

# **THE HUNTSVILLE HISTORICAL REVIEW**

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## HARVIE P. JONES A Tribute

His name was synonymous with historic architecture, the preservation of historic structures, and a lifelong respect for Huntsville and Alabama's heritage as represented in its communities. He demonstrated to many people the economy of restoring, renovating, and preserving buildings from another era—as opposed to tearing them down and building anew, and for that insight and persuasion our community has many reasons to thank him and mourn his passing on December 5, 1998.

“In his quiet and unassuming way, no one has done more in our state to understand and safeguard the places we love,” said Elizabeth Brown, the director of the Alabama Historical Commission. Among the numerous structures that owe their renewed lease on life to him are the Burritt Museum, the Huntsville Depot, the Weeden House Museum, the Annie C. Merts Center (all in Huntsville), Decatur's Historic District, Pope's Tavern in Florence, Belle Mont in Tusculumbia, Arlington Place in Birmingham, the Carnegie Library at Judson College in Marion, and several 1810-era houses in Savannah.

He was instrumental in establishing the Twickenham Historic Preservation District when urban renewal's wrecking ball was the popular icon in the 1950s and 60s. As a result of these efforts, Huntsville's early residential center was spared and is now one of the most desirable parts of the city in which to live. He gave unstintingly of his time and expertise to residents of Huntsville's two historic districts who came before the Historic Commission seeking approval of their plans to re-do, facelift, tear down, or otherwise change the homes and structures in the districts.

His first exposure to historic architecture was the reconstruction of the site of Alabama's first constitutional convention. He rose to the challenge, studied, traveled, observed, measured, and finally drew the plans for the historically accurate reconstruction that is today known as Alabama's Constitution Village, a thriving historic park in downtown Huntsville. He credited local historians, Frances Roberts and Sara Fisk, with the basic research on the project, but out of that project was born his zeal for saving historic structures that was to be the defining emphasis of the rest of his career in architecture.

When he retired in November of 1998, he simply moved his sphere of operations from his office to his home, and continued his efforts on behalf of preservation. He was sorry to note that the Huntsville area had lost 13 Federal-period houses (1810-1835) since 1980. His legacy of excellence in his chosen field gives to the citizens of Huntsville and Alabama an increased awareness of the value of historic buildings; he hoped a member of the younger generation of architects would come to appreciate his view of “old” buildings, and carry on the work he had done so well. It will be interesting to see if that wish of his comes to pass.

The Historic Huntsville Foundation, which he was instrumental in founding, has established a memorial fund in his honor, the Harvie P. Jones Preservation

Fund. Contributions to this fund can be sent to that organization at P.O. Box 786, Huntsville AL 35804.

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This essay was compiled from information appearing in *The Huntsville Times*, Sunday, December 6, 1998, and *The Alliance*, Winter 1999 Issue, a publication of the Alabama Preservation Alliance.



## THE NEWS FROM HUNTSVILLE

By  
Nancy Rohr

Huntsville, August 16<sup>th</sup> 1820<sup>1</sup>

Dear Fred,

I have for some [time] been expecting to hear from you, but your Brother says he has not rec'd any letters from [you] yet. I must give you a small detail of the times. The rule has got[ten to] be rock down and stab. Logwood got stabt by Reubin Turner and expired the next day. He is now in Jail. The next morning Old Delin the grocer got stabt but is about to recover.

Dr. Bradford has forged Major Watkins, Thom. Eldridge, and Eli Hammond and Sugars Turner's names in Bank for six thousand dollars to get his note discounted, ran away, Sherriffs followed him in Tennessee, fetched him back, put him in jail, in their yet. Old Cockrane of this place was found dead in his Bed. Jurors Verdick natural death. Examined his papers found out his name to be Cushing, runaway from Mersales [Marseilles] France. Had a pardner there by the name of Munideen. McKinley & Brandon administer on the estate.

Mr. Pen[n] loses \$900 by Bradford. I lose \$130. Hutchings not broke yet. Put Anion in jail last knight for stealing horse. Jail nearly full. Egbert Harris said to be in a bad way. Owes me \$150. Loose it. Old N.B. Rose broke, owes me \$700. Hard times these little losses, with one other big one will or has broke me. Therefore you must not depend on my doing anything on the business we were in conversation about.

Please rite me and let me know the state of your mind. Fred, I am doubtful I was born'd to have [a] fortune, but old man I say. If I make nothing one consultation [consolation] I had nothing to begin.

Sir, Eldrid Rawlins married to Miss Nancy Lanier, Dr. Erskin to Miss Catherine Russel, John Russel to a Miss Old of Franklin, Tennessee. Charley has gone over the river, will return shortly.

Your brothers family and self are all well. People tolerable healthy—I had forgot to mention about Alfred Davis stealing Willis Pope[‘s] horse Cyclops and returned, gave up the horse and gone again.

My friend, times are harder here than ever you knew them. I suppose I shall get 7 or \$800 dollars about Jany. Next. Will be all I have to start on. You must excuse bad speling and rewriting for I am in a Damnable hurry. Nothing more but remain your friend and well wisher.

Fred A. Harris

Yours with Respect  
Sam I. Hutton

As letter writers often do, Samuel Hutton began this letter to his friend, Fred Harris, with the mild complaint of waiting to receive a letter from him first. But haste was obviously necessary and Hutton began sharing the news from Huntsville, Alabama, immediately. After all, there was so much to tell. Hutton

wrote quickly at a table from the Bell Tavern, perhaps the Huntsville Inn, or Cooper's Hotel as the stagecoach was loading the mail or a friendly rider was preparing his saddlebags for the long ride to Virginia.

The frontier village of Huntsville was newly settled. The two curves of the Tennessee River, as it traveled westward, formed the southern boundary of Madison County; and the state of Tennessee, the northern boundary. The area presented an attractive and unique environment to a variety of prospective pioneers. In the east, yeoman homesteaders were drawn to the rugged mountains to settle on small farms, and in the opposite direction prosperous planters vied for the vast acres of fertile red clay. Huntsville, the county seat, was located on the bluff overlooking the Big Spring where John Hunt had settled. Alabama fever had recently affected scores of pioneers who saw the prospect of a better life in the new lands. They came by the droves with friends and extended family groups travelling by wagon or afoot. Merchants soon followed to stock supplies and manufactured goods and to welcome guests at inns and taverns. The way was not easy for any of them.

The Chickasaws and Cherokees formally vacated the lands as recently as 1805 and 1806. Yet the Creek Indian Nation remained nearby just across the Tennessee River. Other dangers menaced the newcomers. The unknown dense forests, the wild animals, the rough landscape, the sometimes sweltering climate, and the ever-present daily struggle for survival were constant battles. There was also the element of the outsider, passing through, seemingly unattached except for quick opportunities, or failure, before leaving for his next exploit. Because law enforcement was also unsure, oftentimes one had to be on guard. But most settlers came with a spirit of optimism and determination to provide for their families as responsible citizens. Most people aspired to better themselves the only way they knew how, by hard work and perseverance. After all, improvement was the foremost intent, whether vagabond, prosperous planter, struggling farmer, or tradesman. The promise of success in the wonderfully rich countryside of the newly formed state was worth the risk.

For whatever reasons they came, whether to flee jail, escape poverty, begin a more comfortable life, or make their fortune--land was the attraction. Many of the settlers were exceptional people. The persons mentioned in the letter were exceptional by their very presence here. "Those who explore and settle new countries are generally bold, hardy and adventuresome men, whose minds, as well as their bodies, are fitted to encounter danger and fatigue; their object is the acquisition of property and they generally succeed."<sup>2</sup> Surely, their wives and children were no less hardy.

The very first pioneers settled illegally because the land south of Tennessee had not been surveyed or put up for sale. When Madison County became a county in the Mississippi Territory in 1808, there were already 300 squatters living in the area. In 1809, Thomas Freeman, the federal agent and surveyor, counted a total population of 2223 whites and 322 slaves.<sup>3</sup> The Land Office, formerly in Nashville, moved to Huntsville in 1811, and there was amazing activity and growth. Within just ten years, including the transition to statehood, the population grew to 10,242 whites, 9,323 slaves, and 54 free blacks.<sup>4</sup> Transportation for the

growing number of people and goods was exceedingly difficult. Roads were poor and often unusable in the wet season, and riverboat transportation was unusable in the dry season. But Huntsville was never totally isolated from the news of the nation's affairs and politics. Pioneers continued to settle, and visitors arrived. Anne Royall, that intrepid traveler, spoke highly of Huntsville. On her first trip in 1817 she wrote, "The cotton fields [were] astonishing large...you cannot see the end of the fields." She spoke of a flourishing town.

"The land around Huntsville, and the whole of Madison County...is rich and beautiful as you can imagine, and the appearance of wealth would baffle belief.... It contains 260 houses, principally built of brick.... The workmanship is the best I have seen in all the states.... The citizens are gay, polite, and hospitable and live in great splendor."<sup>5</sup>

President Monroe paid a surprise visit in the early summer of 1819, and citizens were delighted to entertain him and his small circle of friends. The state constitutional convention was held in Huntsville that year, and the town was temporarily the capital when William Wyatt Bibb was inaugurated as the first governor of the new state in November. Mrs. Royall visited again in 1822 and was still quite impressed. She predicted it "will always be a place of wealth and business.... Few places combine more blessings than Huntsville."<sup>6</sup>

By the 1820s, at the time Samuel Hutton's letter was written, Huntsville was shaping into a worthy community from many perspectives. Leaders initiated the Bible Society, and the Presbyterians began work on their meetinghouse. Schools were established. Muster Day brought out the militia for practice, followed by all the hoopla and social good cheer that might have spilled over into the taverns afterwards. Because everyone knew where the Militia Grounds were, it was also convenient to collect state and county taxes there. The public library was formed and used a room in the courthouse. A Masonic lodge, the first in the state, invited fellowship and service. Traveling players offered drama, musical farce, and comedy at the theater. A dancing academy and French lessons were available. Dr. Fearn had just returned from advanced study in England to begin his medical practice. For sporting gentlemen there was card playing and the famous racetrack at the Green Bottom Inn.

