

**Names:**

Bury, Edward  
Decatur Railroad  
Bridge  
Deshler, James,  
General

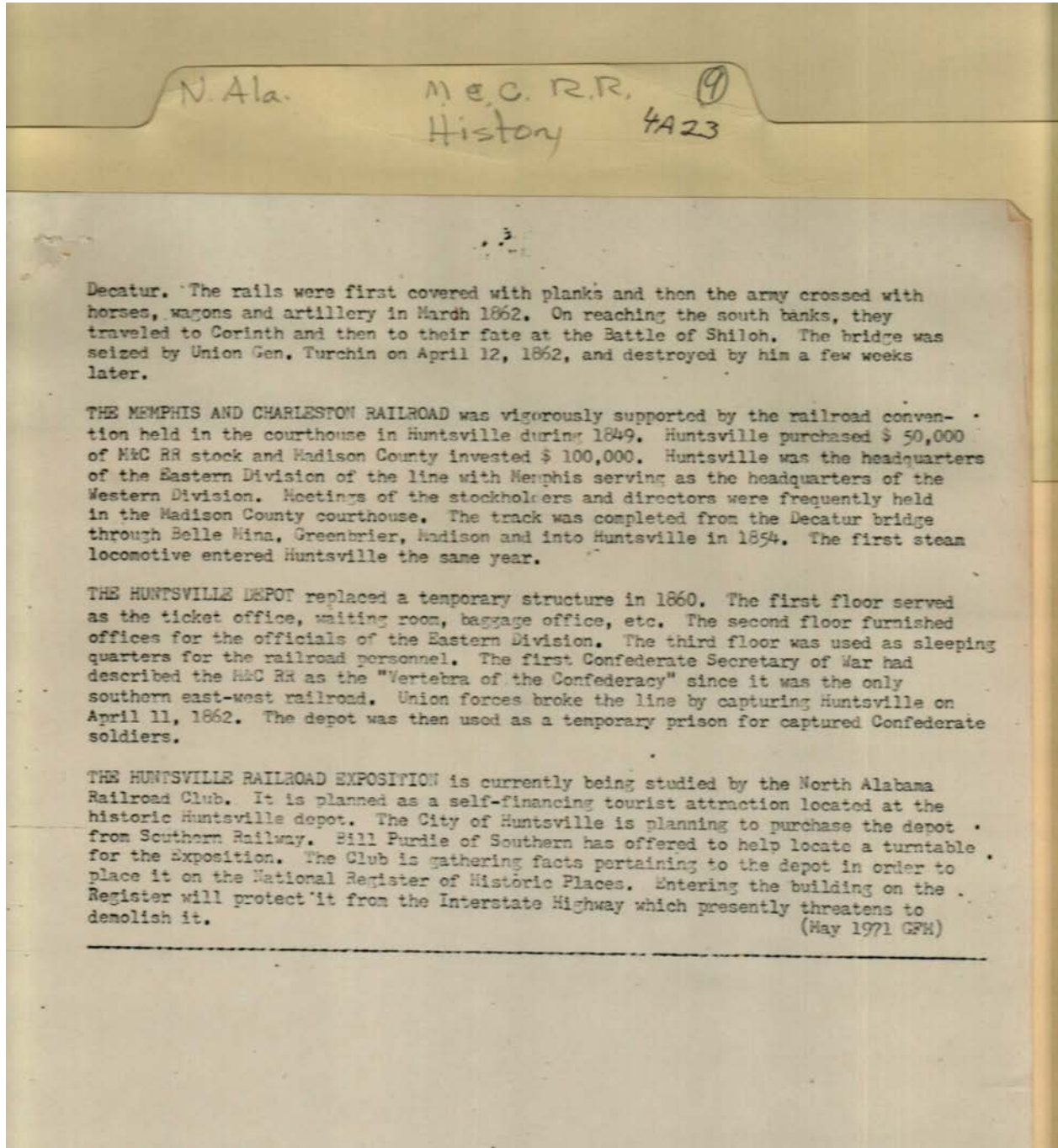
Deshler, David  
Johnston, Albert  
Sidney, General  
Muscle Shoals to  
Huntsville

Railroad History  
Tennessee Valley  
Railroad  
Turchin, John B.,  
General

Tuscumbia Railway  
Tuscumbia,  
Courtland, Decatur  
RR  
Fulton Locomotive

**Types:**

article



**Names:**

Huntsville Depot

Huntsville Railroad  
Exposition

Memphis &  
Charleston Railroad

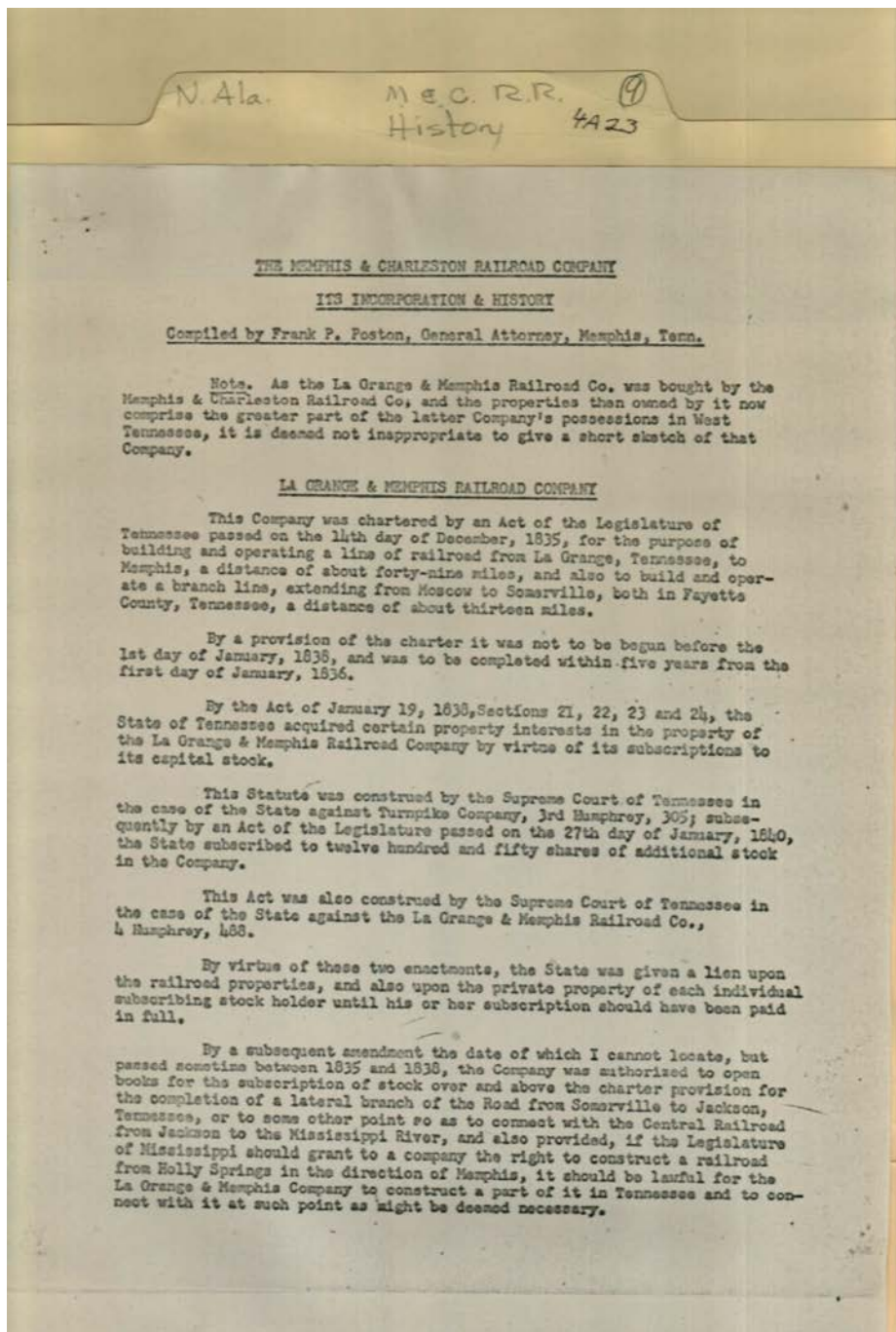
Purdie, Bill

**Types:**

article

**Dates:**

May 1, 1971



**Names:**

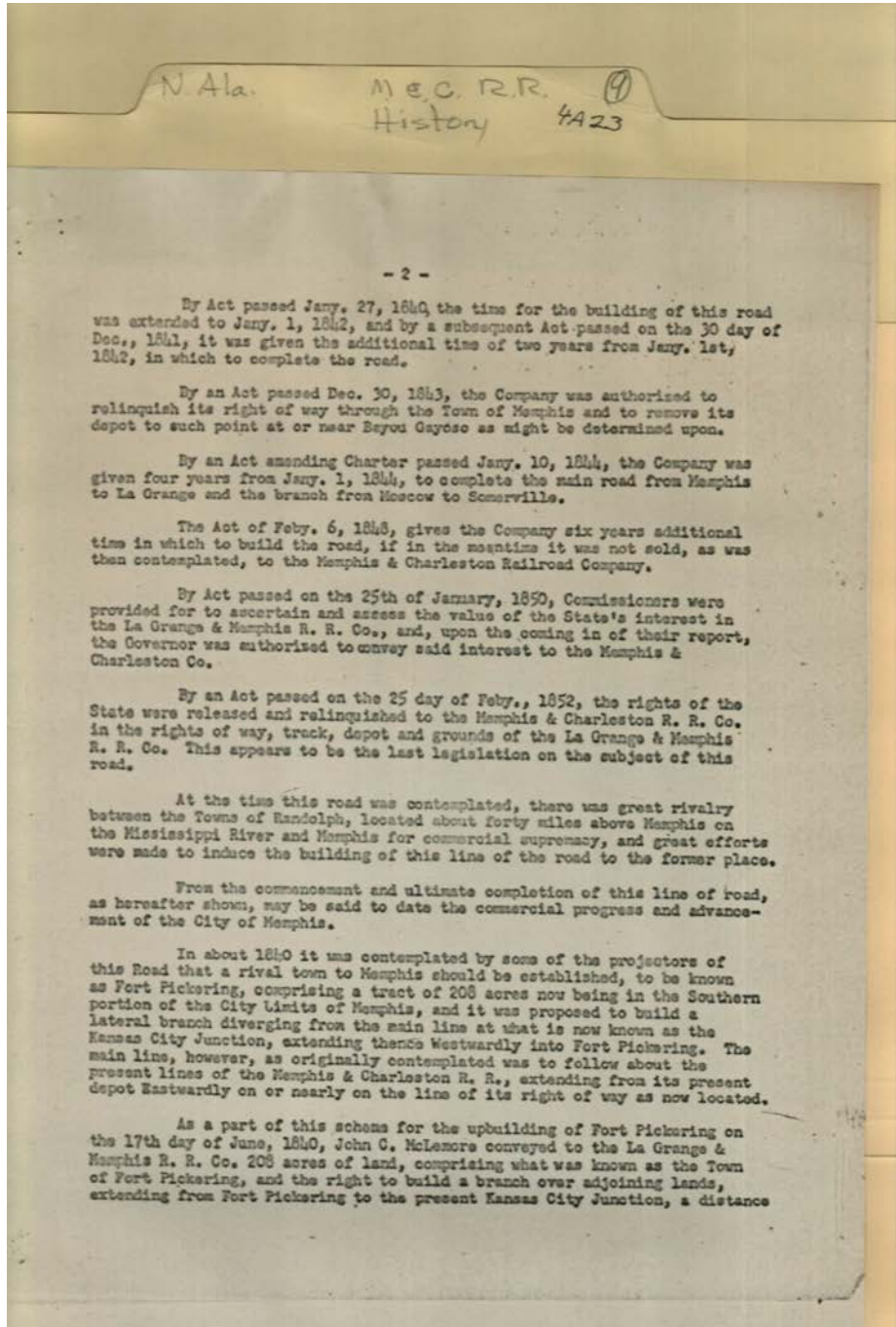
La Grange &  
Memphis Railroad

Memphis &  
Charleston Railroad

Poston, Frank P.

