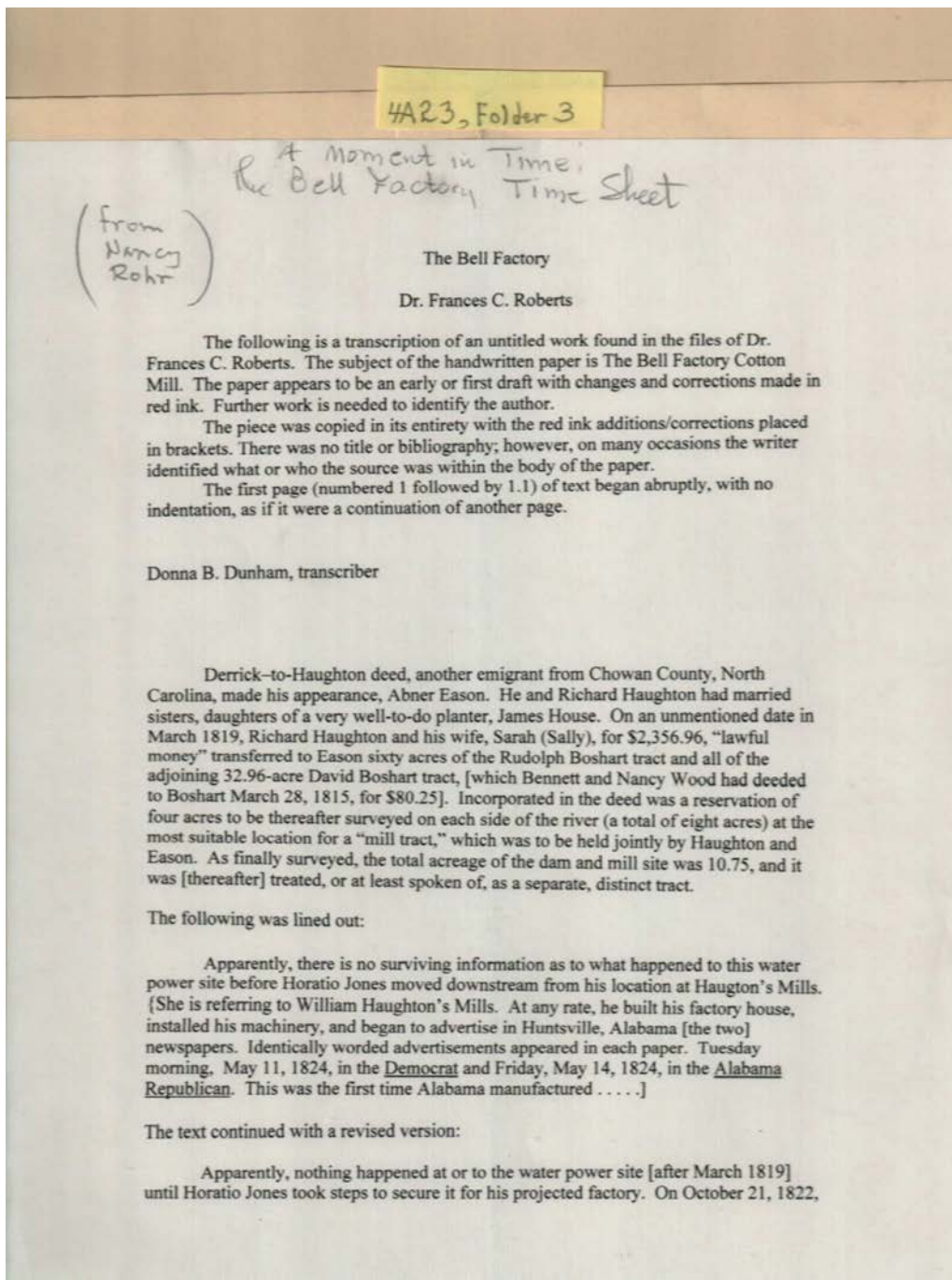


Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

Image 1 r04a23-03-000-0001 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)



**Names:**

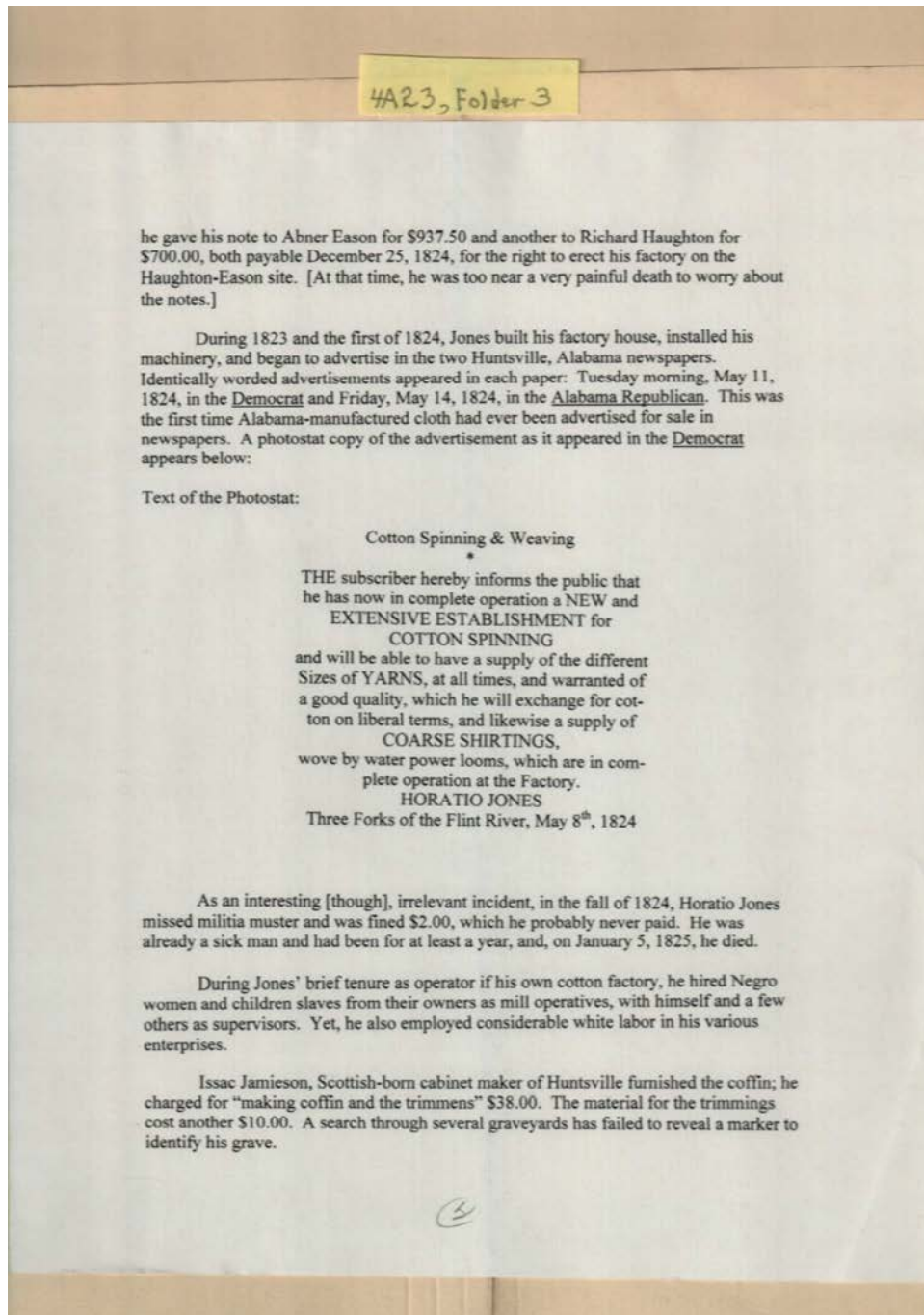
Boshart, David	Haughton, Richard	Jones, Horatio	Wood, Bennett
Boshart, Rudolph	Haughton, Sarah	Roberts, Frances C.,	Wood, Nancy
Derrick,	(Sally)	Dr.	
Dunham, Donna B.	Haughton, William	Rohr, Nancy	
Eason, Abner	House, James	The Bell Factory	

**Types:**

transcription

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

Image 2 r04a23-03-000-0002 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)