Advertisements in the local newspaper, the *Alabama Republican*, offered a variety of goods and services to fit every budget. The men might purchase superior English cattle or thrifty boots. Ladies shopped for new and cheap merchandise of seasonable spring or fall goods like Liverpool or Queensware. And to complete any ensemble, Leghorn Bonnets just arrived. Huntsvillians could share with the family, back in Virginia or Georgia, tidings with notes written on gilt-edged letter paper purchased in town.<sup>7</sup>

However, the outward signs of civilization did not always cancel the ever-present chance of danger. Unpredictability and lawlessness often waited nearby. The constant migration brought settlers who were perhaps only passing through and had little sense of real responsibility to the community, and citizens' worst

fears were realized in August of 1820. The news was not good. The very first item reported in Hutton's letter was the murder of Thomas Logwood by Reuben Turner. Turner never denied the deed. The *Alabama Republican* carried a shocked and angry report:

AFFRAY AND MURDER. It is painful to our feelings to record so depraved a transaction as the following. As Mr. Thomas Logwood and Reuben Turner were leaving town on Monday evening an altercation took place, which caused some blows to pass while both parties were on horseback, and which ended on the ground, by Turner's stabbing Logwood mortally with a knife.... It is generally understood that the dispute originated concerning a security debt which Turner owed Logwood. Many of our readers may recollect that this Mr. Turner came from Virginia About two years since and wormed himself in the favour of some few men of property, among whom was this Mr. Logwood, by whose assistance he was enabled to purchase the establishment of the Bell Tavern, which he kept for three or four months. Everybody who knows the man is well acquainted with the scandalous and disgraceful manner in which he left town, and his dishonesty to all his creditors. It is well known that he almost ruined Mr. Logwood, who was compelled to raise a very large sum on short notice, To pay a debt incurred by becoming a security for Turner.... After a lapse of about 18 months this hardened wretch made his reappearance in a town where his name is consigned to infamy, and as a requital to his best friend and benefactor, stabs him to the heart. Turner died of his wounds on the night of Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> <sup>inst</sup>.... The verdict of the inquest was "Willful murder by the hand of Reuben Turner."<sup>8</sup>

From the evidence, basically those were the facts. In June of 1818, Reuben Turner, a newcomer to town, purchased the Bell Tavern with a mortgage of \$12,000.<sup>9</sup> Several prominent men co-signed the note, including Thomas Logwood. Turner left town surreptitiously and returned surprisingly in a few months. Although both men had almost faced financial ruin because of Turner, on the evening of the crime Logwood and Turner were friendly enough to be drinking together. They left the Bell Tavern together and were headed away from town when Turner decided to return. Logwood apparently grabbed the bridle of Turner's horse to stop him. The only witness, Mr. Seay, saw Logwood strike Turner two or three blows with a horsewhip or cane while on horseback. Turner was known to be carrying a dirk, and six or seven stab wounds were on Logwood's body. In the early morning light, the weapon was found at the scene of the crime.<sup>10</sup>

Obviously the sentiments of the newspaper, and mostly likely the reading public, at that time, were clearly against Turner. Although Logwood was

prominent in the community, he had arrived from eastern Virginia with something of a blemished record himself. In 1797, while still in Powhatan County, Virginia, Thomas Logwood deeded a gift of 13 slaves to Mary Patterson, his future bride. Unfortunately in 1804, now Mrs. Logwood, she had to sue her husband for full title to the slaves in the Chancery Court in Richmond, Virginia. She stated that because her husband was in jail she was unable to protect her rights to the now 23 living and 4 dead slaves. Her allegations were admitted to be true, and with the deed accepted, "they set out for Alabama" in 1819 to join Logwood in Madison County.<sup>11</sup>

At any rate, Thomas Logwood did not die instantly from the attack by Turner. Attempts were made to save his life, and both Dr. Fearn and Dr. Watkins were in attendance. The affairs of Logwood were in such disarray that neither doctor received their fees for consultation (\$25 and \$30 plus \$17.40 interest respectively) in what Dr. Watkins called Logwood's "last sickness" until much later.<sup>12</sup>

Fortunately, Logwood's will was written earlier that year in July. After his death the inventory of his holdings included slaves, almost one hundred books, a backgammon table, and items to give value to the estate of \$9,646. This might appear to be a significant amount, but unfortunately obligations and debts surrounded Mrs. Logwood and his five surviving children. The advertisement for the sale read, "Will be exposed to public sale for cash, at the door of the court house...that VALUABLE PLANTATION formerly owned by Samuel Chapman and now occupied by Mrs. Thomas Logwood."<sup>13</sup>

Again, the widow Logwood tried her best at resolving the estate. In February of 1821 a notice in the newspaper announced the sale, "at public auction the residence of Thomas Logwood, near the Prairie, all his crop of Corn & Fodder, Plantation utensils, stock of horses, Mules, Cattle, Sheep, and Hogs, Waggon, Carts, a Sulky, and a 1st rate London Copper STILL, with a pewter worm. At the same time will be hired 12 likely Negroes."<sup>14</sup> There remained for Mrs. Logwood some furniture and her few personal items.

During all this time Reuben Turner languished in the local jail as the legal process continued slowly. Finally he was tried and convicted in the November term of Madison County Circuit Court, 1822. Turner was sentenced to be hanged on February 23, 1823. However, by the time the death sentence was pronounced, feelings in the community toward Turner had lightened considerably. The murder did not appear to be premeditated in any manner. Another, particularly southern, standard might also be considered. Daniel Dupre in considering this sequence of events suggested, "Southern men were particularly sensitive to the symbolism of a caning or a horsewhipping. They were used to punish slaves, or attack inferiors who were not honorable enough to challenge to a duel." At the least this attack was about Turner's "standing in society and his honor," and most men in the community probably felt this was indeed a point of honor.<sup>15</sup> Various citizens wrote letters of petition to Governor Pickens at the state capital then in Cahaba. Each letter offered a different viewpoint, but the intent of a pardon was the same.

Of course his aged mother, and other family members, attested to Turner's character in a letter written by the governor of Virginia. Solicitor to the Governor of Alabama, Joseph Eastland, said that it was extremely doubtful that Turner was

truly guilty of murder. After all, no express malice was proven, and therefore Turner was a "fit and proper person for executive clemency." This crime was committed in the "heat of passion, not legal malice...owing perhaps to a natural warmth of temper or intoxication." There should be reasonable doubt. Henry Minor, delegate at the recent state constitutional convention, noted that both men were "groggy" and "humane sympathies" would not be served by a death sentence that gives an "appearance of vigor and cruelty, than a necessary act of public justice."<sup>16</sup>

From Madison County the Counsel for the prosecution, J. M. Taylor, wrote for exoneration. Presiding Judge Clay acknowledged that perhaps he had not distinguished between murder and manslaughter in his directions to the jury. Twenty-six lawyers petitioned and 18 other citizens, including four of the jurors wrote for clemency. In his letter, the Jailer, Daniel Rather, reported that during a jailbreak with others, Turner returned and awoke the jailer to tell him of the escape. Turner voluntarily remained in jail. Although intemperance was not unknown on the frontier, Dr. Weeden, a prominent citizen said Logwood was known to be "turbulent when drinking." However, liquor remained a problem for Reuben Turner. In one respite, Governor Pickens suggested "the sheriff will use great care that the prisoner be not furnished with the means of intoxication, such a habit is extremely unsuited to preparation and reflection." Apparently the Governor did not intend a Pardon yet.<sup>17</sup>

In all, Governor Pickens issued three respites before giving the Pardon, at large. The *Alabama Republican* printed an Extra Edition, July 19, 1823, reporting the steps leading to and all the letters pleading for pardon. There was no hint of editorial disapproval or community dissatisfaction in the newspaper report. And there was no further news of Reuben Turner in the Huntsville community or Madison County, Alabama

The second act of violence noted in Hutton's letter was in a way just as shocking. Seemingly, it was an act of robbery and mayhem by a man probably not ordinarily noticed in the community. Citizens might understand violence as a result of a night of hard drinking, but in this case, the very next victim could be any hardworking merchant or honest citizen whose life would be ruined. As reported by the newspaper, the casualty this time was the grocer, "old Delin," of the firm of Phelan and Dillon. He "was dreadfully stabbed by a man of the name of Williams, a journeyman carpenter. His case is said to be a very doubtful one." Thomas Dillon and John Phelan were partners making soap and candles and offering other timely goods in their shop. Their advertisement offered, "Candles, Whiskey and Porter. The subscribers inform their friends and the public that they are at present enabled to supply them with New Candles, Old Whiskey, and Draught Porter which is neither old or new, but just in its Prime." Dillon recovered from his wounds, but he may have been in weakened health. Either because of the results of his injuries or the financial difficulties of the times, the partnership was officially dissolved in October. And perhaps because of his earlier wounds, "old" Thomas Dillon died September 11, 1825, at the age of thirty-five.<sup>18</sup>

If there wasn't enough excitement already, townspeople really were abuzz with the news of the death of the man they knew as James Cochran. All of a sudden the village was cast into stories of conspiracy and embezzlement from places that most folks had never heard about. Many were vaguely aware of the French city, Marseilles, but these new rumors spoke of places in the interior of India, South America, and Cuba. The tale was only beginning to unfold with gossip concerning large sums of money spent about town and then the newspaper's unusual announcement of death:

### MYSTERY

Sometime in November last there came to this place a man who called himself James Cochran. In the course of the winter and spring following he purchased in this town real estate to the amount of \$18,650 for which he paid the money took conveyances in the name of James Cochran. On the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup> inst. he was found in his bed. From the composure of his features and position of his body, it is supposed he died of night-mares or sudden stagnation of blood.... It appears probable his true name is Isaac Cushing and that he had been one of the firm of Cushing & Meinedeir, of Marseilles, in France, and that he has a brother residing at Boston named Thomas Cushing....

Adm. J. McKinley Thos. Brandon<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, a gentleman named James Cochran arrived in Huntsville at the end of 1819 and purchased valuable lots of real estate in town along the square. In these difficult times, with ready cash in hand, he was clearly welcome. He obviously lived well, and no one asked questions. His estate included such items of refinement as a gold snuffbox, a gold watch, a brace of pistols, a bugotill table, and a backgammon table. However, Cochran/Cushing kept one piece of furniture too well endowed. Inside the chest of drawers in his bedroom was a legal trail of papers, written in his own hand, that proved connivance and trickery, 39 documents in all. To summarize the Chancery Court records that took over 20 years to tidy up, the following are the events as they were reported, some with the unique phrasing of their day.<sup>20</sup>

A mercantile partnership was formed in Marseilles, France, in 1814 between Pascal Etienne Meinadier and Isaac Cushing (James Cochran). Initially there was indebtedness for merchandise of 400,000 francs. With this money the partnership bought a sailing vessel, the *Le Bragne*, tackle and cargo. In May of 1817 the ship set sail for Chandernagore, India, about 20 miles north of Calcutta, with Cushing aboard as overseer. Of course the profits would be shared from this venture. The ship sailed for the firm and to lessen the remainder of the debt. In the meanwhile Meinadier reduced his share of the debt almost in half by hard work and felt confident of the concern's success, waiting for his share of the venture. But the ship never arrived in India. Cushing directed the *Le Bragne* to Rio de Janeiro where he apparently sold the ship, the tackle, and the cargo, pocketing \$10,000 for himself.