**Types:**

article

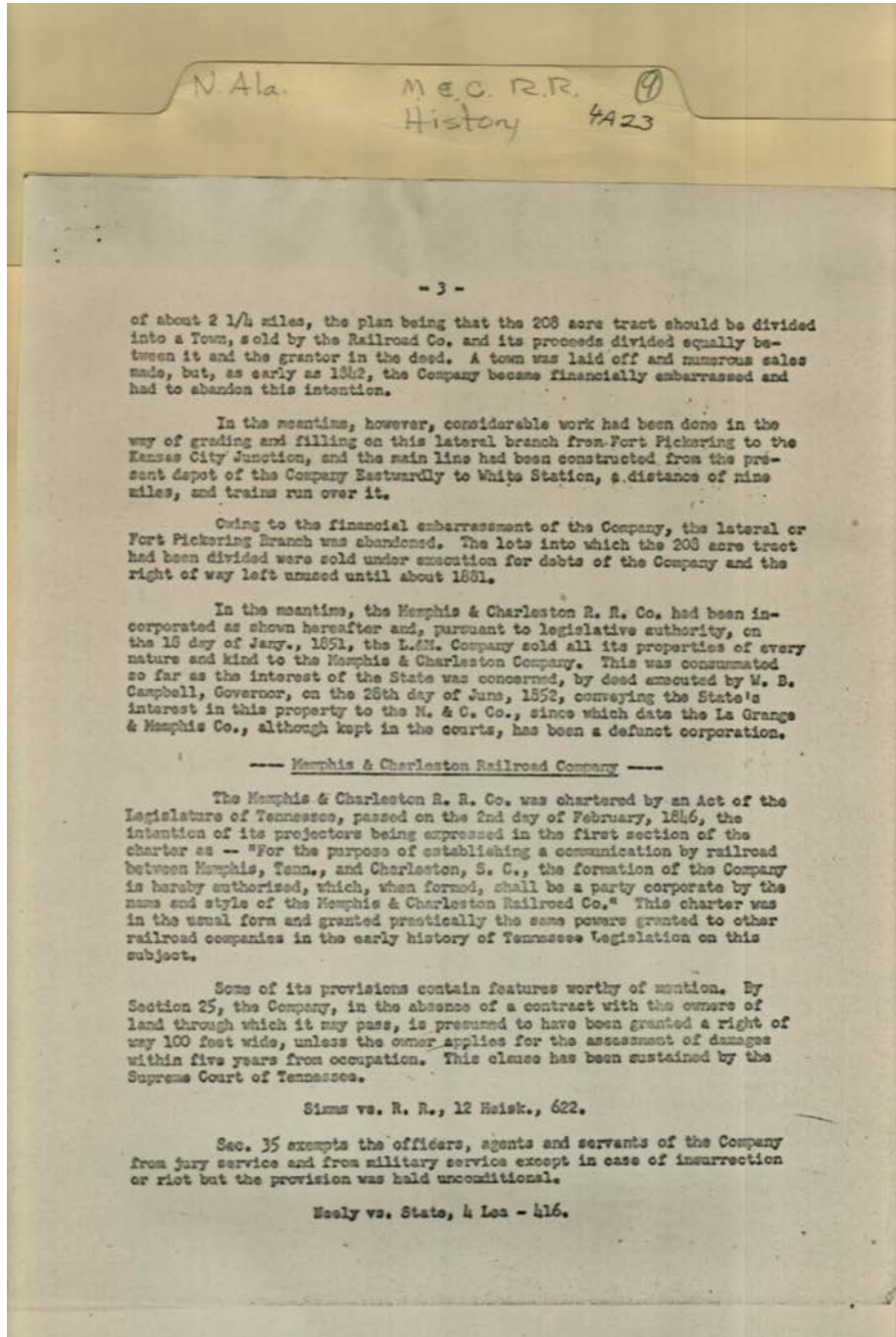


**Names:**

McLemore, John C.

**Types:**

article



**Names:**

Campbell, W. B.,  
Governor

Memphis &  
Charleston Railroad

**Types:**

article

N. Ala. M. & C. R.R. History 423

- 4 -

Sec. 38 exempts the capital stock of the Company forever from taxation and exempts the road with fixtures, appurtenances, work shops, warehouses, etc. for 20 years from the completion of the road. This charter was construed and in some respects upheld in the case of R. R. Co. vs. Gaines, 97 U. S. 697.

Sec. 39 requires construction of the road to be begun in three years from the passage of the Act and to be completed within six years thereafter.

By Sec. 41 the R. R. is to commence in Memphis at or near Union Street where the La Grange & Memphis R. R. depot was located and to run thence South Eastwardly, to a point on the Southern line of Tenn. but was not to be located on the line of the La Grange & Memphis R. R. except under contract and not to be built there at all unless the interest of the State in that road was purchased.

By Act of Feby. 14th, 1848, the charter of the Co. is renewed and it is authorized to construct it to any point on the Mississippi State line after the purchase of the La Grange & Memphis R. R.

By Sec. 19 the time for its completion is extended for 15 years.

Sec. 20 authorizes the purchase of the property of the La Grange & Memphis R. R. on certain terms therein imposed.

By Act Jan'y. 25, 1850, Commissioners were to be appointed by the Governor to appraise the interest of the State in the La Grange & Memphis Road, and directing the Governor to sell and convey, and by Act of Feb. 25, 1852, a conveyance is provided for to the Memphis & Charleston Company of the properties of the La Grange & Memphis and the title of the State released with a provision that the line might be changed if the Memphis & Charleston Co. was not chartered by the State of Miss.

By an Act passed on the 23rd of Feby., 1854, ch 311, the Company is given the right to build an extension from Stevenson to Chattanooga via Jasper and a like change made by Act passed on the 16th day of Feby., 1855.

The charter was also amended in many unimportant particulars by the Act of Jan'y. 29, 1856, which authorized the issuance of one million, six hundred thousand dollars of bonds and the execution of a mortgage to secure the same.

By the Act of Feby. 11, 1852, commonly known as the Internal Improvement Act the aid of the State by the issuance of its bonds was extended to the M. & C. Co. and by Act of Feby. 18, 1856, like aid was granted to it on account of the building of the Somerville Branch with a proviso in the charter that the Company should perpetually keep up and maintain that Branch.

--- Legislation in Alabama ---

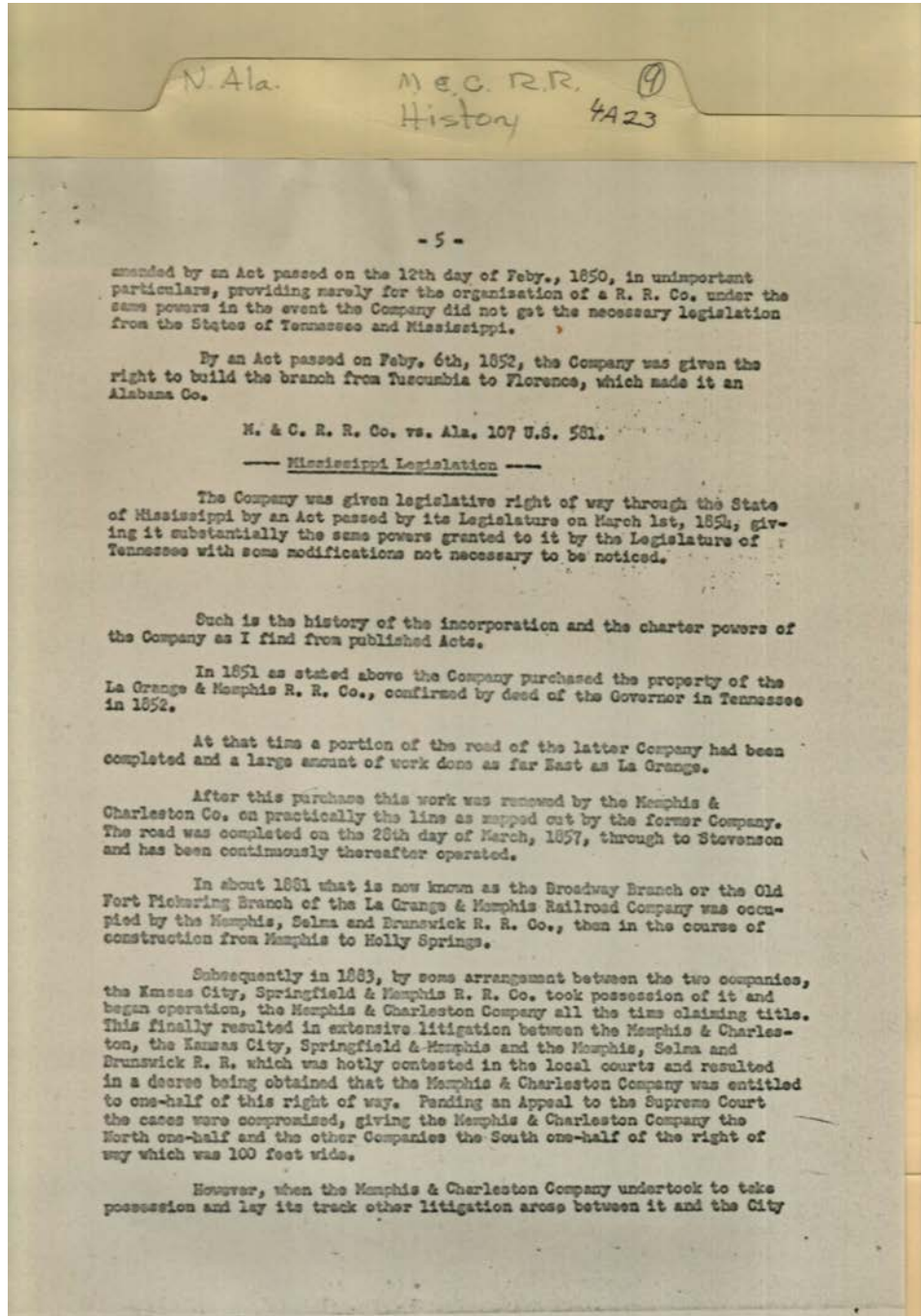
By Act of the Legislature of Ala., passed Jan'y. 7, 1850, substantially the same charter was given to the Memphis & Charleston Co. as was granted to it by the Act incorporating it in Tennessee. This Charter was

Names:

