

The Huntsville Historical Review

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“Work and Play at Bell Factory”

*Published By
The Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society*

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President's Note

Sometimes I look at the calendar and catch myself wondering, "Where have the last 200 years *gone*?" As students of Huntsville and Madison County history, I know you wonder the same thing! Our history is so interesting and rich, and yet we are constantly finding out new facts about those early years. We tend to look at the far past with curiosity and perhaps a critical eye, and study our pioneer ancestors' decisions in the context of their era as well as our own. We forget, in the process, that the era we live in today will be studied by future generations with the same wonderment.

On occasions when I have the privilege of speaking to a group of students, I remind them that their lives and their actions will be consigned to the history books one day. I tell them to make the most of their opportunities and live their lives so history will be kind to their memory. And so the same should be said to the rest of us with our graying hair and fading memories. Write your story down or the stories that interest you for the world to enjoy.

On another note, we are happy to have our newest publication, "King Cotton to Space Capital – the Huntsville-Madison County Story." This hardbound book sells for \$40 to non-members, and \$20 to members. You will also be pleased to know that all proceeds go directly to the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society. Contact me at jacquereeves@avalontours.net if you would like to buy one.

Jacque Reeves
President

Editor's Note

I am very excited to introduce the next generation of historians with a passion for local history in this issue of the *Huntsville Historical Review*. Anna Grace, Whitney Snow, and Chase Tate have maintained the long legacy created by past historians who have contributed to the *Review*. In this issue Anna Grace, an award winning UAH History student, examines one local family's connection to Nazi Germany and provides a moving account of how the world and Huntsville changed during the 1930s. Dr. Whitney Snow, an assistant professor at Midwestern State University, explores the early cotton mill movement in Madison County and how these mills created the foundation for future industrial endeavors in the area. Chase Tate, a technician working with Tennessee Valley Archaeology and Redstone Arsenal, looks at how the Broad River Group from Georgia influenced the developing frontier in early nineteenth-century Madison County. All three articles highlight different elements of local history but provide different lens from which to view our shared past. I hope you enjoy the research and writing of these three new authors and continue to support the Huntsville/Madison County Historical Society. As always please feel free to contact me at john.kvach@uah.edu if you have any article ideas or want to submit a manuscript.

John F. Kvach, Ph.D.
Editor

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"From Day to Day and From Hour to Hour": The Ludwig Marx Family's Journey Out of Nazi Germany

Anna Grace

"Regretfully we must have the idea to go away and seek our future food else where [*sic*] in another land. We worry about us, and our and our childrens future [*sic*]." These were some of the first words written by Lissi Marx to the Goldsmiths in 1937 as they decided it was time to leave their homeland. When Adolf Hitler began his reign of Germany in 1933, many Jews contemplated leaving for a place where they could escape from the burdens put upon them by the Nazi regime, including Ludwig Marx and his family. For five years, the Marx family pondered emigrating from Germany but remained only because of their strong ties to their homeland. Ludwig, his wife Lissi, and two school age girls, Juge and Ellen lived comfortably in the southwestern German town of Bad Kreuznach where they owned a home and ran their own business. But June 1937, Marx determined that they could not stay because of all that had transpired in Germany under the new leadership. Lissi introduced herself and her family by letter and photo to their American cousins, the Goldsmiths. As the Marx family began their journey from Germany to the United States, they became acquainted with the difficulties of the immigration process. Between the ever-pressing Nazi control and the United States immigration laws and regulations, the Marx family took nearly twenty months before finally reaching the United States.¹

From well before the turn of the twentieth century, Germans generally viewed the Jews with a deep suspicion that made every day existence for Jews unpredictable. There were similarities between the German Conservative Party's statements

¹ Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection. University of Alabama in Huntsville Salmon Library Archives, Huntsville. Letter from Lissi Marx to Annie Goldsmith dated 30 June 1937; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection. Correspondence between Lawrence and Annie Goldsmith and Ludwig Marx family 30 June 1937 through 8 December 1941.

of 1892 and the "Aryan paragraph" of a Nazi law in 1933. The 1892 statements declared, "We combat the widely obtrusive and subversive Jewish influence on our popular lives. We demand a Christian authority for the Christian people and Christian teachers for Christian pupils." The Nazis took this as a springboard to further curtail Jewish freedoms. Both statements presented a negative influence of Jewish culture on the everyday lives of Germans. They saw Jewish financial success as plunging Germany into a deep economic slump and opening them up to international weakness. A sense of "Judeophobia" proliferated throughout the schools and German literature reeked with hateful radicalism toward Jews. The German laws and regulations mirrored the country's anti Jewish sentiments and suspicions which soon grew into a sense of paranoia.²

The Nazi platform, established in 1920, echoed the perception of the growing anti-Semitism in Germany that pledged to strip the rights of the Jewish people. Jewish immigrants who entered Germany after 1914 were required to leave and the Nazi regime dismissed any Jews who were affiliated with newspapers and journalism. Jewish-owned large businesses were under attack as well. Ultimately, the goal was to expel "as many Jews as quickly as possible". They were, after all, "responsible" for the economic inflation of the previous decade which ruined many Germans. These laws were fully implemented by 1933 and it was about this time that Marx began thinking of leaving Germany.³

Before the rise of the Nazi party, Jews were generally hard working, self-sustaining, productive members of society.

² Pulzer, Peter. *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988. 112; David Clay Large. *And the World Closed Its Doors*. New York: Basic Books, 2003.13; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 56. Ronald Sanders. *Shores of Refuge: A Hundred Years of Jewish Emigration*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1988. 420-421.

³ Yehuda Bauer. *Jews for Sale?: Nazi Jewish Negotiations, 1933-1945*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994. 4-5, 35; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection. Letter from Lissi Marx to Goldsmith family dated 30 June 1937.

Most were employed in middle class positions that included retail work, private banking, textile trade, publishing, and trading on the stock exchange, with almost no role in mining or manufacturing. Nearly half were self-employed entrepreneurs and a large percentage, in relation to the whole population, worked in the medical field or practiced law. Approximately 1/3 were white-collar workers and only about 9 percent were blue-collar employees. Unfortunately, Jews became economic targets for the Nazis because of their own financial success. Marx was no exception with his wine and spirits business. In 1938, Jews were no longer legally allowed to be employed in the German economy. Marx, one of the few, was of the approximately twenty five percent of Jewish owned businesses that managed to remain in existence until *Kristallnacht*.⁴

German Jews adjusted and became somewhat accustomed to the waves of anti-Semitism that continued under Hitler's rule after 1933, including the implementation of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. The Jewish population, or race, was further segregated under the new regulations. These laws defined a Jew, who they could marry, and took away their rights as full citizens. Under the new laws, anyone having at least three Jewish grandparents, or two Jewish grandparents and married to a Jew, or were of the Jewish religion, were considered Jewish. Mixed marriages were deemed illegal. The laws also declared the swastika flag as the national flag but forbade Jews to fly it. The laws regulated the employment of German citizens by Jewish businesses. According to Hitler, these laws were not designed to cause hatred of the Jews but were created to ease German and Jewish relations. Nazi rationalization said that the Laws gave "protection to the Jews. They [were] guaranteed the same rights as any other minority within Germany." Marx

⁴ Strauss, "Transplantation and Transformed: German-Jewish Immigrants Since 1933.", 247-249; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Marx family to the Goldsmiths dated 19 February 1939; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 24.

helplessly watched as his Jewish community was demoted to "alien status" based on the "racial criteria" of the Third Reich.⁵

The Nazi party added hundreds of amendments to the Nuremberg Laws which increased the pressure for Jews to leave Germany. Each one further minimized the social position of the Jews within German society and raised their economic dependency on the state and other welfare agencies, thus reviving the desire of many Jews to leave Germany. For example: A male Jew could be arrested or his business taken away because of an innocent public encounter with a non-Jewish female. Also, if a Jew wanted to take a vacation, they were to stay in the worst resort and not mix with the general population. They were encouraged to spend their money in Germany but were not welcome there. Segregation was the main goal before the passage of the Nuremberg Laws, but isolation was not effective enough for the regime. Marx undoubtedly felt the increased pressure to emigrate after the passage of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 based on the frequency and urgency of the letters and requests to Goldsmith. Unfortunately, as the pressure increased, the difficulty in emigrating increased also.⁶

United States President Herbert Hoover raised immigration requirements so high in the 1930's that it was extremely difficult for immigrants to get into the United States. The Depression was in full swing and the fear of an influx of

⁵ Marion A. Kaplan. *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. 5; Saul Friedländer. *Nazi Germany and the Jews: Vol 1: The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997. 142; Nora Levin. *The Holocaust: The Destruction of European Jewry*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968. 70. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 42-43; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 142; Adolf Hitler. *Speeches and Proclamations 1932-1945*, ed. Max Domarus, trans. Chris Wilcox and Mary Fran Gilbert, vol. 2, pp. 706-707; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 34; S.R. Fuller. Excerpt of affidavit dated October 18, 1945 giving account of a conversation with Schacht on September 23, 1945, EC-450.

⁶ Levin, *The Holocaust*, 70-71; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 143-144; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection.

immigrants risked another detrimental hit to the economy because of additional people seeking jobs. He redefined the LPC clause, or the "likely to become a public charge clause," which was originally written to keep out the mentally unstable and the indigent, to keep nearly all immigrants out of the United States. The American consuls heavily scrutinized all visa applicants. Hoover also gave no leeway to the 1885 Alien Contract Labor Law, which restricted any immigrant from seeking employment in the United States prior to their arrival. Only potential immigrants with significant monetary resources, or those with relatives whose financial situation allowed for immigration assistance, were considered for visas.⁷

The quota system, passed by United States lawmakers in 1922, consisted of different tiers of immigrants and allowed for only a small percentage to enter the country each year. The system was set to law because of the potential problem of "new immigration coming in unprecedented numbers which created [the] postwar problem" after World War I. Through the quota system, Germany was allotted 25,957 slots per year for those seeking to enter the United States. Besides this quota, there were also preference quota immigrants reserved for close relatives. The Marx family likely fell in the regular quota numbers when immigrating because of the distance in relation to the Goldsmiths who were cousins rather than parents, siblings or children. The other category was non-quota immigrants which consisted of university professors and clergy who had received an invitation

⁷ Herbert A. Strauss. "Transplantation and Transformed: German-Jewish Immigrants Since 1933." In *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred Year History*. Edited by Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh, 245-264. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1983. 251; Alan M. Kraut, Richard Breitman and Thomas W. Imhoof. "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 3, no. 2 (Spring 1984): 7; Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, 429; Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*. 56.

to a position of employment in the United States before immigrating.⁸

United States President Theodore Roosevelt retained the stringent immigration laws enforced by his predecessor and followed public opinion rather than leading it because of pressure from social and political groups within the United States. He felt that the persecution of the Jews was not as bad as he had previously been told based on his visit to Germany during the 1936 Olympic Games, when, unknowingly, Hitler had removed all signs of discrimination while the Games were happening. Early in his presidency, Roosevelt preferred not to make immigration a big political issue, but as the political atmosphere became more unsettled he changed his mind. After the horrific night of *Kristallnacht* in 1938, Roosevelt announced at a press conference that he would bend the immigration regulation by granting twelve to fifteen thousand visitors' visas for German refugees and would extend them for six months. He began to see the imminent danger for those wanting to leave Germany but preferred to let the Labor and State Department work out the immigration issues.⁹

The State Department strictly enforced the LPC clause and instructed their foreign consuls to implement it to the department's fullest capability. Roosevelt generally agreed with the State Department immigration policies. The German immigration quota of 25,967 was already small and, because of the extreme restrictions, was nowhere close to reaching its capacity. In 1933, only 1,445 German immigrants were allowed into the United States. The year 1934 was not much better for immigration with only 4,052 Germans allowed into the United States. The Labor Department, under the leadership of Frances

⁸ Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, 386; Strauss. "Transplantation and Transformed," 249-250.

⁹ Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 22; Large. *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 104-105; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 180-181; Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, 429; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 28-29.

Perkins, fought the State Department to relax the LPC clause and make immigration an option for those persecuted under the Nazi regime, but without presidential support, Perkins was unable to secure the changes in the interpretation of the law and things remained the same as before. It wasn't until 1937 that the clause was relaxed.¹⁰

The United States Labor Department was in a bureaucratic war with the State Department over who had the power of making immigration policy decisions. The State Department was solely "committed to the protection of the American interest and security" while the Labor Department wanted a more lenient, philanthropic immigration policy. Labor Secretary Perkins quietly persuaded the State Department to relax the restriction on immigration requirements such as the two affidavit system so not to raise American concerns over the Jewish issue. She also suggested that the State Department advise their consuls "not to be so strict." The State Department had the stronger stance. They had control over the distribution of visas and therefore determined the rate of immigration. In the five years that the Marx family considered emigrating, approximately 300,000 Germans applied for visas. Just under 75,000 were granted even though more than 150,000 were allowed under the quota system.¹¹

¹⁰ Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 7; Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, 429; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 14-15; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 9; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 19.

