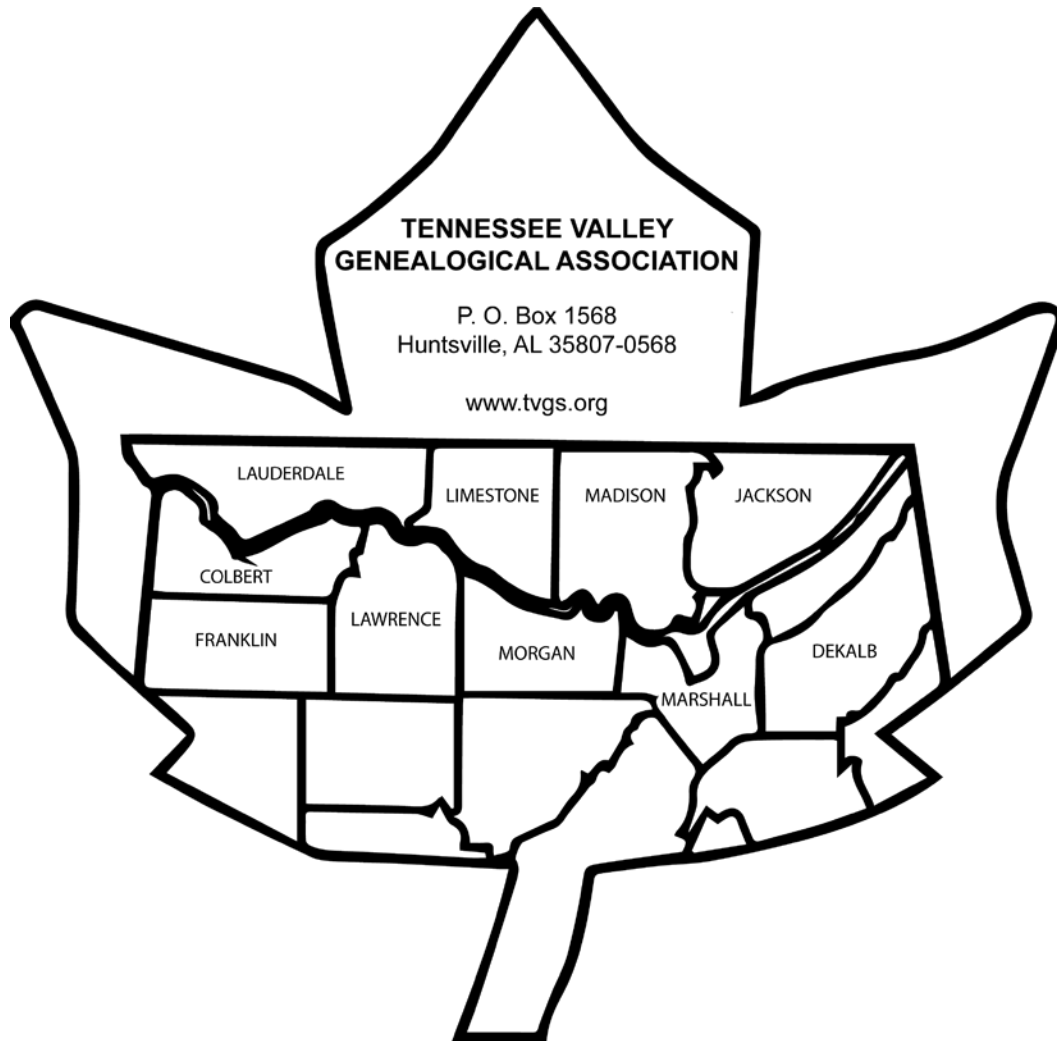


TENNESSEE VALLEY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Valley Leaves



Volume 51, Issues 1-2

Fall 2016

Publications Available for Purchase

Back Issues

Volumes 1 through 13 (1966-1980) available on CD _____ \$10 per volume
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Co., AL. (96 pages, full name index) Anne Beason Gahan © 1991 _____ \$20.00
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Enumeration of the Moon Cemetery and Byrd Cemetery, Owens Cross Roads,
Madison Co, AL. Carla Deramus © 1996 reprinted 2003 _____ \$15.00
1907 Confederate Census of Limestone, Morgan & Madison Counties Alabama, 52 pages,
Dorothy Scott Johnson, © 1981 _____ \$12.00
Death Notices From Limestone Co., AL., Newspapers, 1828-1891,
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A Companion to Vol. 4. TVGS, © December 1969 _____ \$15.00
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Land record books are full name indexed and have a county map at the beginning of each Township and Range intersection.

Old Land Records of Colbert County, Alabama, Margaret Matthews Cowart, © 1985 _____ \$25.00
Old Land Records of Franklin County, Alabama, Margaret Matthews Cowart, © 1986 _____ \$25.00
Old Land Records of Jackson County, Alabama, Margaret Matthews Cowart, © 1988, 2014 _____ \$25.00
Old Land Records of Lauderdale County, Alabama, Margaret Matthews Cowart, © 1996 _____ \$25.00
Old Land Records of Lawrence County, Alabama, Margaret Matthews Cowart, © 1991 _____ \$25.00
Old Land Records of Limestone County, Alabama, Margaret Matthews Cowart, © 1984 _____ \$25.00
Old Land Records of Marshall County, Alabama, Margaret Matthews Cowart, © 1988 _____ \$25.00
Old Land Records of Morgan County, Alabama, Margaret Matthews Cowart, © 1981 _____ \$25.00
Old Land Records of Madison County, Alabama, Margaret Matthews Cowart, © 1979, 2005 _____ \$35.00

All publications have full name indexes. Prices include postage.

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Volume 51, Issues No. 1-2 Fall 2016

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TVGS meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of January, April, July and October at 7:00 pm in the auditorium of the Huntsville-Madison Co. Public Library at 915 Monroe St., Huntsville, AL unless otherwise announced.

TVGS Web Site:

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Thursday, Jan. 26, 2017

7 p.m., Huntsville Public Library Auditorium
Historian John Rankin will present a PowerPoint presentation entitled "An Overview of Historical Papers in the Collection of Dr. Frances Cabaniss Roberts at the University of Alabama in Huntsville."

Annual TVGS Spring Seminar

Thursday, April 22, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Marriott Spring Hill Suites, Huntsville, AL
Featuring TN State Archivist Charles A Sherrill and DAR Historian Linda Moss Mines.
Registration fee required; lunch included

Thursday, April 27, 2017

7 p.m., Huntsville Public Library Auditorium
Dr. Chris Paysinger, a teacher and historian, will present "Making History Local: A Better Context for Approaching the Past."

Thursday, July 27, 2017

7 p.m., Huntsville Public Library Auditorium
Genealogy Antiquist Roadshow with George Marchelos, PhD., certified appraiser of antiques and personal property. Bring your memetos for appraisal!

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Spring Seminar 2017

A full day of genealogical skill-building

Saturday, April 22, 2017, Marriott Spring Hill Suites, Huntsville, AL

This year's TVGS Spring Seminar will feature programs by archivist Charles A. Sherrill and historian Linda Moss Mines. Mr. Sherrill will present two workshops:



“Analysis of a Case File” and “Using Original Court Records: A Hands-On Workshop.” Ms. Mines will also present two programs: “One Hundred Years Later: The Great War and its Impact on US Families” and “Putting Your Ancestors in Historical Context.”

The event will begin at 9:00 A.M. on Saturday, April 22, 2017 and conclude around 3:30 P.M.. Books from TVGS and other local historical groups will be available for sale. Registration is \$40 and includes lunch. To register, please visit tvgs.org after January 1st or find us on Facebook. If you are traveling from out of town and wish to book lodging at the Marriott Spring Hill Suites, please call them at (256) 430-1485.



Analysis of a Case File: You've found it! A long trail has led you to that hefty packet of old papers filed in your ancestor's lawsuit. But how do you wade through the legal jargon and cull the valuable research clues hidden in a hundred pages of cramped handwriting? Learn how to systematically identify, sort and read case files for effective use. (1 hour)

Using Original Court Records: A Hands-On Workshop: Files of the Tennessee Supreme Court form the basis for this workshop. Participants will gain hands-on experience in identifying and interpreting original records. Exercises using copies from 19th-century minute books, dockets, estate packets and court cases will help develop skills for effective research among these records. (1 hour)

About Our Speakers

Charles A. Sherrill, M.A., M.L.S.

Director of Brentwood Library near Nashville, TN, Charles has served as Director of Public Services for the Tennessee State Library & Archives. He holds Master's degrees in History and Library Science from Case Western Reserve University. Among his works are books on several Tennessee counties, particularly Grundy County. Additional works include two family genealogies, a collection of penitentiary records entitled “Tennessee Convicts,” and his most recent publication, *The Reconstructed 1810 Tennessee Census*.

Linda Moss Mines, M. A.

A lifetime appointment by Chattanooga and Hamilton County, Linda is Chattanooga and Hamilton County historian. She is co-chair of the County and City's Commemoration of the War in Vietnam and the Mayor's Council on Women's History and Chair of the History Department at Girls Preparatory School. She obtained her undergrad and Master's from Tennessee Tech. A member of the Chief John Ross Chapter, NSDAR, she is the Tennessee Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution State Historian, and is a Board member of several other organizations.



**Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society
Spring Seminar Agenda
Saturday, April 22, 2017**

Time	Event	Speaker
9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Registration & Books Sales	
9:35 a.m. - 9:40 a.m.	Welcome & Introductions	TVGS Pres. Phyllis O'Connell
9:40 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.	Introduction of Speaker	Lynn Presley
9:45 a.m. - 10:50 a.m.	"Analysis of a Case File"	Charles A. Sherrill, M.A. M.L.S.
10:50 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Morning Break	
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	"Using Original Court Records"	Charles A. Sherrill, M.A. M.L.S.
12:00 p.m. - 12:45 p.m.	Lunch	Catered by Newt's Eatery
12:45 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.	Prizes	TVGS Board
12:50 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Introduction of Speaker	Lynn Presley
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	"Putting Your Ancestors in Historical Context"	Linda Moss Mines, M.A.
2:00 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.	Afternoon Break & Book Sales	
2:15 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.	"One Hundred Years Later: The Great War & Its Impact on U.S. Families"	Linda Moss Mines, M.A.
3:15 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Audience Questions Announcement of Future Programs Closing Remarks	TVGS Pres. Phyllis O'Connell

Jackson County



FROM THE DIARY OF
WILLIAM TECUMSEH SHERMAN

WHILE INVESTIGATING CLAIMS AT BELLEFONTE, AL (1844)

**Foreword by ALEXIS ALBRIGHT
TVGS Contributor**

In our last issue, we published the *Martin-Sherman Letters*, correspondence preserved between Bellefonte resident Daniel McNair Martin and Gen. William T. Sherman. The letters dated from 1864.

At the time the letters were written, Martin was down on his luck and struggling to provide for his daughter, three young grandchildren, and ailing wife during the Civil War, when he received word that his former acquaintance, Sherman, now a general in the Union Army, was stationed nearby. Martin had met Sherman some 20 years prior when Sherman was a young military officer investigating horse claims

**Transcribed by JENNIFER PETTY &
CINDY SWAGLER, Jackson County
(AL) Heritage Center**

from the “Florida Wars.” Martin hosted him at Bellefonte and showed him the local countryside on horseback.

You might think the details of such a passing encounter would be lost to history, but through the diligent work of several researchers, we present Sherman’s personal account of his time at Bellefonte: how the locals reacted to him, what he made of the landscape (and the women), and even how much his ferry ride cost. The following is what remains of Sherman’s account, originally written with pencil in a quick, scrawling hand.

On Monday the 18, left Mr Col Churchill. Mrs. C. Charles & myself mounted followed

Pictured above: Sherman as a young man before the Civil War. Originally published in *The Generals of the Civil War* (1907). Public domain.

by a baggage wagon. I got 26 miles to Col Tumlins, about 3 miles below the ferry across the Etowah. On his place stand three remarkable mounds surrounded by a ditch that rests on the river enclosing a space of 80 acres- They are in good preservation. They are all truncated pyramids and each has a ramp on the Eastern face. The larger is 75 to 80 ft high and has an acre of ground on top. I made a topographical sketch of the pyramid also of two figurines that had been found in the field, one about 12 or 13 inches high of a woman sitting & one knee raised, the other quite small a female supporting a pipe. The former is of baked clay & the latter of green soapstone. I remained at Tumlins house till noon hour when I started and overtook the party at Rome. 52 m from Marietta, on a hill or hills at the junction of the Etowah and Oostanulah a head of the Coosa

Next day. Wednesday we proceeded as far as a town on the Chatuga, 25 m dist, where we spent the night in an airy cabin in most Democratic Style. Next day turned from the Main Road towards Wills Valley- visited a remarkably beautiful falls of Little River 12 m from, and after which on as far as the Widow Slaytons, where I staid all night & next day after dinner arrived at this dirty(?) town. It appears that the Col got lost as well as myself on the Lookout Mountain and descended into the valley 3 miles north of the proper road by an exceedingly rough Ravine the wagon upset and spilled the baggage over the cliff, damaging it not a little, My trunk performed a great feat in the way of jumping over logs rocks and streams which injured it materially. Hammond & Stockton got here the same day afternoon as I did ---(?)

