two deaths reported there today. The first fatal case was Dr. McKie who contracted the disease from a patient he was attending. There are 500 cases at Vicksburg with 25 deaths in the past 24

hours. *The New York Herald* has a reporter at Water Valley. *The New York Times* sent a man but he became alarmed and fled. Signed, H. G. C.”

The few cases in Huntsville were all refugees from other areas. Three from Memphis were spoken of in an article from the *Advocate*: “A poor soiled dove, Ida Edwards, died of Yellow fever in a Pinhook bagnio (bath house). She came from Memphis and Dr. Goldman did his utmost, but the poor creature, deserted by her late companions passed away with all her sins upon her. Frank Engering from Memphis, came on Friday and died early this morning. Dr. Erskine paid him every attention, but the disease could not be controlled. John Fifer, a printer from Memphis who was raised here and learned his trade here, came Friday. He had lost a brother by the fever in Memphis and had nursed him during his illness. He was taken down Sunday and is resting easy.” It continued, “There is little fear of the disease spreading. The ablest physicians of this country and Europe are of the opinion that it is not contagious. Keep cool, stay calm, do not listen to nor circulate idle rumors. There is nothing to fear.”

Staying calm came in several forms. *The Advocate* on September 11<sup>th</sup> wrote: “It is said that one of the best ways to thoroughly fumigate a house is the use of sulphur, this placed in an iron vessel and alcohol poured over it. The alcohol is set on fire then the sulphur ignites and thus sulphurous acid gas will be generated and will penetrate every crevice, hall, room, cellar and attic. Every germ of disease will be destroyed and perfect freedom from infection insured.”

Another page told: “Only one death from the fever among the hundreds of refugees who have come among us. A child, Paulina Solomon, was brought here by her parents from Brownsville, Tennessee. She was sick but a short time then died. Mrs. John Brodie, who came from Memphis and was eleven miles out in the county, died last Wednesday. These cases have given it a good test and it has not attacked any of our citizens.”

*The Democrat* reported on September 11: “Two new cases of persons from Memphis have occurred. Miss Birdie Holt, sister of our clever Express agent, and Mary Eliza Turner. Miss Holt was attacked after 13 days absence from Memphis and Mary Eliza after only a few days.”

Again and again we realize the readers of these papers had no understanding of the real cause of the fever. *The Advocate* told a story placed in Tuscaloosa: “Two refugees from Vicksburg had the fever last week. One died and one recovered. Both were boys and they were quite imprudent in walking one and a half miles, in the sun, to the University bathhouse and bathing in the cold water. The seeds of the disease might have been expelled without development in this anti-malarious locality, had the boys been more prudent.”

A *Democrat* obituary appeared on September 11: “In the Big Cove in this county. On Sept. 7, 1878, of convulsions. Mamie, infant child of the late Fred Schaudies, Jr., aged 3 months. She was brought sick from Memphis and the Schaudies, Sr., her grandparents, took the little innocent to the country and camping out, nursed it till its death, fearing it might have yellow fever.” A list of four more deaths pointed out they all had come from Memphis.

On September 25, the *Advocate* reported: “Dr. John Erskine, who left

Huntsville and located in Memphis after the war, died of yellow fever in that city Tuesday morning. A noble man has fallen. He was President of the Board of Health of Memphis and labored for poor stricken humanity with no hope of reward." Many doctors and nurses were lost to the disease in 1878. Also, "All our convalescents, Mr. Fifer, Miss Birdie Holt, and Mary Eliza Turner are doing finely. There are no new cases."

The October 9 issue of the *Democrat* reported: "The fever seems to be abating in New Orleans, Memphis and most other cities and towns. Tuscumbia reports two cases and the people have stampeded. The Memphis and Charlestown railroad shop hands have come to Huntsville. Florence reported 23 deaths in the last 30 days, all confined to a small area around a brickyard pond. Decatur has had 40 to 60 cases, most comparatively mild with only 6 to 8 deaths. Doctors Dement, Lowry and Clopton have been there."

The October 16<sup>th</sup> *Democrat* gave a scorecard of other cities. Decatur had 15 sick, 3 deaths, total cases 117; Chattanooga had 26 new cases, 22 deaths; Memphis had 100 new cases, 39 deaths; Tuscumbia had 2 new cases, no deaths; Vicksburg had 28 deaths in the last 24 hours, new cases 183; total cases to date 11,720, deaths 3,519; Athens, original yellow fever here, people vamoosing; Huntsville, no resident cases to date. It is impossible to make all these numbers add up. Excited reporting, fear for community and maybe a bit of stretching the story made for inaccurate totals.

The end appeared on October 23<sup>rd</sup> when *The Advocate* wrote: "Jack Frost gave Bronze John a black eye last Saturday morning. Let's hope it was a settler." On October 30, *The Democrat* wrote: "Jack Frost has met and conquered Yellow Jack. All along the line the Boards of Health pronounce him dead and invite refugees to return home."

Still the biggest headlines were reserved for politics. *The Advocate's* headline on November 6 was not about the end of the terrible epidemic: "VICTORY, Hallelujah, 'Tis Done. The People Triumphant. The election of Col. Lowe will reach 2,000 majority. Col William M. Lowe is our next congressman."

It took time for the average person to realize the full extent of the epidemic. The report of the Fever Commission appeared in the November 27 issue of the *Weekly Democrat*. The important and nationally known group reported a sufficient amount of evidence had been taken to state the first case was brought to New Orleans in June by conveyances unknown. Among the conclusions were, nearly all inland towns in the United States were guilty of neglecting drainage, deposits of fetid and refuse animal and vegetable matter, and were inattentive to the purity of drinking water. The transmission of the disease was due to human contact. In some cases the poison was carried in clothing or about the persons going from infected districts or in such forms as cotton bagging or other goods. The weight of testimony was very pronounced against the further use of disinfectants. Personal prophylaxis, drugs or other means, was proven a constant failure. And quarantine, effectively provided, protected its subjects from attacks of yellow fever.

Many cities reacted like Memphis in the next year and with good public health leadership, worked to remove sewage effectively and drain the wet areas



and low ground. About 12 more years passed before the mystery was solved. Dr. Walter Reed and his selfless workers provided the exact procedures to avoid another epidemic. Although yellow fever still appears in some remote countries occasionally, no large populations ever suffered the deadly summer like this country in 1878. The citizens had provided care for refugees, their families, and the economy was not destroyed as in some other areas. Huntsville was very lucky.