The illicit adventures continued. Cushing only nominally sold the ship, because by secret agreement with Captain Kennedy, the vessel then sailed to Bueno-as-Ayres [*sic*], where the two really sold the ship and split the cargo, dividing \$65,000. Now in Buenos Aires, Cushing purchased a load of jerked beef, on the partnership account with Meinadier, and sailed to Havana with the new cargo on the ship *Enterprise*. The profit of that shipment was \$30,175.35 for Cushing and \$22,425.35 for David Sawyer.

When no funds were forthcoming from overseas, and the treachery became known, the French merchant, Meinadier, was cast from opulence into destitution and threatened with jail in France. In silence he saw the home of his inheritance taken from him, down to the last pillow, and swept into the same vortex leading to utter poverty. If this seems very French and overly dramatic, debtors' prison was a stark reality of 19<sup>th</sup> century life. To his relief, 23 creditors supplied Meinadier with funds to pay for his passage to America to locate Cushing and recover what assets could be salvaged.

In the meanwhile Isaac Cushing joined his family in Boston in April of 1818, and immediately shifted funds to his brothers, Thomas, Nathaniel, Charles, Benjamin, and his brother-in-law, the Rev. Joseph Estabrook. However, Isaac did not have long to enjoy the fruits of his intrigues. The now destitute merchant, Meinadier, fast on the trail, arrived in Massachusetts in March of 1819.

Cushing fled Boston, in disguise, and by devious flight passed through the Great Lakes and Canady [*sic*]. According to Meinadier, Cushing by the precipitation, disguise and circuitry of his course eluded the incipient vigilance and exertion of his pursuer to settle in Huntsville, Alabama. It was no accident that Isaac Cushing chose Huntsville to relocate, or hide, depending on one's viewpoint. During the formative years, the old southwest had constantly endured the threats of renegade Indians, lawless Spaniards, and undisciplined whites, who annoyed, robbed and murdered settlers. For the protection of the citizenry, American troops were stationed throughout the vast area. Among the soldiers from the years 1802-1811, and rising to the title of Commander of the Military District for the Mississippi Territory, was an outstanding officer from Boston, one Col. Thomas Cushing.<sup>23</sup>

Isaac Cushing, now James Cochran, arrived in Huntsville by the start of the new year in 1820, to begin a new life—at least for a while. Cochran, with ready cash in hand, saw the possibilities for profit and first acquired two buildings on the north side of the square. In March, he recognized the desperate straits of Gen. John Brahan, was able to take advantage, and purchased buildings on the east side of the square from the general at a low price.<sup>22</sup> In May that same year he purchased more buildings to make a total of eight, all along the bustling square, the heart of the community. But time was running out for Isaac Cushing/James Cochran. He died, from whatever medical causes, August 12, 1820, leaving behind a vast trail of conspiracy. The appointed local administrators, who must have found more than they wanted when going through his personal effects, ordered a sale of perishable property on January 30, 1821. At some time later Meinadier, the French merchant, came to town and began legal proceedings to recover his losses. The first chancery court records for these cases started in 1826. By December 1, 1829, the Court ordered the administrators to pay \$127,894.65 out of all the

monies, goods, and chattels of James Cochran.<sup>23</sup> These funds, of course, were insufficient, and the Court ordered sale of all the real estate that Cochran had bought while in Madison County.

Legal matters never sort themselves quickly and the merchant Meinadier may have stayed a while in Huntsville. Perhaps there was little of monetary value left for him in France until he straightened out affairs here. He, or an agent, sold property in Huntsville in 1841. However, there are no notations of him in the local census or local cemeteries. Perhaps he was, after all, able to return to the home of his inheritance.

Although Hutton's letter appears to be about people and events, the real news is about the effects of the Panic and Depression of 1819-1820. After the War of 1812 the Creek lands had safely opened for purchase, and acreage sold at inflated prices in Alabama. Farmland could be bought on credit with only one quarter of the price as a down payment and with four years to pay the remainder. Generally the years leading up to the boom of 1818 had been good throughout the countryside, and people were optimistic as they continued to buy on credit. There had been high foreign demand for American farm goods during the preceding Napoleonic Wars. This resulted in over-production of cotton on the international market, and the prices fell sharply everywhere. Prices for other farm crops also fell, and the cycle soon affected everyone.

Cotton prices previously set a high of 32 cents a pound, but by June of 1819 a farmer was lucky to receive 12 to 14 cents a pound for his crop. Panic followed, as those who had purchased land on credit were unable to make payment because of the lower cotton prices. Private banks that issued their own paper money refused to exchange for coin, and paper money lost value rapidly. As a result, banks failed; merchants stopped extending credit and called in overdue bills. This domino effect continued on down as everyone demanded payment of personal debts from friends, neighbors, and relatives. Money, always scarce on the frontier, seemed to disappear from everyone's pockets and purses. Depression quickly followed the panic.

Locally, as elsewhere, foreclosure and debts led to forced sales. The newspaper for October 20, 1820, included 19 notices of Sheriff's Sale, and by January 12, 1821, a new column was begun under the heading of "Lands for Sale." Large and small landowners alike were affected. Most of these settlers had come to stay, purchase property, plant crops, build homes, and raise their families. Of those mentioned in the letter by Hutton, nine men purchased land in the county even before statehood in 1819. They had seen the promise of a good future; but with the additional hardship of impoverished times, some settlers finally gave up the struggle to remain. For instance, the effects of the depression and panic can be followed in Madison County with the Harris brothers of the letter.

Although Samuel Hutton is writing to Fred Harris, it is clear that he is also a friend to the brother, Capt. William B. Harris. The Harris brothers, originally from near Lynchburg, Virginia, entered into that early eager spirit of optimism and growth when they chose to settle in Madison County in 1819. William Harris initially stayed in Alabama, while Fred A. Harris, most likely because of uncertain finances, returned to Virginia and the family there. William and Elizabeth (called

Betsy) had at least one child, a boy, Edward. Also in town was Aunt Pamela Mosely, wife of Capt. John Mosely, from whom Harris was estranged. But in his letters back home, William writes far more about his financial life than his family life. Unfortunately, in Madison County, cotton production and profits already were lower in 1818. From Virginia, a letter from their brother, Hannibal Harris, mentioned William's "cotton has been all but down by killing frost." The next year, Hannibal reported, "Times have become so very hard that the people all look as if they have just lost some friend." Not surprisingly, cotton and other crops brought less profit than expected. "...you say, cotton has much fallen and I suppose all other productions of your country will fall.... All things have fallen here. It is impossible for a man to raise money."<sup>24</sup> And then concerns became worse.

The "for sale" notice in the Huntsville newspaper was nicely presented.

#### AN ELEGANT ESTATE FOR SALE

Being disposed to move further to the south, I have concluded to sell the section of land on which I now live, and formerly owned by Dr. Manning. The conveniences of that building, the fertility of the soil, the great abundance of water and never failing springs, sites for water works, bordering immediately on the meridian road and within 7 miles of Huntsville, render this estate an object to an industrious capitalist. A bargain will be given, and immediate possession. For terms apply to the subscriber, on the land.

William B. Harris<sup>25</sup>

By 1820, when Fred had returned to Virginia, William apologized to his brother because he was unable to repay a debt to him, except by the possible sale of property, which at that time no one was buying. William thought of starting again in Arkansas, Florida, or even Cuba. Harris's "elegant estate" finally sold in 1821 to Mr. Horton at a dreadful price. William disposed of property for only \$10,800, that he had purchased for \$26,000 in the boom times, a loss of \$15,200. And, Harris still had other debts to pay. But the real cost was measured in a painfully different value. "The embarrassment...I have suffered causes reflections which almost unman me, those feelings I hope you never may experience.... Show this to no person but the family." William Harris finally gave up and sold the remainder of his property to Major McKinley and resettled in Tennessee in 1824. Captain William B. Harris died in Winchester, Tennessee, November 10, 1834.<sup>26</sup>

If hard-working farmers and honest merchants were tested during these trying times, most did the best they could. However, some few men did not handle their struggles well and in desperation responded badly. The news was not good, and Hutton reported the actions of one such man in his letter. Like any gambling loss, perhaps he thought he could recoup in time and pay off his debts. As it developed, Henry C. Bradford risked all and lost all—his possessions and his position in the community.

Bradford had mercantile partnerships with William Carroll, S.D. Hutchings, and Bartley M. Lowe. These three relationships had all been dissolved in 1818 and 1819. The “new brick house” [today known as the Weeden House Museum] of Henry C. and Martha P. Bradford was sold in May of 1819. One can only guess when Bradford became so desperate to forge the notes, but in May of 1820, the sheriff put up for sale 198 acres of Bradford’s in the county. By August, two parcels of land and lot near town were to be auctioned at the courthouse steps to satisfy debts. Next the house and lot, formerly owned by S. Hutchings & Co. and a lot in Huntsville formerly owned and occupied by Bradford were to be sold. On August 18 the newspaper announced the dissolution of partnership between Hutchings and Bradford. Those with bills to pay were to pay Hutchings only. And now, by October all the wheeling and dealing and guessing was over. Notice was given in the newspaper to the public that “a certain Henry C. Bradford, formerly a merchant of this place paid off a number of promissory notes and bills of exchange, with his name signed thereto as a principal, or endorser, which the subjects...name was never executed there onto, or by his knowledge or consent, and firmly believes that the said Bradford forged his name there to. There may be more claims.” Now there was no doubt. Now everyone who might have shaken their heads and suspected that Bradford had overextended himself, knew for sure and to what depths he had sunk.<sup>27</sup>

Repercussions from the recession, bad debts, and criminal activities continued to spiral about town. The notice by Irby Jones in the newspaper called out, “Look at This” Either the Huntsville Inn or the Bell Tavern could be purchased. Terms would be made accomadating [*sic*]. But the sheriff’s sale in December ordered the sale of both the Tavern and the Inn owned by Irby Jones, Edwin Jones, Frederick Jones, Walter Otey, and William Lewis. (Jones had been so desperate earlier to raise funds that he offered the Tavern up as a lottery prize, unsuccessfully. In the same September issue of the newspaper, J. Newnan offered land in nearby Lincoln County, Tennessee, for sale for which he declared, “There is no dispute about the title—except some sham claims of swindling land speculators, which would have been long since hissed out of court, but for the arts and tricks of lawyers interested in the frauds of Tennessee.” But pity the poor widow of Charles Kennedy whose forced sale included household furniture, perhaps all she owned.<sup>28</sup> Times were hard for the strong and the weak, but one suspects there were more poor people affected than the records indicate. They were too destitute to have possessions to be recorded or auctioned. They just moved on to try again somewhere else.

