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The Huntsville Historical Review

Spring 2017 - Summer 2017

Volume 42

Number 1

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President's Letter

Huntsville Historical REVIEW

Spring 2017

Our Society charter dictates that we collect, preserve, record, and promote the area's history; and our *Historical Review* editor, Arley McCormick, is certainly holding up his end of the bargain. This semi-annual repository of what happened during six different windows of time in Huntsville's and Madison County's past is hereby consigned to the ages. And it is appropriate that one of the articles begins a series on our local boys who served in The Great War, later renamed WWI, which the USA entered 100-years-ago on April 6, 1917.

The Bicentennial Review, Vol. 1, will soon go to press. It contains the best-of-the-best articles from previous Historical Reviews, with particular attention to subjects relative to the Alabama Bicentennial (territory in 1817 and statehood in 1819). Volumes II and III will follow during the next two years. My thanks to Arley McCormick and Jacque Reeves, who spearheaded this project. Jacque Reeves is the editor for this project. This is a value-added benefit to all HMCHS members; it won't be free, but you will get a discount. It should be out this summer.

The Society officially kicked off its Alabama Bicentennial effort on March 22 when State Sen. Arthur Orr addressed a packed-house luncheon at the Huntsville Country Club. The occasion was the HMCHS's first-ever awards ceremony to honor noteworthy historians. Sen. Orr updated the assembled historians on the state's

Bicentennial efforts up thru 2019. Orr was introduced by Huntsville's Mayor Tommy Battle.

There were two recipients of the Raneé Pruitt Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation:

- Nancy Rohr – is the author or editor of four books and ten articles on local history. She is also a prolific researcher and lecturer. She and John Rankin have worked together to preserve old records in various repositories that are deteriorating.
- John Rankin – has been a member of the book committees for development of county heritage books about Madison, Morgan, Marshall, Lawrence, and Limestone counties of north Alabama. And for the last 15 years he has been digitizing the historical records in the Tax Assessor's archive, the Probate Office's Madison County Records Center, and lately concentrating upon the Dr. Frances Roberts historical papers

Certificates of Appreciation from the Society went to:

- Joyce Markwardt Smith – for her dedicated service to the Society for 56 years, from 1961 to present, including serving as president on two different occasions, plus serving as president of the Alabama Historical Association in 1999.
- Alex Luttrell – for his 20 years of dedicated service to the Society as chairman of the Historical Marker

Committee, erecting 43 new markers and repair or refurbishment of 48 markers.

- Certificates were also awarded by the Descendents of Washington's Army at Valley Forge (Jim Maples), the William Hooper Councill Alumni Association (Richard Crimes and Laura Clift), and the Hartselle Historical Society (David Burleson). Congratulations to all.

For the first time in the Society's 66-year history, it now has a supportive relationship with all area schools. As of late March, every social studies and history teacher in this area should have received a 5x8 information card about HOPE, or History Outreach Program for Educators. The card explains how teachers can now go to a single website for digitized local history resources, including music, photographs, oral histories, books, videos, journals, places, archives, contests, and more--all ideally suited for embellishing lesson plans for the three-year Bicentennial. Huge thanks go to the HOPE committee of Deane Dayton, Kelly Hamlin, & Arley McCormick.

The HMCHS Marker Committee has reviewed a plan for participating in the Bicentennial. At the top of the list was the re-erection (following refurbishment) of two markers: John Williams Walker Home Site and City of Huntsville. Both of these markers have direct ties to early statehood. Discussions are underway for additional new markers to celebrate the Bicentennial.

Marker refurbishment continues to be a major thrust, as well. Restoration Huntsville completed the refurbishment of three additional markers: St. Mary's Church of the Visitation, Buckhorn Tavern, and Town of Gurley. Each of these markers was re-

erected in late 2016. The company is now working on four additional markers: First Presbyterian Church, Town of New Market, General John Hunt Morgan, and Harrison Brothers Hardware. Big thanks to Alex Luttrell.

Finally, remember that everything about us today is a consequence of our history. And please, please consider immortalizing yourself by becoming a *Review* author.

John Allen, president

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A Technical Perspective of Greater Huntsville's First 150 Years

By Raymond C. Watson, Jr.

A book, *Huntsville's Technological Evolution* (Trafford 2015) by the author of this article, provides a technical history of Greater Huntsville from 1800 to the present. While the primary intent in preparing the book was to document detailed coupling of technical activities throughout the years, the first two chapters are more of a general history nature. This article abbreviates the information of these chapters, perhaps making it of interest to a broader readership.

The article is in two Parts covering 1800-1890 and 1890-1950; Part I also has information on the native Indian land. Several notes are included, indicating technological advancements as of the present time. Sources and references, if desired, may be found in the parent book.

The Fall/Winter Issue of the Review; Volume 41 Number 1 addressed the origins and maturing of the technical advances in the Greater Huntsville area through the Spanish American War. This issue Mr. Watson tells the rest of the story.

PART II – MANUFACTURING ERA

This Part is composed of two periods: textile manufacturing and munitions manufacturing. In the 40-years from the start of the 1890s into the 1930s, Huntsville was a city with its economy almost completely dependent upon cotton manufacturing – mills that turned cotton lint into cotton thread and goods. With the start of the Great Depression, textile manufacturing entered a major decline, but started to recover as the nation prepared for another

war. Going into the 1940s, there was a rapid and drastic change to manufacturing chemical munitions; this essentially stopped with the ending of WWII in 1945.

TEXTILE PERIOD

Cotton mills – spinning thread and cloth from ginned cotton – came to America in Massachusetts during 1814. Cabannes, noted earlier, added a spinning mill at his Barren Fork gin site in 1819; it gradually expanded and was renamed the Bell Factory in 1832. This is considered the first full cotton mill in Alabama; powered by water, it had 2,323 spindles and 52 looms. However, it closed before the area became highly involved in textile manufacturing.

Textile Manufacturing

From medieval times, homes had spinning wheels where wool, cotton, flax, and silk fibers were spun into spools of yarn; a loom was then used in weaving the yarn into fabric. In 1673, the flying shuttle was invented in Great Britain, leading to automated weaving looms. The next year, a multi-spool spinning frame was invented, making it possible to simultaneously produce many spools of yarn. These inventions were quickly incorporated into large cotton mills concentrated in Manchester, England.

The textile manufacturing technologies were closely held in Great Britain. Nevertheless, Francis Cabot Lowell, visited the Manchester cotton mills and brought to America details of the equipment and operations. Opened in 1814, the Boston Manufacturing Company at Waltham, Massachusetts, was the first in the Nation in which all operations for converting cotton lint into finished cloth could be performed in one building. The firm also manufactured and sold spinning and weaving equipment for use in other mills.

Prior to 1890, little attention was given to the manufacturing of cotton fabric in the Southern states. The first cotton mill in Alabama – the Bell Factory – started operating near Huntsville in 1832; it initially used slave labor and was unable to adjust to post-war labor conditions, finally closing in 1885. At about this time, investors began to recognize the potential cost benefit of having cotton mills near the cotton farms. As an example, the comparative costs in Madison County of delivering a bale of cotton from the gin to the mill were as follows: \$0.50 to a local mill, \$3.00 to a northern mill, and \$5.00 to \$7.50 to a foreign mill.



Tracy Pratt

Tracy W. Pratt (1861-1928) had a recognized influence on the early industrialization of Greater Huntsville. He built and operated the relatively small West Huntsville Cotton Mills, but envisioned the area as a major textile center and had a significant role in making this happen. Following a pattern found over much of the South, this started with outside investors establishing a number of large cotton mills.

After this, the city's economy was greatly dependent upon the price of cotton, and so was the economy of Madison County and the cotton farmers.

In the latter part of the 1800s and early 1900s, a number of cotton mills opened in Huntsville. Although some had different names over the years, the largest were best known as Dallas, Lincoln, Merrimack, and Lowe. Smaller cotton mills included Huntsville Cotton Mill, Huntsville Spinning Company, West Huntsville Cotton Mills, Admiral Braid Mill, Huntsville Knitting, and Erwin Manufacturing. The larger mills were all on property outside the city limits. All of these mills initially used steam power, but converted to electrical in the early 1920s.

The advent of cotton mills made a radical change in Greater Huntsville's work organization. For the first time, large numbers of workers – mainly women – were used in industrial tasks, necessitating a hierarchy of supervisors and managers. Although the equipment involved was built elsewhere, it required engineers and mechanics for plant layout and hardware maintenance. Unfortunately, the census records do not show these as occupations, but the cotton mills initiated the local need for technical and managerial specialists.

Operating the spindles and looms was reserved for White workers; these were often impoverished sharecroppers and tenant farmers who had abandoned worn-out farms for the hope of steady employment in the mills. Entire families worked in the mills, and children were expected to work; employees, who were often called "lint heads," sometimes included children as young as 8 years and working up to 12 hours a day. The State Law required children to attend school eight weeks a year; mills often interpreted this to be satisfied by two hours of school a day. Starting in 1908, Madison County required the mills to obtain an affidavit permitting employment of children between 12 and 17 years.



Inside a Cotton Mill

Although always in the top growers of cotton, Alabama was never better than about fifth in the nation for cotton fabric manufacturers. The best year was 1916, with about 70 cotton mills employing around 16,000 operators.

Petroleum Exploration

Little is known about it, but some serious petroleum exploration took place in the Huntsville area during this time. There was speculation that since petroleum was under the Appalachian chain of mountains in Pennsylvania, it might be expected beneath the end of this chain in Madison County. In the 1910s, with possible encouragement from the State geologist, industrialist / entrepreneur Tracy W. Pratt drilled about 20 shallow wells around Madison County, including one in West Huntsville. In most of these, traces of natural gas and very small pools of oil were found, but the venture was abandoned.

World War I

World War I (WWI) started as a local conflict, with the Austro-Hungarians invading Serbia in 1914. It shortly became two primary combatants: the Allies, with the United Kingdom, France, and the Russian Empire, and the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary; many other nations eventually joined both sides. From the start, the German U-boats (submarines) were a major threat to the shipping of supplies to England; then, after the U-boats sank seven U.S. merchant ships, Congress declared war on Germany on 6 April 1917. In July, the drafting of American civilians started and the first U.S. troops were sent to France. After a slow start, the United States was a major participant in the war until an armistice was signed on 11 November 1918.

During the year and one-half of World War I, the United States military built to over 4,700,000 troops, including about 2,800,000 draftees. Almost 95,000 persons from Alabama saw military service during WWI, of whom 6,262 were killed; 19 men from Alabama were awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. (The records do not show the portions of these numbers for servicemen

from Madison County.) The cotton mills in Huntsville went into high production, supplying fabrics for bedding, uniforms, sand bags, and tents. Aside from this fabric production and personnel in the armed services, Greater Huntsville had little direct involvement in WWI.

Strikes and Mill Declines

Wages paid by the Southern mills were low – averaging 38 percent less than that paid in the Northern and Eastern plants; this was one reason for the textile manufacturing to transfer to the South. In 1930, with the start of the Great Depression, mills began a reduction of workers, and remaining employees had to work longer hours to keep production up. In 1933, Congress passed President Franklin Roosevelt's National Industrial Recovery Act, calling for voluntary acceptance of a 40-hour workweek, minimum weekly wage of \$12 (\$13 in the Northeast), and the elimination of employing persons under age 16.

All of this gave rise to the labor unions in the mills. In a year of intensive organizing, the United Textile Workers of America increased nationwide membership by 270 percent and called for a general strike. On 14 July 1934, a wildcat strike started in Guntersville. This quickly spread to Huntsville where on 16-17 July, an estimated 4,300 workers in six mills went on strike; Lowe had already settled with the union. The movement rolled across the state, and in a few days 20,000 textile workers had walked out. By 15 September, about 400,000 workers nation-wide were involved, making this the largest labor conflict in American history.

The strike brought violence to Huntsville – assaults, shootings, and bombings; carloads of strikers roamed the streets, intimidating anyone who appeared to be going to work; girls who crossed the

picket lines had their hair cut off. On 22 September, national union leaders reached a settlement and the great strike was over. No charges were ever filed concerning the hundreds of acts of lawlessness. The strike, however, was the beginning of the end of Huntsville as Alabama's textile center.

As another war approached, the government made major purchases of fabrics for uniforms and bedding. In December 1941, and the start of World War II, the Huntsville mills were fully loaded with work, but as the end of the war approached, this work slowed, then essentially stopped after the defeat of Germany and Japan. For a few years, the local mills upgraded to compete with those in other parts of the country, but the advantage of cheap labor was largely gone; then the Asian fabric manufacturers took over the market.

Aviation

In the late 1800s, William L. (Will) Quick had a woodworking and machine shop on the bank of Flint River a few miles east of Hazel Green. A creative and inventive person, Quick became interested in flight and started the design of a flying machine fashioned after those of nature. With a book on experimental aerodynamics providing the theoretical basis, Will Quick and his sons began the construction of a powered aircraft in 1900. This was a monoplane having a 38-foot wing span, with the wing covered only on the bottom side (for accepting the aerodynamic lift force). Completion was held up by an unresolved problem: the availability of an engine with sufficient power and light enough to be carried in the craft.

In 1903, the Wright brothers flew an airplane that they had designed and built – the first in America. Quick continued his search for a suitable engine, finally settling on one from a 1907

Ford Model R automobile. This was a four-cylinder, L-head engine producing 18 horsepower.

Will Quick's 16-year old son, William Massey Quick, was selected to make the first test flight; this was done in April 1908 – the first airplane to be flown in Alabama. After becoming about 10-feet airborne and flying near 70 feet, the pilot leaned to the side to see his position and lost control; the craft tipped to the side and came down, destroying the landing gear. The wreckage was returned to the shop and placed in storage; there it remained until it was eventually reconstructed for museum display in 1956.

Thomas Quick, another son of Will Quick, was a leader in developing Huntsville's first air field. Located in the area south of Bob Wallace Street between Whitesburg Drive and the L&N railroad track, the 150-acre Mayfair Flying Field was officially dedicated in June 1931. Three years later it was listed as a commercial field with four dirt runways, the longest being a 2,400-foot northeast-southwest sod strip. Airmail deliveries using this field began in May 1938.

Huntsville's second airport, located about a mile west of the original Mayfair site, opened in 1941. It had two paved runways, the north-south one initially 4,000 feet long. A full terminal and control tower were added in the 1950s, but all operations ended when a new commercial airport opened 10 miles west of the city in 1967. As noted later, a 5,000-foot airstrip was opened by the U.S. Army on Huntsville Arsenal in 1953.

Utilities Updated

Essentially from its formation, Huntsville had utilities earlier and superior to most comparably sized cities. For most of the 19th century, the utilities were primarily to serve homes and small businesses. As Greater Huntsville grew, the utility services were

expanded. With the emergence of large factories, the utilities were further expanded to meet their needs.

Water Utility Updated - Even with the continued demand for water as the 20th century started, Big Spring remained as the sole source. After a severe outbreak of typhoid fever in 1917, Huntsville's first Public Health Officer, Carl A. Grote, Sr., decided that open toilets on the square above the spring were to blame and directed that a sewer line be installed; this, plus a new, efficient chlorinator at the pump station, resulted in a very clean water system.

By 1950, it was evident that the city could no longer depend upon Big Spring for the sole water source. A Water Board was formed to oversee the future development and maintenance of the Huntsville water system. Plans were drawn for accessing the aquifer through wells, and consideration was given to a purification plant for water drawn from the Tennessee River. The wells were accomplished quickly, but the purification plant would wait until the next decade.

Gas Utility Updated - In 1902, the assets and franchise of the Huntsville Gas Light Company were acquired by another private firm, the Huntsville Gas Company; Cyrus S. Sugg was the principal owner. It continued with its facility on Dallas Street, producing manufactured gas through processing coal. By 1913, there were over 12 miles of pipes serving customers in the city.

The local gas company was acquired by Alabama Gas Corporation (Alagasco) in 1946. The old plant for producing manufactured gas was replaced by a facility using liquid propane and air to produce gas for distribution. Propane, a natural petroleum product, is in liquid form when under pressure and is then 270 times more compact. It was shipped to Huntsville in

large tank trucks, then, at the plant, allowed to become gas and mixed with air for distribution.

The city of Huntsville bought the gasworks system from Alagasco in 1950. It was placed under the Huntsville Utilities, and a contract was made with Alabama-Tennessee Natural Gas Company to pipe natural gas into the city, finally closing the local gas production.

Electric Utilities Updated: In 1899, the Huntsville Railway, Light and Power Company (HRLPC) was formed; it acquired the stock and assets of the Huntsville Power Company, and also initiated a streetcar operation. The streetcar system included the cars, about five miles of track, and a central power system consisting of a 200-horsepower steam engine directly connected to a 200-kilowatt DC dynamo that likely had an output of 600 volts. The streetcar system was put into operation in early 1901.

In 1909, the Light & Power Company was formed; still privately held and located in Huntsville, it purchased the stock and assets of the HRPLC and converted the central generators and distribution lines to AC. The new system included a 75-kilowatt, 2,300-volt, 3-phase generator. The DC power for the streetcars continued to be separately provided.

