

This land was originally purchased by John Braham, the Northeast Quarter of Section 36, Township 3, Range 1 West (160.14 acres) in 1809, at the same time LeRoy Pope purchased the southeast quarter of the section.⁶ However, during the land sales of 1817 and 1818, Mr. Braham lost much of this land, a portion of which LeRoy Pope bought. On December 24, 1824, Mr. Pope and his wife, Judith, sold William Patton 32.19 acres on north Greene and Meridian Streets for \$2,050.⁷ Mr. Patton, an Irishman, had come to Huntsville in 1811, and soon after became interested in a mill to process cotton. This would later develop as Bell Factory on the Flint River.

After the Civil War, a new street was cut east of Meridian Street on this property and named for John Williams Walker when the Patton heirs developed the northern end of the property. Judge Taylor's location of the first Huntsville cemetery was confirmed some fifty years ago during the construction of a Hill's Grocery Store on the south side of Walker Street near its intersection with Greene and Meridian Streets. During site preparation as the elevated land was lowered to the level of Walker Street, bones were uncovered. Older Huntsvillians previously believed that all remains had been moved from this site to a new graveyard. Obviously, this was not the case.

There are no records of this original cemetery, only the memory of Judge Taylor and those who witnessed the uncovered bones. When it became necessary to set aside land for burials is also unknown although the Territorial Records suggest that a cemetery was needed as early as 1810. Deed Book A of those records lists wills and probate dates which suggests immediate burials though not necessarily at the Huntsville site:⁸ Other early deaths are recorded in the Orphans Court minutes.⁹

Reasons for the relocation of the city cemetery are unknown although several explanations seem plausible. The site was within view of the main artery to Huntsville from the north, the Meridianville Road. The City Commissioners may have felt that the first sight of Huntsville should not be a graveyard. The site was within one block of Holmes Street, the northern city limit. Perhaps some thought was given to the expansion of the city northward and the need to have a location removed from the near environs of the developing city. A more plausible explanation might simply be that LeRoy Pope wanted to sell this newly acquired land and would be unable to do so with a burial ground on it.

For some years, several deeds have suggested that a new site was purchased in 1818. However, a close examination of these records indicate that this site was that of "Georgia," the original Negro cemetery located where the parking garage adjacent to Huntsville Hospital now stands on Madison Street.¹⁰

LeRoy and Judith Pope sold the President and Trustees of the Corporation of Huntsville 2 acres of land on September 14, 1822. The deed describes this property as "beginning at the LeRoy Pope and John Braham line at the stone on the Basis Meridian...." Although no reference is made in the deed to a graveyard, these acres comprise the oldest sections of Maple Hill Cemetery. The deed was recorded on October 4, 1828,¹¹ Early settlers were somewhat cavalier about recording transactions.

It is impossible to document the earliest burials at the new site. It was not to be called Maple Hill Cemetery until after 1901 when the Clay sisters, Susanna and Virginia, writing in *The Democrat*, called for a name for "the white cemetery." Major documentation in the Cemetery Office begins after 1865 but there are some important gaps in these materials. In the older sections, 1-9, one