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From the President:

T minus six months.

It's now six months until the culmination of Alabama's Bicentennial Celebration – the December 14 anniversary of the day in 1819 that, in Huntsville, Alabama became a state.

Six months, and counting.

Of course, for those who like countdowns, there's another milestone coming up even sooner. Next month will mark the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing, Apollo 11. Huntsville had a little something to do with that one, too.

All that to say, right now is a great time to love history.

Because those anniversaries are being celebrated. Big time.

Right now, you can go to the Huntsville Museum of Art and see that original 1819 constitution that made Alabama a state. You can go to the U.S. Space & Rocket Center and hear panels with the engineers that made the moon landing happen.

You can ... Well, you can do a lot of things. This letter's too short to list them. Go

to <https://www.huntsville.org/alabama-bicentennial/> or <https://www.huntsville.org/apollo-50th-anniversary/> to see the full lists.

Point being, you should seize this amazing moment, and take advantage of the great opportunities taking place in our community.

But not right now. Right now, you should keep reading the document in your hand.

Keep reading, and you'll read about how Huntsville's history is being preserved for future generations with the Sunken Sidewalk Project on the courthouse

square. You'll read about President Monroe's visit to Huntsville 200 years ago that's being celebrated as part of the Bicentennial. You'll read about the Bell Factory and Huntsville's Civil Rights history and Senator Clement Claiborne Clay.

You'll be glad you did. And, when you finish, then you can go celebrate.

Have a great 2019.

This is history.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Hitt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Hitt
President
Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society

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Huntsville's 19th Century: Revealing a Treasure Downtown

By Carol Codori



What is under this old box?

The top was cloudy. The frame was crumbling. Bent nails were gathering inside. Since 1974 it sat in front of the public law library at 205 East Side Square. How could one predict the challenges to revealing the treasure below?

The answers would harken to Huntsville's architectural roots. Our project involved researching the old box and what it covered, then creating a new sentry. Now a local historic site will be guarded for many years to come. Our small group of citizens hereby offers its renewal in celebration of Alabama's Bicentennial, 1819-2019.



What is under the new frame?

At left, designer-fabricator-installer Berry Baugh Allen inspects the new railing that surrounds an old herringbone-pattern sidewalk. The red clay bricks form a rectangle two feet wide by five feet long. They rest approximately 18 inches below the present pavement. We'll show the bricks clearly at the end of the article. But first, let's learn about the side-

walk's history.

Old Sidewalk, Part 1

What follows is not only the sidewalk's story; it's also the story of how a 21st century team preserved this bit of 19th century Huntsville. We scanned scores of photos of downtown from the 1800s, found in books and prints. We read newspaper citations and spoke to knowledgeable citizens. We opened the old box and pulled up a brick. Each source helped us learn more about the sidewalk's age.

Our research suggests that the sidewalk could date about 1869, making it 150 years old. Digging the clay and firing the bricks could have been done even earlier. By our estimate, laying them could have occurred 50 years after the State's founding in 1819. The sidewalk could be marking its own sesquicentennial during Alabama's 200th birthday in 2019.

Photos of the East Side Square vicinity before the mid-1800s show dirt streets and what appear to be either gravel or brick walkways bounded by wooden frames. Subsequent paving probably covered the gravel and then the bricks by the late 1890s, when the advent of street cars called for improving downtown. The original street level rose steadily; the original sidewalk became hidden under layers of fill. (1)

The Architect's Role

Our team studied signage on the old box, which was designed by the architectural firm Jones and Herrin. The firm's late partner was Huntsville's renowned architect-preservationist, Harvie Jones. He spearheaded the placement of our antebellum railroad depot on Church Street on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971. His prolific career included the development of Alabama Constitution Hall Park, known locally as Huntsville's Constitution Village, on Gates Avenue—our open-air historical museum that shows life in 1819. He would have reached a very solid estimate when he wrote that “early to mid-1800s” marked the sidewalk's era.

He took photos of numerous brick walks in front of pre-1840s homes in the Twickenham and Old Towne neighborhoods. These may have been laid at the time of construction in the early 1800s, or removed and re-laid later. Some old bricks had buckled from roots in the ground under-neath, and some modern bricks had replaced them. Mr. Jones would have seen a difference in the consistency of their shapes.

Mr. Jones' archives, now housed at University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH), also contain architectural drawings. We were excited to locate those for a

“Sidewalk Well” dated 1974. His drawings gave measurements and materials for the interior and exterior of the old J.C. Penney Company department store had occupied the white tile-front building from 1931 until 1966 (2), directly behind where the box was located.

The Madison County Commission purchased the building after Penney’s closed. Mr. Jones’s firm was hired to create a design for renovations that took place in 1973. The building then served as the Elbert G. Parsons Law Library until it was sold in late 2017 to Mitchell and Melanie Howie. This background helped explain how the sidewalk was uncovered.

Mr. Jones had designed a cityscape plan for downtown. It included new sidewalks and several brick gazebos, one of which still stands near the steps leading to Big Spring, on West Side Square. During the law library’s renovation, he had the resources to dig up the slab pavement, locate the old sidewalk, and block out a supporting well. He based the time span of the bricks’ age on his photos and on the depth of the bricks below the present concrete walk.

The Archeologist’s Role



*Ben Hoksbergen
lifting a brick
from the old
sidewalk.*

Mr. Jones also wrote text for signage noting the sidewalk was “laid directly on the earth.” This seemed totally reasonable, because early photos show a packed dirt street on East Side Square. In early 2018, Ben Hoksbergen, Archeologist of Redstone Arsenal, opened the box’s bent frame, jumped in with the cobwebs, and carefully pried up a brick.

He quickly confirmed the bricks were handmade. They were shaped from area clay, probably from a local farm or possibly even from the banks of Ditto Landing, then fired in a local kiln. They're not uniform and have no imprint. This indicated they were hand packed in simple molds. A raw edge would have faced the fire in the kiln.

Ben explained that the "...most thoroughly-fired bricks were usually selected for paver bricks for their hardness, but the interiors of the bricks still tend to be softer, so even through the surface is worn...avoid damaging the surface patina, as this could cause more rapid deterioration." He noted that more uniform factory bricks, stamped with the name of the maker, did not appear until the end of the 1800s.

In March, Ben returned to make soil probes. The little plugs were about the size of a ring finger. They showed distinct layers of red Stet—clearly the clay composition of our geographic area. (3) It did seem then that we'd hit bare earth, which supported Mr. Jones's statement that the bricks were laid directly there.

However, several months after his initial probes Ben had an opportunity to explore the basement of the I. Schiffman building, at 231 East Side Square. It sits at the head of the now-built up street, directly above the old sidewalk at 205. He noted that in comparison to our earlier direct access to the dirt under the bricks, "...There weren't any nice soil profile exposures, but the depth of the basement and the dirt floor made me suspect that bedrock was deeper than our probes indicated. I wonder if the red clay below the brick was in fact fill, and the impermeable rock we hit was a layer of gravel or rubble in the fill, instead of bedrock. Impossible to tell at this point without a thorough

excavation, but I would avoid saying that the bricks were placed directly on natural ground.”

Or might the bricks have been laid directly on an earlier gravel walk, one that seems to appear in pre-1860s photos? We’d been asked by passers-by if a longer portion of the same old sidewalk continued as far as the corner of Randolph Street, under the full length of East Side Square. As Ben says, impossible to tell.

The Archives’ Role

As a new covering structure for the old sidewalk took shape in 2017-2018, the team’s historical research continued. In archival sources, we looked for general items on bricks from the 1820s forward. We saw scores of advertisements for businesses of all kinds—candlemakers, shoemakers, watchmakers, music makers—as well as requests for proposals to build roads. (4) But no ads directly mentioned masons or brick laying. Ben had similar lack of luck when he searched old deeds for any word of downtown sidewalk improvements.

This doesn’t reflect the numerous sources of bricks dating from Huntsville’s earliest days. We know that local plantations made their own bricks, for example at the McCrary Farm in nearby New Market. It’s dated as the oldest continuously-operating Alabama farm, owned in the same family for over 200 years. The house was built “using bricks which were made on the farm by slaves. The art of homemade brick production, of course, had been well known and practiced for many centuries. It was not high tech; unskilled labor could easily master most of the steps, but it was laborious to the extreme. It was the firing of the bricks in a

homemade, wood-fired kiln, following an earlier air-drying process, that required skill. ..." (5)

Many of our finest antebellum homes date after the arrival of the brothers Thomas and William Brandon in 1810, "...with no property except their trowels and great skill in their trade," (6) and designer-builder George Steele in 1818. They would have established yards and other sources to meet their brick demands. Steele himself held a deed dated 1822 for his "George Steele's brick yard." (7) Resident Adam Hall of Washington Street obtained permission in 1828 "to make and burn a brick kiln" on property now occupied by him "as a Wagon Yarn" (sic). (8)

Dating the Old Sidewalk, Part 2

Consider also the need for bricks in the decades before and after a new sidewalk could have appeared. (9) The years preceding the Civil War were a time of church building downtown. The first Church of the Nativity building at 208 Eustis Avenue was of brick, and the first service in its present main sanctuary, also of brick, was held on Easter Eve 1859. A year later the First Presbyterian Church at 307 Gates Avenue dedicated its new brick structure in May 1860.

The Union Army occupied the city for most of the war years, 1861-1865. Due to Huntsville's value as a railroad center, homes and commercial buildings avoided major destruction. Nonetheless residents experienced many privations and indignities. Homes were commandeered for headquarters. Troops were encamped around town, and some were quartered in churches.

After 1865, bricks played an important role in reclaiming at least two houses of worship. The First

Methodist Church on 120 Green Street was rebuilt and dedicated in August 1867. This was necessary after January 1864, when Federal troops quartered in the basement set fires on the wooden floor to cook their food.

In 1872 St. Bartley's Primitive Baptist Church was constructed on the South Side of Williams Street. The building was erected to replace the church's first building, burned by Union troops. (10) The current church is located at 3020 Belafonte Avenue. St. Bartley's is recognized as the oldest African American congregation in Alabama, as well as one of the oldest African American congregations in the United States.

A proper sidewalk would have been welcome among churchgoers, merchants, and school children who would be walking there in the late 1850s through the early 1870s. Sunday strollers recently had learned from the *Alabama Republican* newspaper of September 3, 1869, that "Brick-laying commenced on the Holding, Hundley-Fletcher Blocks on the East Side of the Courthouse Square." (11)

After finding this item, our team felt that the bricks could rest in good company. We had validated the era of the old walkway, if not its exact age. We had learned how the bricks were made. We had discovered how the bricks were revealed. We therefore declared victory on 1869 as the sidewalk's birth date and moved on.