Thursday the Friday the 22 March

The balance of the party got here late last Evening

Saturday, 23- today is Sunday and tomorrow our work will be resumed but will not be Valley Leaves

able to do much on account of the Session of the Court which seems to be the great attraction for politicians and Loafers

Bellefonte Ala- April 8, 1844 Still at this place investigating claims for horses lost in the Military Service of Florida. The people seem to be shy of us, come in Slowly. In fact they fear a close scrutiny in to their conduct, as many honest men have admitted that the company was a matter of speculation & that many of them went to work deliberately to kill their horses that they might receive from the U.S. the appraised value thereof which usually amounted to twice as much as the real value. today our office is full and of claimants come in rapidly. we will get through by the end of the month.

Yesterday I went down to see the Sautie Cave which is in a hill side near the Huntsville road about 13 miles from here. I could get no guide & had great difficulty in getting a torch of light wood which enabled me to go about 2 or 300 yds into the cave. it was large and branched to the right & left terminating in shelving -----(?) one of which was so arched, as to be -----(?) and called by the people Singing Room, as they frequently light it up and use it for such purpose. Sacred Lighting(?). The main gallery is nearly straight inside and very high. My torch light could not reach the ceiling except on the corner or in ---tation(?). This gallery passes clear through the hill a half mile. its bottom contains a Species of gravelly clay, which is heaped with nitre. vats & boilers were erected there during the Late Wars & immense quantity of ~~water~~ nitre was extracted and made into powder at a Mill below. the mouth of this cave is more than half way up the hill or about a hundred & fifty feet above the valley, but there was another cave almost immediately below on a level with the valley.

A fine Stream of water and a remarkably cool draught of air seem to come out of this cave which is wet, as far as I went in, which

was about a hundred yards. The walls were covered with smoke & lead me to believe that nitre Earth had likewise been found there, although the works are now confined to the upper one. The hill is either of primitive or secondary limestone of a blueish crystalline texturing ----(?). the stalactytes above large and small with a cone of crystallized stone as hard as flint. makes fire quite as well. have not yet examined it to see whether it be lime, quartz or mica.

The valley of the Tennessee between here and Sautie Creek is rolling but rich, nearly all the land seems to be owned and a great part cultivated. Some very comfortable ----(?) barns, fields & orchard of peach and apple trees are straight(?) along the road. Back from the river the hills sweep over in a dense -----(?) or -----(?) farms enclosing sometimes thousands of acres of good arable land. called coves formed no doubt, by the sinking of the land by the substructure of limestone being washed away. therefore the top of the mountain were on the general surface of the country. and the valley and coves have been formed by the washing away, given(?) the surface -(?) -----(?) tinuously(?) of the limestone

This inposition(?) given will, with the fact that the strata of limestone when(?) it has in ----(?) are merely(?) limestone, but on some of the hills near Bellefonte some ledges of rock seem to have fallen(?) and assumed(?) -(?) -----(?) or standing position, exposing the broken gaffes upper end. The weather for the past two weeks has been beautiful beyond description. The trees have all leaves. The peach has shed its blossom and the apple cherry & other cultivated trees as well as the dogwood, crabapple ----(?), red bud & other trees (forest) are in bloom and covered with bright green leaves. The country looks very beautiful and it seems almost a pity that it has not fallen into more thrifty hands. I have never seen a great

proportion of pretty well looking, modest and intelligent country girls any where. there are several not far from here -(?) ---(?) would be beautiful ---(?) -----(?) had they had the opportunities for cultivating their minds and cultivating the graces(?) of motion(?) & body. Last Thursday received a ----(?) supply of letters from Ellen, Mother, Judd, Bragg & others. Today is mail day but it has not come yet. There are but two a week from Huntsville & they arrived on horseback. Rec'd a letter from A—en(?)

Friday, April 11. Bellefonte

Not many claimants in this week. fine weather.

I have not been well in several days being bilious & with a headache. have taken no medicine & may not be able to partake of a picnic, which is to be given to us tomorrow A—(?) the ___ie(?) of Fish fry in which the Gentlemen and Ladies in and around Bellefonte seem to be making great preparation.

Bellefonte Ala. Apr 15, 1844

Yesterday being Sunday and a beautiful day, I took a horse and crossed the Tennessee in company with our Landlord Martin. Stopped at Gays a while & then Scrambled up the Raccoon Range of mountain by a very rugged ascent to its top about 8 or 900 feet above high water end of the River. The lower part of the mountain is a bluish – end(?) crystalline cavern(?) or(or on?) limestone of very uniform appearance & regular in(?) formation. it extends to within couple hundred feet of the top. when the ----(?) a free stone(?) begins and extend to the very top, each formation still retains very nearly a horizontal position. dipping a little to the South. I could find no organic remains in the limestone formation, although I examined a great many features, but the sandstone was filled with veins of clay & iron ore and pebble distributed sometimes in layers and sometimes throughout the mass The top of the mountain is quite level with

some ravines ----(?) towards the river. the grass had been burned and had been I-plied(?) by a fresh growth that looked very rich. none(?) or very little of that able(?) land has been(?) entered and is open for cattle rangers(?) and appeared beautifully adapted to this purpose as well as the grazing of sheep. – we rode along the ----(?) of the mountain having a beautiful prospect on our left of the Tennessee River & its valley on south(?) side(?) ----(?) the-(?) – ver(?) so much smoke in the air that it did not appear to its best(?) advantage. The trees in the valley were full & freshly leaved another(?) -----(?) top of the mountain was not far behind. on top the surface was quite(?) monotonous. oak (black & chesnut) blackjack, maple, hickory, poplar, sycamore, sugar white oak, red as(?) and gum were the principal variety. little or no walnuts whortleberries on small bushes & on trees not unlike the black ----(?). black berries innumerable peach trees almost wild and just enough pitch pine to make good cheerful(?) fires. about five miles to the north of the ferry, we passed down the mountain by a cattle path into the valley of Racoon creek. Kept along the base and saw(?) fine streams and rivulets coming out at the base of the mountain sometimes merely out of loose stones & sometimes a cavern one of the latter(?) class had been dammed by coffer work with a sliding gate which threw the water into a tub wheel, which turned a vestibul(?) shaft to which was attached a piece(pair?) of mill &(?) turns(?) the whole under the roof of the cave this simple mill was erected some twenty years ago by a white man for the use of the Cherokee Indians, but is now used for grinding the corn of the people round about, or the County(?). we took a hearty lunch after having opened(?) the flood gate & grinding about a peck(?) of corn, and enjoying(?) the cool water much.

From the mill we continued up the Coon valley a couple of miles. again ascended the

mount(?) there along the ravines to a chalybeate Spring & thence back to the ferry. had(?) got home about dark, having ridden about 30 or 35 miles over a very rugged country. The valley or bottom land of the Tennessee is very rich, produces the cane(?), which if(?) fenced in & protected wh—(?) y---g(?) and(?) jointing will furnish(?) a most excellent pasture for horses & cattle during the winter.

An old fellow Gay settled close under(?) the hill. whilst the land on that side of the river still belonged to the Cherokees. has made enough money by grazing cattle & raising horses to pay for(?) two or three hundred acres of most excellent land. he(?) half a doz strapping(?) girls & boys down to mere(mens?) p—ts(?) all living in cabins that will permit any light to enter in every(or any?) direction. at the same time owning most excellent stock and land that may be worth gold to his children

I doubt whether any of them read at all or can ---(?) -----(?)

Last Saturday the people gave a fish fry, which was well attended by all the girls, young & old men, boys & niggers(?) of the county round(?) about(?). It was given(?) somewhat to us and we felt bound to go.

They had lines(?) set(?) for catching fish and succeeded in catching enough of Buffalo to feed the crowd. I was not well and did not stay but a short while.

Bellefonte, Apr 17, 1844

Recd by Mondays mail several letters and papers. amongst others this inteli---(?) of the 2nd Inst containing(?) all the letters upon which -----(?) ----(?) Bragg are predicated & for which he has been arrested and sent to Fort Monroe for trial. They suggest to me the following questions

Why was he sent to Fort Monroe after(?) the A-----(?) letter of the officers at their(?) post to Gen(?) Scott?

Was Lieut Duncan arrested for the disobedience of the same order which Bragg is charged with? Would(?) infer not from the fact that Mr Clinton(?) speaks of having conferred with Duncan on the morning of the 21 or the day after the order was received..

Is the communication of the fact that Luchan(?) ---(?) -(?) is to be issued property(or properly?) speaking(?) an order to obey the expectatione(?) or is(?) it not merely preparatory & (?) much(?) discussion(?) caused by the circumstance by us(?) here(?)

The Bill(?) reported by the C---n(?). Retrenchment(?) in the House(?) of Reps, has been received(?)

Does not alter the organization much of the Army(?) except by prec-----(?) th---(?) employment of Brewster and regiments(?) all capt---(?) of companies to be actually present with the companies. Pay by salaries much reduced(?) No distinction between the Artillery Infantry rifles(?) ordinance(?) -(?) Engineers(?)

May 1, 1844

at Bellefonte still. -----(?) nearly closed and expect to get through this week and start for Charleston next.

Last Sunday(?) rode ten miles back into the country into G(?)reasy Cove. land very rich but thinly settled yet. -----(?) near from Charleston. Ketchum(?) resigned. Fraser(?) - ---(?) from Har-----(?) sick. Tayler to be married to Emeline Everett. Rankin(?) soon to follow on the -----(?) of Miss Williamson of Savannah. Thomas to be sent from West Point. Braggs trial to begin on the 15 ---(?) & (?) c-c(?)

May 7, 1844, Bellefonte

Yesterday, Sunday I rode over on the Racoon Mountain, ascending on the right(?) hand side of Rileys Creek.

The Mountain is capped(?) with free stone. making an entirely different soil on top than in the valleys. Woods(?) more open and th- (?) ground where the grass has been burned covered with firm(?) fresh grass. I seen(?) three deer. It is a most beautiful range for sheep horse, or cattle. There are many fine views of the Tennessee valley & River from the crest of the mountain, which is 800 or 900 feet high --

Transcriptionist's Note: At this point in the diary, Sherman leaves Bellefonte, AL and travels to South Carolina- as you can see in the next couple of entries.

Saturday

Augusta, Ga. May 19, 1844

Col. Churchill,
Sir

In obedience to your Instructions given at Bellefonte Ala. I have the honor to report that neither at Rome or this Post Office have I found any letter addressed to you from any person. I am in consequence unable fully to execute your order to ascertain which of the several documents fo- (?) by you from Marietta to Washington on the 17th day of March are lost and to endeavor to recover them whilst at Marietta I a-(?) -t---ed(?) without giving rise to suspicion. thats(?) the(?) perhaps(?) were put in the Letter Bag(?) each stamped with the usual Post Mark. along with 14 letters marked Free(?) and other letters the postage(?) of which amounted to 68 & $\frac{3}{4}$ cents. These were put in one package with a Post bill marked Northern, and which were not to be opened till it reached Augusta, Geo. Mr Richardson the Clerk and(?) Mr Robertson Postmaster of Marrietta told(?) me on the -(?) (Did not write this letter till my arrival at Fort Moultrie S.C. May 19, 1844)

1845

On Tuesday January 14. 45 dislocated my

arm at the shoulder by the fall of my horse in a deer hunt at Poyar(?) in South Carolina. In consequence on the 24 of January started on leave of absence from Fort Moultrie – left Charleston on the 25. pen'd(?) 21-olls(?) to Baltimore reached Washington on the 27 and remained there till the 31- went to Ft McHenry & left there for the west on the 2 Feb reached Lancaster(?) ...

Transcriptionist's Note: It appears that the remainder of the diary is where Sherman kept a budget. I have transcribed a few references to Bellefonte, AL.

PO postage act for Stockton at Bellefonte .50
 Money lent Stockton May 5. 2.00
 Hammond Postage Bellefonte 1.87(?)

Prices of travel from....

Rec' Bellefonte, Apl-15.
 pay for March-- 70.50

c-mm \bar{n} (?) & ----(?) -- 57.06
 \$127.56

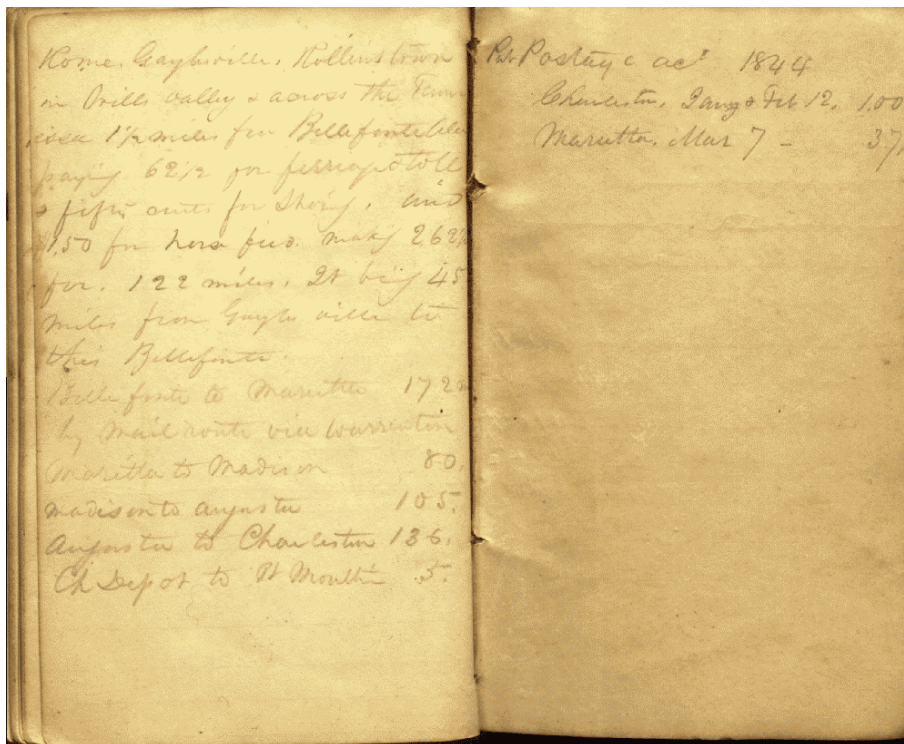
Rome, Gaylesville, Rollinstown in Wills valley & across the Tennessee 1 ½ miles from Bellefonte Ala paying 62 ½ for ferry & toll & fifty cents for shoring(?) and \$1.50 for horse feed making 262 1/? for 122 miles. It being 45 miles from Gayles ville to this Bellefonte.

