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The Huntsville Historical Review

Fall 2015 – Winter 2015

Volume 40

Number 2

In This Volume

The Rise and Fall of "King Cotton"

Dr. James Manning

Madison County Pioneer, Doctor, and Land Speculator

The Birney Brothers of Huntsville, Alabama

Prelude to the Great War– No Slackers in Madison County; Part 1

Historical Research in Madison, Morgan, and Limestone Counties

And More

Yesterday is history. We study yesterday to influence a better tomorrow.

Introduction

“Lest We Forget” The Founding of the Society

The Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society was founded in 1951 through the farsighted leadership of several local residents. Two of the prime movers in forming the Society were Dr. Francis C. Roberts and Mrs. C. H. Russell. The first officers were:

President: Henry Chase;
Vice President: Judge Thomas Jones;
Secretary/Treasurer: Felix Newman;

Board of Directors;

Reese Amis
Harry Rhett
Mrs. Sallie Gill
Mrs. R. J. Lowe
D. C. Monroe
Josh Kelly.

The purpose of the Society as set forth in the bylaws:

“to afford an agency for expression among those having common interests in (1) collecting and preserving information about any past phase of community life in Huntsville, Alabama, and (2) in recording the history of the section of which Madison County is a part.” In 1971, as a part of this commitment to “collect, preserve, and record” the Society began publication of *The Huntsville Historical Review*.

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From the President:

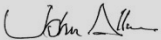
We have 18 board members and a goodly number of them are former HMCHS presidents. The good news is they provide stability for the organization and guidance for new presidents – like me. Considering the esteemed presidents who have gone before me, it is an honor to carry the torch forward. So far, we’re off to a good start, in several different areas. Here’s what I mean:

- Thanks to Arley McCormick, this REVIEW is now providing a standardized format, which can be seen in the Table of Contents.
- The newsletter will be two pages, printed front and back, folded in the middle.
- Thanks to Katy Hale, our website has been improved, both in content and appearance; and for the first time, the Bylaws have been digitized and installed on the web for anyone to see.
- Thanks to Sam Tumminello, as our HMCHS Facebook presence is becoming more robust with each passing week.
- The Marker Committee, spearheaded by Alex Luttrell, now in his 19th year, is at work in earnest refurbishing some of the older historical markers, while evaluating requests for new ones.
- Additional committees have been formed and are now at work, especially the Alabama Bicentennial Committee.
- We now have a speaker certificate.
- We’ve sanctioned a Boy Scout Eagle project to refurbish an old cemetery near New Market.
- And for the first time, we have group photographs of the Society Board, contributors to the REVIEW, and members who are published authors and editors.
- Efforts are underway to “brand” the HMCHS, such that all of its parts have a similar appearance, to possibly include a

logo suitable for T-shirts or bumper stickers, should the need arise.

- Deane Dayton and John Rankin, two of my favorite historians, are continuing their vast projects of documenting and preserving our local history.
- And the Board has given tentative approval for developing an annual Renee Pruett Award to a local person for noteworthy historical contributions.

Still, there is much to be done. The HMCHS membership is now on the rebound, and efforts are underway to make the Society appealing to youth. I urge you, and all of our members, to get involved with us in a way that best suits you; momentum is building. I'll bet that if you are reluctant to put your history in the REVIEW, you probably know someone who could; please urge them to do so. And please urge your friends to become members of the Society. They will find that preserving the past can be an enriching experience.



John Allen
President

From the Editor:

Our Review is indeed intended to reflect the understanding, perceptions, and frequently the opinion of authors that study characters and events affecting our community and thanks to our contributing authors the Historical Society's Review always captures the soul of the community we call home. Our authors illustrate noteworthy characters that form the foundation of our society and provide insight into the political and social fabric common to our community and state, and occasionally, the nation and the world.

Over two hundred years ago the war of 1812 had ended and Louisiana became a state ushering new energy from the federal government and capital investment in the Southwest Territory. Alabama pioneers, land speculators, and statesmen, were seeking recognition for an independent Territory in preparation toward becoming a state. And, the entire state will recognize their achievement during the Bicentennial being planned for 2017, 2018, and 2019. Madison County was represented by seven prominent citizens and Huntsville's Constitution Village became the center of attention when the Constitutional Convention was held here in 1819.

One hundred years ago our military guarded the Mexican border to prevent a revolution from migrating into the United States, invaded Haiti to squelch European intervention, and Americans watched nations bleed on the battlefields of Europe for the first full year of WWI. On May 7, 1915 a German U-boat sank the Lusitania and 1,924 souls were lost including 114 Americans. With oceans isolating us from Europe and politicians encouraging diplomacy, Americans were aroused and began taking sides. Eventually, an armistice was signed but North Alabama lost over 100 of her own young men to the war while their families were struggling through a depression. How did our community respond to these key events? Who were the characters that played a role and those that struggled

just to live? Our challenge is to tell the story of our community, the individual trials and triumphs, using the milestones of yesterday as a backdrop to illustrate the lives that influenced our social environment today.

I will never exclude an article with other historical references. I only encourage authors to consider illustrating the contributions of our community to these Bicentennial and Centennial events over the next few years. See the editorial policy on page 49. The Editor

A huge “Thank You” to our contributing authors!



Front Row left to right: Robert Reeves, Arley McCormick, Jimmy Pemberton, Jacque Reeves, Dr. Virginia Gilbert, Norman Shapiro, Coy Michael, Frances Robb, and Henry Turner Back Row left to right: Chris Lang, Deane Dayton, David Hardin, Kenneth Carpenter, David Byers, David Lady, Joe Jones, ?, and John Allen

The Rise and Fall of “King Cotton”

Arley McCormick



**Marco Polo
(National
Geographic)**

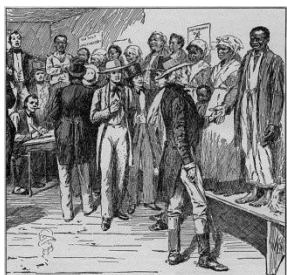
In 1269 Marco Polo began his adventurous travel to the Orient and returned 24 years later with the riches of China and India on his caravan. He was not the first European to venture to the mysterious land where there was an abundance of cotton and silk but he was the only one that wrote about it. His writing inspired maritime exploration leading to the America's in 1492 and a sea route to Asia that fed an economic revolution of global magnitude.

The foundation of a global economy is competitive advantage. If one country can produce the raw material, manufacture, or transport the products more cheaply than another country can acquire the same products internally or from another source, a competitive advantage exists to feed a growing market. When a market is born the merchants and governments join forces to preserve that advantage even if it means war.

The United Kingdom was successful in leading the first global economy based upon cotton. Through the British government supported East India Company, a near monopoly was created connecting the raw material in the Orient, through transport to England, then manufacturing into cloth, and satisfying and unquenchable demand for finished goods. The cotton business was lucrative and countries fought to preserve or participate on a global scale.

The United Kingdom led but there were many players attempting to wrench away their competitive advantage. The French, Dutch, and Portuguese were influencing cotton growth in Africa, Italy, the colonies in the Caribbean Islands and Brazil; and, labor proved to be the decisive ingredient for successful production.

Africans were initially sold as indentured servants in the North American colonies but by the late 1600's that practice changed to unqualified slavery. African slaves were relatively few in number in the colonies and their toil was oriented toward domestic production and consumption. The principle crops in the colonies produced by slaves during the 1700's were sugar cane, indigo, and tobacco. Only indigo and tobacco was considered a cash crop. Cotton was a domestic product grown and used locally.



Slave market
(thelawkeepers.org)

It all changed for the Africans after 1780. An obscure entrepreneur in a village in England had studied cotton for many years and finally organized the first manufacturing center for textiles in the Western World. It was the unanticipated beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Suddenly, the combination of labor, capitol, material, transportation, and time could harness the production of textiles so quickly that the best grade of cloth was

available to the entire population of Europe, not just the rich. The result was a massive explosion in demand driving the cost of raw cotton higher and higher. There just wasn't enough of those little cotton pods available to satisfy the demand.



Cotton Pod

At the beginning of the 19th Century the American colonies were primarily on the coast and the vast lands between the Atlantic and the Mississippi were sparsely populated by Europeans and Native Americans. The soil, climate, and the availability of vast amounts of African labor seemed inexhaustible. The merchants and planters in the Atlantic states, watching the price of cotton soar steadily, worked with the federal government to expand westward and acquire land in the early southwest (Alabama and Mississippi) and

it came within their grasp as well as land west of the Mississippi (Louisiana Purchase in 1803).