**Names:**

Eason, Abner

Haughton, Richard

Jamieson, Isaac

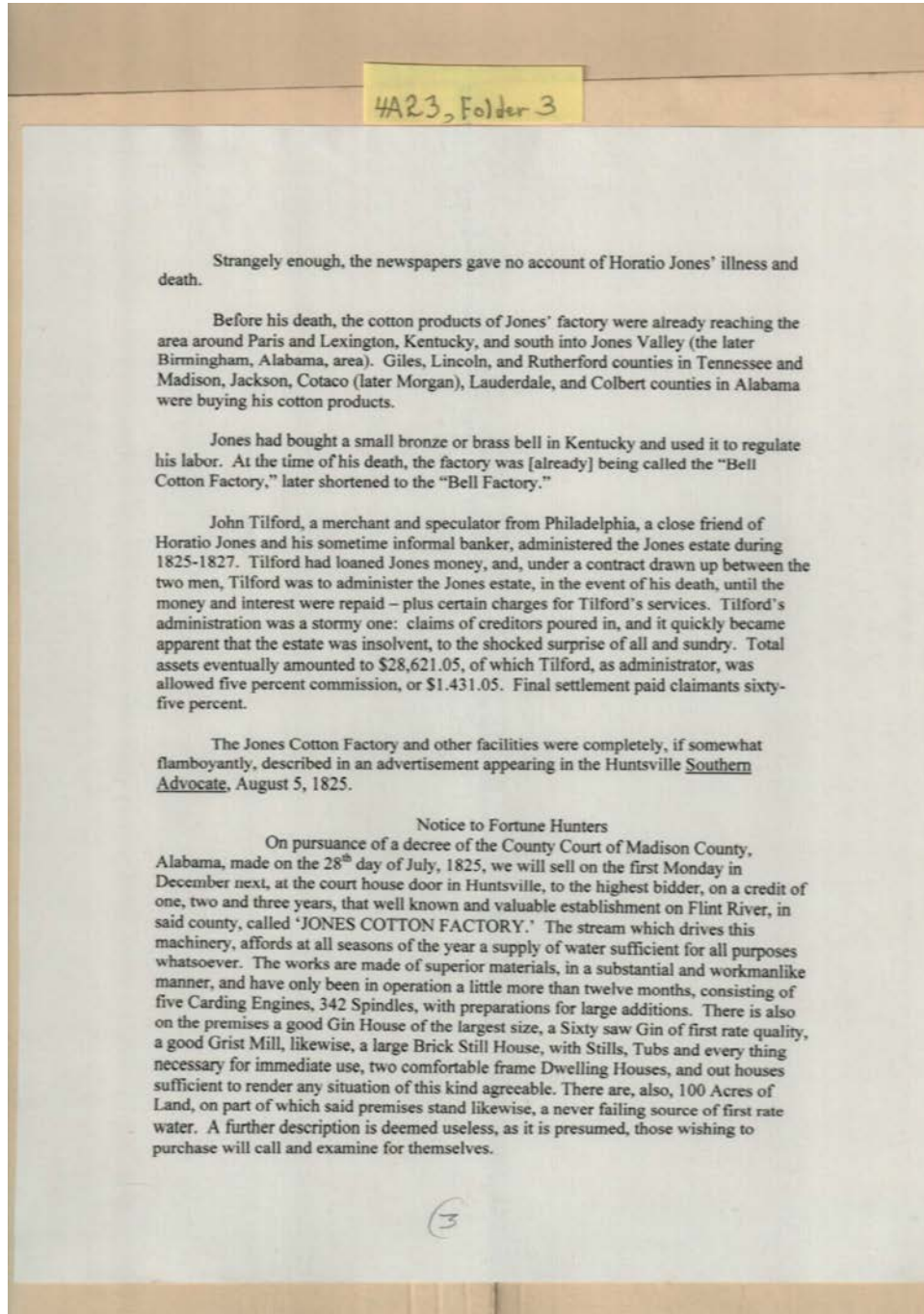
Jones, Horatio

**Types:**

transcription

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

Image 3 r04a23-03-000-0003 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)



**Names:**

Jones Cotton Factory  
Jones, Horatio

Notice to Fortune  
Hunters

Tilford, John  
Bell Cotton Factory

Bell Factory  
Southern Advocate

**Types:**

transcription

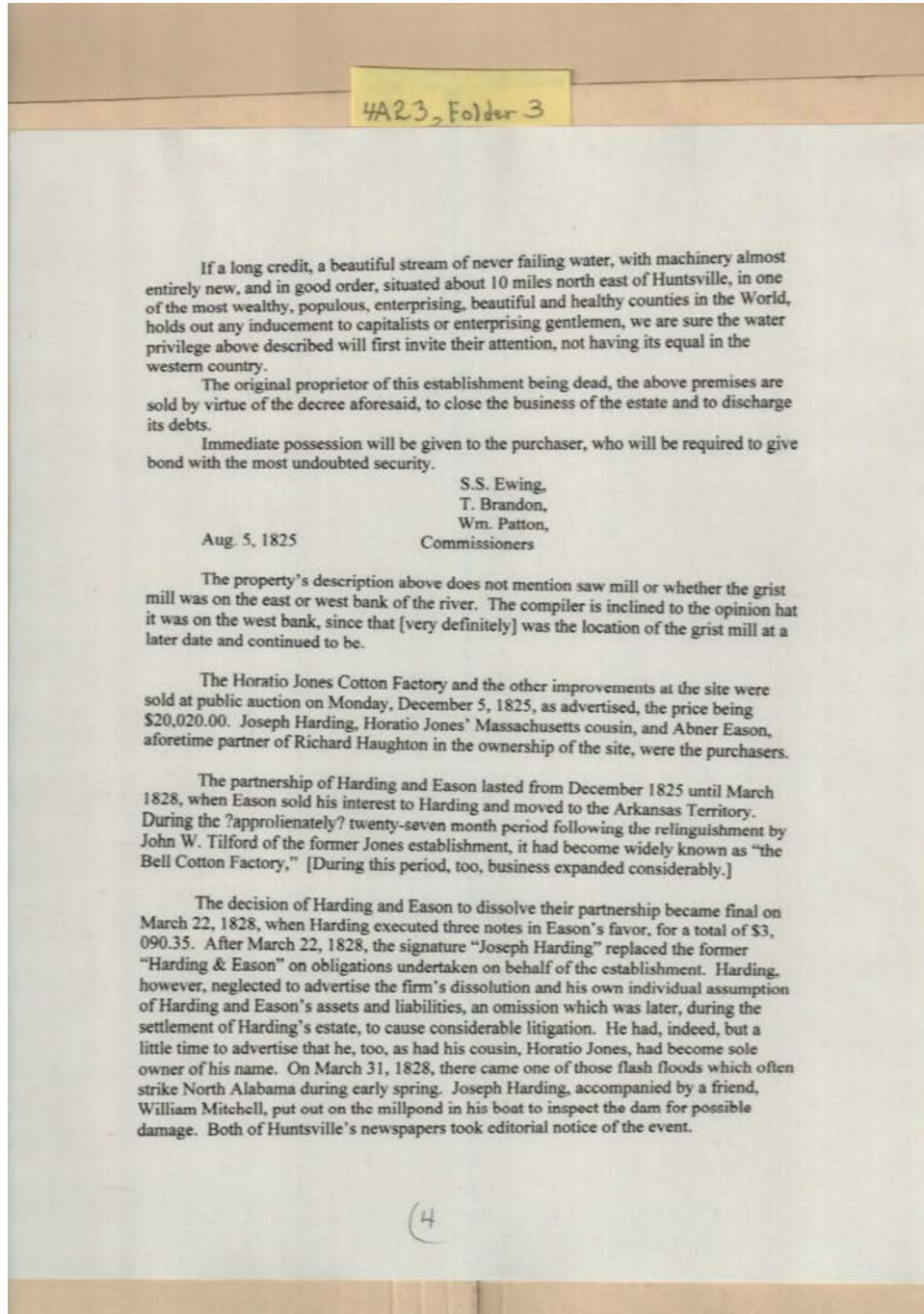
**Dates:**

Aug 05, 1825



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

Image 4 r04a23-03-000-0004 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)



If a long credit, a beautiful stream of never failing water, with machinery almost entirely new, and in good order, situated about 10 miles north east of Huntsville, in one of the most wealthy, populous, enterprising, beautiful and healthy counties in the World, holds out any inducement to capitalists or enterprising gentlemen, we are sure the water privilege above described will first invite their attention, not having its equal in the western country.

The original proprietor of this establishment being dead, the above premises are sold by virtue of the decree aforesaid, to close the business of the estate and to discharge its debts.

Immediate possession will be given to the purchaser, who will be required to give bond with the most undoubted security.

S.S. Ewing,  
T. Brandon,  
Wm. Patton,  
Commissioners

Aug. 5, 1825

The property's description above does not mention saw mill or whether the grist mill was on the east or west bank of the river. The compiler is inclined to the opinion hat it was on the west bank, since that [very definitely] was the location of the grist mill at a later date and continued to be.

The Horatio Jones Cotton Factory and the other improvements at the site were sold at public auction on Monday, December 5, 1825, as advertised, the price being \$20,020.00. Joseph Harding, Horatio Jones' Massachusetts cousin, and Abner Eason, aforetime partner of Richard Haughton in the ownership of the site, were the purchasers.

The partnership of Harding and Eason lasted from December 1825 until March 1828, when Eason sold his interest to Harding and moved to the Arkansas Territory. During the ?appropienately? twenty-seven month period following the relinquishment by John W. Tilford of the former Jones establishment, it had become widely known as "the Bell Cotton Factory," [During this period, too, business expanded considerably.]

The decision of Harding and Eason to dissolve their partnership became final on March 22, 1828, when Harding executed three notes in Eason's favor, for a total of \$3, 090.35. After March 22, 1828, the signature "Joseph Harding" replaced the former "Harding & Eason" on obligations undertaken on behalf of the establishment. Harding, however, neglected to advertise the firm's dissolution and his own individual assumption of Harding and Eason's assets and liabilities, an omission which was later, during the settlement of Harding's estate, to cause considerable litigation. He had, indeed, but a little time to advertise that he, too, as had his cousin, Horatio Jones, had become sole owner of his name. On March 31, 1828, there came one of those flash floods which often strike North Alabama during early spring. Joseph Harding, accompanied by a friend, William Mitchell, put out on the millpond in his boat to inspect the dam for possible damage. Both of Huntsville's newspapers took editorial notice of the event.