Teamwork Supports a New Frame

The broken covering box at 205 East Side Square clearly needed help. But how to go about preserving and displaying the old sidewalk beneath? Fortunately, our team already knew citizen-historians who could guide us. Members of the Huntsville-Madison Historical

Society wrote extensively on local history. The Historic Huntsville Foundation (HHF) promoted the protection of historically significant sites. John Allen, past president of the Society, introduced us to Donna Castellano, executive director of HHF. At her suggestion, we reached out to selected city staff. In short order, the right energy began to merge.

When our team got together in 2018, we decided we wanted to create a new structure in time for Huntsville's celebrations of the Alabama Bicentennial in 2019. First the old box definitely had to be removed. It was not only a sad sight; it was also a safety hazard, with jagged edges and rusty rails. We'd need the city's permission to tear it down and rebuild. That given, they asked us mirror the city's black benches, with their matching rosettes and scrolls. That's where artist Berry Allen would add his creative touch. We'd need sponsors and researchers. We'd need communicators.

For the City, several departments rallied to the cause. Joy McKee, of Operation Green Team, brought Richard Wilkinson of Public Works and Jeff Taylor of Facilities to the site. With their teams, they supported in-kind costs for design meetings, scheduling, fencing, and labor for the tear-down and removal. With Berry, they determined that a course of three bricks outside the well should remain in place, to support a new structure. These modern bricks were now well-seasoned since their placement in 1974. The same type of brick had been laid inside the well, and they too would remain. The handmade bricks farther below would not be disturbed.

As key partners, the Society and HHF shared the main funding. Citizens donated too. With David Hitt as president, the Society served as administrative umbrella. Deane Dayton, John Rankin, Jacque Reeves,

and Nancy Rohr pointed us to key sources. Shalis Worthy, Archivist of the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library, gave us access to special files. As noted above, Ben Hoksbergen served as our archeologist.

Vaughn Bocchino, graduate of the UAH master's program in public history and Salmon Library archivist, created historically accurate wording for the sidewalk's new signage. It would now read "In the mid-1800s, masons sculpted local clay into these bricks and created this sidewalk. It sits approximately 18 inches below the present walk, level with the original street. What once served as a humble walkway for farmers, merchants and pedestrians now links you to Huntsville's past and to all those who trod where you are currently standing."

Vaughn also had located the original design drawings for the old box, the sidewalk well described above. Later, while helping us digitize old photos at the main library, Shalis suggested an important lead to David Ely of KPS Group, the successor firm to Jones and Herrin. He confirmed Mr. Jones's excavation work. He also offered solutions to some condensation and lighting challenges we were having after the initial installation.

To generate community awareness, we used social media and print, and the personal touch. Vaughn created an early Facebook page for the project, which we dubbed "SOS: saving our sidewalk." Beth Thames of AL.com edited the new signage. Cathey Carney of Old Huntsville Magazine published a two-page article in September 2018. David Hitt tweeted about the sidewalk on Twitter, @HistoryHsv and published updates in the Society's quarterly newsletter. Jennifer Purser of Wolfhart Creative took photos for print outreach, including this article. She also updated social media

with photos of our progress on Instagram, @publichistoryplaceoldhuntsville.



Berry Allen fits a rosette into metal scroll.

Sally Warden, local bicentennial committee executive director, shared sidewalk progress, among other events, at a well-attended press conference in December 2018. The sidewalk was approved as a state Bicentennial activity and listed on the official website Alabama200.org. By press time, we were planning a community “reveal” as part of Huntsville’s annual This Place Matters campaign in May 2019.

The Artist’s Role

As it’s been described so far, the project may sound linear. But as with all creative work, it definitely was not. The team faced road blocks, then worked busy weeks to catch up. In summer 2018, Berry while on our “critical path,” seriously sprained his hand. He caught it lifting the new frame’s heavy steel cage, while welding it at his metal and ceramic studio, Baugh Art in Huntsville’s Old Towne.

Berry came to our attention through his work in the lobby of Belk-Hudson Lofts at 110 Washington St. His enormous coffee table top is made of a glass-inlaid cement slab from the former Huntsville Times Building, at the corner of Holmes and Green Streets. The glass circles, called vault lights, allowed light into the basement. Given his active client list, we were pleased

when he agreed to help reveal the old sidewalk as a new creative challenge.

Berry donated scores of his skilled labor hours, in addition to holding technical meetings with city staff. He re-measured and special-ordered materials to meet new specifications, including those of the Americans with Disabilities Act. That law passed in 1990, sixteen years after the old box was designed, and much had changed. The new frame would allow viewing from wheel chairs. Its railings would be closely spaced. Its top would include padding under half-inch thick tempered glass. The glass is nearly 60 inches long by 35 inches wide, weighing almost 40 pounds. It would require seven lengths of aluminum frame, totaling almost 90 feet.



The old sidewalk's herringbone pattern emerges during construction of its new aluminum frame.

Berry remembered sitting on the old sidewalk box as a kid in the early 1980s, watching downtown parades. He recalls it with an initial beehive-curved plastic top, later with successive flat lids inside an added-on rectangular frame. As a boy he rode by on his bike many times; he sadly watched it decay over the years.

He returned to Huntsville from his earlier career years to continue his commitments to both art and public history. You

can see his sculpture at the Huntsville Botanical Garden and in commissions around town. It ranges from ornate garden gates through elegant dinnerware in private homes.

Berry told me that the new sidewalk structure was not his largest nor most lucrative contract. But he considers it his most important work to date. Fittingly, it is Berry who created this functional and elegant form. What a complement to our city and to our team. What a complement to state in its Bicentennial year. And what a fitting way to end our tale of revealing downtown's 19th century treasure--the humble brick walkway that links us to Huntsville's past.

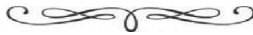
Next Steps: You Can Help

At press time, Berry was designing additional venting of the well's frame, to solve the problems of interior condensation. The current hidden grates are not yet sufficient: the old bricks and ground naturally release moisture. The temperatures of the warmer air in the interior and the colder air above the glass combine to create water droplets. In summer, these usually dispel by noon to give a clear view. But in the less-sunny winter, the sidewalk can be harder to see.

We have ordered the final metal signage and scheduled its installation during a first quarterly maintenance in spring 2019. We'll unlock the frame and lift the heavy top. Then we'll clean the glass and wipe on a rain repellent so the condensation can drain better. We're also considering a solar fan with additional photocells. And we're still hoping to wire a spotlight through the lamp post, with a timer that turns on at dark.

The project is costing over \$5,000—with generous contributions so far by the Society and HHF. Thanks also for generous in-kind labor and resources from the city’s Green Team, Public Works, and Facilities departments. You too can help maintain the sidewalk and create materials to share its legacy. Volunteers to our team are most welcome.

Thank you for supporting our work, so that a new generation of citizens can continue to enjoy the old sidewalk. To make a tax-deductible contribution, send a check made out to Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, and marked “sidewalk,” to HMCHS, Box 666, Huntsville, AL 35804.



Notes

1. Fred B. Simpson, *Huntsville: Then and Now: A Walk Through Downtown* (Huntsville: Triangle Publishing Company, 2002), 75-76, 64.
2. Simpson, *Huntsville: Then and Now*, 72.
3. Gwen Heeney, *Brickworks* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 16.
4. Sarah Huff Fisk Collection, Special Collections Department, Downtown Huntsville Library, Huntsville, Alabama.
5. Joseph M. Jones, *The Wondrous McCrarys: Alabama Pioneers: Same Family, Same Farm, 200 Years* (Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012), 19.
6. Judge Thomas Jones Taylor, *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732-1840* (University: Confederate Publishing Company, 1976), 41.

7. F. Charles Vaughn, Jr., "George Steele: Architect and Builder of the Nineteenth Century" in *The Huntsville Historical Review* (Huntsville: The Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, January-April 1983, vol.13, nos.1-2), 3-4.
8. Huntsville City Meeting Minutes, May 24, 1828, 2018-102, Box 4, Folder 44, Sarah Huff Fisk Collection, Special Collections Department, Downtown Huntsville Library, Huntsville, Alabama.
9. Huntsville/Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau, *Foundations of Faith: Houses of Worship over 100 Years Old* (Huntsville: H-MCC&VB, 2017).
10. Ranee' G. Pruitt, ed., *Eden of the South: A Chronology of Huntsville, Alabama, 1805-2005* (Huntsville: Huntsville-Madison County Public Library, 2005), 70.
11. Pruitt, *Eden*, 66.

Author note:

Many of our city's oldest brick sidewalks are starting to wear and bulge. Take a stroll down Franklin, Adams, or Holmes to see them before they might go away. You can study the homes in Old Towne to see differences in handmade and modern bricks. Or just learn more about our local and Madison County history in brick by walking the Downtown Huntsville and Twickenham Trail at www.hmchs.info/mkrs.

You also might drive to nearby sites, such as the old beehive kiln at Brickyard Landing Marina in Decatur. Look inside to see the heat marks on the walls and ceiling. On the way, stop at the Old Church in Mooresville to notice how symmetrical handmade bricks

can be. Or pay your respects at the Athens cemetery grave of General Hiram H. Higgens, a brick mason who organized a company that fought in the War for Southern Independence known as the Confederate Brick.

For much more about historic brick manufacturing, go to the website: www.brickcollecting.com/history.

Meet the author:

Dr. Carol Codori turned her attention to local history after retiring from the Missile Defense Agency in 2008. She currently serves on the boards of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, the Historic Huntsville Foundation and is a former president of the Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table.

A native of Gettysburg, PA, she is a Friend of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and during the annual Athens Cemetery Stroll, Dr. Codori portrays the granddaughter of Nick Davis and daughter of Judge George Washington Lane, Kate Lane Towns, who lived in Huntsville during the Union Occupation. Dr. Codori holds a Ph.D. from Stanford University.

Bell Factory And The Mill Industry in Madison County

By Sara Curtis



The Bell Factory

The Bell Factory in Madison County imparted a significant historical legacy in local and state history as the earliest important textile mill in Madison County and Alabama. It stood ten miles northeast of Huntsville on the Flint River, a short distance south of Winchester Road on Bell Factory Road. After the Bell factory's incorporation in 1832 it operated until about 1885 except for a brief period during the Civil War.

Raw cotton was plentiful in the pioneer days of Madison County and for years afterward. Converting the ginned cotton into marketable merchandise was the next step. E. C. Betts, in his *Early History of Huntsville*, 1916, found that: "The most noteworthy single industrial development of the times was the 'Bell Factory.'" This was the first plant which converted the

raw cotton product into yarn and cloth for large scale commercial purposes. *The New Orleans Times-Picayune* of 18 Sep 1849 proclaimed “The first samples of Southern manufacture ever sent, it was believed, to the New Orleans market, consisted of cottonades, gingham, osnaburgs, drillings, sail duck, bed ticking, striped shirting, etc., from the ‘Bell factory,’ Huntsville, Alabama, and were available to dry goods merchants at Messrs. Fearn, Donegan & Co.”