¹¹ Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 5; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 27; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 9; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 21; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish

By the end of June 1937, Marx and his family set their minds on leaving their homeland because of the increased economic and social pressure from the ruling Nazi party. Marx did not want to go but found it increasingly difficult to maintain a steady income in order to provide for his family in Germany. At this point, the Nazi regime had already made it illegal for Jews to serve in the armed forces, to swim in public swimming pools, and to teach in the universities under the Nuremberg Laws and subsequent rulings. The regime dismissed all Jewish doctors, lawyers, and state employees and Jewish voting rights were cancelled. Marx was concerned about his family's future. He saw the effects of the "Aryanization of the economy" and knew that remaining in their homeland was not going to be possible. Their "last hope...to stay dwindle[d] from day to day and from hour to hour." The opportunity of immigration opened to the Marx family to go to the United States after Lissi sent out a plea for assistance to their American relatives on June 30, 1937. The family needed their American relatives in order to secure affidavits that ensured their family's good character as well as promised monetary support once they arrived on American soil.¹²

Lawrence Goldsmith and his wife Annie were Huntsville Jews who proved to be sympathetic to the Jewish cause in Europe by providing the much needed affidavits for the Marx family to be able to obtain immigration visas. Annie was Ludwig's first cousin and, though they were not considered close relation by United States standards, she and Lawrence offered

Immigration, 1930-1940.", 5; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 24.

¹² Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 1 Aug 1937; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 117-122; The Holocaust Timeline of Jewish Persecution (1932 - 1945). The Holocaust Memorial Museum.

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/chron.html#39;>

Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 149; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 9 March 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Lissi Marx to Lawrence and Annie Goldsmith dated 30 June 1937.

their help through affidavits and monetary support. Lawrence corresponded with different Federal organizations and lawmakers such as the Hebrew Sheltering Immigrant and Aid Society of America, Alabama Representative John Sparkman, and the American Consul in Stuttgart, Germany, in order to provide a way for the Marx family to immigrate. From start to finish the affidavit process took approximately four months, from March 21 until July 13, 1938.¹³

The actual affidavit had many requirements of the American relative who swore to offer financial assistance and assurance of care to their German relatives. Annie Goldsmith had to provide proof of income, assets, investments, bank statements of debits and credits with loans and payoffs to the American Consul in Germany. She also had to provide a certified copy of paid income taxes and proof and the amount of insurance she carried. Since Annie was employed through the I. Schiffman & Co., her family business, she was easily able to give her occupation, salary, and general responsibilities there. Two "proof of relation" documents were requested to state the relationship of Goldsmith to the Marx family and had to be witnessed by a public notary. There were also two letters of recommendation required, one from a "prominent citizen" of which Lawrence Goldsmith called on Representative John Sparkman. The other letter was from Lawrence Goldsmith which stated why he was interested in bringing the Marx family to the United States and promised to provide for the family.¹⁴

¹³ Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Correspondence between Lawrence Goldsmith and Ludwig Marx dated July 1937- 8 December 1941. Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Correspondence between Lawrence Goldsmith and United States Immigration Agencies, Representative John Sparkman dated 24 March 1938 – 4 March 1939.

¹⁴ Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Correspondence from the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigration Aid Society to Lawrence Goldsmith entitled "Important Information Regarding Applicants For Immigration Visas" dated 25 March 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Notarized forms for Annie Goldsmith dated 4 May 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Correspondence from Lawrence Goldsmith to Representative John Sparkman dated 7 April 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman

The request for affidavits took a long time because there seemed to be little formal method to the system. Lawrence Goldsmith corresponded with his congressman and friend, John Sparkman, in April 1938 in order to seek his advice on the best way to go about bringing his wife's cousin and family to the United States. He contacted the State Department in Washington as well as the Labor Department through Sparkman for access to the necessary paperwork. Sparkman informed Goldsmith that there was no specific form to file with the immigration department during the affidavit process for a visa. It was not until May 4, 1938 that the affidavits were filed with the American Consul, Samuel Honaker, in Stuttgart, Germany. Unfortunately, affidavits often arrived in Germany incomplete because so much was required from the American citizen and the particular paperwork that was required depended on the particular Consul. This included the case of the Marx and Goldsmith families.¹⁵

The visa application process for the Marx family was even more tedious than obtaining affidavits from the Goldsmiths. The affidavit system and the visa application were in tandem for emigrants when attempting to leave Germany. The visa had to be applied for before the consul would accept any affidavits, but the visa would not be approved without the affidavits. The consulate had to receive written proof of good citizenship through police records from the local authorities in order to be

Holocaust Collection, Correspondence from the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigration Aid Society to Lawrence Goldsmith entitled "Important Information Regarding Applicants For Immigration Visas" dated 25 March 1938.

¹⁵ Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 130. Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Correspondence from Lawrence Goldsmith to Representative John Sparkman dated 7 April 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Correspondence from Representative John Sparkman to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 11 April 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter to Consulate General Samuel Honaker from Lawrence Goldsmith dated 4 May 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Correspondence from the American Consulate in Germany to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 23 May 1938.

considered for a visa. A birth certificate and a valid passport were also among the list of necessities. Considering that many authorities despised Jews, the job was no easy task. There were dozens of papers along with many different bureaucratic offices that signed off on any one particular piece of the visa paperwork puzzle. One woman reported that she had "gathered a collection of twenty-three of the necessary documents" and had spent an enormous amount of time and effort traveling from one bureau to the next. The consul, ultimately, had the control to approve, dismiss, or even add to the required information needed for the visa application. The Marx family finally received their visas on November 16, 1938 and began seeking travel documentation.¹⁶

Anti-Semitism within the general population of the United States played a significant role in the difficult nature of the immigration process. Germany's views of the Jews as "Communist" took considerable hold on American society. Many Americans reportedly did not like the way the Nazis treated the Jews but they had reservations about bringing them on American soil. A Catholic priest named Father Charles E. Coughlin had a radio show each week that festered the anti-Semitic feelings of his listeners. According to Father Coughlin, the Jews were taking American jobs and creating division within the country. Jews aimed to push the United States to war, according to Coughlin, in order to reap the financial benefits. Destruction of "private property rights,...monogamous homes, and racial purity, and...belief in a spiritual Creator" were fears of some organized groups in the United States. If they let down their guard, the United States would be "exposed to the entry of

¹⁶ Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from The Hebrew Sheltering and Immigration Aid Society of America to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 25 March 1938; Fromm, Bella. *Blood and Banquets: A Berlin Social Diary*. London, 1942; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from the office of Representative John Sparkman to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 29 April 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Western Union telegram from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 16 November 1938.

undesirables whose communist affiliations [could] not be detected by cursory examination."¹⁷

The foreign United States consular offices presented a portrait of anti-Semitism that made obtaining visas particularly difficult for Jews. An American vice-consul in Berlin stated that they had to be especially careful with the Jewish applicants, being the vast majority of those applying for immigration visas, because the Jews had secretly found employment in the United States before immigrating there. The act of finding employment violated immigration laws. Marx was one of these individuals who asked for his American family's assistance to secure a place of employment in the United States in order to have the ability to settle and provide for his family as quickly as possible after their arrival. The disdain from the consulate was that the Jews were taking American jobs at a volatile economic time in the country's history.¹⁸

There were accusations that the State Department encouraged the German consuls and vice-consuls to compete to see who could issue the smallest number of visas. There is no evidence of written instruction but abundant evidence that supports oral direction from the State Department to limit the quota to less than ten percent of the allotted number of immigrants allowed by law. One Georgetown University professor, Edmund A. Walsh, who taught many of the State Department officials at the School of Foreign Service, taught his students that the Jews were the "entrepreneurs [of the Bolshevik Revolution] who recognized [their] main chance and seized it shrewdly and successfully." The ability for German Jews to obtain a visa to the United States was left to the discretion of the

¹⁷ Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 64; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 24; Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 70; Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 65.

¹⁸ Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 15; Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 60; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Marx to Goldsmith dated 4 July 1938; Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 60.

consulates, who were often prejudiced against Jews, because the immigration laws left many loopholes and were not well defined. In many cases, the affidavit system played no part in the decision for the consul to grant a visa; Money was the deciding factor. The decision was based on a case-by-case basis, not by any structured rules and regulations given to them by the United States State Department. Marx exhausted what was left of his fortune to purchase his family's passports and travel papers.¹⁹

There was a sense of urgency in the necessity to leave Germany which gave the visa division of the State Department and the consulates' offices an overwhelming task. After *Kristallnacht*, the pressure escalated for the refugees to leave Germany and the complexity to obtain visas and affidavits was amplified. The consulates' offices were increasingly understaffed relative to the "impossible amount of work" that was assigned to them. Correspondence with Americans trying to secure affidavits for potential immigrants were delayed or went unanswered altogether. Affidavits became more difficult to secure because of the possible liability of the legality of the document to hold the American citizen responsible for the actions of the immigrant once they arrived.²⁰

The United States feebly attempted to help on an international level by spear-heading the Evian Conference, an international meeting designed to alleviate the European refugee burden, in the summer of 1938. Thirty-two nations gathered in Evian, France in order to begin a dialogue about how the world, together, could handle all the refugees. In their invitation, the

¹⁹ Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 22; Szajkowski, Zosa. "The Consul and the Immigrant: A Case of Bureaucratic Bias." *Jewish Social Studies* 36, no. 1 (Jan 1974):4; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 7; Howard M. Sachar. *A History of the Jews in America*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992. 476; Unidentified visitor to the US Consulate's office in Berlin letter to Max Kohler, 1 August 1933, Yivo, Exo-29, RG 347.1.29, Box 16, Folder 297; Szajkowski, "The Consul and the Immigrant", 4.

²⁰ Pickett, Clarence E. "Difficulties in the Placement of Refugees." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 203 (May 1939): 94.

United States State Department declared that attending countries would not be asked to change their immigration policy. Most took this literally and looked the other direction, refusing to open their political doors citing existing high population problems or potential racial issues.²¹

The attending nations to the Evian Conference determined that the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees was necessary to keep any one nation from bearing the brunt of the immigration burden. This committee sought to place the refugees in semi permanent settlements around the world as well as to negotiate with the Nazi government to allow the Jews to retain more of their possessions when leaving Germany. Neither of these missions were successful because of the fear of Nazi retaliation against the Jews. The work load was too much for the committee and political uncertainty and instability threatened diplomacy.²²

Those who were willing to assume some responsibility for the persecuted, such as the Latin American countries, did not want the middle class business owners and professionals, they wanted laborers to work the land. The Dominican Republic was the only nation who made a proposal to help the emigrants. The Dominican Republic sought advice from the United States State Department about offering 100,000 immigrants a place in the country. The outcome was that only a few hundred were allowed to settle on government owned land on the island and an absorbent amount of money was invested by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. The international attitude of rejection at the Conference was a reflection of the attitudes of the American population.²³

The Evian Conference was poorly prepared with a less than ideal outcome for all involved. In order to keep the peace between nations, the United States considered their foreign

²¹ Levin, *The Holocaust*, 76; Bauer, *Jews for Sale?*, 31.

²² Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 61; Bauer, *Jews for Sale?*, 31; Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 73; Levin, *The Holocaust*, 143.

²³ Bauer, *Jews for Sale?*, 31; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 70; Bauer, *Jews for Sale?*, 31.

relations with Nazi Germany to be more important than helping the refugees. One consular declared that their job was to keep good relations with Germany and was proven by their lack of compassion in the visa division. No country wanted to take immigrants who had nothing and were solely dependent on their host country for assistance. But, the conference gave the Jewish refugees a shimmer of hope for their future. The Intergovernmental Committee was set up to negotiate with the German government in an attempt to let the Jews take some of their possessions with them. President Roosevelt requested that the United States combined quota for Germany and Austria be met in full. This amounted to nearly 30,000 people per year that were guaranteed a space in the United States. This executive order was exactly what the Marx family needed to gain their visas later that same year.²⁴

Nazi Germany systematically took away Jewish rights that made the immigration process take too long. In April 1938, the Nazi regime gave an order for all Jews to register their property. In May of the same year, Germans boycotted Jewish businesses, such as that of Ludwig Marx, which made earning a living very difficult. By June, all Jewish businesses that were not already registered with the Reich were instructed to do so and wealthy business owners were added to a list of targets. The "June Action" included the arrest of 1,500 Jewish men who had police records for past minor legal offenses such as traffic violations. By July 1938, Jews could no longer utilize commercial services such as real estate brokerage or credit information and the Nazis began burning Jewish synagogues. By September, Jewish physicians could no longer legally practice medicine and landlords were allowed to terminate leases with Jews without any reason other than their tenants were Jewish. More rights and possessions were taken from the Jews as Germany's rearmament program gained momentum which made

²⁴ Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, 443; Pickett, "Difficulties in the Placement of Refugees.", 97; Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, 436-443.

immigration even more difficult as the Marx family tried to leave the country.²⁵

All Jews had to give up their passports at the beginning of 1938, while new ones were only given to those who were approved to emigrate. Germany issued identification cards and forced to be shown as law enforcement demanded. In September 1938, because border patrols in Switzerland saw a dramatic influx of immigrants and it had become a major problem, the Swiss suggested that German Jewish passports be marked in a way that let the receiving country know that the intended immigrants were Jewish. The Nazi regime loved the idea of further segregating the Jews and, in October, began to enforce a decree that stamped every German Jewish passport with a large red "J".²⁶

Kristallnacht, also known as the Night of Broken Glass, was a response to the building tension and a reaction to the assassination of a German diplomat in Paris by a young, distraught Jewish boy named Herschel Grynszpan. It began on November 10, 1938, and was the most severe action to date against the Jews during Hitler's reign. Nazi soldiers, under the leadership of Reinhard Heydrich, began the raid in the middle of the night in cities and towns all over Germany. Windows of Jewish homes, businesses, and establishments were smashed, property was stolen, looted and burned, and synagogues were torched. The destruction continued into the morning hours as the shops opened. Even school children joined in the vandalism. The insurance companies paid Jewish claims to the government and not to their policy holders while the Jews were forced to

²⁵ The Holocaust Timeline,

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/chron.html#39;> Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 120; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from the Marx family to the Goldsmith family dated 19 February 1939; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 258; Bauer, *Jews for Sale?*, 34-35; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 258; Levin, *The Holocaust*, 86.