**Names:**

Brandon, T.  
Eason, Abner  
Ewing, S. S.  
Harding, Joseph

Haughton, Richard  
Horatio Jones Cotton  
Factory  
Jones, Horatio

Mitchell, William  
Patton, William  
Tilford, John W.

The Bell Cotton  
Factory

**Types:**

transcription

**Dates:**

Aug 05, 1825

Dec 25, 1825

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

Image 5 r04a23-03-000-0005 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)

4A23, Folder 3

The Southern Advocate, April 4, 1828, lamented Harding's death thus:  
We very sincerely regret the death of Joseph Harding, who was unfortunately drowned at the Flint Mills on Monday morning last. Mr. H. was a respectable, industrious, and enterprising young man. He had but a year or two since, become proprietor of the Cotton Factory, and Mills, at the three forks of Flint [(actually a mile below)], and by his industry and perseverance was in a fair way to realize a fortune. He was one among our most valuable citizens, and his premature demise will be felt as a severe loss to the public.

The Democrat, April 4, 1828, gave bare facts and was less fulsome in praise of Harding:

On Monday morning last, whilst Mr. Joseph Harding, in company with a Mr. Mitchell [a close friend], was attempting to cross the pond on which his Cotton Factory is situated on Flint river, the boat struck upon some concealed timber and turned over. Mr. H., after an ineffectual struggle to reach the shore was unfortunately drowned. In his loss, the community is deprived a most useful and enterprising citizen.

The editor neglected to mention that Mitchell escaped death, as is shown in the Harding estate settlement.

Joseph Harding died intestate, and Judge Samuel Chapman [in Orphan's Court], on Tuesday, April 1, 1828, the day after the drowning, appointed Richard Haughton administrator of the [Harding] estate.

"Factory and Machinery in factory," listed as comprising a unit, were appraised at \$18,000.00. The one cotton gin of Horatio Jones' time had increased to four. There were 579 spindles for spinning cotton and 12 for bailing (cotton bagging) and "2 Power Looms" and "2 Looms" with "flying shettle [sic]."

Administrator Haughton reported claims against the Harding estate amounting to \$22,560.50, including \$1,500.00 for slave hire and "claims in purchase [sic] of Factory" amounting to \$14,000.00.

The advertisement of the court-ordered sale appeared in the Democrat, January 9, 1829, and announced the sales date as Monday, March 2, next. The property was referred to as "the well known and valuable establishment on Flint River," in Madison County, Alabama, "called the BELL COTTON FACTORY." Description of the property varied little from that of the Horatio Jones sale.

Outsiders were not permitted to gobble up this outstanding property. Four of Huntsville's business firms formed a copartnership to buy it: Yeatman and Kent, Patton, Donegan, and Company, Isaac Williams, and Forsey and Stewart. The purchase price had shrunk to \$12,630.00, despite the expansion of manufacturing facilities during the tenure of Harding and Eason. The title was badly clouded, and, no matter what either might have thought, neither Horatio Jones nor Joseph Harding ever owned a square foot

6

**Names:**

Chapman, Samuel,  
Judge  
Donegan,  
Eason,

Forsey,  
Harding, Joseph  
Haughton, Richard  
Jones, Horatio

Kent,  
Mitchell, William  
Patton,  
Stewart,

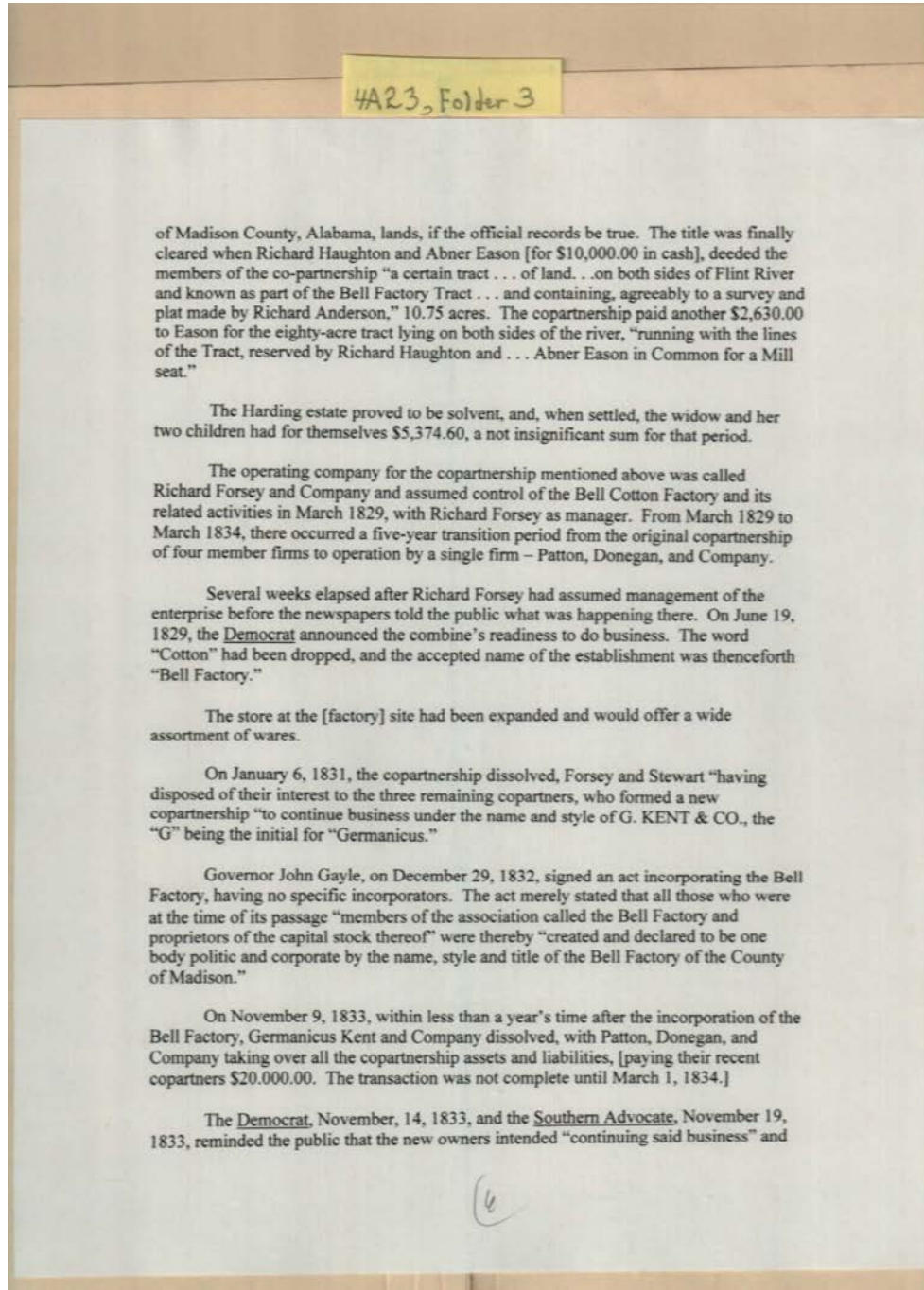
Williams, Isaac  
Yeatman,  
The Bell Cotton  
Factory

**Types:**

transcription

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

Image 6 r04a23-03-000-0006 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)



**Names:**

Anderson, Richard  
Eason, Abner  
Forsey, Richard &  
Company

G. Kent & Co.  
Gayle, John,  
Governor  
Harding,

Haughton, Richard  
Kent, Germanicus  
Patton, Donegan &  
Co.