Alabama Legislation

Types:

article

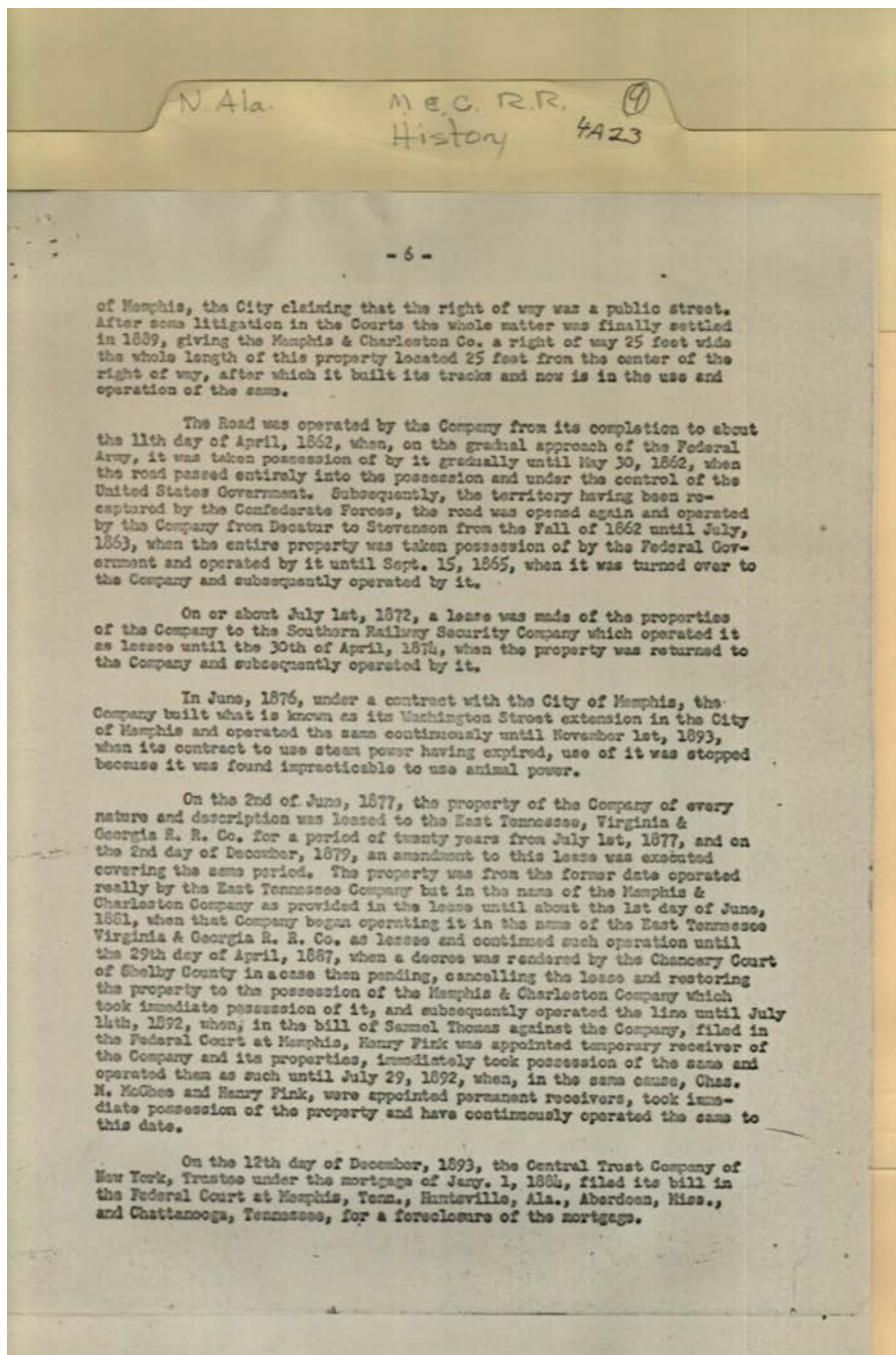


**Names:**

Mississippi  
Legislation

**Types:**

article



**Names:**

Fink, Henry

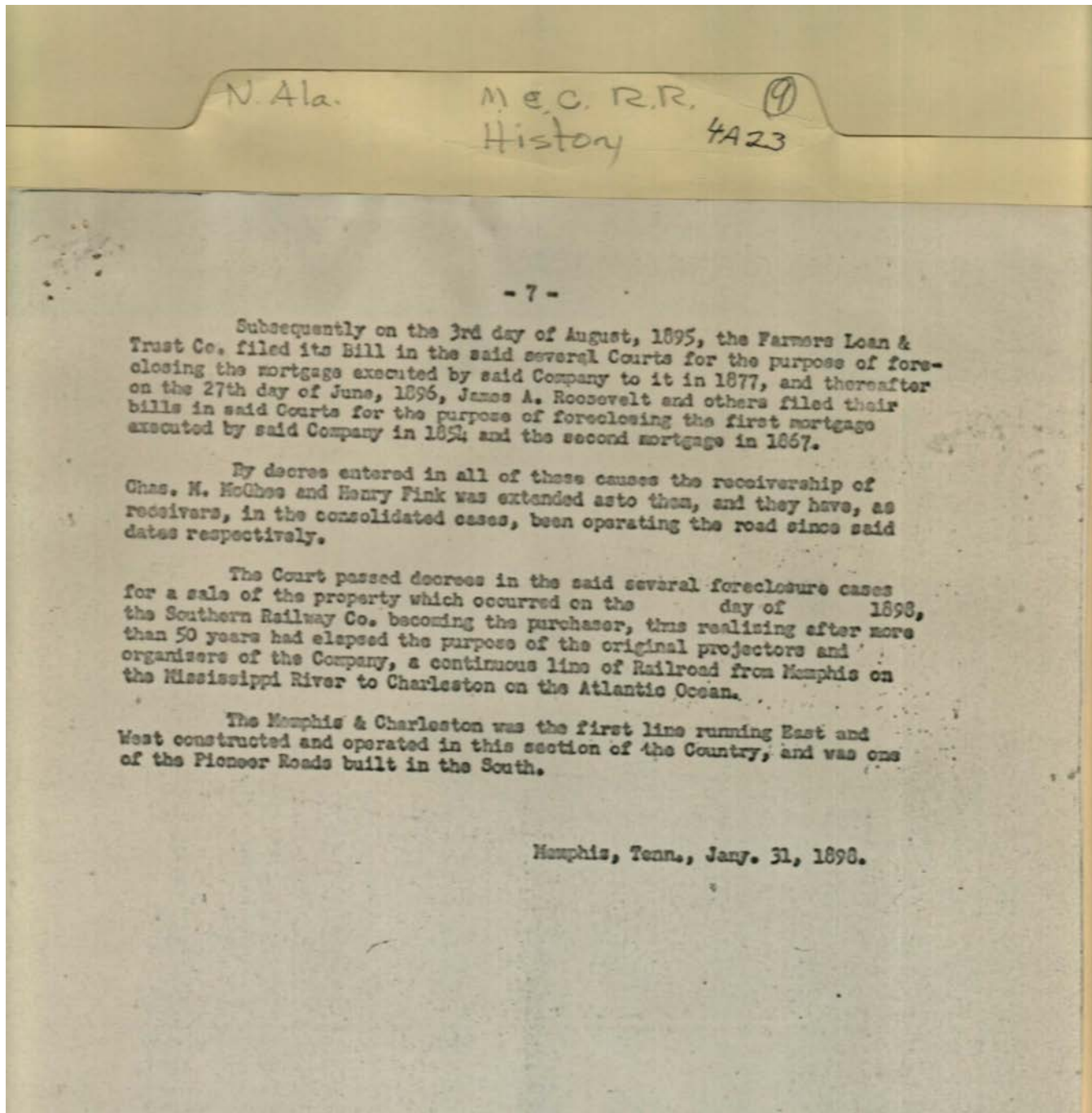
McGhee, Charles M.

Thomas, Samuel

**Types:**

article





**Names:**

Fink, Henry

McGhee, Charles M.

Roosevelt, James A.