- Source: Betty Perine Historic Huntsville Collection,
http://huntsvillehistorycollection.org/hh/index.php?title=Bell_Factory_Textile_Mill

In the early 1800s Madison County’s territorial land sales, rich soil for abundant cotton production, rivers for water power and transportation, and businessmen to establish gins and mills, resulted in the manufacture of the textile. In 1808, Madison County was created by the governor of the Mississippi territory who named it after President James Madison (1751-1836). To raise money for its development, the U.S. government almost immediately ordered land sales in the northern part of Alabama Territory. In 1811 the land office was moved from Nashville to Huntsville, attracting many people from the eastern states to buy land in the Tennessee Valley. Hunt's Spring and the surrounding acreage were bought at a price of \$23 an acre by the influential Georgian capitalist LeRoy Pope. As a result of his efforts, the settlement was selected as County seat and its name changed to Twickenham - after the English town

his forefathers came from. But, in 1811 the territorial legislature decided to revert to the old name Huntsville.

- Source: Mrs. Elfriede Richter Haaser, “Madison County History,” *Huntsville, Alabama* <http://www.madisoncountyal.gov/government/about-your-county/history> (accessed 09 December 2017), 1

During the early 1800s in Huntsville, milling establishments began, prior to the Bell Factory. The Barren Forks of the Flint River provided water power for the development of initial milling operations. Historically, the cotton milling industry was a home based, cottage industry with family members as workers. The mills progressed from small scale mass production operations to large scale factories.

The first operating mill was “In 1809, a full decade before Alabama would become a state and when Textile industry in New England was still in its infancy, a Tennessee contractor named Charles Cabaniss, with the help of Engineer C.P. Poole, began designing the first spinning Mill in the South. The spot chosen for his Mill was the Barren Fork of the Flint River, twelve miles North east of Huntsville (then known as Twickenham). In this area there where two streams of water converging to became the single, continuous flow of the river known as Three Forks. It was an excellent site to harness the water for power. site. The Cabaniss Mill was completed in 1815. There are few accurate records about this mill factory; most have been pieced together

by Dwight M. Wilhelm in his book *History of the Cotton Textile Industry of Alabama: 1809 to 1950*.

- Source: Terri L. French, “The First Huntsville Cotton Mills”, *Huntsville Textiles Mills and Villages*, (Charleston: History Press, 2017), 27

From 1818 Cotton was an important component of the booming economy as Huntsville evolved into a frontier metropolis - a flourishing cultural, commercial, and social center of "King Cotton's" realm. One thousand pounds of cotton per acre could be consistently harvested by the farmers of Madison County. The high cotton price was the financial backbone of the prospering city. The streets of Huntsville were dotted with the small offices of cotton merchants, lawyers, and bankers, most of which were located on the west side of the square facing the courthouse. This area became known as "Cotton Row". Farmers brought cotton by wagon and cart to these merchants to be classified for staple and grade, and would then sell to the highest bidder. The town's economy was so dependent on cotton that the entire west side of the square was reserved for cotton wagons and carts.

The wealthy cotton planters started building distinctive plantation style houses. A weekly paper provided information, a bank the necessary credits for the flourishing plantations and farms. It was vital for the town's economic survival to ship its cotton down the Tennessee River to New Orleans. Therefore, in 1831, the Indian Creek Canal was opened from Hunt's Spring to Triana on the Tennessee River. Transportation over

land was possible along the Meridian Road, which connects the city to Ditto Landing, a point on the river where John Ditto had established a trading post and ferry service in 1802.

- Source: Mrs. Elfriede Richter Haaser, *Huntsville, Alabama* “Madison County History,” *Huntsville, Alabama*,
<http://www.madisoncountyal.gov/government/about-your-county/history>
(accessed 11 Dec 2017), 1

Our Alabama Bicentennial celebration of 2017-2019 commigrates the year 1819 as the year when Alabama progressed from territorial status to statehood as the 22nd state of the Union. Huntsville was chosen as the temporary capital where Alabama's first constitution was drafted, its first governor inaugurated, and its first legislature convened. Similar to our state's progression from territory to state, in 1819 the milling industry grew and evolved in Madison County.

On September 4, 1819 Horatio Jones formed a cotton spinning factory on the Flint River and began producing slave clothing. By 1823, the company had dissolved due to financial problems. Jones, however, refused to give up and soon formed a new endeavor. On October 21, he announced his plan, once again to spin cotton and coarse shirting, and moved the factory downstream. That Mill also became unsuccessful, and later that year, Jones sold the company to a North Carolinian, William Houghton (Houghton's Mill).

- Source: Terri L. French, “The First Huntsville Cotton Mills” *Huntsville Textiles Mills and Villages*, 27

In 1829, Houghton chartered the mill to a group of individuals, including William Patton, and James D. Donegan. In December 1832, the mill renamed the Bell factory was incorporated by an Act of the Alabama Legislature General Assembly for \$100,000. But the property was not purchased until two years later. On April 3, 1834, when Patton, Donagen and Company gave the sum of \$20,000 for the mill and one hundred acres of land to some of the other men from the original charter. It was operated for the most part by Patton, Donegan and Company with C.P, Cabaniss, the son of Charles Cabaniss, later becoming affiliated. William Tabor was one of the earliest superintendents of the factory. W.H. Echols was secretary/treasurer and in the factory's later years served as superintendent. In addition to the three-story Mill, a store and warehouse were maintained in Huntsville on the Square.

Source: Terri L. French, “The First Huntsville Cotton Mills” *Huntsville Textiles Mills and Villages*, cited original source Snow, “Industry Rising,”

The Bell Factory was the first spinning and weaving factory in Alabama. The mill building containing the machinery had three and a half stories, plus a water wheel room under the ground floor. The power used in the operation of the three thousand spindles and one hundred looms was furnished by damming the water of the Flint River and forcing it over a wheel rimmed with buckets. A shaft connected to the wheel was geared to turn the machinery inside the mill. The mill would not

become steam powered until 1868; therefore, in lieu of a steam whistle, the slave laborers were called to work by the ringing of the large Bell, hence the name. (Bell Factory).

- Source: Terri L. French, “The First Huntsville Cotton Mills,” *Huntsville Textiles Mills and Villages*, page 28.

The factory workers lived in thirty-eight cabins organized by household inside the factory compound, surrounded by a wall. The wall had a night watch and was closed to outsiders. While workers were confined, they were usually not mistreated, as their hard work and loyalty were essential to the profitability of the business. Some of the larger mills employed northern born supervisors to train and guide their workers, but such employees were too expensive for smaller manufacturers, which sometimes entrusted talented slaves to such duties. At the Bell Factory, a slave named Branch managed forty hands in the spinning room on the third floor. He was the middleman, dispensing the master’s orders and acting as spokesman for the workers. This is not to say everything always ran smoothly. Bondsmen toiled long hours in tight spaces to produce the sheeting, plaid, ticking, and yarn. Their fatigue and lack of freedom sometimes fostered discontent. Thievery was a problem. Some disgruntled workers took cuttings and scraps for their own use or exchanged stolen raw cotton for food and other items. Frustration and resentment could also take the form of arson. A slave was rumored to have set fire to the mill, though other sources cite the cause of the fire as a mystery. In 1841, Bell Factory burned to the ground.

- Source: Terri L. French, “The First Huntsville Cotton Mills,” *Huntsville Textiles Mills and Villages*, pages 28 -29, cited original source Miller, “The Fabric of Control,” page 490.

By June the following year (1842), Patton, Donnegan and Company had rebuilt the mill and installed an auxiliary steam plant. The plant ceased operations for a brief time during the Civil War. In 1868, it became the Bell Factory manufacturing Company and transitioned totally to steam power. While prior to the war, operatives were exclusively slave laborers, now mainly white women and children were employed, working twelve hour shifts five days a week and earning between eight and twenty dollars a month. Instead of cabins and a wall, there was now a mill village of nearly three hundred residents. In 1881, a visitor to the mill described the mill and mill village as follows:

The factory is large and roomy for the machinery, and everything seems more cozy than in Northern factories... each family has a house on the land of the corporation, a large garden, and a cow...In every home I saw a swing machine. All I have open fireplaces. Major Echols was evidently regarded as a friend but he families on whom we called... no liquor is sold except under his direction. There are a church and a school... I thought it seemed a happy little community.

Source: Terri L. French, “The First Huntsville Cotton Mills,” *Huntsville Textiles Mills and Villages*, 30 citing

original source Stephens, *History of Manufacture in the United States*, page 79.

The hard workers of the factory helped to make Bell Factory highly successful. In the *Alabama Manual of Statistical Register* for 1869, Robert Patton, the twentieth Governor of Alabama and son of William Patton, noted one extraordinary accomplishment of the manufacturer, “The Bell factory near Huntsville ... specimens of the Bell factory were forwarded to the Paris expedition, and in the report for the committee, honorable mention is made of them.”

Source: Joseph Hodgson, *Alabama Manual of Statistical Register for 1869*, ISBN13: 9781140514824, BiblioLife, 2010

Railroad expansion increased the cotton milling industry product distribution and bales. Industrialization gained momentum in Huntsville and Madison County with the completion of the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway in the 1880s. Northern and western capitalists invested in real estate and the distribution market for cotton was enlarged.

Source: *Mrs. Elfriede Richter-Haaser*, Huntsville, *Alabama*

<http://www.madisoncountyal.gov/government/about-your-county/history>

The Bell Factory continued operation until 1885, when more efficient equipment and other economic factors caused the mill to be abandoned. The buildings were torn down in the 1890s. All that remains of the

original building- is the bell from the factory. The history of Bell Factory Land Company was to be entwined in the history of the (Riverton school on Winchester Road) since the company's 500-pound bell was donated to the school system. The family of C. R. Williams, who worked for the company, remembers his efforts to make this possible. The bell was carried from Bell Factory to Oliver Bierne Patton Academy in 1910 and was used there until the county sold the building to F. Stephenson in 1917, reserving the right to keep the bell. The bell was then moved to Riverton in 1973, where the workers beat on it with hammers to call construction workers to lunch. It remained there until 1973. The 500-pound bell was placed in a tower in front of the new Riverton Elementary School building on Winchester Road and dedicated in 1975. The bell has the date 1880 inscribed on it. Madison County resident, Talmadge Smithey's research concluded that the original bell at the factory in 1832 was either confiscated or donated to be cast into cannons to support the Confederate cause, since many church bells were donated for this reason. If this is the case the bell in the tower now, is the bell used to replace the original one at the tower.

