

DOCTOR WILLIAM SIMPSON

In Henry Simpson's obituary it states: "Sir William Simpson and Irish patriot, who took refuge in this Country, at the time of the execution of young Robert Emmet whose cause he espoused and whose fortune he shared." History recorded the execution of Robert Emmet on September 30, 1803, suggesting William Simpson and his family were living in the United States then. From information William submitted when he registered as a British Alien during the War of 1812,<sup>10</sup> William stated he arrived in Mississippi Territory in 1807. The Secretary of Mississippi Territory recorded the following information: "*William Simpson, 32 years old, in U.S. 5 years; A Wife and Two Children; resides in Madison County; A Phisician; [sic] An honest and respectable Inhabitant.*"<sup>11</sup>

By 1805, pioneers began making unauthorized settlements in the area known today as Madison County, Alabama. At this time, the land belonged to the Cherokee and Chickasaw Indians. Soon the American Government enticed the Indians to cede a triangular-shaped section of land, between the Tennessee State Line and the Tennessee River, to the U.S. Government. This was to allow the settlers who were already in the area a legal place to live. Thomas Freeman, a Government Surveyor, from Nashville, Tennessee, received orders to survey the lands in the "Triangle." This surveyed land became known as Madison County, Mississippi Territory on December 13, 1808. Then no one owned, or could own, any of this land. Those pioneers that settled in this area were "squatting" on public domain, most with the hope of being allowed to purchase their homesteads. In January 1809, Thomas Freeman took a census of the inhabitants, living within the bounds of the newly-formed county. Mr. Freeman acted as registrar and received the inhabitants' applications to buy their land. After paying a small fee, the inhabitants' receive permission to stay as "tenants at will," with the right to purchase the land at a public land auction. The first sale took place at Nashville, Tennessee, in August 1809, and "fee simple land titles" were established. Before 1818, the only legal place to settle in North Alabama was Madison County.<sup>12</sup> In January 1809, William Simpson and his family were recorded in the "Squatter" Census as follows.

WILLIAM SIMPSON 1 Male under 21  
1 Male over 21  
1 Female over 21  
Total of 3 & 4 Slaves<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Dorothy W. Potter, "Passports of Southeastern Pioneers, 1770-1823," (Baltimore, MD: Gateway Press Inc., 1982), p. 158.

<sup>11</sup>Clarence Edwin Carter, "Territorial Papers of the United States," Vol. V, Mississippi Territory, 1798-1818, also, Georgia Executive Proceedings, Nov. 1809 - Dec. 1810, p. 213, drawer 50, roll 47.

<sup>12</sup>Letters received from the Surveyor General of Mississippi," General Land Office, p. 49, National Archives, Washington, D.C., pp. 179-196.

<sup>13</sup>Kathleen P. Jones and Pauline J. Gandrud, "Alabama Records Madison County," Vol. 80, p. 81.