Madison County was recognized as possessing an abundance of fertile land waiting for cotton. Many early settlers were of the Yeoman Farmer class but the son's and son's inlaw of the planters on the east coast created the antebellum cotton economy and social environment. Settlers, squatters, adventurers, and those trying to escape the past also composed the social fabric of the growing population.

Treaties with Native Americans provided encouragement to the new residents and optimistic settlers but also proved unsatisfactory and they were eventually subdued, removed from their homeland, and sent west. The imported African slaves rapidly cleared land to establish sprawling plantations throughout the black belt of Alabama, facilitating the growth of the Plantation Industrial Complex.

Littleberry Adams, with 17 slaves, was one of the two largest slaveholders in Madison County in 1809 and by 1810 he was placing cotton on keelboats making their way down the Tennessee to the Ohio and on to New Orleans. The industry matured quickly and the cotton economic engine dominated domestic politics and international markets. By 1849 Alabama provided 20% of the cotton produced in the south.

Cotton influenced the methods of financing, changes in transportation, advances in technology, and launched agricultural research. The world, in less than thirty years was at the mercy of the owners of Southern Plantations.

Originally, the Plantation Industrial Complex was remote from population centers and by necessity became a self contained enterprise that produced almost everything needed to grow cotton. And, almost every inhabitant in the vicinity of a plantation benefited from its financial success. Slave labor was organized into field hands, servants, and artisans (those trained to repair the equipment used in the process including blacksmiths,

wheelwrights, and animal husbandry for maintaining herds of cattle, horses, mules, and pork) and there was a hierarchy of responsibility to supervise the labor. The slave was central to the systems success and motivated by being provided food, clothing, housing and the whip.

Local laws were adopted to protect the property of the plantation. Slaves could not be whipped without cause, mothers could not be sold away from their siblings, the marriage was to be honored by the master and families remain whole. The law was on the books but not always followed to the letter.

Plantation finances depended upon loans secured mostly through Northern banks and the collateral was the number of productive slaves on the plantation, and the anticipated quality and quantity of the crops. The banking and insurance industry flourished and angry confrontations in the congress of the nation's capital and in the media were constant as the "Age of Reason" caused learned men to challenge the morality of slavery as others defended the economic advantage.

There were other cotton growers around the world but they could not compete with the South's plantation industry and reverted to satisfying their domestic demand rather than attempt to compete in the world market. But, they did not lie dormant forever. After the Civil War, there was no free labor example anywhere in the world that produced the efficiency equal to the Southern Plantation Complex and cotton never reached the productive levels experienced prior to 1860 again.

When the Founding Fathers drafted the Constitution, the Industrial Revolution was an unknown infant and the cotton gin was not invented. But, the sectional rivalry had already manifested itself through the economic policy emanating from Northern representatives and the advantages plantation owners sustained over many southern highland farmers' protests. No one could have anticipated how the 3/5ths rule regarding counting a slave for a

state's representation in the nation's congress was going to play out over the next 60 years.

The United States Constitution compromised on the slavery issue to unite a country. The first Alabama Constitution of 1819 clearly perpetuated slavery because it supported a competitive economic advantage and the advantage was sustained in the Constitution of the Confederacy. The international competitive advantage gained by southern planters over 60 years, longer than most of the men representing their state in the Confederate Congress had been alive, was a birth right, all they knew and their only experience. Secure in their knowledge of the power of "white gold" and grasping for the key that would secure international recognition for the Confederacy, they ransomed "King Cotton" by reducing and refusing to export cotton to Europe. The political decision became one that helped seal the fate of the fledgling democracy. **HHS**

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Arley McCormick is originally from North Missouri. He has a Master's Degree from George Washington University, Washington D.C. in Public Administration and he is a former soldier and consultant. His articles have appeared in the U.S. Army Military Review published at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and the Old Tennessee Valley Magazine and Mercantile Advertiser and he contributed to the Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table's first book "13 Wore Gray and the Rest Blue". He is currently serving on the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table, the Board of Directors of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, and he is a member of the Huntsville-Madison County Alabama Bicentennial Committee. He and his wife, Lynda, a native of New Hope, Alabama, live in the Huntsville, Alabama area.

Dr. James Manning

Madison County Pioneer, Doctor, and Land Speculator

Arley McCormick



Dr. James Manning

It is 2015 and the intersection at Gallatin Street and Lowe Avenue in Huntsville is paved. Even the birds ignore the sounds of the city and the patch of ground on the Northwest corner is sufficiently unimpressive to ignore the idea that a stately home, once the largest in Alabama, dominated the intersection. Looking back 200 years to 1815, Huntsville had grown with the territorial expansion from the Atlantic seaboard to the Mississippi River

and was a center of commerce in North Alabama with two to three hundred people residing in and around the town. People of all descriptions, the landed gentry from the Atlantic coast, adventurers, squatters, men fleeing the law, and, of course, slaves made the town and Madison County home. One diarist records walking all the way from Virginia and never seeing a stone house till arriving in Huntsville. As 1819 approached everyone in the Territory focused on Huntsville as passionate and influential men gathered to write a Constitution in hopes of being accepted into the Union as the State of Alabama.

Why is Dr. James Manning a key character in the early days of the territory and Alabama? And, why is he little more than a footnote to the history of the County? Dr. James Manning, along with many old family names familiar to the residents of Madison County, was a doctor and planter that, unknowingly, played a role in creating the social environment of Antebellum Alabama. There is no indication that he was politically motivated. He is not mentioned as holding a high office in the land. But, if he stopped

his buggy and turned to his wife, Sophie Thompson Manning, and waved his hand toward the rise as he described how he would create a space in the trees and call their new home “The Grove”. It was most likely the product of land speculation and cotton. But his place in history may never have been noticed if not for the Weeden family.



The Grove

Dr. Manning was born in New Jersey in 1775. Prominent families were acquainted with each other during the post colonial period, shared similar social and economic goals, and they were always conscious of insuring a

proper marital match for their sons and daughters. Dr. Manning was most certainly a good match for the daughter of Robert and Sarah Thompson of Virginia. The date of their marriage is not clear but Mr. Thompson, being landed gentry, would certainly have been familiar with the prospects of cotton's future, cheap land in the Southwest Territory, and most likely encouraged Dr. Manning to make the trip west.

Since before the turn of the century the Atlantic coastal states' planters observed Europe's growing demand for cotton and they were committed to converting cotton into a cash crop and influenced the Federal government to make land available in the Southwest Territory. The Federal government was willing to oblige since the sale of land and excise taxes were its principle source of income. But, there were Native Americans to deal with and France. Beginning in 1805 and 1806 the Choctaw and northern Chickasaw and Cherokee Indian concessions opened up land to white settlement but that news was old news to those that had formed companies based upon getting rich quickly by purchasing land cheaply and dividing it into townships and sections and reselling. Martin Beatty was one of the first to buy and others followed including Freeman Jones, William Campbell, G.

Harrison, Henry L. Sheffey, and Benjamin Estill all forming the vanguard of future cotton producers.

By 1809 Georgia and South Carolina led the South in cotton production and coincidentally in the same year the earliest evidence of Manning's land purchase in Madison County and other parts of the future Alabama black belt was recorded. Littleberry Adams with 17 slaves, one of two of the largest slaveholders in 1809 had cleared land and by 1810 placed cotton on keelboats destined down the Tennessee and Ohio Rivers to New Orleans. By 1815 Adams owned 32 slaves and more than 600 acres of land.

The Manning history is sketchy through the early years when jousting politicians and planters were attempting to win support to cut away from the Mississippi Territory and create the Alabama Territory, of course the war of 1812 and fears of Native American uprising dominated political discussions and challenged the growth of the Territory. Yet a steady flow of people came to the Huntsville area and it was incorporated as a town, the first in the state, in 1811.

There may have been an official peace with the Chickasaw and Creek Indians but it was often shattered farther south of the Tennessee River and the farmers along the Alabama and Cootusa Rivers were frequent targets for their grievance. Threats to Huntsville and Madison were common and the legitimate concern caused panic among the residents north of the Tennessee River on a number of occasions. After the Creek Indian War of 1813 and 1814, the Native Americans that had called the Southeast United States home since the 1500's were forced farther west.