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# History of the Development of Monte Sano

JAMES B. HILL, JR.

## Early Years 1815-1920

The development of Huntsville on the bluff above Hunt's Spring began with the settlement of a community that can be traced to 1805. Early on, affluent residents and visitors came to Monte Sano Mountain to escape the summer heat. Small cabins were constructed with cedar and poplar wood and native stone. The first permanent non-Indian resident of Monte Sano Mountain was Thomas Martin, who came to Huntsville in 1808 from Fairfax, Virginia. He purchased a large tract of land on the north end of the mountain. In 1815, Martin built a house for his bride a few feet from Cold Spring. The water was furnished to the house through hollowed cedar logs. Mr. Martin made a bathtub for his bride carved out of a limestone rock. It was five feet long, 19 ½ inches wide and 12 inches deep. Not only was it the first bathtub in Huntsville and the Mississippi Territory, but it was the first in the nation!

According to the October 1934 issue of *Valve World*, a trade magazine published by the Crane Co. of Chicago, Thomas Martin's bathtub (ca. 1815) remained in the Martin home on Monte Sano for nearly a half century. Sometime before the Civil War, Martin moved it to a home he had built at the corner of Jefferson Street and Holmes Street in Huntsville, the present-day location of the Federal Court House. The tub was uncovered during a 1934 excavation for the post office (the same building as the court house) and for a while was in the possession of John C. Standard (?) of Huntsville, now deceased. Whether or not it still exists is not known. *Valve World* pointed out the discovery of the old tub brought to light "the hoax perpetrated upon the public by H. L. Mencken in an article in the *New York Evening Mail*." He alleged the bathtub was unknown to the world until the 40s of the last century, and that Adam Thompson invented it in Cincinnati.

Seven years later in the *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, Mencken admitted that his former article was a "piece of spoofing to relieve the strained war days."

"Apparently," the article concluded, "there is no evidence of an earlier tub in this country, so that the old Martin tub may be accepted as the first bathtub in America."

As early as 1814, Dr. Thomas Fearn and his brothers, Col. George Fearn and Robert Fearn, planned a real estate development. The mountain soon became known as Monte Sano, from the Latin words "mount" for mountain and "sanitos" for health. Dr. Fearn was probably the one who selected that name. By 1827 a health colony was located near Cold Spring, where Dr. Fearn promoted the medicinal benefits of the spring water and clean mountain air.



Dr. Thomas Fearn

(Courtesy Huntsville-Madison County Public Library)

In 1830, the Reverend James Rowe, a Methodist minister, along with his wife Malinda, established Rowe's Female Academy. Students were encouraged to take their lessons on the mountain "where the air is salubrious and a chalybeate spring is only one mile away." Although Reverend Rowe was retired from the ministry, he was genuinely interested in the Methodist Church and the religious training of his students. It is well documented that John Wesley, the father of Methodism, promoted physical health as well as spiritual well-being. He carried literature about health, along with religious tracts, in his saddlebags.

The college was located on the north bluff, on the original Lookout Drive at the north end of Cooper Street. There is a historical marker on the front of the property. With the establishment of Reverend Rowe's Academy, the population of the mountain began to increase. In 1833, the town of Viduta was established. Primarily, it was intended to be a summer retreat for the wealthy.



Reverend James Rowe

(Courtesy Huntsville-Madison County Public Library)

Reverend Rowe's Academy closed in 1834, one year after the death of Malinda Rowe. Her broken-hearted husband lost interest in the school. Reverend Rowe lived his final years in nearby Athens with his son and daughter-in-law. His wish was to be buried next to his wife on the academy property, but the terrible winter of 1869 prevented his body from being brought to the mountain. Reverend Rowe was buried in Athens.

Attempts to bring education to Huntsville were not always successful. Two other schools located in downtown were the Huntsville Female Seminary, founded in 1832, and Huntsville Female College in 1851. Both taught subjects every young lady of the time needed to know: English, Latin, a modern foreign language, fine arts etiquette and, of course, sewing and housekeeping. After five years, a young lady received an MEL or an AM degree.

In 1833, Dr. Fearn and his brother George purchased 80 acres of land on the top of the mountain above Cold Spring. Sixty-seven lots were laid off, and by the end of the year, they had sold 38 of those lots. Until then, access to the mountain was by wagon until one reached the foot of the bluff. At the bluff, travelers commenced by horseback over Indian trails. With the sale of lots, money was raised to construct a primitive road.

In 1835, Col. George Fearn bought 362 acres of land on the northeastern bluff where he built his home. This area was to become an important part of the development of the mountain in both the near and distant future.

This first road on a map was simply identified as Road to Huntsville in 1859. Over the years, the other names for the road were Monte Sano Pike, Monte Sano Turnpike and Toll Gate Road. To protect the title, a group of four local men had bought the right of way for the Monte Sano Turnpike for \$150. The names of the four men were Rison, Echols, Patton and Newman. Incidentally, these are the names of four Huntsville streets today.

This road began at the NW corner of Maple Hill Cemetery. It proceeded eastward, just north of Randolph Street, reaching the top of Monte Sano at the intersection of A & Y streets. (Lookout and Fearn). It was a private road that became a toll road. A tollgate was installed on the road approximately one-fourth mile from its beginning at the cemetery, and it became known as Tollgate Road. Bankhead Parkway was constructed ca.1936. It began at the east end of Pratt Avenue, four blocks north of Tollgate Road. Tollgate Road now ends at its intersection with Bankhead, having a length of 1¼ miles. From that intersection, the Bankhead Parkway was built just north of the abandoned section of Tollgate Road. Fearn Street, as it is known now, comes up from Bankhead, connects with the last one half mile of Tollgate at the hairpin curve, and follows the old roadbed to the intersection with Lookout Drive.

By 1878, nine families had summer homes on the mountain. A local newspaper advocated further development of a Monte Sano community, beginning with a hotel. In 1884, further interest in building a motel was motivated by a yellow fever epidemic in Huntsville. A sanctuary in a location known for an abundance of healthful air would provide an escape from the grip of death.