Stewart,

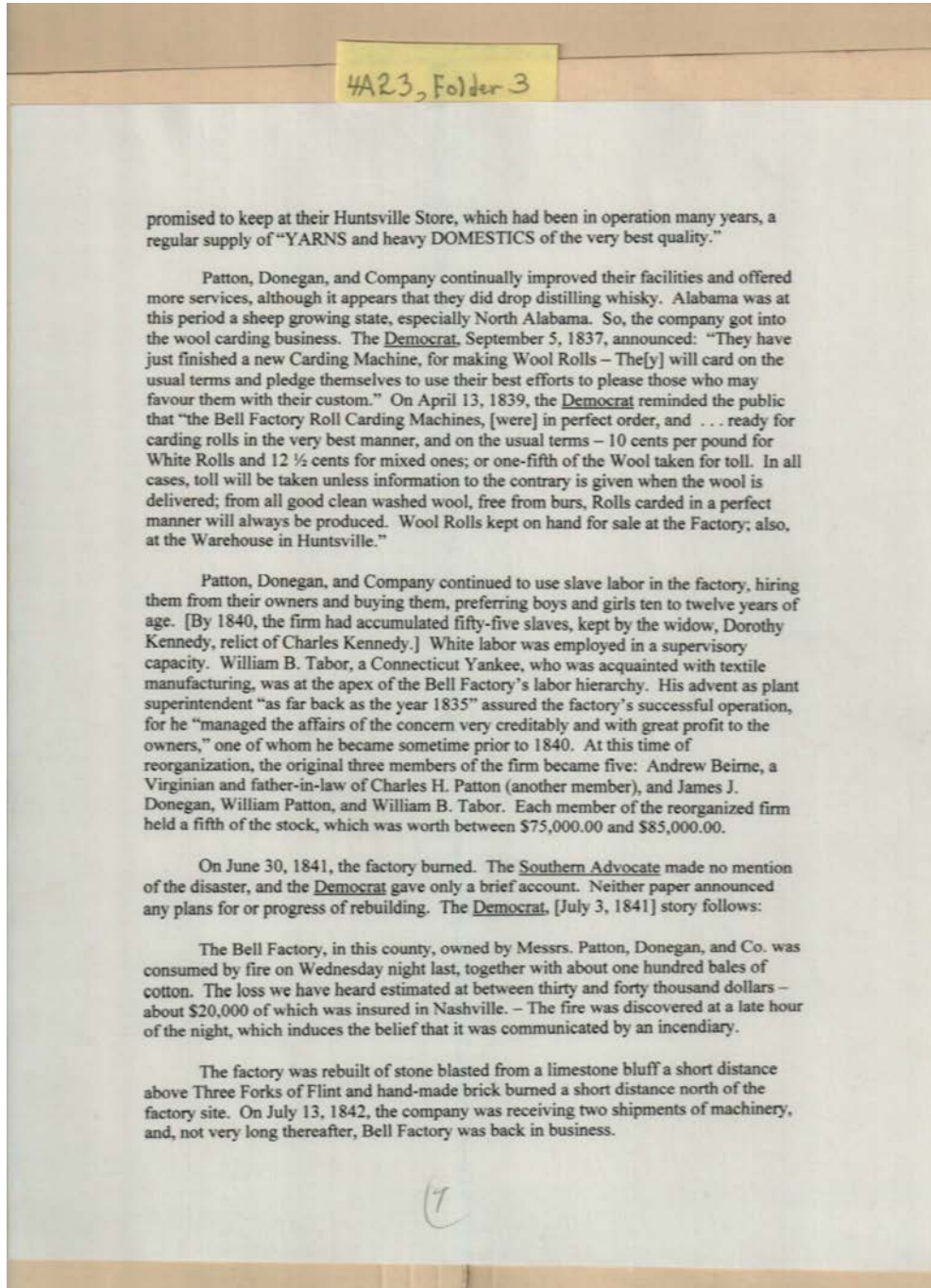
**Types:**

transcription



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

Image 7 r04a23-03-000-0007 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)



**Names:**

Beirne, Andrew  
Donegan, James J.  
Kennedy, Charles

Kennedy, Dorothy  
Patton, Charles H.

Patton, Donegan &  
Co.  
Patton, William

Tabor, William B.

**Types:**

transcription

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

Image 8 r04a23-03-000-0008 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)

4A23, Folder 3

After the fire, Patton, Donegan, and Company experienced great difficulty in getting fire insurance for the factory. The Tennessee Marine and Fire Insurance Company had already paid out \$20,000.00 and refused to issue more than \$10,000.00 at the old rate of three percent. Their coinsurers would issue none at less than three percent. Cotton factories were especially susceptible to fires. We gain some knowledge of the prewar Bell Factory from the correspondence between Charles H. Patton and Haddock, Haseltine, and Company, of Philadelphia, in a letter of December 11, 1847, seeking their assistance in finding an insurer:

... We have since our last policy was effected added about \$12,000 more in Machinery to our former supply and wish to increase our insurance. We have about 2000 cotton spindles with all the necessary preparation and about 48 or 50 looms. Our operatives are blacks and all belong to the proprietors except one. We keep two watchmen constantly employed, who relieve each other at 12 o'clock at night. Our factory is a substantial three story Brick house one hundred feet long and fifty two feet wide, with a wing two stories high and about 70 feet long and twenty wide, which contains our supplies, cotton and woolen machinery on lower floor and above is for warping and beaming and putting up our cloth. All is drawn by water power. Our Machinist - Weaver, who superintends, and Watchmen are White men, and the Superintendent of all is one of the owners of the establishment and is an eastern man and conducts the establishment in an eastern manner... I forgot to mention the whole of our concern is surrounded by a brick wall ten feet high, and no one is admitted after work hours except the Watchman or one of the Owners.

The new plant was valued at \$60,000.00, and the firm was willing to "take the risk of the other half" themselves.

Whether the firm ever succeeded in getting their factory insured for the full \$30,000.00 sought is unknown. Ironically, however, insurance was never needed, since no further fires ever struck the factory. Goods shipped by riverboat during the 1850's were insured.

From the very beginning of the Horatio Jones Cotton Factory, barter had played a very important part in disposing of the factory's output. Patton, Donegan, and Company were past masters at the art of barter. For instance, the Bell Factory store at Huntsville would receive an order for perhaps 5,000 pounds of bacon from a Mississippi plantation owner. C. [Charles] P. Cabaniss, who managed the Huntsville store, knew exactly what Tennessee agents [for Bell Factory products] could obtain the bacon at the shortest notice and the lowest prices. Spun yarn or cloth were swapped for bacon, and the plantation owner got his bacon. Naturally, Patton, Donegan, and Company profited at both ends of this transaction. Do[No] barter deal was too large or too small. Among the items bartered for were lard, bacon, hams, shoulders, wool, hemp, feathers, wheat, beeswax, leather, home-knit socks - wool and cotton, and country woven linsey.

8

**Names:**

Cabaniss, Charles P.  
Haddock, Haseltine,  
& Co.

Horatio Jones Cotton  
Factory  
Patton, Charles H.

Patton, Donegan &  
Co.

Tennessee Marine &  
Fire Insurance Co.

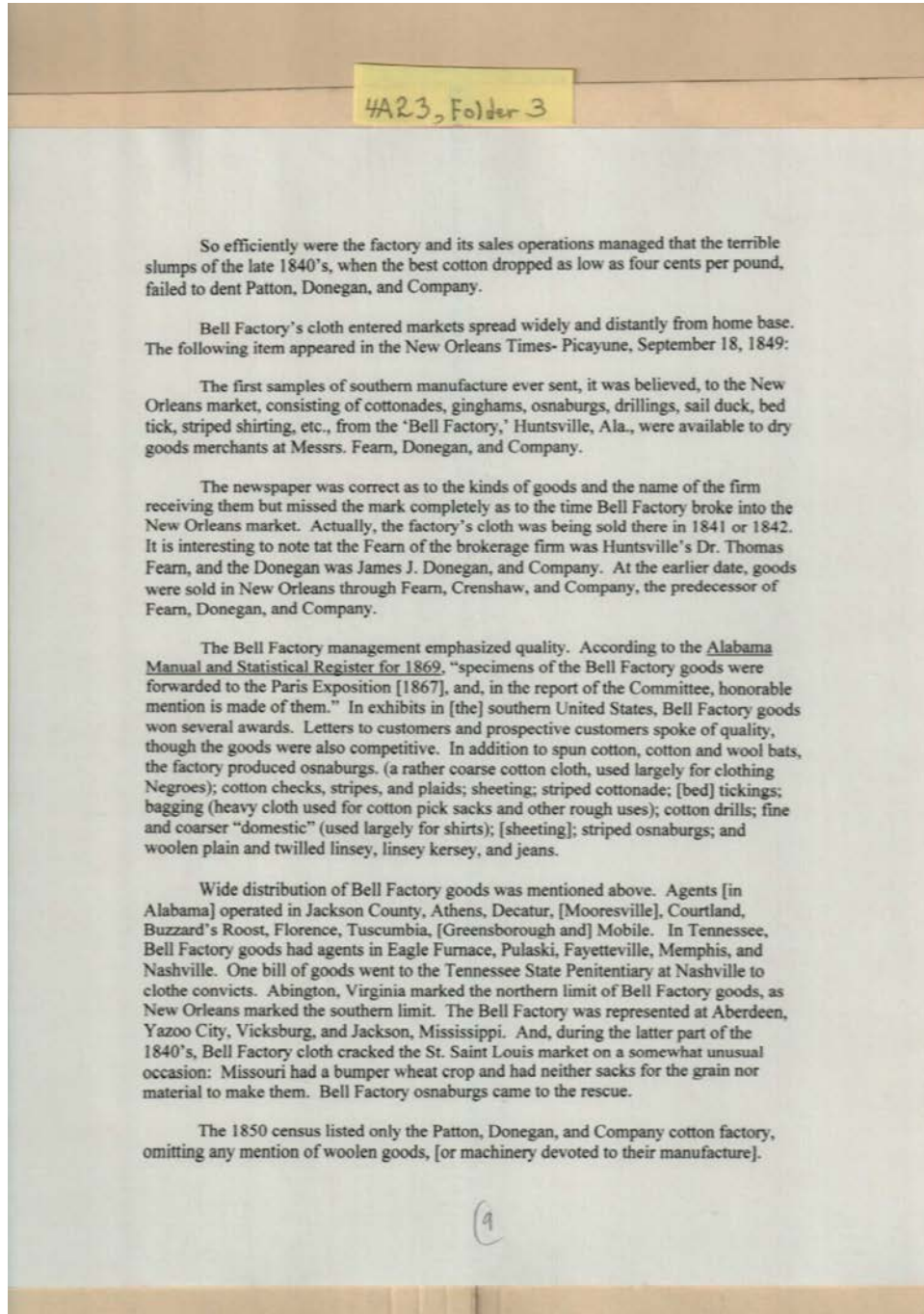
**Types:**

transcription



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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**Names:**

Alabama Manual and  
Statistical Register  
Donegan, James J.