By 1811 Alabama was recognized as a cotton producing area. The output was marginal compared to South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee yet by 1820 approximately 11% of the cotton produced in the South came from Alabama. The state produced 30,000 bales of cotton, 10,000 from North Alabama including Madison County. Mr. Thompson had been correct and Dr. Manning was reaping the benefit of his insight.

That special estate Dr. Manning named “The Grove” may have been built beginning in 1815 but more likely later when cotton was clearly the economic driver for the county. It is possible it was inspired by his sons as indications are that Dr. Manning lived near Madison along the Browns Ferry Road.

Dr. Manning and Sophia had five sons Felix, Robert, James, Payton, and William, and a daughter Sara and they generously allocated their holdings to their children. Dr. Manning watched Huntsville become a city, the birth of the Alabama Territory, and Alabama join the Union. They were there when the Native Americans were driven west from their ancestral homes to the Indian Territory in Oklahoma passing Huntsville just a short distance to the north. He read about Texas becoming a Republic then a state, the Mexican War, and all the while his real-estate holdings grew along with the cotton economy. He was an active participant in sustaining and nurturing the economic system that would eventually be destroyed by war. The cotton kingdom reached maturity by 1840, contributing more than 20% of all the cotton produced by the future Confederate States.

Dr. Manning died on May 3, 1841 at his home near Madison. His wife, Sophia lived another seven years dying in 1848 at the age of 66. Dr. Manning may have practiced his vocation in and around the county but it is quite certain that his relationships with the prominent citizens of the territory added to his wealth and guaranteed proper marital matches for his children. Sara, Peyton Manning’s wife, was the daughter of William Weeden, for whom Weeden Mountain on Redstone Arsenal is named and another Weeden daughter, Elizabeth, married William Manning, brother of Peyton and Felix. And, if it were not for a painting hanging in the Weeden House at 300 Gates Avenue, Huntsville, Alabama of Dr. Manning and his wife, details of their life may have remain buried in the aging pages of the Madison County archives without notice; similar to thousands of others that created the Cotton Kingdom and the Antebellum South. **HHS**

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**The Birney Brothers
Of Huntsville, Alabama**
*Raised as unionists and abolitionists,
These brothers took their convictions to war.*

David L. Lady

Although William and David Birney were born in Madison County, both served as United States Army generals during the American Civil War. Older brother William was born in Huntsville in 1819, and David on a plantation outside of Huntsville in 1825.

The boys were the sons of James G. Birney, a rich Kentucky planter, newspaper publisher, and Presidential candidate. James came to Alabama to practice law and to farm. He was very successful and served as mayor of Huntsville from 1829-1830. As he grew into middle age, his evolving religious beliefs caused him to adopt an anti-slavery attitude. James became one of the most notable of Southern abolitionists and he became a southern agent for the American Colonization Society in 1832. Within a year he resigned, disillusioned with the Society's scheme of gradual emancipation based on ideas of racial inferiority. 1833 the family returned to Kentucky where James emancipated their slaves, and then moved to Ohio and Pennsylvania. James' views on emancipation continued to evolve, as he came to espouse first gradual and then immediate emancipation of all slaves in the United States.

Convinced of the importance of united action by all opponents of slavery, he moved to Cincinnati in 1836, and established the newspaper *Philanthropist*, one of the first anti-slavery papers in the Midwest. The growth of Birney's influence in the anti-slavery movement is evident in his correspondence and pamphleteering, as well as in his many public lectures. He resigned as editor of *The Philanthropist* in 1837 and moved to New York to become the corresponding secretary of the American Anti-Slavery Society.

Birney saw the need for a new political party whose sole purpose was to promote the abolition of slavery, and with his leadership, the Liberty Party was founded in 1840. As its presidential candidate in 1840 and 1844, Birney argued that neither the Bible nor the Constitution supported slavery.

Birney retired from public life after the election of 1844, although he continued to write occasional articles for the anti-slavery press. James' beliefs and examples inspired both his sons to become politically active in the Republican Party, which was founded in the 1850s, and espoused several of the anti-slavery policies of the Liberty Party. With the election of Abraham



William Birney (1819 - 1907)

Lincoln to the Presidency and the secession crisis, both William and David entered the Union Army and became the most distinguished of Huntsville's four generals in blue.

WILLIAM BIRNEY

A scholar who enlisted black regiments and led them to battle

Following the family's move north, William was educated at four colleges including Yale, became fluent in thirteen languages, and first worked as a lawyer. Moving to Europe, he was a professor of literature in England and France. William returned to United States in 1853, and worked as newspaper publisher of *The Daily Register* in Pennsylvania.

In 1861 he entered the 1st New Jersey (NJ) Infantry as a Captain, and led his company at the First Battle of Bull Run. He was later appointed to be Major of the 4th NJ Infantry, but quickly became their Colonel, leading the regiment at Chancellorsville. Many suspected that he owed his promotion to political influence for... 'as a combat soldier, he was a fine linguist.'¹

After Chancellorsville, William was reassigned to the Union forces garrisoning Baltimore, Maryland, a loyal slave state. The Union Army encouraged slave owners to free their slaves in order to enlist them into regiments of United States Colored Troops (USCT). When slave holders proved reluctant to release their male slaves in order to enlist, William Birney put his abolitionist beliefs into action by actively recruiting African-Americans, whether enslaved by “loyal” or “secesh” owners. On July 24, 1863, three weeks after the Battle of Gettysburg, he was among the Union officers who freed the inmates of a slave trader's jail on Pratt Street near the Baltimore harbor. They found a grisly scene. The slaves were confined in sweltering cells or in the bricked-in yard of “Cam-liu's slave-pen,” where “*no tree or shrub grows*” and “*the mid-day sun pours down its scorching rays*,”² Birney wrote. Among those imprisoned was a 4-month-old born in the jail and a 24-month-old who had spent all but the first month of his life behind bars. “*In this place I found 26 men, 1 boy, 29 women and 3 infants*,” Col. Birney wrote to his commanding officer. “*Sixteen of the men were shackled and one had his legs chained together by ingeniously contrived locks connected by chains suspended to his waist*.”³ The liberation of the slave jails marked the end of Baltimore's slave trade.

Benefiting from influential friends in the Lincoln administration and the Congress, William Birney was in 1863 appointed Colonel of the 22d United States Colored Troops (USCT), and was soon appointed Brigadier General and made one of three ‘superintendents’ employed in enlisting escaped slaves into Federal regiments; in less than a year he had enlisted seven USCT regiments.

Among these regiments was the Fourth USCT, initially part of the garrison of Baltimore, Maryland. On 20th July, 1863, two companies of the 4th USCT (Companies ‘A’ and ‘B,’ which had been in uniform for only five days), represented the United States Army at a garrison flag presentation ceremony. General Birney

made the presentation speech. The following excerpt indicates his strong feelings for free blacks enlisting in the US Army:

“The flag they present you today, is in token of their loyalty. Their hearts are true. Whoever else may be swayed from duty, the black remains firm. Pluck him from the very core of rebeldom and he is a true man. You may trust him. All his aspirations are for the success of the right, the triumph of the nation. For him the success of traitors is his own degradation, the dishonor of his family, the doom of his race to perpetual infamy.”⁴

In 1864 he led a brigade of USCT to the Department of the South, becoming the commanding general of the Federal District of Florida. Later he and his brigade went with the Tenth Army Corps to Virginia as part of the Army of the James. He led his brigade without much distinction in the battles around Bermuda Hundred and north of the James River during the siege of Petersburg. In December, 1864 his brigade was assigned to the 2d Division of the all-USCT Twenty-Fifth Army Corps and he soon was appointed to command a division. In 1865 General Birney ran afoul of his Corps and later Army Commander, Major General Edward O.C Ord, who considered him a mediocre commander and a poor disciplinarian, and had initially opposed to employing USCT regiments in combat).

William Birney's division was included in the detachment of the Army of the James that was moved south of the Appomattox River by General Ord to strengthen the final assault of Petersburg. Following the fall of Petersburg and Richmond, Ord led these units in pursuit of the Army of Northern Virginia.