An influx of wealthy northerners was beginning to make significant contributions to the Huntsville economy. Among them was a New Yorker, Michael O'Shaugnessy. On April 13, 1881, he leased a building near the depot that had once been used as the machine shop of the Memphis & Charleston Railroad. He established a successful cottonseed oil factory, and soon his brother, James F. O'Shaugnessy, was encouraged to leave New York for the prosperity Huntsville had to offer. James was impressed with the area and soon began to plan large-scale land developments in Huntsville. He bought the land on the northeastern bluff of Monte Sano from Col. George Fearn, and built an elegant residence on what for many years was to be known as O'Shaugnessy Point. It was reported that guests from all parts of the United States came to visit. A newspaper dated April 11, 1890, reported that the loss of Col. J. F. O'Shaugnessy's house on Monte Sano by fire was an artistic loss to the south. There was not another such home in the southern states. The Monte Sano State Park was built in this area.

Michael J. O'Shaugnessy came to Huntsville from New York after the Civil War. He built a large home on what is now the northwest corner of Meridian St. and Oakwood Road. He named the estate Kildare after his family home in Ireland. Following the O'Shaugnessys, another prominent owner of Kildare were the McCormicks of Chicago, who made Kildare their winter home. The McCormicks were part owners of the Cyrus-McCormick tractor/farm implement company. On June 2, 1943, Mrs. McCormick sold the home at auction for \$11,900.

In 1944, Michael O'Shaugnessy returned to Huntsville after 48 years to visit old friends and Kildare. He was saddened to see his old home in disrepair. The house is still standing after many hard years and several owners.

The North Alabama Improvement Company was organized on January 17, 1886. Michael O'Shaugnessy was chosen as president and John L. Rison served as secretary. A month later on February 18, 1886, work began on the Monte Sano

Hotel. The stockholders included: James F. O'Shaughnessy, J. R. Stevens, W. R. Rison, A. Campbell, J. W. Ford, W. P. Taylor, A. R. Jones, G. M. Harris, Henry McGee, Charles Halsey, William L. Halsey, W. P. Newman, Milton Humes, J. J. Dement, A. F. Murray, W. F. Struve, J. B. Laughlin, Ernest Dentler, A. W. McCullough and Robert Coxe. Several of the shareholders were local businessmen that became Huntsville's leaders into the twentieth century.

The hotel was located on 27 acres of land between what is now the boulevard and the west bluff. Today this property is known as Old Chimney Road. The hotel was a three-story wooden structure was a fine example of Queen Anne architecture. The ground floor porch wrapped around the building to take advantage of every view, and observation towers on top of the building offered views for the more adventurous guests. All of the 233 guestrooms had an outside exposure to allow lots of clear sunlight. The hotel was heated by steam and lighted by gas. Water was pumped up from the Big Spring in downtown Huntsville. The hotel was formally, and finally, opened on June 1, 1887 with S. E. Bates as the first manager.

A celebration ball was held on June 2nd with 400 guests in attendance. On July 1 there was a concert. A few days later another ball was attended by 400 people. Many of the guests had to dance on the porch for lack of room inside. By August 24, the hotel had registered over 1,000 guests. About that time 300 soldiers from Ft. Barancas in Pensacola, Florida, came to the mountain to recover from yellow fever, and they remained until the arrival of cold weather. In 1898, a large group of Spanish-American War veterans came to Huntsville, to recover from malaria. Many were sent to the mountain.



Monte Sano Hotel  
(Courtesy Huntsville-Madison County Library)

Out-of-town guests of the Monte Sano Hotel came to Huntsville by train. Two well-dressed coachmen in a tally-ho carriage met them, while similarly dressed attendants greeted them at the door when they arrived at the hotel. Resort activities included horseback riding, bowling, billiards, croquet and lawn tennis.

The grounds were beautifully maintained and well-equipped with boardwalks. There were 14-mile buggy and carriage rides around the mountain that featured such names as Shelter Rock, Wildcat Glen, Vanishing Falls, Brigans Cavern, Hell's Half Acre, Chalybeate Spring, Alum Spring, Magnesia Spring, Cold Spring, and Inspiration Point. At the conclusion of the 1887 season, which ended in October, the hotel declared a profit! Only poor winter weather prevented year-around operation.



Horseback Riding on Monte Sano Mountain  
(Courtesy Huntsville-Madison County Library)

With the first season over, it was time to take stock of improvements in the operation. The tally-ho service that brought guests to the mountain was too costly and not very satisfactory. Another means of transportation had to be found. By February 1888, plans for a railroad were underway. A right-of-way was granted to the Huntsville-Beltline and Monte Sano Railroad. In the language of the railroaders, it was a dummy line, meaning it had only one destination. The railway was planned and constructed in an astonishing six months, and began operation on August 7, 1888. The train made a round trip every weekday and two round trips on Sunday. Early in its operation, the train wrecked when the brakes failed coming down the mountain. No one was seriously injured; however, it did affect business for both the train and the hotel as wary customers looked elsewhere for entertainment. A new train was bought at a cost of \$15,000. To assure riders they needn't worry about the possibility of a runaway train, the owners declared it safe, "noting there had been 'crowns' broken, fair ladies bruised on the pike through faulty harness, bad driving and balking horses." That was all in the past.

Following the success of these early years, a two-story "cottage" was built on the edge of the west bluff. It was named Memphis Row because the hotel had more guests from Memphis than any other place. Originally, it was designed with a dance floor and a poolroom. The plans were changed when 36 more guestrooms were added and 1892 became one of their most profitable seasons. On June 7, 1893, the railway announced it would not run due to the Chicago World's Fair, which was expected to attract vacationers away from the Monte Sano resort. It did not appear to hurt business, because in August, 1894, a record number of guests registered at the hotel.



The success would be short-lived. Unfortunately, the Chancery Court would not allow the Monte Sano Hotel to open for the 1895 season, and in 1896, due to litigation among the stockholders, the hotel was closed. It reopened June 16, 1897, but the railroad did not operate and would never operate again. By order of the court, equipment was to be liquidated and proceeds distributed among the creditors. In 1896, the crossties and rails were sold, and the balance of the equipment was scrapped.

Even without railroad transportation, the hotel enjoyed a successful 1898 season, due to the arrival of the Spanish-American War veterans. One military ball attracted 250 people who, for the first time, danced under electric lights. The summer of 1900 was the last season for the Monte Sano Hotel. It had been in operation for 13 years, but suffered from insufficient transportation, lack of guests, and financial problems. In spite of these obstacles, interest in the hotel remained high, and on several occasions, plans were made to reopen it, but due to a lack of money, the Monte Sano Hotel remained closed forever.