Although the period was certainly difficult, many of those mentioned by name in the letter remained in the community and struggled successfully to better times. Major Watkins, whose name was among those forged by Bradford, was most likely from one of two prominent Watkins families. One group had migrated from Virginia, the patriarch being Dr. John Watkins who was a delegate to the constitutional convention in 1819. The second family group of Watkins, formerly of Petersburg, Georgia, helped LeRoy Pope form the “Royal Family” in Huntsville along with the Bibb, Thompson, and Walker clans. It is impossible to identify exactly to which group the Major belonged without additional information. Most of the members of these extended families were men who

successfully migrated westward and strengthened their positions still further with successful marriages.<sup>29</sup>

Little is known about Col. Thomas E. Eldridge. His military service at least included the War of 1812 when he raised a company of men from Huntsville and Meridianville. He continued to be a fighting man and was brought before the Territorial Court for fighting with Frederick Weed, "to the terror of peaceable citizens." However, he did not think that would diminish his chances for political office. Eldridge announced his candidacy for the House of Representatives in 1819. Unfortunately he died not long after in September of 1822, age 44.<sup>30</sup>

Another of the men mentioned in Hutton's letter, Eli Hammond led an exciting life, serving the pioneer states of Tennessee and Alabama. In 1793 he was one of a small group of volunteers to form a retaliating group against the Indians in Tennessee. Led by a man the natives called the Fool Warrior, Abraham Castleman, the six men dressed like Indians and crossed into prohibited territory near Will's Town. They attacked the surprised Indians, killing several, and making good their own escape, untouched. In 1799 while Hammond was still in Tennessee, John Sevier, at Andrew Jackson's suggestion, recommended Hammond as a likely candidate to the Secretaries of War and State for political positions that might become vacant. In 1800 Hammond married Mary Owen, and they later settled in Madison County. During the War of 1812, Jackson wrote Gov. Willie Blunt that "Mr. Hammond is a man in whom the utmost confidence can be placed." Jackson himself soon would appreciate that because Eli Hammond was one of the close company of friends during the murderous attack, or duel, by the Benton brothers on Jackson in Nashville. Captain Hammond served in the War of 1812 and formed his own company of Mounted Rangers from Huntsville. They joined Andrew Jackson as the General's army passed through town on the way to the battle of Horseshoe Bend. He became Lt. Colonel Hammond by the time of the assault on Pensacola in 1814. He died in Madison County in 1842, at the age of 77.<sup>31</sup>

Sugars Turner was also a member of a large extended family who settled in Madison County. His brothers, Thomas and Simon Turner, were land wealthy cotton farmers; John Turner was a cousin. If they were related to the ignoble Reuben Turner, it is not known. Sugars and Rebecca Deloney Turner bought several large parcels of land in 1818. He died in August 1836 leaving eight children who remained in the area and were well-to-do and well regarded.<sup>32</sup>

James Penn, who also lost money to Bradford, was typical of many of these eager pioneers with varied interests. Penn was a cashier at the Branch Bank of Alabama in Huntsville. He played an active role in the founding of the Church of the Nativity. Additionally, he was a representative in the legislature for many years and a founder of the Huntsville Masonic fraternity. Penn suggested the need for an improvement that would find favor with most of his neighbors in the community. Transportation from Nashville, particularly, was such an important aspect of receiving supplies and sending produce to market for everyone. Recently one citizen had complained about the "wretched state of public roads leading to [the] North and South from Huntsville.... [I] was apprehensive of breaking my horse's legs, or losing my own life, as I approach[ed] the principal town of

Alabama, where the roads are infinitely worse than any other part of the state.” Penn offered to “petition the next Legislature for leave to make a Turnpike road from Huntsville over beaver-dam fork of the Flint [River] on the Meridian road to receive a toll that shall be a fair compensation for my expense and labor.”<sup>33</sup>

S.D. Hutchings seldom was noted by his entire name in the legal documents of the county, and his last name was often spelled Hutchens. He did not use his middle name, but everyone hereabouts knew his relations. Stockly Donelson Hutchings was a Tennessean fortunate enough to be related by marriage to and partnership with Gen. Andrew Jackson. Jackson reported in a letter to his wife, Rachel, that Stockly was doing very well, and attained the rank of quartermaster sergeant in 1813. By 1816, Hutchings settled in Madison County where he married Elizabeth Atwood. Perhaps because of his connections he was appointed postmaster in Huntsville during 1818 and 1819. Hutchings at one time was in partnership with General Brahan and Neal B. Rose. Together they had purchased at a “bargain” price almost the entire east side of the square from Leroy Pope. But the partnership with such great possibilities did not succeed in those desperate times and was dissolved. Whatever the issues, unsettled accounts were to be paid only to N. B. Rose of Rose, Brahan and Hutchings. In October of 1819 Hutchings resigned his postmaster commission perhaps to distance himself from the bad debts of his former partner, General John Brahan. Apparently feisty by nature, Hutchings reported proudly to his relatives in Nashville, “Dear Uncle. I am...confined in the Common Jaoll...for assault on John McKinley in which I displayed the patriotism which should be engrafted in the bosom of every free born American.” Stockly D. Hutchings died in 1822 in Huntsville. His widow married Phares T. Posey in 1828.<sup>34</sup>

In fighting with John McKinley, S.D. Hutchings had chosen a strong adversary who would go on to become even more powerful in standing. McKinley, the son of Dr. Andrew and Mary Logan McKinley, was born in Culpepper County, Virginia, in 1780. The family moved to Kentucky where he studied law and was admitted to the bar. But like others, he saw the chance of a better future elsewhere and settled in Huntsville. McKinley was selected as a member of the Bank Commission in the autumn of 1820, an important appointment. He also dabbled as a merchant and land speculator. Even in these hard times, McKinley maintained some cash; as noted above, he was able to purchase property that William Harris still had for sale. At one time or another he owned various buildings along the square and a block of buildings on Eustis Street known as McKinley’s Row. McKinley entered the political field and was defeated on his first outing. But not long afterwards, he was elected to the Alabama legislature from Madison County.<sup>35</sup>

McKinley’s difficulties with S.D. Hutchings stemmed from the fact that McKinley chose to align himself politically with Andrew Jackson’s opponent at that time, Henry Clay. Politics were often more vocal then and certainly often more intense as Hutchings boasted to his uncle. But McKinley reported to his friend Clay, although most Alabamians were going to vote for Jackson, it seemed, the “most intelligent are strongly” for you. It is a shame Hutchings did not live long enough to see McKinley change his position because McKinley was elected

to the U.S. Senate in 1826 as a Jackson supporter. McKinley and his family moved to Florence, Alabama, where he next represented Lauderdale County in the Alabama legislature.<sup>36</sup>

John McKinley was described as “a large framed man, stalwart and raw-boned.... He was moody and rather irritable, but very generally esteemed.” However, Anne Royall, always glad to be a guest anywhere, had high praise for the family when she visited in July 1821. She described McKinley as “a stout, fine looking man; of easy manners, and his dwelling contains more taste and splendor, by one half, than I ever saw in my whole life put together.... Mrs. McKinley, the elegance of her manners, and the sweetness of her conversation...completely disconcerted me.... [The children} were the handsomest children I ever beheld.” The elegant Julia McKinley died in Florence the year after Royall’s trip. Widower, John McKinley, married Miss Elizabeth Armistead in February of 1824 in Huntsville. By 1837, now aligned with President Van Buren, McKinley was offered an appointment on the Supreme Court of the United States, a job that entailed traveling at least 10,000 miles each year to complete his circuits. Having moved to Louisville, he remained on the Court until his death in 1852 in Kentucky.<sup>37</sup>

Thomas Brandon, the co-administrator of Cushing’s estate, was one of the hard working and multi-talented Brandon descendents. Josiah and Rachel Brandon had 15 children, and like some other migrating families, they tried several locales before settling down. Their branch started in North Carolina, tried Georgia for a while, returned to North Carolina, and then settled in Lincoln County, Tennessee, sometime after 1810. There, Thomas, the oldest of the brothers, and William, the brother next to him in age, married sisters, Eliza and Mary Sample. Apparently most of the Brandons, and some of the in-laws, decided to migrate once again, this time to Madison County.<sup>38</sup>

Although the brothers arrived in Alabama with “no property except trowels,” they certainly did not lack ambition or energy. William and Thomas Brandon began their work together as brick masons and later owned their own brickyard. Early visitors to Huntsville often commented on the extraordinary number of brick houses already built. Many of these buildings have now been attributed to the work of the Brandons, who really arrived before the more acclaimed George Steele. The brothers and their siblings were considered valued members of the community. For instance, their younger brother, Col. Byrd Brandon, studied law under Clement Comer Clay and later was appointed Attorney General by President Andrew Jackson. William’s wife, Mary, died in 1847 and Col. William Brandon, 60, died in 1848. The newspaper account of his death suggested he had “amassed a large amount of the world’s good.... He left a large circle of friends and children.”<sup>39</sup>

Thomas Brandon, in 1823, was a successful candidate for the job of Clerk of the County Court, which he maintained for several years. In 1827 his wife Eliza died, age 35, leaving a “disconsolate widow and six little girls.” The next year he married Mrs. Mary Owen, the widow of William Purnell Owen. They had two surviving daughters and a son Thomas, who died at the age of seven in 1844. Thomas Brandon’s opinion was respected, and he was asked to sit on the

committee for rules of the Committee of Vigilance with other leaders of the town. Unfortunately the long-standing partnership of William and Thomas apparently dissolved in 1842 with harsh words. Thomas Brandon and his family moved to Monroe County, Mississippi, where he died in 1859.<sup>40</sup>

Egbert Harris has remained a curious, but hapless, figure among those in the letter. He married Sally G. Wall in Madison County in September of 1815, and they purchased and sold property worth considerable sums of money. There may be a hint of difficulties to come with a study of the Appearance Docket for the Superior Court of Madison County, 1810-1816. Among all the names mentioned in the letter by Samuel Hutton, only Egbert Harris was actively involved in so many court cases, and he was the plaintiff or the defendant in four acts of litigation during that time. Certainly Hutton's letter said Harris was "in a bad way." "According to the 1819 Deed Books, Harris was indebted to Willis Pope for \$31,000, and these were days with no cash to pay debts, great or small. The next news about Harris was in March of 1822 when Andrew Jackson hired Egbert Harris to oversee his hands and the farm at Jackson's plantation near Florence, Alabama. Harris said "he had nothing to support on now, but labour and he was determined to persue [*sic*] any employment that would yield him support." He was said to be a "good farmer and industrious." Harris wrote later that year to General Jackson about the difficulties of building the new gin house and mentioned his own family in closing. Egbert Harris revealed, "Mrs. Harris says she is not disposed to live with [me] as man and wife, and I am determined to use no coersive [*sic*] measures." He mentioned he would like to bring his "darling Babes" to the farm. A later note mentions difficulties with the hands, crops, building, and Harris was "abed with a heigh feaver. [*sic*]" But Jackson, in a letter in December to Gen. John Coffee, his neighbor in Florence, mentioned there was an enormous disparity in accounts. "Harris must have deceived me."<sup>41</sup> There are no further references to Egbert, Sally Wall Harris, or the "darling babes."