The Alabama Power Company was founded at Gadsden, Alabama, in 1906, with a primary intent of developing a hydro-electric power network. Alabama Power acquired the Huntsville-based Light & Power Company in June 1915. In 1924, Alabama Power constructed the first rural electric power line in Alabama, running it out of Huntsville to Whitesburg. During the years of the Great Depression, small communities throughout Madison County received this utility.

As a major element of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal in combating the Great Depression, the Tennessee Valley

Authority (TVA) was established by Congress in 1933. Among many other projects, TVA built dams and hydro-electric generating plants along the Tennessee River, and sold power at low cost to locally owned utilities. As an additional benefit, the building of dams finally opened all of the Tennessee River to boat traffic.

The City of Huntsville purchased the electrical system in Madison County from Alabama Power in July 1940, forming a part of the emerging Huntsville Utilities. A contract was made with TVA wherein electrical power for all of Madison County would be purchased from that agency. At that time, there were 5,810 Huntsville and Madison County consumers connected to about 250 miles of electrical distribution lines.

Commercial Expansion

It was previously noted that a number of commercial industries were started in Greater Huntsville during the latter part of the 19th century. Except for the cotton mills – which boomed and dominated the local economy – few others were such that they continued well into the next century. The Huntsville Chamber of Commerce noted having 65 industries in 1925, most being textiles mills or related firms. By the start of the second half of the 20th century, there were only three textile mills still operating, and all were gone in a few years. Two new industries operating in this period will be described.

John Blue Company - In 1886, the John Blue Company was formed on a farm near Laurinburg, North Carolina, to repair cotton gins and farm equipment. The founder, himself a farmer, was creative and soon had developed a variety of farming implements. In the early 1940s, the foundry in Laurinburg burned, and John Blue, Jr., then the owner, examined sites for moving the full operations. In Huntsville, he found potential workers, available

buildings, and saw the potential for a locally operated farm equipment manufacturer. John Blue Company opened in Huntsville during 1945, with facilities on a large lot at the intersection of Bob Wallace and First Avenue.

Within a few years John Blue was a powerhouse in the city's economic leaders with several hundred employees. Among other products, John Blue made fertilizer spreaders, cotton wagons, and agricultural and industrial pumps. For a while, they had a production line manufacturing a tractor – Model G-1000 painted bright blue – developed by Ervin West and Wesley Cagle, their engineering VP. Eventually, John Blue had branches in five other states; a fleet of trucks and a company plane were indicative of their success.

As Huntsville grew, the original plant moved to the outskirts of nearby Madison in 1986. Stiff competition resulted in downsizing, and the firm eventually became a division of Virginia-based Advanced Systems Technology, but the John Blue operations remained in Madison.

Martin Stamping and Stove Company - In 1905, two Martin brothers opened a cast iron foundry in Sheffield, Alabama. They expanded their business in 1918, acquiring a stove factory in nearby Florence, Alabama. In 1939, the Martins purchased a bankrupt manufacturing plant in Huntsville on West Clinton Street (later Governors Drive); they reopened this as Martin Stamping and Stove Company, initially producing a line of unvented gas heaters. A spur railroad track came directly to the Martin building.

During World War II, all of the Martin facilities manufactured radiant heaters for the Army, and Martin Stamping also made bomb crates and related materials for the Army's Huntsville Munitions Plants. Following the war, the companies returned to manufacturing wood, coal, and gas heaters, and Martin Stamping

added electrical heaters to the Huntsville line. As America grew and more modern homes were built, the market for space heaters declined. In 1974, the various Martin holdings were consolidated into Martin Industries, Inc., with administration, engineering, and marketing centralized in Florence. The plant in Huntsville was eventually closed in 2000.

Civilian Conservation Corps

During the Great Depression, one of the many activities under President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Established in 1933 by Congress through the Emergency Conservation Work Act, this put 500,000 men to work on 35 project areas such as forestry, road improvement, and building national parks.

Functioning in a military-like operation, volunteers were assigned to companies of about 200 men each, led by a Captain and two Lieutenants. CCC camps usually had about 20 buildings, but the men often slept in tents. They were paid \$30 per month, of which they were required to send about \$25 home to a dependent. The first camps opened in late 1933, and all CCC activities ended in mid-1942.

There were 28 CCC camps in Alabama, not all open at the same time; two camps were located in the Huntsville area. Camp Clement, opened in June 1935, was located atop Monte Sano Mountain where they primarily worked on improving the Monte Sano State Park. A stone entrance to the camp still exists at Highland Plaza Street. Camp Silver Dollar, opened in August 1935; it was about 1.5 miles southeast of downtown on Tennessee Street in what is today the Blossomwood area. Men from this camp also worked on the State Park and nearby roads. When Huntsville Arsenal was started in 1941, Camp Silver Dollar was

assigned to assist in its establishment. Clement closed during 1940, and Silver Dollar during 1942.

Agriculture

As the 20th century got underway, Alabama was still primarily an agricultural state, and cotton was still the number one cash crop. In 1909, there were about 3.7 million acres in cotton throughout Alabama, with some 1,130,000 bales produced. In that year, however, boll weevils started invading southeastern Alabama, and ten years later they had infested all cotton-growing regions of the United States, causing the greatest agricultural disaster in American history

Calcium arsenate was the first insecticide available for killing boll weevils. Hand-cranked or mule-drawn blowers were first used to spread calcium arsenate dust; the process was called dusting, and experimental dusting from Army Air Service aircraft showed this method to be effective. In 1924, Curtis Quick (son of Will Quick) modified for dusting a WWI surplus biplane, and started in Huntsville what was possibly the first crop-dusting service in the Nation.

Tractors and other mechanical equipment for farms started to become available following WWI, but it was expensive and few farmers in Madison County could afford this technical advancement. By the late 1930s, tractors began to be used locally, and this was followed by mechanical cotton pickers in the 1940s. A mechanical harvester could pick almost 1,000 pounds of cotton per hour compared with the 15 to 20 pounds per hour by a human. These and other agricultural advancements are reflected in the following official data for Madison County (dates are when the census was taken):

	1929	1949
Number of Farms	7,178	5,004
Total Area in Farms, Acres	387,612	415,332
Percent of County	74	80
Average Farm Size, Acres	54	83
Cotton, Acres	129,800	109,400
Cotton, Bales	41,700	50,800
Cotton Yield (pounds/acre)	154	223
Corn, Acres	62,300	56,400
Soy Beans, Acres	---	5,400

MUNITIONS PERIOD

The second portion of Greater Huntsville's Manufacturing Era, the Munitions Period, primarily concerns the 1940s decade. The Second World War (WWII) dominated the first years of this decade, and brought about some of the most significant political and technological changes in history. Therefore, the activities in the Munitions Period start with a brief description of this event.

World War II

The Second World War started 1 September 1939, with Adolph Hitler's Wehrmacht invading Poland. Great Britain immediately declared war on Germany, but the United States hesitated until after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. Following declaration of war against Japan on 8 December and against Germany and Italy three days later, America became the leader of the Allies (United States, United Kingdom, Soviet Union, and 19 other nations) in a conflict against the Axis powers (Germany, Japan, Italy, and three other nations) that eventually covered much of the world.

An estimated 60 to 85 million people, the majority of them civilians, were killed during WWII, making it, in size, the deadliest conflict in human history. During the war years, 16.1 million Americans served in active military duty; of these 291,557 were killed or missing (1.81 percent) and over twice this number were wounded. The European and Atlantic war ended 8 May 1945 (V-E Day), but the war in the Far East and Pacific continued four more months, ending 2 September 1945 (V-J Day).

Even before the United States' official involvement in the war, Greater Huntsville was already engaged in the development of two huge facilities for the production of chemical munitions: the Huntsville Arsenal and the Redstone Ordnance Plant. Throughout the war years – at times employing as many as 11,000 regular workers – these two facilities were at the heart of Huntsville's wartime involvement. In 1943, the estimated total employment in Greater Huntsville was 30,000; aside from those directly working at the Government munitions plants, essentially no others were involved in this activity – the city had no supporting infrastructure.

The cotton mills were heavily engaged in making cotton material for military uniforms and bedding. Textile workers and management came together to fill orders, and unionization was at a minimum. As of the end of 1944, Dallas had 725 employees, Merrimack had 850, and Lincoln had 1,200. Madison County farmers were tasked with producing as much cotton as possible, as well as grain and meat for supplying the military.

The first war casualty from Madison County was Luther James Isom of West Huntsville; he was killed aboard the battleship USS *Arizona* in the Japanese attack on 7 December 1941. Throughout the war, some 6,000 persons from Madison County served in the military; of these an estimated (using the 1.81 percent national average) 110 were killed or missing. Carl M. Crabtree of

Huntsville was the first person accepted by the local Draft Board when it started in October 1940 (the nation's first peacetime draft); he was killed on Luzon in the Philippine Islands in 1945.

Many from Madison County served with distinction; Cecil H. Bolton and Paul L. Bolden were each awarded the Medal of Honor. Bolden was Madison County's most decorated WWII veteran; an 18-mile stretch of Alabama State Route 53, from Research Park Boulevard in Huntsville to just south of Ardmore, Tennessee, is designated as the "Paul Luther Bolden Memorial Highway" in his honor.

After the Allies retook North Africa and until V-E day in May 1945, about 240,000 German and Italian soldiers were sent to America for internment at some 500 prisoner-of-war (POW) camps. In Alabama, there were 4 primary camps, including one at Fort McClellan near Anniston, and 16 satellite camps. During early 1944, the Army Corps of Engineers (CoE) built a camp on Huntsville Arsenal (one of the munitions facilities described later) as a satellite to Fort McClellan. The camp was initially designed to accommodate 250 German POWs, then increased to 655 by mid-year. The CoE constructed the original camp, but the remainder was completed by POW labor.

Before the war, the Axis had superior military technologies, but the Allies, particularly America, quickly responded, pulling ahead with innovation and production. Two of the most important technologies were radar and the atomic bomb – it is often said that radar won the war and the atomic bomb won the peace. Huntsville and Madison County, however, had no role in these technological advancements.

Munitions Production

Following the First World War and the devastation caused by both sides using chemical weapons (primarily mustard gas), the Geneva Protocol prohibited the first-use of such weapons, but not their manufacture or in-kind retaliation. Recognizing that potential adversaries were continuing with research and production in this field, the United States also continued; the Army's Chemical Warfare Service (CWS) was the responsible unit. Edgewood Arsenal in New Jersey was the only existing source, and, as another major war loomed closer, a second source was needed. The CWS dated from 1918, as did the Edgewood Arsenal.

In early 1941, a national search was started for an inland location for a second arsenal. James Center, industrial agent for the Nashville, Chattanooga and Saint Louis (NC&StL) railroad in Nashville, was contacted about available land with existing rail and water transportation, and on 8 June he brought Lt. Col. Charles E. Loucks and a civilian civil engineer to Huntsville. They first visited an area just south of the Tennessee River, but found it too hilly; they then visited the flat farmland immediately southwest of the city. Following their visit, the search team said that the site adjacent to Huntsville was a perfect location for the new arsenal. James Center must be credited with initiating the activity that so drastically changed the future of Greater Huntsville.

Loucks filed a report to Maj. Gen. William N. Porter, Chief of CWS, recommending this location. In a few days, Porter and Col. Paul X. English from Edgewood Arsenal personally reviewed the Huntsville location. Other locations that had been surveyed and were being considered were Florence and Tuscaloosa, Alabama; Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri; Memphis, Tennessee; Toledo, Ohio; El Dorado, Arkansas; and Charleston, West Virginia.

Huntsville Arsenal

On 3 July 1941, the selection of the site for Huntsville Arsenal was announced with headlines in *The Huntsville Times*. The selection was based on four major factors: immediate availability of suitable, low-cost land; availability of a lower-paid, production work force; availability of good rail and river transportation; and availability of a plentiful supply of electric power (from the TVA).

The Huntsville site included 32,244 acres of land just southwest of the city, buffered on the south by land owned by the TVA along the Tennessee River. The primary land was acquired through condemnation, and land-use agreements were made with TVA for an additional 1,200 acres. Existing railroads bordered the north and east edges. There were a number of rural roads; main ones were Martin going east-west and Patton and Rideout, about 2.5 miles apart, going north-south. Most of the land was relatively flat, with an average elevation of near 680 feet. Unusable land included about 10,000 acres of swamps and some 2,800 acres around Ward and Madkin Mountains located near the top of the site.

Displaced were about 6,000 men, women, and children; between 70 and 75 percent Black; comprising up to 1,000 families; and occupying about 550 dwellings. Some of the families were tenant farmers, but many, both Black and White, were landowners who had worked the fertile soil of the region for decades. Farmers



were allowed to continue using their land until all of the existing crops were harvested.

Before the end of July, the War Department awarded a cost-plus-fixed-fee contract to Whitman, Requardt, and Smith of Baltimore, Maryland, for architectural and engineering services for designing the Huntsville Arsenal and Redstone Ordnance Plant facilities (described later). In September, as designs were completed, cost-plus-fixed-fee contracts were awarded to C. G. Kershaw Contracting Company of Birmingham, Alabama; Engineers Limited of San Francisco, California; and the Walter Butler Company of St. Paul, Minnesota, for the construction of buildings.

By early October, about 3,500 construction workers were involved at the facilities; by the end of 1941, this had swelled to near 12,000. A total of 1,016 buildings and structures were eventually built for the Huntsville Arsenal, Redstone Ordnance Plant, and Gulf Chemical Warfare Depot. These were connected by about 66 miles of paved roads, 25 miles of gravel roads, and 75 miles of railroad tracks. At its peak, about 2,000 railroad cars per month would move along the tracks.



Colonel
Rollo C. Ditto

The Army Corps of Engineers had the overall responsibility for construction of the two arsenals and the depot. When the Corps of Engineers left in mid-1943, it turned over the largest chemical warfare manufacturing operation in the world. By the end of World War II, the cost of all construction, including land, totaled \$63,431,925 – about \$857 million in today's dollars.

Colonel Rollo C. Ditto arrived as the first commanding officer of Huntsville Arsenal on 4 August 1941; in early October, he was

promoted to Brigadier General. Ditto had served in the Army since 1907 – first in enlisted status and then as an officer in the CWS starting in 1922.

The recruitment and hiring of operating personnel involved a major initial effort. A cadre of specialists was brought from Edgewood Arsenal, but many professionals and production workers were needed. Recent college chemistry graduate John L. McDaniel was one of those hired in February 1942, with a daily salary of \$6.24; when McDaniel retired from the Government almost three decades later, he was the highest ranking civil service employee in the Huntsville area.

The advent of munitions production first brought security in employment to Huntsville. Very few of the potential employees had ever been exposed to secrecy, and no formal process existed for vetting them for their eligibility. Most of the civilian employees were natives of the region – mainly "good old boys" and hard-working women who had always been the backbone of Southern citizenry. Thus, the ordinary personnel managers could easily make a basic determination of their "security" qualification.

Facilities and Products - The first construction centered on roads and railroad tracks; buildings were started in September. Huntsville Arsenal's first production facility was activated in March 1942, just 7 months after Ditto's arrival.

The production plants were in three distinct areas: Plants Area 1, 2, and 3. Areas 1 and 2 were essentially duplicates, based on the concept of one surviving after a major attack. Plants Area 1 was located at the northeast corner of Rideout and Martin Roads, while Plants Area 2 was about 2.5 miles



Incendiary Production

away at the southwest corner of Patton and Martin Roads. These were primarily plants for chemical gas munitions. For community safety, the plants were located near the center of Huntsville Arsenal. Plant Area 3 was on the west side of Patton Road about a mile north of Area 2. Smoke munitions filling, incendiaries, and non-lethal tear-gas munitions, but no actual chemicals, were made at Area 3; the buildings were spread apart because of the explosive nature of their products. Each of the three areas had its own administrative units for engineering, personnel, property, storage, and transportation.

In 1943, a 5,000-ft airstrip and several small supporting buildings were built on the northern portion of the Arsenal, primarily to assist the Army Air Forces in testing incendiary devices in preparation for firebombing Japanese cities. Six Air Forces personnel and two planes – a B-26 and an L-20 – were stationed at the Huntsville Arsenal Airstrip (later named Redstone Airfield).

By May 1944, Huntsville Arsenal's need for production, maintenance, and administrative personnel had accelerated greatly. That month civilian employment at the arsenal reached a WWII peak of about 6,700, divided 63 percent male (52 percent White and 11 percent Black) and 37 percent female (26 percent White and 11 percent Black).

More than eight million pounds of munitions were dropped on Huntsville Arsenal test areas during the war. One test area, on the west side of the Arsenal, was called “Little Tokyo” and had three streets, about 50 small wooden houses and buildings, and a 200-foot structure for proof-testing large bombs; these were totally obliterated by late 1944. There was also a thick, 500-foot-square concrete mat for testing penetration capabilities of dropped bombs.

During the war years, 27 million items of chemical munitions were produced at Huntsville Arsenal. The coveted Army-Navy “E” Award was received four times.

Redstone Ordnance Plant

When the Chemical Warfare Service decided on the Huntsville area for its new arsenal, it was recognized that an ordnance plant in the same general area would be very beneficial. The Chief of Ordnance, Maj. Gen Charles M. Wesson, sent Major Myron Leedy to examine potential sites. Leedy was accompanied by Major Carroll Hudson, who would later command the new plant. Leedy recommended an area about 10 miles south of Huntsville and adjacent to the southeast corner of the Huntsville Arsenal land. This was a rolling, rural terrain, wholly agricultural in nature. There were no interior paved roads, but the NC&StL Railroad had a spur track along part of the eastern border and a main Southern Railroad track was near the top of the area.