Fearn, Crenshaw &  
Co.  
Fearn, Donegan &  
Co.

Fearn, Thomas, Dr.  
Paris Exhibition of  
1867

Patton, Donegan &  
Co.

**Types:**

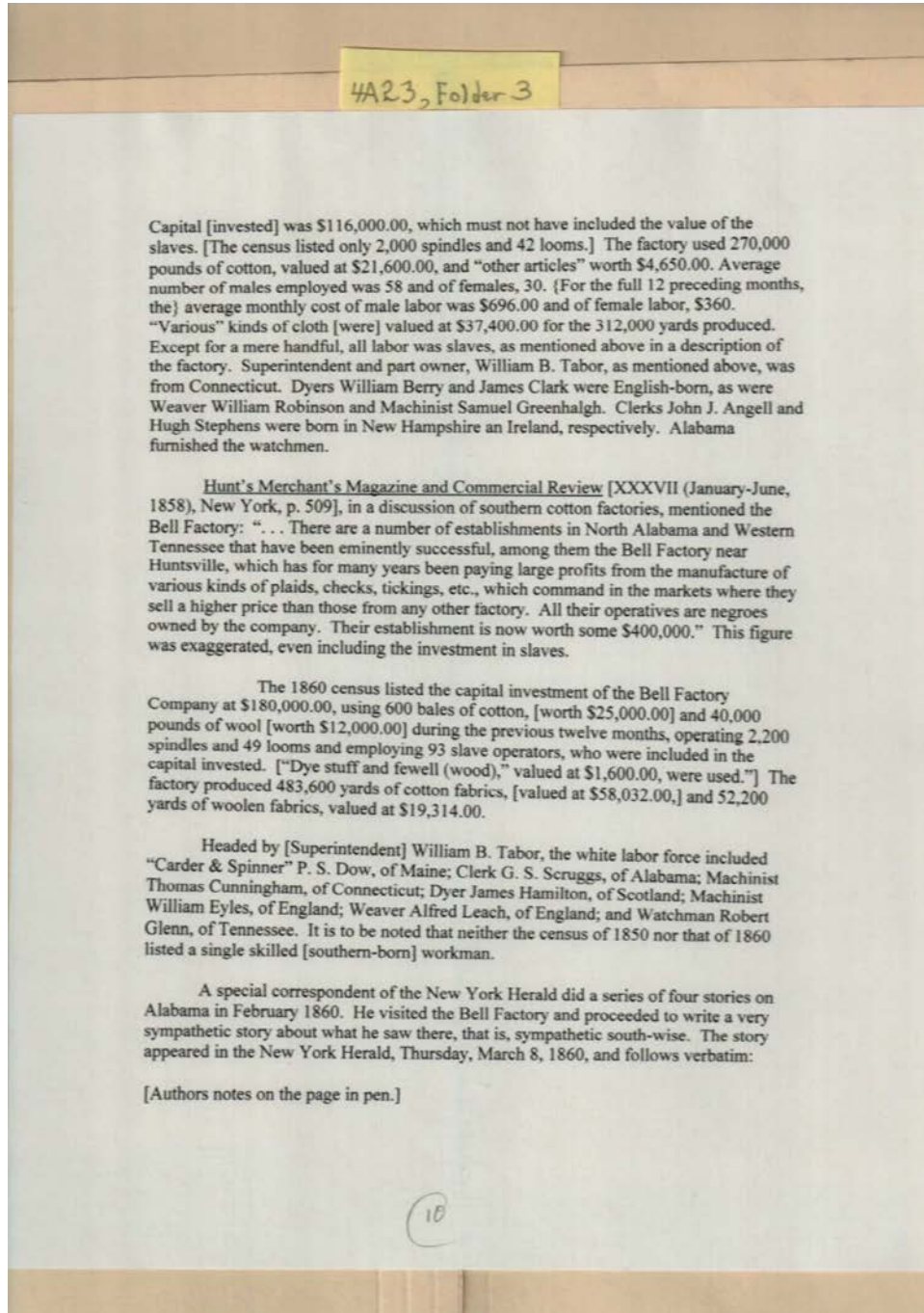
transcription

**Dates:**

1869

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

Image 10 r04a23-03-000-0010 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)



**Names:**

Angell, John J.  
Berry, William  
Clark, James  
Cunningham, Thomas  
Dow, P. S.

Eyles, Willam  
Glenn, Robert  
Greenhalgh, Samuel  
Hamilton, James  
Leach, Alfred

Robinson, William  
Scruggs, G. S.  
Stephens, Hugh  
Tabor, William B.

Hunt's Merchants'  
Magazine  
New York Herald

**Types:**

transcription

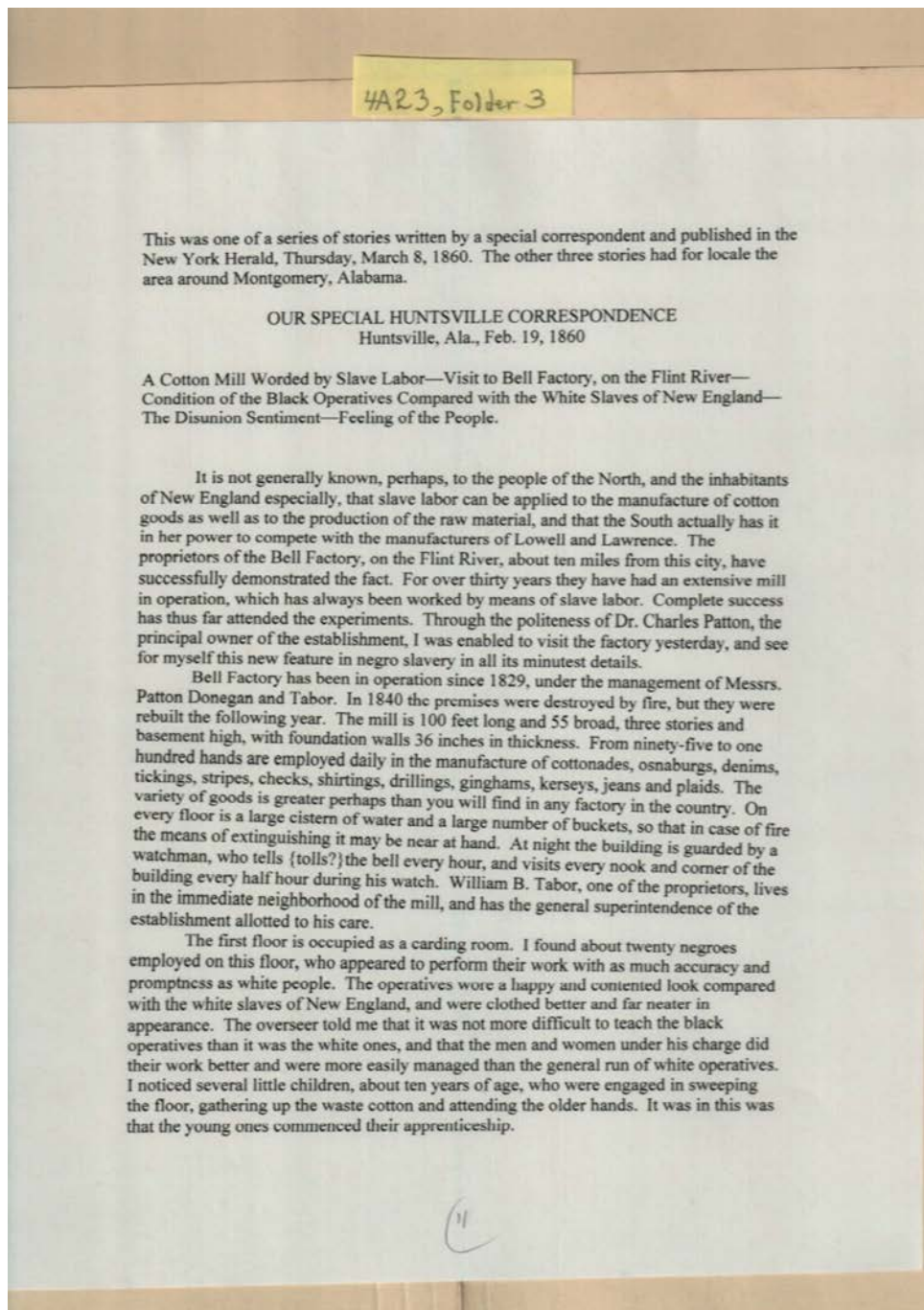
**Dates:**

Jan 1858

Mar 08, 1860

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

Image 11 r04a23-03-000-0011 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)



**Names:**

Patton, Charles H.,  
Dr.

Patton, Donegan &  
Tabor

Tabor, William B.  
New York Herald

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

transcription

**Dates:**

Feb 19, 1860



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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4A23, Folder 3

The weaving room is situated on the second floor. There are fifty-two looms here, employing some thirty-three hands, one-fourth of whom eight women, and the remainder men and boys. The operatives are under the superintendence of an overseer, who assured me that he never had charge of better hands in his life. The negroes, he said, did their work cheerfully and well, which was not always the case with white operatives. The warping and cloth room is also on the second floor. Here all the goods are measured, ticketed, and prepared for bailing, which gives employment to some five hands.