²⁶ Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 254; Levin, *The Holocaust*, 78.

clean the mess and pay for the damage out of their own pockets.²⁷

The push for Jews to emigrate was primarily psychological before *Kristallnacht*, but after the pogrom, Jews felt that they and their families were in physical danger. Men were arrested and taken to concentration camps while women scrambled around trying to find a way to free them. The Marx's home and business were heavily damaged and many Jewish shop owners were arrested and taken away, including Marx. The Marx family no longer had "a window or a door, nor a cup to drink coffee." It was only by "great luck" of a letter from the Goldsmiths that Lissi had the ability to free Ludwig in order to go to the consulate in Stuttgart. The only way for imprisoned Jews to escape imprisonment was to have the proper paperwork to emigrate and to do so quickly. In the case of Ludwig Marx, "all goods of [his] business and house wer[e] broken" but his family was still intact.²⁸

Control of the banking system in Germany was of particular interest to the Nazi regime primarily because they felt that the Jews not only were successful at the expense of the Germans, but that Jews were the primary reason for the economic difficulties of the time. Hjalmar Schacht, the head of the Reichsbank and later the Minister of the Economy, did all that he could to stop the export of German assets through emigration. The capital flight tax, for amounts greater than RM 50,000, was implemented specifically to keep Jewish emigrants from taking all their savings out of Germany. In the minds of the

²⁷ Gilbert, Martin. *Kristallnacht*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006. 24-25; Levin, Nora. *The Holocaust: The Destruction of European Jewry*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968. 78-80; Marianne Geernaert letter to author Martin Gilbert dated 10 June 2005; Gilbert, *Kristallnacht*, 31; Laurence Milner Robinson letter dated 10 November 1938: Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/21637; Levin, *The Holocaust*, 88-89.

²⁸ Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 129; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 119; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Marx to Goldsmith dated 27 March 1939; Adina Koor, letter to author Martin Gilbert, 24 June 2005; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Marx family to Goldsmiths dated 19 February 1939.

regime, Jewish capital belonged to the German people and Jews were not considered German. Both Schacht and George Rublee, an American lawyer nominated by Roosevelt to negotiate with the Germans, proposed that a significant percentage of all Jewish assets be combined into a trust fund that would ease resettlement and travel expenses for Jewish emigrants. High taxes on Jewish assets and blocked Jewish bank accounts were just a few other ways that, as Germany became more desperate, kept Jewish revenue within German borders. Germans also seized precious stones and metals, including dental work.²⁹

Marx managed to sell his house in February 1938 and keep his business under very difficult circumstances. The amount that Marx sold his house for is unknown but it is likely that he had to sell it for only a small fraction of its actual value simply because he was a Jew. The Economy and Finance Ministries of Germany sought to Aryanize the housing market and did so by depreciating the value of Jewish homes to the extreme of ten percent or even less of the home's actual value. Marx's wine and liqueur business was more difficult to sell. He was prepared to wait for an interested buyer willing to pay the right price. There is no reference to the sale of the business in Marx's correspondence with Goldsmith and he likely cut his losses and left what remained of it after *Kristallnacht* behind after he received word from the consulate about the issuing of their visas.³⁰

Without their own home to live and a business to earn an income, the Marx family likely became dependant on the many relief agencies that came into existence to help those persecuted by the Nazis, although there is not any mention of them in the correspondence letters. Agencies on both the American as well

²⁹ Levin, *The Holocaust*, 92; Barkai, Avraham. *Hakalkalah Hanatzit*, Sifriat Poalim, Tel Aviv, 1986, 142ff. and Table 3; Bauer, *Jews for Sale?*, 27-33; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 131-132.

³⁰ Letters from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 9 May 1938 and 1 June 1938; Levin, *The Holocaust*, 89; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 9 May 1938.

as the German side offered economic advice, religious hospitality, social services, and personal assistance to those in need. The Jewish communities organized courses to train ladies in trade jobs that they could then travel overseas and earn a modest income as useful immigrants. Lissi Marx learned to make leather gloves and continued in her trade once they reached New York. Many of these organizations had a very difficult time keeping up with the demand for help, especially later in the decade. Soon after the Marx family was able to leave Germany, the Nazis shut down all the relief agencies and arrested the Jews running them.³¹

When the Nazi regime began confiscating all valuables from those who sought to leave Germany, Marx had to smuggle his valuables in packing crates, or *liftvan*. As the Marx family packed their belongings in early 1939, they were forced to hide the only valuables the Nazis had not already found. They hid their silver and gold in the furniture along with other personal items. Their bank account was confiscated and they had no income to live on because they could not legally be employed, so they took these valuables to help sustain them when they reached the United States. Their personal belongings that were shipped separately held hidden objects such as golden rings, watches, spoons, needles, broaches, gold pencils, a spyglass and silver religious objects hidden between the kitchen dishes. Marx also hid gold things in the floor of his toolbox. This was his only opportunity to save a piece of his fortune. Much of their savings and personal belongings, the very things that would have allowed them to flee the country, were taken from them. As refugees, they were left with hardly anything.³²

³¹ Strauss, "Transplantation and Transformed: German-Jewish Immigrants Since 1933." 252; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 29; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection letter from Lissi Marx to the Goldsmiths dated 7 April 1939; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 32; Levin, *The Holocaust*, 83.

³² Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letters from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 27 March 1939; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 18 April

It was not until August 18, 1938, that the Marx family finally got the highly anticipated news from the consulate in Stuttgart that their visa applications were finally under review and were issued November 16, 1938. Marx exhausted what was left of his fortune to purchase his family's passports and travel papers. With great difficulty, Ludwig Marx, his wife and two daughters left Europe through Cherbourg, France on February 25, 1939 and arrived in New York Harbor on March 3. They stayed with Ludwig's sister in Forbach, just over the French border from Germany for a few weeks prior to leaving Europe. They sailed on the R.M.S. Aquitania with "only ten Marks... to wander out" of Germany and to start all over again in the United States.³³

Millions of people died by the hands of the Nazis during their twelve year reign partly because of the strict immigration laws and the delays of getting paperwork and issuing visas. The Marx family's immigration was a painstaking process which involved many people, documents, and agencies. It took months for the Goldsmith family to provide the necessary affidavits needed to start the immigration process and the plethora of German agencies delayed providing birth and marriage certificates and documentation of good behavior. The hurdles brought about by both the United States and Germany, on a national level, complicated the already rocky international relations. The United States feared bringing in immigrants and destabilizing the already fragile economic position of the country. They also wanted to avoid stirring the political groups that wanted to keep the Jews out. In contrast, Germany wanted to rid themselves of the Jewish population but keep their assets. Each step of the immigration process was meticulously

1939; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 19 February 1939.

³³ Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Ludwig Marx to the Goldsmiths dated 18 August 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Western Union Telegram dated 16 November 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letters from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 19 February 1939.

scrutinized and examined by both German and United States officials. From the first affidavits to the granting of the United States visas, the Marx family remained cautiously optimistic in their fight for their freedom.³⁴

³⁴ Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection. Correspondence between Lawrence and Annie Goldsmith and the Marx family 30 June 1937 through 8 December 1941; Levin, *The Holocaust*, 92; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection. Correspondence between Lawrence and Annie Goldsmith and the Marx family 30 June 1937 through 8 December 1941.

Industry Rising: Madison County Cotton Mills, 1809-1885

Whitney Adrienne Snow

The history of early cotton mills in Madison County began in 1809 when Charles Cabaniss built the state's first mill along the Flint River, not too far from Twickenham. By 1860 the area boasted the McFarland Mill, the Flint Manufacturing Company, and the infamous Bell Factory. Each mill relied on either slave or white labor, used the river for trade, transportation, and energy, proved a source of income for cotton planters and farmers, and aided the local economy. Due to foreign, not to mention northern, competition, oscillating economies, the Civil War, and in one case, a natural disaster, each mill, by the end of 1885, had shut its doors. While their heydays proved brief, these mills sparked future endeavors and thus, further fueled the industrialization of Madison County.

The production of cotton in the northeastern part of the Mississippi Territory began in the 1770s, if not earlier. The climate, rich soil, and potential waterpower presented an excellent location for cotton ventures. In 1805 John Hunt settled the area that became known as Huntsville. When Hunt failed to register the land properly, Leroy Pope bought the area, and on December 22, 1809, named it Twickenham after the birthplace of Alexander Pope. Situated in Madison County, which had formed on December 13, 1808, Twickenham attracted many settlers. Not until November 25, 1811, did the name finally change to Huntsville in honor of Hunt. Alabama became a territory in 1817 and then a state in August 1819; Huntsville was its capital for a short time. In its early days, Huntsville was largely plantation and farm-oriented but had beer, candle, plow, hardwood, brick, hat, tanning, and water pump factories. Despite these varied enterprises, cotton remained the foundation of the area's growth. In 1809, the area's first cotton gin began

production.¹ This gin proved only the first of many cotton experiments and a cotton mill soon followed.

In 1809, contractor Charles Cabaniss built a cotton mill twelve miles northeast of Twickenham on the Barren Fork of the Flint River. Accessible water power had a great deal to do with site preference. Along with the mill, Cabaniss constructed a house, storehouse, smoke-house, spring, barn, and forge shop. Once production began, he no doubt advertised, for on February 17, 1818, *The Alabama Republican* reported that the 192 spindle mill, also called the Beech Grove Factory, sold yarn for fifty cents to \$1.25 a pound. Then, on April 18, *The Alabama Republican* noted that Charles Cabaniss would trade thread for cotton and sell thread anywhere from fifty cents a pound to \$1.25 a pound depending on size and type.² Labor consisted entirely of slaves who endured pitiable working conditions. They depended on light emitted from windows or candles and suffered extreme heat or cold depending upon the season. When it came to raw materials, Cabaniss depended entirely on local production. Once

¹Daniel S. Dupre, *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County Alabama, 1800-1840* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 38; Thomas Perkins Abernathy, *The Formative Period in Alabama, 1815-1828* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1965), 74; and Dwight Wilhelm, *A History of the Cotton Textile Industry of Alabama, 1809-1950* (Montgomery: Dwight Wilhelm, 1950), 32. See also, Edward Chambers Betts, *Early History of Huntsville, Alabama, 1804-1870* (1909; repr., Huntsville, 1998), 5, 11, 26, 32, 35, 48-49; and William H. Brantley, *Three Capitals: A Book about the First Three Capitals of Alabama: St. Stephens, Huntsville & Cahawba . . .* (Tuscaloosa, 1947).

² On the Cabaniss mill, see Cecilia Jean Thorn, "The Bell Factory: Early Pride of Huntsville," *The Alabama Review* 32, no. 1 (January 1979): 28; John Singleton, *The World Textile Industry* (London: Routledge, 1997), 75; Wilhelm, 11; and *The Alabama Republican*, 18 February 1818, n.p. . On site preference, see Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), 13. See also, *The Alabama Republican*, 17 February 1818, n.p.

cotton had been transformed into grades of thread, he employed the Flint River Navigation Company to transport the goods.³ Given that the mill was the only one of its kind, its promise should have seemed limitless and yet, due to poor business, Cabaniss decided to sell.

Having grown dissatisfied with the factory, Cabaniss, in 1819, sold one-third interest in the mill to Henry Shrader. On February 14, 1823, he sold the remaining two-thirds interest to Patrick McStay. He accepted McStay's promissory notes and expected partial payment in spun cotton. When Cabaniss died in 1825, local planter Edwin Jones obtained the mill and renamed it The Prairie Factory. Facing the same market difficulties that plagued his predecessor, Jones eventually closed the mill.⁴ While this mill proved unsuccessful, another was poised to dominate the local textile industry.

On September 4, 1819, Horatio Jones formed a cotton spinning factory on the Flint River and began producing slave clothing. That same September, *The Alabama Republican* mentioned an offer from the Horatio Jones & Company to sell products for cash or seed cotton. The following year, the mill increased its machinery, but this course of action only served to drain funds. In fact, in 1823, the company dissolved due to financial problems. Jones, however, refused to give up and soon formed a new endeavor.⁵

³ William Echols Spragins, *A Brief History and Brief Genealogy of the Andrew Beirne, William Patton, William Echols V and Robert E. Spragins Lines: Beirne-Patton Echols-Spragins Pedigree* (Huntsville: W. E. Spragins, 1956), 7.

⁴ Randall Martin Miller, "The Cotton Mill Movement in Antebellum Alabama" (master's thesis, The Ohio State University, 1971), 11.

⁵ Thorn, 29; James William Bragg, "Frontier Entrepreneurs of Madison County, Alabama: The Bell Factory Enterprise, 1819-1842" (master's thesis,

On October 21, Jones announced his plan to once again spin cotton and coarse shirting and moved the factory downstream. The May 14, 1824 issue of *The Alabama Republican* included his enthusiastic advertisement for cotton in exchange for “good quality yarn.”⁶ The celebratory air of the passage, however, proved deceptive for later that year, Jones sold the mill to Richard Haughton. A few months later, when Jones died, John W. Tilford became director of the factory. Shortly thereafter, Tilford, too, sold the mill.⁷ The sale included five carding machines, 342 spindles, a gin house, a “sixty-saw gin,” a grist mill, two wood houses, and one brick house.⁸ Buyers stood to have one to two years’ credit extended. When the sale day finally arrived, Abner Eason and Joseph Harding, Jones’s cousin, bid \$20,021 and succeeded in purchasing the mill.⁹

Harding and Eason proved no more successful at running the mill than its previous owners had. Their workforce consisted of two slaves whom they paid \$70 a year and provided two suits of clothing, one for winter and one for summer.¹⁰ In 1828, Eason sold his interests to Harding and subsequently moved to Arkansas. With the interests, stipulated Eason, went all debts. Harding accepted this clause hoping to make a success of the

University of Alabama, 1958), 39; *The Alabama Republican*, 14 September 1819, n.p.; and *The Alabama Republican*, 14 May 1824, n.p.