On 8 July 1941, the War Department announced that an ordnance facility, designated Redstone Ordnance Plant, would be built on a 4,000-acre tract southeast of, and adjacent to, the chemical munitions arsenal. This was a rolling, rural terrain, wholly agricultural in nature. There were no interior paved roads, but the NC&StL Railroad had a spur track along part of the eastern border and a main Southern Railroad track was near the top of the area.



Carroll Hudson

Major Carroll D. Hudson was named Commanding Office on 25 September 1941; he was promoted to Lt. Colonel in 1942, and then to Colonel in 1944. A graduate of Stanford University in mechanical engineering, Hudson was personally involved in

designing and building the new plant; then throughout the years of operation, he made many valuable engineering contributions.

A few key civilians were sent to Picatinny Arsenal and Charleston Ordnance Depot for intensive operational instruction. It was not until the summer of 1942, however, that a full complement of officers and key civilians was obtained.

Facilities and Products - Huntsville Arsenal would function as a “works” facility, producing basic materials, while the Redstone Ordnance Plant would operate as a “plant” (commonly called LAP – largely assembly-and-pack) making finished munitions.

The Plant initially had four assembly lines; there were also supporting storage and administrative buildings, all completed before the end of 1941. Each assembly line had about 15 buildings distributed on some 25 acres. Lines No. 1 and 2, which were completed first, were similar and both used for the loading of burster tubes – the empty tubes themselves were from private manufacturers. Other Ordnance plants supplied the explosive ingredients – tetryl and TNT; these were mixed to form tetrytol, a very-high powered explosive.

Lines No. 3 and 4 loaded and assembled chemical ammunitions, eventually centering on 81-mm and 105-mm mortar shells. Plans for these lines were suggested by Picatinny Arsenal, but were redesigned by Major Hudson to meet local problems and conditions. Line 3 was built using Hudson’s design, and Line 4 used the Picatinny design. Early efficiency testing using the same number of workers showed that Line 3 was 25 percent more productive; thus, Line 4 was modified to the Hudson design. Line 1 started full operations in April, and Line 4 in August.

In the fall of 1942, the plant expanded to have an additional large assembly line (No. 5) for manufacturing chemical projectile shells, soon producing up to 190,000 projectiles per month. Igloo,

warehouse, and magazine areas for the finished products were also greatly expanded. Initial production included the 105-mm M60 white phosphorus (WP) or mustard gas (HS) shells, the 155-mm WP or HS-filled shells, M5 and M6 burster charges, the 100-pound A1 WP bomb, and the 100-pound A47A2 HS bomb. In 1943, production added M4, M8, and M10 burster charges, 115-pound M70 HS bombs, 75-mm WP M64 shells, and 105-mm M84 HC base ejection shells.

Between March 1942 and September 1945, over 42 million units of ammunition were loaded and assembled for shipment at Redstone Arsenal. Demolition blocks for the Corps of Engineers and Airborne Troops were a particular specialty; about 12 million blocks were produced.

Civilian personnel at the beginning of each year were as follows: 1942 - 24; 1943 - 1,906; 1944 - 3,422; 1945 - 4,252, the highest ever. In addition, there was an average of about 25 military personnel each year. From the opening of Redstone Ordnance Plant, many women were employed for the production work; they peaked at 62 percent by September 1945. In March 1944, 2nd Lt. Eleanor B. Wilson became the first Woman's Army Corps (WAC) person assigned to the Arsenal.

Gulf Chemical Warfare Depot

Approximately 7,700 acres in the southern portion of the arsenal along the Tennessee River were intended as a depot site. Initially this was the Storage Division of Huntsville Arsenal. In March 1942, the depot was activated as a separate installation named the Huntsville Chemical Warfare Depot. General Ditto (and successive Huntsville Arsenal Commanders) also served as the Depot Commander, with Capt. William C. Behrenberg as Executive Officer. The Depot had no office buildings; the

headquarters were in the James Cooper House, an old mansion originally built in 1818, and one of the few houses left standing when the arsenal area was cleared.

In August 1942, the name was changed to the Gulf Chemical Warfare Depot. The depot received, stored, and shipped chemical warfare materiel, including bulk chemicals, decontaminating apparatus, and protective materials. It covered nearly twelve square miles and was divided into three principal areas: the toxic gas yard, the munitions branch, and the warehouse area. All were in operation by October 1942.

By early 1943, the Gulf Chemical Warfare Depot consisted of 7 warehouses, 370 igloos, 55 above-ground magazines, several outdoor storage areas, 12 miles of railroad track, and dock facilities on the Tennessee River.

Related Information

There has long been a question as to the origin of the name “Redstone.” In 1955, the Army conducted a study concerning the origin. It turned up a Major H. Sachs who said that he was in the Ordnance Department when the Arsenal was being planned, and was asked to give the facility a name. To find more about the location, he consulted Lt. Col. Jack A.

Goodwin, who earlier, as a Captain, had led a Huntsville-based CCC Camp that had worked on roads in the area. Goodwin told him, “It was beautiful country with red rocks predominating and was sometimes called the Redstone Area.” Sachs then submitted the name Redstone Ordnance Works; this later became Redstone Arsenal.



Redstone Land Areas

Arsenal Casualties - Considering the hazardous products involved at the two arsenals and the depot, it is a testimony to the safety training and practices that there were only eight fatalities in the operations during the war years: seven civilian workers and one Army officer. Easter Posey of Hazel Green was killed on 21 April 1942, in an accidental explosion of an incendiary bomb at Huntsville Arsenal; she is recognized as the first American woman killed in the line of duty during WWII.

In addition to those killed in the munitions plants, three Army Air Forces personnel were killed in a crash of a Martin Marauder B-26 bomber while flight-testing incendiary bombs. On 27 June 1944, the Martin Marauder bomber took off from the Huntsville Arsenal Airstrip with bombs that were to be drop-tested on Little Tokyo. Climbing north, at about 3,000-foot altitude, an engine problem developed. The pilot turned back and dropped one of the 500-pound bombs into a vacant field near the present HudsonAlpha Institute. He again attempted a landing, but crashed into a cotton field just north of the highway near the present Memorial Gardens Cemetery. Killed were 1st Lt. Emmett J. Hale, the pilot; 2nd Lt. Jerome Loeffler, the bombardier; and Tech. Sgt. Antone Valim, the onboard engineer

Missile Precursor - The long-range missile was another technology that came into being during the war; this was essentially developed solely in Germany. Only after the V-1 and V-2 missiles began raining down on England were the Allies aware of the existence of these developments, and the U.S. Army initiated a desperate attempt to replicate the V-1. It was in this that Greater Huntsville had its first and only wartime involvement with missile technology.

When the German V-1 – forerunner of the cruise missile – became known to the Allies, the U.S. Army Air Forces (AAF) and

contractor Republic Aircraft began the development of a similar weapon designated the JB-2 (JB for jet bomb), and commonly called the “Loon.” (Earlier, there was a JB-1 “Bat” built by Northrop and using a General Electric J31 engine – the first jet engine produced in the U.S. – but the JB-1 was never successfully flown.) The engine for the JB-2 was reverse-engineered from a pulse-jet found in a downed V-1. The AAF asked the Army’s Chemical Warfare Service (CWS) to be responsible for the propellant. In support of this, Huntsville had its first, and only, involvement with missile technology during WWII.

To meet this need of the AAF, CWS turned to Huntsville Arsenal. Between January and September 1945, Huntsville Arsenal conducted investigations of three systems of liquid propellants: hydrogen peroxide-permanganate, fuming nitric acid-aniline, and mononitromethane-catalyst. Called the FRED Project, Major Frederick Bellinger headed the team performing the study. Of special interest was the potential of Huntsville Arsenal manufacturing these propellants. The only reference to this project states that it was successful; otherwise, there is no known documentation concerning details of the activity. The project concluded in September when JB-2 jet-powered missiles were successfully tested at Eglin Field, Florida.

In 1945, no locals would have ever imagined that within five years some of the most capable German scientists and engineers who had developed the V-2 would come to Huntsville and make major contributions to this area becoming a world center for defense and space technologies.

Post War Drawdown

After V-E (Victory in Europe) Day (8 May 1945) shutdown of production at Huntsville and Redstone Arsenals began. Following

V-J (Victory over Japan) Day (2 September 1945), most of the operating buildings and production lines were placed in standby condition, and large quantities of finished products were placed in long-term storage.

At Redstone Arsenal, the reduction in force and readjustment to a standby activity was completed by early 1946; Colonel Carroll Hudson remained the commander until 15 March. The standby organization involved several officers and about 250 civilian employees. Redstone Arsenal was still an official unit under the Ordnance Department at the Pentagon, and major political and commercial efforts were made in searching for government or business tenants for space at both Redstone and Huntsville Arsenals.

There were several attempts to commercialize plants originally associated with chemical munitions manufacturing. These included the Solvay Process Division of Allied Chemical and Dye Corporation, and Stauffer Chemical Company, both leased chlorine manufacturing plants. General Aniline and Film Corporation (GAF), the largest manufacturer of roofing in America, leased the plant making iron carbonyl and continues with this operation on Redstone Arsenal today. Two other commercialization efforts are described:

Keller Automobile Plant - Keller Motors was incorporated on 25 November 1947. The objective was to develop and produce small, inexpensive automobiles and make Huntsville the “Detroit of the South.” Central offices of Keller Motors were in downtown Huntsville, and Buildings 471 and 481 (later numbered 4471 and 4481) on Huntsville Arsenal were placed under a 15-year lease for automobile development and production. George D. Keller, formerly vice president of sales for Studebaker, was the president, and Hubert Mitchell, a successful entrepreneur from Hartselle,

Alabama, provided initial financing. John Liefeld, an experienced automotive engineer, led the technical efforts, and Mitchell began the sale of dealer franchises. Some \$450,000 was quickly raised and about 65 designers, engineers, and other production personnel were hired by Liefeld. Huntsville native Henry L. Hilson was a lead production engineer.

By early 1949, prototypes for convertible roadsters and 'woodie' station wagons were ready. A \$5 million stock issue was approved by the SEC, and half of the stock was quickly sold. On 4 October 1949, a celebration was held in New York; the next morning, 52-year-old Keller was found dead in his hotel bed. An acceptable leader could not be found, and the Keller Motor firm went into history. A total of only 18 Keller convertibles and station wagons had been built. The three remaining Keller vehicles are now valuable items sought by antique automobile collectors.

DDT Manufacturing - In 1947, Benton H. Wilcoxon, a California expert in chemical manufacturing, came to Huntsville and formed Calabama Chemical Company. The firm leased land and facilities on Redstone Arsenal and began manufacturing the insecticide DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane).

The manufacturing process resulted in significant amounts of DDT-laden wastewater being released into a reservoir that drained into the Huntsville Spring Branch; this flowed into the Indian Creek and eventually into the Tennessee River near Triana. In 1948, the Calabama operation was acquired by the Olin Mathieson Chemical Company (later known as Olin Corporation), and this firm continued the production of DDT. The production was about 12,500 tons per year. When investigated, the water in Huntsville Spring Branch had DDT as high as 0.3 parts per million. This

resulted in major fish kills, particularly in Indian Creek and the Tennessee River in the vicinity of Triana.

Production of DDT was stopped and the plant was demolished in 1973. From July 1979 to August 1982, the U.S. Army conducted an extensive DDT abatement program. The residents of Triana, along with the Justice Department, filed lawsuits against Olin Corporation. In 1982, an out-of-court settlement resulted in Olin pursuing clean-up operations; these were basically completed by 1987, and were called fully successful in 1995.

Transition of Redstone Arsenal from Chemical Weapons to Guided Missiles

Small rockets using solid fuels had been of interest world-wide for many centuries. In the early 1930s, a number of university students in Berlin formed a *raketenwesen* (rocketry) group, building and launching rockets with liquid fuels. One designated A-1 reached altitudes up to 360 meters (1,200 feet). Werhner von Braun, a 22-year old doctoral student, was a participant. Upon learning of their success with liquid-fueled rockets, the Ordnance Department of the German *Heer* (Army) put the group under contract to do rocket research and development. By 1933, they had a rocket called the A-2 that, with a pressure-fed propellant system burning alcohol and liquid oxygen, attained an altitude of near 2.5 km (1.5 mi). Their rockets were flight tested from Borkum Island in the Baltic Sea.

In 1937, a joint *Heer* and *Luftwaffe* (Air Force) center doing military rocket research and development was established at Peenemünde, a peninsula along the Baltic seacoast; the Berlin activity was transferred there. With von Braun as the leader of the Army activities, rocket A-4 had a range of about 175 km (110 mi) and could carry a payload of 1,000 kg (2,200 lb).

Near the end of 1943, production of A-4s started at the Mittelwerk (General Works) underground factory in central Germany; eventually some 6,000 of these missiles were built, at the cost of an estimated 12,000 forced laborer's lives. Beginning in September 1944, over 3,000 A-4s were launched as military rockets against Allied targets, resulting in 7,250 deaths. The propagation ministry called this missile the *Vergeltungswaffe 2* (Retaliation Weapon 2); hence, the popular designation V-2.

It is noted that the *Vergeltungswaffe 1* (V-1) flying bomb with a pulse-jet engine was also developed at Peenemünde, but by the German *Luftwaffe*; the von Braun team was not directly involved in this effort.

During 1943, the U.S. Army learned the extent of missile weapon developments in Germany, and in September the Rocket Branch was formed in the Technical Division of the Army's Ordnance Department. Although small rockets had always been used by America's military, they in no way competed with artillery weapons. Formation of the Rocket Branch gave recognition to the importance of this technology in augmenting or even extending the existing capabilities of weaponry. Although some missile analysis was done by the initial staff of the Rocket Branch, awareness of German developments spurred the Ordnance Department to enlarge this activity and seek outside assistance.

An operation called the Ordnance Research and Development Division Sub-office (Rocket) was set up at Fort Bliss, a large Army post just north of El Paso, Texas. Also, contracts were awarded to the California Institute of Technology (CIT) and the General Electric Company (GE) for initiating missile research and development for the U.S. Army. Testing was mainly conducted about 30 miles away at White Sands Proving Grounds in New Mexico.

After May 1945 and the close of the war in Europe, the U.S. and the USSR were in great competition to gain the benefits of Germany's weapon developments. As a part of this, about 1,500 key German and other Axis scientists, engineers, and technicians were to be brought to the United States through Project Paperclip to work under one-year contracts. Colonel Holger N. Toftoy, then head of the Ordnance Department's Rocket Branch, arranged for 125 specialists who had developed rockets at Peenemünde to be included. In January 1946, the German team led by Wernher von Braun began arriving at Fort Bliss, Texas, where they became contract employees of the Rocket Sub-office.

By early 1948, activities at Fort Bliss had progressed to a point where the Chief of Ordnance decided to establish a permanent rocket research and development center at a better location. During the summer of 1948, a survey was made of available Ordnance installations, and in early December, the Chief of Ordnance announced that Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville had been selected.

On 1 June 1949, Redstone Arsenal was officially reactivated, and the Chief of Ordnance designated this as the Ordnance Rocket Center. Its mission included research and development of guided rockets and related items. This, then, began a totally new and different era for Huntsville and Madison County.

On 30 June 1949, the Chemical Corps deactivated Huntsville Arsenal and the CoE put it up for sale, but the new operations of Redstone Arsenal needed the land and facilities. On 1 April 1950, the consolidation of the two arsenals was made official; at this time, the Redstone reservation was expanded to include an approximately 10-by 12-mile area, comprising about 40,300 acres. The Ordnance Guided Missile Center (OGMC), a unit of Redstone Arsenal, was officially activated on 15 April 1950. All guided

missile activities at Fort Bliss, including the German team led by Wernher von Braun, would be transferred to OGMC by November.

Raymond C. Watson, Jr., Ph.D., P.E., a native of Anniston, Alabama, has been an engineer since 1942, with two years of wartime service in the U.S. Navy. He came to Huntsville to form the Research Laboratories of Brown Engineering Company (later Teledyne Brown Engineering) in 1960. Watson's overall career combined a broad variety of industrial and academic positions, with some 450 reports, papers, and presentations, including 5 books (3 on technical history) and about 50 Wikipedia and magazine articles. He is still fully engaged as a consultant and writer. His recent books are Solving the Naval Radar Crisis (Trafford 2007), Radar Origins Worldwide (Trafford 2009), and Huntsville's Technological Evolution (Trafford 2015).

Notes:

1. Evolution in Transportation: Leap ahead 200 years. Transportation technology in Greater Huntsville has evolved to the point that people working just a short distance from Ditto's Landing are developing rockets that might someday propel future explorers over 35,000,000 miles to Mars.
2. Evolution in Communications: Today, fiber-optic networks routinely carry digital information between Huntsville and many areas of the world at gigabit rates – 1,000,000,000 electrical impulses per second, sufficient to transmit over 3,000 average-sized (50,000 words) books per second.
3. Evolution in Arms Accuracy: In 1984, Huntsville-based Army and industry engineers conducted an experiment demonstrating the

equivalent of hitting a bullet with a bullet; in this, a missile intercepted a small target at an altitude of over 100 miles and moving with a closing speed of 13,600 miles per hour.