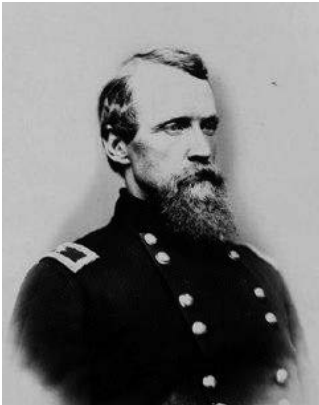
On April 7th, 1865 (two days before Lee's surrender), General Birney was relieved of duty by General Ord and sent to take command of the army depot at City Point, Virginia. Ord stated that he wanted the black units under his best commanders for the

final fight with the Army of Northern Virginia. The two brigades of Birney's former division were each assigned to other Federal divisions and the both fought the next day as part of the battle-line which repulsed the Army of Northern Virginia's final attack of the war at Appomattox Court House. Although General Birney wrote political sponsors protesting the injustice of his relief, no action was taken to restore him to another command. With the end of the war he resigned his volunteer commission and left the military.

William Birney was brevetted Major General in the post-war mass brevet-promotion of deserving officers (Brevets were honorary promotions in recognition of good service, there being no military awards for 'distinguished service' at this time). He resided in Florida and later Washington DC after the war, where he served as a US Attorney for the District of Columbia. Although he remained proud of his service to abolitionism and the Union, and published a very popular biography of his father, he no longer actively supported African-American causes. He died in 1907 at his home in Forest Glen, Maryland.

DAVID BIRNEY

A Political General, but also a Fighter



David Birney (1825-1864)

Younger brother David was educated in Massachusetts and then practiced law in Philadelphia. Like his father he was prominent in the abolitionist movement and the pre-war Republican Party.

In 1861 he raised the 23d Pennsylvania (PA) Infantry Regiment, largely at his own expense. Initially appointed as Lieutenant Colonel, 23d PA, he was promoted to Colonel in August, 1861. Although a non-professional, he was

promoted to Brigadier General in 1862. As a 'political general,' he was much resented within the Army of the Potomac for his support of the Republican Party, the abolitionist movement, and for being critical of Army commander Major General George McClellan. Serving as regimental and later brigade commander with the Army of the Potomac's Third Corps, Birney was befriended by Generals Phil Kearney and Joe Hooker, who were also harsh critics of General McClellan.

Birney's aggressive seeking of political support for promotion made him very unpopular with his fellow officers despite his proven competence. Theodore Lyman, a Federal staff officer, described him in this way:

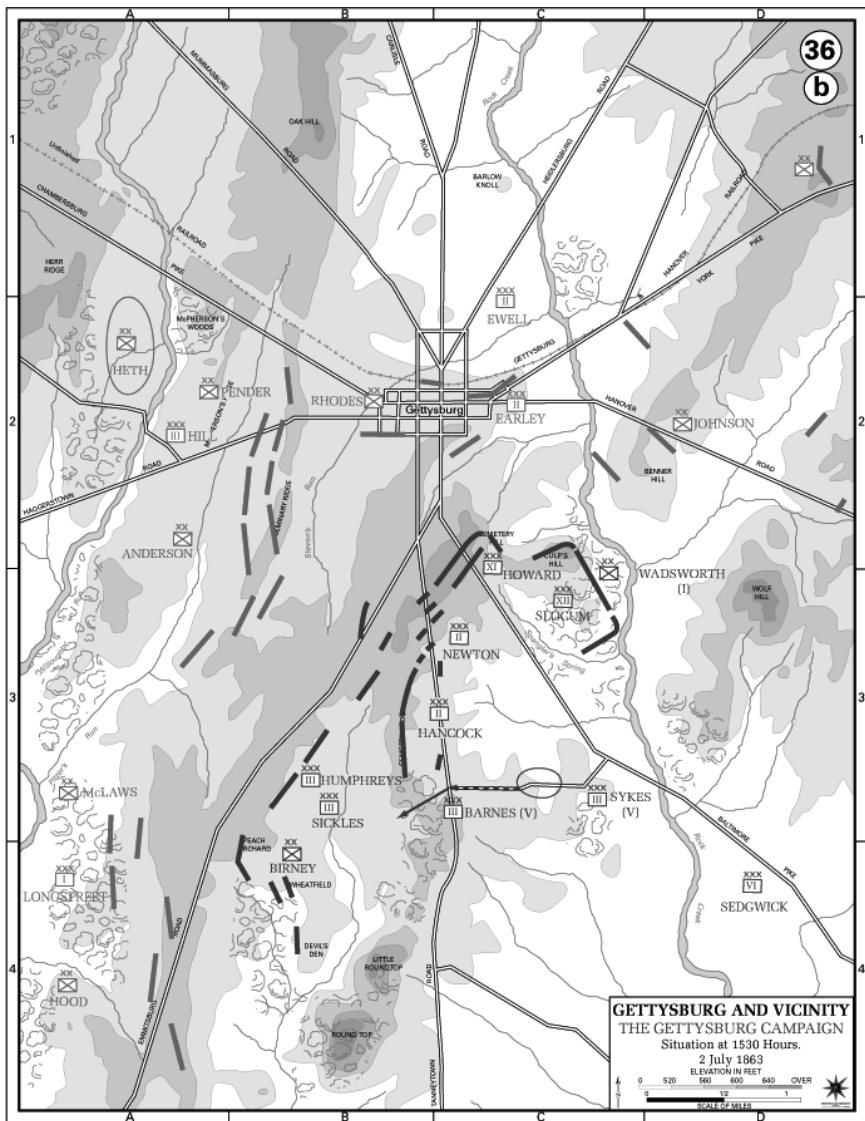
*"He was a pale, Puritanical figure, with a demeanor of unmoveable coldness; only he would smile politely when you spoke to him. He was spare in person, with a thin face, light-blue eyes, and sandy hair. As a General he took very good care of his Staff and saw they got due promotion. He was a man, too, who looked out for his own interests sharply and knew the mainspring of military advancement. His unpopularity among some persons arose partly from his own promotion, which, however he deserved, and partly from his cold covert manner."*⁵

David Birney was noted as a good disciplinarian and trainer of soldiers and as a competent, even brilliant, fighting commander. He was also arrogant and contentious, following his own counsel and disdaining contrary opinions and even lawful orders. Accused by his own corps commander of disobeying orders at The Battle of Fair Oaks, a Court Martial found him 'not guilty' due to testimony of his brigade commander. He was also accused of failing to support MG Meade's assault on Jackson's Second Confederate Army Corps during the Battle of Fredericksburg, but was never charged with dereliction or disobedience.

Birney was promoted to Major General in May, 1863 for displaying fine leadership at Chancellorsville where his division had suffered the heaviest casualties in the Army. He was by now regarded as one of the best of the Federal division commanders, and as the Army of the Potomac marched toward Gettysburg, David Birney was identified as a potential army corps commander should there be casualties among the higher ranking officers.

Major General Birney at Gettysburg:

On the morning of the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg, Major General Dan Sickles, commanding the Federal Third Army Corps, ordered his divisions forward from Cemetery Ridge to occupy the Peach Orchard. General Humphreys' Second Division was formed in line of battle along the Emmitsburg Road, and General Birney was forced to stretch his First Division's line over too much territory in order to occupy the ground between Devil's Den and the Peach Orchard. When General Longstreet's Confederates attacked in the afternoon, Birney had great difficulty defending his position; he had no second line of troops or forces in reserve, and could not launch strong counterattacks or reinforce his line. Late in the day General Sickles was seriously wounded and carried from the battlefield. Birney as senior division commander became the temporary corps commander, but his line of battle was already pierced by the Confederate attack at the Peach Orchard and his men were withdrawing toward Cemetery Ridge. Birney's attempt to reform his men along a line from the Emmitsburg road toward Little Round Top was undone by the rapid advance of Barksdale's Brigade and other Confederate forces, and the entire Third Corps was driven toward Cemetery Ridge, suffering very heavy casualties along the way.



Gettysburg, before the fighting of the second day
(Birney's troops in blue at lower left)

David Birney was himself wounded the afternoon of 2d July, but returned to lead the Third Corps after receiving first aid. He was extremely distraught by the defeat of the Third Corps, stating that he wished that he had been shot and killed like his horse. Later that evening his spirits revived and he reorganized his Corps to support the battle line along Cemetery Ridge. During General Meade's council of war that evening, General Birney was one of the officers who voted to stay on the defensive. His men were placed to help resist Pickett's Charge the next day, but were not called on to engage the Confederates.