Bellefonte to Marietta 17.20
 by mail route via Warrenton
 Marietta to Madison 80.
 Madison to Augusta 105.
 Augusta to Charleston 136.
 Ch Depot to Ft Moultrie .5.

Pub(?) Postage act 1844
 Charleston(?) Jany & Feb 12. 1.00
 Marietta. Mar 7- 37 ½

Reference:

William T Sherman Family papers (SHR), University of Notre Dame Archives (UNDA), Notre Dame, IN 46556



The tally of costs from Sherman's time in Alabama.

Madison County

JOHN HUNT,

HUNTSVILLE'S FIRST CITIZEN

Huntsville Public Library's late archivist, Rane'e' Pruitt, assigned several the task of researching and writing about different sections of 1805 Madison County in preparation for the book sponsored by the Madison County Commission for the bicentennial year 2005. I was given the area around the Big Spring and with that came John Hunt. My wife and I visited libraries, courthouses, and archives in his hometown Tazwell, then Rogersville and other Tennessee towns. The Tennessee Archives in Nashville, the McClung Museum in Knoxville and the North Carolina Archives in Raleigh revealed the real John Hunt. I believe we now have the whole story. -DB

BY DAVID BYERS

For over 200 years, conversations have been heard in North Alabama about a man who came to Indian Country and left few obvious tracks. The city is named for John Hunt, the first man to live at the Big Spring, and a park is called by his name, but it is hard to work through the dusty rumors and stories gathered over those years.

Many Huntsvillians will remember classmates whose family claimed John Hunt as an ancestor. One Huntsville historian felt Huntsville should not claim its start at the building of Hunt's cabin but instead when the wealthy cotton-growing investors came from Georgia. Others gave Hunt credit for beginning the community around the spring but thought him to be a wanderer, clad in buckskin, a poor businessman, and only a small part of our history. So the story, so often mistakenly told, had many faces and few facts.

Some said that LeRoy Pope had swindled Hunt out of the land Hunt had cleared and built on near the Big Spring. Two families told that Hunt had stolen logs prepared by their early family members for that rough cabin at the creek side.

None were sure how long he stayed in

Huntsville or where he died and was buried. Little local proof was available. The early records of government have disappeared and other problems caused research to go astray. The very common names, "John" and "Hunt," did not help. His father, his son, his cousin and he all shared the same name.

Hunt was born about 1750 in Fincastle County, now Botetourt County, Virginia. Little is known about his wife but they did have seven children. The family moved about 180 miles south to Granville County, North Carolina, near Chapel Hill, by 1768. He was a member of the Granville County militia in 1771.

There, he was near a well-connected kinsman, Memucan Hunt. Memucan served in the North Carolina legislature, was state treasurer for three years beginning in 1784 and became a very wealthy man. His will mentioned several real estate partnerships, the largest owned 127,000 acres in Tennessee. That and several other large parcels and many slaves were left to various members of his family.

Memucan introduced John Hunt to a number of movers and shakers in the North Carolina government at occasional meetings in nearby Hillsboro. Hunt was always ready to take a

Madison County

public stand on the current issues. He signed an oath of support for the state of North Carolina in 1777. That same year he moved his family to mountainous Washington County, North Carolina in the extreme northeastern part of what would become Tennessee.

As the states and counties were formed, divided and subdivided, he never moved, yet he lived in the states of North Carolina, Tennessee, the short-lived state called the "Territory South of the River Ohio," the lost State of Franklin and in Washington, Claiborne and Hawkins counties. It is true that states and counties have ancestors.

In 1787, Hunt was appointed Sheriff of Hawkins County. On Nov. 3, 1790, the governor of the "Territory South of the River Ohio," which became eastern Tennessee, appointed Hunt a Captain of the Militia and his best friend, David Larkin, swore him in at nearby Rogersville. Hunt appears in the 1790 Federal census taken in Hawkins County Township, Ohio Territory, Ohio.

Due to the connections established by his relative, Memucan, Hunt also held a part-time but steady job as the clerk of the House of Commons in the North Carolina legislature. Usually the legislature met twice a year in various towns for a few weeks. From 1777 to 1789, except for one year (1786), he served the House in many ways. Legislative records in the North Carolina Archives show that there he dealt with the audits of money spent, arranged for the printing of laws and journals of the meetings, and paid reenlistment bonuses to officers in the Continental Army. He signed for the House resolutions, appointments and messages. Hunt corresponded with the governor, officers of the Federal government, the state treasurer, and set up payments to members of the legislature.

One letter, July 1785, told of a task assigned to Hunt. After each session he was sent to have the laws printed and readied for Valley Leaves

circulation. In this case, he was to go from Hillsboro (near Raleigh) to New Bern, near the Atlantic coast, to have printed the laws just passed by the legislature. The only qualified printer in the state was a long way away. There were many good printers across North Carolina, causing the question, why was this trip necessary? The elected leaders as well as the citizenry wanted to know what new laws were imposed on the state.

The governor, Richard Caswell, wrote to Memucan Hunt, a member of the legislature and kinsman of Hunt, "If you have received any accounts lately from Mr. John Hunt respecting the printing the Laws, I shall be much obliged to you to inform me. R. Caswell."

Three days later Memucan wrote, "I happened to be able to take up your warrant, drawn in favor of John Hunt, as soon as it was presented. It is now almost a month since hearing anything from him. He was there endeavoring to exchange his money for Tobacco, or hard money. I hope this has been effected and that before now he has got the printing business in some forwardness. M. Hunt."

Cash money was an endless problem during the country's earliest years. Most pioneers could not deal with deciphering values of the different monetary systems that circulated: Spanish doubloons, eight reales, dollars, halves, quarters, pistareens, and picayunes. Bank notes sometimes appeared, but most preferred hard money. Often debts were paid with IOUs, slaves or real estate. Tobacco often served as currency in small exchanges.

Britain's Currency Acts of 1751 and 1764 complicated a tight money policy and few immigrants brought many coins to America. In most places of the newest west, large transactions were conducted not with money but with promissory notes. These were usually informal scrawls on a scrap of paper with no witnesses. Obviously, personal relations were very important. In one case,

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we find it said: “We would rather have Benjamin Borden’s IOU than any state’s currency.”

When the legislature of the Mississippi Territory created the Bank of Mississippi in 1809, headquartered in Natchez, one reason was an attempt to settle the situation of lack of cash. Also chartered by the Mississippi Territory legislature, the Planter’s and Merchant’s Bank opened in a building on Huntsville’s Big Spring bluff in December 1816.

When the legislature chose to print its own currency, John Hunt was one of two men chosen to sign those bills. Each bill had to have two actual signatures. This North Carolina currency was considered one of the most worthless of those printed at that time. Counterfeit bills soon turned up with the same signatures.

Then, a big-time opportunity came. In November 1788, John Hunt was elected to represent Hawkins County, North Carolina at the convention to *ratify the United States Constitution*. At two meetings, in Hillsboro in 1788 and Fayetteville in 1789, he served as a delegate and a secretary. He voted against one proposed change to the document and then voted in favor of ratification. The vote was 195 to 77 in favor. That is the *United States Constitution*.

Hunt was always outspoken on public issues. He once signed a petition in favor of an unfortunate young man accused of horse theft. In 1787, he signed a petition asking to separate the soon-to-be Tennessee from North Carolina. A petition to keep the county seat and prison in Tazewell, Tennessee, bore his signature and that of three of his sons.

Tennessee became the 16th state in 1796. The meeting at which Claiborne County was formed in 1801, from Grainger and Hawkins Counties, was held in the Hunt house in Tazewell, as was the first term of the court in 1802. Hunt gave land for the first church in Valley Leaves

the town. Hunt again served as Sheriff, this time of the new Claiborne County, for four years beginning in 1801. In June 1802, because he was Sheriff, Hunt was named Collector of Public Monies. People really liked him and he served in public positions regardless of the community in which he lived.

In spite of all this evidence of a public life, Hunt was really a land speculator. The two tasks fit together nicely. A speculator’s dream of wealth required him to look across the forests and see the small crossroads with children running around, then to sell that vision to the newcomers. He followed the pattern where men moved ahead of the settled world, often into Indian Territory, and found ways to own and sell land for a profit. He had five slaves, who probably were used to improve land parcels he owned to ready them for sale.

Over and over, Hunt purchased and subdivided land and sold it in three Tennessee counties: Hawkins, Sullivan and Claiborne. Lengthy documentation in Hawkins County provides evidence of many land trades. Hunt’s term as sheriff of Claiborne County ended in 1804, at which time his son, John Hunt, Jr. was elected to replace him. His son continued the land sale activities after his father came south. In Sullivan County alone, 96 deals were done between 1803 and 1837. The Hunts were in the land business.

Many knew about the numerous splendid springs north of the great bend in the Tennessee River. Of those springs the most remarkable was the Big Spring in the center of the region. A few white men had visited it and the land was a part of the selfish scheme of the Georgia legislature, the Yazoo Land Fraud. In that deal Martin Beatty had purchased 1,000 acres, including the spring, for \$1,000. Certainly the speculator Hunt was aware of the interest in this area.

Hunt decided to look south into the

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Mississippi Territory, just formed in 1798. While still held by the Cherokee and the Chickasaw Nations, new land opportunities were envisioned by the adventurous and the Big Spring was on the mind of those who sought profit in speculation.

The trip was certainly planned because he left just a few days after his term as sheriff ended on April 4, 1804. Leaving his family at home, he traveled with Andrew Bean, a neighbor, on this long and lonesome track down the trails and through Indian country.

This trip of several weeks and about 275 miles found him near a fine creek on the Tennessee border. Then a night was spent with the Criner family at New Market on the Mountain Fork Creek. The Criners were the first white settlers to build in that area. Although the area north of the Tennessee River was still claimed by the Indian tribes, "Old Man" Ditto had already settled on the Tennessee River nearby and operated a ferry.

Both the Criners and another family, the Davises, later claimed Hunt had used their logs to start his cabin near the Big Spring. Soon he brought his family to live by the beautiful spring. They had moved their belongings, driven their cattle and settled by the spring of 1805.

In February of 1806, John's son, David, married David Larkin's daughter, Elizabeth, in Winchester, Tennessee. The Larkins, the Beans, the Acklins and the Hunts had moved together several times before. Some stayed near the Tims Ford Lake area. That was the pattern of migration of the day.

Hunt was in the advance guard of all those who were heading to the new southwest. Washington, near Natchez, was the capital of the Mississippi Territory. Robert Williams, the governor of the Mississippi Territory, became aware of all the activity, then selected an expanse and named it Madison County on Dec. 13, 1808. A census, taken at his direction by Thomas Freeman, revealed

2,223 men and women, both free and enslaved, were living in Madison County. In that census, Hunt is listed with five slaves, meaning he had some wealth. Within 4 years, 5,000 settlers were in the area.

The wonderful red clay soil was a topic of conversation across the farming south. This newly available land with fine, fertile soil and water brought the next movement to the area. A number of wealthy, slaveholding planters, many from Petersburg, Georgia, arrived. They brought with them a sophisticated lifestyle, political connections, education and money. Many of the group would become leaders of the new town.

Judge Thomas Jones Taylor, in his *History of Madison County*, written in 1840, said, "the lands being offered were rapidly taken up by a class of settlers who were in intellect, enterprise and energy the peers of any on the continent." LeRoy Pope was a businessman, farmer and a leading citizen in Petersburg and the most affluent of all. Judge Taylor called him "a wise and liberal man." He stepped into the leadership in the county.

When the Federal land sales began in August of 1809, they were held in Nashville. It was felt the prices would be much higher and neighbors could buy preferred parcels when away from those who occupied the desired land. And those with little money would not be tempted to be bidding and fouling the sale. The big plan of the federals was to use these land sales to pay off the enormous debt created by the Revolution. Taxes then, like today, were not favored.

It was difficult to decide on which parcels to bid. Other than price and distance, the new rectangular section, range and township survey system required searching for the perfect piece to reconcile the large squares to the natural features of creeks, road, and hills. Earlier in the colonies, all land descriptions had been metes and bounds, such as so many rods to a large oak tree, meandering down the creek to two dogwoods, and adjoining

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another's farm.