4. Evolution in Cotton Farming: In 2013, as much cotton lint was produced in Madison County as produced there in the year just before the Civil War. Amazingly, this was grown in fields whose total acreage was only seven percent of the acreage in 1860! The yield (pounds per acre) had increased by a factor of about 14 times; technology improvement played a major role.

Alabama's Six Constitutions

By Julian D. Butler

In the drafting and adoption of Alabama's six Constitutions, no woman participated and only 18 blacks (1868).

Part II

The Constitutions of 1875 and 1901

Constitution of 1875

- Democrats wrested control of the legislature and the governor's office in the 1874 elections. The Legislature on March 19, 1875 passed an act to submit the question of a constitutional convention to the people in an election to be held on August 8.
- Approval of the question in the popular vote was not a foregone conclusion. Democrats campaigned for the "yes" vote by vowing to abolish the powerful and expensive Board of Education and by promising to implement retrenchment and economy in state government. They also attacked the offices of lieutenant governor and commissioner of industrial resources.
- State indebtedness was \$29 million, with two-thirds of that amount consisting of railroad bonds guaranteed by the Republican legislature.
- The August 3 vote approved the call for a convention, 77,763 to 59,928. Delegates included 80 Democrats, 12 Republicans, and 7 Independents, who won the Republican support.

- The convention opened on September 6 in Montgomery and continued in session until October 2. More than half the members were lawyers. Others included planters, farmers, merchants, preachers, editors, and physicians. Several had been members of the secession convention of 1861, and two had served in the 1865 convention. None returned from the Reconstruction convention of 1867, Leroy Pope Walker of Huntsville who had been Secretary of War in the Confederate Cabinet was elected President of the convention.
- Adopted provisions included one providing that the state could not be sued in any court of law or equity, a step that grew directly out of fear that creditors would sue because of debt incurred by the Republicans.
- Foreigners were given equal privileges and rights with native-born citizens, and immigration was encouraged.
- It prohibited any educational or property qualification for suffrage or office, or any limitation based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude.
- The legislature was to have biennial sessions limited to 50 days.
- The state could not lend its money or credit for internal improvements.
- Dueling and lotteries were prohibited.
- Relocation of the capital from Montgomery without a majority vote of the people was prohibited. (Some had favored moving the capital out of the Black Belt to avoid “Radical influences.”)
- The governor’s term was set at two years, but successive terms permitted. The governor could veto a portion of an appropriation bill.

- Judges were to be elected to six-years by the people.
- The delegates skirted the issue of suffrage entirely, fearful of Federal intervention should they attempted to limit black voting. The text recognized the Fifteenth Amendment. A prohibition on integrated transport and interracial marriage was not seriously considered.
- Apportionment decreased the number of seats of Republican-majority Black Belt counties. No provision was made for continuation of the state census, and future apportionment was to be made on the results of the federal census.
- The constitution demanded economy in state government, limited state and local taxation, and instructed the legislature to cut the salaries of state officials.
- In the area of education, the constitution abolished the state Board of Education, created a popularly elected state superintendent; required separate schools for blacks and whites; and earmarked 96 percent of school funds for teacher salaries. Funding sources were to include \$100,000 from general revenue, the poll tax fund, interest on state funds, and unclaimed property.
- The state, counties, and cities were not engaged in internal improvements by lending of money or credit.
- Ratification occurred on November 16, 1875, by a vote of 85,662 to 29,217. Only the Black Belt counties of Autauga, Dallas, Lowndes, and Montgomery voted against it.
- Format: The constitution is written on twenty-eight sheets of parchment, and is a total of forty-two feet and eight inches in length. Each sheet of parchment is glued to the one below it and held together with blue grosgrain silk ribbon. When rolled, the document is eighteen one-fourth

inches in width and three and one-fourth inches in diameter.

Constitution of 1901

- After adoption of the 1875 constitution, whites were able to exercise control of the political process through manipulation and intimidation of black voters in the Black Belt. North Alabama resented the power realized by the southern half of the state due to this.
- The assurance of white control diminished during the Populist revolt of the 1890's, when economically disadvantaged small farmers split from the conservative Democrats.
- With the likelihood of federal intervention gone, conservative Democrats decided it necessary to limit suffrage through a new constitution.
- In December 1900 the legislature passed an enabling act to provide for a vote on calling a convention. The results on April 23, 1901, were 70,035 votes in favor and 45,505 against. Twenty-five majority-white counties, most in North Alabama, voted against the convention. Five Wiregrass counties voted "no".
- On May 21, 1901, 155 delegates met in Montgomery; 141 Democrats, 7 Populists, 6 Republicans, and 1 Independent. No blacks were elected.
- The members included 90 lawyers, 12 bankers, 4 journalists, an several physicians, teachers, and engineers. 38 were Civil War veterans, and 45 had served in the legislature.

- John B. Knox, an Anniston attorney representing the industrialist faction of the Big Mules, was selected president of the convention by acclamation.
- Knox's presidential address left no doubt about the chief agenda of the gathering.

"And what is it that we want to do? Why it is within the limits imposed by the Federal Constitution, to establish white supremacy in this State. This is our problem and we should be permitted to deal with it, unobstructed by outside influences. But if we would have white supremacy, we must establish it by law-not by force or fraud."

"These provisions are justified in law and in morals, because the negro is not discriminated against on account of his race, but on account of his intellectual and moral condition. There is in the white man an inherited capacity for government, which is wholly wanting in the Negro."

- The Convention sat continuously, with the exception of one week's intermission, until September 3rd.
- The work of the Committee on Suffrage and Elections drew the most attention and constituted the most significant updates to the Constitution of 1875.

- Ratification took place on November 11, 1901, by a vote of 108,613 to 81,734. The margin of victory came from the Black Belt counties. Thousands of African Americans saw their votes manipulated one more time—to ensure their future disfranchisement. Historians have largely concluded that its passage was the result of considerable fraud in the Black Belt counties, which were predominantly African American yet overwhelmingly approved the measure.
 - On November 28, 1901, Thanksgiving Day, the present Alabama State Constitution went into effect by proclamation of Governor Jelks.
 - The 1901 Constitution was written in large part to restrict voting by blacks and poor whites. Literacy requirements and cumulative poll taxes (that grew larger each year they were not paid) became major barriers to popular suffrage. Also, local registrars were given, as a practical matter, almost unchecked power to make a final determination of who could register.
 - Format: The constitution has a total of 287 sections, numbered consecutively and uninterrupted from Article 1 through Article XVIII. The document, bound in burgundy colored leather, is written on sixty-one sheets of parchment.
- ***

Reference:

- Malcolm Cook McMillian, *Constitutional Development in Alabama, 1789-1901; A Study in Politics, the Negro, and Sectionalism* (1955)
- *My sincere appreciation to Steve Murray, Director, Alabama Department of Archives and History, and my

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“Until Another and Better Destiny May be Unfolded”:

The Proslavery Ideology of Four Southern Presbyterians

By Jake Nelson



Reverend Frederick Augustus Ross

In a speech before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Buffalo, New York, in 1853, Reverend Frederick A. Ross defended the southern institution of slavery, arguing that while it was neither ideal nor permanent, it was not inherently contrary to the law of God. Ross based his argument on the Bible, using scriptural themes and words to make his points. “Let the Northern philanthropist learn,” said Ross, “the relation of master and slave is not sin *per se*.” The

Presbyterian minister put forth his belief that slavery was “of God,” sanctioned and ordained under divine providence. Ross allowed that slavery was not ideal for either master or slave, and he instructed his fellow southerners to “comprehend that God never intended the relation of master and slave to be perpetual.” He instructed southerners to reject the idea that blacks were of a different species and the belief that God had created the different races to remain only in the continent in which they had been born. While Ross went so far as to call slavery “the evil—the curse on

the South” and a “degraded condition,” he believed slavery must continue for the good of the slave, the master, and the American family until God in his divine direction saw fit to let it “pass away.” Ross’s own pro-slavery stance well represented several other antebellum southern ministers’ views on the controversial matter. Many held the same position and argued as Ross did in his 1853 General Assembly speech in New York.¹

Well over a century later, the 2002 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America passed a resolution focused on promoting racial reconciliation within the denomination.² This included corporate confession and repentance of “heinous sins attendant with unbiblical forms of servitude-including oppression, racism, exploitation, manstealing, and chattel slavery” that all “stand in opposition to the Gospel.” The resolution went on to detail the goals of confession and repentance: racial reconciliation, forgiveness, unity, and healing among Christians of all colors and ethnic backgrounds. The resolution spoke openly and solemnly about the Presbyterian denomination’s history of failing to follow some of the commandments and statutes of God. The Assembly admitted to mistreatment of and injustices against African-Americans throughout the denomination’s past, especially insofar

¹ Fred A. Ross, *Slavery Ordained of God* (Kessinger Publishing), 2-3.

² There are important distinctions between several different Presbyterian denominations in the United States today, the PCA being one of them and being among the largest of all the conservative evangelical denominations in the country, with nationwide congregations, recognition, and influence. For the full story of how the PCA separated and distinguished itself from other Presbyterian groups in the mid-1900s, see: Sean Michael Lucas, *For A Continuing Church: The Roots of the Presbyterian Church in America* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2015).

as many Presbyterians, like Frederick Ross, supported slavery in the South for many years before the Civil War.³

While there were many social, economic, political, and cultural changes in the United States, and especially the South, during the period between both General Assemblies, at the core, each gathering dealt with moral issues. Ross appealed directly to the Bible that he and his contemporaries went to for direction on any ethical question. And the 2002 resolution struck a profoundly spiritual chord that ensured anyone who read or heard it would know the gravity of the matters it discussed. So while analyzing how politics, culture, and economics can influence history is important, understanding what informs the moral choices of particular people from a particular time often leads to more significant conclusions. One looks from the recent PCA General Assembly back to the one in 1856 and wonders how the men involved could come to such radically different conclusions and positions. It is striking to note that the men involved in each gathering held not only similar titles—Presbyterian ministers and elders—but on many topics, very similar beliefs as well. Yet, 150 years later, Ross’s denominational descendants condemned and confessed as sin the position he and many of his contemporaries in the Presbyterian Church once held.

As the modern PCA confessed and repented of past sins, it looked back and lamented failures of its former leaders. But is that all there was to it—sinful human beings failing to do their moral duty, deliberately choosing to violate their conscience and God’s law and instead follow the social, economic, cultural, and political convention of their time and place? Plainly put, how could these

³ The Aquila Report, “Racial Reconciliation: Action of the 30th PCA General Assembly,” 18 June, 2015, <http://theaquilareport.com/racial-reconciliation-action-of-the-30th-pca-general-assembly-2002/>.

men have supported slavery? To try to answer these kinds of complex, searching questions, one must investigate and hopefully understand the perspectives and words of the men themselves. Indeed, the first step is analyzing how they *did* support slavery—in a factual, philosophical, historical, and rhetorical way—before ultimately arriving at conclusions about the moral side of the questions.

Reckoning with where a denomination within a certain religion and a certain country has been and what it has done is critical in setting its current goals and articulating its contemporary purpose. Understanding what shaped past leaders' thinking and what factors went into their decisions offers the denomination's current clerical



Reverend James Henley
Thornwell

leadership and laymen alike guidance on both what to do and what to avoid. And more generally applicable to all contemporary people, examining the way any past group answered controversial questions of their time can offer lessons to thoughtful people of any race and any religious or nonreligious persuasion, giving a study like this both broad and particular relevance.

This paper will focus on four southern Presbyterians who held important ministerial positions in the South and were active in the defense of slavery. Reverend Frederick A. Ross, minister and evangelist in a few southern states, primarily Alabama, authored the 1856 pro-slavery pamphlet *Slavery Ordained of God*, a collection of his speeches, letters, and other writings from earlier in the decade defending the South's peculiar

institution.⁴ James Henley Thornwell of South Carolina also wrote and spoke in defense of slavery. Thornwell, president of South Carolina College (today's University of South Carolina) in the 1850s, was a well-known and respected Presbyterian minister and the South's most brilliant theologian according to one historian.⁵ Thornwell wrote extensively on a wealth of topics, but this study focuses on a few chapters of his collected writings: "The Relation of the Church to Slavery" and "The Christian Doctrine of Slavery." Additionally, on May 26, 1850, the South Carolina minister delivered a sermon at the dedication of a new church building "erected for the religious instruction of the Negroes," the title of which was *The Rights and Duties of Masters*. Thornwell also gave a speech to the Presbyterian synod of South Carolina on November 5, 1851, containing a report on the matter of slavery. Along with Ross and Thornwell, Reverend Benjamin Morgan Palmer, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in New Orleans, was another minister active in the biblical defense of slavery. On November 29, 1860, Palmer delivered his "Thanksgiving Sermon" in which he sought to give assurance to his listeners that the South was the righteous

⁴ Tommy W. Rogers, "Dr. Frederick A. Ross and the Presbyterian Defense of Slavery," *Journal of Presbyterian History*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (June, 1967), pp. 112-124. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23326127>.

⁵ Michael O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life in the American South, 1810-1860*, Vol. 2 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), pp. 1113-1157. See also Marilyn J. Westerkamp, "James Henley Thornwell, Pro-Slavery Spokesman within a Calvinist Faith," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 87, No. 1 (January, 1986), pp. 49-64. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27567932>.

side in the fast-approaching national conflict. Cohorts distributed the address throughout the South in the form of newspapers and pamphlets, and Palmer's influence on the Confederacy is undeniable.⁶ Finally, there was Robert Lewis Dabney of Virginia, one time member of the Confederate army as an officer under General Stonewall Jackson and later author of *A Defence of Virginia*, wherein Dabney articulated many of the same proslavery principles that the three other men put forth.⁷



Reverend Benjamin Morgan
Palmer



Reverend Robert Lewis
Dabney

The dates of each source are close to one another, but there are subtle yet important differences in chronology and context. Both Thornwell and Ross made their biblical defenses of slavery in the 1850s, a time of heightened tension and strained political compromise over the continuation and expansion of slavery as well as over contemporary fugitive slave laws. This context would have also given political significance to the religious defense of slavery they articulated. Still, the singular national tension attendant with secession

⁶ Benjamin Morgan Palmer, "Thanksgiving Sermon," *Civil War Causes*. 1860. <http://civilwarcauses.org/palmer.htm>.

⁷ For a biography of Dabney with a discussion of his life, education, work, theology, and influence see Sean Michael Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2005).

and war was not yet a reality at this time.

Palmer and Dabney issued their support of slavery amidst a different national and political climate, and because of this their words carried a different kind and amount of political weight given their particular circumstances. Palmer issued his Thanksgiving Sermon a few weeks after the election of President Abraham Lincoln and about the same amount of time before the state of South Carolina became the first in the South to secede from the Union. In his sermon, he sought to assure the forming Confederacy that it was not only on the right side of the law and providence of God but also on the right side of the coming political conflict. Similarly, Dabney's work held important political as well as religious foundations and meaning. Indeed, the creation of Dabney's *A Defence of Virginia* is an interesting tale in its own right. Dabney spent some time in the army of the Confederacy, both as a staff officer under General Stonewall Jackson then later as a chaplain, before being forced to resign because of illness. Cleared to remain home for medical reasons and seeking to defend his beloved South with a pen in lieu of a sword, Dabney compiled a host of articles he had written some years earlier and published them together in 1863, first in England, hoping to win the British as a southern ally. There the book "languished" for years until the war came to a close, but as a final measure of special devotion to a cause then lost, Dabney published *A Defence of Virginia* in its last form in the United States in 1867.⁸ The story of Dabney's book, then, is most similar in context and timeline to Palmer's sermon. Both came either upon the brink of or during the Civil War, as opposed to the words of Thornwell and Ross, which were issued years before it. With the above context in mind, then, this study first considers key points discerned from the words of Thornwell

⁸ Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life*, 99-128.

and Ross, then from those of Palmer and Dabney, before finally focusing on them altogether to discover a single critical common element that ties them all together.

Examining these men and their words leads to striking realizations that offer insight into their minds and their moral choices. One gains a better understanding of the questions facing the Presbyterian denomination in the South before the Civil War and sees how many antebellum southern Christians dealt with complex, controversial issues of their own time. As leaders and representatives of Christians in their churches, states, and regions, Ross, Thornwell, Palmer, and Dabney serve as a way to look into the thoughts, feelings, and choices of a significant group of antebellum white southern Christians, a demographic as fascinating and influential as it was imperfect.

Altogether, the sources paint a complex and revealing picture. These four men believed in the inerrant authority of a Bible that did not explicitly condemn slavery as well as in a sovereign God who in his divine providence ordained slavery as an imperfect, temporary, and legal social system that prevented many potentially worse conditions from arising in a fallen, sinful world. Yet the writings and sermons examined herein also reveal that these ministers bore a contextualized yet powerful racial prejudice against African-Americans of the time that shaped their thought as well. So their views on Christian theology and biblical doctrine were not alone in informing their philosophy and rhetoric. Both how they interpreted the Bible and how they viewed black people as a group molded their position. Ultimately, their racial prejudice combined with three specific aspects of their Christian theology and interpretation of the Bible to form their particular defense of slavery. As a consequence, within their worldview, slavery constituted a complex, layered and morally ambiguous question.