The third floor is occupied as a spinning room. The manufacture of thread and twine is also carried on. Some forty hands, mostly girls and boys, were at work. Branch, one of the negroes, acted as overseer, and a right good one he makes, too. There are 2,500 spindles in operation on this floor, besides machinery for spooling thread, twisting twine, and making rope. Monroe, a boy about fourteen years old, attended the thread and twine machine, and turned out fifty pounds of goods per day. He twists the material, lays it out, and winds it all himself. The operatives were quite expert at their business, and gave the overseer little or no trouble. Branch, to I have already made allusion, is about 40 years of age, and is a fine, intelligent fellow. He makes all the machinery belts, covers the rollers, and weighs all the yarns, thread and waste on that floor, keeps a journal, and renders an account to his employers every Saturday. After business hours he makes seines for the fishermen, and derives an income of \$150 a year from that business alone.

In connection with the factory is a flour mill, also a dye house and drying room, giving employment to some half dozen persons, mostly blacks. The operatives are required to work eleven hours per day all the year round. The greater portion of them have set tasks to perform, and generally manage to get through their week's work by Saturday noon. Mr. Tabor informed me that the work was not performed any cheaper than it would be by whites, but it was far more satisfactory to have it done by their negroes. They could not get along with white operatives near as well, he said, as they could with their own slaves, for reason that the former were always discontented and unhappy, and not to be depended on. The negroes, on the contrary took quite a pride in their business, and were willing and able to work from one end of the year to the other. There was nothing he thought, to prevent the system being carried on with much success in all the Southern States, especially where water power and the raw material were to be had on the spot. He acknowledged, though, that it was quite a task to take care of all the operatives; but, on the whole, he preferred the negroes to the whites, and would not exchange his operatives for any gang of whites no matter where they came from.

The Bell Factory goods find a ready market in nearly all the Southern States, but more especially in Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Louisiana. The goods are highly spoken of by planters and merchants, and already the company have [has] received thirteen prizes at different fairs. At the South Carolina State Fair, held at Charleston a year or two ago, a diploma and a silver medal were awarded the proprietors for the best checks, cottonades and gingham, while at Tuscumbia and Decatur, in this State, the company was equally successful. The students at the law school at Montgomery have recently ordered a large quantity of the jeans for the purpose of making their uniforms, and every day the demand for the goods increases. By and by southern manufacturers will be trying their hands at fine goods, and if they should be as successful in their undertakings as Messrs. Patton & Co. have been in theirs, what a powerful blow will be struck at Northern manufacturers. With slave labor well controlled, splendid water

(12)

**Names:**

, Branch (slave)

, Monroe (slave)

Patton & Co.

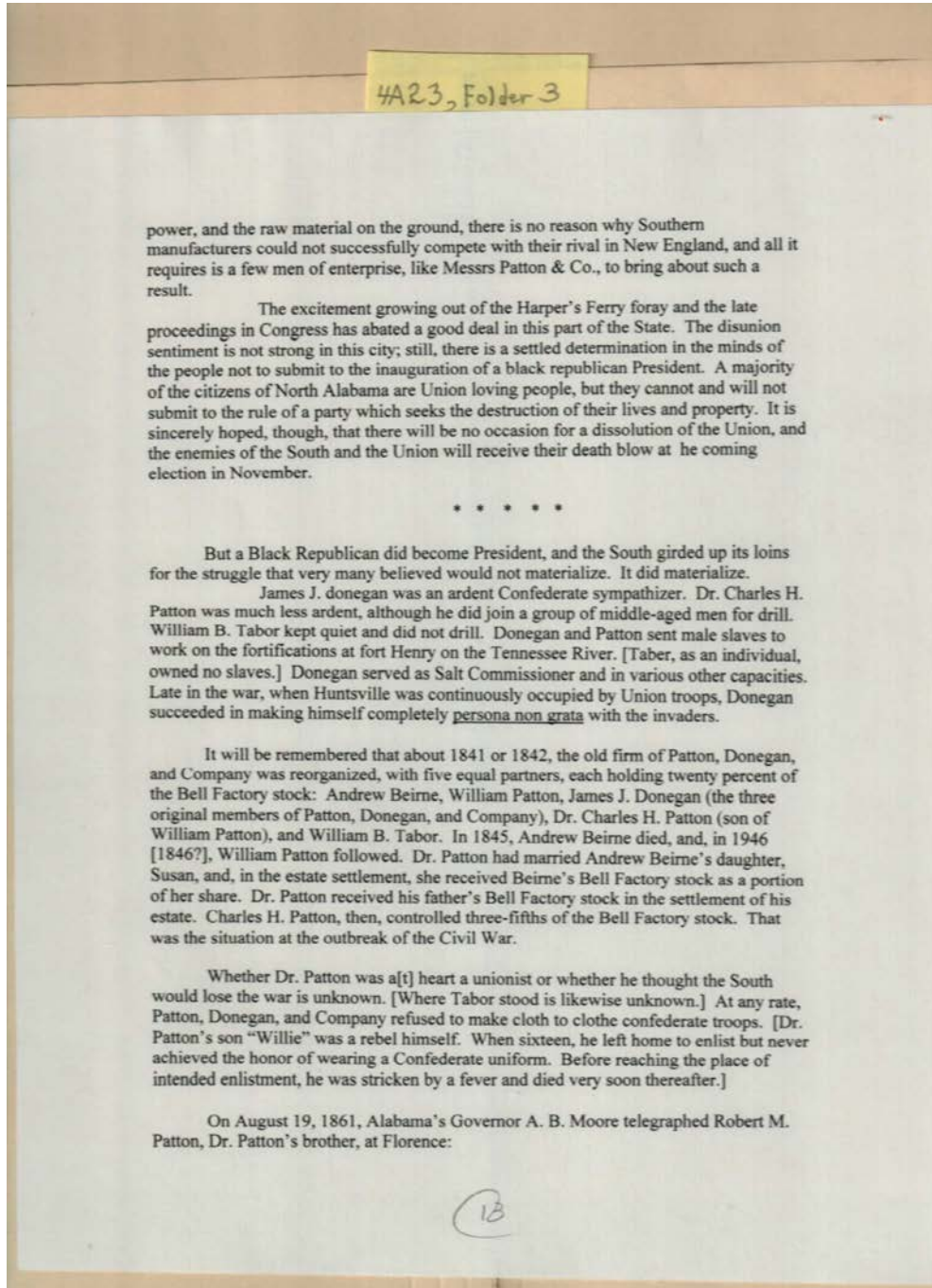
Tabor, William B.

**Types:**

transcription

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

Image 13 r04a23-03-000-0013 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)



power, and the raw material on the ground, there is no reason why Southern manufacturers could not successfully compete with their rival in New England, and all it requires is a few men of enterprise, like Messrs Patton & Co., to bring about such a result.

The excitement growing out of the Harper's Ferry foray and the late proceedings in Congress has abated a good deal in this part of the State. The disunion sentiment is not strong in this city; still, there is a settled determination in the minds of the people not to submit to the inauguration of a black republican President. A majority of the citizens of North Alabama are Union loving people, but they cannot and will not submit to the rule of a party which seeks the destruction of their lives and property. It is sincerely hoped, though, that there will be no occasion for a dissolution of the Union, and the enemies of the South and the Union will receive their death blow at the coming election in November.

\* \* \* \* \*

But a Black Republican did become President, and the South girded up its loins for the struggle that very many believed would not materialize. It did materialize.

James J. Donegan was an ardent Confederate sympathizer. Dr. Charles H. Patton was much less ardent, although he did join a group of middle-aged men for drill. William B. Tabor kept quiet and did not drill. Donegan and Patton sent male slaves to work on the fortifications at Fort Henry on the Tennessee River. [Tabor, as an individual, owned no slaves.] Donegan served as Salt Commissioner and in various other capacities. Late in the war, when Huntsville was continuously occupied by Union troops, Donegan succeeded in making himself completely persona non grata with the invaders.

It will be remembered that about 1841 or 1842, the old firm of Patton, Donegan, and Company was reorganized, with five equal partners, each holding twenty percent of the Bell Factory stock: Andrew Beirne, William Patton, James J. Donegan (the three original members of Patton, Donegan, and Company), Dr. Charles H. Patton (son of William Patton), and William B. Tabor. In 1845, Andrew Beirne died, and, in 1846 [1846?], William Patton followed. Dr. Patton had married Andrew Beirne's daughter, Susan, and, in the estate settlement, she received Beirne's Bell Factory stock as a portion of her share. Dr. Patton received his father's Bell Factory stock in the settlement of his estate. Charles H. Patton, then, controlled three-fifths of the Bell Factory stock. That was the situation at the outbreak of the Civil War.

Whether Dr. Patton was a hearted unionist or whether he thought the South would lose the war is unknown. [Where Tabor stood is likewise unknown.] At any rate, Patton, Donegan, and Company refused to make cloth to clothe Confederate troops. [Dr. Patton's son "Willie" was a rebel himself. When sixteen, he left home to enlist but never achieved the honor of wearing a Confederate uniform. Before reaching the place of intended enlistment, he was stricken by a fever and died very soon thereafter.]