All land was priced at \$2 per acre to begin the auction. The most desirable area around the Big Spring was sold to LeRoy Pope at \$23.50 per acre on Aug. 25th. Several bidders raised the price to that high level. Hunt could not afford to buy the land on which he had cleared and built. He had to get off Pope's new land.

On Aug. 29th and Sept. 18th he bid and bought two-quarter sections, each 160 acres, down the Indian Creek (now the Big Spring Creek) in an area today including John Hunt Park. On return from Nashville, he found this land to be swampy and not useful for his purposes. He soon allowed this land to go back to the government and it was later resold. To finance the land purchases for five years, one was required to pay 5% down. On 320 acres, at \$2, the cost was \$640 and 5% of that makes Hunt's loss \$32.

On Oct. 23rd, he bought 160 acres in northwest Madison County which he held and sold in 1813. It was on the fine Limestone Creek about in the area now known as Ford's Chapel. He bought this land for the government's asking price, \$2 per acre. His son-in-law, Samuel Acklin, bought nearby land in the area of the old Huntsville airport on the same date as Hunt's Aug. 29th purchase. Probably there is where Hunt lived his last years.

It must have been terribly inconvenient to have the land auction in Nashville. Because it took several days to ride a horse there, several inn-keepers were busy along the route. Lots of conversations, changed-minds, deals and plans occurred along that trail. Most likely some served as agents for small buyers.

Pope and a few others persuaded the Mississippi Territory legislature to name the new town Twickenham. It previously had been called Hunt's Spring. In 1811, the same legislature, when petitioned by citizens, renamed the town Huntsville.



Big Spring Park as it appears today in Downtown Huntsville. Photo: A. Albright

Anne Royall, a traveling journalist/gossip columnist, wrote about Hunt in 1818 when she visited Huntsville, "standing 5 feet 10 inches in height, his 180 pounds were a mass of flexible steel. His courage and endurance were immeasurable. He was fond of hardships, adventure and daring, but he was valued most among those early frontiersmen for his caution." Hunt had impressed Royall.

His knowledge of his surroundings served those who laid out the county and new roads when he was often consulted about routes. On one occasion he led a party of 40 men to build a new road toward Whitesburg.

A number of letters still exist written by his children and friends. Like all, the family had prosperous times and troubled times. One, written by Ben P. Hunt, attorney, son of George and grandson of John, on Feb. 13, 1896, told, "My office where I now write is above the spring, whose music, as it rolls over the dam, I hear most of the year. The rear door looks out and I can see where once was that 'tater patch.'" Those old office buildings, known as Cotton Row, were removed to open the view from the courthouse to the Big Spring Park.

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Hunt and his children were valuable and valued members of the community. It is clear he was held in high regard when the populace chose to name the town for him. In 1810 the governor named him coroner for a four-year term. Now about 60 years old, Hunt was with LeRoy Pope and other powerful men of the town a member in the Masonic Lodge. He became a Master Mason.

His grandson reported his death from

consumption in 1822. Some think he is buried on the Acklin property in the old Huntsville airport area, while others believe he lived with his son in a nearby Tennessee community and is buried there.

John Hunt was a soldier, lawman, politician, guide, clerk, and land speculator. He was dependable and vigorous, well respected, and it is proper that this city bears the name of this resourceful, well-adapted man of the time. 🍁



**Portrait of John Hunt at Big Spring. Artist unknown.
From the Collection of the Huntsville-Madison County Library via Alabama Mosaic.**

First Town Lots Sold at Huntsville, 1810

The following accounts come to us from documents found in the Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection housed in the Dept. of Archives/Special Collections of the M. Louis Salmon Library at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, AL. The Roberts Collection encompasses 156 archival boxes which are being diligently digitized by Mr. John Rankin, from whose scans the following transcriptions were made possible. The following text is a transcription of a transcription; the grammar and spelling have been tidied for ease of reading.

Original Foreword

The original manuscripts of which the [following] are copies are now in the possession of Miss Elizabeth McCullough Jackson, of Florence, Alabama¹. They were brought to light by Mr. Robert Dyas², formerly of Huntsville, now residing at Asheville, North Carolina, who sent a copy of the documents to a friend in Huntsville. Mr. Dyas is a grandson of General John Coffee, the writer of the letter. General Coffee was a distinguished soldier, and was General Andrew Jackson's second in command at the Battle of New Orleans. For many years he resided in Lauderdale County, new Florence. J.W. Walker referred to in General Coffee's letter, and who with him acted for the proprietors in transaction with the County Commissioners, was John Williams Walker, the President of Alabama's first Constitutional Convention, and one of the first two representatives of Alabama in the United States Senate. His wife was Matilda Pope, a daughter of LeRoy Pope, who at the first sale of public lands in Alabama in August, 1809, bought the quarter section which includes the Big Spring and the tract from which the lots mentioned in General Coffee's letter were sold. The proprietors were LeRoy Pope and those who became associated with him in the enterprise of establishing and developing the town of Twickenham and getting it made the "seat of Justice" of Madison County, Mississippi Territory, Coffee County and Walker County, Alabama, were named for the two signers of the contract with the County Commissioners.

The documents copied below give an authentic account of the transaction which resulted in Twickenham, now Huntsville, becoming the county seat of Madison County, and the first sale of town lots in Huntsville.
-Sugar Forest, 11th Jul. 1810

Messrs. Jackson and Anderson.

I returned yesterday from Huntsville Major Walker and myself after several days hard negotiations with the Commissioners, did on the 5th of July inst., enter into terms for fixing the seat of Justice and laying out a town at Huntsville. You may readily expect from the elat that we had much difficulty in establishing that as the permanent site, -we had Col. ward against us in and throughout the whole proceedings, with all his eloquence and oratory as well in the Cabinet with closed doors, as in a Stump Speech to the populace. The terms are there: the town was first laid out say to the amount of sixty acres with the public square in the center. We then run a line through the center and gave to the Commissioners their choice half, or side of the town to the amount of

¹ Elizabeth McCulloch Jackson died Aug. 8, 1947 and is buried in Florence Cemetery, Florence, Lauderdale Co., AL. [Find A Grave Memorial# 159257999]

² Robert Dyas (1861-1928) "the elder son of Mr. Alex J. and Mrs. Rachel Coffee Dyas, was born near Florence Alabama, at the plantation home of his grandfather, General Jno. Coffee. [Milner, J. W. (1931, Jan.) *Memorial to Robert Dyas 1861 to 1928*. Tennessee Historical Magazine, Series II, Vol. 1, No. 2.]

30 acres at \$23.50 per acre. The proprietors bound to convey all their right under government with a quit claim deed only - giving the town free use of the water for all necessary and ordinary purposes, but reserving to the proprietors the sole right of the soil in and around the spring and its branch, so that they may at any time erect any machinery they may think proper, etc.

On the 5th in the evening we opened the sales, and the Commissioners finding lots sell well immediately opened theirs, which impeded the sale of ours. They sold 24 lots and we sold 4; in the whole 28 lots sold for upward of \$8,000 dollars. The Commissioners have yet to sell 10 lots and the proprietors 34. We have concluded it would be better to postpone the sale for a further notice when I think you will have no reason to complain of your speculation. I have with me a plan of Twickenham the seat of Justice for Madison County, M. T. [Mississippi Territory] and a copy of the articles of agreement between the proprietors and Commissioners, etc. which I will have the pleasure to lay before you in a few days - lots sold for \$750, -715 -617 -500 -616 -515 -385 -367- and from that down to \$100 on the outside - the proprietors have yet four lots on the public square that are equally valuable with those sold.

I am, Gentlemen, yours with esteem,

John Coffee

Articles of an agreement entered into between the Commissioners appointed by law to fix on a place for establishing the public buildings and lay off a town in the County of Madison, and the proprietors of the Southwest quarter of Section number thirty-six, in Township No. three of Range No. one West. ----SHEW

That the proprietors or their attorneys in fact shall whenever thereto required, make to the said Commissioners or their successors in office for the use of said County of Madison such title as they have derived, or may here-after derive from the United States to thirty acres of land in said quarter section, beginning at the East corner of the town enar and opposite to lot No. 72, running with the North-west lien of Lincoln Street to a point opposite the junction of lots No. 36 & 40, thence with the dividing line of those lots continuing the same course through the center of the public square to the Southwest boundary of said square, thence with the said boundary to the Northwest boundary of Fountain Row, thence with that boundary line to the South-west boundary line of Henry Street, thence with that line to the South corner of William Street, thence with the South-east boundary of the same to the place of beginning-reserving to the proprietors whatever is over the quantity of thirty acres within the above mentioned lines to be pointed out before the sale in such place as the commissioners may think proper.

That the proprietors engage to make the payments to the United States as they become due. That the commissioners shall pay the proprietors for the said thirty acres at the rate of twenty-three dollars and fifty cents per acre, by the proprietors or their agents selecting from the whole whole number of bonds taken for lots sold by the commissioners such as they choose-

That the public building shall be within the public square; that the plan of the town remain unalterable, and that all the streets and Rows be common.

The right of property in the soil of the land which is covered by the spring and its branches continues vested fully and completely in the proprietors, but the proprietors shall secure to the town the free and uninterrupted use of the water for all ordinary and necessary purposes, and that convenient through-fares shall always be kept open to the Spring, and they further stipulate that they shall not injure the quality of the water by any dams or machinery they may erect, so as to produce stagnation and endanger the health of the inhabitants. July 5th 1810

On the back of manuscript:

Commisioners:
Wm. Dickson P. Perkins
Edward Ward
A. Gilbreath

Agents to Proprietors:
J.W. Walker
John Coffee

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection, Dept. of Archives/Special Collections, M. Louis Salmon Library, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, AL. Digitized by John Rankin, 2016. 🍁

In today's age of Internet, it is hard to dream of a topic not covered by its millions of page of content, but information on Huntsville's "Disastrous Fire" of 1835 appears to have eluded further publication until now. Originally printed by the Southern Advocate in Huntsville, AL on Tuesday, Oct. 6, 1835, the following account comes from a transcription in the Francis Roberts Collection at the University of Alabama, Huntsville. Digitized by John Rankin, this account was found among the family's papers and describes the conflagration that destroyed parts of Eustis Street and the Huntsville Square. 🍁

HUNTSVILLE SOUTHERN ADVOCATE

Tuesday Oct. 6, 1835

Disastrous Fire

It is our painful duty to record the occurrence of one of the most disastrous conflagrations with which our village has ever been visited. On Saturday evening, a few minutes after 7:00 o'clock, a fire broke out in the Law Offices of Messrs. Clifton & Phelan, situated on Eustis St., a few doors from the Square, and spread with great and unchecked rapidity, in an eastern and northwestern direction until the entire block of buildings on Eustis St., composed mostly of Lawyer's Offices, and the whole of the Cheap Side, consisting of mercantile Houses, including also the spacious and extensive establishment, known as the Huntsville Inn, with the exception of the kitchen and stable appertaining to the same, were totally destroyed.

At the announcement of the fire there were from 500 to 1,000 persons in attendance upon a circus performance which was being held a short distance from the scene of danger and alarm. During the fire, the exertion on the part of our citizens, to subdue the flames and save the property which was exposed to their ravages, 'seldom have we seen a more excited and terror stricken community.' The fact that our town is supplied with only two engines, one of which is a small one, and the extreme difficulty of procuring water, in consequence of the present deranged conditions of the water works, produced the wildest disorder and confusion-this being only the second calamitous visitation of the kind which we have had, we were taken somewhat by surprise; and the badly organized condition of the fire company prevented everything like prudent and steady concert of action, in their efforts to arrest the progress of devouring elements. Our situation was in a high degree embarrassing and appalling, and in the alarm and agitation of the moment, we probably neglected those means which might have saved some of the principal buildings. It now appears to us that the fire could have been intercepted by unroofing those houses which were nearest and most exposed to the spreading conflagration. Here was however such a deficiency of fire hooks and other necessary implements as to make this an enterprise of great hazard and difficulty. The progress of the flames was finally stopped by destroying the roofs of some of the neighboring buildings and placing wet blankets on others.



Above: The Fearn building at 301 Franklin Street SE on the corner of Eustis Street. Situated at the southeast side of the city square and built in 1836, this building likely replaced one of the buildings damaged in the Disastrous Fire. Photo by Deane Dayton, huntsville history collection

As we have said, the fire originated in the office of Messrs. Clifton and Phelan; but in what way is not certainly known. It is supposed that it was communicated by candle which was left in the room, or from a fire which was carelessly made by a servant. Three two-story buildings and all the lawyers offices on Eustis St. were destroyed. The Law libraries with a slight exception were saved.

We regret to state that the records of the United States District Court were entirely consumed. They were in the office of Messrs. Clifton & Phelan; Mr. Clifton being Clerk of the Court. These gentlemen were both absent from town. A considerable portion of the goods of the merchants was saved. An insurance had been effected on some of the buildings and part of the merchandise. Three of the buildings, the property of Mr. Menadier, and the Huntsville Inn, a very valuable tenement, owned by Judge William Smith, were not insured. The individual losses we have not been able to ascertain but the whole amount of property destroyed is supposed to exceed a hundred thousand dollars. The following is a list of buildings destroyed:

On Eustis St.