While this paper focuses on Presbyterian ministers in the South, other denominations around the country also held significant and robust debate on the subject of slavery during the same era. Both Baptists and Methodists, to name only two groups, extensively debated the matter in the years leading up to the Civil War. Both denominations possess a complex and meaningful history. But in view of the Presbyterian denomination's extensive history and profound influence in not only the United States but specifically the South, an examination focused on some of its former ministers holds special interest and significance. And in light of the PCA's recent movement to recognize and deal with its past in both positive and negative manifestations, such a study also offers contemporary meaning and import that can be applied to many people in several different ways.⁹

The sources considered herein were all created and published after the Presbyterian denomination split into its Old School and New School branches in 1837. This was primarily a split based on doctrine, concerning the place and authority of Scripture. The Old School Presbyterians held to a literal interpretation of the Bible and a belief in its inerrancy, while the New School branch began to move towards higher biblical criticism and a more socially rather

⁹ See Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974) and *The Slaveholders' Dilemma: Freedom and Progress in Southern Conservative Thought, 1820-1860*, (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1992); Larry E. Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701-1840* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1987); Stephen R. Haynes, *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Mason I. Lowance Jr., *A House Divided: The Antebellum Slavery Debate in America, 1776-1865* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

than spiritually focused ministry. It is important to note that Dabney, Thornwell, Palmer, and Ross all wrote and preached from an Old School perspective, as this both coincided with and influenced their proslavery stance.

The Presbyterian debate over slavery was a complicated one, reaching back to the creation of the United States. In 1787, the denomination adopted a cautious anti-slavery position that sought the institution's gradual demise. Beyond 1818, that stance would find no more growth in supporters or their passion. Hereafter, the issue of slavery became a regional dividing line within the group in addition to the split between Old School and New School. Most northern Presbyterians were antislavery, while many in the South favored their region's peculiar institution.¹⁰

The induction of more focused and fervent abolitionist rhetoric coincided with the Presbyterian split in the 1830s. Beginning in that decade and growing in extent and influence into the 1840s and 1850s, men like William Lloyd Garrison, Charles G. Finney, and Frederick Douglass (among others) spoke out against slavery. Abolitionists used newspapers, such as Garrison's *The Liberator*, along with speeches to argue against what they believed was the corrupt, oppressive institution of southern slavery. These men argued against slavery from a variety of perspectives and angles, and while they often spoke out against it simply using political ideas such as liberty, equality, and basic human rights, many abolitionists also used the Bible to condemn slavery.¹¹

¹⁰ Irving Stoddard Kull, "Presbyterian Attitudes toward Slavery," *Church History*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (June, 1938), pp. 101-114.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3160673>.

¹¹ Stanley Harrold, *The Abolitionists and the South 1831-1861* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995).

The biblical debate over slavery involved the whole nation in the three decades before the Civil War that decided the institution's fate. Though not monolithic, at the time the United States was for the most part a nation that not only read the Bible frequently but also believed in its divine origins and authority. Consequently, both proslavery advocates and those against the institution used the Bible to bolster their position. In general, proslavery writers employed passages from Israelite law in the Old Testament—primarily Leviticus but also some portions of Genesis and Deuteronomy—to argue that the God had sanctioned slavery as an institution among his people. They also pointed to the New Testament book of Philemon in which the Apostle Paul instructed a servant to return to his Christian master, for whom he also included instructions on how to treat his restored slave. There were further passages within some of Paul's other writings, his letter to the Ephesians for example, in which he instructed slaves to obey their masters and these same masters to in turn treat them with gentleness and fairness. Antislavery writers argued that their proslavery counterparts misinterpreted any parts of the Bible that appeared to sanction slavery. Hebrew Law, they would say, did not sanction the same kind of slavery as that of the American South, which was hereditary and based upon race, but rather temporary positions of servitude as war captives, debtors, or some other similar situation. And if Paul seemed to instruct slaves to obey their masters, he spoke within Greek and Roman culture to what Americans of the 19th century would better recognize as either indentured servants or even hired men. Furthermore, they argued that even if the Old Testament did not condemn slavery as an institution, the command of Christ in the New Testament to do unto others as you would have them do unto you clearly prohibited slaveholding. No matter the final interpretation, both sides

employed powerful sources that bolstered some persuasive arguments. And in the end, regional and political concerns also informed people's thinking at the same time biblical convictions did. So while both sides ramped up the fervor and power of their arguments as the Civil War approached, the nationwide debate was complicated and had no final conclusion during the years when the four ministers considered here published their works.¹²

To understand the four men's defense of slavery, first it is important to bear in mind their belief in the Bible as the authoritative word of God. This is perhaps a well-known point by now, but understanding what it meant to the question of slavery within their worldview is critical. Wrapped up in the authority of the Bible is the belief that the men recording God's word were inspired by the Holy Spirit—meaning the Bible did not contain merely the words of men but instead the very mind, character, and revelation of the Lord. In short, this belief meant that the Bible was the final decider of all ethical, moral, and spiritual questions. Applying this to slavery meant that if the Bible anywhere explicitly condemned the institution itself, God then commanded these Christian men to not only cease participating in it but to actively work toward its expiration. On the other hand, if the Bible failed to condemn the institution, these men felt they had neither right nor

¹² Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006). See also Mason I. Lowance Jr., *A House Divided: The Antebellum Slavery Debate in America, 1776-1865* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Stephen R. Haynes, *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Larry E. Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701-1840* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1987); Michael O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life in the American South, 1810-1860*, 2 Vols. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

duty to do so either. And if indeed the Bible sanctioned the relationship between master and slave, anyone declaring the institution inherently sinful was guilty of either misinterpreting Scripture or, even worse, elevating human values above the word of God. For men like Ross, Thornwell, Palmer, and Dabney, the question of whether to support or condemn the South's peculiar institution hinged first and foremost on what the Bible said about it.¹³

The belief in the Bible as the final authority on the contentious issue of slavery ran throughout Ross's proslavery pamphlet *Slavery Ordained of God*. This belief was in many ways implicit throughout the work. Again and again Ross described the Bible in terms of what God said, intended, forbade, commanded, or sanctioned. He also repeatedly referred unequivocally to the Bible as "God's law." Ross went to the Bible first and last when trying to discern the truth about a questionable matter, and slavery was no exception.¹⁴

This idea also manifested itself explicitly in some statements in different sections of the pamphlet. The starkest example was when Ross appealed to the Bible "in its plain and unanswerable authority" when determining whether the "relation of master and slave" was inherently a sin. The implication was obvious. Ross believed in the truth and final authority of Scripture to answer the slavery question. Though people disagreed over what exactly the

¹³ Robert Bruce Mullin, "Biblical Critics and the Battle over Slavery," *Journal of Presbyterian History*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (1983), pp. 210-226. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23328492>. See also J. Albert Harrill, "The Use of the New Testament in the American Slave Controversy: A Case History in the Hermeneutical Tension between Biblical Criticism and Christian Moral Debate," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Summer, 2000), pp. 149-186. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1123945>.

¹⁴ Ross, *Slavery Ordained of God*, 19-21, 26.

Bible instructed regarding slavery, to this Presbyterian, whatever it did say was true and authoritative, and anyone who failed to believe and proclaim this was treading on dangerous ground in his eyes.¹⁵

Thornwell joined his contemporary Ross in looking to the Bible as the final and authoritative source of answering the slavery question. In his report on slavery before the South Carolina Presbyterian synod, he said that states and communities could honestly differ on slavery as a political question, but as a moral issue, “the Bible has settled it.” To Thornwell, the final authority on the matter of slavery was the Bible. Thornwell connected the idea of biblical authority to the duties, actions, and positions of the Church as a whole. Since the Church was “bound to abide by the authority of the Bible, and that alone,” it had to “[declare] what the Bible teaches, and [enforce] its laws by her own peculiar sanctions.” In other words, if the law of God did not condemn slavery as a sin, the Church could not do so either. To do so, as antislavery Christians did, was to “corrupt the Scriptures” and “profanely add to the duties” of the Church described in the Bible. Thornwell summed up his view by saying, “Where the Scriptures are silent” the Church “must be silent too.” As the Bible was the final authority, the Church could only act upon what the book explicitly stated.¹⁶

In general, the very fact that these men went so quickly and so often to Scripture when defending slavery is telling. One could argue that they simply saw in the Bible an accessible and powerful

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Anderson, Charles A., James Henley Thornwell, and John B. Hill, “Presbyterians Meet the Slavery Problem.” *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (March, 1951), pp. 9-39. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23324662>, 12-15.

way to defend slavery, their region's peculiar economic, social, and political system. There is perhaps some truth to this assertion, but it fails to tell the whole story. It is true that these men went to Scripture and ended up finding a way to defend something that frequently resulted in abuse, cruelty, and oppression. But the reverence afforded their holy book and the urgency with which they defended its ultimate authority adds another layer to the picture. Within the worldview they subscribed to, the Bible spoke to many complicated issues on which decent and intelligent humans often disagreed. At the time, slavery was just such an issue, and their belief in the authority of the Bible profoundly shaped their decision to defend it.

In examining the two sections of this authoritative Bible, the Old and New Testament, Ross and Thornwell arrived at the conclusion that slavery in and of itself was not sinful. Each minister argued that the social and economic relationship between master and slave was not a transgression of the law of God and therefore not inherently evil. They each fully granted that the institution could and did at times give rise to abuse and injustice on the part of the master. These were sins, and any Christian master should not only avoid them but act in fairness and mercy toward his slaves. The contrast between slavery as an abstract institution and concrete instances of abuse and injustice was an important point of distinction for each minister. Like any human relationship, the one between master and slave could involve cruelty or exploitation. But ultimately, Ross and Thornwell argued that slavery as a social and economic system did not explicitly violate the law of God.

Ross attempted to show the moral neutrality of slavery by first defining sin as the transgression of the law of God and then arguing that the institution itself was not “sin *per se*” (emphasis his). Before the 1853 General Assembly, Ross declared that

antislavery activists must “learn from the Bible that the relation between master and slave is not sin *per se*” but instead slavery was only “evil *in certain circumstances*.” The Presbyterian minister further declared that “God says nowhere it [slavery] is sin.” He expounded and built upon these statements in another speech before the 1856 Presbyterian General Assembly. There Ross argued that right and wrong were not transcendent facts that exist “in the nature of things.” Instead, they were “contingencies” and “means,” existing only by the will of God and expressed in his word. Sin was a deliberate act of the will to break the law of God as expressed in Scripture. To Ross, this meant that if God did not condemn slavery as contrary to his law, it could not in itself be sin. He granted that “*the Golden Rule*,” the ethical teaching of Christ in the New Testament, existed in the relations of slave and master, but pointed to examples of Old Testament figures holding slaves with no condemnation from the Lord and pointed out further that “God in the New Testament made no law prohibiting the relation of master and slave.” Altogether, Ross put forth an argument that was consistent with and coherent within his worldview that the Lord did not explicitly condemn slavery itself.¹⁷

Thornwell explored this principle in a chapter of his collected writings called “The Relation of the Church to Slavery.” In this section, Thornwell questioned whether the Church had any right to “declare slavery to be sinful.” The minister argued there was “little doubt” that the Bible did not condemn the relation of master and servant as “incompatible with the will of God.” Instead, Thornwell argued that abolitionists who used the Bible to preach against slavery failed to let Scripture speak for itself. These people elevated their own values and standards above the law of God. For, according to Thornwell, “no direct condemnation of slavery can

¹⁷ Ross, *Slavery Ordained of God*, 2-3, 17, 20-28.

anywhere be found in the Sacred Volume.” In fact, rather than calling slavery sin anywhere in its pages, the Bible “distinctly [sanctioned] it as any other social condition of man.” Like Ross, the South Carolinian Presbyterian found nothing in the Bible that explicitly named slavery as a transgression of the law of God. Thornwell applied this belief to himself and to the Christian Church as a whole. If the Scriptures did not declare slavery a sin, neither would he—and neither should the Church, whether in the North or the South.¹⁸

While they argued in support of the southern institution of slavery, contending that it was not inherently contrary to the law of God, Ross and Thornwell granted that it was not an ideal system. For a Christian who believed in divine providence and the absolute sovereignty of God over a corrupted world and a sinful mankind, deciding how much to fight injustice in this world and how much to simply live for the next one was a difficult decision. In their worldview, divine providence entailed the daily intervention of the Lord in ordinary affairs of human beings. God’s powerful sovereignty over the universe meant that, while he used human choices, actions, and events to accomplish his will, ultimately he directed everything that happened on earth. And because of the sin of mankind and the resulting corruption of the world, he allowed certain systems to exist that were not ideal and could lead to abuse but still would accomplish his higher purposes for his people. The evidence before these men showed that God had ordained a government that for nearly a century had recognized slavery as a legal system. To rebel against this could be seen as either hastily rushing toward a destiny God intended to bring about later, or,

¹⁸ James Henley Thornwell, *The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell, D.D., LL.D.*, Vol 4, *Ecclesiastical* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1873), <http://bit.ly/1QHuzG0>., 384-386.

worse, heretically denying the authority of the law of God within his creation. This kind of action, then, would not only cause strife in social, political, and economic spheres. Emancipation or abolition coming too soon would also undermine and endanger the spiritual mission of the church, the salvation of souls and the spiritual education of saints both black and white. In short, the line between seeking earthly justice in line with the Lord's will and denying the authority of that will was a blurry one.

The theme of God's providence showed up throughout Ross's *Slavery Ordained of God*. With it was the southern minister's belief founded in the Bible that the world was broken and corrupt because of the sin of mankind and thus must include social systems like slavery that are not ideal but exist often temporarily to prevent conditions that are worse. "Slavery," said Ross, "may, in *given conditions*, be *for a time* better than freedom for the slave of any complexion." Even so, Ross pled with southern Christians to understand and realize that God did not intend slavery to be permanent. While slavery was "of God" according to his divine direction and "not a sin" according to his revealed word, it was still "a degraded condition" that would eventually "pass away in the [fullness] of Providence." But Ross concluded that "until another and better destiny may be unfolded" slavery should continue for the good of slave, master, the American family, and the country as a whole. Ross defended slavery with realism and an eye toward a better future for blacks and whites alike. His position was a careful and complex one. He offered words of caution and reprimand to both northern antislavery advocates and southern Christians, but he concluded that in a fallen world, the proslavery position could be a moral one.¹⁹

¹⁹ Ross, *Slavery Ordained of God*, 2-3.

Thornwell joined Ross in defending slavery in this way. The South Carolinian, however, expounded more on the mission of the Church and the duties of Christian masters within a slaveholding society. Thornwell granted that slavery was not an ideal system and believed that it was the result of mankind's fall into sin and the corrupted nature of the world. But in his report to the South Carolina synod and in his collected writings, he discussed the mission of the Church and added another layer to his proslavery stance. First, it was not the mission of the Church to "wage war upon every form of human ill" as a "moral institute for universal good." Thornwell granted that the Church certainly should contribute to the progress and prosperity of society, but the Bible taught that the world could not be "converted into a paradise" by human effort, so social justice should not be the primary concern of the Christian Church. Though Christians could fight many earthly injustices, at times they had to trust some matters to the providence of God and focus instead on the next world. To Thornwell, communicating to people the need for salvation through Jesus Christ constituted the primary aim and mission of the Church. Deciding whether or not to support slavery in the antebellum South was one place wherein understanding that specific mission was critical.²⁰

In *The Rights and Duties of Masters* Thornwell outlined what it would look like for a Christian master to not struggle against an imperfect but necessary and divinely ordained institution but to instead carry out his Christian duty toward his slaves. As it was not the primary concern of the Church to fight earthly injustice, it was

²⁰ Charles A. Anderson, James Henley Thornwell, and John B. Hill, "Presbyterians Meet the Slavery Problem," 10-14; James Henley Thornwell, *The Rights and Duties of Masters* (Charleston, South Carolina: Steam Power Press of Walker and James, 1850), <http://bit.ly/1R7dssY>, 1-15.

not the only duty of a master to provide for the physical needs of his slaves. Thornwell emphasized the Christian duty of a master to also provide for the religious instruction and spiritual wellbeing of his slaves. A master must render to his slaves what was “just and equal” as far as worldly provision, but instructing black slaves on the tenets and necessity of the Christian life was the “triumph of Christian benevolence.” By doing this, masters showed a deeper love to their slaves, providing for the eternal salvation of their souls. Thornwell took in the providence of God, the sinfulness of mankind, and the brokenness of the world and applied each of them to the slavery question. In the end, the South Carolina Presbyterian joined his fellow southern minister Ross and concluded that supporting slavery could be the right moral choice in their place and time.²¹

Several years after Ross and Thornwell articulated their multifaceted positions, two other Presbyterian ministers echoed their words with a biblical defense of slavery of their own. Palmer and Dabney wrote and preached from their proslavery perspective in the 1860s, a decade with bitter conflicts and difficulties born out of Ross and Thornwell’s time but with new ways of trying to settle them—war and secession rather than just heated rhetoric and portentous political compromise. Palmer’s Thanksgiving Sermon came on the eve of the Civil War and Dabney’s *Defence of Virginia* was published during the very throes of the conflict. Still, the proslavery position of each man was similar to that of both Ross and Thornwell. Palmer and Dabney also focused on the fundamental authority of Scripture, the belief that the Bible did not condemn slavery, and God’s providential ordination of slavery within a sinful and fallen world. Overall, despite any differences in

²¹ Ibid.

political context, the rhetorical pillars of their defense of slavery was the same.