- Source: History of Riverton School 1918-1973, (the history from 1918 through 1973 is taken from the booklet commissioned by the 1972 Riverton PTA under the leadership of W. W. Wales, President. The committee consisted of Mrs. Sam W. Smith, Jr., Chairperson, Mrs. Joe Jones, Mrs. Leo Lawler, Mrs. Ray Renfroe, Mrs. Jim Sisco and Miss Grace Whitfield), 1.

http://rivertonintermediate.mcscsk12.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=386816&type=d&pREC_ID=932855



*Bell donated by the
Bell Factory Land
Company*

Some questions about the date 1880 which is inscribed on the bell were raised when the bell was removed from the tower in 1972. Bell Factory was incorporated in 1832 and was still in operation in 1885. Talmadge Smithey did research on this and came up with the conclusion that the bell at the factory in 1832 was either confiscated or donated to be cast into cannons to help the Confederate cause, since many church bells were donated for this

reason. If this is the case, the bell at Riverton is the one used to replace the original bell at the factory.

- Source: History of Riverton School 1918-1973, (the history from 1918 through 1973 is taken from the booklet commissioned by the 1972 Riverton PTA under the leadership of W. W. Wales, President. The committee consisted of Mrs. Sam W. Smith, Jr., Chairperson, Mrs. Joe Jones, Mrs. Leo Lawler, Mrs. Ray Renfroe, Mrs. Jim Sisco and Miss Grace Whitfield), 1 http://rivertonintermediate.mcscsk12.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=386816&type=d&pREC_ID=932855

Thus, the history of the Bell Factory Land Company was intertwined with the history of Madison County and

Riverton School. Many citizens in the Huntsville area and Sharps Cove claim to have heard the Bell at various times. At that time the area was sparsely settled and there were no machines to interfere with the sound. As in its past, the bell is rung to announce the news of national celebrations such as the end of WWI and local Riverton community celebrations and concerns. This bell holds many memories for people in the community. Alice Williams Lay relates, *"How well I remember hearing the ringing of the bell on the morning of November 11, 1918, when Dad and my brothers went to the school at 4 AM and rang it, spreading the news that World War I had ended."*

- Source: History of Riverton School 1918-1973, (the history from 1918 through 1973 is taken from the booklet commissioned by the 1972 Riverton PTA under the leadership of W. W. Wales, President. The committee consisted of Mrs. Sam W. Smith, Jr., Chairperson, Mrs. Joe Jones, Mrs. Leo Lawler, Mrs. Ray Renfroe, Mrs. Jim Sisco and Miss Grace Whitfield), 1
http://rivertonintermediate.mcssk12.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=386816&type=d&pREC_ID=9328 55

The bell ringing tradition of the Old Bell Factory continued on December 14, 2017 as Madison County residents gathered and celebrated the relocation of the Bell Factory Marker by the Daughters of the American Colonists to the campus to Riverton Elementary School. They honored the rich history of The Bell Factory, its

legacy and important role it played in Madison County and our Alabama Bicentennial history.

The program mentioned above was presented by Sarah K. Curtis, Daughters of American Colonists Historian, Judge David Campbell Chapter, at the rededication of the Bell Factory Marker On 14 December 2017 at Riverton Elementary School, Madison County.

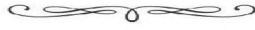
Bell Factory Dedication Dates

On October 27, 1957, The Bell Factory Historical Marker was Judge David Campbell Daughter of the American Colonists dedicated. The Marker was located approximately ten miles northeast of Huntsville in Winchester Road.

On December 14, 2017, Judge David Campbell Daughters of the American Colonists rededicated the refurbished Bell Factory Marker. It was relocated to the campus of Riverton Elementary School on Winchester Road, adjacent to the tower housing the old Bell from the Bell Factory



Rededication Bell Factory Marker



Historian Daughters of American Colonists Judge David Campbell Chapter

The following was not presented as part of the program presented but is submitted as additional information regarding the Bell Factory history.

Ledger References

The following list was taken from a time book ledger of the factory for the years Jan 1839 to Dec 1841. It is accessible at the Heritage Room of the Huntsville Public Library. Most of the labor in the early years was performed by slaves. The individuals listed in the book as “boys” were slaves. Their owners were paid for their labor. The slaves of the company partners are not listed. The ledger shows the days that each person worked but only their names are included below.

Some additional owners of the Bell Factory include

- Preston Yeatman was part owner of the Bell Factory. He died in Huntsville in 1841.
- Richard Forsey, born 1795. He was the third owner of the Bell Factory from 1829-1831.

List of Workers

Allison, Samuel

Baron, Jas. M.

Battle, John

Battle, Thomas

(son)

Brandon's boys:

Edmund

John

Perry

Pleasant

Westley
Branham, Genj.
Chambers, Robt.
T.
Champion, James
N.
Cook, Geo. T.
Dyer, Capt. Justin
boy Westly
boy Tom Cain
boy Davy
boy Ned
boy Bill
boy Dick Luna
Ervin, C. F.
Hale, William
boy Sonny
boy Jacob
Hughey, John
Johnson, James
M.
boy Grantland
Johnson, Robert
B.
boy Brown
boy Baron
Kirk, Benj. L.
Leary, Cornelius
" Henry
" Leml.
" Thomas
boy Harry

boy Tom
McBride, Jack
McBride, L. A.
McGhee, Wesley
Malone, Nash's
team
Martin, Wm.
Mitchell, Wm. M.
Moore, Hugh N.
Moran, William
Patton, Bill
Sammons, G's boy
And team
Smith, P. L.
" Perry L.
Smith, Wm.
Stonebreaker, Bill
Taft, Moses
Taylor, Stephen
Valiant, Wm.
Weatherly, Asa H.
White, Robert
Whitely, Frances
L.
boy Curtis
boy Dean
boy Harrington
boy Jack
boy Littleton
boy Martin
boy Pleasant

Towards the end of the ledger a few more workers are listed for the year 1866 and appear as follows.

1866,

Azyor, M. R., Doolittle, ___
Gibson, ___,
Gibson, ___
McDowell,
Mc Dowell
McQuarter,
McQuarter,---
Merrit, ___,
Tiller, ___,
Curtis, J.,
“ Jas. M.,
“ John,
“ Senior,
Dalton, G. W

The time sheets for the years 1842-65 and 1867 -85 were not found.

References

- Betts, Edward Chambers, *Early History of Huntsville Alabama, 1804 -1867*. Printing Co., Montgomery, Alabama, 1909.
- Summersell, Charles Grayson, *Alabama History for Schools*. Viewpoint Publication, Inc., Montgomery, Alabama, 1970.
- *The Huntsville Times Newspapers*: 11-17 Sep 1955, 27 Dec 1957, 13 Sep 1965, 23 Mar 1975, 24 Sep 1984

- Bell Factory Time Book, located in the Heritage Room of the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library.
- Deed Book A, page 8, located in the Madison County Records Room, in the Huntsville Public Library.
- Retrieved _____ from ["http://huntsvillehistorycollection.org/hh/index.php?title=Bell Factory Textile Mill"](http://huntsvillehistorycollection.org/hh/index.php?title=Bell+Factory+Textile+Mill) Category: Story

Meet the Author

Sarah Kathryn Curtis was born in Eufaula, Alabama in 1949 and has resided in Huntsville for 38 years. She received her B.S. in Elementary Education from Auburn University, M.S. from Vanderbilt University in Speech Pathology, and Learning Disabilities Certification from Alabama A&M University. She retired from Huntsville City Schools with a focus on speech and language disorders, learning disabilities, and reading interventions. She was a consultant for Sopris West Educational Co. and the Ala. Dept. of Education. Sarah currently serves as Vice President of Judge David Campbell Chapter of The Nat. Soc. Daughters of American Colonists, President of the Colonel Walter Aston Chapter of Nat. Soc. Colonial Dames XVIIIC, and Secretary of the Ala. Division of the Nat. Soc. Magna Charta Dames and Barons. She holds membership the Hunt's Springs Chapter of Nat. Soc. Daughters of the American Revolution and other lineage, genealogical and historical organizations. Publications include articles in

the Curtis- Curtiss Family Society Chronicle and Conn. Ancestry Society Quarterly Journals.

Sarah presented the Bell article on December 14, 2017 at the DAC Historic Bell Factory Marker Rededication ceremonies at Riverton Elementary School in Madison Co, Ala.

HUNTSVILLE

CIVIL RIGHTS TIMELINE

By Kelly F. Hamlin

Kelly Hamlin earned a masters in 2015 from the University of Alabama, Huntsville, her theses focused on local history and specifically the civil rights movement in Huntsville. The Review will include a portion of here theses in two parts with the timeline in this issue and in December the narrative that supports the timeline. The Editor

1950

- Huntsville's population is 16,437.
- Wernher Von Braun and the Army's German rocket team move to Huntsville.

1952

- Due to its status as a federally-run military installation, Redstone Arsenal instituted a policy of non-segregation and removed all "Negro" and "White" signs.

1954

- May 17: The Supreme Court decides in *Brown vs. Board of Education* that racial segregation in public schools violated the 14th Amendment of the Constitution.
- May 31: In what is known as *Brown II*, the Supreme Court clarifies that the states are expected to desegregate public schools "with all deliberate speed." The vagueness of these guidelines meant that segregated states like Alabama would not hurry to change their ways.

1956

- Redstone Arsenal employs 9,000 and brings \$30 million in new construction to Huntsville.
- Army Ballistic Missile Agency established at Redstone.

- June 4: Huntsville opened one of its city swimming pools to blacks only, the first public pool open to blacks in the city.

1958

- February 1: Explorer I is first satellite to orbit the Earth, with the help of Von Braun's Huntsville team.
- November 3: For the first time, the black community had access to a city library, located at Cavalry Hill Junior High with Reverend H.P. Snodgrass at its head.

1960

- Wernher Von Braun made Director of NASA's new George C. Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville.
- September 8: President Eisenhower visited Huntsville to commemorate the opening of Marshall Space Flight Center.

1961

- In 1961 there were 3,198 building permits issued at a value of over \$37 million. An additional \$14 million in permits were issued for new building projects on Redstone Arsenal.
- May 14: Freedom Riders attacked in Anniston. One of these riders was Hank Thomas, who would later spur Huntsville's entry into the civil rights movement.

1962

- 20-year-old Hank Thomas, a Howard University student and field agent from the civil rights group Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) arrived in Huntsville in January 1962. With his guidance, black students from Alabama A&M University and Council High School received training in non-violent techniques and began their first sit-ins protesting segregated downtown stores and lunch counters that month.