It seemed that by 1908 the days of the Monte Sano Hotel had come to an end. Horace E. Garth, an invalid living in New York, decided to move to Monte Sano Mountain in the hope of improving his health in the mountain air. In 1909, Mrs. Winston Fearn Garth, (Lena) a wealthy Huntsville citizen, bought the fully equipped hotel and its 27 acres for \$20,000. The Garth family occupied it until Horace's death in 1920. The hotel remained closed for over 20 years. Mr. John Hale and his family lived in a caretaker's house located on the south end of the property and Mr. Hale occasionally took visitors through the former hotel. Inside, with all the furnishings intact, the place was covered with dust and cobwebs.

On March 9, 1944, the executor of the Garth estate sold the buildings for salvage to the Mazer Lumber & Supply Co. of Birmingham for \$9,000. Contrary to the erroneous story that the Monte Sano Hotel burned to the ground, it took two months to dismantle the buildings. The furnishings were sold to individuals and antique dealers. For another 20 years the land remained vacant, except for a lone chimney. In the 1960s, Cecil Ashburn developed the land into choice building lots.

An interesting footnote to the hotel's history comes from the guest registry. It contained such names as William H. Vanderbilt of Newport, Rhode Island, Jay Gould of New York City, William Waldorf Astor of New York City, and Helen Keller from Tusculumbia, Alabama.

With the arrival of residents, guests, and civilization in general, there came a need for a church. The only evidence of the earliest church is a stone marker now located beside the sidewalk at the entrance to the Monte Sano United Methodist Church, 601 Monte Sano Boulevard. It was once located at the front of the Monte Sano Union Chapel, a small white frame building on the SW corner of Monte Sano Boulevard and what is now Old Chimney Road. In 1943, the Monte Sano Union Chapel became a Methodist Church, a member of the North Alabama Conference, Huntsville District. The newly-named Monte Sano Methodist Church merged with the Evangelical United Brethren in 1968 to become the Monte Sano United Methodist Church.

The stone marker (ca.1892) bears a Celtic cross on the north side and the

words, "The Church of the Holy Innocence." This name was probably inspired by the Episcopal Feast Day of that name, referring to the slaughter of innocent infants of Bethlehem by King Herod. On the east side it reads: "Jesus Christ the Chief Cornerstone" and "Out of the mouth of babies and suckling thou has perfected praise" taken from Matthew 21:16 of the Bible. On the west side it reads, "May 30th<sup>AD</sup> 1892. Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such are the Kingdom of God," a quote from Luke 18:15.

This church never actually existed, except in the mind and heart of a grieving mother by the name of Mrs. Lucy Beirne Matthews. She was the daughter of Colonel George P. and Eliza Hill Carter Gray Beirne. According to the original survey made in 1859 of Viduta on Monte Sano, Colonel Beirne owned lots 17 and 18. Madison County Court House records show that in 1887, they were still owned by Colonel Beirne. These lots are on the southeast corner of what are now Lookout and the Boulevard. Mrs. Matthews began raising funds for an Episcopal Mission, a memorial to her infant daughter, Eliza Gray Matthews. Today there is a beautiful stained glass window in the sanctuary of the Church of Nativity in memory of Eliza Gray Matthews.

On February 23, 1892, Episcopal Bishop Jackson laid a cornerstone for the building intended as an Episcopal mission. This date differs, however, from the date on another stone placed some three months later that has inscriptions on three sides. Construction was started; stone walls were stacked up to about six feet, but unfortunately, the building was never completed. A stone house on this site may have portions of the original structure incorporated into it.

On December 12, 1896, Sidney J. Mayhew and his wife, Fannie Mayhew, sold, for \$1.00 a 40 x 75 foot parcel of land to the Trustees of The Monte Sano Union Chapel located on the northeast corner of Lot No. 26 (identified on Viduta plat). Mr. Mayhew was a builder and lumber dealer, as well as a trustee, and perhaps he built the church. His summer home on Monte Sano, one of the oldest on the mountain, still stands on the corner of Dennison and the Boulevard, and is presently owned by Tom and Martha Gale. Mr. C.L. Nolen, a trustee, had a home that was perhaps located on the street named for his family. O.K. Stegall, another trustee, had his summer home built near the south end of what is now Cooper Street. This house was dismantled in the early 1960s. The other trustees, W. R. Rison and Daniel Coleman, also had summer homes on the mountain.

The little white church was a landmark on the Boulevard for over 60 years. There is very little information about the activity at the Monte Sano *Union* Chapel for the years 1897 through 1930. With the closing of the hotel, one can imagine a lot of the activities on the mountain slowed down. All indications are that the church remained non-denominational, as the name Union implies. There was no minister regularly assigned or employed. The pulpit was mostly filled by lay ministers or lay readers with visiting ordained ministers every now and then. James Lawrence Cooper recalled that his grandfather, Lawrence Cooper, a layman, preached there on occasion. The Cooper family owned a summer home on Lookout Drive as early as 1908, and Cooper Street is named for them. In the 1920s, Miss Evelyn Crick visited the chapel when her family spent summers on

the mountain in their house on Cooper Street. She often played the old pump organ for services. Only summer residents used the church building, and it was winterized many years later.

There were no large developments on Monte Sano between 1900 and 1920. By 1920 there were approximately 30 homes on the mountain. Eight or ten families lived on the mountain year-round. The houses spread mostly along A (now Lookout Drive), B (Nolen Avenue) and X (Boulevard), as they were identified on the plat of Viduta. A few of these homes were located further south on the Boulevard.

## The Middle Years 1920 – 1950

The post World War I economic boom of 1920s promoted another major effort to develop a community on Monte Sano Mountain. On September 9, 1925, the Mountain Heights Development Co. was incorporated. The officers were: D. C. Monroe, president; M. M. Hutchens, vice-president; and Herbert Johnson, secretary-treasurer. The directors were: Ira Terry, James C. Conner, I. A. Burdette, J. Emery Pearce, Raymond Jones, Sam Thompson, and S. A. Terry. With the exception of Mr. Burdette, they were all Huntsville businessmen. The purpose and activity was the same as the North Alabama Improvement Company - to turn the mountain into a popular summer resort.