In 1864, during General Grant's march toward Richmond, David Birney commanded a division in the Army of the Potomac's Second Corps. He led his men with distinction during the Battles of The Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, and the assaults on Petersburg. In the autumn that year, General Grant appointed him to permanent command of the Tenth Corps of the Army of the James, then serving in the siege works opposite Richmond. This Corps included a division of USCT, for Birney was one of the few senior generals in the Army of the Potomac who did not object to commanding African-Americans in battle. Birney's last fight was an offensive north of the James River, along the Darbytown Road (6-7 October); he led his Tenth Corps from the front although suffering from malaria. By 7 October, General Birney's health collapsed and he became bedridden and delirious. He was rushed by train to his home in Philadelphia in order to convalesce. State elections were occurring at that time, and Birney had himself carried to the polls where he voted a straight Republican ticket. He lingered until October 19th 1864, in his delirium shouting orders and encouraging his men. His last words were "*Keep your eyes on that flag, boys!*"⁶ **HHS**

Footnotes

1. Longacre, Army of Amateurs, pg.198
2. Sloan.
3. Ibid.
4. Schoberlein.
5. Lyman, Meade's Headquarters, pg.266
6. Davis, Life of David Birney, pg. 298

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-*Monuments to their patriotism*, Rob Schoeberlein, Baltimore City Archive blog, July 15, 2013:

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-*A secret history of the slave trade*, Scott Shane, Baltimore Sun, June 20, 1999: http://articles.baltimoresun.com/1999-06-20/topic/9906220293_1_slave-trade-buy-slaves-slaves-were-sold

David Lady is a native of Washington, D. C., and grew-up in northern Virginia during the Civil War Centennial. His branch of the Lady family lived in eastern Tennessee and southwestern Virginia during the Civil War, and ancestors fought on both sides. He completed a 33-year career with the U. S. Army in 2007.

David and his wife Ellen reside in Huntsville. He has published articles and book reviews in historical reviews and Army professional journals, and has led groups of soldiers and civilians on battlefield tours and military 'staff rides' of both eastern and western Civil War battlefields. He is currently serving as secretary for the Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table.

Prelude to the Great War ***No Slackers in Madison County***

Part 1

Jacquelyn Procter Reeves

On June 28, 1914, Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Sophie, were assassinated in Sarajevo. Their murders established a chain of events that would change the world. Six assassins – members of the Bosnian Mlada Bosna nationalist group – planned the attack, but nearly failed when a grenade tossed at the car Ferdinand and Sophie were riding in, missed the mark. The grenade exploded, leaving the archduke unharmed. Others were injured, however, and taken to the nearest hospital. Ferdinand and his wife went to the hospital to express their concerns to the wounded. As they left the hospital, a wrong turn put their car back into the path of an assassin and this time, Gavrilo Princip did not hesitate. He shot Ferdinand in the neck and Sophie in the abdomen. They died soon after. In retaliation, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia one month later and began an invasion. As other countries chose sides, a domino-effect ensued. Other countries were invaded, leading to other declarations of war, and the end result became known as the Great War, the World War, and still later, World War I.

On May 7, 1915, a German U-boat sank the *RMS Lusitania*, a British passenger ship with 128 Americans on board. On behalf of the United States, President Woodrow Wilson promoted a non-intervention policy, but demanded that Germany not attack or interfere with passenger ships. Germany, however, did not heed the international law regarding restricted submarine warfare, even though it meant the U.S. could make good on the threat to declare war.

A message was sent from the German Foreign Minister to Mexico. On behalf of Germany, the foreign minister promised that if Mexico would ally with Germany and take up arms against the United States, Germany would provide financial backing to help Mexico recover the Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona territories. The message was intercepted, however, and President Wilson ordered that it be released to the public. The effect was exactly as the president had intended. American citizens were outraged. There was yet a final straw, German submarines sank seven U.S. merchant ships and the message was clear – Germany would not heed the president’s many warnings.

On April 2, 1917, President Wilson petitioned Congress for a declaration of war. On April 6, the U.S. Congress declared war on Germany. The front page of the *Huntsville Mercury* ran a story entitled “Lane Tells Why We Are in the War Now.” Secretary of War Franklin Lane was asked by reporters why America was obligated to fight the war in Europe.¹

“She is at war to save herself with the rest of the world from the nation that has linked itself with the Turks and adopted the method of Mahomet.”² While the quotation was intended to rally the citizens of the United States, the newspaper article is somewhat confusing. The Secretary of War under President Woodrow Wilson was Newton D. Baker, while Franklin Lane was Secretary of the Interior.

America, and therefore Alabama, was about to go to war. The lucky men of conscription age were those between the ages of 21 and 31. A local newspaper ran a story that boasted, “North Alabama Boys are not Slackers, according to reports.” The story went on to explain that many patriotic Alabamians had enlisted early. They would not wait for a mandatory draft.³

¹ *Huntsville Mercury*, Tuesday, June 17, p. 1.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Huntsville Mercury*, Monday, May 7, 1917, p. 1.

The Selective Service Act was passed on May 18, 1917. It allowed the President to temporarily increase the size of the military for the duration of the war. The Selective Service System was tasked with choosing the men who would be inducted and ensure they would be transported to the appropriate training camps.⁴

One problem that had not been anticipated was that American manufacturers did not yet have enough khaki cloth to create the uniforms that were needed. “The first ten thousand may have to drill as in the days of ’76,” the newspaper reported.⁵ Dye used for transforming white cloth had almost universally come from Germany before the war. American soldiers had worn khaki uniforms in the Spanish-American War and decided to continue to do so. British soldiers learned that khaki colored uniforms made them less conspicuous (in contrast with their red uniforms worn in the American Revolution) and smokeless gunpowder was less messy on their uniforms. More importantly, smokeless powder did not immediately give their location away to the enemy.

The war would affect more than the obvious. A prediction was made by a woman from Denver. She said that the long war would allow women to “rid themselves of dangerous troublesome skirts.” Women, she said, would soon be wearing pants!⁶ While her prediction didn’t come to pass immediately, the style of women’s dresses was greatly influenced by military uniforms.

National Registration Day was set for June 5, 1917. All men of conscription age, including those in prisons, were required to register. Patriotic speeches and the singing of “America The Beautiful” at the Madison County courthouse would inspire young men who could register at the courthouse or at their voting precinct. Two local brothers, Stanley McKee and Gus McKee had

⁴ <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/ww1/draft-registration/>

⁵ *Huntsville Mercury*, Monday, May 7, 1917, p. 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*

already enlisted.⁷ Gus was reported to be on his way to France after he had qualified as an “aeroplane” machinist.⁸

The McKee brothers weren’t the only Huntsville men anxious to get into the fray. The *Huntsville Mercury* printed the names of the first to enlist as reserve officers. Among them were W. H. Blanton, Homer T. Baker, Edward Betts,⁹ Harry and Charles Landman, Walter Wellman, and Reavis O’Neal.¹⁰ These men would receive \$100 per month and be sent to Chattanooga to train. It was expected that 1/3 of those men who enlisted would be rejected during the first examination based on mental or physical disabilities.

Those who intentionally refused to register for the draft could face prison time – six to twelve months in prison. In addition, their names would appear in the newspaper, identified as slackers.¹¹

There was no shortage of encouragement for young men to remember to register on June 5. As the day grew closer, other events were lined up to generate enthusiasm among the local citizens. It was also dubbed Red Cross Day and local housekeepers were reminded to donate jars of home-grown fruits and vegetables to be sold for the war cause. Tents were to be set up at the Madison

⁷ *Huntsville Mercury*, Tuesday, May 29, 1917, p. 1.

⁸ Gus McKee is listed in the 1910 census as a wallpaper hanger, living with his parents, James and Vennie McKee on Meridian Street. He is listed in the 1920 census as a garage mechanic (Ancestry.com). No information can be found on Stanley McKee. It is not known if he survived the war.

⁹ Edward Chambers Betts wrote one of our most important history books while he was only 18 years old: “Early History of Huntsville, Alabama, 1804 to 1870.” In WWII, he served as Judge Advocate General, reporting to General Dwight D. Eisenhower. He organized the war trials at Nuremburg, but died unexpectedly in Frankfurt, Germany of a heart attack on May 6, 1946, before the trials were concluded. He was inducted into the Alabama Men’s Hall of Fame in 1997.