**Places:**

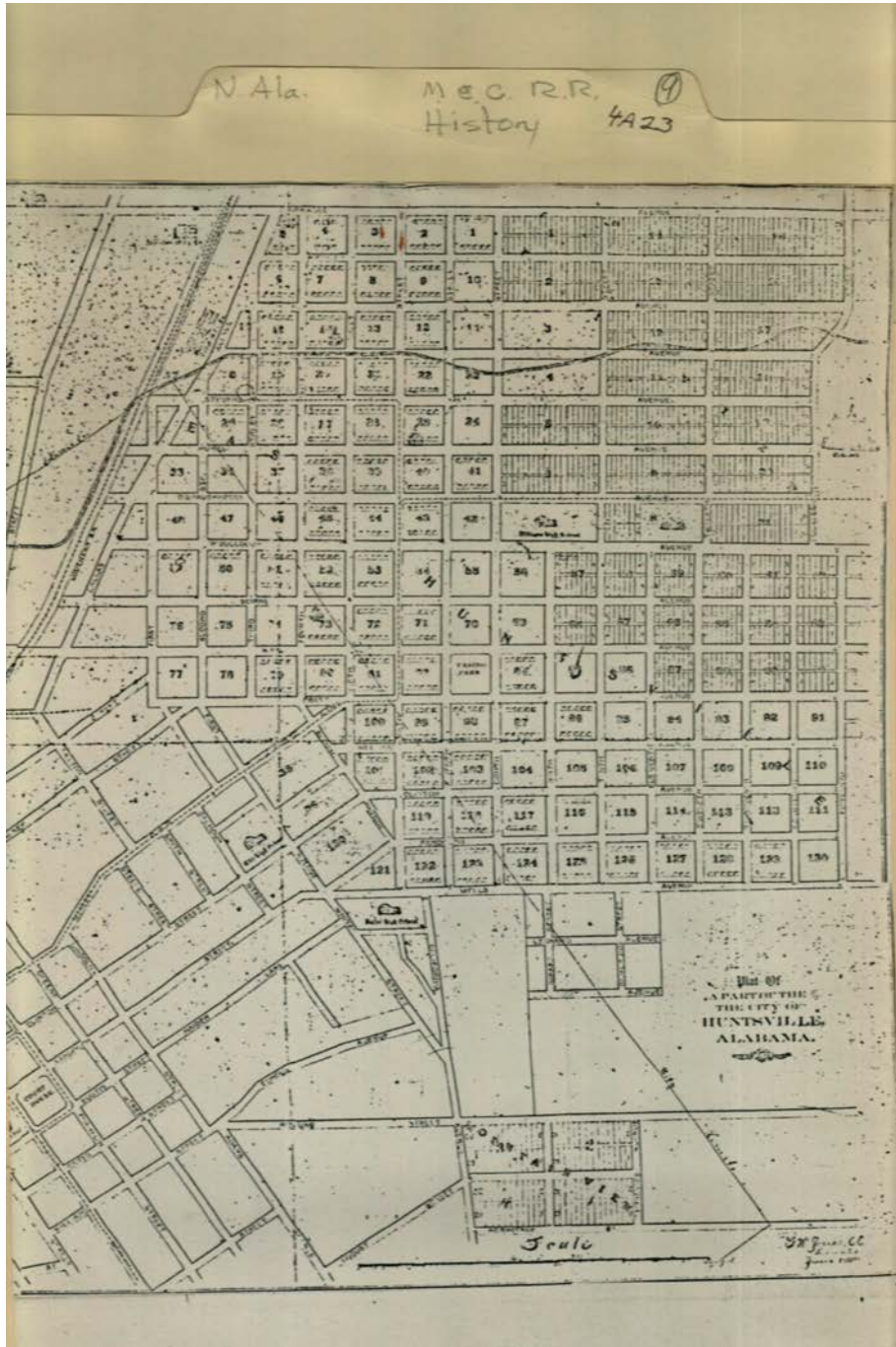
Memphis, TN

**Types:**

article

**Dates:**

Jan 31, 1898

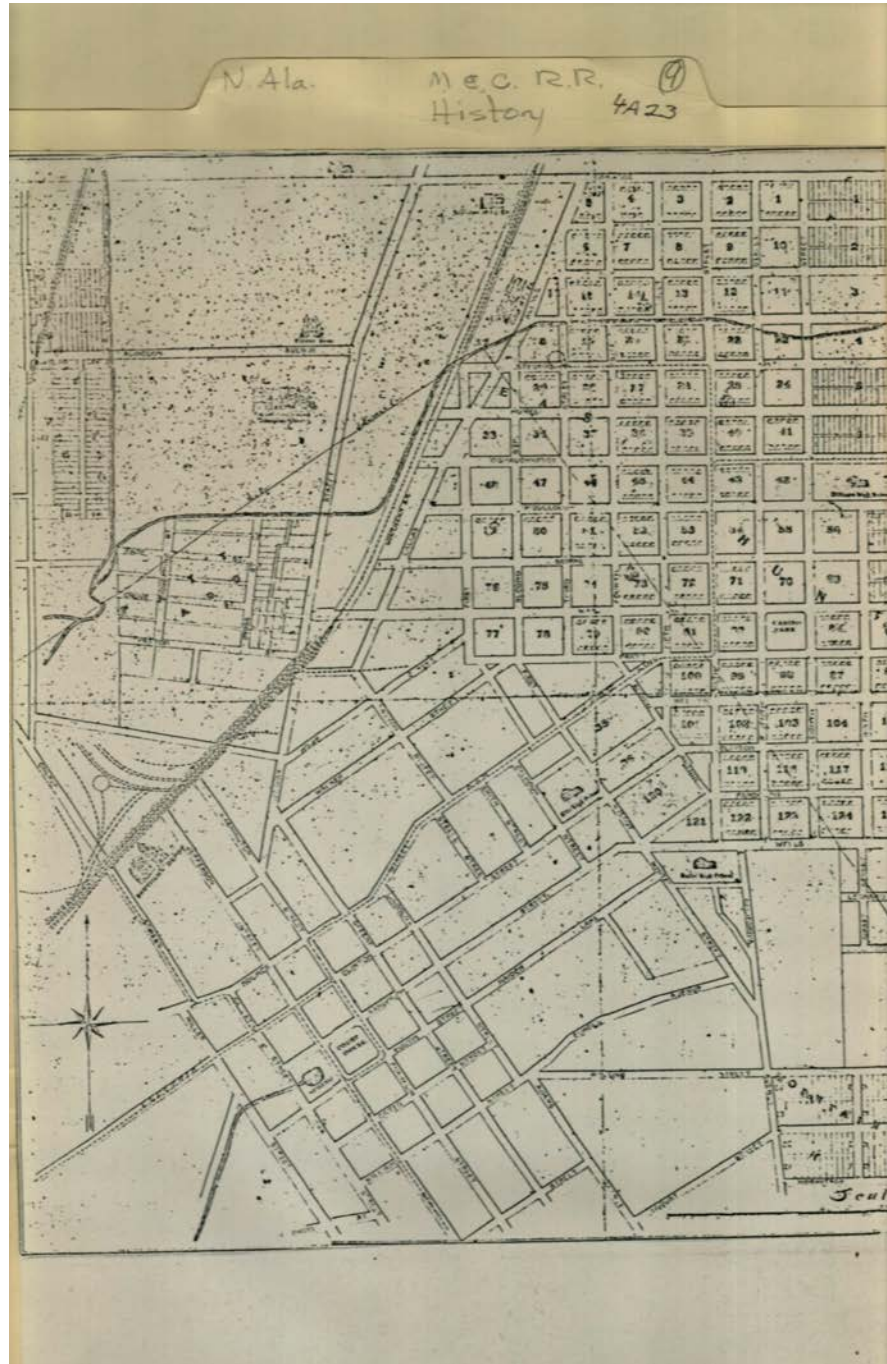


**Names:**

Huntsville partial  
map

**Types:**

map



**Names:**

Huntsville partial  
map

**Types:**

map

N. Ala. M. & C. R.R. 9  
History 423

A = Cause

260

~~The first party, doth hereby and in consideration of the purchase money, and will forever defend the title to the above described and herein conveyed lot or parcel of land to the said Cassie A. Judson her heirs, Executor, Administrator and assigns against the claim demand, or interest of himself or any one claiming by or through him as well as against the lawful claim or demand of any person or persons who may hereafter claim the same. The said Cassie A. Judson being the party of the first part hereto sets his name and affixes his seal this day and year first above written.~~

~~State of Alabama }  
Madison County } J. P. Figg Jr Justice of the Peace  
in and for said County hereby certify that Hunt-Howry  
whose name is signed to the foregoing conveyance and  
who is known to me acknowledged before me, on this  
day that being informed of the contents of this conveyance  
he executed the same voluntarily on the day the same  
were date.~~

~~Given under my hand this 24 day of June A.D. 1880.  
J. P. Figg Jr~~

~~The foregoing Copy filed for record 24th day of June  
1880 and 10th day of July 1880 and was duly returned in the  
records of Madison County, Alabama.~~

~~Thos. J. Taylor~~

1 W. & C. R. R. Co.  
2 H. B. L. & M. S. R. Co. } The State of Alabama  
Madison County.  
This contract made by and  
between the Memphis & Charleston Railroad Company  
as party of the first part, and the Huntsville Belt  
Line and Monte Sano Railway Company as the party  
of the second part. Witnesseth.  
That as the party of the second part is desirous  
of making a connection with the tracks of the party

**Names:**

Huntsville Belt Line

Memphis &  
Charleston Railroad

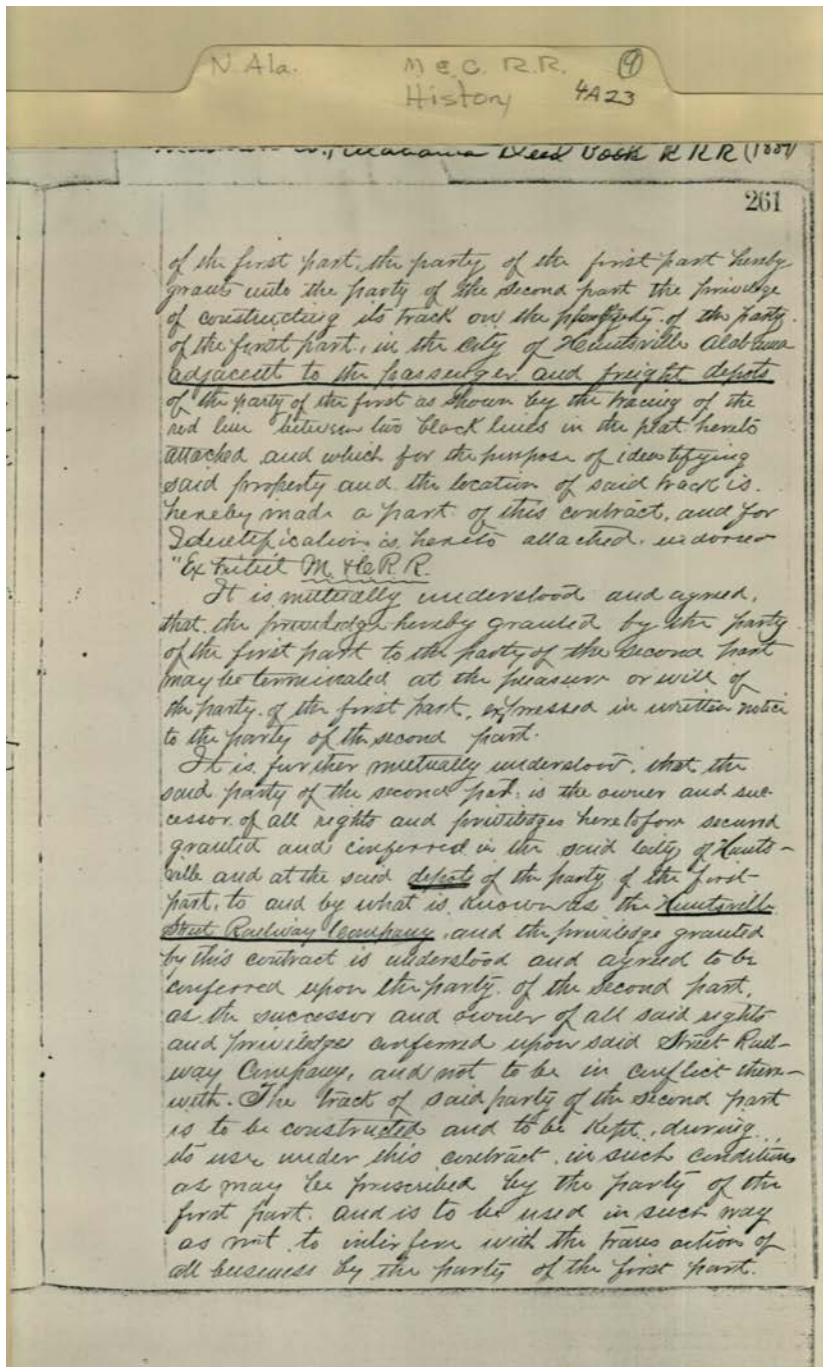
Monte Sano Railway  
Company

**Places:**

Madison County, AL

**Types:**

contract

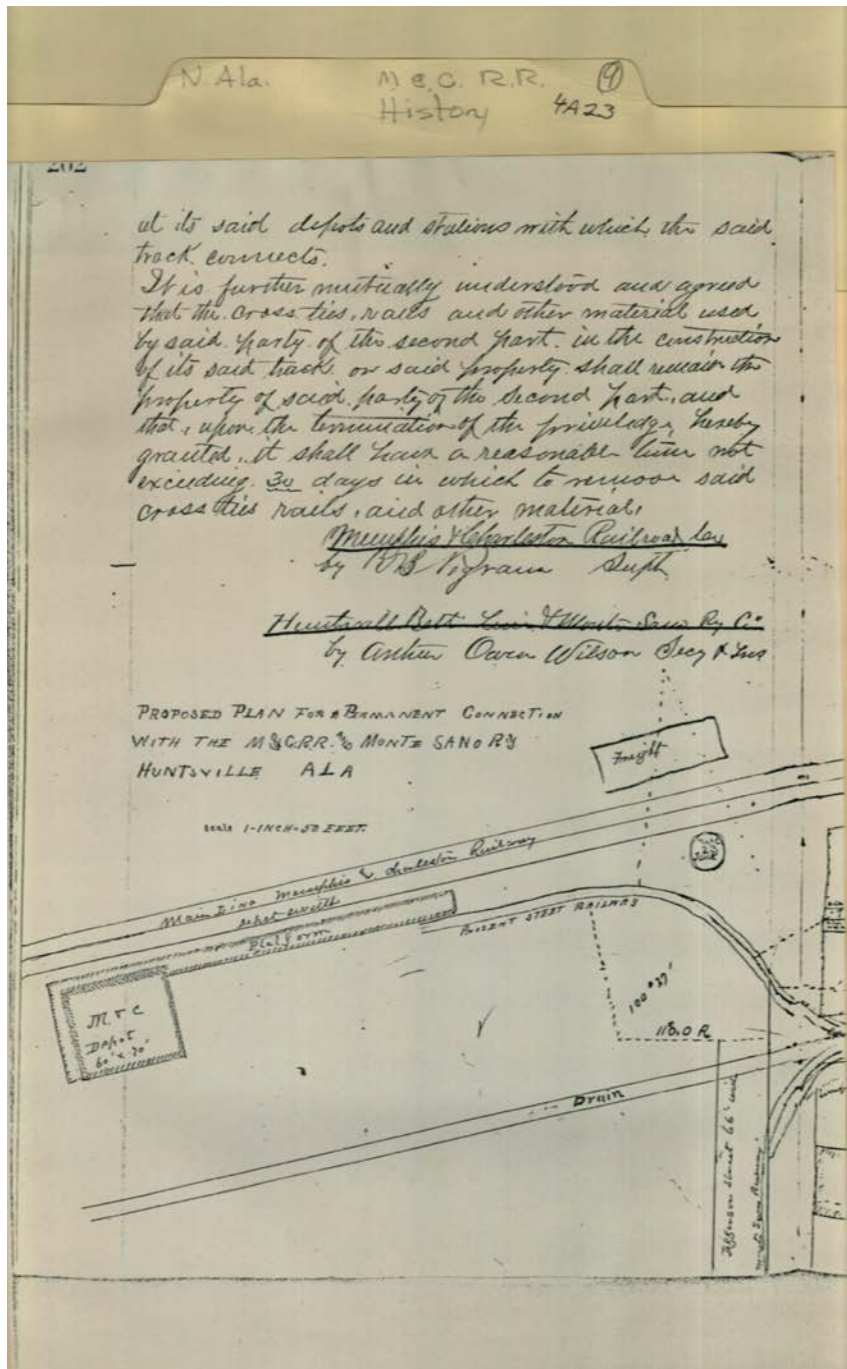


**Names:**

Huntsville Street  
Railway Company

**Types:**

contract



**Names:**

Huntsville Belt Line  
Memphis &  
Charleston Railroad

Monte Sano Railway  
Company  
Pegam, R. B.