⁶ *The Alabama Republican*, 14 May 1824, n.p.

⁷ Thorn, 29-30.

⁸ *The Democrat*, 5 August 1825, n.p.

⁹ Thorn, 31.

¹⁰“Notes on Textile Manufactures in Huntsville and Madison County, Alabama before the Civil War,” Huntsville Industry Bell Factory, Vertical Files, Huntsville-Madison County Public Library

mill. Despite his efforts, the mill seemed destined to fail because of the inherent risks in the textile industry. Aside from financial and mechanical problems, he had the forces of nature to contend with. When flooding occurred, production halted indefinitely. In 1828, Harding drowned while checking the mill during a flood. In the aftermath, Haughton became administrator for Harding's estate and sold the mill a year later.¹¹

On April 8, 1829, Huntsville businessmen Preston Yeatman, Germanicus Kent, Andrew Beirne, William Patton, James J. Donegan, Isaac Williams, William Forsey, and William Stewart bought the factory for \$12,630. These men, who belonged to Patton, Donegan & Company, Yeatman, Kent, & Company, or Forsey & Company, intended to revitalize the mill.¹² At the time of purchase, inventory included the following: "Factory and machinery in Factory \$18,000; 276 yards of white linsey, \$135.00; 187 ½ yards of brown linsey, \$113.50; two stills and tubs; 35,000 lbs. Seed cotton; 14,013 doz. Spun thread; 3 slaves," and four barrels of whiskey.¹³ Nevertheless, the mill failed to satisfy Forsey and Company which sold out. Determined to make a go of it, the remaining members formed Germanicus Kent & Company, a venture which resulted in the creation of what mistakenly came to be known as the first cotton mill in Alabama.¹⁴

It was Germanicus Kent & Company that dubbed the mill The Bell Factory because a bell, not a whistle, called its workers. On December 29, 1832, The Bell Factory became incorporated.

¹¹ "Notes on Textile Manufactures," Huntsville Industry Bell Factory, Vertical Files, Huntsville-Madison County Public Library; and Miller, 18.

¹² "Notes on Textile Manufactures."

¹³ Spragins, 281

¹⁴ Woodman, 138.

Terms included a thirty-year charter, 1,000 shares worth \$100 each, and a capital stock under \$100,000. The number of votes a stockholder received corresponded to the number of shares, but no individual could have more than twenty votes.¹⁵ While not the first cotton mill in the state, The Bell Factory quickly became the first to produce on a large scale.

While business varied from poor to grand, the owners saw only promise, so much so that several owners were bought out. On March 1, 1934, Patton, Donegan & Company purchased all interests in the factory from Germanicus Kent & Company for \$20,000. The deed included the signatures of Preston and Agnes N. Yeatman, Germanicus and Arabella Kent, and Isaac and Eliza Williams.¹⁶ The new owners, Andrew Beirne, William Patton, and James J. Donegan, had great plans for their mill.

Under Patton, Donegan & Company, The Bell Factory flourished. By this time, the factory consisted of several two-story buildings. The main structure had three and one-half stories in addition to a water wheel in the basement. Other buildings housed machinery for carding, weaving, and dyeing. The mill itself had eight looms, 3,216 spindles, consumed fifty bales of cotton a month, and made sheetings, plaids, ticking, and yarn. Advertised locally and in New Orleans, there seemed no limit to production or expansion until the unthinkable happened.¹⁷

On June 30, 1841, The Bell Factory burned to the ground. While arson was suspected, the cause remained a mystery. The

¹⁵ Betts, 59; Dodge, 89; Wilhelm, 21; and “Notes on Textile Manufactures.”

¹⁶ “Bell Factory Deed, 1 March 1834,” Huntsville Industry Bell Factory, Vertical Files, Huntsville-Madison County Public Library; and “Notes on Textile Manufactures.”

¹⁷ Birdie Campbell, *History of the Bell Factory* (Huntsville: Huntsville Public Library, 1940), 5; and Thorn, 32.

Nashville Merchants Insurance Trust Company only paid half of the \$40,000 loss. Despite the setback, by June of the following year, Patton, Donegan & Company had rebuilt the mill and even installed an auxiliary steam plant. On November 12, 1842, *The Democrat* advertised the company's request for cotton in exchange for bagging, rope, and twine. In this same advertisement, the company also noted that their products were reasonably priced given the economically difficult times. Indeed, the price of cotton continued to drop, and even though the United States had begun exporting textile goods to China, overproduction on a national level had resulted in a severe drop in the price of textiles.¹⁸ The owners, however, firmly believed that their venture would eventually prove extremely profitable.

The owners reaped encouragement from the sight of their rebuilt mill. Surrounded by a ten-foot brick wall, the three-story building stood 100 feet by fifty-two feet. A two-story wing used to house the lappers and woolen machines measured seventy-feet by twenty-feet. As for machinery, insurance coverage increased with each addition. Over time, the factory came to have forty-eight to fifty looms and 2,000 spindles. Supervision consisted of two weavers, one of whom oversaw the watchmen while the other, an owner, ran the mill. By 1858, the mill, then owned by Charles H. Patton, William M. Tabor, and J. J. Omiga, had a supposed worth of \$40,000. The mill continued to rely on the labor of slaves of which all but one belonged to the owners.¹⁹

¹⁸ Thorn, 33; *The Democrat*, 12 November 1942, n.p.; Spragins, 270; Walton, 190; and Beth English, *A Common Thread: Labor, Politics, and Capital Mobility in the Textile Industry* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 40. See also, "Notes on Textile Manufactures." On China, see M. B. Hammond, *The Cotton Industry: An Essay in American Economic History* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1966), 244.

¹⁹ "Notes on Textile Manufactures"; and James Benson Sellers, *Slavery in Alabama* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1950), 203.

Unlike northern mills which depended mainly on white female employees, many early mills in the South relied on slaves. For example, the Rocky Mount Cotton Mills in Edgecombe County, North Carolina depended entirely on slaves belonging to the owners of the mill. While it had a small number of free black employees, some mill hired only white labor. The Graniteville Manufacturing Company in South Carolina, for instance, relied on rural white labor. For the most part, however, many owners expected only racial friction to come from an integrated workforce. The owners of mills using slaves insisted on the superior treatment of slaves compared to that of white workers in New England. However, the use of slaves in mills declined rapidly when the price of slaves skyrocketed in the 1850s. At this point, textile work became more and more associated with poor whites.²⁰

In 1850, the Flint Manufacturing Company, located two miles below New Market, began operations. The mill relied entirely upon seventeen white employees. Owned by Joseph Rice and William Whitman, the two-story, sixty-foot by thirty-foot mill with its three spinning frames and 369 spindles,

²⁰ Holland Thompson, *From the Cotton Field to the Cotton Mill: A Study of the Industrial Transition in North Carolina* (1906; repr., Freeport, NY, 1971), 48; August Kohn, *The Cotton Mills of South Carolina* (Spartanburg: The Reprint Company Publishers, 1975), 24; Douglas Flamming, *Creating the Modern South: Millhands and Managers in Dalton, Georgia, 1884-1984* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 109; David J. Jeremy, ed., *Technology and Power in the Early American Cotton Industry: James Montgomery, the Second Edition of his "Cotton Manufacture" (1840), and the 'Justitia' Controversy about Relative Power Costs* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1990), 25; David L. Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina, 1880-1920* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 84, 114-115, 158; and Broadus Mitchell, *The Rise of Cotton Mills in the South* 1921, reprinted with a new introduction by David L. Carlton (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 209.

consumed three bales of cotton a week.²¹ The owners sought to emulate the success of nearby Bell but proved only moderately successful.

By 1860, Alabama possessed fourteen textile mills, 35,700 spindles, and 623 looms worth \$1.3 million in invested capital. During the 1840s and 1850s, many such mills had arrived in cities such as Florence, Montgomery, Autaugaville, and Mobile. The mills had a combined workforce of 1,300. Only half of the mills had looms and only six processed cotton into cloth. These mills often obtained cotton from agents who purchased from the larger cotton markets of Nashville, Memphis, New Orleans, Atlanta, Macon, and Fayetteville among others though purchasing cotton from neighboring farmers was quite common. In terms of sales, Alabama mills, much like other southern mills, usually had agents who found buyers for their goods and converters, men who altered the products to suit the market. For owners, the sky seemed the limit when it came to future possibilities for the state and the south. In fact, of the nation's 915 cotton mills and 4,300,000 spindles, 443 mills and 217,000 spindles were in the South.²² Elation changed to despair when the Civil War arrived, bringing the southern textile industry to a virtual standstill.

²¹ Miller, 97; and "Notes on Textile Manufactures."

²² Wilhelm, 11, 47; English, 41; Harriet E. Amos, *Cotton City: Urban Development in Antebellum Mobile* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1985), 81, 214; Woodman, 14; Melvin Thomas Copeland, *The Cotton Manufacturing Industry of the United States* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1966), 182-183, 209-210; William Kessler, "An Outline of the Textile Industry in the United States," in *Textiles . . . A Dynamic Industry* ed. Wilfrid H. Crook, E. C. Bancroft, Lester Blum, Wilson Farman, Frank Farnsworth, and William Kessler (Hamilton, NY: Colgate University, 1951), 13-15; and Hammond, 254, 343.

During the Civil War many southern mills stopped production. Others began making war goods. Southern textile operations, periodically hampered by poor crops and foreign competition, were ill-prepared for war. The conflict put an end to cotton shipments throughout the South and hurt exports, causing Britain to turn to Egypt for raw cotton. Indeed Britain, having anticipated the war, had long been stockpiling cotton in order to avoid dependence on the American South and thus an obligation to assist the Confederacy in its endeavors. Just as problematic were the northern blockades that impeded the transport of southern goods, including textiles. To make matters worse, Confederate money was backed by southern cotton, which had few if any buyers. The fact that many farmers switched from growing cotton to food also hurt southern mills.²³ Other problems abounded.

Throughout the war, the Bell Factory remained inactive. The mill did, however, play a role in the conflict. In 1863, Union soldiers, attracted by the grain mill opposite the factory, produced 3,000 pounds of flour and meal before leaving. The owners of the mill were extremely lucky given that Union

²³ David L. Cohn, *The Life and Times of King Cotton* (Westport, CT, 1956), 209, 131; Stephen Yafa, *Big Cotton: How a Humble Fiber Created Fortunes, Wrecked Civilizations, and Put America on the Map* (New York, 2005), 168; Hammond, *Cotton Industry*, 255; Woodman, *King Cotton*, 205–26; Anthony Howe, *The Cotton Masters, 1830–1860* (Oxford, NY, 1984), 199; Thomas C. Cochran, “Did the Civil War Retard Industrialization?” in *Myth and the American Experience*, ed. Nicholas Cords and Patrick Gerster (New York, 1973), 402; Brent D. Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History* (Raleigh, NC, 1992), 13; Singleton, 50; Anthony Burton, *The Rise & Fall of King Cotton* (London, 1984), 179, 189; Thompson, 58–59; Perry Walton, *The Story of Textiles: A Bird’s Eye View of the History of the Beginning and the Growth of the Industry by which Mankind is Clothed*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1925), 190; John W. Rowell, *Yankee Artillerymen: Through the Civil War with Eli Lilly’s Indiana Battery* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), 139; and Campbell, 5. One of the worst crop failures took place in 1856.

soldiers often burned mills. In fact, when operation resumed in 1865, only Bell, Flint, and perhaps one other mill remained in Madison County. Considering the value of cotton on both national and international levels, these mills stood to make a great deal of money.²⁴

The mill in question, The McFarland Mill, had been built about fifteen miles from Huntsville sometime prior to the Civil War by Thomas M. McFarland. The mill produced brown domestic and may have contributed to the making of Confederate uniforms.²⁵ A July 28, 1866, edition of *The Huntsville Advocate* advertised a nearby 400 to 500 spindle “Wool Carding Mill Factory” in reference to The McFarland Factory.²⁶ Success, however, proved short lived, for in 1874, a fire destroyed the mill. It became known as “The Old Burnt Factory.”²⁷ Before its untimely end, the McFarland Factory, along with the other local mills, encountered a challenge just as difficult as that posed by the war—Reconstruction.

In the war’s aftermath, cotton mills faced an uncertain road to recovery. Forced to adjust to changing economies, politics, and competition, owners tried to stay afloat. Deprived of slave labor, an alternative workforce was needed. Though many whites deemed labor a traditionally black role, tenant farmers, small farmers, and mountain residents flocked to mills from near and far in the hope of attaining a better life. Whereas farm work demanded entire families working twenty-four hours a day, mill work offered set hours and bi-weekly pay. With this

²⁴ Rowell, 139. On the price of cotton after the war, see Hammond, 121.

²⁵ Wilhelm, 111-114; and “Notes on Textile Manufactures.”

²⁶ *The Huntsville Advocate*, 28 July 1866, n.p.