¹⁰ *Huntsville Mercury*, Friday, May 11, 1917, p. 1.

¹¹ *Huntsville Mercury*, Tuesday, May 29, 1917, p. 1.

County courthouse and there was a promise that “attractive young girls” would serve lemonade and sandwiches.¹²

On Tuesday, June 5, young men from all over the country took their place in line. Registration Day came and went and it was pronounced a success. It was reported that more than 10,000,000 men registered, and in American cities where there were large foreign populations, the turnout was especially heavy for those who were foreign-born or first generation Americans.¹³ In Madison County alone, there were 4,275 registrants; 1,545 were Negro, 2,730 were white.

On a Navajo reservation in Arizona, American patriotism was nowhere to be found. The officials sent to oversee the registration process were forcibly removed from the reservation.¹⁴ On the other end of the spectrum, a large number of men and boys, too young or too old, tried to sign up in other cities by lying about their ages.

As the American Doughboys (“Sammies” as they were called by Europeans as a nod to our symbol of patriotism, Uncle Sam), prepared to fight for the cause, Germany’s leaders were beginning to worry. On the one hand, they felt our men couldn’t possibly be ready to fight in any reasonable amount of time, however they hoped to wrap up the war before American ships began to arrive, just in case.

Seemingly small details were having a huge impact in the strangest places. Captain Balhurst, the assistant to the British food controller was quoted as saying, “Bread, not bullets may decide conflict. War bread is almost a complete human food and when combined with butter or margarine, it is a complete human food. That cannot be said of anaemic loaf with which we were all too familiar in the pre-war days.” He went on to ask that all ingredients used to produce beer go to make bread for our soldiers.¹⁵

¹² Ibid.

¹³ *Huntsville Mercury*, Wednesday, June 6, 1917, p. 1.

¹⁴ *Huntsville Mercury*, Sunday, June 17, 1917, p. 1.

¹⁵ *Huntsville Mercury*, Monday, May 21, 1917, p. 1.

The cost of food soared in Germany as more food was needed to feed the army.¹⁶ Americans felt the pinch too. The price of bread doubled as wheat became scarce and U.S. citizens were asked to have one “wheatless” meal per day.¹⁷ While the article encouraged housewives to use a substitute for wheat, no suggestions were made.

The *Huntsville Mercury* listed names of financial donors – individuals and companies who supported the Doughboys. It served the war effort well. Other companies boasted that they also had workers who had enlisted to fight, and public bragging served as excellent advertising for those companies. Lists of donors and volunteers soon filled the papers. Other lists would be printed as well, according to the *Mercury*. “Slackers” who had not registered as required, would have their names published on “roll of infamy.”¹⁸

Also listed were the national draft numbers as they were drawn.¹⁹ Madison County was required to send 410 men in the first round of draftees. The first five Madison County men whose numbers were drawn were: Henry McGee, Eddie Suggs, Charlie Bible, Milton Herd, and Shelly Alexander.

Still, there were items for the society page in addition to world and local news in the newspaper. One story suggested a resolution to the problem of speeders. If the speedometer on a racing automobile reached 15 miles per hour, a white bulb would light up on the radiator. If the car reached 25 miles per hour, a green bulb would light up. At 40 miles per hour, a red bulb would light, but if

¹⁶ *Huntsville Mercury*, Monday, July 30, 1917, p. 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2.

¹⁸ Pruitt, Rancee', *Eden of the South A Chronology of Huntsville, Alabama 1805-2005*, Huntsville, Alabama: Huntsville-Madison County Public Library, 2005, p. 135.

¹⁹ *Huntsville Mercury*, Monday, July 30, 1917, p. 1.

it went to 50 miles per hour, a music box underneath the driver's seat would begin to play, "Nearer My God to Thee."²⁰

An advertisement that frequently appeared read, "Wanted Old False Teeth don't matter if broken, I pay 2 - \$15 per full set. Single and partial plates in proportion. Send by parcel post and receive check by return mail. F. Terl, 403 N. Wolfe Street, Baltimore, Maryland." Apparently, punctuation was casual and typographical errors were not uncommon.²¹

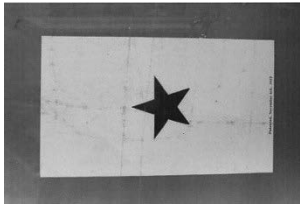
One prominent and important American from this period had spent some time in Huntsville. John "Black Jack" Pershing was a captain with the 9th and 10th Cavalry, known as the Buffalo Soldiers, during the Spanish-American War. After the war, fought in Cuba in 1898, thousands of American soldiers came to Huntsville to recover from the effects of malaria. Major John Pershing – his rank at the time – temporarily resided in a house in the Twickenham Historic District while he was here.

Pershing's military career continued after leaving Huntsville. He was sent to Ft. Bliss, Texas after an assignment at the Presidio in San Francisco. His wife and four children were in the process of leaving San Francisco to join him at Ft. Bliss when a fire in their home claimed the lives of his wife and three daughters. Only his son survived.

In 1916, only a few months after the tragedy, he led forces (which included men from Alabama) into Mexico in pursuit of Pancho Villa and his army after Villa's attack on Columbus, New Mexico. Villa had successfully escaped, only to be assassinated a few years later. Major General John Pershing and his men were called back into the U.S. to prepare for the U.S. involvement in World War I. Pershing was promoted to full general and President Woodrow Wilson named him Commander of the American Expeditionary Force.

²⁰ *Huntsville Mercury*, Monday, May 7, 1917, p. 1.

²¹ *Huntsville Mercury*, Sunday, May 27, 1917, p. 1.



The flag with one star represents one family member in the service. This particular flag, presented to Nannie Hundley on behalf of her son, was discovered folded and wrapped around a handful of Confederate money inside a trunk in the Hundley home in Greenbrier, Alabama (Private collection of Jacquelyn P. Reeves.)

Nationally, over 4,000,000 men became soldiers and over 2,000,000 were sent to France for combat. In Alabama, about 74,000 men were inducted. The 4th Infantry of the Alabama National Guard was swallowed up into the 167th United States Infantry which became part of the 42nd “Rainbow Division.” Major Douglas MacArthur suggested that a division be formed from units taken from several states, which included 26 states and the District of Columbia, and that the group would “stretch over the whole country like a rainbow.”²²

Camp Sheridan was established three miles north of Montgomery. It served as the temporary home of the 37th Division from Ohio, as well as the troops of the 4th Alabama Infantry. While a young lieutenant by the name of F. Scott Fitzgerald was stationed at Camp Sheridan, he met the daughter of an Alabama Supreme Court Justice, Zelda Sayre, who would eventually become his wife.²³

From Camp Sheridan, the young men of Alabama were sent to Camp Mills, New Jersey to join the rest of the 42nd Division.

²² [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/42nd_Infantry_Division_\(United_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/42nd_Infantry_Division_(United_States))

²³ Rogers, William Warren; Ward, Robert David; Atkins, Leah Rawls; Flynt, Wayne, *Alabama The History of a deep South State*, Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1994, p. 404, 405.

William Hundley, a resident of North Alabama, wrote a letter to his mother, Nannie Donnell Hundley before he shipped out.

“I will keep sober in all of my journey, and in the end, I will be a better man in every respect.”²⁴ From there, the next stop was France. **HHS**



**William M. Hundley,
Jr. private collection
Jacquelyn P. Reeves**

Next issue, Part II – The Enemies: Germany and La Grippa

Jacquelyn Procter Reeves is a native of Las Vegas, New Mexico, and a graduate of New Mexico Highlands University. She is the editor of North Alabama's Valley Leaves and associate editor of Old Tennessee Valley Magazine in Decatur. Jacque is the curator of the historic Donnell House in Athens and owner of Avalon Tours in Huntsville. She conducts ghost walks, cemetery tours and historic tours and has served on Huntsville's Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll committee for some fourteen years. She teaches history to students all over the United States via distance learning through Early Works Museum in Huntsville. In her spare time, she has written scores of short stories and nine book and has served as contributing writer to many others. Jacque lives in Huntsville.

²⁴ Gray, Jacquelyn Procter, *A Dry Dusty Wind*, United States: 1st Books Library, 2003, p. 188-189.