Speaking from his Presbyterian worldview, Palmer shared the others' belief in the power and authority of Scripture to answer the question of whether slaveholding was a sin, but he went a step further. Since southern defenders of slavery followed and believed what the Bible said about it, the abolitionists fighting to end the institution did so in an "undeniably atheistic" spirit. Palmer said that those who denied the authority of Scripture over earthly political and social matters "worshipped reason" and "blasphemously [invaded] the prerogatives of God." To Palmer, no less than his fellow Presbyterians, the Bible was God's law and final word on moral questions. Anyone who denied this truth and sought to elevate other sources, such as human values or reason, above Scripture were guilty of subordinating the word of God to their own goals.²²

Dabney also believed in the authority of Scripture to answer the question of the morality of slavery. He implied the importance and authority of Scripture by associating abolitionist interpretations with heretical biblical critics that disbelieved in the word of God and spread false doctrine. Moreover, Dabney claimed abolitionists in their hearts did not approach the question with an eye toward the authority of Scripture. Instead, they "determined . . . in advance" their position and went to the Bible for reinforcement only, and in doing so they had to twist portions of the text to fit their preconceived values. This was untenable to Dabney, for "the only sure and perfect rule of right is the Bible." In a chapter of *A Defence of Virginia*, he summed up his position on the whole issue: "In the emphatic language of the book whose protection we claim: 'Let God be true, but every man a liar.'" Dabney went to

²² Palmer, "Thanksgiving Sermon."

Scripture first and last in answering the question of slavery, and the southern minister surely meant to follow what he thought the book said on the issue, no matter what others chose to do.²³

Palmer approached the question of whether slavery was inherently sinful in a different way than those who came before him but with a similar conclusion and some deeper implications. In his “Thanksgiving Sermon,” Palmer pointed a finger at abolitionists and antislavery advocates, saying that by attempting to end slavery they disbelieved the word of God and “[set] bounds to what God alone can regulate.” To him, attempts to bring about an end to slavery came from a point of view that both denied the providence of God in human history and failed to trust God’s law enough to condemn only what he explicitly condemned. Palmer pointed to slavery as a system “interwoven with our entire social fabric” and said “these slaves form parts of our households, even as our children.” Most importantly, he declared slavery to be “a relationship recognized and sanctioned in the Scriptures of God.” Consequently, Palmer stated that abolitionists failed to believe the word of God for he believed the Bible sanctioned slavery and was thus on his side and the side of the South. The Bible recognized and sanctioned slavery, and anyone who fought against the institution raged against the very word of the Lord.²⁴

In his *Defence of Virginia*, Dabney also treated the critical question of whether slavery was sin per se. Dabney’s exploration of this question was more detailed and more extensive than that of the other ministers. He delved deeply into the text of the Bible, both Old and New Testament and argued as did the others that the

²³ Robert Lewis Dabney, *A Defence of Virginia* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Portage Publications, Inc., 2005), <http://www.portagepub.com/dl/causouth/dabney.pdf>, 117-129, 140-142.

²⁴ Palmer, “Thanksgiving Sermon.”

“the Bible teaches that the relation of master and slave is perfectly lawful and right, provided only its duties be lawfully fulfilled.” Dabney broke his argument into sections treating both the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament history books of Genesis and Exodus, Dabney found numerous examples of Israelite figures holding slaves and even instances where Moses mentioned it in the laws he received from God. In none of these examples did Dabney find an express condemnation of the practice. Nor, according to Dabney’s interpretation, was there in the New Testament a denunciation of slavery as evil. Neither Christ nor the Apostles explicitly forbade the practice, and Dabney argued that they spoke on such matters enough that they would have done so if it were an “essentially religious evil.” Overall, Dabney found no condemnation of slavery within the Bible, and it would have been anathema to him to speak above or ahead of the word of God and to work against an institution permitted according to the law of God.²⁵

At the time, those who debated slavery did not only hold a debate about the literal words of the Bible, though, but also about the overall tone and direction of its moral commands. Many antislavery advocates argued that even if the Bible did not explicitly condemn slavery, the idea of holding another human being as property surely violated the spirit of Christ’s ethical command to treat others as you would want to be treated. Dabney spoke on this distinction between the spirit of the law and the letter of the law. The Virginia Presbyterian responded to this argument and attempted to show that a Christian slaveholder could indeed obey this command without having to resort to emancipating his slaves. In *A Defence of Virginia*, Dabney first stated that abolitionists who advanced this argument did so “with a disdainful

²⁵ Dabney, *A Defence of Virginia*, 70-133.

confidence” when really their thinking was “founded on a preposterous interpretation” of the command of Christ. Dabney said that antislavery forces put forth the argument with the underlying assumption that slavery was evil and incompatible with the rule. Furthermore, the Virginian argued that as Christ came to fulfill the Old Testament, no command he issued could contradict what it said but rather built upon it. Christ in building upon the Mosaic Law that sanctioned slavery could not at the same time issue a command that opposed it. The command of Christ to love others and treat them how you would want to be treated was one and the same with commandments in the Old Testament that coincided with laws that sanctioned slavery.²⁶

Furthermore, in attempting to tear down the abolitionist argument, Dabney asked if the so-called Golden Rule also applied to slaves themselves in their relationship to their masters. By the abolitionist interpretation, the slave would be “morally bound to decline his own liberty; i.e., to act towards his master as he, were he the master, would desire.” Dabney described such an idea as absurd and concluded that Christ’s rule of conduct must have meant something else. “The rule of our conduct to our neighbor is not any desire which we might have,” he said, but “that desire which we should, in that case, be morally entitled to have.” Essentially, he contextualized the rule itself. In his view, the rule commanded a master to treat a slave how he would wish to be treated *were he himself a slave*. At the same time, the rule also commanded the slave to treat his masters how he would want to be treated *if he were a master*. In the end, Dabney believed that slaves should respect and obey their masters and perform their labors with diligence and that masters should provide and care for their slaves while treating them with fairness and justice according to their

²⁶ Dabney, *A Defence of Virginia*, 122-126.

service. If all this happened, neither slave nor master violated any part of the Bible's commands, either in letter or spirit.²⁷

In his Thanksgiving Sermon Palmer added his voice to those who before him applied the providence of God to the slavery debate. He plainly declared the "existence of a personal God whose will shapes the destiny of nations." Several times throughout the sermon, he underscored his belief in the providence of God specifically over the issue of slavery. The timing of Palmer's speech, mere weeks before the future Confederate states began seceding from the Union, shaped his overall goal: to offer a biblically based defense of the South, the southern way of life, and the institution of slavery. As a result, much of his speech focused on God's providence. Palmer argued that as God had ordained southern slavery up until that point in 1860, abolitionists hoping to destroy the system raged against God himself and disbelieved his word. In defending the South and slavery, Palmer claimed that he and others defended "the cause of God and religion." Antislavery forces, on the other hand, disregarded "*the delicate mechanism of Providence*" and sought to change something "*which the great Designer alone can control.*" To Palmer, the cause of the South was a righteous one that God himself guided and ordained. In defending slavery as existing under God's divine direction, Palmer took a moral stance in which he felt justified. In Palmer's mind, God could choose someday to abolish slavery using human choices and actions as his means, but he believed its abolition should not come at the hasty behest of northern abolitionists and others with a wrong view of society, mankind, and God's word.²⁸

Dabney shared this view, but the Virginian emphasized the fallen nature of the world and the temporary nature of slavery as a flawed

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Palmer, "Thanksgiving Sermon."

but necessary system more than any of his fellow Presbyterians. *A Defence of Virginia* often specifically discussed slavery in the American South as it was at the time, but in communicating his entire proslavery position, Dabney also focused on the ultimate destiny of slavery in an abstract and worldwide sense. “There is a true evil in the necessity of it,” he said, but the origin of slavery could be found in the “sin and depravity of man.” He allowed that the spread of the gospel in love and righteousness could make slavery unnecessary in the same way it would one day abolish the need for prisons. But this would not happen until the return of Christ and the establishment of the new heaven and earth. Until then, mankind could not abolish “true slavery” any more than they could hope to abolish sin itself or even death. Employing his belief in the sinful and corrupted nature of the world, Dabney defended slavery as consistent with the law of God. The Lord directed the broken world and sinful mankind according to his will, and Dabney believed that will could allow slavery to be a moral if imperfect way to organize society.²⁹

The Christian theology and biblical interpretation of Ross, Thornwell, Palmer, and Dabney were important aspects of their defense of slavery. It is true that they believed in the final authority of the Bible in answering moral questions, including the question of slavery. They also believed the Bible did not explicitly condemn slavery as inherently sinful. Moreover, they believed that God in his divine providence ordained and sanctioned slavery in the United States, for a time, as a method of ordering society and the economy, and preventing, potentially worse circumstances from arising in a sinful and corrupted world.

Yet these beliefs alone did not account for or entirely comprise their proslavery philosophy. Another and more invidious doctrine

²⁹ Dabney, *A Defence of Virginia*, 130-132.

combined with the three specific aspects of Christian theology and biblical interpretation to round out and solidify their rhetoric. Ross, Thornwell, Palmer, and Dabney also believed to one extent or another in the inferiority of African-Americans as a race. Each man wrote or spoke about it in different ways and without identical conclusions, but nonetheless it was a common and critical theme in their rhetoric. Most clear in their writings and sermons was a fundamental racial prejudice that can be accurately described as paternalistic, a view that held black people as categorically lower than whites in culture, economic ability, and intellectual, spiritual, and moral development. In the paternalistic view, it was the duty of the white slaveholder—who were often and not coincidentally people much like some of the members of these ministers' churches—to look after their black slaves and provide for them physically, mentally, and spiritually. The prejudicial assumption was that black slaves were, because of their race, unable to do all of this for themselves. The paternalistic model very rarely if ever worked out as it was supposed to by those who held to it, but nonetheless, it was a powerful ideal among many southern whites of the time, primarily slaveholders, and especially among Christians who supported the institution.

Paternalistic racial prejudice against African-Americans as a group was the final and in some ways most critical link in the rhetorical chain of these particular proslavery ministers. They combined it with their other beliefs and argued therefore that supporting and engaging in slavery was a morally acceptable choice at the time. And despite any differences in chronological context, each source plainly bears the unmistakable mark of paternalistic racial prejudice.

Ross's words on the matter did represent a complex perspective. While the harsh realities of well documented abuses concurrent

with slavery make some of his statements ring hollow in retrospect, understanding his point of view as he presented it offers insight. In the clearest example of paternalistic prejudice, Ross claimed in his argument for the continuation of slavery that the institution was “for the good of the slave.” Yet he offered his listeners a word of caution. He pled with southerners to relinquish two false ideas: first, that blacks were “of a different species” than whites, and second, that God had intended all races to remain in their native continents “in swarms, like bees.” Ross hoped people in the South, most particularly those southern Christians who owned slaves, would put away these notions and that a new perspective would bring about more fair and merciful Christian treatment of slaves in the region.³⁰

Ross further detailed this perspective in *Slaver Ordained of God*. He compared the relation of black slaves to white masters with several other relationships that he believed illustrated the necessity and purpose of slavery: “husband and wife; parent and child; teacher and scholar; master and apprentice” among others. Ross used these relationships as comparisons to slavery to make his main point. He believed that “God intended the rule of superior over the inferior, in relations of service” and that this would “exemplify human depravity” and demonstrate God’s “overruling blessing.” Ross argued that different people would at different times and in different contexts be inferior in some ways to other people and would thus need ruling, direction, and instruction. African-American slaves in the South constituted one such case in his mind. For while he believed slavery was far from ideal and only a temporary system, Ross still felt many blacks needed this kind of instruction and ruling and that the institution offered “blessings in its time to the South and the Union” and was for the

³⁰ Ross, *Slavery Ordained of God*, 2, 12, 22-23.

good of those enslaved. Ross supported slavery for a complex variety of reasons, but his belief in the inferiority of blacks, which he believed was neither inherent nor permanent, certainly shaped his position in defense of the South's peculiar institution.³¹

Thornwell's words were also multifaceted but overall were still laden with the distinctive paternalism and racial prejudice. In his sermon on the rights and duties of Christian masters, the South Carolina Presbyterian, like the other ministers, exhibited the assumption that black people as a group were inferior in moral capacity and intelligence to whites. Yet Thornwell had a slightly different focus than his fellow Presbyterians. Though admittedly shaped by his racist perspective, his primary concern for slaves was that they be given proper Christian instruction and spiritual guidance. This may sound insincere to modern ears. But as Thornwell explained elsewhere, the primary mission of the church was not combatting social injustices and economic ills. Instead, the aim of the Church, and thus his goal, was to instruct slaves in spiritual matters that would ultimately save their souls rather than merely securing for them worldly skills and goods or even political liberty.³²

The duty of every Christian master, then, was to not only provide for his slaves physical provisions but to treat him as a fellow sinner in need of the forgiveness of God only received through Jesus Christ. In this way, Thornwell exhorted Christian masters to take their slaves to church as often as possible where they would be ministered to and hear the gospel that was the foundation of Thornwell's worldview. He illustrated these points in a few surprisingly touching passages from the sermon. The South Carolinian stated that even the "meanest slave has, in him, a soul

³¹ Ibid.

³² Thornwell, *The Rights and Duties of Masters*, 47-49.

of priceless value.” Furthermore, he said, “Thought, reason, conscience, the capacity of virtue, the capacity of Christian love” and an “intimate connection to God” were parts of both slaves’ and masters’ “common humanity.” Thornwell felt these “[reduced] to insignificance all outward distinctions.” Most important to him in this sermon was communicating all of humanity’s sin and need for Christ. His message to white slaveholders was plain: Black slaves were poor and lesser in certain ways, but in the end God would treat them no differently. Neither, then, should their white Christian masters fail to treat them with fairness, concern, dignity, and generosity.³³

Palmer echoed Ross and Thornwell with similar sentiments from his sermon in 1860, but the New Orleans man approached the whole matter from a different angle. In his sermon, Palmer criticized the North as hypocrites who attempted to tear down and transform the southern way of life. As he saw it, the Yankees sought to disrupt the whole southern society and end slavery but offered neither insight nor aid in providing employment, sustenance, or education, for the proposed freedmen. Within this criticism lay the assumption that newly freed slaves would be unable to do any of this for themselves. In Palmer’s mind, southern Christian slaveholders were the “constituted guardians of the slaves themselves,” there to protect them, provide for them both physically and spiritually, and do for them things they were not equipped to do for themselves. Again, the realities of many slaves’ treatment at the hands of their masters themselves belie Palmer’s statement, but his words are revealing nonetheless. It was not merely his positions regarding the authority of Scripture, God’s law, and God’s providence that informed his proslavery position.

³³ Ibid.

Instead, these things combined with his view of black people as inferior and unequipped to live successfully in American society.³⁴

In his defense of his home state and region, Dabney argued slavery was not only morally acceptable but temporarily good for those who played a part in it. Certain portions of the book exhibited his paternalistic and prejudicial perspective that helped to shape his proslavery philosophy. Dabney declared once that slavery was not the ideal social organization—indeed there was “true evil in the necessity for it.” According to Dabney, this “evil” was the depravity of man and the brokenness of the world; however, he specifically pointed to “ignorance and vice in the [laboring] classes” as the primary reasons for slavery’s necessity. One understands that he means specifically the ignorance and vice of African-American slaves who, according to his view, could not yet live well enough that liberty would serve them or society.³⁵

Furthermore, Dabney chastened those like Ross who compared slavery to the relationship of husband and wife, pointing out that this relationship existed before the fall of mankind into sin. Slavery on the other hand only needed to exist to be as the “restraints and punishments of civil government” since man was “depraved and fallen.” Again it is key to understand that Dabney had blacks in mind when speaking of ignorance, depravity, and vice. In his mind, as a group and culture, African-Americans were inferior to him and other white Christian slaveholders, whose job it was then to give them direction, instruction, and correction. According to Dabney, too many blacks lacked the requisite level of “true virtue” and “self-command” to operate as free and equal persons to their white counterparts. His belief that blacks could not prosper and

³⁴ Palmer, “Thanksgiving Sermon.”

³⁵ Dabney, *A Defence of Virginia*, 130-132.

live well morally and spiritually on their own joined with his theological ideas to lead him to inform his proslavery rhetoric.³⁶

As the evidence demonstrates, in their time these men attempted to come to clear and coherent moral conclusions on the question of slavery. All the while, their racial prejudice combined with their Christian theology and biblical interpretation. To these Presbyterian ministers, the Scripture by which they lived their lives appeared to come down on their side of the issue. Slavery did not in itself transgress the letter of the holy and authoritative law of God. Nor did the relationship between master and slave violate even the spirit of the law as represented in Christ's command to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. In this light, those who argued that the Bible condemned slavery and tried to destroy the institution were agitators on the side of atheists and heretics. In contrast, ministers like Ross, Thornwell, Palmer, and Dabney saw themselves as righteous defenders of their faith, their region, and most importantly the word of God.