On August 19, 1861, Alabama's Governor A. B. Moore telegraphed Robert M. Patton, Dr. Patton's brother, at Florence:

13

**Names:**

Beirne, Andrew  
Donegan, James J.  
Moore, A. B.  
(Alabama)

Governor)  
Patton & Co.  
Patton, Charles H.,  
Dr.

Patton, Donegan, &  
Co.  
Patton, Robert M.  
Patton, Susan Beirne

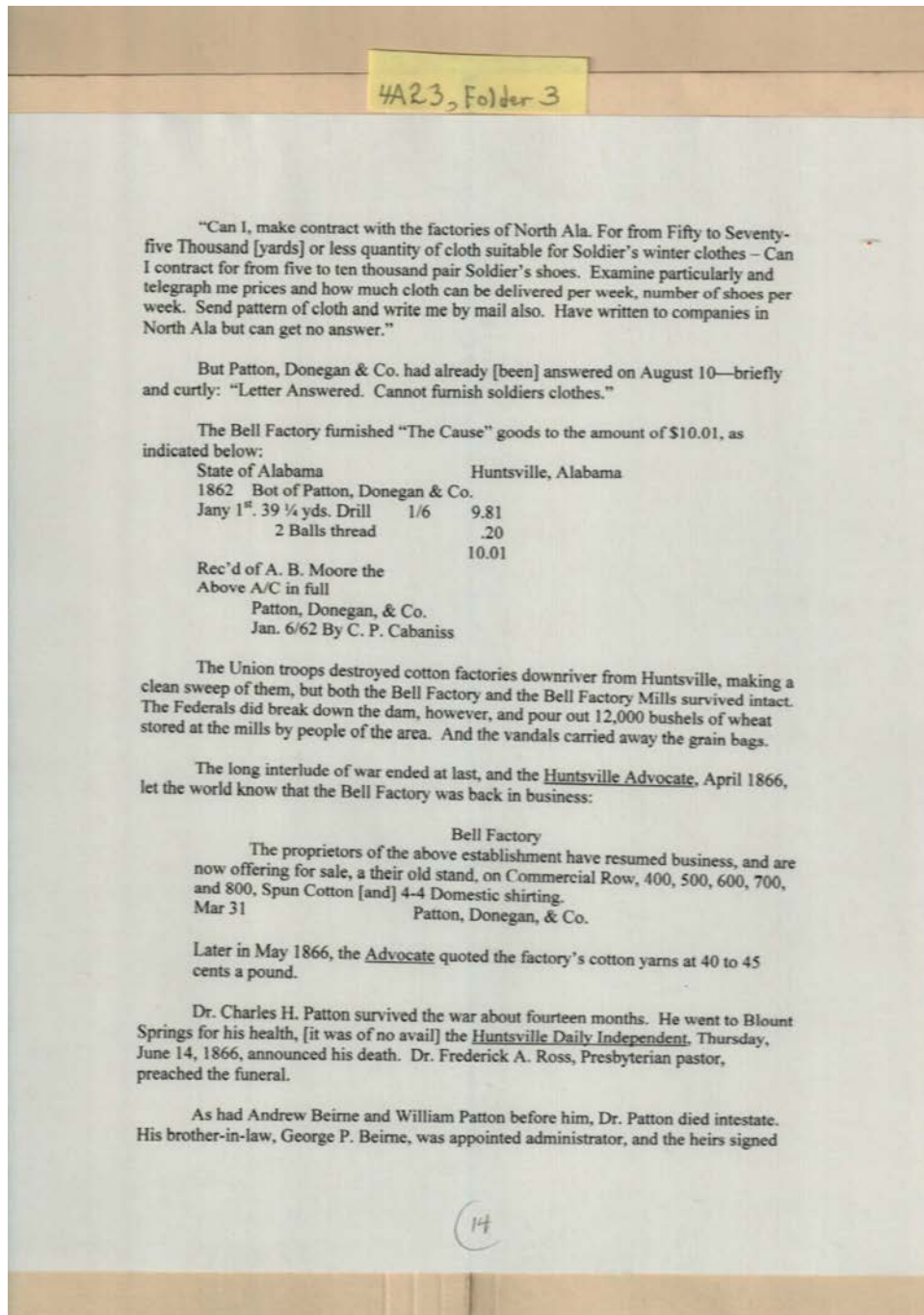
Patton, William  
Patton, Willie  
Tabor, William B.

**Types:**

transcription

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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**Names:**

Beirne, Andrew  
Beirne, George P.  
Cabaniss, Charles P.  
Moore, A. B.  
(Alabama

Governor)  
Patton, Charles H.,  
Dr.  
Patton, Donegan &  
Co.

Patton, William  
Ross, Frederick A.,  
Dr.  
Soldier's Winter  
Clothes

**Types:**

transcription



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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4A23, Folder 3

an agreement to permit a commission to divide the estate. There were to be a court fights to devour the estate, though negotiation was necessary to settle with the widow, Dr. Patton's second wife, Martha L. The other heirs were Mary B. Echols, wife of William H. Echols, late major of engineers in the Confederate Army; Mattie Lee Patton, soon to become wife of James R. Stevens; and Oliver Beirne Patton, who was not yet 2 years old.

In the meantime, something had to be done about the Bell Factory Corporation, which was limited [to a life of thirty years], by the act of incorporation in 1832. The second act of incorporation, "An act to Incorporate the 'Bell Factory Manufacturing Company'" was approved January 23, 1867. It was November 18, 1868, however, before the corporate organization took place to enact by-laws and elect officers. Capital stock was set at \$200,000.00 - 2,000 shares at \$100.00 par.

In the first quarter of 1870, William B. Taber gave "notice of his intention to quit" his position as factory superintendent. He sold 200 of his 400 shares of stock to W. H. Echols and the remaining 200 to Eliza Patton Watkins, husband of J. L. Watkins and sister of the deceased Dr. Patton. Taber took his capital to Nashville and joined others in building a cotton factory, the Tennessee Manufacturing Company, which became a very successful establishment. William H. Echols succeeded Taber as factory superintendent.

For some few years in the 1870's the factory was [from time to time] expanded. More building was done and new improved machinery installed. [Eventually, the amount of machinery is said to have reached about 3,000 spindles and 100 looms, with the factory employing 100 operatives. These figures fail to agree with the census.] There seems, however, to have been some dissension among the stockholders, with some rather strong sentiment to liquidate the business. [And, J. J. Donegan, in some obscure, mysterious manner was finally maneuvered out of the organization. There was, in the stockholder's meetings, talk of his indebtedness to the firm; for what never appeared in the minutes of those meetings.

The census of 1870 listed the Bell Factory Corporation as "cotton and wool manufactures," with the cotton [manufacturing] facilities valued at \$150,000.00 and the wool at \$50,000.00, for a total of \$200,000.00, operated by waterpower, the cotton manufacturing machinery required 130 horsepower and the wool machinery 20 horsepower, with 2 wheels furnishing the motive force. Devoted to cotton were 18 cards, 100 looms, and 1,675 spindles and to wool 2 "loppers," 2 "N. looms," 1 wool card, and 50 "spindles, cap[acity] 25 lbs." Male employees numbered 36; female, 80; and "children and youths," 10, drawing during the preceding year wages totaling \$24,500.00. The factory used 250,000 pounds of cotton, valued at \$52,000.00, fuel, valued at \$500.00; mill supplies, valued at \$1,500.00; and miscellaneous supplies, valued at \$500.00. Checks, osnaburgs, and shirtings, totaling 90,000 yards and valued at \$18,000.00, were produced and 410,000 yards of sheetings, valued at \$61,500.00.

Below is a statement of annual production of the Bell Factory for 1873, as required by law. Whether another was ever rendered is not known by the compiler; he never discovered it, at least. It will be noted that this statement is far more complete the

(B)

**Names:**

Donegan, J. J.  
Echols, Mary B.  
Echols, William H.

Patton, Charles H.,  
Dr.  
Patton, Martha L.

Patton, Mattie Lee  
Patton, Oliver Beirne  
Stevens, James R.