- A small tenement owned by Judge Smith, occupied as a law office.
- Henderson & McClung's law office occupied by Jas. W. McClung
- Geo. P. Beirne's law office occupied by Jas. B. Robinson
- A.F. Hopkins' law office occupied by Hopkins & Beirne
- J.B. Craighead's law office occupied by Himself
- William H. Campbell's law office occupied by Clifton & Phelan
- Two-story brick building occupied and owned as a warehouse by B.M. Lowe
- P.E. Menadier's two-story brick building occupied by Jones & Dines as a confectionary,

Gormly & O'Neal, Saddlers, and P.T. Posey, Druggist.

On Cheap Side

- P.E. Menadier's two-story brick building, occupied by Morgan & Fackler, dry goods store
- Col. James White's two-story brick building occupied by John Read & Co.
- B.M. Lowe's two-story brick building occupied by himself.
- Bradley and Pleasants two story brick building occupied by Withers & Hunter and by themselves as a Counting Room.
- The Huntsville Inn owned by Judge Smith
- Dr. Thos. Fearné's small frame building occupied by N.T. Packard, Silversmith
- E. Childress' small frame building occupied by A. Jones, Saddler

One cannot conclude our notice of this mournful and unexpected calamity without endeavoring to impress upon our citizens the necessity for some further provision for the protection of the town against future dangers of this sort. Had the wind on Saturday evening blown in an opposite direction, two-third of the Square would have been unavoidable consumed. It is impossible to get along in such alarming emergencies without a better supply of hooks and ladders. There should be a more complete organization of the Fire Company, and a sufficient number of officers, who are so well practiced as to enforce, on such occasions, immediate obedience and effective concert of action.

We were gratified to observe on Saturday evening a very lively sympathy and incessant activity were manifested by our citizens generally, in their attempts to extinguish the fire and save the merchandise from destruction. There were even some ladies who, as far as safety and propriety would justify, lent a ready and cheerful assistance to the sufferers.

We noticed, however, in the crowd some who exhibited an apathy and indifference which totally unfit them for members of a humane and civilized society. We should not omit to mention that the negroes bore a useful and distinguished part in removing what property was rescued from the flames. They should be well compensated by those most interested.

Since writing the above we have learned that there are papers in the hands of Gen. Patteson, Marshall of this District, which will in a great measure supply the loss of the records of the U.S. District Court.

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection, Dept. of Archives/Special Collections, M. Louis Salmon Library, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, AL. Digitized by John Rankin, 2016. 🍁

James Henry Bibb

A Vintage Vignette by John P. Rankin

In 1984 the Bibb-Whatley home at 11 Allen Street in Madison was placed on the Alabama Historical Register and the National Historical Register by current owners, Phil and Ann Whatley. In 1998 the Whatleys opened the home to guests as a bed and breakfast establishment under the name "The Bibb House", built in 1867. It is located about one block west of the boundaries of the historical district of Madison, but it is one of the oldest homes in the town. James Henry Bibb, the original owner, was related to the first two governors of Alabama through common descent from Benjamin Bibb of colonial Virginia in the 1600s. James died of measles at age 44 in Madison in 1870, leaving a widow and seven children. He was among petitioners who in 1869 requested authorization from the state legislature to change the town name from **"Madison Station"** to just **"Madison"**. He was elected to the first town council that year. He is buried in the Dillard-Bibb Cemetery on the north side of Mill Road, west of Sullivan Street. James Bibb purchased numerous parcels of land around the town. For a time he had a "storehouse" on Main Street adjacent to Sarah Clay's residence, which we know today as the Clay House Museum.

Madison's James Bibb was a son of Rev. James H. Bibb of Huntsville and his wife Sally Alford. The father was from Amherst County, Virginia, by way of Nashville, Tennessee. He was an early Methodist minister of this area, preaching at Jordan's Chapel and Methodist camp gatherings. He also served as Madison County Tax Assessor & Collector from 1824 until his death in 1826. He and Sally had 10 children, of whom only one died young. When James died, Sally was left with seven minor children, according to descendant Kathleen Apperson Williams. James Henry Bibb of Madison was the youngest, being born five weeks after his father's death. Sally lived for another 42 years as a widow, outliving all but four of her 10 children. Sally and her husband are buried in Maple Hill Cemetery in Huntsville.

On Feb. 13, 1855, Madison's James Bibb married Laura Dillard, who was 23 when she died in 1859 after four years of marriage. She is buried in the Dillard-Bibb Cemetery, along with her husband and his second wife, Rebecca Robinson. The little private cemetery contains markers for James, Laura, Laura's father Joshua Dillard (1789-1859, born in Dinwiddie County, Virginia), and Laura's mother Catharine (1794-1855, born in North Carolina). Also there are tombstones for James Edward and William T. Bibb, sons of James and Rebecca. Another marker is for James Bibb Spragins, son of James Robert and Sallie K. Spragins. Sallie Kate Spragins was a daughter of James Bibb and his first wife, Laura Dillard.

The 1870 Madison census shows a household headed by Rebecca (Robinson) Bibb, widow of James. Nearby were households headed by Sarah Clay, blacksmith Seymour Doolittle, and wagonmaker James Strong. Martha Robinson, age 56, was included in Rebecca's household, as were Sarah ("Sallie") K. Bibb at age 13 and Robert Spragins, age 23. Sarah and Robert became the parents of James Bibb Spragins, who was born in 1872, when Sarah was only 15 and Robert was 25. Robert Spragins was not only a son-in-law of Rebecca Bibb, he was also the Administrator of the estate of her husband, James Bibb. In the 1880 census, Spragins was listed as a merchant in Madison.

One of James Bibb's sisters, Elizabeth Alford Bibb, married first to Stephen, a son of Elijah Hussey, one of the first landowners in the Madison area. The Hussey land was 320 acres located immediately south of today's Eastview Drive and east of Hughes Road. Elizabeth Bibb Hussey had one child, Edmund, by Stephen. When Stephen died, Elizabeth married William Parham of Limestone County, who was born in Virginia in 1792. They had two girls -- Mary Ann, who married Thomas J. Cain in 1857, and Elizabeth Cassandra, who in 1860 married Thomas F. Allen. Any relation of Mr. Allen to the street name where the Bibb House is located in Madison is unknown.

John Bibb

A Vintage Vignette by John P. Rankin

John Bibb owned a large parcel of Madison land across the road from where I live, but he owned it 150 years ago, until his death in 1862. John was a brother of merchant James Henry Bibb, one of the five members of Madison's first Board of Aldermen in 1869. John and James were two of the 10 children of Rev. James Bibb, who is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery in Huntsville, as are John and several other members of the family.

The engravings and inscription on his tall obelisk grave marker reveal that John was a Mason, born in Amherst County, Virginia, in 1805. The book "**Bibb Family in America, 1640 – 1940**" by Charles William Bibb has John listed as born in 1803, but little else is noted of his existence here. John's father James married Sally Alford in Amherst County in 1802. John was their firstborn child listed in the book, whereas his brother James Henry Bibb was their last child, born in 1826 a few months after his father James' death. James was born in 1778, son of another James Bibb, who was reported to have served in the Revolutionary War and in the War of 1812.

The senior James Bibb married Sally Nowlin. He is reported to have come with members of his family to Madison County after a short stay in Dickson County, Tennessee (near Nashville). The book referenced earlier states that he died in Madison County on the 16th of September, 1809, at age 62. His son James, the father of John, was admitted to the Methodist Conference in Nashville in 1810, and it is reasonable to expect that he played a role in attracting the first Methodist Conference held in Huntsville in 1819. Rev. James Bibb also served as Madison County's Tax Assessor and Collector from 1824 until his death two years later. From the monuments in Maple Hill and from other records, it is known that Rev. James had living here a brother William, who married Sarah Garrett and had several children, including Martha Bibb who married Archibald Rison of Huntsville. Another brother, Thomas, married first Marian Fielder, then her sister Elizabeth Fielder in Huntsville. A third Bibb brother in Huntsville was Henry, who married Sarah Grant and brokered land transactions between the family and distant cousin Thomas Bibb, the second governor of Alabama, also residing in Huntsville.

In the year 1855, when Rev. James' son James Henry Bibb married Laura Dillard (early Madison residents), his son John purchased two parcels of land in the area that officially became the town of Madison two years later. His land today contains the Abbington Downs and Cottonwood Estates housing developments, northward through all of Bob Jones High School grounds along the west side of Hughes Road to the Eastview Drive intersection and westward to Wall-Triana Highway at West Madison Elementary School. Altogether, John purchased four contiguous parcels in the area, totaling over 200 acres. Most of this property had initially been purchased from the government land office in 1818 by James Gray, a son of Madison area pioneer William Gray.

James Henry Bibb became Administrator of John's estate, distributing its proceeds among his surviving brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews from 1862 until James' own passing in 1870. Final settlement of John's estate was made by James Robert Spragins, son-in-law and executor of James Henry Bibb. Some of John's inheritors were the children of his deceased sister Elizabeth, who first married Stephen, son of Madison pioneer Elijah Hussey, then William Parham of Limestone County. One of her daughters, Mary Ann Parham, married Madison merchant Thomas Jefferson Cain. Another daughter, Cassandra Parham, married Thomas Allen, possibly the namesake of Allen Street in Madison. Another sister of John was Louisa Bibb, who married Melkijah Spragins and became the mother of three famed Methodist ministers -- Edward L., Charles Allen, and Hal Stith Spragins. While the local Bibb families of the first two governors of Alabama and the first Madison alderman James Henry Bibb were not closely related to their contemporary John Bibb of Kentucky, inventor of Bibb lettuce, they certainly all served prominent community roles.

Clement C. Clay, Jr.

A Vintage Vignette by John P. Rankin

In his 1916 letter to Thomas McAdory Owen, Robert E. Wiggins wrote that: “*The Honorable C.C. Clay Jr. and the Honorable Jeremiah Clemmons {should be Clemens} both U.S Senators from Alabama {were} born within two miles of Madison, on plantations owned at that time by their fathers, who lived on them.*” Jeremiah Clemens was, of course, the son of James Clemens, the Founder of Madison. C.C. Clay Jr. was Clement Claiborne Clay, a son of Alabama’s 8th governor, Clement Comer Clay. His mother was Susannah Claiborne Withers, daughter of pre-Madison area landowner John Withers. Perhaps more pertinent, Robert E. Wiggins was born in 1843 on a plantation located near the junction of today’s Martin Road with Wall-Triana Highway. He was 14 years old when Madison began to be a village clustered around the rail depot. He lived in the town all of his adult life, excepting only the four years that he served in the Confederate States Army. As an eyewitness to the town’s infancy and development, Robert Wiggins was an authority on the history of the settlement. His letter to Mr. Owen had been solicited as the basis for the town’s coverage in Owen’s official history of the state, compiled while Owen was head of the Department of Archives and History in Montgomery.

Clement Claiborne Clay used the “Jr.” after his name, even though his father’s middle name was Comer. Born in 1817, “Junior” was raised in Huntsville, where his father practiced law. In 1835-7, when “Senior” served as governor, Junior was Private Secretary to his father. He had graduated from the University of Alabama in 1834 with a Bachelor of Arts degree, which was extended to a Master’s degree in 1837. Afterward, he studied law at the University of Virginia and was admitted to the bar in 1840, with a practice in Huntsville. He also became editor of the *Huntsville Democrat* newspaper, but he was elected to the state legislature in 1842, 1844, and 1845. He became judge of the Madison County Court in 1846, resigning in 1848 and later becoming U.S. Senator, a position which he held for 9 years. He succeeded Sen. Jeremiah Clemens in this position. In fact, it was reported that Mr. Clay received every vote cast in the election of 1859.

When the Confederacy was organized, C.C. Clay Jr. served as a Confederate Senator from 1861 to 1863. In 1864 he represented the Confederate Army in Canada, retiring back to Alabama in

January of 1865. He was charged with complicity in Lincoln's assassination and incarcerated with Confederate President Jefferson Davis for a year. His release was won largely by the WDC lobbying efforts of his wife, Virginia Carolina Tunstall Clay. Virginia Clay married David Clifton of Huntsville after her first husband's death, which occurred on Jan. 3, 1882.

Virginia Tunstall Clay was a close relative of Mary Williams Battle, wife of Alabama Chief Justice and Governor Henry Watkins Collier. Henry Collier was a son of James and Elizabeth Bouldin Collier, who in 1818 moved their family to Myrtle Grove Plantation in Limestone County near Triana. Their children and grandchildren intermarried with the local Slaughter, Pickett, Withers, Blackwell, and Walker families, with "in-law" connections to the Sale, Pettus, and Bibb families of the area. James Collier was a Revolutionary War soldier from Lunenburg County, Virginia. He was wounded in the battle at Eutaw Springs, where his brother Wyatt was killed. Henry's brother Thomas Bouldin Collier of Myrtle Grove married Mary Harrison Dent, a close relative of Julia Dent, the wife of U.S. General and President Ulysses S. Grant of Civil War notoriety. Thereby, the infamous Union general was related to many Madison families of his day, including connections to Clement Claiborne Clay, a Southern Senator imprisoned for assumed implication with President Lincoln's murder.