Neil B. Rose, like many other of the early settlers, tried his hand at several things. Rose served under Jackson as Brigade Quartermaster for the Cavalry in preparation for the war against the Creek Indians. On a trip through Huntsville to get supplies, Rose wrote indignantly to Jackson, "I railed amongst them, without discrimination, they are awake now.... Rest assured everything is in motion hear [*sic*]" Rose must have seen something favorable because he settled in Huntsville and was a community favorite for many years. He built one of the first stores on the east side of the square with Pope and Hickman. Like others, Rose suffered financial reverses from overextension and the depression of 1819.

However, his recognized place in the community was as owner of the Planters' Hotel, where as a genial host he delighted ready listeners—travelers and townspeople alike. "Rose spoke with a Scottish burr and he had the ability to hold an audience spellbound with his story telling and sense of humor." In 1818 Anne Royall said of Rose, "You have not to look very deep for the qualities of his mind. It is plainly depicted in his fine open countenance, and soft blue eye." She wrote Major Rose to be, "the merriest soul in the world. He is nothing but frolic and fun" as she described their somewhat risqué evening fun around the backgammon table with friends.<sup>42</sup> His wife, Mary, died in 1829, age 45. And although his

tombstone apparently gives a death date for N.B. Rose as 1835, county marriage records indicate Major Neal B. Rose married Martha F. Moody in 1836.<sup>43</sup>

Optimistic plans continued for the future as Hutton reported the news to Fred Harris. Eldred Rawlins, who had purchased land in the county in 1818, married Nancy Lanier [Ann], August 11, 1821. Little is known about their short time together; she died of consumption less than two years later on January 16, 1823. He stayed in Madison County and was active in politics as he announced his candidacy for state treasurer in 1840.<sup>44</sup>

The second marriage noted in the letter was that of Dr. Alexander Erskine and Susan Catherine Russel, both originally from Virginia. Erskine graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and began his career in medicine in Huntsville in 1817 with Edmund Irby. When Dr. Thomas Fearn returned from advanced study in England in the summer of 1820, he and Erskine began a partnership and a friendship that lasted their lifetimes. Erskine's bride, Susan, had moved to Huntsville in 1816 at the age of eleven with her parents, Ann Frances Hooe Russel and Col. Albert Russel, who served in the Revolutionary War. Dr. Erskine and his wife reared a family of nine children, three of whom became doctors. He died in 1857 at the age of 66. His widow, Susan Russel Erskine lived almost 35 years longer and died at the age of 88 on April 17, 1892.<sup>45</sup>

Samuel Hutton mentioned that John Russel married Miss Old of Franklin, Tennessee. John Hooe Russel was a brother to Susan Catherine Russel, and thus he was the brother-in-law of Dr. Alexander Erskine. A few years after the marriage to Mary Old, their family, now with five children, moved to Memphis where he died in 1829, about the age of 27.<sup>46</sup>

Of those mentioned in the letter, some men were almost impossible to follow later. Charley, the mutual friend of both Harris and Hutton, will never be identified with certainty. Obviously he was well enough known to both men not to need a surname. Considering the information given about the activities of others, Hutton's reference to Charley is almost purposefully vague. Perhaps his direction was not entirely within the law. At the least, Charley would have needed a passport or some kind of official permit to enter the Indian Nation Territory. Nothing is known about Reuben Turner before coming to Huntsville or his later life. His escape from the death penalty perhaps urged him, after the initial celebration of his release, to put miles between himself and the town.

Alfred Davis left no further trail in the Huntsville community. After all, a known horse thief is not particularly welcome anywhere. His crime was all the more noticeable because the owner of the horse was the son of the town's founder, Leroy Pope, and because the horse was such an outstanding racer. Cyclops, the horse belonging to Willis Pope, was apparently no ordinary mount. Horseracing was an important aspect of sporting life in early Huntsville and attracted other race lovers. Andrew Jackson often came for the events and entered his own racers. John Connally had organized a Jockey Club at his Green Bottom Turf just north of town. There was a subscription for a purse for the races, and he advertised the celebrated horse, Telemachus, at stand there. As mentioned in the letter, Davis stole Cyclops. According to the newspaper, Willis Pope offered a fine reward for his "nicked tail sorrel horse, 13 hands high, paces and walks remarkably fast, a

snip in the forelock, short thick neck, very deep through shoulders, long back and one of his fore and hind feet are white, not recollected which. \$25 for delivery of the horse or Horse and Thief \$50." "The owner's reward for the horse appears to be out of proportion. In the same issue of the paper David Moore offered a reward for his runaway slave, 15 year old Lima, of only \$2 for the Negro or \$20 for the boy and horse.<sup>47</sup>

Alfred Davis continued his misdeeds with the horse, as Hutton reported, because the next notice in the newspaper described Cyclops, missing again, with additional information "...about 5 feet high, paces at rate of 12 miles per hour and walks remarkable fast.... He is a horse that would attract very little attention unless when moving, then looks remarkably fine.... Seen on Georgia road 8 days ago." The new owner, Alexander Erskine offered a reward of \$100.<sup>48</sup>

As the previous Jockey Club term expired, efforts at the racetrack continued but there were obstacles. In the advertisement to organize a new Jockey Club, Connally called for "gentlemen only." He hoped no "others will presume to intrude themselves upon the new club. Rules and regulations will exclude all person in the habitual practice of foul racing." A purse would be available for subscribers.<sup>49</sup>

According to Hutton's letter "Anion" was also moved to separate a horse from its owner. George Anyan purchased land in Madison County in 1814 while it was still part of the Mississippi Territory. Family members, whether spelled Auyan, Anyan, or Anion, continued to buy land in the more rugged parts of the county for many years. George Anyan was listed as head of household in the 1830 Census with a family of six; he died in 1833. The surname is still recognized in the Big Cove area east of Monte Sano.<sup>50</sup>

And so that's the news from Huntsville, Alabama, in mid summer, 1820. Samuel Hutton's letter tells so much, but one can wonder about all the news still unsaid. For just a moment in time, the events of the village are reported to someone who had shared the daily scene. Probably life here was not unlike other small towns over the countryside; just the names were different. Although many of the families scattered, descendants of some mentioned still live in Huntsville today. As a result of the study of the letter, stories unfolded about them that had been forgotten with the passing of time.

Of Samuel Hutton, nothing is known. Even the spelling of his last name could be questioned. He left no signature on any county or personal documents, other than this one modest letter. Samuel Hutton, like many others, moved on. As one might wish Hutton had written more, or even more often, it wasn't so. The local newspaper, so often a source for research, contained a roster of letters uncollected from the Huntsville Post Office. "Remaining in the post office at Huntsville, Alabama, on the first day of October 1820, which if not taken out before the first day of January next, these letters will be sent to the General Post Office as dead letters."<sup>51</sup> Among the alphabetical listing of letters to be picked up was printed the name, Samuel Hutton. One hopes Samuel Hutton called for and collected his letter and that it was a reply from his dear friend, Frederick Harris, about the news from Huntsville.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Samuel Hutton to Fred A. Harris, August 16, 1820, Harris Family Papers (Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collection Library, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University). Commas have been added for the sake of clarity; and sentences have been grouped in clusters to make reading somewhat easier.
- <sup>2</sup>John Marshall cited in Parke Rouse, Jr., *The Great Wagon Road* (Richmond, 1995), 101-102.
- <sup>3</sup>Clarence Edwin Carter, *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, Vol. 5, Territory of Mississippi, (28 vols., Washington, 1937), 692.
- <sup>4</sup>"Alabama Census Returns, 1820," *Alabama Historic Quarterly*, no author (Fall 1944), 337.
- <sup>5</sup>Ann Newport Royall, *Letters from Alabama 1817-1822*, ed. Lucille Griffith (University, Alabama, 1969) 114-115, 118-119.
- <sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 235.
- <sup>7</sup>Huntsville, *Alabama Republican*, misc. notices 1820-1821. Hereafter cited as *Republican*.
- <sup>8</sup>*Republican*, August 11, 1820.
- <sup>9</sup>Madison County, Alabama, Deed Book E, 86; E, 62.
- <sup>10</sup>*Republican*, Extra Edition, July 19, 1823; Gov. Israel Pickens Papers, Evidence for State and Defense, Reuben Turner, Petitions for Pardon, SG 4162, f.7, Alabama Archives, Montgomery, Alabama
- <sup>11</sup>Dorothy Scott Johnson, comp., *Madison County Alabama Deed Book A,B,C,D & E 1810-1819* (Huntsville, 1976), 74. One is not entirely sure from reading this if Mrs. Logwood was already here and the slaves joined her or if she and the slaves traveled together with Mr. Logwood to Alabama.
- <sup>12</sup>Madison County, Alabama, Probate Records, File #923, Thomas Logwood.
- <sup>13</sup>Madison County, Alabama Probate Record Book #2 (Alabama Archives, microfilm), Inventory of Thomas Logwood, January 29, 1821. [Some owner, not necessarily Logwood, possessed a flair for the theater; three of the slaves were named Yorrick, Cato, and Iago.]; *Republican*, August 25, 1820.
- <sup>14</sup>*Republican*, February 23, 1821.
- <sup>15</sup>Daniel Stuart Dupre, "Liberty and Order on the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840," (Ph.D. dissertation. Brandeis University, 1991), 289.
- <sup>16</sup>Governor Israel Pickens Papers, Alabama Archives, Montgomery, Alabama.
- <sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup>*Republican*, August 11, 1820; September 15, 1820; March 9, 1821; Diane Robey, Dorothy Scott Johnson, John Rison Jones, Jr. and Frances C. Roberts, *Maple Hill Cemetery, Phase One* (Huntsville, 1995), 1.
- <sup>19</sup>*Republican*, August 18, 1820.
- <sup>20</sup>Madison County, Alabama Probate Record Book #2,P. (Alabama Archives, microfilm); Madison County Chancery Court Record Book C, 142-154, 171-172, F, 195-258. His brother-in-law Reverend Estabrook, even wrote and

gave letters of introduction to Cushing, leaving some blank so Cushing might insert any one of his assumed names. At least five currencies, Spanish pesos, French francs, English pounds sterling, Portuguese robes, and American dollars, were involved in the transactions.