- January 3: Huntsville's first sit-ins. Across the city, groups of black students took a seat at the whites-only lunch counters of W.T. Grant Co. on Washington St., the H&H Walgreen Agency, the Trailways Bus Station, F.W. Woolworth & Co., and Sears & Roebuck. The students were refused service and left quietly after being ignored. Later that evening, 30 black students in four cars attempted to purchase movie tickets at the whites-only Parkway Drive-In Theater and Woodey's Drive-In Theater and were turned away. Two different groups briefly held sit-ins at the Big Boy Restaurant the same night.
- January 4 & 5: In the second and third days of Huntsville sit-ins, over 75 students participate.
- January 5: Huntsville's mayor, R.B. Searcy, met with a delegation of 6 leaders from the black community, headed by Dr. John L. Cashin Jr, but the group was unable to come to an agreement about the state of race relations in the city.
- January 6: First arrests of civil rights movement in Huntsville. An old Huntsville law allowed any business owner to have the police arrest anyone deemed to be "trespassing" on their property. This allowed business owners to arrest the protestors who were involved in sit-ins, but it did not stop the students' enthusiasm. Alabama A&M student Frances Sims, age 19, and Council High School student Dwight W. Crawford, age 16, were the first to be arrested as they sat at the Walgreen's lunch counter.
- January 6: An anonymous caller threatens to detonate bombs at Woolworth's and W.T. Grant Co., two businesses that were facing pressure from sit-in protestors.
- January 8: Thirteen black protestors were arrested and jailed overnight for trespassing during their sit-ins at G.C. Murphy Co in Parkway City Mall, Liggett's

Rexall Drug Store in the Heart of Huntsville Mall, and Walgreens.

- January 8: In a mass meeting of the black community held at First Baptist Church citizens form the Community Service Committee, which will go on to organize and support the struggle for civil rights in Huntsville.
- January 10: After sitting at the whites-only lunch counter at Walgreens, 18 protestors aged 16 to 21 were arrested and spent the night in jail, bringing the total arrested in the last week to 35.
- January 14: While Hank Thomas was leading a sit-in at the Heart of Huntsville mall, someone entered his vehicle and doused the drivers' seat with oil of mustard, a severe skin irritant. When Hank returned to his vehicle he was severely burned by the caustic substance and had to be taken to the hospital, where Dr. Sonnie W. Hereford III tended to him. Dr. Hereford served as the doctor for all CSC members and local participants in the civil rights movement who might be injured in the course of their activism.
- January 22: Marshall Keith was a white employee of Redstone Arsenal who had been participating in the recent sit-ins. On the night of January 22 he was forced from his home at gunpoint by masked attackers who drove him away from the city, beat him and forced him to strip naked. Then they doused his body with oil of mustard, the same severe skin irritant that was used against Hank Thomas the week before. After his recovery from the severe burns, Keith moved away from Huntsville.
- January 31: Over the month of January, Huntsville's black community embraced the efforts of over 250 Alabama A&M and Council High students to fight for racial equality through sit-ins. The Community Service Committee established regular mass meetings every Monday evening and trained students in non-

violent techniques. Activists soon began leading picket lines in front of downtown stores with discriminatory policies, carrying signs with slogans such as "I ordered a hamburger, but they served me a warrant!" or "This is Rocket City, U.S.A., Let Freedom Begin Here!"

- February 4: CORE Field Agents Hank Thomas and Richard Haley Arrested for Picketing at Walgreen's.
- February 13: The State Board of Education, which oversees Alabama A&M, forced University President Dr. Joseph F. Drake into early retirement in response to the role of A&M students in the Huntsville sit-ins. Governor John Patterson, chairman of the State Board, said the school urgently needed a president "who will require discipline, make the students behave themselves and make them study."
- February 14: Due to anxieties over the activism in Huntsville and thanks to the efforts of Alabama Attorney General MacDonald Gallion, the Congress of Racial Equality was outlawed in the state of Alabama. CORE field agents Hank Thomas and Richard Haley ceased their organizing efforts in Huntsville.
- February 27: About 150 civil rights demonstrators gathered at the Madison County Courthouse on the square in Huntsville. There they joined in singing hymns and leading prayers for their cause.
- March 19: Thanks to the fundraising of the Community Service Committee, Martin Luther King spoke at the Negro First Baptist Church on Church Street and later to a crowd of about 2,000 at Oakwood College. He was accompanied by Ralph D. Abernathy, another significant figure in the national civil rights movement.
- April 10: Martha Hereford was six months pregnant and Joan Cashin was accompanied by her four-month-old infant when they were arrested for sitting-in at Walgreen's. They were joined by CSC President

Reverend Ezekiel Bell, Reverend S.F. Lacey, and student activist Frances Sims.

- April 19: After refusing to post bond, Joan Cashin, Martha Hereford, and Francis Sims were placed in the Madison County Jail. Although Huntsville Mayor R.B. Searcy signs an order permitting the release of Hereford and Cashin without bond, the two women refuse to leave until their fellow protestor Sims is released as well. They spend 33 hours in jail before they are released. Just as its organizers had hoped, the event brought attention to the cause as national news outlets picked up the story.
- April 22: Blue Jeans Sunday. Traditionally, Huntsville businesses enjoyed a seasonal boom in business as families would go shopping for clothing in preparation for Easter celebrations. In an act of protest against the discriminatory policies of Huntsville's downtown businesses, African-Americans boycotted clothing stores in the city and instead shopping in neighboring cities such as Fayetteville and Athens. In a show of solidarity, all participants wore plain, cheap blue jeans instead of expensive new sets of "Sunday best" clothing. This activism was a dramatic economic blow to the city's businesses, who counted on the annual Easter rush to boost their profits.
- April 26: Protestors began sit-in campaigns at the Nugget Restaurant, the Krystal, and the A & F Cafeteria.
- April: African-American students took a new approach to protesting segregated movie theaters. Two or three protestors would get in line to buy a movie ticket. When each one reached the counter and asked for a ticket, the clerk inevitably would not sell to him or her because of their race. They went to the back of the line, waited patiently, and asked to buy a ticket once again once they reached the counter. This technique frustrated theater owners, held up lines, and made

moviegoing more inconvenient for those willing to patronize segregated theaters.

- Late April: After months of repeated requests from movement leaders, Huntsville Mayor R.B. Searcy finally agreed to create a biracial committee to address the city's racial problems.
- May: Joe D. Haynes and Joseph Ben Curry, two African-American employees at Marshall Space Flight Center, filed complaints with the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity. They claimed that they had been overlooked for promotions and had been given inappropriate job assignments due to their race.
- May 13: On Mother's Day several families peacefully integrated Big Spring Park, which had previously been open only to whites.
- May 18: Former Huntsville residents and Alabama A&M students gathered in front of the New York Stock Exchange and passed out 1,000 handbills reading "To invest in Huntsville, AL is to invest in segregation." The story increased pressure on Huntsville businesses and was picked up by the Associated Press.
- May 19: Then campaigning for governor, George Wallace spoke at the Huntsville courthouse. Civil rights demonstrators attended the event and released hundreds of balloons carrying messages about Huntsville's discriminatory practices.
- June 1: Rev. Ezekiel Bell, Dr. Hereford, and Martha Hereford drove to Chicago and distributed thousands of handbills at the Mid-West Stock Exchange reading "To invest in Huntsville, AL is to invest in segregation." Copies were mailed from Chicago to members of the Huntsville city council.
- July 9-11: After negotiation with the mayor, about half of Huntsville's restaurants agreed to desegregate at 11:00 a.m. over the course of a three-day trial period.

Small groups of African-Americans were served that day at Liggett's Drug Store, W.T. Grant's, G.C. Murphy, Woolworth's, and other lunch counters.

- July 19: The then-independent student civil rights organization from Alabama A&M University merged with the Community Service Committee.
- October: With the assistance of the NAACP, 35 Huntsville families filed lawsuits to desegregate Huntsville City Schools.
- November 9: The CSC sent a letter to the Superintendent of Huntsville City Schools, pointing out that the African-American child of a Redstone Arsenal employee had been denied entry to his nearest school, the all-white Madison Pike. Instead he had to register across town at Cavalry Hill, an all-black school. Copies were sent to higher officials such as the Secretary of Defense, Attorney General, the Director of the U.S. Commission of Civil Rights, among others.

1963

- Huntsville's population is 105,000.
- Huntsville was one of the ten fastest-growing cities in the country, with the population growing at a rate of 400 people per week.
- At the beginning of 1963 there were only three schools that Huntsville's black students could attend: Councill High with grades 1-12, Cavalry Hill with grades 1-9, and West End with grades 1-6. There were 25 schools for white children in the city.
- January 18: In the first attempt to enforce *Brown v. Board* in Alabama, the U.S. Department of Justice sued Huntsville and Madison County to prevent 500 black children of Redstone Arsenal employees from being barred from attending schools with white children. The case, *United States vs. Madison County Board of Education & City of Huntsville Board of*

Education, was dismissed on a technicality in May of 1963.

- January 18: In his inaugural speech, Alabama Governor George Wallace pledges to uphold “segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever.”
- March 11: Only four families remain on the court case against Huntsville City Schools. Initially the case involved 35 families, but many faced extra discrimination and pressure from the white community as a result of their decision to press for integration. Only four families were left on the case by March. The four were representing the students Sonnie W. Hereford IV, John A. Brewton, Veronica T. Pearson, & David Piggie.
- March 25: Dave McGlathery & Marvin T. Carroll were black employees of Redstone Arsenal. Both applied for admission at UAH but were turned down because they did not meet admission requirements. In May both men would file lawsuits against the University.
- April 3 - May 10: Birmingham Campaign. For over a month, the leaders of Birmingham's civil rights movement organized a slew of activist activities in the city to bring public attention to their cause in hopes of change. Bull Connor, Birmingham's notoriously racist Police Commissioner, reacted with violence at several occasions. Just as organizers had predicted, the violent reactions of Birmingham's white community brought national attention to the severity of the race problem in Alabama.
- May 16: Robert Carl Bailey was hired as the city's first black policeman by a unanimous vote of the City Council and Mayor R.B. Searcy. At the same meeting the Council voted to desegregate the drinking fountains at the Madison County courthouse.

- May 18: President Kennedy toured Huntsville, spoke to a crowd of 10,000 at Redstone and toured MSFC facilities with Wernher von Braun.
- Spring: Huntsville Hospital begins desegregation.
- June: Marshall Space Flight Center begins affirmative action program.
- June 11: Robert Muckel, a 29-year-old white schoolteacher from Nebraska, was the first person to integrate a public educational institution in Alabama when he attended a summer science institute at Alabama A&M College. When Muckel applied for admission he did not realize that A&M was a historically black school and was surprised when he unintentionally broke a barrier in Alabama education.
- June 11: Governor George C. Wallace made his infamous "stand in the schoolhouse door" to block the University of Alabama from admitting black students Vivian Malone & James Hood. Later that day and out of the spotlight, the two successfully enrolled and registered for classes.
- June 13: David McGlathery, a black mathematician working on Redstone Arsenal, enrolled at UAH without incident. Many feared that Governor Wallace would take a stand in Huntsville as he had in Tuscaloosa two days earlier and the National Guard 169th Combat Engineering Group was federalized in anticipation of a fight. McGlathery had no problems enrolling.
- June 18: In a Washington D.C. meeting of the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, Attorney General Robert Kennedy insisted that Marshall Space Flight Center take action to remedy the racial inequalities of the Center's workforce.
- June: Leaders from NASA, the Department of Defense and the Civil Service Commission met to address the "lack of equal employment opportunity for Negroes in

Huntsville, Alabama." They decided to take action within the city to ensure more African Americans would be employed in the city's federal industries. The group would conduct surveys of housing and federal employment practices in Huntsville and provide assistance to Alabama A&M and Tuskegee Institute to develop engineering programs. They also met with Huntsville's military contractors to stress the importance of equal employment opportunity. They directed Wernher von Braun to give personal attention to developing programs at Marshall to provide opportunity to black applicants. Later that summer NASA Associate Administrator George Mueller praised MSFC's equal opportunity program as "imaginative and well-rounded."