A paternalistic view regarding black people as inferior, lacking the ability to provide for themselves either worldly goods or spiritual knowledge, also augmented their other purely theological notions. A sense of their own superiority as a race and as individuals combined with the ministers' belief in the authority and teaching of Scripture. As the sources show, this paternalism and racial prejudice further complicated their analysis of the morality of holding another human being as personal property.

In this light it may be tempting to look back on these ministers with a sense of modern moral superiority, believing that in their position, we would not let the prevailing racial prejudices and views of the time color our thinking on a matter as black and white as human slavery. But to truly understand them, we must seek to

³⁶ Ibid.

understand past people's choices on their own terms, in their own context, and with their own information. This should be the goal of anyone who thinks back on issues, questions, and people from the past. Contextualizing the moral choices of some antebellum southern Christians, then, may throw a metaphorical wrench in some modern thoughts of automatically holding higher ethical ground, because in the end, evidence shows that the moral choices of these men were complicated and difficult.

Still, those quintessentially human qualities of pride in oneself and prejudice against others that are different clearly influenced the conclusions and actions of each man considered in this paper. Within his worldview, each one considered the evidence at hand—both divine and earthly—and staked out his position based on what believed was in the Bible, what evidence he could see in the world around him, and perhaps most importantly what was in his heart. In the end, Shaping what each man saw in the Bible and in the world around him was what was in his heart—a fundamental belief in the inferiority of black people. Prejudice united with other factors and opened up the possibility for them that supporting slavery was a morally acceptable choice.

Understanding the complex story of these men and their defense of slavery, along with its implications, adds a new layer to the history of race, slavery, and Christianity in the antebellum south. One can look back at these four antebellum southern Presbyterian ministers and consider that while American slavery was an unjust and oppressive system that often involved much cruelty and abuse, many who supported it did so from a contextual position that was perhaps as articulate and coherent as it is objectionable according to today's standards of racial sensitivity and fairness. Even so, while this point offers some new light by which to examine the mind of southern white Christians before the Civil War it in no

way diminishes the tragedy that was the South's peculiar institution. Recognizing the complex interplay between Christian theology, biblical interpretation, and racial prejudice gives Christians today of any color and any denomination a deeper understanding of how people in the past processed difficult moral questions and harsh realities of their day. American Christians seeking to understand the church's and the country's past can learn that the moral choices of Christians in the South regarding slavery were perhaps not as easy as might be believed now. Even with this moral complexity in mind, modern Christians must also learn the critical lesson of how dangerous it can be to allow racial prejudice and a belief in the inferiority of other human beings to mix with trust in the authority of Scripture and the divine providence of God. If American Christians as a group begin to understand and apply this new understanding, the implications can greatly strengthen the Church as a whole, as the lessons of the past shape the choices, judgments, and relationships of the present.

While the many of the first and most obvious consequences of this study may seem tailored to the relationships and actions of Christians in America—both black and white—who are still seeking to understand and come to grips a complicated past, a story like this also has much wider applications to people of all colors and creeds. First, anyone can and should learn even from these four white southern Presbyterian men how dangerous and corruptive prejudice against any group of people can be. Prejudicial, paternalistic belief in the inferiority of African-Americans caused these otherwise thoughtful, educated, and ethical people to believe that supporting a system as unjust and cruel as American chattel slavery could be a morally good choice. This leads any thoughtful person to conclude that similar prejudices can and do still exist and exert their influence today in

many places and situations around the world. Furthermore, no matter one's race, ethnicity, or religion (or lack thereof), one can discern in this study of human history the importance of context in understanding people and ideas from the past. Surely, as much as they drove the culture in which they lived, Thornwell, Ross, Palmer, and Dabney were also products of their time and place, in many ways taking on some of the choices, attitudes and beliefs of those around them. This kind of realization ought to lead people now to frequently and critically examine the moral choices, attitudes, and beliefs of their time and place with as much objectivity as possible. Human beings must constantly look around the world and question things sometimes taken for granted and decide whether they really are true or right. Perhaps if Thornwell, Ross, Palmer, and Dabney had done this better, they would not have defended and supported slavery at all. Unfortunately, they could not be so objective, circumspect, and detached from their place and time. In the end, they were unable to clearly see and fully believe in "another and better destiny" that Ross spoke of and what it meant for them and their fellow countrymen.

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John Hunt, Huntsville's First Citizen

By David Byers

For over two hundred 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 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 Land South of the Ohio River, 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 November 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 brother-in-law, David Larkin and swore him in, in nearby Rogersville. Hunt appears in the 1790 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 several 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 there he dealt with the audits of money spent, arranged for the printing of laws and journals of the meetings, and paid

The images listed below can be viewed at www.hmchs.org/gallery

Images 27 thru 31 and 36 and 37 are taken from the Published Colonial Records of the American Colonies, North Carolina.

Image 27- in May 1783 Hunt was paid as Clerk of the House of Commons and wrote a letter to Governor Richard Caswell regarding expenses of the House.

Image 28- Hunt was paid 25 pounds for searching and examining public papers, vouchers regarding North Carolina claims against the United States and delivering that information to the Comptroller.

Image 29- The North Carolina Senate protested the hiring of John Hunt as Clerk of the House of Commons. The House responded with sarcasm and support of Hunt.

Image 30- John Hunt wrote a letter to the new governor asking for guidance on instructions given by the previous governor.

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.

View at www.hmchs.org/gallery

Image 31- Hunt was instructed to draw 200 pounds, exchange it for hard money or tobacco, to buy paper and get the new laws

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 circulation. In this case he was to go from

Hillsboro (near Raleigh) to New Bern, on 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 (sic) 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 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 Planters and Merchants 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

**The image can be viewed at
www.hmchs.org/gallery**

Image 32- Currency printed by the North Carolina Legislature shows Hunt’s signature. Two appointees signed every bill.

considered one of the most worthless of those printed at that time. Counterfeit bills soon turned up with the same names.

Then a big-time opportunity came. In November 1788 he 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 the secretary and 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 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 Tazwell 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 Tazwell, as was

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Image 38- Hunt is mentioned on a plaque in front of the Claiborne County courthouse as a founder.

the first term of the court in 1802. Hunt gave land for the first church in the town. Hunt again served as Sheriff, this time of the new

Claiborne County, for 4 years beginning in 1801. In June 1802, because he was Sheriff, he 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 he 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,

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Image 40, 41, 43, and 45 are from abstracts of the County Records.

Image 40- Hunt is elected sheriff of Claiborne County.

Image 41- Hunt and others post a 2500-pound bond so that he could serve as Collector of Public Monies.

Image 43- The County Court was held in John Hunt's house.

Image 45- When Hunt was elected sheriff of Hawkins County he and others signed a 2000-pound bond to insure he would do the job properly.

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 was evidence of many trades. The term as sheriff of Claiborne County ended in 1804. Then his son, John Hunt, Jr., was elected to replace him. The son continued the land sales activity after his father came to Alabama. In Sullivan County alone, 96 deals were done between 1803 and 1837. The Hunts were in the

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Images 48 to 51 are documents showing land transactions.

Image 48- An actual deed shows Hunt sold 100 acres for 50 pounds to Henry Brown.

Image 49- An actual deed shows Hunt sold 100 acres for 50 pounds to John Galbreath.

Image 50- Court record shows Hunt sold a lot in Tazwell to Ezekiel Craft.

Image 51- Court record show Hunt sold a lot in Tazwell to his son, John Hunt, Jr.

Images can be viewed at www.hmchs.org/gallery

Image 34- A roster of attendees at the 1789 North Carolina Constitutional Convention to approve the US Constitution showed John Hunt represented Hawkins County and served as Secretary.

Image 35- Actual document showed Hunt was appointed to serve as Secretary of the Constitutional Convention.

Image 36- Hunt opposed payment for travel to the Convention to William Blount. The record shows Hunt "acquitted himself with great propriety."

land business.

Many knew about the numerous and 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 1000 acres, including the spring, for \$1000. Certainly the speculator Hunt was aware of the interest in this area.

Hunt decided to look south into the 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. A night was spent with the Criner family at New Market on the Mountain Fork Creek. They 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 in the spring of 1805. They were at home because in February of 1806, John's son, David, married David Larkin's daughter, Elizabeth, in

Winchester, Tennessee. The Larkins, the Beans and the Hunts had moved together several times before. 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 December 13, 1808. A census, taken at his direction by Thomas Freeman, revealed 2223 men, women and slaves were here. In that census, Hunt is listed with five slaves, meaning he had some wealth. Within 4 years, 5000 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, slave-holding planters, many from Petersburg, Georgia, came.

They brought with them a sophisticated life-style, political connections, education and money. Most who would be leaders of the new town came in that group.

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."

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 from so many rods to a large oak tree, meandering down the creek to two dogwoods, and adjoining 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 August 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 August 29th and September 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 October 23rd he bought 160 acres in northwest Madison County that 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 land in the area of the old

Huntsville airport. 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 innkeepers 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.

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's 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 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 February 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.' "

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 while others believe he lived with his son in a nearby Tennessee community and is buried there.

He 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.

Huntsville Public Library's late archivist, Rane' 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 bi-centennial 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

The Author: *David Byers is a Huntsville native and a graduate of Alabama Polytechnic Institute. He is a retired fourth-generation nurseryman. Very active in the community, he has been involved in many organizations and boards. He is the author of the book, Crapemyrtle, A Grower's Thoughts and has written several*

articles on Huntsville history. He and his wife, Janie, have three sons and three grandchildren.

TIMELINE OF JOHN HUNT'S EVENTFUL LIFE

- about 1750 John Hunt was born in Fincastle County, Virginia
- 1771 Hunt joined the Granville County, North Carolina militia
- 1777 Hunt takes oath to support the state of North Carolina
- 1777 Hunt began as a clerk of the North Carolina House of Commons
- 1787 Hunt was appointed Sheriff of Hawkins County, North Carolina
- 1787 Hunt signed petition to separate Tennessee from North Carolina
- 1789 Hunt ended his service as a clerk of the North Carolina House of Commons
- 1789 Hunt was secretary at the Constitutional Convention representing Hawkins County, NC
- 1790 Hunt was appointed Captain in the militia of the Territory South of the River Ohio
- 1796 Tennessee became a state of the United States
- 1801 Hunt was elected Sheriff of Claiborne County, Tennessee
- 1805 Hunt came to the Big Spring in what would become Madison County
- 1808 Robert Williams, governor of the Mississippi Territory created Madison County
- 1809 Federal land sales of Madison County property began in Nashville, Tennessee
- 1809 Hunt was outbid for his home by Leroy Pope. He bought three other parcels.
- 1810 Hunt was named Madison County Coroner by the Mississippi Territory governor

- 1811 Mississippi Territory legislature changes town name from Twickenham to Huntsville
- 1819 Alabama becomes a state
- 1822 John Hunt dies

SOME SOURCES:

There are a series of photographs that accompany this article. If printed in the format for this Review a large part of the information would be too small for comfortable reading. The photographs of documents and pages are available on the website of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society.

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Emblems of Woe: How the South Reacted to Lincoln's Murder

By David Hardin

*The following excerpt is taken from **Emblems of Woe: How the South Reacted to Lincoln's Murder**, an e-book by David Hardin (Now and Then Reader pub., 2014). Hardin, a Huntsville resident, writes here of the harsh response and near-mutiny of many Union soldiers in parts of the occupied South, including Huntsville, upon hearing the news of President Lincoln's death on April 15, 1865. With permission of David Hardin.*

THE SHORT-FUSE reaction of Union Army soldiers, as evident in Nashville and in [Union General William T.] Sherman's fears for Raleigh, was a genuine menace not only to captured Confederate soldiers but to civilians at hand. That the number of retaliatory killings—that is, murders—was comparatively few hardly minimizes the many other punitive actions (arrests, assaults, vandalism) that underscored the seething rage of Union soldiers. Nor was Nashville alone in recording multiple homicides. In New Orleans the *Daily Picayune* for April 20 listed at least nine such city murders in a twenty-four-hour period.

Nor was the South alone. In Chicago, an almost gleeful Union private observed, soldiers shot boisterous, anti-Lincoln

“villains so quickly, that the cry [of joy] dies in their throats mingled with the death rattle. ... The swift Justice is approved by all good citizens.”

The emotions of Union soldiers in response to the assassination are abundantly mirrored in diaries, memoirs, and letters to home. An Iowa soldier wrote his wife: *"I have heard only one sentiment expressed, and it seems to be universal throughout the army. Woe to the South if this Army is compelled to pass through it again."*

An Ohio officer said his men were consumed with rage and *"walking about with clenched fists swearing that they would have revenge."* A Union soldier in North Carolina, remarking on Sherman's talks with [Confederate General] Joe Johnston, warned that if

"we make another campaign it will be an awful one. ... We hope Johnston will not surrender."

In Washington enraged soldiers had to be kept under tight control, which, said a fellow Yank, probably prevented a massacre as there *"were many ex-Confederate soldiers in the city, also many Southern sympathizers."* One man was killed by a soldier after calling Lincoln a "black rascal."

In the wake of the news, officials in such cities as New Orleans, Atlanta, and Savannah, Georgia, were told by military authorities to draft public statements of grief. In Vicksburg, soldiers' demands forced resolutions compelling citizens to wear mourning for thirty days and to raise money for a Lincoln monument. In Chattanooga, Tennessee, nine men were arrested for *"expressing pleasure"* at the death; they were made to labor about town while wearing signs labeled *"Assassination Sympathizer."* In North Carolina soldiers prevented from attacking defeated Confederates instead set fire to a "princely" plantation.

In Richmond, a city already half-destroyed by war, a Union division commander ordered his camp to be surrounded by other troops while he broke the news to his men and urged them to maintain *"moderation, conciliation, and magnanimity"*. He also

vowed to join them to annihilate “*the Southern Slaveholding race*” if the assassination proved to be linked to the Rebel government. In Mobile two women who shouted “**Glory to God!**” when they heard of Lincoln’s death were refused passage by the captain of a military transport, as soldiers on board had threatened to kill them once at sea.

No act, it seems, was too small. In occupied Huntsville, Alabama, the diarist Mary Jane Chadick recorded the order of Union General R.S. Granger, warning of punishment for persons “exalting” the assassination. Soon a “Mr. Westley Parkes was seen standing on the porch of his brother’s house, laughing and talking with some young ladies, which excited suspicion that they were rejoicing in regard to the above [Granger’s order]. The house was searched, and last night some of the furniture was moved out with a threat to burn the house.” The following day, April 17, “Miss Ella Scruggs and Miss Edmonia Toney were arrested and taken to the Courthouse on a charge of having rejoiced at the late news. Col. Horner read them a lecture and dismissed them.”

Behind this sometimes murderous rage of Union soldiers lay the sheer admiration they held for Lincoln, the man they affectionately called “Old Abe” and “Father Abraham.” Not only had they fought under him during the war, but with peace finally near Lincoln was trusted as the one man to set matters right again. Of course it depended on the individual’s viewpoint and priorities as to what those matters might be, and how the president might do it; Lincoln had left the future open to individual speculation.

Admiral David D. Porter, who attended a meeting with Lincoln, [General Ulysses S.] Grant, and Sherman prior to Appomattox, came away convinced that Lincoln “*wanted peace on almost any terms.*” Porter thought Lincoln came to the meeting “with the

most liberal views toward the rebels.” After the assassination, Grant described Lincoln’s postwar policy as a;

“desire to have everybody happy, and above all his desire to see all people of the United States enter again upon the full privileges of citizenship with equality among all.”

A large number of Southerners seem at least to have “sensed” this generosity—dreading the alternative—and Grant’s humane regard for [Confederate General Robert E.] Lee and his army at Appomattox had added to the impression. Thus it would be the bitterest irony for Lincoln’s army now to be plotting revenge. And yet, in a soldier’s view, Lincoln himself had been cheated of victory. His death went beyond murder; it was incomprehensibly unfair.

That is why a New Jersey officer, Captain George Bowen, feared trouble from his men who were camped near Appomattox when told of the assassination.

“The men are insane with rage,” he wrote in his diary. *“It is all we can do to restrain our men from wreaking their vengeance on the poor fellows who are making their way home on foot from Lee’s army.”*

Factors besides the assassination, however, were also at work upon the emotions of the Union soldier in April 1865. One of them was the pall now cast on the exaltation of having won a war and survived.

Another was the outrage building over revelations of Confederate prison camps and the sufferings of helpless thousands.

Finally, and not least, was the coarsening that a long war brings to soldier and non-soldier alike.

One of Sherman's officers wrote in March 1865, as his army looked to North Carolina:

"We have given South Carolina a terrible scourging. We have destroyed all factories, cotton mills, gins, presses and cotton; burnt one city, the capital, and most of the villages on our route as well as most of the barns, outbuildings and dwelling houses, and every house that escaped fire has been pillaged. ... There was recklessness by the soldiery in South Carolina that they had never exhibited before and a sort of general 'don't care' on the part of the officers."

He did not mention rape, but that is also a characteristic of the wrath of invading armies.

For those especially with Sherman, it scarcely mattered if some place like Raleigh too should now be put to the torch. There it was more difficult to relay the news and keep the peace than Sherman would later indicate. The *Raleigh Standard* did its part on April 18 by saying, *"We announce with profound grief the assassination of the President of the United States."* Yet army muscle was still needed to keep the ranks in line.