²⁷ “Notes on Textile Manufactures.”

in mind, single men and women, widows, and entire families made the trek to the cotton mills.²⁸

Those who transitioned from farm to factory expected their independence would be furthered but were often disappointed. Unlike single northern women who, thought under supervision, found some level of liberty in their ability to become relatively self-supporting, southern men could not support their families on mill salaries. This meant whole families had to work in order to subsist.²⁹

²⁸ Broadus Mitchell and George Sinclair Mitchell, *The Industrial Revolution in the South* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1930), 32; Jennings J. Rhyne, *Some Southern Cotton Mill Workers and their Villages* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 66, 129; August Kohn, *The Cotton Mills of South Carolina* (Spartanburg: The Reprint Company Publishers, 1975), 126; Wayne Flynt, "Spindle, Mine, and Mule: The Poor White Experience in Post-Civil War Alabama," in *From Civil War to Civil Rights Alabama, 1860-1960*, ed. Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1987), 387; May Simons, "Education in the South," *The American Journal of Sociology* 10, no. 3 (November 1904): 396; M. W. Heiss, "The Southern Textile Social Service Association," *Journal of Social Forces* 3, no. 3 (March 1925): 513-514; H. C. Nixon, *Lower Piedmont Country: The Uplands of the Deep South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1984), 148; and Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 111-113.

²⁹ Thomas Dublin, ed., *Farm to Factory: Women's Letters, 1830-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 23; David Carlton, "Paternalism and Southern Textile Labor: A Historiographical Review," in *Southern Labor History* ed. Gary M. Fink and Merl E. Reed (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1994), 17-25; Elizabeth Hayes Turner, "Women in the Post-Civil War South," in *A Companion to the American South*, ed. John B. Boles (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 2002), 350; Thomas R. Brooks, *Toil and Trouble: A History of American Labor* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1964), 244; and Cohn, 251.

While white mill workers did not require the same protection extended slaves, an unbalanced relationship between manufacturers and mill operatives resulted. Corporate paternalism did not derive from planter-slave paternalism. Primarily, industrial paternalism existed in all mills, not just those of the South. Secondly, white workers in no way viewed themselves as slaves. Thirdly, industrial paternalism took the form of schools, churches, and other types of social welfare. Mills did this in order to maintain the loyalty of employees and ensure a perpetual workforce. Owners may have felt some charity toward workers but profit remained the ultimate goal. Motivations aside, the resulting provisions meant unprecedented assistance to workers.³⁰

In November 1868, The Bell Factory, having survived the war unscathed, became The Bell Factory Manufacturing Company. Around that time, the mill switched from water to steam power. This transition proved somewhat later considering that the first steam run mill appeared in New England in 1827 and in the South in 1830, but the price of transporting coal no doubt proved one explanation for the delay. In any case, with its 2,352 spindles, eighty looms, and sixty wool spindles, the mill made sheetings, gingham, ducks, and plaids. Production proved impressing to the extent that in 1868, a Mr. Haines, special commissioner for the state, displayed various selections in Paris, France. Success, however, did not prevent Superintendent William M. Tabor from selling his 200 shares of capital stock to

³⁰ Burton, 60, 197; Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*, 121-124; Wallace, 423; Mitchell, *The Industrial Revolution in the South*, 133; Carlton, *Mill and Town*, 60, 89; Elna C. Green, ed., *Before the New Deal: Social Welfare in the South, 1830-1930* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999), xv; David R. Goldfield, *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers: Southern City and Region, 1607-1980* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 125; and Virginia Van der Veer, *Alabama: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1977), 38.

William H. Echols. Echols later assumed the role of superintendent while James R. Stevens became president. Of note, Charles P. Cabaniss, son of The Cabaniss Factory founder Charles Cabaniss, ran the company's office in Huntsville until his death in 1880. During that time and in the years to come, the factory hired mainly white women and children. Workers may have had homes, measuring forty-feet or so, a garden, and one or two cows on company land. By 1881, the mill provided a church and a school for its roughly 300 village residents who earned anywhere from eight to twenty dollars a month. The mill ran successfully until 1885 when it shut down. Reasons included the Southern Railway being built over ten miles away, the costs of transporting cotton and textile products, and competition from the newly built mills in nearby Huntsville. Quite simple, pursuing production offered no profit. As a result, attorney William Echols Spragins, acting on behalf of his mother-in-law, Mary Beirne Patton Echols, liquidated the factory's assets.³¹ When The Bell Manufacturing Company closed its doors, an era ended.

The early mills of Madison County weathered fluctuating economies, local and regional competition, and the Civil War.

³¹ Wilhelm, 45; Alice Galenson, *The Migration of the Cotton Textile Industry from New England to the South: 1880-1930* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985), 158; *The Weekly Democrat*, 11 December 1868, n.p.; Wilhelm, 73; Joseph Hodgson, ed., *The Alabama Manual and Statistical Register for 1868* (Montgomery: Mail Building, 1869), 75; "Stock Transfer," Huntsville Industry Bell Factory, Vertical Files, Huntsville-Madison County Public Library; Thorn, 31; Turner, 350; and Victor S. Clark, *History of Manufacturers in the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1949), 398; Wayne Flynt, *Mine, Mill, and Microchip: A Chronicle of Alabama Enterprise* (Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1987), 105; Thorn, 36; and Spragins, 139.

The lifespan of each may have been relatively brief, but had helped to prove the area's industrial potential. By the dawn of the twentieth century, Huntsville alone boasted six cotton mills and was well on its way to becoming one of the largest textile cities in the south. At one point the city boasted eleven mills. While the early mills of Madison County had long since closed, they provided their successors with a legacy of, if not success, its possibility.

The Broad River Group of Georgia: Transforming the Pioneering Frontier of Huntsville, Alabama

Chase Tate

“It is not merely a rude frontier, thinly peopled with hunters and herdsmen, the mere precursors of the tillers of the earth, but it is the tillers of the earth themselves, who bring with them the pleasures of social life, the arts of industry, the abundant means of easy and comfortable subsistence.”

This triumphant rhetoric was a portion of a July 4th, 1811, speech delivered by the up and coming lawyer John Williams Walker, one of the most successful and influential men in the first few decades of settlement in Huntsville, Alabama. Walker belonged to a group of families that shifted west to North Alabama from the Broad River area of Georgia to reap the benefits of the fertile Tennessee Valley. There was no single group to have so great an impact on Huntsville than this “Georgia Faction”.¹

The Broad River group was the primary catalyst in the transformation of the pioneering frontier in Huntsville, resulting in its development into the major economic and political center that it became within the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Through close inspection of a series of chronologically consecutive events, the influence and effect of the Broad River group on Huntsville and the state will be made clear. This entity essentially affected the establishment of the city of Huntsville, among others, produced the financial means and atmosphere by which the economy saw a major boom and subsequent bust, and effectively forced the creation a two party political system in the state through controversy over their personal and banking practices.

¹ Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 25.; Shearer, Benjamin. *The United States: Alabama to Kentucky*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004. 39.

The Broad River group had a history of influence and affluence in their home state of Georgia that they brought with them to Huntsville in 1809. The group consisted of a number of wealthy families that all lived in and essentially dominated Petersburg, Georgia. They were the elite of the town, and they were all closely associated with each other by way of business transactions, intermarriage, and political unity. The key members of the group were Leroy Pope, Thomas and William Bibb, John Williams Walker, Charles Tait, Robert Thompson, William Watkins, James Manning, and Peyton Cox. Many of the bonds connecting the group ran through Leroy Pope in some fashion or another. Likewise, it was Pope who was said to be the patriarch of the group, referred to by some in Petersburg as the “Royal Family”. This name was so pervasive that group member John Williams Walker even referred to it as such in a letter to his friend, Larkin Newby.²

The fact that this collection of families either voluntarily or involuntarily co-opted that name (the Royal Family) portrays exactly how much power they either possessed in the town or at least were perceived to have possessed. And in many ways, they operated as if royalty, making alliances through marriage and trade to strengthen ties and increase economic and political success. One of the key members of the group, the aforementioned John Williams Walker, married Matilda Pope, the daughter of Leroy Pope, the group’s leader and patriarch. However, it seems that his desire to marry

² Rogers, William, and Robert Ward, Leah Atkins, and Wayne Flynt. *Alabama: the History of a Deep South State*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010. 61.; Taylor, Judge Thomas Jones. *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732-1840*. University: Confederate Publishing Company, 1976. 30.; Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 30.

Pope's daughter may not have been as much about her as the bond that was forged between he and his new father-in-law. While this is said with slight reservation, Walker himself did say in a letter to a friend that, "I shall get me a wife from the concern of Pope & Watkins." So either girl seems to have been sufficient so long as he made a familial bond with men of such clout as Pope and his partner Watkins. A similar alliance was forged when Thomas Percy, a former schoolmate of Walker's at Princeton, moved to Huntsville and married another of Pope's daughters, forging a strong alliance with Pope, Walker, and the Broad River group. He later used that alliance to his advantage in his acquirement of a seat on the board of directors for the Planter's and Merchant's Bank.³ This is the weight which a relationship with this group carried.

In any case, Pope and his Broad River group's reputation as heavy handed pushers and movers in Georgia preceded them, and they brought all of their political, social, and economic clout to Huntsville with the land sales of recently ceded Native American territories in the first and second decades of the nineteenth century. Word had spread of the fertile land in the Great Bend of the Tennessee River, and this caught the attention of Pope and his neighbors after he and Thomas Bibb journeyed through the territory in route to New Orleans. Between the possibilities of high cotton profits in the Tennessee Valley, the near exhaustion of their own soil with of the growth of tobacco in Petersburg, and the appearance of a strong new trade competitor in Augusta, Pope and his neighbors made the decision to shift their economic pursuits and focus to

³ John Williams Walker to Larkin Newby, April 1, 1804, in Larkin Newby Papers, DU.; Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 54.

Alabama. It is worth noting that the Broad River group's absence in Petersburg was felt so deeply upon their Exodus that it resulted in a power vacuum and economic slump that the town never recovered from, ultimately losing all economic vitality in a matter of decades. This again speaks to the political power and economic worth that Pope and his neighbors' possessed, which was then transferred to Huntsville where it would be wielded just as effectively.⁴

The Broad River group had a hand in every aspect of Huntsville politics and economics after the land sale. Immediately, their presence was felt as just ten men purchased nearly half of the Huntsville area land sold at public auction in 1809, with half of those men being from the Broad River region of Georgia. Pope and his group bought some of the best lands available, speculating on the high prices of cotton and land in the region. They were certainly capable as some of the wealthiest families to move to the Tennessee Valley, with Pope being the absolute wealthiest resident. Pope himself bought a large amount of spring acreage around Hunt's Spring, as it was then called for the squatter, John Hunt, who originally settled there and came to be known as the grandfather of the town. Pope joined forces with two other men, William Anderson and James Jackson of the Nashville group of speculators, and they purchased the land surrounding the spring at the unbelievably high rate of \$23 an acre, speculating of course that they could resale for a profit. In addition to his joint purchase, Leroy Pope acquired 1,120 acres around and beyond the spring.⁵

⁴ Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 28-29.

⁵ Taylor, Judge Thomas Jones. *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732-1840*. University: Confederate Publishing Company, 1976. 31.; Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton*

Pope's intention with his purchases was to lay out a town to be the county seat and commercial center of the region. And he did just that through his newfound connections. The territorial legislature appointed five men on a commission to determine the county seat. Among those five men were William Dickson and Edward Ward, both of whom were part of the Nashville group of speculators. Through his alliance with the Nashville group, Pope was able to influence the choice of location for the seat along with his new partners, Anderson and Jackson. In addition, he had the new town named Twickenham in the territorial legislature in 1809 after the name of the home of the English poet Alexander Pope, who some say Leroy Pope claimed as a relative. Hunt's Spring, which they had all invested heavily in, would be the location of the county seat and the center of the new town. And of course, Pope also owned many of the new town plots due to his additional purchases. He and his new partners sold the commissioners the northern section of town plots for no profit, on which the town's public buildings would be constructed. The rest of the town plots they kept to sell for a handsome profit, making good on their speculative efforts. This political, speculative, and financial maneuvering of Leroy Pope to lay out Huntsville and cause it to be made the county seat earned him the reputation early on as the father of the town.⁶

Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 29.; *Alabama: The Sesquicentennial of Statehood.* Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, 1996. 19.

⁶ Taylor, Judge Thomas Jones. *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732-1840.* University: Confederate Publishing Company, 1976. 31-34.; Record, James. *A Dream Come True.* Huntsville: John Hicklin Printing Company, 1970. 30-36.; Betts, Brigadier General E.C. *Early History of Huntsville, Alabama.* Huntsville: Minuteman Press, 1998. 18-30.

In a variety of ways, the different aspects of the land sales of 1809 reveal the beginnings of an economic and political evolution in Huntsville at the hands of Pope and his Broad River Group. Economically, the region was flooded with wealthy planters and merchants including several of the men in the Broad River Group, bringing with them commercial and agrarian production and potential. Pope and his partners' establishment of Twickenham (later Huntsville) as the county seat of Madison was of equal importance for the economic success of the region. This provided a politically stable and organized economic center for local market trade and commerce and also offered area planters and merchants a central waterway by which they could ship their cotton and merchandise down the Tennessee to larger markets, all of which made the land and city that much more successful. That new economic and political base was also essential for the work of the area's newest professional men such as the Broad River group's doctors and lawyers, one of which was Leroy Pope's future son in law, John Williams Walker, who only followed him to Alabama because of his close ties to Pope and his daughter. Pope's alliances and ties to Georgian and national legislators also assisted in the economic success of the region but for reasons which will be discussed in a later section of this study. For now, let it simply be stated that Leroy Pope and his "Royal Family" provided for the county the means and direction for political and economic stability and subsequent growth in the structuring and political leadership of the new town. Colonel E.C. Betts best described the new town leader and his effect on the community in his book about Huntsville's early history when stating that "the moving spirit and the dominant influence of nearly all positive in the life of the settlement was Leroy Pope."⁷

⁷ John Williams Walker. Letter to Larkin Newby. April 1, 1804. Larkin

The Broad River Group's entry into Madison County through the land sales of 1809 also marked the beginning of a societal evolution in its creation of social stress and disagreement within the community. The initiation of that social strain came upon the massive land purchases of speculators and planters like Pope and his Georgia neighbors. Prior to Pope, the region was home to a multitude of squatters, most of whom were by no means wealthy. They were simple subsistence farmers (most of them) that came in search of new frontier possibilities and the opportunity to control their own destiny and forge their own success out of the wilderness. With one of the two largest slaveowners, Littleberry Adams, holding no more than about twenty slaves prior to the land sales, massive cotton production was not a reality. Rather, a simple trade and bartering economy existed, made up of settlers still struggling to clear the land under their own power with the occasional assistance of a slave or two.⁸

This pioneering struggle was quite different from the efforts exhibited by Pope and company upon their entry into the area. They relied much more heavily on slave labor and monetary wealth to build their success in Madison County, and in as much, they established the foundations of a plantation society that was at odds with the yeomen class of farmers. It must be noted here that while the focus of this work and others like it is clearly centered on the white men of power, the exclusion of the perspective of women and slaves is not by choice. Just as the slaves were robbed of their freedom, so are we

Newby Papers, DU.; Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 29-30.; Betts, Brigadier General E.C. *Early History of Huntsville, Alabama*. Huntsville: Minuteman Press, 1998. 29.