- <sup>21</sup>Carter, *Papers V*, 102, 224, 679. According to the court testimony, brother Thomas Cushing nefariously made the arrangements with Captain Sawyer with whom he had already sailed in England.
- <sup>22</sup>General Braham, Madison County's most distinguished military leader of the Revolutionary War had been appointed receiver of public money for the land sales in Huntsville. He bid for land himself and apparently made the down payment with government funds. He was called on for the \$80,000 and was unable to come up with the amount due. Whether he was careless, or criminal, community friends and leaders helped return the shortage. Due to his age and standing, the matter was not generally discussed as the years passed.
- <sup>23</sup>Madison County Deed Book F, 88; F, 233; F, 31, F 312, *Republican*, December 22, 1820; Madison County Deed Book N, 263. Using BLS guide as to the worth of an 1820 dollar today, the value would be at least 1-1/2 million dollars in 1997. Thank you, Bob Nathan.
- <sup>24</sup>William B. Harris to Fred Harris, April 25, 1821; Hannibal Harris to Frederick Harris, June 10, 1818; Hannibal Harris to Frederick Harris, April 27, 1819; Hannibal Harris to Frederick Harris, June 30, 1819, Harris Family Papers (Duke University).
- <sup>25</sup>*Republican*, December 1, 1820.
- <sup>26</sup>William B. Harris to Frederick Harris, March 15, 1820; William B. Harris to Frederick Harris, April 25, 1821 (Duke University); Pauline Jones Gandrud, *Marriage, Death and Legal Notices from Early Alabama Newspapers* (Easley, South Carolina), 304.
- <sup>27</sup>Sarah Huff Fisk, *Civilization Comes to the Big Spring* (Huntsville, 1997), 133; Johnson, *Deed Books*, 688, 643; *Republican*, May 6, August 4, August 18, and October 20, 1820. There was no further news of Henry C. Bradford.
- <sup>28</sup>*Republican*, September 15, December 8, and December 1, 1820.
- <sup>29</sup>Merton E. Coulter, *Old Petersburg and the Broad River Valley of Georgia, Their Rise and Decline* (Athens, 1965), 38.
- <sup>30</sup>Judge Thomas Jones Taylor, *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732-1840*. Ed. W. Stanley Hoole and Addie S. Hoole (University, Alabama, 1976), 41; K. Loughran, comp. *Minutes Book, Superior Court of Law and Equity Madison County, Mississippi Territory, 1811-1819*. State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, n.d.; Gandrud, *Notices*, 429, 433.
- <sup>31</sup>J.G.M. Ramsey, *Annals of Tennessee to the End of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century; Comprising Its Settlement, as the Watuqa Association from 1769 to 1777; a part of North Carolina, from 1777 to 1784; the state of Franklin from 1784 to 1788; a part of North Carolina 1788-1790; Territory of the U. States, South of the Ohio, the State of Tennessee* (Charleston, SC, 1853) reprint, East Tennessee Historical Society, Knoxville, 1967), 605; John Spencer Bassett,

- Correspondence of Andrew Jackson* (Kraus Reprint, New York, 1969) Vol. I, 228; Dorothy Scott Johnson, *Cemeteries of Madison County, Vol. 1* (Huntsville, AL, 1971), 145; Bassett, *Letters*, I, 318; Edward Chambers Betts, *Early History of Huntsville, Alabama, 1804-1870* (Montgomery, 1916), 30; Bassett, *Correspondence*, II, 94, 128; Robey et al., *Maple Hill*, 104; Pauling Myra Jones and Kathleen Paul Jones, *Genealogy of the Harris and Allied Families* (Huntsville, 1929), 107.
- <sup>32</sup>Johnson, *Deeds*, 304, 390, 491, 672, 748, 752; Oral interview with Norman Shapiro, December 18, 1997 and June 19, 1998.
- <sup>33</sup>Penn Family Files, Huntsville Public Library; Taylor, *History*, 100; Frances C. Roberts, *Sesquicentennial History of Church of the Nativity, Episcopal* (Huntsville, 1992), 12, 13, 21; *Republican*, June 9, August 25, 1820. [There are those who would say nothing has changed about the roads.]
- <sup>34</sup>Bassett, *Correspondence*, I, 289, 248; Elizabeth DeYoung, *Madison County, Alabama Marriage Book I, 1809-1817* (Huntsville, 1951), #17; Fisk, *Big Spring*, 113, 90, 162, 100, 98; Jones, *Notices*, 430, 293; S.D. Hutchings to Andrew Jackson, February 27, 1821, cited in Bassett, *Correspondence*, I, 303; *Republican*, March 15, 1822.
- <sup>35</sup>Frank Otto Gatell, "John McKinley" *Justices of the United States Supreme Court 1789-1969*. Leon Friedman and Fred L. Israel ed., (New York, 1969), 769; *Republican*, September 29, 1820; Fisk, *Big Spring*, 91, 94, 110-113, 116, 119.
- <sup>36</sup>Jimmie Hicks, "Associate Justice John McKinley: A Sketch," *Alabama Review* (Summer, 1965), 227, 228-229; DeYoung, *Marriage Book I*, #55; *Republican*, September 15, 1820.
- <sup>37</sup>Willis Brewer, *Alabama: Her History, War Record and Public Men*. Reprint Co. Publishers (Spartanburg, SC, 1975), 298; Royall, *Letters*, 229-230; Jones, *Notices*, 434-281; Hicks, "Sketch," 232, 233.
- <sup>38</sup>Oral interview with Dr. John Rison Jones, Jr., a descendent of the Brandon family, June 17, 1998.
- <sup>39</sup>*Ibid*; Taylor, *History*, 40, 104; Jones, *Notices*, 353, 356.
- <sup>40</sup>Jones, *Notices*, 435, 459, 463, 480, 308; Oral interview with Dr. John Rison Jones, Jr. June 17, 1998. Two houses built by the brothers include the Wharton home on Adams and the Sanford house on Madison Street.
- <sup>41</sup>DeYoung, *Marriage Book I*, #213; Dorothy Scott Johnson, trans. *Appearance Docket, Superior Court of Madison County Alabama, 1810-1816* (Huntsville, n.d.) #36, 37, 54, and 57; Johnson, *Deeds*, 123, 304, 672, 748; Bassett, *Correspondence*, III, 155, 173, 176, 182.
- <sup>42</sup>Bassett, *Letters*, I, 248, 354; Taylor, *History*, 38; Robey et al, *Maple Hill*, 4; Royall, *Letters*, 121.
- <sup>43</sup>Robey et al, *Maple Hill*, 4; DeYoung, *Marriage Book*, IV, 298. If the tombstone is in error of the actual death date, it will not be the first or last time this has happened.
- <sup>44</sup>DeYoung, *Marriage Book*, III, 125; Jones, *Notices*, 434, 337.
- <sup>45</sup>Jewell S. Goldsmith and Helen D. Fulton, *Medicine Bags and Bumpy Roads*, (Huntsville, 1985), 133; *Republican*, September 15, 1820; Mary Irby Mastin,

comp., *Hooe Russel Genealogy*, n.d., no page numbers; Robey et al *Maple Hill*, 14; Gandrud, *Notices*, 417. The Erskine Home constructed about 1819 is located at 515 Franklin Street, Huntsville. Dr. Fearn's home is next door at 517 Franklin.

<sup>46</sup>Mastin, *Genealogy*. No page number.

<sup>47</sup>*Republican*, April 8, May 6, 1820.

<sup>48</sup>*Republican*, May 19, 1820. Announcements of horse thefts were not uncommon in the newspaper. If not for the value of the animal, perhaps the adventure amounted to joy-riding of the day.

<sup>49</sup>*Republican*, June 16, 1820.

<sup>50</sup>Marilyn Davis Barefield, comp., *Old Huntsville Land Office Records and Military Warrants, 1810-1854*, #6, 320. For some additional local insight, see Nancy M. Rohr, "Blevins Gap: A Road Less Traveled" *The Historic Huntsville Quarterly* (Summer 1988), 11.

<sup>51</sup>*Republican*, October 20, 1820.

A REPORT CONCERNING THE FINAL RESTING PLACE OF  
FATHER JEREMIAH F. TRECY

By  
William J. Stubno, Jr.

Located in Section 15 of Maple Hill Cemetery in Huntsville, Alabama, the headstone inscribed with the name of Rev. J. F. (Father Jeremiah F.) Treacy, the founder of Saint Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church, has generally been considered to be only a memorial stone. Information has recently surfaced, however, that proves the stone marks the actual location of Father Treacy's final resting place. That information consists of both physical evidence and primary source documentation<sup>1</sup>

Parishioners of the church contending that the stone marked the actual burial site of Father Treacy asked members of the cemetery staff to assist them in gathering physical evidence. They agreed to the request. Subsequently, a staff member drove a metal rod into the disputed ground and eventually hit a solid object or box after several feet, indicating that someone was buried there. That discovery established compelling physical evidence of a burial at that location.<sup>2</sup>

Just as compelling was the primary source documentation which centered around the illness, death, and burial of Father Treacy.<sup>3</sup> Hospital records listed Father Treacy as a priest of the Diocese of Mobile in Alabama when he became a patient at the Alexian Brothers Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1882. He remained at that facility until his death from hemiplegia on March 5, 1888. Both the death register (information for death certificate taken from death register) and the burial certificate, located among the records of the City of St. Louis, indicated Huntsville, Alabama, as the intended place of burial.<sup>4</sup>

Shortly after Father Treacy's death, the individual or individuals responsible for the priest's body had it transported (undoubtedly by rail) to Huntsville, Alabama, for interment.<sup>5</sup> The *Huntsville Gazette*, dated March 10, 1888, a local newspaper, described the burial and the circumstances surrounding it:

All that was mortal of Rev. Father Tracy [Treacy] was consigned to the tomb yesterday. It was meet and fitting that his remains should be brought to the city he loved so much in life, that under the shadow of the lofty mountains that gird our city his dust should find a final resting place.<sup>6</sup>

In summary, the physical evidence and the primary source documentation examined in this report clearly show that Father Treacy is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery. It is therefore hoped that this report will erase any doubt as to that fact.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Dorothy Scott Johnson, John Rison Jones, Jr., Frances C. Roberts, and Diane Robey, *Maple Hill Cemetery, Phase One*. (Huntsville, Alabama: Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, 1995), pp. 128-129; Rose G. Lovett, *The Catholic Church in the Deep South*. (Birmingham, Alabama: The Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama, 1981), pp. 33-35
- <sup>2</sup> From telephone interviews with various members of Saint Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church, Spring 1998.
- <sup>3</sup> Not annotated, as all the statements will be footnoted and expanded in the documented narrative to follow.
- <sup>4</sup> Archival Records of the Alexian Brothers Hospital; Death Certificate for Father Jeremiah F. Treacy (information from death register), Certificate #004862, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Division of Health, City of St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri; Burial Certificate of Father Jeremiah F. Treacy, Certificate #1882, Records of the City of St. Louis, St. Louis Public Library, St. Louis, Missouri.
- <sup>5</sup> A person or persons obviously had the responsibility of shipping Father Treacy's body to Huntsville.
- <sup>6</sup> Except for the *Huntsville Gazette* (dated March 10, 1888), issues of the daily and weekly Huntsville newspapers of that period either did not carry the notice of Father Treacy's death, or the issues in question were missing. The *Huntsville Gazette*, March 10, 1888, microfilm copy in the Heritage Room, Huntsville-Madison County Public Library, Huntsville, Alabama

## SPUTNIK 1957 – MEMORIES OF AN OLDTIMER

By

Ernst Stuhlinger

(Presented during a panel discussion at the Freedom Forum, Washington, DC,  
October 4, 1997.)