Proposed Plan for  
Connection  
Wilson, Arthur Owen

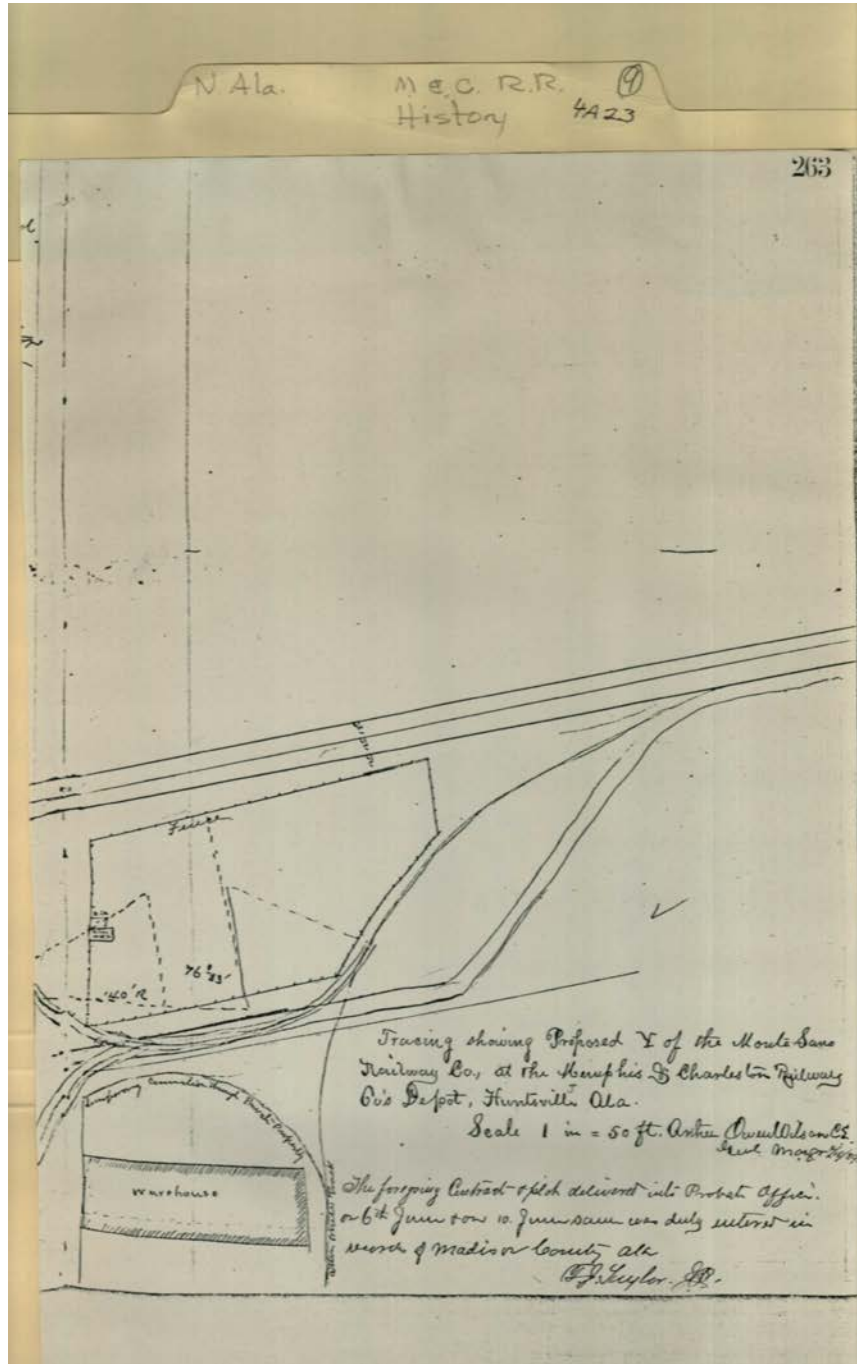
**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

contract

map



**Names:**

Proposed Plan for  
Connection

Taylor, T. J.  
Wilson, Arthur Owen

**Places:**

Madison County, AL

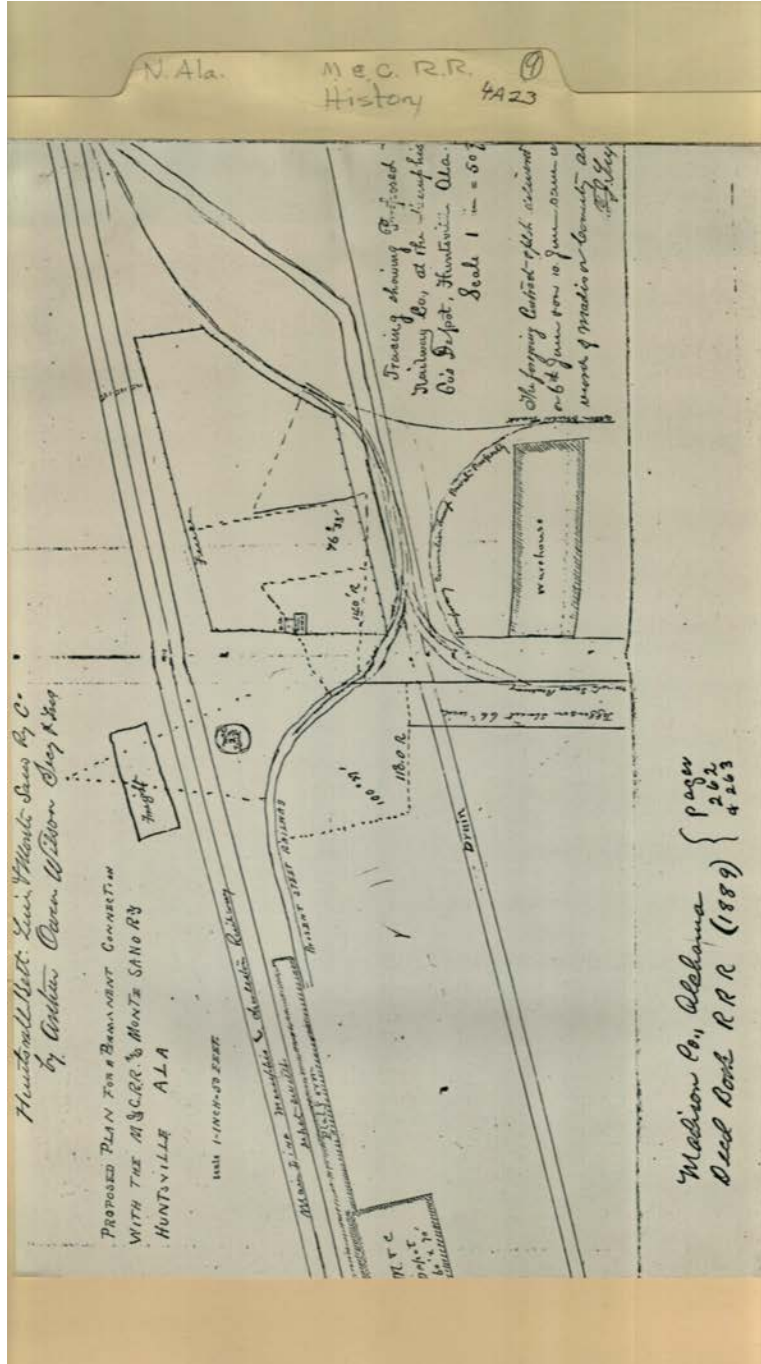
**Types:**

map

**Dates:**

Jun 06, 1889

Jun 06, 1889



**Names:**

Deed Book Map  
Huntsville Belt Line

Monte Sano Railway  
Company

Proposed Plan for  
Connection

**Places:**

Madison County, AL

**Types:**

map

**Dates:**

Jun 06, 1889





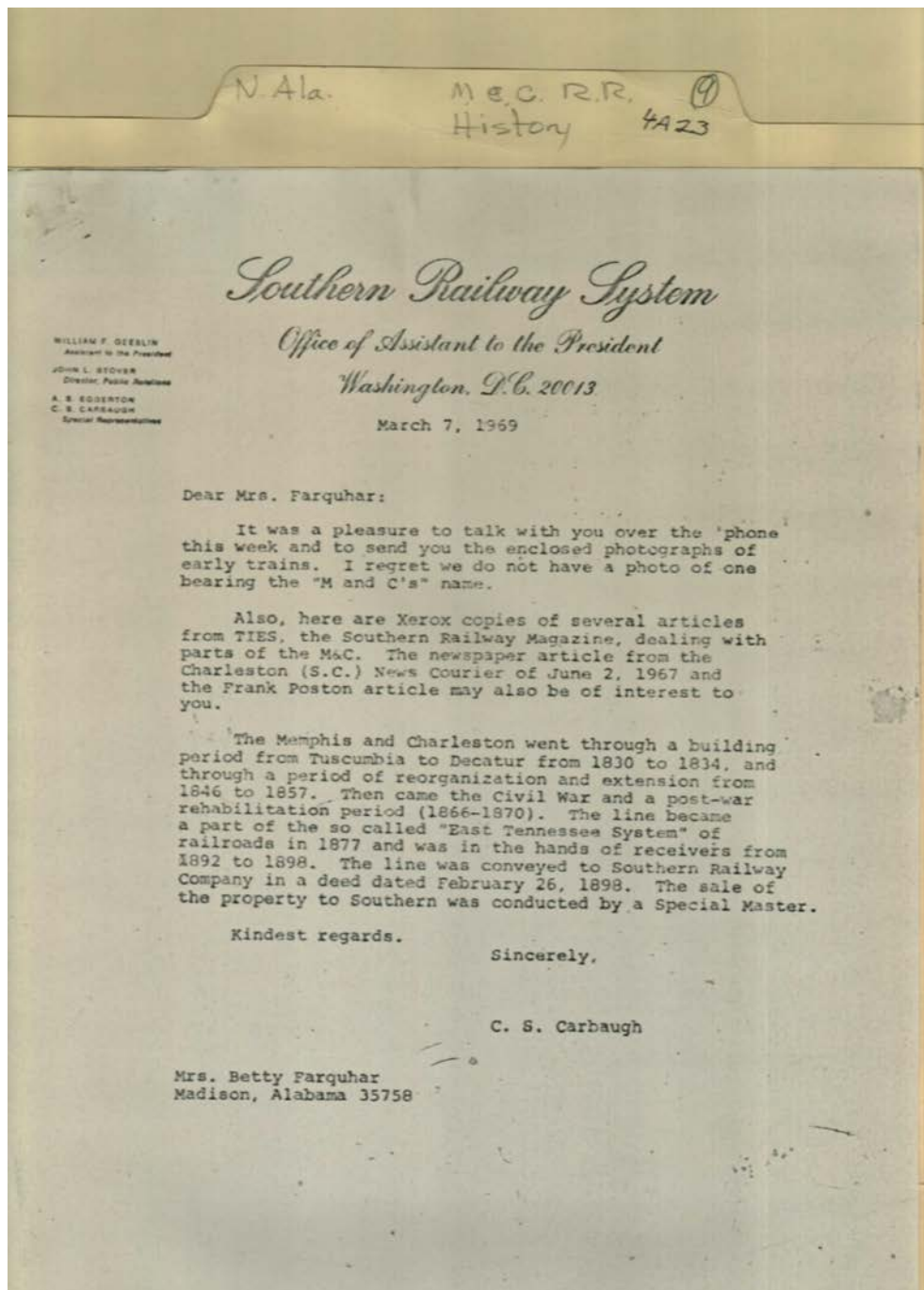
**Names:**  
Railroad Office  
announcement

**Places:**  
Huntsville, AL

**Types:**  
article

**Dates:**  
Jan 02, 1861

Southern Advocate



**Names:**

Carbaugh, C. S.  
Farquhar, Betty, Mrs.

Gerblin, William F.  
Poston, Frank P.

Southern Railway  
System

Stover, John L.