Sarah Clay

A Vintage Vignette by John P. Rankin

Madison had some powerful and influential women during its history. There was Sarah Orrick Chilton Pickett, whose daughters married governors of the state, and Susannah Claiborne Withers married Clement Comer Clay, who became the 8th governor of the state. Numerous others quietly exerted their skills, advising and exhorting their husbands to public accomplishments while they stayed behind the scenes and raised children to prominence. Another illustration of the powerful women of Madison's history is seen in the life of Sarah A. Clay.

Census records indicate that Sarah was born before 1830 in Alabama. According to Robin Brewer, Director and owner of the Clay House Museum, Sarah was the twin of Nancy Russell, who married a Holt and lived in Athens. Sarah's first marriage was in 1841 to Robertson Webb in Limestone County. Their neighbors in the 1850 census included Hezekiah B. Cartwright (pioneer John Cartwright's son), James and son Richard Matthew Fletcher (future Civil War era doctor of Madison area), Nicholas Floyd (brother of later Madison Mayor John B. Floyd),

Thomas J. Cain (senior member of the Cain families of Madison 30 years later), and Waddy Tate (likely a son of the prominent founder of Triana). Their homes were in the area between “Nubbin Ridge” and Shoal Ford, a few miles northwest of where Madison was founded in 1857.

The 1850 census showed that Robertson Webb was 65 years old, whereas Sarah was only 24. Their household included a son John R., at age 22, produced by his first wife, Phoebe, who died in 1840. With Sarah, Robertson had children Wiley, Catharine, and Ann. In the early 1830s Robertson was appointed guardian of the minor children of Nancy Webb Clay when Nancy obtained a legal separation from her husband (a senior Thomas Clay). Among these minor children were brothers Andrew J., Theodorick S., and Thomas J. (first postmaster of Madison) Clay. After Robertson died Sarah married his ward Andrew J. Clay, who was closer to her own age. They bought Col. Egbert Jones’ house in Limestone County. They had a son Walter born in 1859 and a daughter Maggie Jane born in 1863, just before Andrew died during the Civil War. In her 1876 will, Sarah named as heirs Maggie Clay and Ann (Webb) Robinson, leaving most of her estate to Maggie and token possessions to Ann. Walter (Clay), Wiley (Webb), and Catharine (Webb) apparently had either died or otherwise missed any mention in the will. Ann must have married poorly, as she and her husband N.T. Robinson were mentioned as “utterly insolvent”, and still Sarah saw no reason to add cash or land to their situation.

Sarah had significant holdings to bequeath to her children, as the will listed 480 acres in Limestone County plus a house and lot in Madison and notes of obligation totaling around \$1,000. In fact, Sarah must have been a good money manager, as she paid \$1,500 in gold for her house and lot in Madison in 1866, just after the Civil War, when almost everyone else was destitute. Sarah purchased the Madison property from Jane Paralee Harrington Curtis (but clearly recorded as “Custis” in the deeds). Jane obtained the property via her trustee Micajah Pope. That adds credence to the Custis name, since the Popes and George Washington’s ancestors were closely connected, and George Washington married Martha Dandridge, whose first husband was Daniel Parke Custis, with whom she had 4 children. Robin Brewer has compiled data that shows Jane as a daughter of Susan Harrington, but the name of Jane’s husband, whether Curtis or Custis, is unknown.

Sarah Clay designated William Russell to be the executor in her will, with back-up by Herman Humphrey. William Russell as an “overseer” in his 20s was listed in the 1860 household of Andrew and Sarah Clay in the Shoal Ford district. Whether or not this was the same William Russell or even if he was a brother of Sarah is unknown at this time, but records show that the executor’s attorney was W.L. Clay. It seems that Russell and Clay families of the area were connected in a number of ways.

Federation of Genealogical Societies National Conferences

2017

Aug. 30 – Sept. 2, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

FGS 2017 National Conference — Pittsburgh will provide a wonderful historical backdrop with its rich genealogical resources for this four-day genealogy event with local co-host Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society.

2018

Aug. 23 - 26, Fort Wayne, Indiana

FGS 2018 National Conference — FGS returns to the Hoosier State in 2018 providing attendees convenient access to Allen County Public Library which houses one of the largest genealogical research collections available with records from around the world.

Marshall County

EARLY MARSHALL COUNTY: ALABAMA SHERIFFS

BARTON STONE CLAPP, Sr.

7th Sheriff of Marshall County, Alabama (1853-1856)

By MARGENE BLACK

Researcher, Marshall County, AL Archives

Barton Stone Clapp was the eldest son of William Lewis Clapp (1778-1840) and Mary Mandy Cotton Clapp (b. 1792). William came first from Orange County, N.C., to Madison County, AL, where he married his wife on Dec. 9, 1813.

William received land in the Honeycomb Area which was then Jackson County, AL, but later became Marshall County. The family moved to this area by 1830. The 1830 census shows there were 10 free white persons in the household.

William died Nov. 1, 1840. His eldest son, Barton Stone Clapp was appointed the administrator of his estate. By the time the estate was settled, his wife had remarried and her name was Mary Ashburn.

The final settlement of the estate of William Clapp is found in the November 1841 Term of the Marshall County Wills and Estates (Vol. 65, p. 66). "Barton Clapp was to retain in his hands the following: \$32.50. Mary Ashburn, widow of decedent, \$47.75 Joseph Craft in right of wife, Margaret, \$23.87 1/4; same to Alexander Boadley in right of wife, Sarah; James Herron in right of wife, Carron, Tillman R. Clapp, William K, Clapp and Lewis P. Clapp, each to get \$23.87 1/4." There was another list in the November Term which shows the same information.

Mary Ashburn made a Petition for Dower Rights stating that William had died without a will and he had promised her a piece of land

containing 161 and 50/100 acres. This land was marked off on Jan. 1, 1841, for Mary's Dowry Rights. The final settlement of this estate is found in the Marshall County, AL, Wills and Estate Records (Vol. 65, p. 15).

The Orphan's Court Records of Marshall County, on Nov. 1, 1841, show Barton S. Clapp was appointed guardian of William K. Clapp, infant child of William Clapp. Further records showing Barton S. Clapp's business as guardian of William K. Clapp was found on Nov. 1, 1842 and March 10, 1845.

Barton Stone Clapp was born in Alabama about 1814. Some believe he was named for an evangelical minister, Barton W. Stone. This minister was well known during the "Restoration Movement." This movement was during what is called the Second Great Awakening which took place in the early 19th Century. He was also known for the 1801 Cane Ridge Revival in Kentucky. This movement was instrumental in the establishment of the present-day Churches of Christ.

Florida was purchased from Spain in 1819. The Territory of Florida was organized in 1822. Thousands of settlers poured into Florida and the Indians caused a lot of trouble. When the United States urged Indian tribes to move west, the Seminole massacred Maj. Francis L. Dade and his troops. This incident in 1835 started the second Seminole War. A call went out for volunteer militia and many from Northeast Alabama responded. The North Alabama Mounted Volunteers commanded by Col. Benjamin Snodgrass was among these volunteers.

Barton Stone Clapp, Sr. was first sergeant of Capt. Richard Griffin's company. He was mustered into service of the U.S. at Bellefonte, AL on Oct. 26, 1837 for the term of six months. He served five months and 17 days and was honorably discharged at Fort Mitchell, AL, April 11, 1838.

The 1840 Marshall County Census shows the household of Barton S. Clapp as follows: 1 free white person under 5; 1 free white person 10 thru 14; 1 free male white person, 30-39; 2 free female persons under 5; 1 free female white person 20-29; 1 person employed in Agriculture; 1 white person over 20 who could not read or write; 4 free white persons under 20.

In the 1850 Census, Barton S. is listed without a wife. It is not known at this writing who his first wife was. He married Catherine Bridges on Dec. 20, 1848 but Catherine died in May 1850 according to family research. Catherine was born in York, S.C. It is probable that the last child listed, Elizabeth, was the child of this marriage.

The 1850 census shows the family living in Subdivision 23. Barton Clapp was a farmer with the value of his property being \$1,500. The household members were: Barton S. Clapp, age 34, William Clapp, age 15, Sermerimus Clapp, age 13, Katherine Clapp, age 11, Alexander B. Clapp, age 7, George W. Clapp, age 6, Barton S. Clapp, age 5, and Elizabeth A. Clapp, age 5 months.

In the Alabama, Homestead and Cash Entry Patents Pre-1908, Clapp received the following land from the Huntsville Land Office on Sept. 1, 1858. The description of this land is as follows: 82.15 acres; Township 7-S; Range 4-E; Section 6.

The U.S. General Land Office Records, 1796-1907 shows he received 81.31 acres on Dec. 1, 1859. The description is: County, Marshall; Township 6-S; Range 3-E; and Section 35.

The last land records found were in the U.S. General Land Office Records, 1796-1907. On Dec. 1, 1860, 40.24 acres were issued in Township 6-S; Range 3-E; Section 35.

Barton Stone Clapp's land holdings were seven miles north of Guntersville, AL, in Honey Comb Valley. This area was called Cottonville.

According to the Marshall County Sheriff's Office, Barton was a sheriff for the years 1853-1856.

Clapp married for a third time on April 20, 1860, in Butler County, AL. His wife was Mary A. Cunningham. Mary was born about 1820 in South Carolina according to the 1860 census of Marshall County.

Following his service as the sheriff, Clapp moved on to become a member of the House of Representatives. In the Journal of the Seventh Biennial Session of the House of Representatives of the State of Alabama, session of 1859-1860, there was a listing for the First Call of the House. In this call B. S. Clapp is mistakenly listed as R. S. Clapp.

In 1861, he was in attendance for the Second Call. This time he was listed correctly as B. S. Clapp along with Wm. M. Griffin from Marshall County. He was in service as a Representative from 1861 until his death Sept. 26, 1862.

The will of Clapp is found in the Alabama Records (Vol. 96, p. 50, 51, 655). This publication was compiled by Pauline Jones Gandrud.

On Nov. 7, 1862, there was an inventory of the estate and chattels of Clapp. This record was found in the Marshall County Probate loose records located in the Marshall County, AL, Archives. The survivors were: his widow Mary A. Clapp, living in Montgomery, AL; William K. Clapp, Catherine Clap Gibson, deceased, George W. Clapp, Barton S. Clapp,

Elizabeth Ann Chandler, and Barton E. Bridges, grandson.

Louis Wyeth was appointed administrator of Clapp's estate on Nov. 12, 1862. At this time he petitioned the court for permission to sell the slaves that belonged to Clapp. On July 16, 1867, two slaves were sold. One was Rachel, age about 10, sold to James C. McCorkle for \$935. The other was Frank, age about 6, also sold to James C. McCorkle and his price was \$610.

The following are the children of Barton Stone Clapp. The mother of these children is unknown.

Sermerimus Clapp was born about 1837. She married Edmond Bridges July 1, 1855 in Marshall County. Edmond was born about 1831 in Jackson County and was the son of Edmond Bridges and Elizabeth Manning. A son, Barton Edmund, was born to Sermerimus and Edmond about 1857. He was listed as a survivor following his grandfather's death. Barton E. Bridges died April 26, 1879.

Catherine Clapp was born about 1839 in Marshall County. She married Absalom C. Gibson. They were be found in the 1860 census living in the Claysville area of the county. Absalom (or Abner as he was listed) was 21 years old. They had living with them his mother, Isabella Gibson. His father is not known. The U.S. Federal Census Mortality Schedules, 1850-1885 lists the death of Catherine. She was 31, married, and died in September 1869 of Chronic Diarrhea. The estate of Barton Stone Clapp lists the children of Catherine and Absalom as: James Barton Gibson, Alexander Gibson, Joel Gibson and Absalom Gibson.

Alexander Barton Clapp was born Aug. 18, 1842. Alexander became caught up in the strife that became the War Between the States. He served as a Lieutenant in the 55th Regiment of the Alabama Infantry Volunteers, Company E. Following the War he married

his first wife, Mary Elizabeth Baker on July 24, 1864. The children from this marriage are: Sallie Frances, Elizabeth P., Robert Edward, George W. and Margaret. Mary died in 1876 and Alexander married Mary Ann Horn in 1884 and had two more children; James Benton and Frances. Mary Ann died March 20, 1891 in Sallisaw, Sequoyah County, Oklahoma. From this marriage came the birth of twins born in January 1886. One was a son named James B. and the other was a daughter whose name looks like "Frank" on the 1900 census. This census reveals that Alexander was married to Alsy Elsie Sanders in 1895. Alexander Barton Clapp died Dec. 4, 1904 in Brushy Mountain, Sequoyah, and Indian Territory. Alsy died in the same location on Dec. 15, 1906.

George Washington Clapp was born in February 1844 at the Claysville home of his family. George W. also enlisted into the service when the Civil War began. He enlisted on Feb. 4, 1863 in the Artillery, Ward's Cruze Battery in Huntsville as a Private. His records show that he deserted May 5, 1863, but was reenlisted by Lt. Spotswood and served at the City Redoubts in Mobile, AL on June 30, 1863. He was married in Marshall County on Sept. 21, 1869 to Cornelia Frances "Fanny" Baker. They were found in the 1870 Alabama Census with his brother, Barton in the household. By 1880, the family was living in the White Oak area of Franklin County, Arkansas. They had several children living with them at this time: Milton, David, Christopher, Garland, Emma and a niece, Sallie. In 1900 the family was shown living in Scott County, Arkansas. Added to the family were two more children, Mollie (Mary J.) and Luke. Cornelia died about 1905 and in the 1910 Logan County, Arkansas, Census George W. was living in his household with three of his children: Emma, Mary J. and Luke. Family records state that George Washington Clapp died in 1915 while living in Arkansas.