Union Private John Ferguson of Illinois wrote in his diary on April 20 that a

"strong guard had to be placed around the city of Raleigh to keep the soldiers from racking out their vengeance on the citizens of Raleigh".

This was a genuine threat, as some two thousand soldiers had slipped out of camp to do their worst. Ultimately destruction was prevented by the arrival of General John Logan's XV Corps and its artillery. Logan's wife, who wrote his biography, described her husband mounted on his horse, flying "*from one command to another, calling on the men to be worthy of their own heroic deeds and innocent of the blood of guiltless people.*" Emotions soon cooled. Victory parades beckoned; so, at last, did hearth and home. But for a short time, for many Southerners, these post-assassination days and nights were among the most harrowing of the war.

Nor did they bode well for the future.

The Author: *David Hardin is a veteran newspaperman who grew up on the Civil War battlefield of Nashville, Tennessee. He has been a writer and editor at newspapers across the South, including those in Nashville; Raleigh, North Carolina; Savannah, Georgia; Miami and Tampa, Florida; Jackson, Mississippi, and Huntsville. Among his journalism awards is a Pulitzer Prize. Besides "Emblems of Woe," Hardin is the author of "After the War: The Lives and Images of Major Civil War Figures After the Shooting Stopped" (Rowman & Littlefield pub., 2010). He has lectured on it at the Library of Congress and Lipscomb University. Hardin and his family live in the Huntsville area. He's a Vols fan.*

Our Doughboys Prelude to WWI Part I

By Arley McCormick

In response to an inquiry from the Alabama Department of Archives and History regarding the WWI experience of Private Ben Hope, his mother replied:

Aug 23, 1921

Dear Friend; ...The 15th July 1918 he was in a battle and after this battle he was sighted for his bravery by Col William D. Screws. Then in July 26th 1918 he was in battle at Chateau Thirey. He was in the Rainbow Division. ...

Yours Respectfully

Mrs. Lizzie Hope

P.S. His first training was in Montgomery Alabama.

On November 2, 1895, Lizzy Hope gave birth to Ben in Hazel Green, Madison County, Alabama. Samuel, her husband, was ecstatic; Lizzy was relieved. Not even 23 years later, on July 26, 1918, neither Lizzy nor Samuel were on the bloody field in France to wipe the dirt and blood of battle from their son's face as he lay dead alongside others. He was not alone.

The “War to End All Wars” shaped the course of events that many historians characterize as the “American Century,” and its impact on the world is not over. The war destroyed the Hapsburg Dynasty and the Ottoman Empire; it shaped the national boundaries in the Middle East, contributed to the birth of the Soviet Union, and the international reach of Imperial Japan. It sowed the seeds for World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War and the Islamic Reformation the world is engaged in today.

A major political aim of the war instilled in the American psyche the concept of making the world safe for democracy. In the history of mankind, no war has shaped and confused the world order as dramatically. Names that appeared on the public scene would become the characters of fact and fiction throughout the century, and today nearly every American will recognize the names “Black Jack” Pershing, Douglas MacArthur, Harry S. Truman, Adolf Hitler, Herman Goering, Winston Churchill, Charles de Gaulle, Ernest Hemingway, Sergeant York, and even Lawrence of Arabia. North American economic and political impact circled the globe and in the wake of the social and political progress young men from Madison County lay dead in graves across Europe and at home.

WWI is largely forgotten in America. Those who planned and fought the war are all dead. Europe lost a generation of its youth as more men died during WWI than any equivalent period in history. Americans bled for less than nine months, but the prelude affected almost every American and the end has affected Americans ever since. The American interest in the sacrifice to “make the world safe for democracy” is buried somewhere below the interest of all other American wars, save possibly the Spanish American War. Maybe it’s because it was a short war for Americans, maybe it’s because the League of Nations failed, maybe it’s because dictators

and protagonists who fought in the war rose again to fight the second, or maybe we have lost interest in our history. No matter, on the 100th anniversary of WWI, we will remember the sacrifice of a few of Madison County's young men in the following pages.

The world changed rapidly during Ben Hope's life. The residents of a relatively sleepy oasis of agriculture in Madison County would work and gossip about the happenings and would not define the hard work and scarce financial resources as the "Gay Nineties" although they were certainly better than in the preceding 25 years. It was a time when American art was finding its own character, women's suffrage was on the national political agenda, and Elizabethan morality was being challenged by gaudy plays and high profile scandals. Little Ben took no notice of the birth of "Ragtime" because entertainment adopted in the cities took a long time to reach rural communities, and his family situation for the second decade of his life could hardly afford the nonsense created by city culture. They were members of the Hazel Green Methodist Church.

At the age of ten, Ben may have attended the ceremony when the United Daughters of the Confederacy dedicated the new confederate monument on the Huntsville square in 1905. Nearly the whole community attended. His parents possibly attended the opening of the opera house in 1907, and automobiles were becoming a common sight on the streets of Huntsville. Ben certainly would have seen the only truck in Huntsville in 1910.

Ben grew up with meager resources, but his family had many friends and enjoyed the community. Names he may have been familiar with through school activities and sports: Kirk Satterfield,

Opal Roberts, Edgar Freeman, Percy Crunk, and Dock Hill, to name a few.

Ben may have been vaguely aware of the struggle between the empires of the world that was well underway. The Hapsburgs, Ottoman, British, French, German, and Russians were all jostling to retain their share of an economy fed by colonialism. Germany had unified Germanic speaking people in 1870 and occupied the French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine.

Here at home, the United States was busy protecting the “New World” from the “Old World” and using the Monroe Doctrine as justification. The panic of 1893 caused middle class Americans difficulty, but as the new century approached, there was optimism, even as the events in Europe captured the headlines and Mexico’s revolution threatened to migrate across our Texas border.

In the first decade of the new century Australia, South Africa, Norway, and Portugal became countries. Bulgaria was freed from Ottoman rule and in the Far East, the Russo-Japanese war was another signal of a changing world.

Ben could hunt in the countryside and fish in the Flint River, play baseball or football, and occasionally slip off to the race track near Huntsville. Somewhere between his work and recreation, he managed to get an education. News of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire made the Huntsville paper as well as Wilber and Orville Wright’s successful flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Maybe he knew that Robert Perry had reached the North Pole, and the Panama Canal had opened. The gossip would probably not include the subtle rise of advertising and mass consumption stimulated by Henry Ford and the assembly line of automobiles departing Detroit, yet with all the advancement in technology, the ugly vestiges of Jim Crow resulted in 1000

lynching's of African Americans in both North and South during the first 20 years of Ben's life.

In 1912, the first Southern born president since the Civil War was elected; President Woodrow Wilson was a Virginian. The Democratic platform he promoted won the vote of African Americans and split them from the Republican Party for the first time since the Civil War. His first term began with unremarkable expectations as agriculture – the economic engine that drove prosperity in Madison County, grew slightly and steadily each year.

Early in 1914, the President sent General John J. Pershing and a military force to the Mexican border with Texas, to deal with Poncho Villa. That military force included the 4th Alabama Infantry. The 4th Alabama's heraldry dated back to before the Civil War, and during that war, it participated in battles from First Manassas to Appomattox. Young men from Madison County were among the members and the casualties.

In 1914 the 4th Alabama deployed to Texas but never officially crossed the border into Mexico. Its mission was to guard military equipment and stores in Nogales, Texas and train. Training was hot, sweaty, and boringly routine. Marching and bayonet drill dominated the training schedule and many soldiers couldn't decide which was worse, hours of boredom on guard posts or bayonet drill. The townsfolk thought they were the rowdiest bunch of drinkers Nogales had ever known and the Alabamians took pride in their reputation.

Ben Hope secured a good job as a mechanic with the Huntsville Textile Mill but life in Madison County began to change in June, 1914. On June 28th, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of the Hapsburg Empire, was assassinated in Sarajevo. The events that unfolded lead Germany to declare war on Russia, then

France, and on August 4, 1914, Germany invaded Belgium. By the end of the year, Europe, the Far East, and nearly all the colonial powers in between, were sucked into the cauldron. The United States remained neutral.

When Germany invaded Belgium their soldiers were wearing the style of uniforms and toting the same type of weapons and equipment used in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Soldiers not marching were on horseback, few trucks were employed by the invading army. The British and French had not modernized either and the Italians and Russians were less prepared. In Madison County, the European's shift to a war time economy immediately caused cotton exports to decline. As a result, cotton prices plummeted, causing mass unemployment.

As European stockpiles were depleted, the demand for war materials grew. The Allies began sending millions of dollars to J.P. Morgan, a bank in New York. As a result, the bank began contracting with United States industry to provide raw materials to England and France. The German strategy, however, was to deny their enemy the raw materials for industry, consequently, America's problem grew worse when on February 4, 1915, Germany commenced unrestricted submarine warfare.

The United States economy was not prepared for war, and neither was the military. The meager military forces were deployed on the Mexican border and other places in the Americas. President Wilson, it appeared, was determined to stay neutral, yet there were plans to activate the National Guard in the event of a national emergency. Not activating the National Guard would protect the federal treasury until an actual commitment to war materialized. Yet, there was a national call for civilians to prepare by volunteering to receive military skills training in the summer at a Plattsburg, New York camp. The cost was being absorbed by

private contributions. Nearly all the participants were businessmen and other professionals.

On May 7th, a German U-boat sank the British ship *Lusitania*, causing the deaths of 128 American civilians. The American public had always leaned toward the British and diplomatic protests resulted in a pledge by Germany, in August, to guarantee the safety of passengers traveling on unarmed vessels. However, in November, Germany sank an Italian liner without warning, killing 272 people, including 27 Americans. With these attacks, public opinion in the United States turned irrevocably against Germany.

In Europe, the initial euphoria for war influenced the governments of Britain and France to predict a short war and the U.S. government optimistically promoted a similar scenario. No official prognosticator would ever suggest the battlefields in Europe would be covered with pools of blood and rotting flesh.

On August 22, 1914 the Battle of the Frontiers resulted in the deaths of 27,000 French Soldiers in a single day. Between September 6 and 10, at the first Battle of the Marne, the French halted the German invasion and created the first trenches of the war. The concept of a short war was shattered and inflamed passions drew Americans to the allied cause. Americans fled to Canada, not to avoid war, but to join foreign ranks as infantry, medical personnel, and aviators. It was only the beginning. For the rest of the year and beyond, the slaughter continued.

In July, 1916 the Battle of the Somme resulted in a loss of over a million Germans and British soldiers. The British suffered over 20,000 losses during a four hour period. Entire English villages lost their fathers, husbands and sons, yet the killing continued.

In his campaign during the presidential election of 1916, Woodrow Wilson proudly declared that he had kept the United States out of war. What was not spelled clearly to the public was his agenda for America's future, included leading a new world order – an order that made the dollar the world's trading currency and a government policy of exporting democratic industrialism and popularizing the concept of making the world safe for democracy. To achieve those lofty ambitions, the United States Navy would replace the British as master of the sea; the colonial system would be replaced by democracies under the observation of an American led League of Nations. The Entente (generally West European Countries allied against Germany) listened politely and scoffed. The Entente wanted America to provide soldiers as individual replacements and the Germans were convinced the Americans would never enter the war but considered the idea that when every country of Europe had bled to death, America may very well establish the new world order. President Wilson waited.

In 1916, the Washington Mall filled with lobbyists and Detroit promoted the new industrial consumer market. In addition to searching for water, Los Angeles was promoting cheap silent cinemas to the public and wine. The President was arbitrating between the military and Congress for a larger navy and a National Guard mobilization on paper. Of course the bickering and infighting in Washington, common still today, stalled the plan to fund and create a merchant marine fleet.

In 1916, the most destructive war in the world's history appeared nowhere close to a conclusion and no amount of political persuasion seemed to alter events. The Germans had no respect for the Americans and considered them cowards and weak. The British and French wanted replacements for their dead and dying soldiers believing only if America would provide individual replacements,

the Germans attrition would exhaust their personnel and resources faster and the Entente would win in the end.

Body counts illustrated that WWI was a war of human attrition. Clearly the man and material losses could not be replaced indefinitely. The prosecution of the war was a mess with neither side gaining more than a temporary advantage. The definition of victory was redefined as not losing ground. Each side rejoiced when their soldiers died in a fight for a few yards of dirt only to return to their original trenches. The entire countryside in Alsace and Lorraine was a quagmire of barbed wire, trenches, and death.

In 1917, the German leadership recognized they could lose the war and announced the resumption of unrestricted warfare. That strategy signaled the end of the American public's and Presidential tolerance for diplomatic overtures. Finally, the course of American involvement began to alter as three days later, the United States broke diplomatic relations with Germany.

On January 28, a German cruiser sank the *William P. Frye*, a private American vessel, and on February 22, Congress passed a \$250 million arms appropriations bill intended to make the United States ready for war. In late March, Germany sunk four more U.S. merchant ships. After years of political rebuff and hours after the American liner *Housatonic* was sunk by a German U-boat on April 2, President Wilson appeared before Congress and called for a declaration of war against Germany. After years of diplomatic stiff arms and a German attempt to induce Mexico to rise up against America, the president took action. Four days later, April 6, his request was approved; it was now an American war too.

The Army was poorly prepared. The Army staff of the War Department consisted of 19 officers and that would expand to over 1000 by the date of the Armistice. The nation's Army and Marine Corps were not trained for a European war. They were engaged in

chasing unconventional combatants and not to maneuver on the battlefield of France. Shortly after the US entered the war, “Black Jack” Pershing was interviewed by the President, appointed a full general, and directed to command the American Expeditionary Force. The 4TH Alabama soldiers may have been frolicking in the Nogales bars but General Pershing was paying attention to the events in Europe and was not an advocate of trench warfare. He intended to instill in every soldier that maneuver through a vigorous offense and superior marksmanship would equal victory. The Expeditionary Force would need everything to make victory possible.

The First World War had now reached into the American heartland and Ben Hope could only imagine what his future would hold. Along with thousands of young men between the ages of 21 and 31, Ben Hope, now 5’7” tall with blue eyes, enlisted in the U.S. Army.

Next issue:

Our Doughboys, Part II, Draft and Mobilization

***The Author:** Arley McCormick is a former soldier and active with organizations that contribute to the history of Alabama.*

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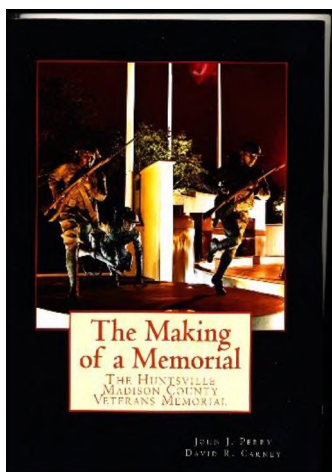
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Book Review

John J. Perry and David R. Carney; The Making of a Memorial, 2017, Nightsky Publishing, New Market, AL 35761



I know book reviews are supposed to address the good and the not so good of a book and clearly expose the intent of the author and judge if the author meets his objective. The intent and objectives were met and the text is an adequate representation of the largest Veterans memorial in the southeast United States and a rival to any memorial in

Washington D.C.

The Daughters of the American Revolution, Twickenham Town Chapter launched an effort that took many years to reunite a plaque listing 84 men that served in the American Revolution and subsequently became local residents and were interred in graveyards throughout the county. The plaque, mounted on a large bolder was dedicated in 1939 and graced the Court House grounds until the new court house was built in the late 60's and subsequently misplaced. Finally found, the bolder and plaque were united and dedicated recently along Patriots Walkway at the Memorial.

During that ceremony, I had the opportunity to meet Brigadier General (Retired) Robert A. Drolet, the leader of the Memorial Park project. I immediately challenged him to provide the Historical Society a document detailing the concept, design, and effort that made this remarkable landmark in Huntsville a reality. His response; "I don't write." But, John J. Perry and David R. Carney do and they assembled a very comprehensive 239-page document that tells, not only the story of the park but the local service members that posed for the statues, letters from the family of fallen soldiers, biographical sketches of the fallen and much much more.

There are ample photographs and easy to follow illustrations and, to be fair, the Table of Contents listing the pages of different section's is not always correct but who cares. The book is a treasure of veterans antidotes and perceptions of those instrumental in it's creation and a fine addition for local veteran's families and friends to treasure.

The Veterans Memorial Foundation is marketing the book as a fundraiser for the Foundation. Proceeds will be used to continue the recognition of local Veterans in the years ahead.

Books may be acquired by contacting Carney50@mchsi.com or phoning 256 694 9125

The Editor

The Huntsville Historical Review **Editorial Policy**

The Huntsville Historical Review, a biyearly journal sponsored by the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, it 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.

This year we begin a three year celebration commemorating 200 years of Alabama history. The Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society is active and leading the state in actions that will make the celebration memorable to all. Your Review is indeed a reflection of our 200 year history and there are so many cataclysmic events that occurred with hundreds of books written from many perspectives but not always from the perspective of our

community or the people in the community that lead us through tough times and good times. I urge writers and local historians to share with our community your favorite story, person, or event and help us preserve the knowledge for the next generation.

You can contribute to our history by writing an article for the *Huntsville Historical Review*.

The Editor

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