On the desk in my study, I have a small but highly treasured memento. I brought it with me to show it to you—a small, beautifully crafted replica of Sputnik. It was a gift from Professor Leonid Sedov, chief scientist of the Russian space program. He sent it to me after the American Explorer had been put in orbit, together with his best wishes for me and for the future of space flight.

At that time, we rocket people in the United States did not know who the genius was who achieved these Russian rocket and space firsts: the 5000-mile ICBM in August 1957, Sputnik 1 weighing 83 kilograms on October 4, 1957, and Sputnik 2 with the dog Laika, weighing 508 kilograms on November 3, 1957. It was nine years later, and after many more Russian firsts which included military rockets, satellites for scientific, communication, and military purposes, and also numerous spacecraft to the moon, to Venus, and toward Mars, the first man in orbit, the first two-man capsule and the first three-man capsule in orbit, the first woman in orbit, the first spacewalk, and indications that Russia was eagerly trying to beat American astronauts to the moon. It was only then that we learned that the “Chief Designer” behind these impressive accomplishments was Sergei Pavlovitch Korolev. His name became known publicly, and also to us Americans, only after his death in 1966. Only then his outstanding achievements were acknowledged publicly by the Russian government. He was buried in the Kremlin wall, receiving a hero’s funeral.

A biography of Korolev was written by an American author, James Harford, and published last summer. It is an exciting and fascinating book, providing deep insights into the life and work of an extraordinary man, and into the complex set of circumstances, personalities, events, accomplishments, hopes, and failures that made up the Russian rocket and space program during the past 60 years. With this book, the mysterious Chief Designer steps out of mystery and into full daylight, and the reader cannot help being deeply impressed by Korolev’s brilliant accomplishments, and touched by his personal fate.

One day in the early 1960s, Korolev saw a picture of von Braun in a newspaper. For years he had eagerly followed the news about von Braun’s work in Germany and in the United States, and particularly about the fledgling Saturn-Apollo Project. Looking at von Braun’s picture, he said: “We should be friends.”

Ten years later von Braun remarked to a friend: “If I had the opportunity to meet and talk with just one of the many space pioneers who, during these past 80 or 100 years, have helped space flight to become a reality, I would choose Sergei Korolev.”

Korolev and von Braun never met, although Korolev was sent to Germany after the end of the war to help round up material and personnel related to von Braun’s Peenemuende project. Some years earlier, I had some indirect contact with Korolev’s work. In 1942 I was sent to the Russian front as a Pfc in the German

Army, and I found myself repeatedly in the middle of a barrage of Katyusha rockets (we called them "Stalin Organ") that had been developed by Korolev. I survived with minor damage, and in 1943 was transferred from the fighting front to von Braun's rocket project in Peenemuende.

Harford, who knew von Braun very well, points out that there were a number of surprising parallels between Korolev and von Braun. Each of them had a very broad and thorough education not only in technical and scientific matters, but also in the humanities; both were supreme charismatic leaders who inspired their co-workers to do their very best; both were extremely hard workers; each had ideas of rockets and space flight in his early teens; each decided to devote his professional life's work to the development of human travel to our neighbors in space; both were avid pilots of motorized airplanes and gliders; each of them had to live and to work under a ruthless dictatorship whose philosophies and doctrines he did not share, but with which he had to live in order to pursue his plans of space flights with powerful precision rockets; each also had to develop military rockets as ordered by his government; each was willing to accept abuse, temporary imprisonment, and other humiliations under the accusation that he pursued spaceflight ideas rather than the defense of his country; each enjoyed outstanding success with some of his projects, but both met also with times of depression and frustration. Both died of intestinal cancer while they were still relatively young—Korolev at 59, von Braun at 65.

There were also distinct differences. Korolev had a tempestuous character; he could be abrupt, cynical, brusque, shouting, using expletives; von Braun was even-tempered and almost never lost his self-control. While working in Germany, von Braun was unknown to the public; the government kept him in obscurity. After he came to America, and after his rocket projects for the Army (Redstone and Jupiter) had been successfully completed, he became known to the public. With his many interviews, articles, and public appearances, he soon became a favorite of the media. When he launched America's first satellite, and the first American into space, his fame spread quickly, and many public honors were bestowed upon him. The crowning event, both in his professional life and in the eyes of the public, was the series of successful Saturn flights which culminated in the moonwalks of twelve American Apollo astronauts. For twenty years, from 1950 to 1970, he enjoyed the limelight of public recognition, admiration, and gratitude—wonderful experiences of fulfillment and recognition that Korolev was not permitted to enjoy.

Korolev, like von Braun, began thinking of satellites while he was still a teenager. The possibility of building earth-orbiting satellites had been mentioned by Konstantin Tsiolkovskii as early as 1903. Goddard, Oberth, and all the early promoters of space flight elaborated on satellite ideas. In 1948 Mikhail Tikhonravov suggested to Korolev that a satellite should be built and launched. Anatoli Blaganravov, President of the Academy of Artillery Sciences, was reluctant, but he still supported the proposal that Korolev should build and launch a satellite.

In 1953 Korolev proposed to the Central Committee of the Communist Party that his recently developed R-7 rocket should be used to put a satellite in orbit,

and half a year later, in 1954, he made a formal proposal to Dimitri Ustinov, Minister of Armaments, to launch a satellite.

While these events happened in Russia, a very similar development took place in the United States. From 1950 to 1953 Wernher von Braun developed the Redstone rocket for the U.S. Army. Sometime in 1952, von Braun remarked to me, "With the Redstone, we could do it." "Do what?" was my answer. "Launch a satellite, of course!" And then, he described how three small stages of solid propellant rockets on top of a Redstone, ignited when the rocket had reached its apex point, could put a small satellite into orbit. In 1954, he submitted a formal proposal to the Army. A counter proposal, based on a new, still undeveloped, rocket system called Vanguard, was made by the Navy.

In July of 1955 President Eisenhower announced that the United States would launch an earth satellite as a contribution to the International Geophysical Year (IGY) "sometime in the future." The following week, at the Sixth Congress of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) in Copenhagen, Professor Sedov revealed that a Soviet satellite project, also a contribution to the IGY, could be expected in the near future.

In January 1956, the Russian Council of Ministers issued a decree authorizing the development of a satellite. Later that year, Mstislav Keldysh, head of the Academy of Sciences, in a presentation to the presidium of the Academy he described scientific measurements to be made from orbit. He also talked of plans to place a dog in a satellite, and later to fly to the moon. He ended his talk with the words: "We all want our satellite to fly earlier than the Americans'."

Korolev's first satellite, weighing half a ton, would have been ready to be launched with an R-7 rocket in the summer of 1957. However, the scientific instruments it was supposed to carry were not ready, so the launch had to be delayed. Fearing to be second in orbit, Korolev decided to build another, very small, and very simple satellite. Gyorgi Grechko, one of Korolev's engineers, told Jim Harford in 1993: "We made it in one month, with only one reason, to be first in space." This satellite, Sputnik 1, reached its orbit 40 years ago today. Korolev's original satellite proposal became Sputnik 3 on May 15, 1958.

Meanwhile, von Braun's satellite project encountered rough sailing. President Eisenhower did not want a scientific satellite to be launched by a military rocket, so the Army could not allow von Braun to develop a satellite as a normal Army project. He was authorized only to "study" such a project. Consequently, much of the theoretical work for a Redstone-launched satellite was done by some of von Braun's co-workers at home, on their own time. But simultaneously, von Braun's team developed a close cooperation with Dr. Pickering's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, and with Dr. James Van Allen at Princeton. Both became very decisive members of the American satellite project.

The history of America's Explorer Project from 1954 until 1958 is a very complex series of events, intermixed with times of high hopes and deep frustrations, far too long to be told here. It was described in some detail in a recent book entitled *Wernher von Braun, Crusader for Space*.

Then came the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1957, when, in von Braun's words, "a new star appeared in the firmament." It was a manmade star, which even talked to us with

its soft but persistent beep-beep tones. As small as it was, it produced a shock wave, which quickly engulfed the civilized world. It brought headlines in the papers everywhere. For the people at large, it was an absolutely traumatic experience. For the Russians, it was a cause for justified pride and deep satisfaction. For America's governing body, it raised anxious questions. What did we do wrong? Is there now a missile gap? For some members of government, it was simply a "silly bauble" that did not bother them one iota. For members of America's space community, it confirmed that some unfortunate decisions had been made in the past. For the journalists, it was an invitation to ask penetrating questions about leadership in our nation.

For me personally, it was a bittersweet confirmation that my feelings in the past had put me on the right track over the years. I had carefully followed the restrained and cautious pronouncements of Russian space people that were reported in scientific journals: In October 1951, Mikhail Tikhonravov stated that the USSR had plans to orbit artificial satellites. Two years later, in November 1953, A.N. Nesmeyanov declared at the World Peace Conference in Vienna that the launching of earth satellites by the Soviet Union had become a realistic possibility. In 1955 at the Fifth International Astronautical Congress in Amsterdam, American attendees asked Professor Sedov whether in his opinion the first astronaut in orbit would be Russian or American. "Neither one," he answered. "The first astronaut in orbit will be a dog. A Russian dog, of course." During 1956 and 1957 more articles appearing in space journals and in Russian papers and newscasts implied that the USSR intended to meet its IGY satellite commitment. At a meeting of IGY planners in Barcelona, Spain, in 1956 Professor I. Bardin said that the Soviet Union would use satellites for pressure, temperature, cosmic ray, micrometeoroid, and solar radiation measurements. In June 1957, Professor Nesmeyanov stated in a press release that a satellite launcher and its payload were ready, and that a launch should be expected within a few months. Also during the summer of 1957, Lloyd Berkner, the U.S. member of the IGY Committee, was informed by professor Keldysh that a satellite launch by the USSR was impending, and on September 18, Radio Moscow reported that a satellite would be launched soon. Even the frequencies at which the beep-beep would be transmitted were publicly announced.