Barton Stone Clapp, Jr. was born in Marshall

County, AL about 1845. Since the death of his father he was living with other of his siblings. In the 1870 Marshall County Census he was living with his brother and sister-in-law, George W. and Frances. Barton, Jr. enlisted as a Private in the Alabama Ward's-Cruse's Light Artillery Battery when the Civil War began. Following the War, Barton married Emily Jane Hackney on Oct. 24, 1870. The 1880 Census shows Barton's family living in Alma, Crawford County, Arkansas. The household consisted of: Barton, Emily Jane, Atha Julianna, Eugene and Edward. Another son, Earl Ewell, was born about 1875. Emily Jane died sometime after 1875. On Dec. 14, 1882,

Barton married Pauline Raines in Johnson County, Arkansas. From this marriage there were born five children: Jennie, Gaylon, Pearl, Johnie and Martha. Pauline died about 1906 in Mead, Bryan County, Oklahoma, and Barton Stone Clapp, Jr. died after 1910 in Mead.

The child of Barton Stone Clapp, Sr. and Catherine Bridges Clapp:

Elizabeth Ann Clapp was five months old when the 1860 census was taken. Her mother passed away a short time following her birth. Elizabeth married James P. Chandler on Nov. 14, 1871 in Madison County, Alabama. 🍁

EARLY MARSHALL COUNTY: ALABAMA SHERIFFS

JOHN J. SIBLEY

8th Sheriff of Marshall County, Alabama (1856-1859)

By **KEITH FINLEY & MARGENE BLACK**
Researchers, Marshall County, AL
Archives

An article from the *Advertiser-Gleam* on Dec. 31, 2011 tells about this sheriff. This article was sent to the paper by Keith Finley, volunteer for the Marshall County Archives.

HE WAS EITHER SHORT LEGGED, OR LONG LEGGED, DEPENDING ON WHERE YOU SAW HIM AND WHAT HE WAS DOING

His name was John J. Sibley. He was born in Virginia and came with his family to Marshall County about the time it was formed in the 1830s. He lived in the Honeycomb area and received a very brief education there. In his autobiography *With Sabre and Scalpel*, for some unknown reason, Dr. John Allan Wyeth refers to him as James Swiverly, but name was actually John Sibley. In 1847 he married Sarah Ann Birdsong and they had two

children, Helen and William. Sarah Ann was born in 1823 in Warren County, Kentucky. He was first elected constable his beat, then in 1856 he was elected sheriff, and in 1863 he was elected, along with Arthur Campbell Beard, to the Alabama House of Representatives. Sometime between 1860 and 1870, Sarah died.

He was described as gentle, blue-eyed, and soft spoken. One of his strong suits was that he could really tell some tall tales. He was, according to Wyeth, the most popular man in the county. Part of this popularity was due to his soft touch and probably some sympathy due to a birth defect that caused one leg to be fully 6 inches shorter than the other. He made no attempt to correct the situation with a built-up shoe and his limping gait made him appear somewhat grotesque as he went bobbing up and down as he walked the streets of Guntersville. He explained to young John Wyeth one day why one leg was shorter than the other (all of Sibley's comments in this article are in dialect as Dr. Wyeth remembered

them). “John, I don’t like to brag about myself in public; but I don’t mind talking to you, if you won’t tell it. I come about in this way. When I was a-growing’ up ther’ wasn’t nobody in Honeycomb could lift as big a load as me. One day a lot of us fellers was a-standin’ in front Rickett’s store when a feller drove up with a bushel bag plum full of buckshot. He said he’d bet a dollar I couldn’t shoulder the bag, and I took him up. It wasn’t no trouble for me to shoulder a bushel o’ shot, but, as bad luck would have it, my left foot was a-restin’ on a rock and couldn’t sink into the ground as far as the other one did, and the heavy weight drove that hip-bone half a foot up into my body, and it’s stayed thar ever since.” Wyeth said he believed every word that Sibley said.

His malady also gave him an advantage when he was politicking. He said, “When I’m a-talkin’ to the people in ‘The Gap’ or over in Honeycomb, I get down among ‘em on my short leg, familiar like: but when I’m up here in town with upper ten, like your pap (Judge Louis Wyeth), I rise up on my other foot, and thar I am.”

During the Civil War his condition came in handy on an April morning late in the war. The Federal commander in Huntsville heard that the steamer Paint Rock was hidden in a creek which emptied into the Tennessee near Guntersville, and he was determined to capture it. Led by a local scout he crossed the river near Huntsville and rode all night over the mountain arriving in Guntersville about nine o’clock in the morning. There were no soldiers in town and Sibley and two other men, one the village doctor and druggist (probably Dr. L. D. Lusk) and a wealthy, pompous, and very portly planter who went by the nickname “Kernel Jim,” were discussing the latest war news in front of the doctor’s drug store. This is Sibley’s account of what happened as recorded in Wyeth’s book. “I’ve been skeered lots o’ times in my life, and bad skeered, too, but I never come so near being paralyzed all over at once as I was the mornin’

them Yankees dashed ‘round the corner and come a’tearin’ down Main Street so fast and so sudden-like that before a feller could say Jack Robberson they was right on top of him.

“We all knowed they was over in Huntsville, but nobody ever dreamt they’d cross the river below and come on us in the back way. Howsomever, that’s jest what they done, and at the wrong time, too, for Kernal Jim was right in the middle of one of his big war talks. I disremember what he left off, for he was a’facin’ up the street, and me and Doc was a’facin’ the other way, and he seed the Yankees fust. Kernel Jim had been saying ‘My motto is to keep on a’fightin’ ‘em. One Southern man can whup five Yankees any day, and if they ever try to take our town we’ll---,” And right here Kernel Jim stopped a’talkin’ so short off I knowed something mor’n common had happened.

“I was a-looking straight at him, and as he shut up, his eyes popped wide open, and he riz ad jumped over me and the doc and flew out o’sight into the narrer passageway betwixt the drug store and Kinzler’s grocery. Four hundred pounds o’ dead weight wasn’t interferin’ with Kernel Jim’s quick action. As I was a-noticing’ the way he was behaving’ I heard a roarin’ sound like a drove o’ horses a-runnin’ away, and, turnin’ ‘round, thar was the whole road blue with Yankees, and they was right on top of us. Talk about being skeered! When I tried to git up my legs wouldn’t work, and I slid off my cheer onto the platform and rolled into the street. By this time the Yankees was gone, and everybody else was gone but me. Then my legs come back, and I run into the alleyway, and that I seed the comicallest sight I ever seed in all my born days. Skeered as I was, I just had to laugh, for thar, at the back o’ the house where the underpinnin’ had sagged down and narrowed the passage, was Kernel Jim wedged in so tight he couldn’t move one way or t’other, and Doc was jest a-clearing’ him with one o’ the highest jumps I ever seed.

“By this time I was a-movin’ so fast I couldn’t check up, and riz on my long leg and tried to clear the Kernel like Dock, but I fell short, and my knees hit him right between his shoulder-blades. Just as I strick him he hollered, ‘Oh, me! I’m shot plum through with a cannon-ball,’ and then he went to prayin’ same as if he’d been a church-member, and as I crawled betwixt his legs and cleared the opening’ he was still a’suplicatin’. By the time I got through Doc was nearly out o’ sight, and I hollered to him to wait on me, but the louder I hollered the faster he went, and if it hadn’t been for one thing I never could ‘a’ cotched him. When we come to the side o’ the steep hill back o’ town (Hill Street?), as good luck would have it, I struck the slant with my short leg on the upper side, and then I went by Doc like he was a-standin’ still.”

Dr. Wyeth considered John J. Sibley, who was 15 or 20 years older than he, to be one of the most interesting people he ever met, and Dr. Wyeth had met Kings and Queens.

We owe this bit of Guntersville history to Dr. Wyeth’s autobiography and to the Marshall County Archives being maintained by the Archives Society.

BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN J. SIBLEY

John J. Sibley was born about 1826, oldest child of William A. and Sarah Johnson Sibley. His parents were married in Halifax County, Virginia and it is supposed the family lived there until they removed to Madison County, Alabama. William’s family can be found in the 1850 Madison County census but John J. had moved to Marshall County.

Sibley married Sarah Ann Birdsong the 23rd of October 1847 in Marshall County. They are listed in the 1850 Marshall County Census with one child, Helen A., age one. Sarah’s father, mother and siblings are living next door to them. Sibley is listed in the Alabama Homestead and Cash Entry Patents, Pre-1908, as obtaining 67.51 acres of land 10th of August 1850. This land was located in

Honeycomb, north of Guntersville. The Agriculture Census the 21st of October, 1850 notes that Sibley was a farmer.

According to the Marshall County Sheriff’s Department, John J. Sibley became the county sheriff in 1856 and stayed in this office until 1859. We also find this proof of his service in the book, *People and Things From The Marshall County, Alabama Democrat, 1892-1900* by Robin Sterling. This book tells of the death of Thomas J. Cochran in 1893 and states Cochran became the sheriff from 1859-1862, following Sibley.

In 1860, Sibley is boarding in the household of Walter P. Macfarlane, Clerk of the Circuit Court. Sibley’s occupation is listed as being a clerk. Sibley’s wife, Sarah, is gone from this census and his children are in the home of her father.

The 1870 Marshall County Census shows Sibley is out of the sheriff’s office and is again listed as head of the household. Sibley’s children are living in his household along with his sister and her children. She was married Dec. 28, 1859 in Marshall County to John C. McKinney. The following persons are listed: John J. Sibley, age 43, born in Virginia and listed as a store clerk; Helen A. Sibley, age 20; William R. Sibley, age 15; S. [Sarah] P. McKinny, female, age 31; William McKinny, age 9; John S., age 8.

Many researchers have stated that John J. Sibley removed to Franklin County, Alabama and eventually died there. This is not true, however. If you follow the John J. Sibley in Franklin County you will see him in the household of his mother as a young man. John J. Sibley from Marshall County has not been found following the 1870 census. It is not known at this time when and where John J. of Marshall County died.

The daughter of John J. and Sarah Ann Birdsong Sibley was Helen A. Sibley. She was last found in the 1870 census and was living in

Marshall County

the household of her father, aged 20 years old. There was a marriage for a Helen Sibley to Audubon Gullett, in Mobile, AL in 1866. The date and place of this marriage do not make this seem likely that this is the Helen in the Marshall County records.

The son of John J. and Sarah Ann Birdsong Sibley was William Richard Sibley. He was born Aug. 14, 1850 in Marshall County. He was last found living in Marshall County on the 1870 census.

William moved on to Mineola, Wood County, Texas, but it is not known exactly when this move was undertaken. It is known that he married Delona Stokes Maxy on Nov. 18, 1883 in Wood County. Delona was born about 1859 in Etowah County, AL. She was first married to William Maxey in 1877 and a son, William F. was born into this family. William Maxey died February 1880 in Wood County.

Delona and William were the parents of three children:

Zona Agnes Sibley was born Oct. 7, 1886 in Wood County, Texas. She married Elijah Quinton Hearn who was born Dec. 15, 1880 in Bell County, Texas. There were three children born to this couple. Gerald, Elijah Quinton, Jr.

and Helen Josephine. Zona died Oct. 27, 1976 and Elijah died Oct. 1, 1950 and both are buried in Mineola, Wood County, Texas.

Nell Alma Sibley was born March 23, 1890 in Wood County, Texas. She was married to Samuel Newton Chapman who was born Dec. 22, 1881 and died in a hospital located in Palestine, Anderson County, Texas on Jan. 24, 1949. He was then removed to Cedars Memorial Gardens in Mineola, Wood County, Texas for burial. "Nellie" died Aug. 9, 1980 and is buried in Cedars Memorial Gardens.

Hettye Ann Sibley was born April 20, 1893 in Mineola, Wood County, Texas. She was first married to Amos L. Nixon who was born in November 1891. This couple had a son, Roger, who was born in 1912. In the 1930 Census, Hettye was living with her father and evidently had remarried. Her name was listed as Hetty Peart. Zona and Elijah were living next door to William R. and Hettye, with their three children.