**Places:**

Washington, DC

**Types:**


correspondence

**Dates:**


March 7, 1969

N. Ala. M.E.C. R.R. History 4423

3-25  
(History Memphis & Charleston RR)



Benjamin Sherrod's  
**IRON RIVER**  
First Railroad in Alabama  
REFERENCE FILE



Placed as an "iron river" — a bypass around Muscle Shoals of the Tennessee River — the Tuscumbia, Courtland and Decatur Railroad found its vital role in Alabama's growth as part of a rail network serving the South.

Alabama's first railroad came into being because Benjamin Sherrod and other planters along the Tennessee River in northern Alabama believed that they needed an "iron river."

In charter and in organization, the 24-mile Tuscumbia Railway Company and the more ambitious Tuscumbia, Courtland and Decatur Railroad Company that grew out of it remained separate companies. (Both later became part of the Memphis and Charleston, now Southern's Memphis division.)

But the two must be considered one railroad in concept, in operation and in the benefits they were intended to bring to an area that obviously needed a reliable, all-weather transportation system.

Filled with mud during wet weather, crossing treacherous bridges in every season, poor roads left the valley planters largely dependent on the Tennessee River as a route for moving cotton to market and bringing in needed supplies and manufactured goods.

From Chattanooga, Tenn., to Decatur, Ala., the river was navigable. Beyond Tuscumbia landing the winding Tennessee curved like a broad highway to the Ohio and Mississippi River channels. But between Decatur and Tuscumbia shoal water barred the river to all but the most lightly-burdened craft.

In the Tuscumbia Railway Company — chartered in 1830 to establish a horse-powered rail line from the town to the river bank — Benjamin Sherrod found and nourished the seeds of a bolder plan.

He foresaw a railroad link between the two navigable sections of the Tennessee — an "iron river" — and beyond that a rail network that would in time rival the river itself as a highway for commerce.

David Hubbard, another valley planter who went all the way to Pennsylvania to see at first hand one of the early railroad experiments, rightly gets credit for the idea of the Tuscumbia Railway Company. But the man most responsible for putting cedar ties and iron-capped wooden rails across the valley was Benjamin Sherrod, first president of the Tuscumbia, Courtland and Decatur.

Before the town celebrated the completion of the Tuscumbia Railway in June, 1833 (with a horse-car parade down the track enlivened by local beauties and band music), events caught up the little railway in a larger design and allied it with a new company.


Delegates from three northern Alabama counties met in October, 1831, at Courtland, Ala., to plan an extension of the railway to some point on the river above Muscle Shoals. In response to their resolutions the Alabama legislature the following January approved a charter incorporating the Tuscumbia and Decatur Railroad Company to build a rail line by way of Courtland to Decatur.

Subject to the later approval of the stockholders the charter listed a board of directors, most of them officers and directors of the Tuscumbia Railway, and named Benjamin Sherrod president.

The evidence in the charter, his role as major stockholder and financial backer and the fact that the stockholders year after year returned him to the presidency all mark Sherrod as the moving force behind the Tuscumbia, Courtland and Decatur.

After little more than a dozen years in the valley, Sherrod was one of its ablest and most prosperous planters — respected for his skill in planting and harvesting cotton and his attention to preserving the soil, liked for his honesty and personal warmth. He owned four plantations, each of them several thousand acres, lying between Tuscumbia and Decatur.

If he lacked varied business experience he more than made up for it with the drive and ability that



**Names:**

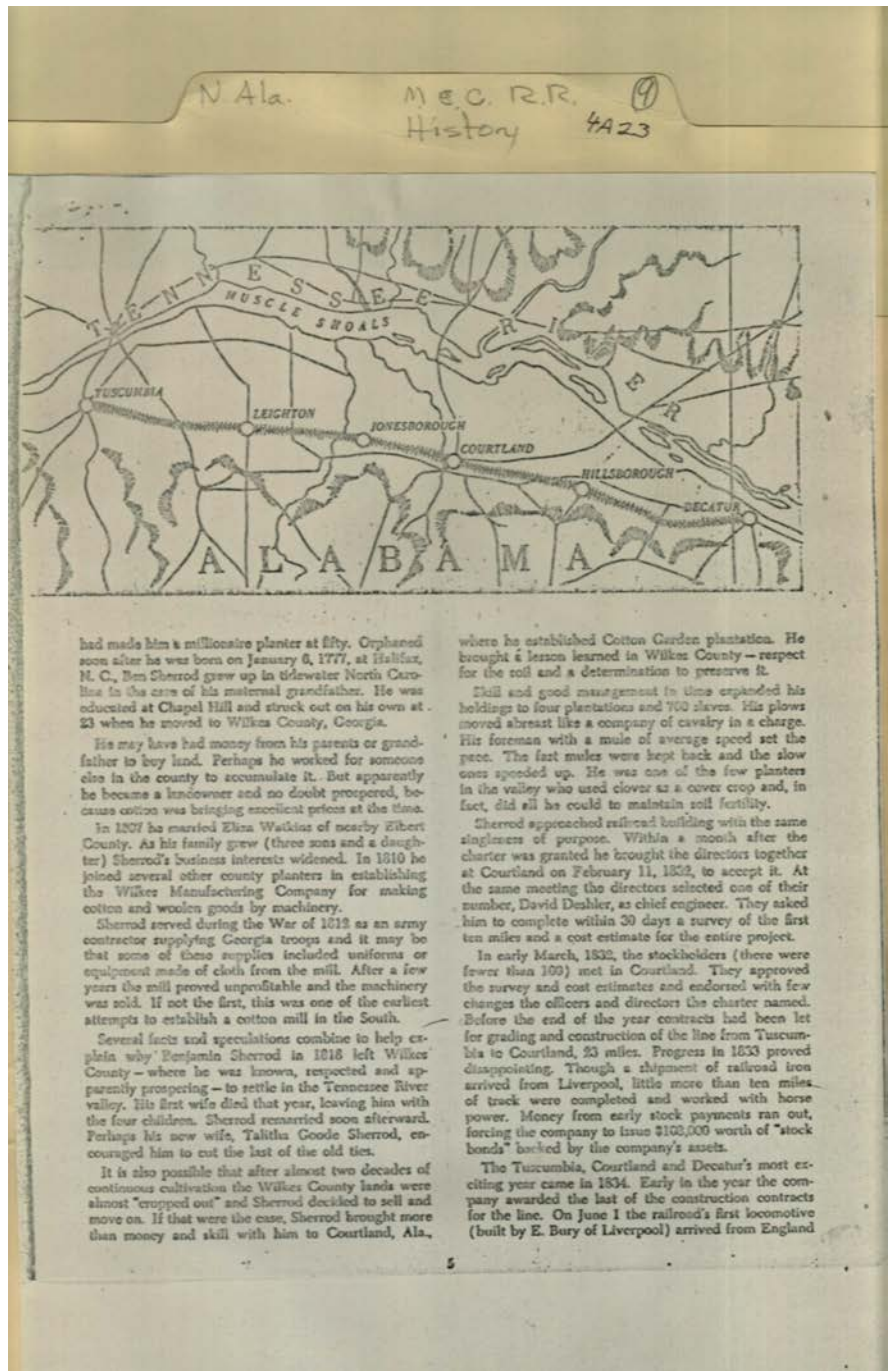
Alabama's First  
Railroad  
Hubbard, David

Memphis &  
Charleston Railroad  
Sherrod, Benjamin

Tuscumbia,  
Courtland, Decatur  
RR

**Types:**

article



**Names:**

Bury, Edward  
Deshler, David

Goode, Talitha  
Sherrod, Benjamin

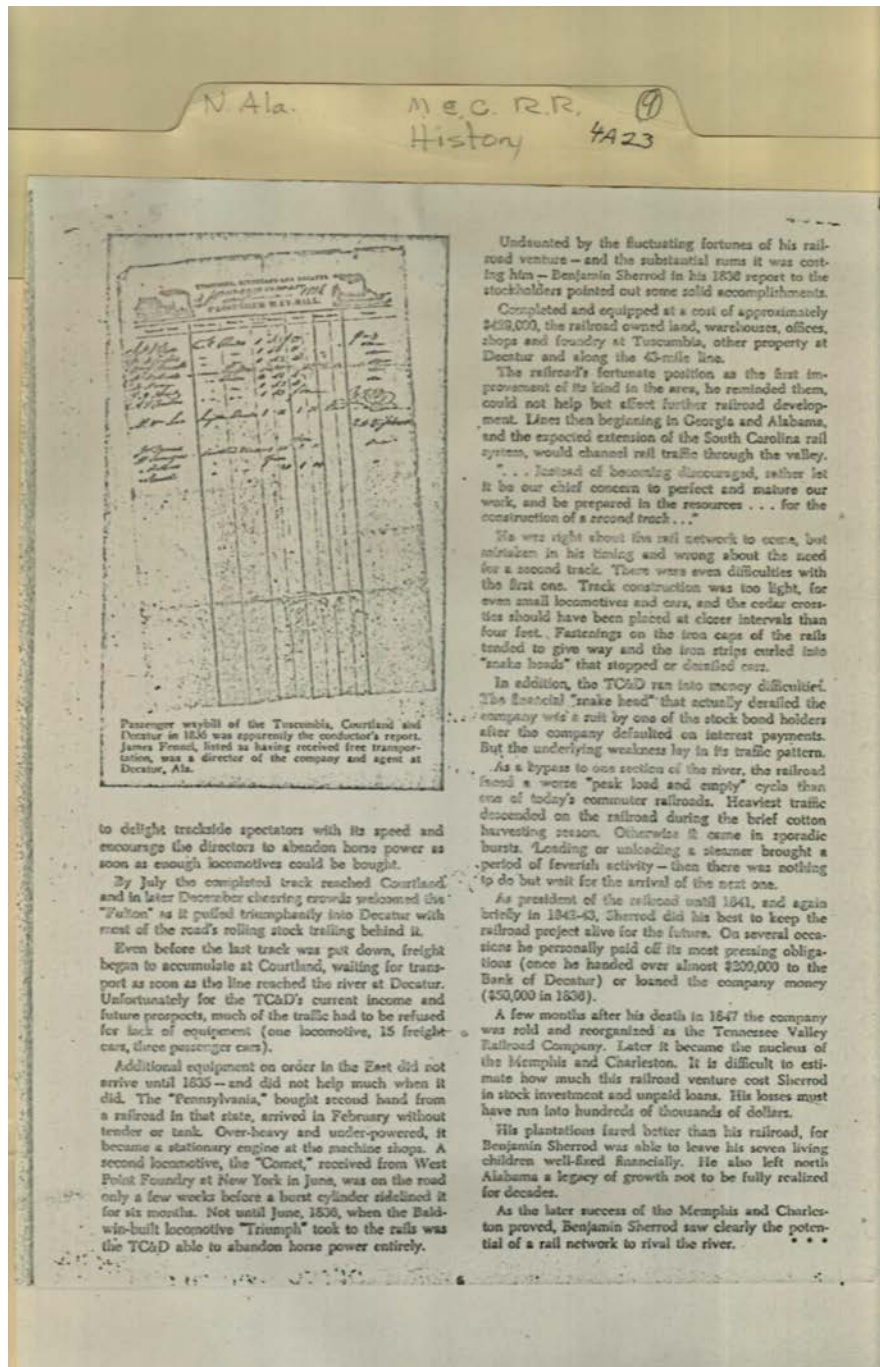
Valley Railroad  
Watkins, Eliza

Wilkes  
Manufacturing Co.

**Types:**

article

map



**Names:**

Fennel, James

Passenger's way-bill

Sherrod, Benjamin

**Types:**

article

photo

**Dates:**

1836

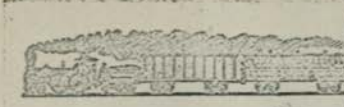

N. Ala. M & C. R.R. History 4A23

(History - "stump speaking" - clear - 1855)

REFERENCE FILE

## TALL MAN FROM TENNESSEE

A Governor and U. S. Senator from the Volunteer State, who devoted some of his best "stump-speaking" to the promotion of a new railroad for his state, was the first president of one Southern predecessor line — the Memphis and Charleston Railroad.