All these announcements convinced me that a Russian satellite launch was indeed imminent. Surprisingly, almost no attention was given to them by the media; space events were not yet big news. Von Braun's satellite project had come to a complete standstill by order of the Secretary of Defense. My plea to von Braun to approach the Department of Defense with another request to let him go ahead with the satellite project was to no avail. "Please leave me alone," he said. "My hands are tied, as you well know!" Then, on September 27, I went to General Medaris, the Commanding General at Redstone Arsenal. "A Russian satellite will soon be in orbit. Wouldn't you try once more to ask the Secretary for permission to go ahead with our satellite? The shock for our country would be tremendous if they were first into space!" "Now look," the General said, "don't get tense. You know how complicated it is to build and launch a satellite. Those people will not be able to do it.... Go back to your laboratory, and relax!"

One week later, Sputnik 1 was in orbit. Everybody with a modest receiver could hear its gentle beep-beep, and on clear nights one could see it traveling quickly between the stars from west to east. The shock for our country was enormous. Von Braun asked me: "Did the General talk to you since it happened? I think he owes you an apology." "Yes," was my reply, "but all he said was 'Those damn bastards!'"

Von Braun's reaction was different: "The Russians have given us Americans a free lecture. We better put it to good use! And he added: "Most Americans made some grave errors in judgement. They failed to recognize the tremendous psychological impact of an omnipresent artificial moon," and he added that most Americans grossly underestimated the remarkable capabilities of Russian project managers, scientists, engineers, and technicians, and they also failed to appraise correctly the research and development abilities of a country even when it is run by a totalitarian government.

Reactions by the media to the unexpected space victory of the Russians were overwhelming. Some reporters were acrid and biting, others lamenting and admonishing, still others presented well-meant and even good advice. Many of the writers demanded a thorough overhaul of our educational system, a suggestion that was very warmly welcomed by the members of the space community. All in all, the actions of the media amounted to a resonating wake-up call.

This wake-up call was badly needed in our country, and it was highly appreciated by the space people. Still, it took five long weeks which included the launch of Sputnik 2 with the dog Laika, more painful mishaps of the Vanguard project, and more critical and urging comments by the media, before General Medaris received the order from Washington to go ahead with the Explorer project. Eighty-four days of intense work by von Braun's, Bill Pickering's, and James Van Allen's team members followed. By the end of January 1958, the modified Redstone rocket and the little satellite were assembled at the launch site in Florida, and the launch was prepared.

A personal problem arose for me at that time. I had developed and built a simple, but indispensable analog computer system that would accept signals from the rocket's first stage during ascent, and quickly determine the exact moment when the solid propellant upper stages of the launch rocket should be ignited so that the satellite would obtain its predetermined orbiting speed in the correct horizontal direction. I was supposed to operate that system and to press the button at the correct moment. However, it so happened that my wife was expecting our third child around that time, and the doctor had told us that it would arrive on January 28, exactly the day on which the new satellite was supposed to be launched. A husband wants to be with his wife when a new member joins the family, so I faced a severe dilemma. Very fortunately, the baby, our son Christoph, arrived two days early, on January 26. So I could be with my wife in the hospital, then leave her in the hands of her mother and some good friends, and depart quickly for Florida. The launch had to be delayed because of bad weather, but on the evening of January 31, Explorer 1 reached its orbit. "We have now firmly established our foothold in space," von Braun said, "we will never give it up again." Our son Christoph grew up to be a forester. He is presently the State

Forester in the State of Maryland, and I am happy to say he is here with us today. He will be 40 years old next January 26.

Americans had learned the lesson Sputnik had taught. Matters of education received unprecedented attention in this country. Space exploration became a familiar research and development objective. In the summer of 1958, President Eisenhower established the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). In May of 1961 President Kennedy approved a program of manned lunar exploration as an “urgent national need;” the huge Saturn Apollo Project ensued and met with brilliant success eight years later, giving twelve Americans the opportunity to walk on the moon and to return safely to earth. General Medaris, looking back several years after the Sputnik launch, said: “If I could get a hold of that thing, I would kiss it on both cheeks!”

In preparing for moon flights, Russians and Americans were again engaged in a competition—this time for the first men on the moon. Korolev made a desperate effort to win again, but the odds were against him. In his program there was not enough money, not enough manpower, and not enough support from his government to build and test a rocket system powerful enough to make a successful round trip to the moon. This time von Braun was in a better situation. The government was solidly behind the project, there was enough money and manpower, there were distinguished and powerful colleagues to share the burden (particularly Robert Gilruth and the Manned Space Center in Houston), and there were about 20,000 industrial contractors to support the project. Sputnik had taught the Americans a lesson, and they had put it to good use. Korolev did not live to see the American success; he died in January 1966.

When it became obvious that our Moon Project would succeed, there were some oldtimers in the American space program who sent up a silent greeting to that eternal orbit: “Thank you, Sergei Pavlovitch, for Sputnik.”

## NOTES

The quotations in this essay were taken from two books:

*Korolev* by James Harford, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1997

*Wernher von Braun, Crusader for Space* by Ernst Stuhlinger and Frederick I. Ordway III, Krieger Publishing Company, Malabar, Florida, 1994.

## ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION APPROVES FOUR ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL MARKERS FOR MADISON COUNTY

by  
F. Alex Luttrell, III

The Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society Marker Committee completed several new markers in late 1998. Committee members, working with individuals from sponsoring organizations, performed the research, gathered historical data, and wrote and reviewed the text for four additional historical markers: Shiloh United Methodist Church, Tallulah Bankhead / I. Schiffman Building, Goldsmith-Schiffman Field, and Huntsville Slave Cemetery. The text for each of these markers was approved by the local committee and the Alabama Historical Association Marker Committee, and the markers were ordered from the manufacturer. The Shiloh United Methodist Church marker was sponsored and financed by the church and their Choose Life Sunday School class. The Tallulah Bankhead / I. Schiffman Building marker was proposed by Huntsville's Tallulah Bankhead Society, with funding provided by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs. The Goldsmith-Schiffman Field marker was proposed by Mrs. Margaret Anne Goldsmith Hanaw and financed by the Huntsville City School System. The City of Huntsville provided the funding for the Huntsville Slave Cemetery marker.

One of the four markers has already been erected and dedicated. The congregation of Shiloh United Methodist Church paused to unveil and dedicate their new marker immediately following their regular worship service on March 14, 1999. Because of inclement weather, the entire ceremony took place in the church sanctuary instead of outside at the site of the marker. Mr. Greg Miller, church historian, welcomed the crowd and introduced other participants in the program and those responsible for working on the marker. Mr. Miller also talked about the importance of understanding one's history and learning from the past in order to create a better future. Mrs. Terry Landers then read excerpts from Rev. Anson West's *History of Methodism in Alabama*. According to West, Shiloh was one of seven Methodist Societies in existence in late 1808 when Rev. James Gwinn, a Methodist Circuit Rider, was sent as a missionary to serve the frontier settlers in the "great bend" of the Tennessee River. Following Ms. Landers' history, Mr. Miller announced that his son, Nathan, and Mr. R.D. Cole would unveil the marker immediately following the ceremony. He invited everyone to take a look at it at the conclusion of the service. Mr. Miller then presented the marker to Mr. Alex Luttrell, Chairman of the Marker Committee of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society. Mr. Luttrell accepted the marker for both the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society and the Alabama Historical Association, and spoke a few minutes about the Alabama Historical Association Historical Highway Marker Program which began in 1947. He noted that Shiloh is the third of the seven original Methodist Societies in Madison County to be recognized with a historical marker. The other early

Methodist Churches with markers are First United Methodist Church of Huntsville (formerly Hunt's Spring) and Ford's Chapel United Methodist Church in the Harvest area. A marker was also recently erected at the original site of the Lakeside United Methodist Church, the oldest Black Methodist congregation in Madison County. Following Mr. Luttrell's remarks, Rev. Gary Formby, Huntsville District Superintendent of the United Methodist Church, discussed the significance of the church as a place for the people of the Ryland community to congregate and worship over the past 190 years. Rev. Robert Nance, Pastor of Shiloh United Methodist Church, concluded the ceremony with a benediction. The complete text of the marker is shown on the next page.



Mr. Greg Miller and Mr. R.D. Cole are shown with the new Shiloh United Methodist Church marker

SHILOH  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
Organized 1808

In October, 1808, the Western Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church sent James Gwinn, a circuit rider, to the "great bend" of the Tennessee River to formalize existing Methodist Societies. He organized the Flint Circuit to serve frontier settlers in southern Tennessee and Madison County, Mississippi Territory. The first meetings of the Shiloh Methodist Episcopal Church were held in a private home. In late 1819 legislation was enacted which permitted churches to own land and, in 1820, a one-half-acre plot of land known as Shiloh was purchased. An adjoining one-acre plot was added in 1876 to construct a new church. That building burned in the mid 1890's. Its replacement was destroyed by fire in 1931. The present edifice was then constructed. Shiloh remained as a circuit charge until late 1953, when it began full-time worship services with B.M. McElroy as pastor. Shiloh provided a school for the community until 1917.

ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION    1998

Additional unveiling and dedication ceremonies are being planned for the coming months! The dedication of the Tallulah Bankhead/I. Schiffman Building marker is scheduled for Sunday, April 18, 1999, at 3:00pm.

Also note that the City of Huntsville marker will soon be moved from its original site near the intersection of Church Street and Williams Avenue to its new location on the east side of Church Street at Big Spring Park. This relocation is necessary due to the demolition of the old Chamber of Commerce building and the construction of the new Colonial Bank building and parking garage. The new location for this marker was approved by Huntsville's Mayor Loretta Spencer upon the recommendation of the Public Space Committee of the Beautification Board.

If you know someone who may be interested in becoming a member of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, please share this application for membership.

HUNTSVILLE-MADISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P. O. Box 666  
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My check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ payable to Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society includes a subscription to *The Huntsville Historical Review* and all the Society's activities.

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Signature







**The purpose of this society is to afford an agency for expression among those having a common interest in collecting, preserving and recording the history of Huntsville and Madison County. Communications concerning the organization should be addressed to the President at P. O. Box 666, Huntsville, Alabama 35804.**

**Manuscripts for possible publication should be directed to the Publications Committee at the same address. Articles should pertain to Huntsville or Madison County. Articles on the history of other sections of the state will be considered when they relate in some way to Madison County. All copy, including footnotes, should be double spaced. The author should submit an original and one copy.**

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