William Richard Sibley died June 19, 1935 in Mineola and Delona died before 1900, also in Mineola. William is buried in the Sand Springs Cemetery which is in Wood County, Texas. 🍁

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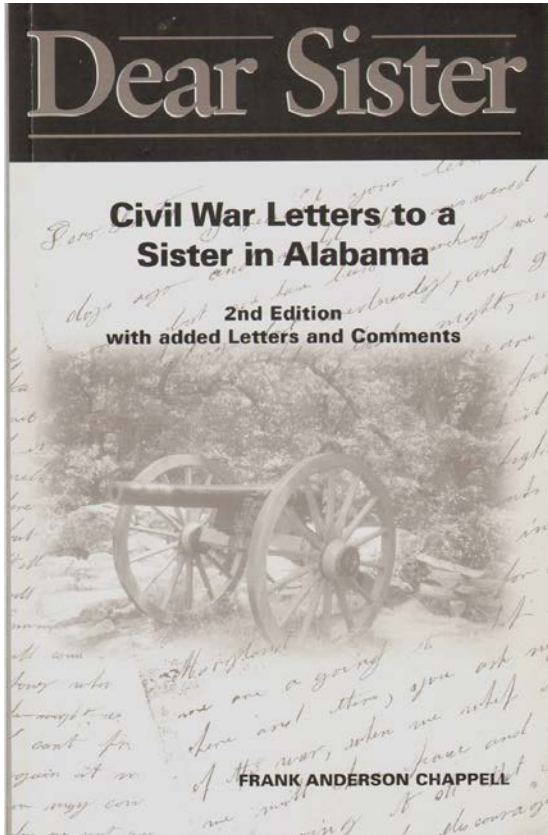
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Book Reviews

Dear Sister: Civil War Letters to a Sister in Alabama

BY SUSY JACKS, TVGS Contributor- Frank Anderson Chappell was the great-great grandson of Lucinda Caroline Branscomb Hunter of Union Springs, Alabama. Dear Sister, Lucinda, had four brothers who joined the Confederate Army as part of the Third Alabama Infantry Regiment. In 1861, they went to Virginia, to defend the South, writing home frequently. This book contains the transcribed and annotated chronological correspondence of the brothers.



In 1991, the great-grandchildren of Lucinda Hunter cleaned out their grandfather's house in Union Springs, where they found an old BVD underwear box that was marked "War Letters" containing almost 100 Civil War letters. Most were written by Lucinda's four brothers, the sons of Bennett Hill Branscomb and Eliza Belotte Branscomb. Chappell was able to find several other letters from various sources, which he added to the collection. The four brothers, John Wesley, William Henry, James Zachariah and Lewis Sylvester Branscomb, typically wrote home complaining of not enough mail, inadequate clothing, cold weather, poor food, and problems with officers. The letters give a detailed account of camp life and engagements. Chappell's narrative between letters keeps the reader knowledgeable about the military situation the brothers were facing at that time, as well as biographical information, pictures and documents. This book adds to our understanding of the life encountered by the men who went off to war in 1861, and also of their families left at home.

Civil War enthusiasts and researchers, especially those with an interest in Alabama and Union Springs, will want to study this book. 🍁

Chappell., Frank Anderson. (2002). *Dear Sister: Civil War Letters to a Sister in Alabama*. Branch Springs Publishing, Huntsville, AL. 241 Pages, Paperback, \$14.95. ISBN 0-9727622-0-5.

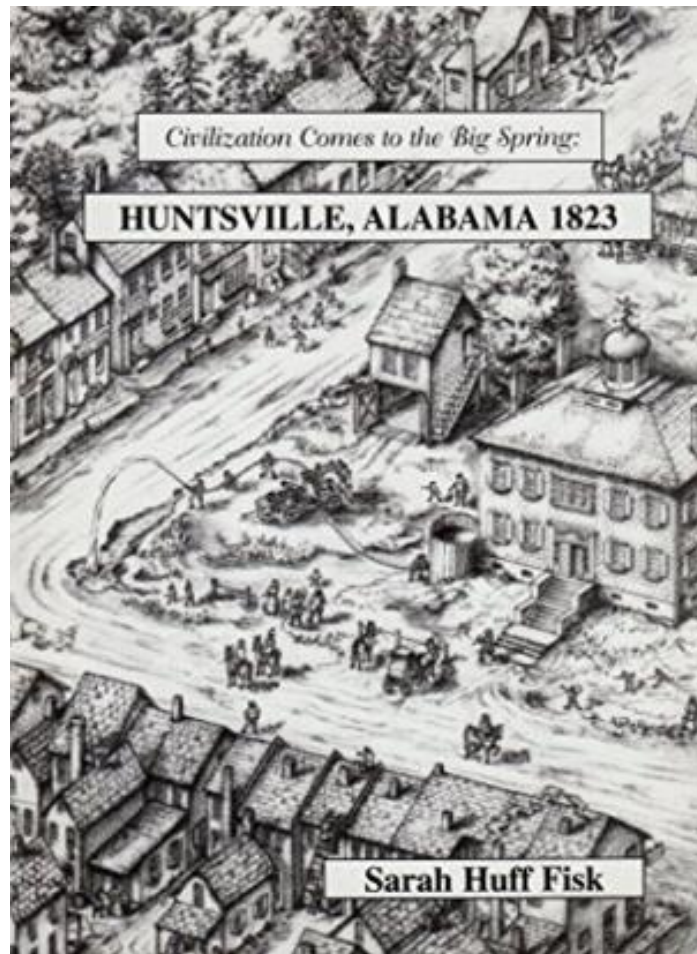
BOOK REVIEW:

Civilization Comes to the Big Spring: Huntsville, Alabama 1823

BY SUSY JACKS, TVGS Contributor- John Hunt built the first cabin near the Big Spring in 1805 in early Huntsville, the little town in the untamed southern wilderness. Sarah Fisk ably gives her conception of the appearance of some 70 of the earliest structures that stood around the public square. Her illustration of the scene is a scale drawing made after many years of archival research. The size and appearance of each structure was gleaned from deeds, newspapers, and other records, or based on the architecture of surviving buildings in Huntsville or other southern towns.

In the beginning Ms. Fisk reflects on the wild rush of Federal land sales and the town in 1819 when Huntsville played host to the convention that organized the State of Alabama. She further adds short biographical information for some of the known Huntsville builders and artisans during the period 1810-1824. An early chapter entitled "Sights, Sounds, and Smells" embellishes both the pictures and descriptions of conditions in the early development of Huntsville.

The main part of the book is the illustrations of the buildings and their stories. All structures are numbered which makes it easy to relate them to the documented text. Each of their stories are told: the owners, the builders, the succession of merchants, their goods as advertised in the local newspapers, the offices of doctors, lawyers, the commerce of a bustling town as well as some of its problems. Ms. Fisk discusses how the waters of the Big Spring were used by the town for their needs, and of the great fires that destroyed most of these buildings before the advent of photography.



The illustrations were originally made to commemorate the 150th anniversary in 1973 of the Huntsville Water Works, which is the oldest water system in the United States west of the Appalachian Mountains. This study by Ms. Fish additionally led to the restoration of Lots 51 and 52 which had housed activities closely associated with the drafting of Alabama's first constitution in the year 1819. Today on these two lots stand The Alabama Constitution Village, a living history museum that not only tells the story of Alabama's statehood, but also includes The

Center for Early Southern Life, an imaginative, hands-on museum facility that teaches us about our heritage.

This posthumous publication of Ms. Fisk's work will give researchers wishing to understand life on the Huntsville frontier, find ancestors among the earliest residents, and get a vivid picture of who and what of the building and their occupants will surely want to delve into this important addition to the history of early Huntsville and Alabama. 🍁

Fisk, Sarah Huff. *Civilization Comes to the Big Spring: Huntsville, Alabama 1823*. Pinhook Publishing Company, Huntsville, AL. 178 pages, Paperback, \$22.95, ISBN-13-978-0-9655917-3-7.



Did you know?

Genealogical databases can take hundreds of hours to index, but did you know that you can browse familysearch.org records before they are indexed? Head over to the website, click the “Search” tab at the top of the page, select the country and state you wish to search, and then scroll down to “Image Only Historical Records.” From here, you can browse these records just like a physical archive collection!

Things You Should Know

A Look Back at Spring Seminar 2016

In 2016, the Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society welcomed “the Legal Genealogist” Judy Russell. Formerly a lawyer, Russell now devotes her legal expertise to genealogical research. She presented multiple programs on extracting vital genealogical data from legal documents.

Russell devoted part of her presentation to gleaning family ties through an ancestor’s Last Will and Testament. Colonies and states had different inheritance laws which shaped who was mentioned in a will. For instance, some governments granted a certain portion to widows and eldest sons, unless otherwise specified. This may be why widows or certain children are not mentioned.

Another portion of the presentation was devoted to “widows and orphans under the law.” Orphans could be apprenticed or indentured in instances where no guardian was named and no family could be found. In-family adoptions were often informal and loosely documented.

For more information on Judy Russell’s research and to find out more about her future speaking engagements, please visit legalgenealogist.com.





Attendees were eligible for history-themed door prizes, including books and genealogical software, which were awarded during the afternoon session.



The program included a new induction to First Families, which recognizes descendants of Northern Alabama's first pioneer families. If you or someone you know may be eligible for First Families, contact TVGS!



Historians Rally for Bicentennial

Alabama historians gathered to make history of their own in honor of the Alabama bicentennial.

BY JOHN ALLEN
*HMCHS president & Confederation of
Historians facilitator*

HUNTSVILLE - Historians and historical entities from five counties, representing 21 towns and cities, made history of their own Aug. 18 when they met in Huntsville for a Bicentennial briefing at the Children's Early Works Museum.

Sponsored by the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, the briefing was intended to encourage the historians to form their own committees to help their communities celebrate Alabama's 200th birthday. The

three-year Bicentennial will focus on the state's people (2017), its places (2018), and its path to statehood (2019). Alabama became a territory in 1817 and a state in 1819.

This was the first time that most of the area historians have been together in one place. Representatives from Jackson, Limestone, Madison, Marshall, and Morgan Counties heard a report from Huntsville attorney, Julian Butler, who is chairman of the Madison County Bicentennial Committee. Bart Williams, executive director of the Early Works Family of Museums, told about renovation plans for the Constitution Village where Alabama became a state. 🍁

The Tennessee Valley Genealogy Society of Huntsville, AL and the Rachel Jackson Chapter of the National Society United States Daughters of 1812 joined together to contribute \$1,500 for the *Preserve the Pensions, War of 1812* fund. This project is working to digitize and index the soldiers' benefit pensions housed at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. The project is spearheaded by the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS).

By digitizing these records, research will be much easier and access will be free through fold3.com. We greatly appreciate those who participated in helping to preserve approximately 3,335 pages of 1812 pension records for future generations. If you would like to make additional contributions, they can be mailed to:

**Preserve the Pensions
P. O. Box 200940
Austin, TX 78720-0940**

TVGS Visits Brentwood



Left to right: Coy Michael, Brian Newton, Stephany Wingard, Dr. David and Nancy Billings, Martha Ann Whitt, Rhonda Larkin, Phyllis O’Connell and Cynthia Guffey.

Members of The Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society traveled to Brentwood, Tenn., for the 28th Annual Middle Tennessee Genealogical Society Fall Seminar on Saturday, Nov. 19, 2016 to hear archivist and author Gordon T. Belt, librarian and archivist Chuck Sherrill, librarian Allison Griffey and genealogist Jim Long.

The event was themed “Judgement, War, Taxes and Tales: A Day Among the Records,” and speakers talked about census

documents, court records, and taxes with programs such as “Stories from the Stacks” (Gordon Belt), “Moonshiners and Horse Thieves: Ancestors in Tennessee Supreme Court Records” (Chuck Sherrill), “Gold Star Records from World War I” (Allison Griffey), and “You Can’t Evade Taxes...At Least Not in Genealogy” (Jim Long).

The event was sponsored by the Middle Tennessee Genealogical Society, the Tennessee Historical Society and the Brentwood Historic Commission. 🍁



Please complete and mail to:
Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society
P. O. Box 1568
Huntsville, AL 35807

REGISTRATION FORM
Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society
Spring Seminar

Date: Saturday, April 22, 2017, 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Location: Marriott's SpringHill Suites Huntsville Downtown (256-512-0188)
745 Constellation Drive, Huntsville, AL
Cost: \$40 (includes programs & lunch)

REGISTRATION & PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BY April 7, 2017.

Name:

Mailing Address:

Phone: _____ **E-Mail:**

Newk's Eatery is catering lunch at the seminar. The registration price includes morning refreshments, lunch, dessert, and beverages. If you require a vegetarian option, please check here: _____ **I require a vegetarian lunch option.**

Please mail completed application and your registration fee (check please, no cash) to the following address by April 7, 2017: *Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society, Attn: Seminar, P. O. Box 1568, Huntsville, AL 35807*

You never know where you might find an ancestral connection! Include the names of prominent or mysterious ancestors in the chart. Maybe you'll find a match!

Name	Date of Birth	Birth Place	Date of Death	Location

July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017

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www.tvgs.org

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*“We all carry, inside us, people who came before us.”
Liam Callanan*

Valley Leaves Policies

Contributions

Editorial Policy: The Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society, “Valley Leaves” is an educational publication committed to the compiling and printing of genealogical and historical articles and materials for the Counties of **Jackson, Marshall, and Madison** in the State of Alabama – including County and Municipal Records, Bible records, diaries, military records, newspaper items, personal letters, tombstone inscriptions, family histories, church and school records, research methodology and technology. The Society solicits primarily from among its membership unpublished source data but will accept previously published material if it is derived from rare, little-known, hard-to-find or out of print publications not readily available to researchers, provided that proper acknowledgement is given. An effort will be made to balance material among the three counties to broaden researcher interest. Materials prior to mid-20th Century are preferred. Family histories should be sufficiently comprehensive to interest researchers in methods of research, and possible connection to ancestors. In compiling submissions, all source references should be cited, including locations where known. The 15th Edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* should be used. While attempts are made to check submission for accuracy and originality, The Society, Editorial Board, and the TVGS *Valley Leaves* Editor shall not be held responsible for any such errors by contributors. Correction of proven errors will appear in subsequent issues of the publication.

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