- July 5: Following the federal example, many of the largest federal contractors in Huntsville met and formed the Association of Huntsville Area Contractors. They agreed upon a goal of racial equality within their businesses and soon began a campaign of work with local high schools and Alabama A&M to make engineering programs available to black students, hoping to increase the number of qualified black applicants for jobs in the space and defense industry. Milton K. Cummings of Brown Engineering served as the committee's spokesman until L.C. McMillian, a black college administrator from Texas, was hired later in 1963 to serve as AHAC's executive director.
- August 13: Judge Grooms of the District Court in Birmingham ruled that Huntsville had to begin integration in September of 1963 and must submit a plan to the court for the desegregation of all city schools. Two weeks later Huntsville presented Grooms with the Freedom-of-Choice plan, in which black students could petition to join a white school starting with 12th grade in 1963 and adding one more grade each year. Grooms rejected this plan, but did accept

an amended plan soon thereafter. The city planned to integrate 1st grade & 10th-12th grades in 1964, 2nd & 9th grades in 1965, 3rd & 8th grades in 1966, 4th & 7th grades in 1967, and 6th grade in 1969.

- August: The hearing officer for the Haynes & Curry discrimination cases found that both men had been victims of racial discrimination during their time at MSFC. He recommended that Haynes be promoted and Curry be reassigned to more appropriate duties. In his report he noted that of 7,335 employees at Marshall, only 52 of them were black. Furthermore, blacks comprised only 0.5% of employees in the more coveted GS-5 through GS-11 positions. He concluded that "a pattern of discrimination has and continues to exist at Marshall."
- September 3: St. Joseph's Catholic School, today known as Holy Family Catholic School, welcomes twelve white students who were the first to enroll in the previously all-black Catholic school. The students and their families were seeking a Catholic education, not necessarily trying to make a statement about civil rights. St. Joseph's was the first integrated private school in the state of Alabama.
- September 3: All Huntsville city schools were scheduled to open for the 1963-1964 school year. Four children involved in the lawsuit planned to integrate their four schools: Sonnie Hereford IV at Fifth Avenue School, Victoria Pearson at Rison Junior High, John Brewton at East Clinton, and David Piggee at Terry Heights. At 6:20 a.m., Alabama state troopers announced on local radio that all schools would be closed, by Governor Wallace's order. Huntsville's Board of Education stated that all city schools should open anyway, but families were shocked to find around 150 state troopers blocking students from entering the four integrated schools. Huntsville's families and leaders were furious at Governor Wallace

for interfering in the city's federally-mandated integration. Huntsville's School Board later announced that school openings would be delayed until Friday September 6.

- September 3: Mobile, Birmingham, and Tuskegee were also under federal orders to integrate. Governor Wallace delayed schools in all four cities and sent state troopers to block students from entering. Huntsville's families of all races were outraged at Wallace's actions.
- September 6: State troopers were waiting for students and families at Fifth Avenue, Rison, East Clinton & Terry Heights on the morning of Friday, September 6. They announced that Governor Wallace had once again closed four of the city's schools rather than allow them to integrate. Huntsville's families were furious! NAACP lawyer Constance Baker Motley, who had helped to file the initial integration suit, immediately left to meet with Judge Grooms in the District Court at Birmingham. There they filed a restraining order against Governor Wallace prohibiting him from interfering in Huntsville's federally-mandated integration.
- September 9: Four black students peacefully integrated four of Huntsville's schools without any resistance: Sonnie Hereford IV at Fifth Avenue School, Victoria Pearson at Rison Junior High, John Brewton at East Clinton, and David Piggee at Terry Heights.
- September 9: Governor Blocks Integration in Tuskegee, Mobile, Birmingham. Whites in these cities applauded the governor's stand against integration and continued to support segregation. In Mobile, white high school students led protests against black enrollment. Birmingham's whites surrounded the schools with crowds shouting segregationist slogans and waving Confederate flags. In Tuskegee, white high schoolers boycotted their integrated school, refusing

to attend and leaving the building empty except for the 13 black students.

Huntsville City Schools: Student Enrollment and percent of Blacks, 1963-1964			
<i>Schools</i>	<i>Total Enrollment</i>	<i>Black Students</i>	<i>% of Blacks</i>
Blossom-wood (1-6)	692		
Bradley (7-9)	746		
Butler (10-12)	1258	3	0.24
Cavalry Hill (1-9)	851	851	100
Chapman Elementary (1-6)	1135		
Councill (1-12)	1129	1129	100
Davis Hills Elementary (1-6)	994		
Davis Hills Junior High (7-9)	704		

East Clinton (1-6)	551	1	0.18
Fifth Avenue (1-6)	639	1	0.16
Highlands (1-6)	697		
Huntsville High (10-12)	1246	1	0.08
Huntsville Junior High (7-9)	851		
Lakewood (1-6)	964		
Lee (9-12)	1305		
Lincoln (1-6)	551		
Madison Pike (1-6)	1114	5	0.45
Monte Sano (1-6)	271		
Ridgecrest (1-6)	1334		
Rison (7-8)	521	1	0.19
Terry Heights (1-6)	575	1	0.17
University Place (1-6)	627		

Weatherly Heights (1-6)	620		
West End (1-6)	383	383	100
West Huntsville (1-6)	641		
Westlawn Junior High (7-9)	920	1	0.001
Whitesburg Elementary (1-6)	1174		
Whitesburg Junior High (7-9)	708		
Total	23201	2377	

1964

- January 18: Beginning in the Spring semester of 1964, 10 more of Huntsville's black students enrolled in previously all-white schools. Six students entered at Madison Pike Elementary, 1 at Westlawn Junior High, 1 at Huntsville High, and 2 at Butler High. This made a total of 14 black students attending schools that were previously all-white.
- July 27: Judge Grooms in Birmingham was not satisfied with Huntsville's attempts to integrate. He ruled that the city must make an effort to educate the public about the application for transfer to white schools and recommended publishing an announcement in the *Huntsville Times*.

- August 28: Madison County Schools made its first move toward desegregation when four black students enrolled in Sparkman High School for the fall semester of 1964.
- October 29: After NASA Administrator James Webb announced that Huntsville's racial climate had to improve in order to keep NASA in Alabama, the CSC responded with a glowing telegram thanking him for his support.

1965

- May: Dr. John Cashin reported to the CSC mass meeting that City Solicitor Charles Younger had told him, "It isn't my job to give you any assistance, boy, you'd better stay in your place if you know what's good for you."
- June 14: An article in the *New York Times* praised MSFC Director Wernher von Braun for supporting an end to racial segregation in Alabama. In April and May he had bluntly warned the state's leaders that if Alabama continued its resistance to federal desegregation mandates, the multi-million-dollar federal space research industry in Alabama could be negatively affected or even cancelled completely.
- July 6: The Citizens' Council was an all-white community organization formed to maintain racial segregation and inequality. The speaker at their July 6 public meeting was Sheriff Jim Clark of Selma, a man notorious for his defense of segregation. Dr. John Cashin led 16 black protestors and about 20 white supporters to the meeting where they joined the audience, shocking the segregationists who led the meeting. When the white leaders asked Huntsville's Police Chief W.F. Dyer to remove the black audience members, he refused because the meeting was held on city property open to the public. The protestors sat calmly in the audience through the meeting as Jim Clark and others fumed over the intrusion.

- U.S. Civil Service Commission establishes Summer Employment of Youth program at Redstone Arsenal to employ needy local high school and college students of all races.

1966

- April: U.S. Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach moved to have Huntsville City Schools completely desegregated by September of 1966.
- The city's plans for desegregation were less effective once North Huntsville's white families moved en masse into South Huntsville, further reinforcing the naturally segregated white and black neighborhood schools.
- Redstone Arsenal hires its first black interns in the Civilian Personnel Program, Mr. John Nelson & Mr. Leroy Daniels.

1967

- April 6: The U.S. Justice Department was not satisfied with Huntsville's token progress toward school desegregation, so they filed a suit in District Court ordering complete desegregation of the city's schools by the next fall. This pushed the city's goal to 2 years ahead of the present plan.
- September 21: The Dept of Justice, as an intervener in the *Hereford v. HCS* case, filed formal complaints against the Huntsville City Board of Education, accusing them of establishing freedom-of-choice procedures which, allegedly, were dishonest, created a terrible situation, and resulted in an unfair burden on black parents.
- Huntsville City Schools desegregates its faculty in the 1967-1968 school year.

1968

- April 5: The entire nation mourned the death of Martin Luther King Jr. In Huntsville, over 500 college

students from Oakwood College & Alabama A&M marched along with a police escort to the courthouse for a candlelight service in King's memory.

1969

- John Nelson appointed as the Army's first ever Equal Employment Opportunity Action Officer, working under Luther Adams, Civilian Personnel Officer, to ensure that careers at Redstone are accessible to qualified applicants of all races.
- July 20: Huntsville joined the nation in celebrating Apollo 11's successful landing on the Moon. The city took special pride in the event because of MSFC's critical role in developing the Saturn V rocket that carried Apollo 11 into space.
- Fall: The NAACP filed a lawsuit through the Civil Rights Department of the U.S. Government, charging that Huntsville City Schools had failed to comply with the 1963 court decision to integrate.