Historical Research in Madison, Morgan, and Limestone Counties

Susanna Leberman & Samuel Gibby

Research opportunities for historical scholarship, public history, memory, and cultural heritage have become more advanced and resources are now more readily available. However, researchers need to know where to go to get the necessary information for their research. Researchers working in the North-central Alabama counties of Madison, Morgan, and Limestone might find this resource checklist of particular help. The criteria for the list of resources is based on five basic ways the general public can learn about history and access historical records that support scholarship, genealogy, and cultural heritage. These ways include archive rooms, artifacts and memorabilia, academic resources, public history events and exhibits, and other miscellaneous educational and online resources.

❖ **Madison County**

- ***The Huntsville-Madison County Public Library***

The third floor of the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library is one of the best places for researchers to study history. In addition to being the home to the Library Special Collections department, the building also houses the Madison County Records center and Tax Accessor's archives.

RESOURCES:

- Archive Room (contains over 25, 000 photos, books, and documents)
- Special collections floor (national genealogy resources, newspapers, books, databases including ancestry.com, archive and genealogy classes,

assorted year books, city directories 1859-present, cemetery records, local memorabilia and rotating public history exhibits in Partnership with Calhoun-ex: Elvis at Von Braun Center, Alabama and the Presidency)

- African American resources (includes African American genealogy classes, slave schedules, scrapbooks, sheet music, letters, poetry and art, microfilmed African American newspapers and freedman's bureau records.
- Native American Genealogy classes, books, Trail of Tears information, Dawes rolls, artifacts
- Madison County Record Center (extensive website <http://madisoncountyal.gov/mcrc/>) includes Probate Court Records: Orphan's Court (pre-Probate Court), wills, administrations, guardianships, adoptions (may or may not be sealed record, depending on year), marriages, deeds, mortgages, cotton mill affidavits, Commissioner's Court Records, maps, etc. (1809 – 1968) Circuit Court Records: Chancery Court (pre-Circuit Court), divorces, civil suits, criminal cases
- Madison County Tax Assessors Archives (early land records, property tax records, and maps)
- HMCPL Digital Archive-- digitalarchives.hmcpl.org-- (including thousands of photographs and documents)

Contact and URL:

915 Monroe St SW
Huntsville, AL 35801
(256) 532-5940
Library Main Website: hmcpl.org
Digital Archive: digitalarchives.hmcpl.org

- ***University of Alabama in Huntsville Salmon Library***

The Special Collections held at M. Louis Salmon Library at the University of Alabama in Huntsville house theses and dissertations produced within the University. It also houses research reports produced within the University, and preserves the history and development of the space program.

RESOURCES:

- Documentation of Saturn V rocket history and the Skylab collection
- Bob Jones collection, papers of the former Congressman who represented North Alabama's fifth Congressional District for thirty years (1947-1976)
- German scientist papers
- Oral History Interviews and Video recordings
- Francis Roberts's papers
- Harvey Jones Collection
- Academic books (physical and online)
- Online journals and periodicals

Contact and URL:

4700 Holmes Ave.,
Huntsville, AL 35899
(256) 824-6530

Library Website: www.uah.edu/library

UAH Archives and Special Collections Libguide:
libguides.uah.edu/archives

- ***Alabama A&M J. F. Drake Memorial Learning Resources Center Library***

Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University received the designation as a land grant institution. It was the first black school in Alabama to receive funds from the Second Morrill Act of 1890 in August 1891. In 1904, the Carnegie Library was constructed on "Normal's Hill" under the leadership of Alabama A&M's first principal and president, Dr. William Hooper Council. In 1968, the Joseph F. Drake Memorial Library was built.

RESOURCES:

- Archive Room (strong emphasis on African American studies and historically black colleges)
- Yearbooks
- Campus Queens
- William Hooper Council and past University history
- Historically Black Leaders research
- State Black Archives (located on campus and includes research and memorabilia concerning Buffalo Soldiers)
- Academic books (physical and online)

Contact and URL:

4900 Meridian St
Huntsville, AL 35811
(256) 372-5000

Library
Website: alabamam.sdp.sirsi.net/client/default
State Black Archives
Website: stateblackarchives.wix.com/sbarcm

- ***Oakwood University Eva B. Dykes Library***

The Oakwood University Archives is the repository for the historical records of Oakwood University, African-American Seventh-day Adventists, alumni, faculty, and administrators.

RESOURCES:

- The Clara Peterson-Rock Museum (visual history of Oakwood University in context of American History and Adventist history)
- Emphasis on African American studies and religion
- Year books
- Oakwood College Bullins

Contact AND URL:

7000 Adventist Blvd NW
Huntsville, AL 35896
(256) 726-7000
Oakwood University Digital Collections:
archive.org/details/oakwooduniversity

Archives Libguide:
libguides.oakwood.edu/c.php?g=260563&p=1740676

- ***Huntsville History Collection***

The Huntsville History Collection is an internet portal that provides information about the history and historic architecture of Huntsville and Madison County. This large website includes interactive mapping. It also features the Huntsville Historical Review and Quarterly in full text and by subject in a Wikipedia-styled format.

RESOURCES:

- It includes the Huntsville Historical Review Quarterly, with a search engine that focuses on the subjects and authors.
- The Southpaw Postcard Collection- this is a private collection of 500 Madison County and Huntsville postcards. The subjects of the postcards include homes, scenes of buildings, streets, Marshall Space Flight Center, Big Spring, Monte Sano, etc.
- Glimpses of Old Huntsville – This is a series of audio recordings by local historian, author, and storyteller Nancy Rohr. She narrates the accounts of life in early Huntsville, the residents of the city's historic homes, and tells stories about the local heroines of the Civil War.
- Madison Memories Collection – This is an extensive collection of memorabilia by John P. Rankin, who researched Madison County's history for 20 years. The collection includes:
 - Cemeteries of Redstone Arsenal - These are reports that document the 50 cemeteries residing on Redstone Arsenal.

- Oral History Series – This is a series of oral histories from Madison County residents from 2004 to 2006.
- Pioneer Family Folders – This is John Rankin’s research papers concerning the Madison pioneer family, which is organized by family in a series of online directories.
- Vintage Vignettes – Originally published in ‘The Huntsville Times’, they are a series of short stories by John Rankin that discuss the history and the people of Madison and Madison County.

Contact and URL:

huntsvillehistorycollection.org

Email the Webmaster:

webmaster@huntsvillehistorycollection.org

- ***Calhoun Community College’s Center for Southern Political History***

Calhoun Community College’s Center for Southern Political History preserves political literature, and partners with the Huntsville Public Library on public history displays. It also promotes public debates on current political issues. It not only encourages political involvements in all levels of the government, but it also provides researchers a room to read current periodicals. The Center also promotes the importance of history, political science and social science disciplines.

RESOURCES:

- Political Memorabilia (both locally and nationwide) (buttons, signatures, political papers, etc.)
- The Senator Tom Butler Archive collection

- Document Exchange
- The Representative Sue Schmitz Political Arts Collection
- Photographs

Contact and URL:

Cummings Research Park Campus
102 Wynn Dr.
Huntsville, AL 35805
(256) 890-4737

Website: calhoun.edu/about-calhoun/center-for-the-study-of-southern-political-culture

- Local Museums and Helpful Links

These are the local museums and helpful links that help demonstrate Huntsville's public history programs. These places are helpful to researchers who are studying a particular subject in North-central Alabama counties' history. These helpful resources include:

- *Burritt on the Mountain* (historical mansion, living history park, authentic pioneer cabins) 3101 Burritt Dr SE, Huntsville, AL 35801 (256) 536-2882 (<http://www.burrittonthemountain.com/>)
- *Early Works* (Huntsville Depot, Constitution Village) 404 Madison St SE, Huntsville, AL 35801 (256) 564-8100 (<http://www.earlyworks.com/>)
- *Space and Rocket Center* Davidson Center, Huntsville, AL 35805 (256) 837-3400 1-800-637-7223 (<http://rocketcenter.com/>)
- *U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum* (extensive war library and memorabilia including WWII tank and small encryption machine) 2060 Airport Rd SW,

Huntsville, AL 35801 256 883-3737
(<http://www.memorialmuseum.org/>)

- *Weeden House Museum* (African American art, poetry, and antique furniture) 300 Gates Ave SE, Huntsville, AL 35801 256 536-7718 (<https://weedenhousemuseum.com/>)
- *Huntsville History Tour* (Online resource, walking tour, and Web App) 500 Church Street NW, Suite One Huntsville, AL 35801 800-Space-4-U (256-772-2348) (<http://huntsvillehistorytours.org/>)

- ***NASA Marshall Space Flight Center***

This is the historic center where the development of the Space Launch System takes place. This place also has ties to the Redstone Arsenal.