⁸ Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 21.

subsequently robbed of their voices. Despite this, many of their deeds are well known and often recorded, if only we take the time to read between the lines of history and historical studies such as this. Upon closer inspection into the lives of the great political, economic, and social pushers and movers like Leroy Pope and the Broad River group, the lives of the slaves can be seen. They made up the workforce that cleared the land, planted the seed, and collected the harvest. The success of Huntsville's elite was, more often than not, literally on the backs of slaves. Furthermore, many of the great estates and commercial structures of Huntsville and the surrounding area were constructed with the labor of slaves and made with bricks formed by the hands of the slaves. Behind the economic success pushed by agriculture and trade was often the toil of the slave, clearing the trees across the once untamed wilderness and reaping the harvest for the benefit of his or her owner. And while the slave population of Madison County was sparse in the squatter days of John Hunt, it quickly doubled time and again with the augment of such wealthy planters and traders as Leroy Pope and company.

The influx of new settlers, planters, and elite merchants like Pope with his large slave holding posed a threat to that life and the squatter's future in the area by blocking them out of the sale of the very land that they had settled and cleared for the possibility of creating a prosperous life for themselves and their families. Many of the squatters, whose families were already well established on the land, had to give up their fields and homes because they could not compete at auction with the much wealthier planters, merchants, and speculators. That was, of course, if they could even get to the auction as it was held in Nashville. This location was notably convenient for the many speculative groups that participated and effectively pushed the squatters and many small farming settlers out. Thomas Freeman had something to do with this, as he, in his directorship of the

land office, suggested to Albert Gallatin that it be located in Nashville so as to be far enough away from Hunt's Spring to ensure an orderly auction free of squatter's bids to keep the prices low. For some squatters, the distance to the land office prevented their ambition of owning their land. For others, it was the high prices driven by wealthy, speculators, planters, and the like. The latter occurred when Leroy Pope and his partners pushed John Hunt out of the area of the spring on which his cabin sat. While Pope and others brought economic and political advancement and opportunity, they simultaneously created class conflict as they were essentially a threat to the squatter and his financially limited subsistence lifestyle. Only 34 percent of the original squatters managed to win the bid and begin payment to own land in Madison County by the end of 1809. The wealthy newcomers and speculators became the enemy of many when they dashed the work and dreams of many squatters upon driving up the prices of land to levels which the squatters couldn't afford.⁹

That early class conflict along with newly developed social stratification laid the first steps to the creation of a two party system political system in Huntsville. The presence of Pope and his "Royal Family," along with a flood of other newly arrived settlers, planters, merchants, lawyers, and doctors, effectively stratified the population in Madison County. Where there was little social stratification prior to the land sales, the emerging differences in social status of the county's citizenry became painfully obvious. The

⁹ Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 12-13, 29.; Taylor, Judge Thomas Jones. *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732-1840*. University: Confederate Publishing Company, 1976. 39.; Roberts, Francis. "Background and Formative Period in the Great Bend and Madison County". Dissertation. 234-235.

situation was adequately described as early as 1811 by John Williams Walker in the opening quote of this paper. In his July 4th speech, Walker made mention of the progress that had occurred with the entrance of the opulent and cultured citizens such as himself and his Broad River associates. This assumes that previous settlers, or the squatters, were of a less cultured and basically less civilized and mannered social status living on a “rude frontier”. That arrogance was the subject of many in the years to follow, being a key topic for the criticism of Leroy Pope and his allies. The group’s own rhetoric and lifestyle created an “us versus them” mentality among many of the citizens of lesser means in the county. This perceived arrogance would become fodder for future political debates and division. According to sources, Leroy and his close friend and fellow Georgian Thomas Bibb were said to have wheeled around town in four-wheeled carriages, leaving out of their finely built brick mansions. Pope had a fine estate built on the highest hill overlooking the town which still stands today, commanding a geographical location above the downtown area just as he commanded social superiority over his fellow citizens. There, he entertained such guests as General Andrew Jackson and company. As stated by scholar Daniel Dupre, Huntsville was rapidly developing into a plantation society of planter and merchant elite, with an ever-widening cultural rift between the top of the social order and the yeoman farmer.¹⁰

¹⁰ Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 11-12, 35-37.; Roberts, Francis. “Background and Formative Period in the Great Bend and Madison County”. Dissertation. 234-235.; Anne Royall. *Letters from Alabama*. Washington, 1830. 244-245. Record, James. *A Dream Come True*. Huntsville: John Hicklin Printing Company, 1970. 48.

The debate over the new town name displays some of the tension that was building as a result of the new social stratification. As previously stated, Leroy Pope managed to have the town named Twickenham by the appointed commissioners for the territorial legislature. However, the original squatters and settlers to the area wanted to serve justice for the sake of the downtrodden John Hunt, who was unable to purchase either his original homestead, which Pope bought at a premium, or another parcel of land in the county. Adding insult to injury, Hunt had even begun paying payments on two sections of land at the spring, but it was recorded that Pope swooped in and took over those payments and the land. As a result, Hunt had to move on with the burden of finding a means to provide for his family of eight in addition to his five slaves. To honor Hunt for his original settlement in what was then called Hunt's Spring and take a shot at the all-too-powerful moneyed aristocracy that was so quickly established on former squatters' lands, many of the townspeople urged a name change from Twickenham to Huntsville. And on November 25th, 1811, the Mississippi Territorial Legislature granted that change. The division of the county had begun with a social conflict, but it would progress rather quickly into the political realm and create a rift between the interests of the planter and merchant elite and smaller subsistence farmers along with others of lesser social status. The settler had different social values than the speculator. The speculator pushed the growth of the market economy for the sake of increased economic opportunity for profit, while in stark contrast, the settler often just sought a piece of land by which he could support he and his family. These divisions were the early foundations laid by the coming of Huntsville's social elite led by Leroy Pope and his

associates that would culminate in the development of a two-party political system in Huntsville and Alabama.¹¹

The next major event with associated with the Broad River group was one that transformed Huntsville, Madison County, and the state. This one event had wide reaching implications that later brought Huntsville to its highest point of economic success only to give falter and nearly lead the town to the brink of devastation. It was the chartering of the Planter's and Merchant's Bank in Huntsville. It would be the first chartered bank in the state. And not surprisingly, this next step in the economic progression of Huntsville came with the efforts of Leroy Pope. Pope, through his connection to the United States Secretary of the Treasury, William Crawford, had the bank granted a charter by the Mississippi Territorial Legislature on December 11th, 1816. This opportunity came on the heels of renewed economic growth and activity in Huntsville and the whole cotton frontier following the conclusion of the War of 1812 and other European hostilities. This growth realized a steep climb of cotton prices and land prices to match. And with the anticipation of another federal land sale in 1818, Crawford permitted the opening of the Planter's and Merchant's Bank. Certainly, the intent was for the bank to facilitate buyers for land sales. Simultaneously, the bank would inject its own notes of currency to facilitate other trade and commerce in regular town and regional activity.¹²

¹¹ Betts, Brigadier General E.C. *Early History of Huntsville, Alabama*. Huntsville: Minuteman Press, 1998. 32.; Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 37. Record, James. *A Dream Come True*. Huntsville: John Hicklin Printing Company, 1970. 37.

¹² Brewer, Willis. *Alabama, Her History, Resources, War Record and Public Men*. Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, Publishers, 1988. 347.; Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County*,

At the helm of the Planters and Merchants Bank were the Broad River group and its allies. Leroy Pope was the president from the moment the bank initiated operation on October 17th, 1817. And many of the bank's directors were his fellow natives of Petersburg, Georgia, while the rest of the list was a who's who of power and wealth in North Alabama. The board of director's consisted of Pope, his sons-in-law John Williams Walker and Thomas Pearcy, Broad River neighbors Thomas Bibb and James Manning, doctors David Moore, Thomas Fearn and Henry Chambers, new business partners of Pope, John Hickman and Jesse Searcy, and receiver and register of the Huntsville Federal Land Office John Brahan and John Read.¹³

Pope utilized his Broad River group connections in his opening of the bank, as Crawford was yet another Georgia neighbor of the now prominent Huntsville citizen. Crawford was a key national connection to the group that empowered the bank to operate with as much vigor as it did with its lending practices in the Tennessee Valley. And its lending practices are the key to its great impact on Huntsville and North Alabama.¹⁴

Alabama, 1800-1840. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 40.

¹³ Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 76,81.; Betts, Brigadier General E.C. *Early History of Huntsville, Alabama.* Huntsville: Minuteman Press, 1998. 40.

¹⁴ Betts, Brigadier General E.C. *Early History of Huntsville, Alabama.* Huntsville: Minuteman Press, 1998. 35.; Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 84.; Rogers, William, and Robert Ward, Leah Atkins, and Wayne Flynt. *Alabama: the History of a Deep South State.* Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010. 61.

The greatest benefit of Pope's relationship to Crawford was Crawford's subsequent choice of the Planters and Merchants Bank as a depository of federal funds the year of its opening. The reasoning for the choice of the North Alabama bank was two-fold. As stated, Huntsville's market economy and land sales were soaring. By 1815, the end of the War of 1812, many international cotton markets and trade routes out of the U.S. were reopened, allowing for booming cotton prices here and throughout the various American markets full of cotton. And the renewed spike in cotton value sent interest in land speculation and planting sky high. That upward tick continued until early in 1819, when the economy collapsed. But in 1816, Crawford granted the charter for Pope's bank and later placed millions in it for the use of area planters, speculators, and the like to borrow from the bank. That money was borrowed only to turn around and pay the federal government for land purchased in the federal land office, then located in Huntsville. Crawford saw it as an opportunity for the federal government to make good on land sales while Pope saw it as an opportunity for he and his bank directors to make good on profits through their banking practices. And they certainly did make good on those practices in the bank's second year of operation.¹⁵

1818 was a monumental year in the life of Huntsville, and like the year 1809, the city saw exponential expansion due to federal land sales. The price of cotton was at an all time high along with land value that naturally followed the cotton curve. From 1809 to 1817, the average price of land was around two

¹⁵ Betts, Brigadier General E.C. *Early History of Huntsville, Alabama*. Huntsville: Minuteman Press, 1998. 38-39,42.; Taylor, Judge Thomas Jones. *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732-1840*. University: Confederate Publishing Company, 1976. 39.

dollars an acre. But in 1818, that shot up to an average of seven dollars and fifty cents an acre. This alone reflects the increased interest in land purchases in Huntsville and the surrounding Tennessee Valley. The cotton value that steered the price of land was sitting somewhere around twenty three cents a pound by 1818. But cotton value wasn't the only attraction for purchasers of large land tracts. While cotton was the backbone of the land value spike, many land speculators bought up massive tracts for the sole purpose of profit on resale to planters and merchants, just as Pope and the many land speculation companies had done in 1809. Many sought to replicate Pope's success in the sale of town plots at other newly established towns. Pope himself joined some Broad River partners and others in that land speculation for the settling of a town when the Cypress Land Company was formed before the land sale of 1818. The group bought 5,515 acres in Muscle Shoals for \$85,235, which group member John Coffee then surveyed in his official capacity as land surveyor for the federal land office.¹⁶

The Broad River group and the rest of the upper echelon of Huntsville had created a network of associations with each other based on individual wealth and power that they could then utilize corporately for the realization of greater wealth and control in the Huntsville and North Alabama. Even with Andrew Jackson's advice to John Coffee to stay independent of these groups and sell his knowledge of the land, Coffee was sucked in by the powerful men and possibility of serious profits. This is a fine example of the phrase, "money talks." After they purchased that land in Muscle Shoals and had it

¹⁶ Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 43-45.; Taylor, Judge Thomas Jones. *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732-1840*. University: Confederate Publishing Company, 1976. 45.

surveyed, they plotted out the town of Florence and opened up sale of the town lots on July 22nd, 1818. The value of land in the Tennessee Valley was so valuable at the time, these town lots attracted such national figures as former President James Madison, future President Andrew Jackson and many others. Between mercantile firms who sought centrally located shop and office sites, planters who sought downtown space for town homes, and prominent men such as the aforementioned presidents who sought profit through speculation, 400 town lots sold for \$280,891.¹⁷

The Cypress Land Company, made up of men such as Pope and Coffee, more than tripled their money immediately. Of course, the heavy volume of buyers of such prominence was also due in part to their connections nationally and regionally through which they pushed their agenda, which was the sale of the land. It is beyond doubt that figures such as Coffee bent the ears of Jackson and the like to express the profitable possibilities of the land for sale in the new town of Florence.