REFERENCE FILE

On February 8, 1855, a tall, gaunt Tennesseean took his customary seat on the Whig side of the Senate chamber at the national Capitol in Washington. He listened for awhile to spirited debate on a bill to grant railroads three years in which to pay duties on imported iron.

When the torrent of oratory had slowed, the listener unfolded his lanky frame to rise and face the rostrum.

"Mr. President,"

Granted the few minutes he asked to present his views on the bill, he surveyed his audience with the seasoned eye of a veteran of torchlight politics.

"I could not, Mr. President, and shall not, undertake to enlighten the Senate upon the great benefits which are conferred upon the country by the construction of these works (the railroads)... I might enlarge... upon its advantages to the country, to its agriculture, its commerce, its social relations, its political relations, and its national relations, and in this I might find abundant argument to satisfy the Senate and the country that there is an absolute, indispensable obligation

on the part of the Government, if not to extend its aid, at least to withhold any burden or imposition from it."

It is doubtful that there was any man then in the Senate better qualified to speak on the subject of railroads and their needs than James C. Jones, junior Senator from Tennessee. He had come to the Senate from the presidency of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad Company (now the Southern's Memphis division).

As "Jimmy" Jones addressed his colleagues, work was progressing on both the eastern and western portions of the Memphis and Charleston. They were destined to meet at Iuka, Mississippi, two years later, and Jones would drive the last spike as he had driven the first.

Jones was a railroad pioneer and a vigorous champion of the new industry. He was just completing a term as governor of Tennessee when the South's early dreams of a rail link between the Mississippi River and the Atlantic Ocean took definite shape in a charter for the Memphis and Charleston Railroad in 1838.

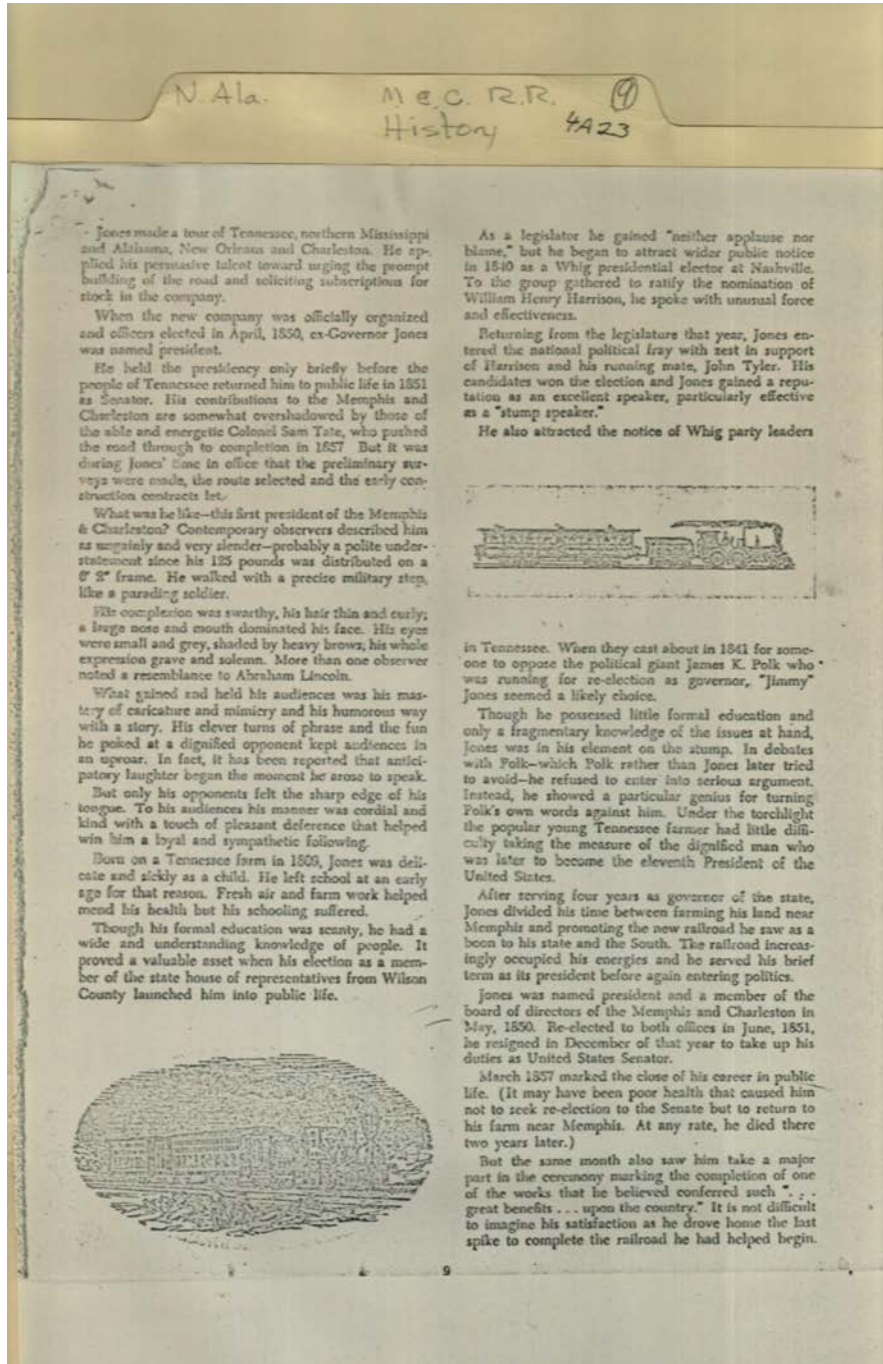
REFERENCE FILE

**Names:**

Jones, James C.,  
Governor

**Types:**

article



**Names:**

Harrison, William Henry

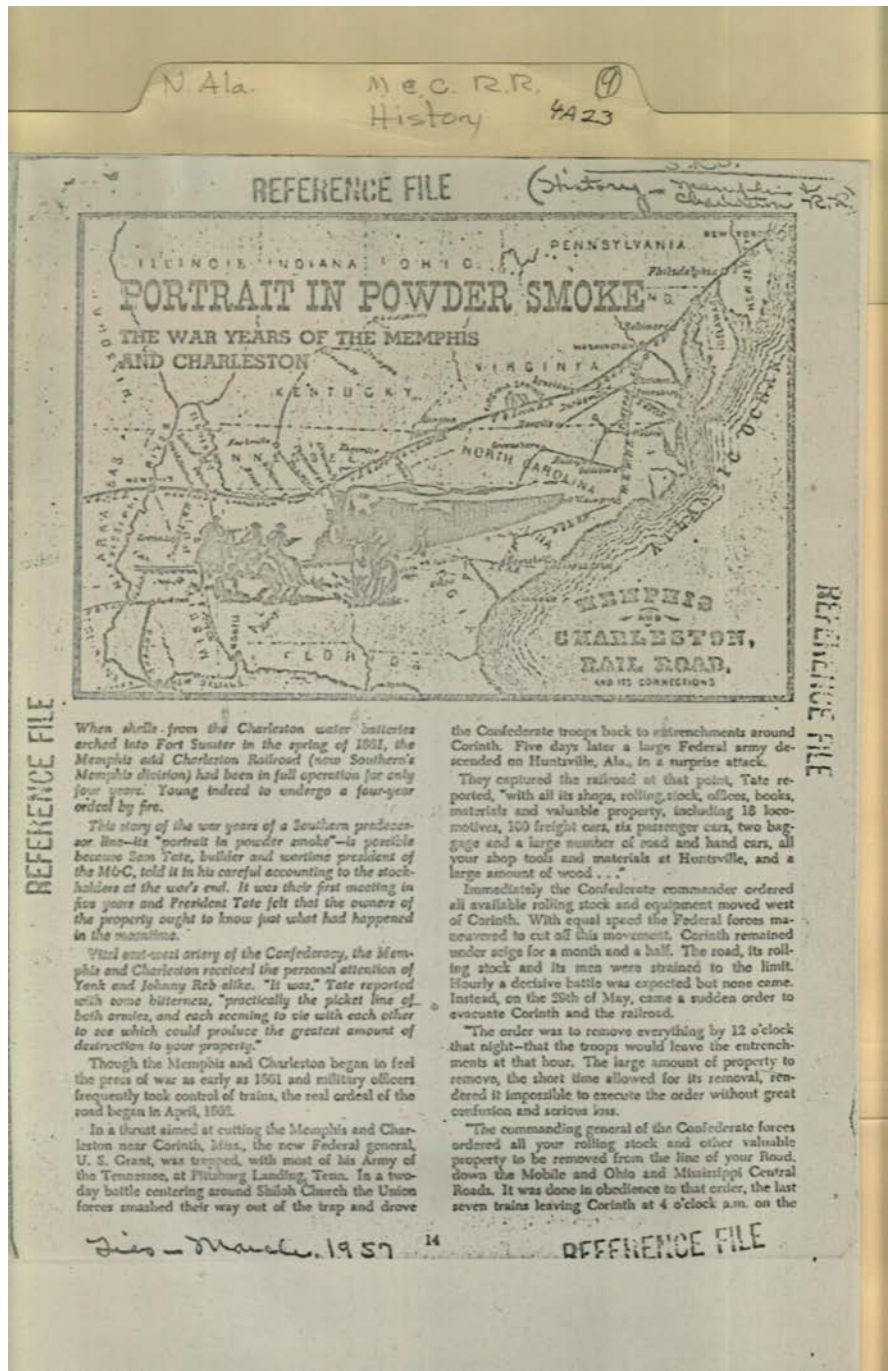
Jones, James C., Governor

Lincoln, Abraham Polk, James K.