RESOURCES:

- Exhibits and Memorabilia
- Archives
- Online Timeline

Contact and URL:

Redstone Arsenal
Huntsville, AL 35812
256-544-6840

Websites:

<http://www.nasa.gov/centers/marshall/home/>
<http://history.msfc.nasa.gov/>

- ***Huntsvilleal.gov***

This is a website for Huntsville City's, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Interactive Services

department. This index provides links and details to historical resources and demographics for Huntsville, AL.

RESOURCES:

- Historical Markers
- Interactive Maps
- Maple Hill Cemetery Burial Locater
- City Greenways
- A Link to Request Property Addresses for Variance
- Brick Locaters

Contact and URL:

308 Fountain Circle
Huntsville AL 35802
256 427-5100

Website: <http://www.huntsvilleal.gov/gis/index.php>
Direct link to Atlas of Huntsville/Madison County:
<http://www.huntsvilleal.gov/gis/atlas/atlas.htm>

❖ **Morgan County**

• *Morgan County Archives*

Created by the Morgan County Commission in 1995, this Archive is located in a historic bank in downtown Decatur. The Archive is the official repository for local county government records and also contains exhibits and public access computers for genealogy and research.

RESOURCES:

- Genealogy classes
- Database access (ancestry.com)
- Memorabilia/Artifacts

- County government records
- Photographs and postcards
- Rotating exhibits
- Located in a historic building

Contact and URL:

624 Bank Street N.E.
Decatur, AL 35601
(256) 351-4726

Website: www.co.morgan.al.us/archivesindex.html

• ***The Blue & Gray Museum of North Alabama***

For those interested in Civil War studies, The Blue & Gray Museum of North Alabama is a large privately owned collection of Civil War artifacts. Robert Parham, the owner of the collection, organized, displayed, and opened this collection to public viewing in the museum.

RESOURCES:

- Privately owned Civil War museum
- Artifacts (weapons, uniforms, etc.)
- Memorabilia (coins, buttons, drums)
- Small models

Contact and URL:

723 Bank St.
Decatur, AL
256-350-4018

Website: <http://www.alabamacivilwarmuseum.com>

❖ Limestone County

• *Limestone County Archives*

In 1980, the Limestone County Commission established The Limestone County Department of History and Archives. In 2004, the commission purchased the 1905 L&N Depot and redesigned it in order to house the Limestone County Department of History and Archives. This building is the biggest resource for Limestone county records produced by the Circuit Court, Board of Education, County Commission, Probate Court, Revenue Commission, and Board or Registrars. The archives also contain periodicals, family histories, family photographs, and microfilmed newspapers.

RESOURCES:

- Historic Depot Building
- Photographs and Memorabilia
- Limestone County death records
- Historic funeral programs
- Deeds, Wills, Marriages
- Court cases
- Tax blanks
- Plat books
- Voter registrations

Contact and URL:

102 W Washington St,

Athens, AL. 35611

Website: <http://limestonearchives.com/>

• *Limestone County Historical Society*

This is a website that promotes Limestone County's local history by printing and distributing educational materials. They also promote locating, marking, and preserving historical sites and records. This website is a great resource

for the public to learn about Limestone county's public history events and tourism.

RESOURCES:

- Public History events
- Promote Limestone County Archives
- Website provides links to other museums

Contact and URL:

Limestone County Historical Society
P.O. Box 82
Athens, AL 35612

Website:

<http://www.limestonecountyhistoricalsociety.org/>

❖ Additional Statewide Resources

● AlabamaMosaic

AlabamaMosaic is the statewide digital repository focusing on history, culture, places, and people. This virtual library draws from Alabama's archives, libraries, museums, and other repositories electronically accessible. With over 100,000 digital objects and 34 member institutions, AlabamaMosaic is a comprehensive way to research University Archives and other types of a public memory keeping organizations.

RESOURCES:

- Photos Postcards
- Letters and Diaries
- Oral histories
- Newspapers
- Yearbooks and Scrapbooks
- Sheet Music
- Maps

- College records
- Census records
- Church records
- Government records
- Funeral programs

Contact and URL:

alabamamosaic.org

- The Alabama Department of Archives and History
(<http://www.archives.alabama.gov/>).

The Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) is a central institution connecting all things Alabama history. The ADAH mission statement: "We tell the story of the people of Alabama by preserving records and artifacts of historical value and promoting a better understanding of Alabama history." Housed in a beautiful historic building in downtown Montgomery, across from the capital, it is also the home to the Alabama Museum. The website offers links and recordings of historical presentations, as well as online indexes, records, and other high demand materials available at ADAH. **HHS**

RESOURCES:

- Local government/County records on microfilm
- Civil War Soldiers database
- Military Records
- Newspapers on microfilm
- Digital Collections
- Vertical Files
- Newspapers not on microfilm
- 1867 Voter Registration database

- Alabama City Directories
- Maps
- World War I Goldstar database
- Alabama Church and Synagogue Records Collection
- Governors' Executive Orders database
- Reading and Research Room
- Online Research Request forms

Contact and URL:

P.O. Box 300100 / 624 Washington Ave.
Montgomery, AL 36130
(334) 242-4435
Website: archives.alabama.gov

Susanna Leberman is the Archivist at the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library, where she is responsible for maintaining the archival collection, creating digital collections, writing grants, assisting patrons with research projects, and giving public history presentations and performances. Susanna has an M.A. in History from the University of Alabama-Huntsville.

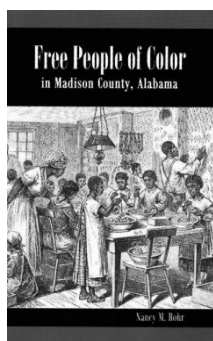
Samuel Gibby works with the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library archive, he handles tasks such as creating digital collections, maintaining archival collections, and assisting the archivists in their public history presentations. Samuel has a Bachelor's Degree in History from the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Book Review

Free People of Color in Madison County, AL

by Nancy Rohr

Reviewed by the Editor



Was it purgatory on earth? Freedmen were neither slave nor equal in the community? Nancy Rohr has documented, through the available records of Alabama and the county, and presented snippets of the life and the time Free African Americans coped in Southern society before and during the Civil War. It is not a novel but for those interested in the social environment of the Old South there are ample storylines to tingle the imagination and reflect on the impact of a deliberately segregated society on a single segment of its population. She outlines the patriotic justification that secured freedom for some slaves, freedom as the reward for loyalty to the master, and other legal methods for slaves to join a free society. The short descriptions of individuals whose legal documents illustrate the struggle freed slaves endured to support themselves and their families in a community that, at best, was ambivalent and, at worst, accusatory and violent. And, the primary focus is the Madison County Community. She illustrates the civil changes that affected the lives of all citizens and presents findings in records where returning to bondage was a better alternative to freedom for some. It is a documentary illustrating the struggle for equality in a society where the African American is seen but seldom noticed until the fear of insurrection surfaces. Ms. Rohr's essay is supported by the census of 1830 – 1860; The Black Huntsville census of 1865; and material found in the Alabama State Assembly (legislature) and Madison County court records. It is a must for the library of anyone interested in the Old South society.

The Huntsville Historical Review Editorial Policy

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

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

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

Manuscript Preparation and Submission

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

Huntsville-Madison County
Historical Society
Box 666

Huntsville, Alabama 35804

Review Content and Style

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

Book Review

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

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

News and Notes Submissions

Please keep your submissions limited to 500 words or less and please include contact information if you are making an inquiry or asking a question. The editor has the right to change or delete wording or information.

Little Reminders . . . Good Writing Rules

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

Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society Board of Directors 2015

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- Gary Wicks,
- Bob Adams,
- Jim Lee,
- Jacque Reeves



Front Row Left to Right: John Allen, Wayne Smith, Sharon Lang, Arley McCormick, Jacque Reeves, Gary Wicks, Carol Codori
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