In addition to owning, organizing, and selling half of the town of Huntsville through wealth and political/business alliances, Leroy Pope and his Broad River group also tested the waters of the shipping industry, assisting in the transport of much of the town's economic goods. Pope, along with Broad River ally, Dr. Thomas Fearn, joined with a few others in chartering the Indian Creek Navigation Company in 1812.¹⁸ Through their efforts, the commercial shipping of goods to markets outside of Huntsville was made easier and more efficient. They created a canal out of the Indian Creek which began

¹⁷ Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 43-45.

¹⁸ Taylor, Judge Thomas Jones. *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732-1840*. University: Confederate Publishing Company, 1976. 60.

at Hunt's Spring and eventually found its way out to Triana, where the creek met with the Tennessee River. The end result was a much more navigable waterway by which Madison County farmers and merchants could ship and receive goods directly from the local market in downtown Huntsville. This gave Huntsville a major advantage over the towns surrounding in the rest of the county. Not only did it make shipping of cotton and other crops easier and, more importantly, cheaper for the farmers and merchants due to the close proximity of a water route, but it also attracted new investors and businessmen to Huntsville for the promising new local market that was quickly developing downtown. In essence, Leroy Pope had assisted in the development of a strong local market where one had not previously been. It was yet another push and boost for Huntsville's economy initiated by Leroy Pope and his Broad River allies.

The judicial and political realms were not immune to the influences of the Broad River group either, as they were quite involved with such matters in the city and state. Many important judicial matters were being heard and acted upon by Leroy Pope and company. The Broad River group provided at least two justices of the peace and quorum, Leroy Pope and Thomas Bibb. But Pope's Nashville associates William Dickson, Edward Ward, and David Moore served as well in that capacity. This position allotted Pope and his allies much more authority than the lesser justices of the peace. While most of the local justices of the peace were middling farmers who settled small personal disputes, the justices of the peace and quorum were the wealthier elite who settled more substantial and impactful matters. Author Daniel Dupre reports that of the forty-nine justices of the peace that appear on the 1815 tax list, twelve owned no slaves while the other thirty-seven owned less than twenty, with only one exception. While they were not poor, they were

clearly not in the same class as Pope. Indeed there was a slave population of about 4,200 by 1816, and these justices of the peace owned only a small portion of that group. In contrast, Leroy Pope and the other justices of the peace and quorum were the elite of Huntsville and Madison County, each owning vast tracts of land and large numbers of slaves. Pope himself owned more than one hundred slaves. Chosen to serve from January of 1810 until 1820, Pope and his fellow justices of the peace and quorum settled land disputes, answered questions of mill and dam placement, determined slave ownership, and decided on mercantile contracts.¹⁹

This position, for obvious reasons, was one of great responsibility and gave Pope and his allies' great control over the city of Huntsville and surrounding Madison County. Mill placement and merchant contracts were vastly important for the success of the city and even more so its planter/merchant classes. And the dichotomy of the different justice positions reflects very well the dichotomy that was rapidly developing socially and economically in the town. The yeomen farmer class that had dominated the region prior to Pope and company's entry were still a major force within the population, and they still operated on a local level as they had done before. However, Leroy Pope, his Broad River Group, and others of the elite planter class had arrived and developed an overarching social, political, and economic system in Huntsville and Madison County that went beyond the scope and control of the former isolated settlement of John Hunt and the early settlers. Pope and his elite associates linked the new town to the greater territory and the country economically, politically, and socially. It was the definition of progress and the

¹⁹ Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 35-36.

transformation of a rude frontier into a capitalist market economy.

Beyond the service of Pope and Moore as justices of the peace and quorum, the Broad River group was well represented in the area of law and justice. This was due to the number of lawyers that were either a part of the group or aligned with the group politically, financially, and socially. The most prominent of this bunch was undoubtedly the young John Williams Walker, who made the most of the thriving new city. He studied law at Princeton and then began practicing in Petersburg, Georgia. But soon after, Leroy Pope and his Broad River partners, including Walker, moved to Huntsville where Walker bought a town lot and opened a law office. Like Pope, he took part in the speculative efforts of the Broad River group, buying land in and around Huntsville in addition to town lots in newly established Florence.²⁰

Also like his father-in-law, John Williams Walker became very involved and influential in local and state political matters. As early as 1810, Walker was nominated by the Broad River group for a position in the Mississippi Territorial Legislature along with Louis Winston and Peter Perkins, the latter a member of the Nashville group who by this time had aligned himself with the Georgia faction. But unlike future endeavors of the Broad River group, two of their nominees did not make the cut, including Walker. Their loss was not representative of the next decade, however, which granted Walker and his associates' great political success.

²⁰ Brewer, Willis. *Alabama, Her History, Resources, War Record and Public Men*. Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, Publishers, 1988. 353.; Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 45.

But the loss did foreshadow the political division that was slowing brewing in Huntsville.²¹

Just as the dichotomy of justices represented the social rift that was developing, so did this election reveal the same two divided groups. Opposing the Broad River group and using Pope's choice of Twickenham as the town name against him were Hugh McVay and Gabriel Moore. Moore was a new arrival, not aligned with either the powerful Nashville or Broad River groups while McVay was one of the original settlers in Huntsville who, like John Hunt, had squatted on the federal lands with hopes of one day owning it. These two men were both elected with Perkins to represent the county. McVay and Moore used the Broad River group's power grab in the area and Leroy Pope's name change of the town to vault them to election by the majority of yeomen farmer population who certainly held resentment for the new wealthy elite that barged into the area, taking their land and now the name of their settlement. And McVay and Moore pushed for retribution as the county's delegation, seeing the issue of the name brought forth and the city renamed Huntsville after John Hunt. This was an attempt to restore the original balance of power that was lost when the wealthy planters, merchants, and speculators, led by Leroy Pope, moved into Madison County. However, it was no more than a jab at the side of the powerful Broad River group and their elite alliances in the city. Pope and his associates would run the town for the next decade while the social stratification continued and the subsequent tension built.²²

²¹ Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 37.

²² Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 37-38.; Betts, Brigadier General E.C. *Early History of Huntsville, Alabama*. Huntsville: Minuteman Press, 1998. 32.;

Walker went on to lead the regional efforts to push Alabama to statehood by 1819. He did his part in initiating this process in the year prior when he sent correspondence to his close friend and Broad River ally, Charles Tait, a Georgia senator. In this correspondence, Walker urged Tait to request that the Alabama territory be reviewed for entry into the Union as a state. And with those pleas, Walker sent information collected by way of a census to accompany the effort, revealing to Congress the population and economic vitality of the territory. This bid for statehood was a successful one, as thirty delegates from twenty counties were meeting in the summer of 1819 to draft a state constitution.²³

The Broad River group reigned supreme in their representation at this event which shaped the state and displayed Huntsville's place therein. Huntsville and Madison County provided the most delegates with eight present. Huntsville also provided the location for deliberation in what is now known as Constitution Village. As for the Broad River group, Henry Chambers, John Williams Walker, John Taylor, and Thomas Bibb were all present from the faction. In addition, Clement C. Clay, a fellow lawyer friend of Walker's and associate of the group was also in attendance, representing Madison County. At the same time, Hugh McVay and Gabriel Moore were also representatives in attendance, still the driving forces for the interests of the small farmer. And what better display of the social and political situation at hand in Huntsville and the state, than to see John Williams Walker, son-in-law of Leroy Pope and key member of the Broad River group, sitting atop the

Alabama: The Sesquicentennial of Statehood. Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, 1996. 19.

²³ Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 37-38.

delegation of representatives as the convention president. This justly represents the power which the Broad River group had in constructing our state and its constitution, and it even more clearly illustrates the significance which Huntsville demanded under their guidance and leadership.²⁴

Walker remained at the helm of politics for the city and the state throughout his life. Prior to Alabama's acceptance into statehood, future president and General Andrew Jackson of Tennessee recommended John Williams Walker as the governor of the new territory, as he possessed the necessary "honesty & talents". However, Walker declined the position. He turned down a similar nomination by President James Monroe to make him the United States Attorney in the Alabama Territory following Mississippi's adoption as a state in 1817. Walker instead later ran and was elected as the new state's senator to serve Alabama in 1819 in Washington D.C. He was able to take the interests of Huntsville, Alabama, and his Broad River group to the nation's capital. In the new Alabama state capital, the newly elected governor was William Wyatt Bibb. Of course, Bibb was also a former resident of the Broad River region like his brother and future governor, Thomas Bibb, a close associate of Leroy Pope in his capacity as a fellow director of the Planters and Merchants Bank in Huntsville. So the Broad River group had spread their tentacles like an octopus into every level of political

²⁴ Rogers, William, and Robert Ward, Leah Atkins, and Wayne Flynt. *Alabama: the History of a Deep South State*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010. 61.; Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 47-48.

organization, pushing the interests of Huntsville and themselves within the state and the country.²⁵

As of 1818, Pope and the Broad River group had essentially organized and developed multiple towns within North Alabama, planted themselves firmly in the center of Huntsville's economy, politics, social life, and justice system, and created a bank in Huntsville that would give legs to the local economy that would have it propped up far above all others in Alabama. Huntsville had risen to the forefront in Alabama with speed unmatched by any before it. And at the heart of that rise, or possibly pushing from the back, was the Broad River Group. These former Georgia neighbors had simultaneously affected the adoption of the state of Alabama through their connections on the national level, and they then only upped their efforts in their leadership of the body of constitutional convention delegates. In almost every way, they placed Huntsville on the map for its economic and political success. But that success was soon to be tested. And the legs on which the bank had propped up Huntsville were soon to break and crumble, leaving the people of Huntsville looking away from Leroy Pope and the Broad River Group for their leadership and economic stability.

The positivity, prosperity, and opportunity of the eighteen tens were soon erased with the coming of the Panic of 1819, and much of the blame for the economic

²⁵ Record, James. *A Dream Come True*. Huntsville: John Hicklin Printing Company, 1970. 54,64.; *Alabama: The Sesquicentennial of Statehood*. Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, 1996. 32.; Taylor, Judge Thomas Jones. *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732-1840*. University: Confederate Publishing Company, 1976. 71.; Brewer, Willis. *Alabama, Her History: Resources, War Record and Public Men*. Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, Publishers, 1988. 353.

collapse that followed was due to the banking practices of the Broad River Group in Huntsville. The Panic of 1819 brought economic collapse and financial instability to nearly all of the United States much like the stock market crash of 1929 brought the Great Depression. At the heart of the financial disaster was the drop in the price of cotton. Cotton in Madison County saw a drop in value from 20-25 cents per pound to an all time low of 13 cents per pound on average. This drop in price came after the U.S. Treasury began limiting the number of bank notes in circulation and building up specie to stop the growing depreciation of bank notes. The formerly inflated values of cotton, land, and other goods dropped drastically with the sudden withdraw of available bank notes.²⁶

The devastation of that price drop was two-fold. Besides the initial drop in cotton value, a massive decrease in land value followed as a result. Logically, if land value was drawn from its ability to sustain valuable cotton growth, a drop in cotton prices would result in a weakening land value. As a result of this drop in land and cotton value, all of those speculators, planters, and yeomen farmers who had purchased property in the land sales of the previous decade or privately from other landholding individuals or groups found themselves at a loss, unable to make good on their debts. Massive amounts of money were still owed to the government as many land purchases were made in payments over a series of a few years, and many had only begun to pay those debts off. In addition, hopeful speculators who had sought large profits from land purchases along with middling and yeomen farmers who had sought to push themselves into the wealthier elite status through land purchases and cotton growth found themselves seriously

²⁶ Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 50.

indebted to banks such as the Planter's and Merchant's Bank. This is because many had come to the bank for loans on the eve of such events as the federal land sale of 1818 with stars in their eyes at the thought of turning around the heavy interest loans quickly, fueled by the sky-rocketing price of cotton.²⁷

While the bank was not responsible for the collapse of cotton and land value in 1819, they were certainly culpable for their hand in the massive prices of land sold, in addition to their unscrupulous lending practices. Many, if not most of the lenders were involved in the speculative land companies that drove up the prices of land around the time of the land sales in 1818 and previous years. The bank itself encouraged such practices. They each participated in competitive bidding wars that, in addition to driving out original settlers whose subsistence practices didn't provide enough money for them to purchase land and stay, also drove the prices through the roof for those who decided to take the risk and acquire a loan just to purchase land. Good land sold at the federal land sale for as much as \$50-100 per acre while average land brought a price of \$20-30 per acre. If you will recall, Leroy Pope paid what was then an outrageous amount of money at \$23 per acre for his downtown lots in the federal land sale of 1809. The set minimum for this new acreage to sell was a mere \$2 per acre, but speculative fever dashed those smaller prices and with them the hope of hundreds of yeomen and subsistence farmers looking for more.²⁸

²⁷ Taylor, Judge Thomas Jones. *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732-1840*. University: Confederate Publishing Company, 1976. 27.

²⁸ Abernethy, Thomas Perkins. *The Formative Period in Alabama, 1815-1828*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1990. 68.; Taylor, Judge Thomas Jones. *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732-1840*. University: Confederate Publishing Company, 1976. 32-33.