Tate, Sam, Colonel Tyler, John

**Types:**

article



**Names:**

Grant, U. S., General

Memphis & Charleston Railroad

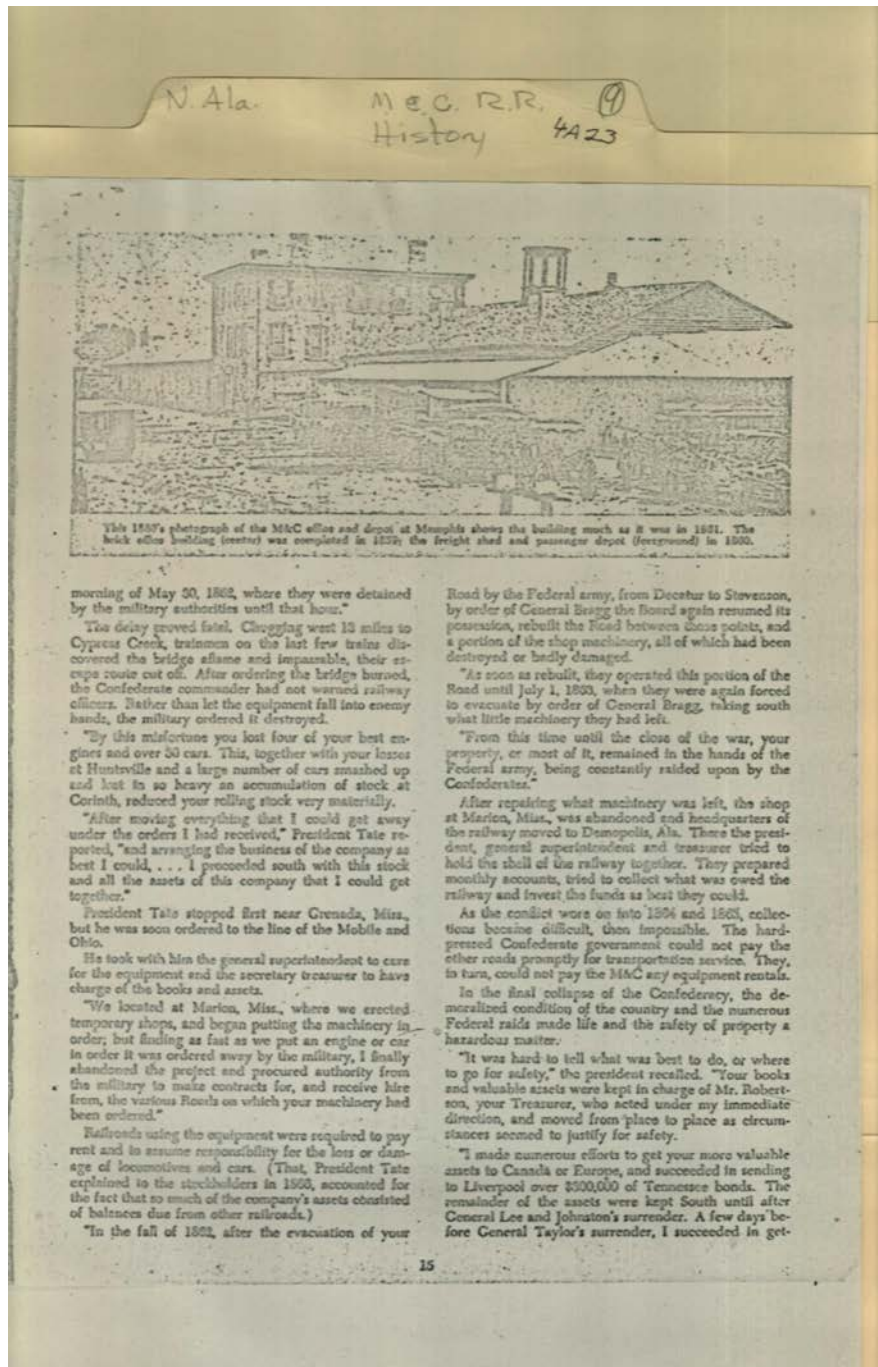
Tate, Sam, President Young,

**Types:**

article

map





**Names:**

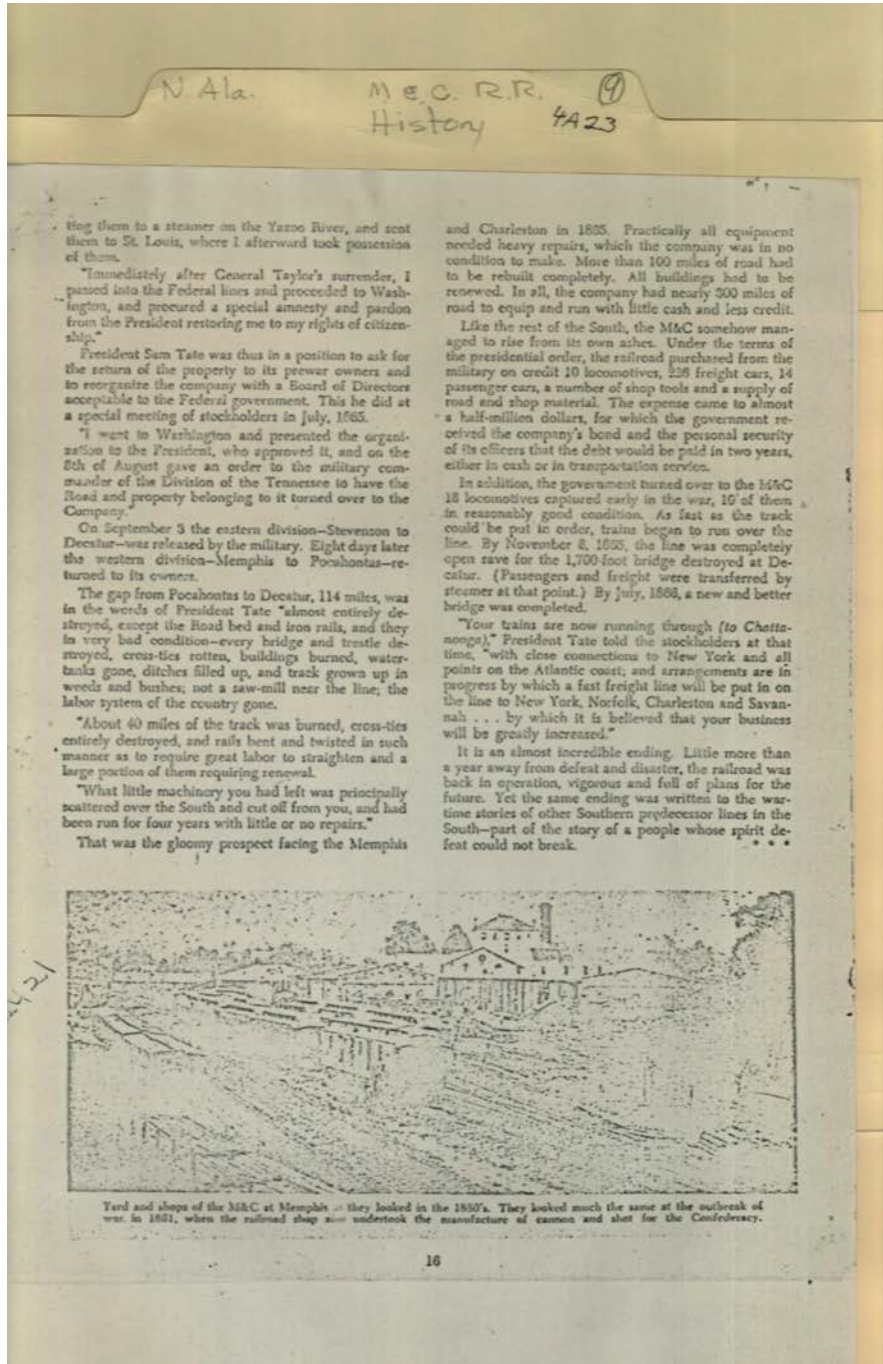
Bragg, General  
Johnston, General

Lee, General  
Robertson,

Tate, Sam, President  
Taylor, General

**Types:**

article



**Names:**

Tate, Sam, President

Taylor, General

**Types:**

article

**Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 9  
Northern Alabama Railroad History - copies**

[Contents](#)   [Index](#)   [About](#)

**Table of Contents**

[Image 1](#) (r04a23-09-000-0123)

[Image 2](#) (r04a23-09-000-0124)

[Image 3](#) (r04a23-09-000-0125)

[Image 4](#) (r04a23-09-000-0126)

[Image 5](#) (r04a23-09-000-0127)

[Image 6](#) (r04a23-09-000-0128)

[Image 7](#) (r04a23-09-000-0129)

[Image 8](#) (r04a23-09-000-0130)

[Image 9](#) (r04a23-09-000-0131)

[Image 10](#) (r04a23-09-000-0132)

[Image 11](#) (r04a23-09-000-0133)

[Image 12](#) (r04a23-09-000-0134)

[Image 13](#) (r04a23-09-000-0135)

[Image 14](#) (r04a23-09-000-0136)

[Image 15](#) (r04a23-09-000-0137)

[Image 16](#) (r04a23-09-000-0138)

[Image 17](#) (r04a23-09-000-0139)

[Image 18](#) (r04a23-09-000-0140)

[Image 19](#) (r04a23-09-000-0141)

[Image 20](#) (r04a23-09-000-0142)

[Image 21](#) (r04a23-09-000-0143)

[Image 22](#) (r04a23-09-000-0144)

[Image 23](#) (r04a23-09-000-0145)

[Image 24](#) (r04a23-09-000-0146)

[Image 25](#) (r04a23-09-000-0147)

[Image 26](#) (r04a23-09-000-0148)

[Table of Contents](#)

[Name & Place Index](#)

[About the Collection](#)

**Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 9**

**Northern Alabama Railroad History - copies**

[Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)

**Name & Place Index**

Alabama Legislation [6](#)  
Alabama's First Railroad [19](#)  
Bragg, General [25](#)  
Bury, Edward [1](#), [20](#)  
Campbell, W. B., Governor [5](#)  
Carbaugh, C. S. [18](#)  
Decatur Railroad Bridge [1](#)  
Deed Book Map [16](#)  
Deshler, David [20](#)  
Deshler, James, General [1](#)  
Deshler, David [1](#)  
Farquhar, Betty, Mrs. [18](#)  
Fennel, James [21](#)  
Fink, Henry [8](#), [9](#)  
Fulton Locomotive [1](#)  
Gerblin, William F. [18](#)  
Goode, Talitha [20](#)  
Grant, U. S., General [24](#)  
Harrison, William Henry [23](#)  
Hubbard, David [19](#)  
Huntsville Belt Line [12](#), [14](#), [16](#)  
Huntsville Depot [2](#)  
Huntsville partial map [10](#), [11](#)  
Huntsville Railroad Exposition [2](#)  
Huntsville Street Railway Company [13](#)  
Huntsville, AL [14](#), [17](#)  
Johnston, Albert Sidney, General [1](#)  
Johnston, General [25](#)  
Jones, James C., Governor [22](#), [23](#)  
La Grange & Memphis Railroad [3](#)  
Lee, General [25](#)  
Lincoln, Abraham [23](#)  
Madison County, AL [12](#), [15](#), [16](#)  
McGhee, Charles M. [8](#), [9](#)  
McLemore, John C. [4](#)  
Memphis & Charleston Railroad [2](#), [3](#), [5](#), [12](#), [14](#), [19](#), [24](#)  
Memphis, TN [9](#)  
Mississippi Legislation [7](#)  
Monte Sano Railway Company [12](#), [14](#), [16](#)  
Muscle Shoals to Huntsville [1](#)  
Passenger's way-bill [21](#)  
Pegam, R. B. [14](#)  
Polk, James K. [23](#)  
Poston, Frank P. [3](#), [18](#)  
Proposed Plan for Connection [14](#), [15](#), [16](#)  
Purdie, Bill [2](#)  
Railroad History [1](#)  
Railroad Office announcement [17](#)  
Robertson, [25](#)  
Roosevelt, James A. [9](#)  
Sherrod, Benjamin [19](#), [20](#), [21](#)  
Southern Advocate [17](#)  
Southern Railway System [18](#)  
Stover, John L. [18](#)  
Tate, Sam, Colonel [23](#)  
Tate, Sam, President [24](#), [25](#), [26](#)  
Taylor, General [25](#), [26](#)  
Taylor, T. J. [15](#)  
Tennessee Valley Railroad [1](#)  
Thomas, Samuel [8](#)  
Turchin, John B., General [1](#)  
Tuscumbia Railway [1](#)  
Tuscumbia, Courtland, Decatur RR [1](#), [19](#)  
Tyler, John [23](#)  
Valley Railroad [20](#)  
Washington, DC [18](#)  
Watkins, Eliza [20](#)  
Wilkes Manufacturing Co. [20](#)  
Wilson, Arthur Owen [14](#), [15](#)  
Young, [24](#)

# Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection

**Preferred Citation:** Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection, Archives and Special Collections, M. Louis Salmon Library, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, AL.

**Collection Scope and Content:** The Collection of 114 Linear ft. includes a total of 156 Archival Boxes. The Frances Cabaniss Roberts collection covers the historical records of the Cabaniss Roberts family. This collection contains extensive correspondence records of the Cabaniss Roberts family circa 1830 to 1930.

**Archives/Special Collections Access Restrictions:** None

**Conditions Governing Use:** This material may be protected under U. S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code) which governs the making of photocopies or reproductions of copyrighted materials. You may use the digitized material for private study, scholarship, or research. Though the University of Alabama in Huntsville Archives and Special Collections has physical ownership of the material in its collections, in some cases we may not own the copyright to the material. It is the patron's obligation to determine and satisfy copyright restrictions when publishing or otherwise distributing materials found in our collections.

**Provenance:** Gift of Johanna Shields on October 28, 2006.



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

**The UAH Archives and Special Collections  
M. Louis Salmon Library**