James O'Shaughnessy was a member of the North America Investment Company, located in Brunswick, Georgia. It had mortgaged 2,030.28 acres on Monte Sano, to William Pope Anderson, a wealthy financier from Cincinnati, Ohio. Mr. Anderson had to foreclose on the mortgage. On June 21, 1894, at an auction held by the District Court of Equity in Tusculumbia, Alabama, Mr. Anderson was the highest bidder and bought the property from the court for \$43,906.72. When Mr. Anderson died on November 26, 1897, the property was inherited by his wife, Mrs. Julia Worthington Anderson.

On April 1, 1925, the Mountain Heights Development Company purchased the 2,030.28 acres from the estate of Julia Worthington Anderson. The price was \$25,000. The company paid \$10,000 in cash and two notes for \$7,500 each, secured by a mortgage of the property. The notes with interest at 6% were due April 1, 1926, and April 1, 1927, respectively.

The *Huntsville Times* reported that the plans of the Mountain Heights Development Co. were the "most extensive development of the century." The company spent approximately \$100,000 for surveying, grading streets, and a reservoir with a water system. The plans included, once again, a resort hotel. The Monte Sano Manor was to be built on the west bluff of what is now Crescent Circle.

Mr. D. C. Monroe, of Monroe Printing Company, served as president of the Mountain Heights Development Company. He wrote the following letter, a look back at the heyday of the Monte Sano Hotel, as well as an explanation of his enthusiasm for the new project:

October 11, 1926

Dr. W. L. Williams  
Huntsville, Ala.

I will try to reply to your question, i.e. 'Why did you become interested in Monte Sano?'

While employed at the old Monte Sano Hotel, in 1890-92, I made it a point to get out on the boardwalk in the evenings to view the beautiful sunsets, and it was there that I heard comments from our guests. Many of them had visited beauty spots of the world. Their expressions of delight and admiration for the surpassing beauty of Monte Sano made an impression on me that I have never forgotten.

It has been a prevailing belief that we, citizens of Huntsville, must take our children to Monte Sano for the summers if we were to avoid the many ills that are common to children.

My family and I endured the many hardships accompanying these summer seasons for more than thirty years.

At times I would have to ride a horse to and from Huntsville, up and down the steep rough road. These slow, tiresome trips offered plenty of time to think and scheme for better facilities for making the trip and for the general development of Monte Sano.

I have never quite given up this idea of a development of this wonderful spot that might bring pleasure and healthful benefits to our community.

There have been many others with the same desire, no doubt, but nothing has ever been done about it. No one has seemed sufficiently interested to take the initiative. It has appeared like it was up to me, so I proceeded to try to interest others.

On two occasions, 1924 and 1925, I invited representatives of our local clubs and Chamber of Commerce to join me, at my expense, to explore Monte Sano. They finally gave me the time to take them to the many points of interest on the mountain plateau.

Several in the party had never seen more of the Mountain than that part surrounding the old Hotel, but after seeing more of the beauties and advantages of this natural resort, they became very enthusiastic, and it did seem that we were going somewhere, but interest subsided.

In July 1925, I visited Florida, when real estate activities were at their peak. I saw, on what the investors were basing their hopes, and I compared the many advantages of North Alabama with what was attracting people to Florida, and upon my return home I determined that Huntsville people should be awakened to their superior advantage and possibilities. At this time I succeeded in getting others to see as I did, in a possible development of Monte Sano, and altogether, we proceeded to organize what is known as Mountain Heights Development Company.

Our first plans were to acquire the land on Monte Sano that had not been available for over forty years, and other lands to give us a clear right-of-way for a new automobile road to the mountain.

We were about twelve months in acquiring the land we had selected. This makes us realize that it will take some time to put over the entire plans, for they are possible and while we hope they will prove profitable, one way or other, to our entire community, and with the able assistance of your experienced sales organization, we feel assured of success.

Seven days, later on October 18, the Monte Sano Construction Company was incorporated. The officers and directors were the same as in the Mountain Heights Development Company, with the exception of S. A. Terry and James Conner, who were not on the Board of Directors of Monte Sano Construction Company. Mr. W. P. Dilworth and W. L. Williams were added to the construction company board. On the same date, the Mountain Heights Development Company deeded 7.47 acres to Monte Sano Construction Company.

On November 5, 1926, for the payment of \$1,000, the Anderson Estate released 80 acres to the Mountain Heights Development Company. Six days later, on November 11, 1927, an additional 41 acres were deeded. The initial plans of the development contained about 200 acres, approximately 10% of the 2,000 acres purchased from the Anderson Estate. The 200 acres were located at the extreme southern section of the Monte Sano plateau, extending from Inspiration Point to the intersection of Monte Sano Boulevard and the north section of Panorama Drive. With the release of this acreage, the Monte Sano Construction Company could sell lots and proceed with the development of the First Division of 48.47 acres.

The company built a gravel road approximately one mile long from the new highway to the top of Monte Sano. It was officially opened July 4, 1927. Madison County agreed to pay one-half of the cost on the condition that the company complete the new hotel within two years.

The 200 acres was the planned area of development before the economic crash of October 1929. The Anderson heirs transferred the mortgage on the Monte Sano land to the Tennessee Valley Bank on March 28, 1929. The more or less 2,000 acres of land previously owned by the North American Investment Company would remain the property of the Mountain Heights Development Company and the Monte Sano Construction Company, but mortgaged to the Tennessee Valley Bank. This large portion of Monte Sano began approximately one mile east of the Boulevard to the Monte Sano State Park, then east-southeast to O'Shaugnessy Point, including the adjoining slopes.

The developers realized that transportation to the mountain would be a key factor to ensure success. A paved highway constructed across the south side of Round Top Mountain into Big Cove was the first step. This new road replaced the 1870 toll road that went across the south side of Round Top Mountain.

At the turnoff to the gravel road, a very impressive archway was erected. It was composed of two rough hewed wooden beams supported by large sandstone pillars on each side. Each pillar had an electric light on top. There were signs made with letters cut out of metal and painted white and placed on the wooden beams. On the front side of the sign were the words "Monte Sano Welcomes You." On the back side, visible as one descended the mountain, the sign read "Live Life Longer on Monte Sano." This became the slogan for all of the promotions.