But to find the key to the Planter's and Merchant's Bank and the Broad River group's involvement in the mess, a closer eye must be paid to the work of the legal efforts of John Williams Walker in 1818. That year, John Williams Walker and his fellow lawyer and bank director, Clement C. Clay, spearheaded an effort to repeal the 1805 Mississippi Usury Act. The law prohibited outrageous interest rates on private loans, setting the cap at 8% interest. Walker and Clay pushed a motion through to repeal the bill in the Alabama Territorial legislature. This repeal had disastrous effects. It allowed creditors within private loans to place any interest rate on the borrowed amount that they so chose. Walker and Clay both stood to profit greatly along with the other members of the Planter's and Merchant's Bank. With land and cotton prices at an all time high, citizens of the county were not intimidated by the massive interest rates then applied, but rather, they made full use of the available money in the federal land sale of 1818. John Williams Walker even commented in a letter to his friend, Georgia senator Charles Tait, that "30 to 40% could be got" for loaned money. In just one of countless examples of this terrible policy, a man acquired a loan of only \$4,200 but owed \$24,570 after four years due to interest. At that point, loans became yet another speculative tool which anyone come use to turn a serious profit so long as the market remained healthy.²⁹

The problem, of course, is that the market did not remain healthy and this legislation eventually became the arrow that pierced the side of the debtor, leaving him in deep debt to the creditor for an outrageous amount of interest on top of an already large principal balance. And

²⁹ John Williams Walker. Letter to Charles Tait. September 22, 1818. Tait Family Papers, ADAH Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 87.

with the value of cotton and land dropping to less than half of what it had been, paying off that amount of money was impossible for most. While other western states were hit hard with the Panic of 1819, Madison County was the worst off of any region in the Union, defaulting on a considerably larger percentage of land purchased from the federal government than anywhere else. And this was due in large part to the added debt and pressure applied by high interest loans following the repeal of the Usury Act. As late as 1820, seven western states owed over 21 million to the federal government, with half of that debt being in Alabama and 6 million on Huntsville citizens alone. There are countless cases of people losing their land and money to boot. But the damage was not isolated to planters and small farmers. Indeed, merchants were hit first as they were holding mass amounts of cotton fresh from Huntsville's market en route to be sold at other national markets. Two well established merchant houses fell almost immediately under the pressures of the economic collapse, one being Leroy Pope's own son, Willis Pope. Taylor and Foote was another Huntsville mercantile firm that had just overextended themselves before the value of cotton collapsed, and they were stuck with the loss. The amount of cotton they had just purchased was the largest on their books to that point, a risk taken for the chance of similarly large profits from the soaring cotton prices. But eating the loss was more than the firm could manage, and they had to sell off everything, including a personal town house.³⁰

Over seven million dollars of land were sold in the federal land sale of 1818. But of that, only about one and a half million were paid initially. And not much more of that seven million was ever seen by the federal

³⁰ Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 51-53, 101.

government. In addition, most of the initial payments were made in Mississippi scrip. This was equally bad news for the success of the contracts as the scrip and banknotes used from Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, and eventually Huntsville all depreciated with the events that unfolded in the Panic of 1819 due to the run on banks for specie payments. Consequently, nearly all banks, including the Planter's and Merchant's Bank, eventually suspended specie payments.³¹

The initial result of the economic collapse of the Panic in Huntsville and Madison County was the loss of the previous decade's air of positivity, prosperity, and progress. Historians theorize that the citizenry lost their sense of control and mastery over their own lives and destiny. While the years prior promised the opportunity for each man to carve out his own piece of the pie, the Panic rendered the people impotent and powerless for their inability to make good on debts and build wealth for the future. The situation was so grim for one Huntsville citizen, Llewellyn Jones, that he hung himself on the rafters of his newly built home. As seen in the pages of the *Alabama Republican*, many called on informal debts and obligations to be resolved for the sake of making good on others. A majority of the citizenry were anxious of their entire holdings being auctioned off at sheriff sales for the repayment of debt which they could not manage to settle.³²

This time of strife and fear following the Panic of 1819 is the key to understanding the most lasting effect which the Broad River group had on Huntsville and the state, and it similarly had major effects on the future success of the group. While the Panic of 1819 was by no

³¹ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

³² Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 6-7,57,62.; *Alabama Republican*, 1819.

means entirely the fault of the Broad River group or their Planter's and Merchant's Bank, they certainly deepened the disastrous effects of the event in Huntsville and Madison County by way of their lending practices and push of speculative efforts. Regardless of fault, when people are hurting and wounded, they tend to seek out an offender to be made the enemy. In this case, the Planters and Merchants Bank and the Broad River group along with their fellow bank directors of different origins became the offender and subsequently the enemy. This was a rather logical conclusion, whether justified or not. The fact was that much of the outrageous and inflated debt was due to either the Planters and Merchants Bank or its board members, therein including key members of the Broad River group.

Aiding this new war against the bank, its directors, and the Georgia faction was the work of William Long, editor of the Huntsville newspaper entitled the *Democrat*. Long took to the pages of his paper in 1823 with hopes of squashing this group, whom he referred to as the Royal Party. This should draw back memories of the aforementioned name of Pope's group of associates from Georgia, satirically referred to as the Royal Family. Long waged a war of words against the Royal Party and their newspaper defender, the *Alabama Republican*. His enflamed and emotional rhetoric was no doubt influential among the lower classes of Huntsville as the language was superbly strong and poignant. It is reminiscent of political radio talk show hosts of today. Indeed, the rhetoric is similar to many of their arguments. From the very beginning, Long makes his intentions known by stating that he intended to destroy the bank and expose the Royal Party, protecting Huntsville's common man from the "nobility". He claimed himself a champion for the common man, fighting the monied aristocracy whom he claimed, "hesitate not to sacrifice upon the

altars of their unhallowed ambition, everything that stands in the way of their exaltation.”³³

In reply, John Boardman, editor of the *Alabama Republican*, provided an avenue by which readers could write in to defend the bank and its practices as he did. In reference to efforts such as those by Boardman, Long wrote, “With a yielding sycophantic, accommodating spirit, he could bow to, and lick the feet of the monied aristocracy of the country, and for a few pieces of silver, betray, and sell to them, the honest, unsuspecting multitude.”³⁴ As is more than obvious here, the social and political dichotomy previously mentioned is becoming more and more clear and distinguished here in the early 1820s.

A social and political rift had developed and grown from the arrival of Pope and the Broad River group up to the post Panic years. This rift, or dichotomy, was composed of two opposing social classes, each with their own individual pursuits and perspectives on issues. On the one hand was the Broad River group and the social elite of Huntsville who made up what would become known as the Whig Party. And on the other hand was the class of the yeomen farmer and the populists that would make up the Democratic Party. The arrival of Leroy Pope and company into North Alabama initiated much of the social division with their political and economic power grab upon entry and settlement in Huntsville. They furthered that process of division in the

³³ Abernethy, Thomas Perkins. *The Formative Period in Alabama, 1815-1828*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1990. 116-117, 135.; *The Democrat*. October, 1823.; Rogers, William, and Robert Ward, Leah Atkins, and Wayne Flynt. *Alabama: the History of a Deep South State*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010. 79.

³⁴ *The Democrat*. October 21, 1823.; Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 79.

development of a planter society in Huntsville that created an ever growing gulf between the common yeomen or middling farmer and the elite planter and merchant elite with their town homes and vast plantations. The process was only spurred by the Panic of 1819 when the Broad River group and the bank became the enemy for the extreme financial pressure they placed on many in the town. Simultaneously, Long and the *Democrat* rallied the voices and efforts of the downtrodden and debt ridden masses in opposition to the elitist Royal Party and their bank. Boardman's passive defenses of the group in his *Alabama Republican* were ineffective in quelling the outrage, and did little to nothing to stop Long and company with his emotionally charged rhetoric from blowing the gulf wide open between the two, now very distinct, social classes and assisting in the creation of class conflict. Following the end of the *Alabama Republican*, a new Huntsville paper picked up where Boardman left off upon resignation in 1825. This paper, known as the *Southern Advocate* provided the radical rhetorical opposition to Long that the *Alabama Republican* had failed to do for so long. To give you an exemplary sample of the inflammatory writing style, the *Advocate* reports in 1825 that the Kelly-Long faction are a "violent gentry" who "render republican service with their lips, while their hearts are inflamed with the fires of anarchy." Here, the *Alabama Republican* claims that Long with his associate William Kelly, a Huntsville lawyer unaligned with the Broad River group, speak out against the elite of Huntsville to incite a popular revolt. This only further accentuated the division and delineated the desires of the two opposing Huntsville parties that had arisen out of the verbal gunfire.³⁵

³⁵ *Southern Advocate*. May 27, 1825.; Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge:

The social division of the previous decade took a very political turn in the 1820s thanks to the actions of the Broad River group and the Planter's and Merchant's Bank during and after the Panic of 1819 along with the advent of the politically charged newspapers. The issues of the bank and land relief became the talking points of two different political efforts following the Panic. Initially, the members of the Broad River group were focused on several key points. They wanted to see internal improvements such as a canal in Muscle Shoals to make shipping of cotton and other goods to market cheaper. In addition, they were against a valuation law that would serve as a relief for many landowners' issues of debt. Despite the pleas for such relief by his friends John M. Taylor and Larkin Newby, John Williams Walker opposed any such relief because he believed it risked an onslaught on the economy that would weaken the social order. He sought to preserve the rights of the creditor. The last concern of the group was the preservation of the bank through its ability to remain in private control and suspend specie payments as long as necessary. In stark contrast, the rapidly developing populist party in Huntsville (the Democrats) was focused on the reverse side of those issues. Their first sticking point was the need for land and debt relief, and the second was the sure destruction of the bank (likely in part due to the enflaming words of Long). From the Panic of 1819 onward, the Broad River group and the Planter's and Merchant's Bank was fighting a losing battle due to the strength and size of the planter and farmer population in Huntsville. Despite concerns about the sanctity of legal binding contracts voiced by readers such as "Old School" of the *Alabama Republican* in the debt and land relief debate, both were eventually granted in different forms. The federal government gave way on pleas for

land relief, allowing indebted farmers to buy back land at cheaper rates and relinquish some land as payment for other. They also dismissed cases of extreme debt acquired through creditor's interest rates after the cases were seen in the Alabama Supreme Court from 1825-1827. William Kelly, lawyer and friend of William Long, represented the debtors in those cases against the creditors, who were represented by none other than bank director and Broad River ally Clement C. Clay.³⁶

At the same time, Royal Party patriarch and Planter's and Merchant's Bank President Leroy Pope lost his good name with his former Broad River neighbors, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury William Crawford and Alabama state governors William and Thomas Bibb in 1819 and 1820, respectively. This loss of alliances was because of his refusal to resume specie payments at the bank and his hand in the devastation the North Alabama economy with the Usury Law. While John Williams Walker, David Moore, and Clement C. Clay all later ran and acquired public office, they each in some way distanced themselves from the issues that arose with the bank and the Royal Party. David Moore went so far as to vote against fellow bank director Henry Chambers in favor of the opposition's leading candidate, William Kelly, for the U.S. Senate seat. C.C. Clay, along with others, later attempted to fashion himself a man of the people much like Andrew Jackson, and it was met with some success as he was politically active in the decade that followed. Regardless, the accusations against the group that were made visible in Long's writings became

³⁶ Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 89-90, 107-108.; John M. Taylor. Letter to John Williams Walker. December 8, 1819, January 26, 1820. Walker Papers.; John Williams Walker. Letter to Larkin Newby. April 1, 1804. Larkin Newby Papers, DU.; *Alabama Republican*. July 28, 1820.

the rallying cry against any politician with any association with the Broad River group or the Planter's and Merchant's Bank. In the end, the self proclaimed leader of a populist majority in the state, Israel Pickens won the election for the governor's office in his defeat of bank director and Broad River ally Henry Chambers, signaling the end of the Planter's and Merchant's Bank and moreover, the dominance of the Broad River group and its allies. Pickens took issue as Crawford did with the Huntsville bank not resuming specie payments and gave an ultimatum in the form of a legislative act in 1823 for Pope to lift the suspension of those payments or face forfeiture of the bank's charter. After two years of noncompliance, the bank's charter was forfeited on February 15th, 1825.³⁷

While the Broad River group lost its political, economic, and social grip on Huntsville and the state with the effects of the Panic of 1819, they had provided an antithesis and an enemy to the populist Democratic party that emerged politically in the 1820s. And that emergence was due greatly to the group's actions in that decade and the one previous. So over the course of nearly twenty years, the Broad River group and its allies slowly effected the creation and evolution of a two party political system in Huntsville and Alabama through social and economic conflict and division. Out of the events of the 1810s and 1820s, led and impacted by the Broad River group, the Democratic and Whig parties emerged. The Whig party was that of the Broad River group and its elite ally

³⁷ Rogers, William, and Robert Ward, Leah Atkins, and Wayne Flynt. *Alabama: the History of a Deep South State*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010. 80.; Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 94.; Taylor, Judge Thomas Jones. *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama. 1732-1840*. University: Confederate Publishing Company, 1976. 50.

planters and merchants, with its defender in the *Alabama Republican*. And the Democratic Party was the champion of the common man, led in Huntsville by William Long, William Kelly, and the *Democrat*, poised against the Whig elites.³⁸

The Broad River group fundamentally changed the fabric of Huntsville and the state as a whole. They transformed Huntsville from a pioneering frontier of yeomen subsistence squatters into the economic, social, and political epicenter of Alabama in the first ten years upon their arrival. With the leadership of Leroy Pope, the group initiated the development of a town that would lead the territory to statehood and national representation. That same leadership and group of allies guided Huntsville on its crash course to economic collapse out of which the group came to its inevitable demise as a powerful entity. But through that success and subsequent failure, Leroy Pope and his allies drove a stake through the political and social unity of the city, region, and state. And in that capacity, Pope and his Broad River group were the ultimate catalyst for the creation of a two party political system in Huntsville and Alabama in the 1820s.

³⁸ Dupre, Daniel. *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997. 6-7.

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