Huntsville City Schools: Student Enrollment and percent of Blacks, 1969-1970			
<i>Schools</i>	<i>Total Enrollment</i>	<i>Black Students</i>	<i>Percent of Blacks</i>
Blossomwood (1-6)	757	31	4.1
Butler (10-12)	2464	271	11
Cavalry Hill (1-9)	970	968	99.79
Chaffee (1-6)	651	19	2.92
Chapman (1-9)	2089	122	5.84
Colonial Hills (1-6)	691	223	32.27

Councill (1-6)	174	164	94.25
Davis Hills (1-9)	2106	248	11.78
East Clinton (1-6)	429	20	4.66
Ed White (7-9)	1058	76	7.18
Farley (1-6)	214	33	15.42
Fifth Avenue (1-6)	479	76	15.87
Grissom (9-12)	1590	11	0.69
Highlands (1-6)	997	64	6.42
Huntsville High (10-12)	1658	91	5.49
Huntsville Middle (7-8)	891	89	9.99
Jones Valley (1-6)	825	7	0.85
Lakewood (1-6)	885	83	9.38
Lee (9-12)	1767	181	10.24
Lincoln (1-6)	506	48	9.49
Madison Pike (1-6)	1072	39	3.64
McDonnell (1-6)	772	50	6.93
Monte Sano (1-6)	216	0	0
Montview (1-6)	646	19	2.94
Mountain Gap (1-9)	1081	17	1.57
Ridgecrest (1-6)	1114	24	2.15

Rolling Hills (1-6)	1222	282	23.08
Stone (7-9)	1093	218	19.95
Terry Heights (1-6)	651	264	40.55
University Place (1-6)	772	56	7.25
Weatherly Heights (1-6)	1045	13	1.24
West End (1-3)	149	149	100
West Huntsville (1-6)	650	172	26.46
Westlawn Jr. High (7-9)	840	19	2.14
West Mastin Lake (106)	1003	88	8.77
Whitesburg (1-9)	1814	8	0.44
Total	35291	4242	12.02

1970

- Huntsville was sad to hear that their beloved Wernher von Braun would be leaving Marshall Space Flight Center to move to a new position at NASA's headquarters in Washington, D.C.
- August: The Department of Justice filed yet another motion requesting that Huntsville's Board of Education take further action to desegregate the school system. The Justice Department argued that a dual school system still existed in Huntsville and that the Freedom-of-Choice plan should be abolished in the school system.

- August: Redstone Arsenal is commended for hiring more than 70 graduates of Alabama A&M University over the last 3 years of their equal employment opportunity initiatives.
- September: As the new school year began, all but 589 black students were enrolled in previously all-white schools.
- September 2: Judge Grooms ordered the Huntsville Board of Education to work with the Office of Health, Education & Welfare to prepare a plan for a new school system that would be completely unitary, ensuring complete equality of the races.
- October: After reviewing Huntsville's case, HEW Program Officer Robert Morris submitted his new plan for a unitary Huntsville school system. He recommended closing one school and redistricting the students attending Cavalry Hill school, including reassigning many to new schools. He also required Huntsville City Schools to transport some black Terry Heights students into white-majority schools. Huntsville's white residents immediately balked at the plan. Huntsville City Schools denounced it entirely and refused to enact the changes.
- November: Suit filed, *Ralph A. Root, Jr., et al. v. Joseph Stowers, Superintendent of City Schools, et al.* - pleading a motion that the court prohibit the BOE from enforcing the school zoning regulations for the 70-71 year. Dismissed.
- December 1: Hearing to hear a motion of intervention filed by parents of children at University Place School in the zoning dispute.

1971

- Of all Army installations nationwide, Redstone Arsenal had highest percentage of black interns on track to become high-level employees.

- January: Police and black students clash at a Butler High School basketball game. Police arrested a Butler teen for allegedly making a telephone bomb threat to the school.
- March: Robert Morris of HEW submits two new desegregation plans for Huntsville City Schools. One proposed combining many of the Huntsville elementary and junior high schools, while the other allowed zones to remain the same but added bus transportation by Huntsville City Schools.
- April 23: Fletcher Sheldon becomes first black man to serve on Huntsville City School Board
- June 26: Judge Grooms ruled to prohibit students at Butler High School to display Confederate flags or sing the Confederate battle song *Dixie* in support of their mascot the Rebels.
- August 2: Many Butler High School students rallied and marched, waving Confederate flags to show their disapproval of Judge Grooms's ruling that the Butler High Rebels could no longer sing *Dixie* or use the Confederate flag. Other students marched to show their support of the change.

1972

- Changes to the school zoning plan would have sent many white students to previously all-black Cavalry Hill School. Instead, many of these white students left the public education system entirely and attended private church schools instead. In an effort to offset this movement, the school system determined that it would make Cavalry Hill an exemplary school. The school was staffed with the most experienced staff, and provided with funding for an enhanced curriculum including industrial arts, career education, art & music in an attempt to draw white students back to the school.

1973

- Missile Command Upward Mobility program established at Redstone to offer training opportunities for lower-grade Redstone employees of all races, making them eligible for future promotions.

1974

- May 16: The city was required to submit all plans for school rezoning to the Department of Justice for approval before they could take effect. Due to the huge growth of the city, Huntsville often had to resubmit new zoning plans by the time they were evaluated.
- July 10: The Department of Justice agreed to a modified zoning plan, sending 6th & 8th grade students from predominantly-black Cavalry Hill to attend predominantly-white Ed White Middle.
- August 14: Judge Grooms approved of the proposed changes to Huntsville's school system.
- August 30: Despite Judge Grooms's approval of Huntsville's zoning plan, the Justice Department did not feel the plan was sufficient and appealed the decision.
- November 20: Judge Grooms rules that Huntsville must take further steps to better integrate Cavalry Hill School.

1975

- January 28: The Huntsville Board of Education submitted a modified plan to Judge Grooms that would reorganize the Cavalry Hill school zone in accordance with the federal requirements.
- February 12: The Citizens for Neighborhood Schools, an organization of over 350 Huntsville parents, filed a motion to block the new zoning plan for Cavalry Hill School.
- March 17: Under the terms of the new plan, 7 school buses moved black and white students between Cavalry Hill, Montview, Highlands, and University

Place schools to integrate the student bodies. Parents opposed to the plan picketed the School Board Central Office, but kept their protest peaceful.

1977

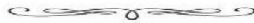
- Prior to desegregation, there was only one private school in Huntsville. By 1977 there were 23 primarily all-white church and private schools that offered an alternative education for families opposed to the public school system.

1984

- Leroy Daniels becomes first black Civilian Personnel Officer at Redstone Arsenal, managing entire civilian workforce on Redstone Arsenal.

2018

- Huntsville City Schools remains under judicial supervision under a consent order until it reaches satisfactory conditions across the schools' system and can prove it does not operate a dual system. More information available at www.hsvdac.com.



Meet the Author

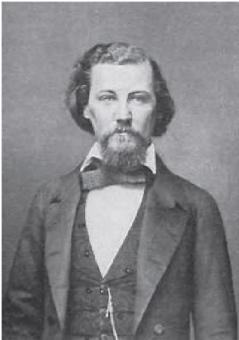
Kelly Hamlin graduated with a degree in U.S. History from Sewanee: The University of the South in 2010, and subsequently completed her Master's degree in Public History at the University of Alabama in Huntsville in 2015. Her work and research has taken her from the National Archives to the world of living history, with a particular focus on digging up untold stories in local history. Kelly is Project Director for Rocket City Civil Rights; a project continuing the work of her Master's Thesis to document and share Huntsville's civil rights era history. She was nominated for the 2019, Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society's Dr. John Rison Jones Award for

Southern History and is the founder and director of Wolf Gap Education Outreach, a southern Tennessee nonprofit organization providing hands-on history and nature education programs.

Alabama Senator Clement Claiborne Clay, Jr.

By Marjorie Ann Reeves

Nostalgia was the 19th century term for what we call Post Traumatic Stress Disorder today. Even though Clement Claiborne Clay Jr. was never on the battlefield during the War Between the States, he was imprisoned in isolation for almost a year after the war charged with participation in the assassination of President Lincoln. His imprisonment by the Federals was unnecessarily cruel and affected him for the rest of his life. In the end, the prosecution for a crime, in which he did not take any part, was not carried out.



C. C. Clay Jr.

C.C. Clay Jr. was born on December 16, 1816, in Huntsville and educated at the Greene Academy. He attended the University of Alabama, afterward he entered University of Virginia gaining a law degree. He returned to Huntsville to become a partner in his father's law firm. His father Clement Comer Clay arrived in Huntsville in 1811 opening a law practice. He became a judge for the circuit court and served as the state's first chief justice for the state supreme court. He chaired

the Committee of Fifteen that drafted the state constitution. He served as a state Representative, Governor of Alabama, and in the U.S. Senate. His belief in state rights and hatred of the Union made him one of the strongest Unionist enemy. After the invasion of Huntsville by the Federals in 1862, he was imprisoned which broke his health, and he died soon after the war.

Clement Comer Clay's oldest son C.C. Clay Jr. followed his father's footsteps into politics being elected county judge in

Madison County and served in the U.S. Senate. He only missed 5.2 % of the voting in congress making his voting record one of the best in history. He wrote during his time in the Senate that “The South is now powerless in Congress and getting weaker in the Union every year.” In 1858 his speech contained, “The Union of the Constitution, which our fathers made, I love and revere and would preserve, but this Union without the Constitution, or with it as construed by the Northern Republicans, I abhor and scorn, would dissolve, if my power were equal to my will.”

When secession came, C.C. Clay Jr. give a farewell speech to Congress from his heart:

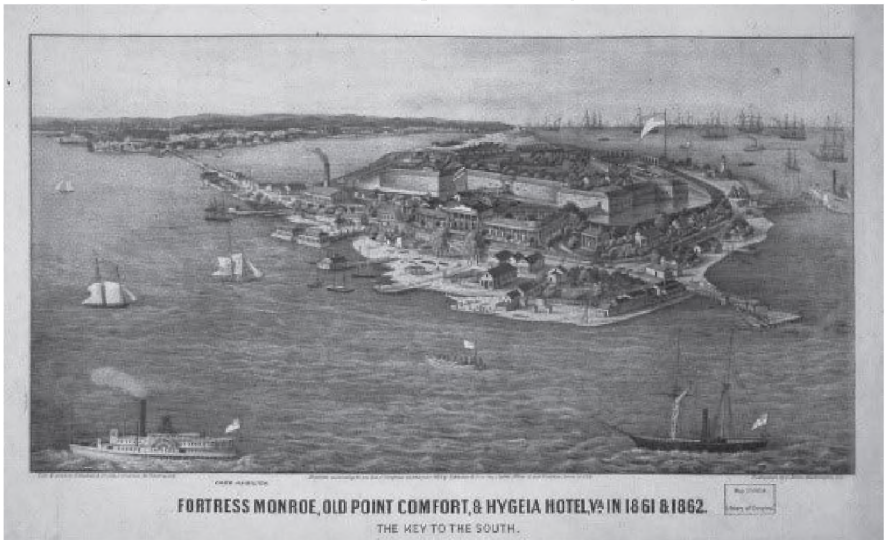
“Identified as I am with Alabama by my birth, education, interest, and affection – regarding her as my nursing mother and my grave – indebted to her for the highest honors and greatest trusts she could bestow, and standing here as one of her ambassadors, I feel it my duty to justify all her acts relating to the Federal Government.”

After the Clays left D.C., they came back to Madison County, Alabama, to their home, *Cozy Cot*, on Monte Sano Mountain to work on Clay Jr’s strength from his chronic illness. He was prone to asthmatic attacks so bad the doctors thought he had consumption. A few months later he ran for a Confederate Senate seat. Even though an old friend of the Jefferson Davis from the Washington days, he still criticized Davis’ governing methods as the Confederacy’s President. Being a close friend, Clay Jr. would spend many hours including nights at Jefferson Davis’ side when he would be bedridden by his illnesses.