Maps were drawn showing well-planned streets and building lots. Most of the lots were 50 feet wide and 200 feet deep. The 50 x 200 foot lots were priced at \$450. The lots on the west bluff overlooking the town were priced at \$1,250. The area to be developed began on the south end where Monte Sano meets Round Top. This first area of development would extend on the plateau north to just beyond the northern intersection of Panorama Drive and Monte Sano Boulevard.

On the southern end at Inspiration Point, a large open-air dance pavilion was erected. Further out, on the extreme southern end of the point, a wooden observation platform was constructed. About 150 to 200 feet from the pavilion toward the point, a wooden water tank was installed on a steel tower. The front cover of the February 2004 *Monte Sano Telephone Directory* showed a picture of the observation platform. It appeared to be an aerial photo but was actually made from the top of the water tank tower. On the grounds around the pavilion were benches and tables for picnics, and a children's playground with swings, seesaws, and a well with a hand pump near the front gate to the fenced area.

It was not until 1929 that the water system became operational. A concrete reservoir had been constructed at Sadler's Spring. The water was pumped up to the tank from the reservoir. Water lines had been laid on the Boulevard as far north as the intersection of the Boulevard with Wildwood and Belcrest. On Panorama, the south side had a water line to the intersection of Belcrest. On the west side, it extended to the intersection of Wildwood. The Alabama Power Company had constructed a substation below Inspiration Point about half way from the top to Sadler's Spring below. They had run electric lines in the same area as the Mountain Heights Development Company had laid water lines.

At this time, the Boulevard had been completed all the way to the north end of the mountain. The last quarter mile replaced X Street (now Monte Sano Boulevard) ending at A Street (Lookout Drive). The Boulevard had been surfaced with creek gravel. At this time it was the only road on the mountain that had been surfaced. The south section of Panorama had been cleared and graded as far east as Belcrest. The west section of Panorama had been cleared and graded as far north as Wildwood. Portions north of Wildwood had been partially cleared to the intersection with the Boulevard. No work had been done on Highland Plaza, Huntsville Avenue (now Hutchens) or the northeast section of Panorama Drive. Thompson Circle was not on the plat.

When the New York Stock Market crashed in October 1929, all the work on Monte Sano stopped. (It was this way all over the United States and to a large extent the world economy was affected.) There were two pieces of road construction equipment abandoned where they had been in use on the mountain. One was in the parking area at the pavilion. The other one was in the woods just off of Spring Street, now Belcrest Drive. They remained there until World War II, when the Mountain Heights Development Company sold them for scrap steel. A basement had just been dug for the new hotel on Crescent Circle. The work was abandoned, leaving a large hole in the ground. The company could not fulfill the commitment they had made to Madison County.

By 1929, eighteen homes had been built in the area. During this period the first brick home on the mountain was built by the Robinson family at 3123 Panorama Drive. One other house was approximately 60% completed. Another one had only the basement and stone foundation completed. There were 30 houses on the north end making a total of approximately 50 on all of Monte Sano. Most of the 18 completed houses on the south end were built for year-round living, and two of them had central heating - the Thompson home at 5510 Panorama

Drive and the Orlendorf home at 1711 Monte Sano Boulevard. At the time they were built, however, there were no house numbers or street markers. Houses were identified only by the owner's name!

Unfortunately, property values dropped to a fraction of the original price. Serious efforts by the company to sell the lots had limited success. For example, at an auction on June 20, 1932, two lots with a total front footage of 85 feet, which are now identified as 1511 Monte Sano Boulevard, sold for \$40. The purchaser put \$10 down and signed a promissory note for \$30.

Dr. William H. Burritt's home was built on Round Top in 1932-34. It was razed by fire on June 6, 1936 and was rebuilt. Dr. Burritt willed this real estate to the City of Huntsville. The 127 acres on Round Top Mountain, with the mansion, became the Burritt Museum after his death in 1955. Over the years more facilities were added for education, recreation, entertainment and social activities. It is today known as "Burritt on the Mountain – a Living Museum."



Entrance to Burritt on the Mountain  
(Courtesy Huntsville-Madison County Public Library)

In 1933, the mountain, Huntsville and the entire Valley began to feel the economic impact of the Tennessee Valley Authority. The construction of Wheeler and Guntersville Dams brought employment opportunities. Several houses on the mountain were rented to construction workers employed to build the Guntersville Dam. The Rural Electrification Administration (REA) brought electricity to the north end of the mountain. The south end of the mountain had been served by the Alabama Power Company. The TVA, furnishing less expensive hydroelectric power, replaced the Alabama Power Company. Huntsville Utilities, a department of the City of Huntsville, became the distributor of electric power to the entire area.

The Monte Sano State Park was first conceived through the initiative of a group of Huntsville citizens. J. B. Mitchell, the County Agent, was the leader. The others included John J. Sparkman, the Eighth District representative in Congress, and Robert Schiffman, a local businessman. The group was able to obtain the cooperation of Sam F. Browser, regional planner of parks and recreation for the TVA, and Col. Page S. Bunker, of the Alabama Forestry Commission.

Madison County Commissioners voted on April 15, 1935 to appropriate \$18,000 to purchase 1,992 acres of land located on the top and on the slopes of Monte Sano. The county deeded the property to the State of Alabama for park purposes. This was about 90% of the land that the Mountain Heights Development Company had purchased from the Julia Anderson Estate for \$25,000 on April 1, 1925. The other 10%, or 200 acres, was the amount of land that was planned for development on the south end of the mountain by the Mountain Heights Development Company and the Monte Sano Construction Company.

Actual construction of the park began on August 5, 1935, when the first two companies of the Civilian Conservation Corps arrived and moved to the site. On August 14, 1935, an additional company of the "CCC" arrived. Each company had 175 men. The two companies located on Monte Sano built the State Park. The Monte Sano camp was located in the east block of Highland Plaza, one company on the north side and one on the south side of the street. The stone entrance to the camp from the Boulevard still stands. The Mountain Heights Development Company gave the Federal Government the use of the land for an indefinite period of time. A third company of the CCC was camped on McClung Street, on property owned by the city adjacent to Maple Hill Cemetery. That company worked to control soil erosion in the rural areas of the county. Each company had separate barracks, headquarters, mess hall, infirmary, workshops, etc. The buildings were from World War I; they had been disassembled and brought in on trucks and reconstructed.

