

moon were tested. During those tests conducted on former Lanier lands, their bones no doubt were “shaken, but not stirred”. While this connection of the Lanier family to our current generation’s historic achievements is impressive, that is typical of the history of the family. They are perhaps the most significantly connected family buried on the arsenal lands, with marriages and accomplishments that have always reached national and international prominence.

The history of the Lanier family that settled on the pre-arsenal lands is traced back into our country’s colonial days and earlier. They are direct descendants from the great grandfather of George Washington, our first President of the United States of America. The Laniers from the time of Queen Elizabeth in England were noted for their love and cultivation of the fine arts. The family also produced a famous American poet-writer-musician-lawyer, Sidney Lanier (1842-1881), a son of the state of Georgia who lived for a time in Alabama. The history of the Lanier families of north Alabama includes intermarriages with the Jordan, Dickson, and Pope families, who were also prominent in the history of the settlement of Madison County and the establishment of Huntsville, with Leroy Pope being recognized as the “Father of Huntsville”.

According to papers found in the Lanier folder of the Family Files in the Heritage Room of the Huntsville – Madison County Public Library, in the late 1600s some Huguenot Laniers living in the southern part of France fled persecution to reside in Wales. This data largely consists of information collected from the older family members in the 1800s and recorded in works about the Laniers published around 1900. According to these works, after a time in the British Isles, a Thomas Lanier left Wales with other Huguenots and a company of English emigrants to settle in Powhatan County of the Colony of Virginia. They established homes near what is now Richmond, within the 64,000 acre “Crown Lands” granted by William and Mary to Henry Harris and John Jourden in 1691. Members of the Harris and Jordan families were thereafter intermingled with the Laniers through our nation’s history.

The Coat of Arms show below is taken from a book entitled “*LANIERS*”, by Laura Ingersoll. The book is in the family bookshelves of the Heritage Room at the Huntsville – Madison County Public Library.