Clay Jr. spent two years as the Alabama Confederate Senate in Richmond but was defeated for reelection. Davis appointed him and Jacob Thompson as commissioners to Canada to support Confederates in that country. He took

part in organizing a raid into Vermont, several citizens were wounded and one killed. Clay Jr. paid the legal fees for the defense of the raiders. The strain of the trial affected his weakened health convincing him to return to Alabama which he did after the end of the war. When Clay Jr. heard that there was a reward for his arrest, he surrendered to Federal Soldiers hoping it would show his innocence of the charge of plotting Lincoln's assassination. Clay Jr. and Davis with their families were arrested and sent together to Fort Monroe, Virginia. Before they arrived at the fort, the wives and children were sent back South, after the soldiers went through their luggage and took what they wanted from the travelers.

Clay Jr. and Davis were imprisoned in cold, damp casemates at Fort Monroe guarded by three officers and



twenty soldiers. The Federals feared the prisoners would escape or commit suicide, so Clay Jr. and Davis were under tight, continuous security. In the book *Jefferson Davis, American*, their imprisonment was described, "A sentry stood inside the cell and outside the door. The men were under

constant observations, but the soldiers were not allowed to talk to the prisoners. The furnishings were sparse: a hospital bed, iron bedstead, one chair and table, stool chest, a bible, and Episcopal prayer book. They ate food prepared in the hospital but not allowed neither knives no forks. A lamp burned constantly. The lamp, changing of the guards every two hours, and incessant tramping of the sentinels made normal sleep impossible.”

From the *Prescott Journal* of July 8, 1865: “Clem Clay smokes with philosophic indifference. He occasionally addresses a pleasant remark to his guards. As a prisoner he has given very little trouble. From the beginning, he has subsisted on the army ration. He eats but little, smokes a great deal, and has evidently made up his mind that neither fretting nor grumbling will help his case, and the best course to be pursued is to take things easily and quietly.”

Clay Jr. was finally allowed to write to his wife, Virginia, which she quoted in her book, *Belle of the Fifties*. “For I must now tell you what I have heretofore thought I would conceal till my liberation or death, that I have endured the most ingenious and refined torture ever since I came into this living tomb; for, although above the natural face of the earth, it is covered with about ten feet of earth, and is always more or less damp like a tomb. With a bright light in my room and the adjoining room, united to it by two doorways, closed by iron gates, which cover about half the space or width of the partition, and with two soldiers in this room, and two and a lieutenant in the adjoining, until about 30th June; with the opening and shutting of those heavy iron doors or gates, the soldiers being relieved every two hours; with the tramp of these heavy, armed men, walking their beats, the rattling of their arms, and still more the trailing sabre of the lieutenant, the officer of the guard, whose duty is to look at me every fifteen minutes, you may be sure that my sleep has been often disturbed and broken. In truth, I have experienced one

of the tortures of the Spanish Inquisition in this frequent, periodical and irregular disturbance of my sleep. During the one hundred and twelve days of my imprisonment here I have never enjoyed one night's unbroken sleep; I have been roused every two hours, if asleep, by the tread of soldiers, the clank of arms and the voices of officers. I have never known the feeling of refreshment from sleep on arising any morning of my imprisonment. Besides, I have never been allowed retirement from sight, actual or potential, of my guards; having to bathe and do all the acts of nature in view of the guard, if they chose to look at me. I have never been allowed an interview with any one alone, not even with a minister of God, but have always been confronted with two or more witnesses, whenever minister or physician come to see me. I have never been allowed any clothes save those in present use. Where my other clothes are I do not know, as several of those who were represented as masters of my wardrobe denied the trust. I have found out that some things I valued have been stolen, together with all the little money I kept. I think it probable that you will never see half of the contents of my valise and despatch bag. The inclosed letters * present but a glimpse of my tortures, for I knew that the grand inquisitors, the President and Cabinet, knew all that I could tell and even more; and, besides, my debility of body and of mind was such that I had not power to coin my thoughts into words. . . . And to be frank, I was too proud to confess to them all my sufferings, and also apprehended that they would rather rejoice over and aggravate than relent and alleviate them. I now feel ashamed that I have complained to them instead of enduring unto death. My love for you, my parents and brothers, prevailed over my self-love, and extracted from me those humiliating letters. I have been reluctant to humble myself to men whom I regarded as criminals far more than myself, touching all the woes and wrongs, the destruction and desolation of the South."

After the doctor noticed the treatments were contributing to the prisoners' poor health, he wrote to the War Department requesting to have the lamp and guard removed from the cells. Davis and Clay Jr. were permitted to exercise outdoors but still not allowed to communicate with anyone. They were finally moved out of the damp casemate to Carroll Hall before winter set in.

The one thing Clay Jr. had going for himself was in 1843 he married a politically connected, charming Virginia Tunstall. He was the oldest of three siblings and she was the youngest of 24. She was an energetic, sociable, attractive, young lady that fit naturally into the political life in Washington and Richmond.



Virginia Clay

When her husband was imprisoned, she campaigned for his release. She managed to get President Johnson to pardon Clay Jr, and he was released April of 1866. After Clay Jr's release, he traveled back to visit Davis who was still being held in Fort Monroe without justification.

After Jefferson Davis was finally released a year later, he still had a family to support and went to work for Carolina Life Insurance. He would stop to see the Clays whenever his travels allowed. He wrote often to the Clays and Virginia, the letter writer in the Clay family, was the one that answered

Davis' correspondence. Davis appointed Clay Jr. an insurance agent, but Clay Jr. did poorly due to his health.



Jefferson Davis

His health grew worse during the imprisonment and he was basically a broken and financially ruined man when he returned to Huntsville. Their *Cozy Cot* home on Monte Sano had been burned by the Union. He tried to return to a law practice, but he couldn't keep that going so he moved

out to his country home in Gurley, *Wildwood*, until his death in 1882.



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PRESIDENT JAMES MONROE VISITS HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

By Coy E. Michael

On June 2, 1819 three men on horseback arrived at the Eastern edge of Huntsville. They inquired as to a place to spend the night and were advised there was an Inn on the public square. The men were not immediately identified until they arrived at the Inn. Soon word spread through the town that President James Monroe was here with, Mr. Gouveneur, his private secretary, and Lieutenant Monroe, of the Army.

The *Alabama Republican* newspaper printed on June 5, 1819 contained the following: "No intimation of his intention to visit our town had been received by any individual in it, but the citizens solicitous to shew their respect to the Chief Magistrate of the Union, appointed a committee to wait upon his Excellency and invite him to a public dinner.

On Wednesday at 4 o'clock, the President and suit together with more than one hundred of the most respectable citizens of Madison County sat down to a sumptuous entertainment prepared by Capt. Irby Jones, at which Col. LeRoy Pope acted as President assisted by C.C. Clay and Henry Minor Esqrs., as Vice-Presidents. After the cloth was removed, C. C. Clay Esqr. addressed the President [with a lengthy speech]. Twenty-one toasts were given. The first toast was to "Our Country" followed by toasts to Major General Andrew Jackson, to General John Coffee, to our Navy, to Agriculture and many more. The President rose and gave an additional toast "To the Territory of Alabama –

may her speedy admission into the Union advance her happiness, and augment the national strength and prosperity". He returned thanks to the company for their kind expressions toward him.

The *Alabama Republican* continues: "The company rose from the table about sunset highly delighted with the entertainment they had received and the opportunity they had enjoyed of demonstrating their great regard and affection for Mr. Monroe, who now appeared to them more like a plain citizen than the Chief Magistrate of a great nation".

The Presidential visit was part of his tour through the south to examine the various fortifications and to strengthen them against foreign aggression.

The President left the following day, toward Nashville, escorted by a number of respectable citizens several miles on his way, the whole company being on horseback.

The *Nashville Gazette*, Saturday, June 12. 1819, reported the following: On Wednesday last about 3 o'clock, p.m. James Monroe, Esq. President of the United States, arrived in Nashville. He left the residence of Major General Jackson, on that day accompanied by the General, his Staff and Major General Gaines. --- A few miles from town he was received by a body of Volunteers under the order of Cols. Williamson and Phillips and a large collection of citizens on horseback, who escorted him to town."

Prior to his visit to Huntsville President James Monroe visited Brainerd Mission, in the Chattanooga area, on May 27 and 28, 1819ⁱ. He was accompanied by General Edmund Pendleton Gaines. This was the first

presidential visit to the Hamilton County area. He donated \$1,000 as a personal gift to the work of the mission. The mission was established in 1817 as a religious and an educational institution for Cherokee Indians. The mission ended in 1838 with the Cherokee removal.

The Jackson County Chamber of Commerce published a brief early history of the county. A paragraph from that article follows: "It is very probable that Jackson County had a very important visitor ride down its old stage road the latter part of May 1819. President James Monroe visited the Brainerd Mission School for Cherokee Indians on May 27 and May 28, 1819 and arrived in Huntsville, unannounced, June 1st.



¹ The History of Hamilton County and Chattanooga, Tennessee, Vol. 1 by Zella Armstrong, Lookout Publishing Company, Chattanooga, Tennessee 1931.

The Huntsville Historical Review; Editorial Policy

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

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

You can contribute to our history through the *Huntsville Historical Review*.

Manuscript Preparation and Submission

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

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

Review Content and Style

- In matters of form and style, a good guide is the fourteenth or fifteenth edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.
- If you choose to include footnotes the preferred citation method for full articles would be best.
- Manuscripts should be in 12-point font and in Times New Roman. Microsoft Word
- This is a guide and not intended to discourage the creative process nor constrain authors from contributing to the Review.

Book Review

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

- Your first obligation in a book review is to explain the subject of the book and the author's central thesis or main points.

- Your second obligation is to evaluate how successfully the author has made his/her point. Is the author's argument reasonable, logical, and consistent?
- Your third obligation is to set the book into a broader context. If you can, place the book into a wider context by looking at broader issues.
- Your fourth obligation is to render a judgment on the value of the book as a contribution to historical scholarship.

News and Notes Submissions

Please keep your submissions limited to 250 words and please include contact information if you are making an inquiry or asking a question. The editor has the right to change or delete wording or information.

Little Reminders . . . Good Writing Rules

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

**Huntsville-Madison County
Historical Society**
Preserving The Past To Enrich The Future

The HMCHS was formed more than 65 years ago by thoughtful citizens who were concerned about preserving the unique heritage of this area. The richness and diversity of 200 years of local history indeed should be shared and celebrated. To that end; the Historical Society has been collecting, preserving, recording and promoting history since 1951.

Check out our website <http://www.hmchs.org>

An Invitation to Membership

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

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

The Cost of Membership \$35.00 per year

**Renewals are based on the calendar year*

Make checks payable to the:
Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society.
Simply mail the information below and include
a check or visit <http://www.hmchs.org> and
use paypal.

**Huntsville-Madison County Historical
Society**

PO Box 666

Huntsville, AL 35804

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