With the additional members of the camp, the population of the south end of the mountain was increased approximately five times. Sadler's Spring could no longer supply the water. A water line connected to the city water line was laid from the eastern end of Hermitage Street to the top of the mountain. It was connected to the company's system in the 5500 block of Panorama west. Due to the rock and rugged terrain, at that time it was not feasible to lay the line beneath ground. The pipe was on top of the ground and covered with dirt. The mound of dirt made it an easily identifiable path and it was used as the shortest walk to town.

All the buildings in the camp were of frame construction, which created additional concern for more adequate fire protection. The camp erected a water tank on the corner of Wildwood and Woodard Streets. A few years later, the company's tank and tower located on Inspiration Point collapsed due to the heavy ice formation brought on by the leaking wood tank. The CCC tank served the mountain residents for some 20 years, long after the camp left. The city continued furnishing the water to the residents on the southern end of the mountain. The residents took care of the pump and were responsible for maintenance of the system. The residents on the northern end, which included the old Viduta plat and surrounding areas, continued to depend on private wells and in some instances the springs.



Many of the young men from the camps on the mountain attended services at the Monte Sano Union Chapel. The church, having been closed for several years, was reopened by a Methodist minister, the Rev. T. J. Williams, in the early 1930s.

Each CCC company had a commanding officer and an adjutant who were in charge. They were Army Reserve officers called to active duty when the need arose. Men from the National Park Service developed the plans and supervised the construction of the park. The initial construction included six miles of road, a public lodge (tavern) and parking area. Other facilities included 11 cabins, a picnic area with 24 grills and 40 tables. The picnic area had an overlook shelter. The 18 miles of foot trails and 8 miles of bridle paths had 10 trailside shelters. A horse barn, a service building and a superintendent's lodge were built, and a complete water and sewage system was installed. The long-range plans proposed an administration building, a swimming pool with necessary parking areas, a bath house and beach, group camps, trailer camps, the possibility of a golf course and extension of the cabin layouts.

Construction of the park was near completion on August 25, 1938. An all day celebration was held and the activities began with a parade in downtown Huntsville. After lunch there was a tour of historical points. A motorcade was formed at the Court House that proceeded to Monte Sano State Park. The Honorable W. B. Bankhead, Alabama's senior U. S. Senator, addressed the crowd. The entrance to the park from downtown Huntsville is by way of the Bankhead Parkway, named for Mr. Bankhead in appreciation of his work to get the park built. A tour of the park and a barbecue were concluded with a pageant, "The Parade of Progress," which highlighted Huntsville's history from 1805 to 1938. That night, the Queen's Ball was held at the Russel Erskine Hotel.

During this period, the children living on the south end of the mountain attended Huntsville City Schools. They were few in numbers, as most of the residents left the mountain by the time schools opened for the fall term. On the north end, the children went to Rison School, a Madison County school, which furnished bus service. Mr. Sam Schrimsher, a long time mountain resident, drove the school bus.

In 1940 Monte Sano Boulevard was straightened, the grade improved and paved with asphalt. At the park, a dude ranch was opened for riders to enjoy the wooded trails. Breakfast and dinners were served.

On July 3, 1941, the *Huntsville Times* published an extra edition, reporting the long anticipated news that an Arsenal and an Ordnance Plant would be built on approximately 33,000 acres of land in Madison County. Madison Pike would serve as its northern border and it would extend south to the Tennessee River. Huntsville and Monte Sano would never be the same. Construction workers moving into Huntsville made an increased demand for rental housing. Vacant houses, including summer homes on the mountain, were rented year-round. In 1942, mail service was brought to the mountain for the first time. The service began by adding the mountain to Huntsville Rural Route 4.

On February 17, 1948, a fire destroyed the tavern in the Monte Sano State Park. Only the rock walls were left standing. The tavern had become a popular

place for both young and old. It had served meals from hamburgers to full dinners, and there was a dance floor and a Nickelodeon (juke box). It was the "big band" era. There was a smaller room suitable for private meetings and social events.

At the end of World War II, Huntsville Arsenal, the chemical warfare plant, was closed, and the property was put up for sale. Redstone Arsenal, an ordnance plant that furnished the explosives and loaded the ordnance, was also closed. The economy and population growth slowed. This was reflected in a lack of development on the mountain.

In June 1948, the Russians barricaded U.S. access to Berlin due to "Autobahn repairs." The Marshall Plan initiative to feed the people and rebuild war-torn Europe was just underway. The U.S. and Great Britain began the historic Berlin Airlift which transported food and fuel to the residents of Berlin. A number of historians agree that this was the first public confrontation of the "Cold War."

Redstone Arsenal was reactivated in October 1948 when the Office of Chief of Ordnance designated Redstone as the center for rocket research and development. Monte Sano was about to experience the largest and most complete development to date. The Korean War, beginning in June 1950, further increased the activity at Redstone Arsenal. In 1952, the U.S. Army Missile Command moved to Redstone.

## **The Cold War Years 1950 – 1990**

The decade of the 1950s brought a population explosion to the development of Monte Sano. It was not like the two previous efforts, as a summer resort for tourists as well as local residents with summer homes, but as a suburban neighborhood that would attract families that were headed by young to middle-age professionals. They were permanent, year-round residents that built or bought homes in all areas of the mountain.

Among these new residents were German families headed by scientists and rocket engineers. Dr. Arthur Rudolph (later Chief, Saturn Systems) purchased 36 acres on Panorama Drive. Building lots were sold for \$200 to \$300 to members of the Dr. Wernher von Braun team. A number of the leaders of the team made their homes on Monte Sano. They included Hans Maus (Chief of Staff), Dr. Eberhard Rees (Deputy Chief of Staff, later Chief of Staff, Marshall Space Flight Center), Konrad Dannenberg (Deputy Chief, Saturn Systems), Kurt Debus (Launch Director), Dr. Ernst Geissler, Dr. Ernst Stuhlinger and Helmut Hoelzer (Laboratory Directors). Additional members of the Dr. Wernher von Braun team who have resided with their families on Monte Sano are Anton Beier, Herbert Bergeler, Ernst Euterneck, Dr. Karl Hager, Dr. Rudolf Hermann (UAH), Heinz Hilton, Otto Hirschler, Otto Hoberg, Walter Jacobi, Richard Jenke, Klaus Juergensen, H. H. Koelle, Hermann Kroeger, Hans Lindenmayr, Hannes Luehsen, Heinz Millinger, Fritz Mueller, Erich Neubert, Leopold Osthoff, Werner Rosinski, Heinrich Rothe, Rudolf Schlidt, Fridtjof Speer, Wolfgang Steurer, Werner Tiller, Arthur Urbanski, Georg von Pragenau, Friedrich and Ruth von Saurma, Werner Voss, Hermann Weidner, and Walt Wiesman.

These German residents spearheaded the increase in population on Monte Sano, adding to the educational and cultural environment.

Previously planned streets were now being completed. Sunrise Terrace, the northeastern section of Panorama, became a choice area. New streets were built primarily on the north end of the mountain in the area just south of Nolen Avenue and adjoining the State Park's west border. These streets were given names that recalled the mountain's Indian heritage – Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, etc. In the central area of the mountain just off of the Boulevard, Carroll Circle, Mae Drive, Georgetta Drive, and Read Drive were developed.

Mr. Sam Thompson, one of the original members of The Mountain Heights Development Company's Board of Directors, began once again to sell building lots. For 25 years "Mr. Sam" never gave up his hope that the slowdown caused by the Depression would be reversed. The company still owned substantial property on the northeastern and the northwestern sections of Panorama Drive and on what is now Hutchens Avenue. They built houses for sale on this property, perhaps the largest number of houses on the mountain to be built for sale by one owner. By 1966, the Company had liquidated all of its property.

The organization of the Monte Sano Civic Association in 1952 became a strong force for the good of the community with its slogan, "Improvements Toward Better Living." Through the years, the Association has been an advocate before the city government and other powers that be. Under its leadership, the community swimming pool was built along with other recreation and social facilities.

The Rocket City Astronomical Association (now the von Braun Astronomical Association) was formed in 1954. Shortly thereafter, a 16-inch reflecting telescope was obtained from a California observatory. With the assistance of state, county and city governments, and contribution of materials from local merchants, the Association members completed their dream. At the dedication ceremony, Dr. von Braun remarked that it was "...one of the finest astronomical observatories in the South."

The mountain was annexed into the city on April 14, 1956, by Act #86 of the Alabama Legislature. This was the key to the successful development of Monte Sano Mountain. With it came a much-needed takeover of the community water system as well as extending service to areas previously using individual wells or springs. In 2007, the installation of a sewer system on the mountain connecting to the city system was completed.

In 1959, the first fire station and the elementary school were built. A new fire station was built in 1991. The school has had several additions and renovations. Every year Monte Sano Elementary School has been rated academically among the top of the city elementary schools.

On April 2, 1958, President Eisenhower recommended to Congress that a civilian agency be established to direct non-military space activities. A few months later he signed the National Aeronautical and Space Act of 1958, which created the National Aeronautical and Space Agency (NASA). On July 1, 1960, the responsibility of all the Army's space missions, along with personnel, buildings and equipment, were assumed by the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center,

which officially opened at Redstone Arsenal on the same date. Monte Sano, along with all areas of Huntsville, benefited greatly by the increased number of high paying professional jobs. Along with the Army Missile Command and NASA came many civilian contractors offering comparable employment.

In February 1959, Rocket City Television Co. broke ground for WAFG, Channel 31 UHF at 1000 Monte Sano Boulevard. In July 1963, Huntsville's lone TV station was sold to Smith Broadcasting, Inc., and the call letters were changed to WAAY. On November 28, 1963, WHNT Channel 19 signed on the air. The Educational TV station was dedicated on February 9, 1967.

In May of 1961 a 70-foot-tall concrete cross on the west side of Round Top Mountain was started. It was a project of the Huntsville Ministerial Association. The Monte Sano Methodist Church bought property in the 600 block of the Boulevard, constructed a new building, and opened for services in 1962. In addition to facilities for Christian worship services and Sunday school for all ages, there is a large campus with a ball field and a well-equipped playground that is used by the entire mountain community. Today the church sponsors scouting programs for boys and girls and offers the facilities to other youth groups.

For a time, the original building of the Monte Sano Union Chapel was rented to the Monte Sano Baptist Church until the Baptists erected a new building in 1966. The original building of the Monte Sano Union Chapel, located at the corner of the Boulevard and Old Chimney, was demolished in 1968, after 72 years of service. The Johnson/Perkins family had worshipped in the building for over 30 years. The small tract of land (40 foot x 69 foot) was deeded to David and Lois Perkins, who owned the adjoining property.

In the early 1970s, the population growth of Huntsville, as well as the mountain, leveled off. The Marshall Space Flight Center had a key role in the moon landings. The end of these programs brought a slowdown in NASA and in all space-related industries. The slowdown was short lived as National Air and Space Administration (NASA) and Marshall played a leading role in the development of the Space Shuttle, Skylab and the Space Station. While NASA and the US Army remained the largest employers, the Huntsville area has attracted a number of other high-tech industries. The number of residents on the mountain stabilized. During the 1980s, a proportion of the employees of the new industries settled on Monte Sano. In the meantime, residents who had moved to the mountain as young and middle-age professionals were now retiring. Most chose to remain on Monte Sano.

New streets were built which included Viduta Place, Railway Avenue, Castlegate Boulevard, and Becket Drive. During this same period, many of the older homes were remodeled and enlarged.

In the years since 1815, when the first non-Indian built a home near Cold Spring and became the first permanent white resident, the mountain has changed in many ways. With paved streets, churches, the school, fire station, city water and sewers, the State Park and so much more, the mountain remains a wonderful place to enjoy nature while rearing a family. It seems appropriate that the slogan should remain, "Live life longer on Monte Sano."

Author James Hill was born in Columbia, Tennessee and has lived in Huntsville since the age of two. He served as a pilot in the 9<sup>th</sup> Army Air Corps in WWII and graduated from college at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois. His family has been in the jewelry business since 1886 and Mr. Hill retired from J.B. Hill and Son Jewelers in 1989. Mr. Hill has been a resident of Monte Sano, off and on, since 1930.

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# Administration

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The purpose of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society and The Huntsville Historical Review is to provide an agency for expression for all those having a common interest in collecting, preserving, and recording the history of Huntsville and Madison County. Communications concerning the society should be addressed to the president, P.O. Box 666, Huntsville, Alabama 35804.

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