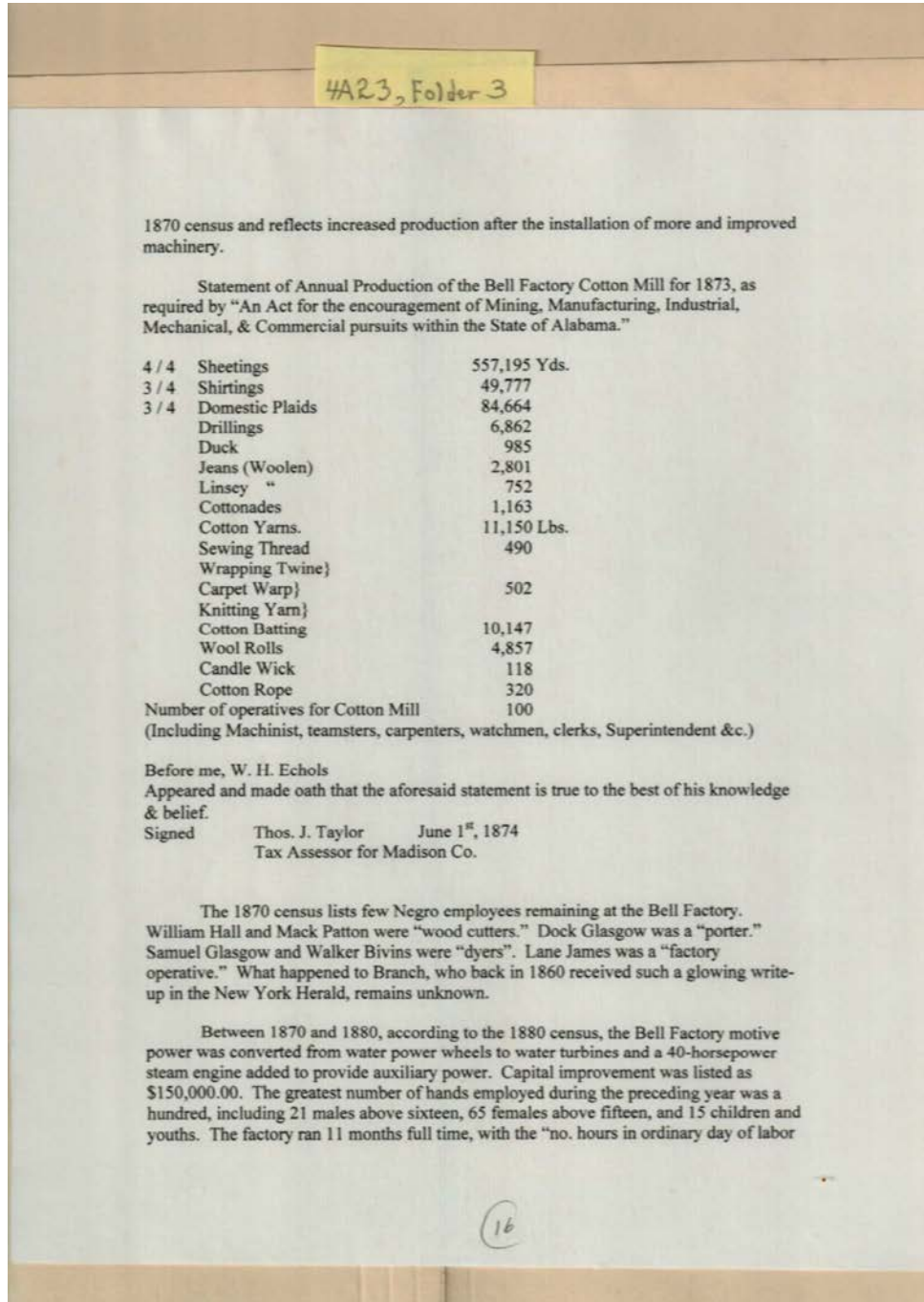
Taber, William B.  
Watkins, Eliza Patton  
Watkins, J. L.

**Types:**

transcription

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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**Names:**

Bivins, Walker  
Echols, W. H.  
Glasgow, Dock

Glasgow, Samuel  
Hall, William  
James, Lane

Patton, Mack  
Statement of  
Production 1873

Taylor, Thomas J.,  
(Tax Assessor)

**Types:**

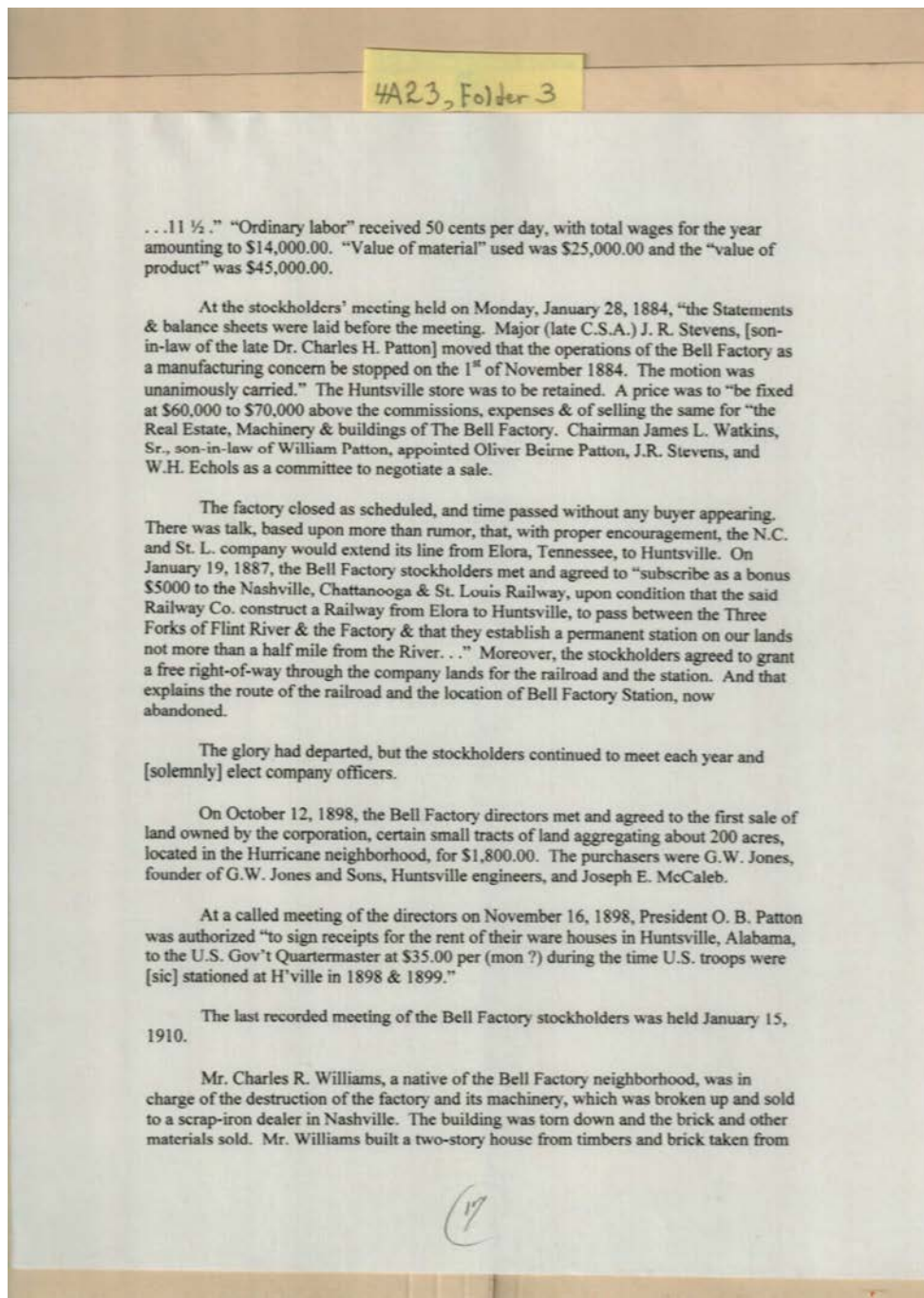
transcription

**Dates:**

Jun 01, 1874

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Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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...11 1/2." "Ordinary labor" received 50 cents per day, with total wages for the year amounting to \$14,000.00. "Value of material" used was \$25,000.00 and the "value of product" was \$45,000.00.

At the stockholders' meeting held on Monday, January 28, 1884, "the Statements & balance sheets were laid before the meeting. Major (late C.S.A.) J. R. Stevens, [son-in-law of the late Dr. Charles H. Patton] moved that the operations of the Bell Factory as a manufacturing concern be stopped on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 1884. The motion was unanimously carried." The Huntsville store was to be retained. A price was to "be fixed at \$60,000 to \$70,000 above the commissions, expenses & of selling the same for "the Real Estate, Machinery & buildings of The Bell Factory. Chairman James L. Watkins, Sr., son-in-law of William Patton, appointed Oliver Beirne Patton, J.R. Stevens, and W.H. Echols as a committee to negotiate a sale.

The factory closed as scheduled, and time passed without any buyer appearing. There was talk, based upon more than rumor, that, with proper encouragement, the N.C. and St. L. company would extend its line from Elora, Tennessee, to Huntsville. On January 19, 1887, the Bell Factory stockholders met and agreed to "subscribe as a bonus \$5000 to the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway, upon condition that the said Railway Co. construct a Railway from Elora to Huntsville, to pass between the Three Forks of Flint River & the Factory & that they establish a permanent station on our lands not more than a half mile from the River..." Moreover, the stockholders agreed to grant a free right-of-way through the company lands for the railroad and the station. And that explains the route of the railroad and the location of Bell Factory Station, now abandoned.

The glory had departed, but the stockholders continued to meet each year and [solemnly] elect company officers.

On October 12, 1898, the Bell Factory directors met and agreed to the first sale of land owned by the corporation, certain small tracts of land aggregating about 200 acres, located in the Hurricane neighborhood, for \$1,800.00. The purchasers were G.W. Jones, founder of G.W. Jones and Sons, Huntsville engineers, and Joseph E. McCaleb.

At a called meeting of the directors on November 16, 1898, President O. B. Patton was authorized "to sign receipts for the rent of their ware houses in Huntsville, Alabama, to the U.S. Gov't Quartermaster at \$35.00 per (mon ?) during the time U.S. troops were [sic] stationed at H'ville in 1898 & 1899."

The last recorded meeting of the Bell Factory stockholders was held January 15, 1910.

Mr. Charles R. Williams, a native of the Bell Factory neighborhood, was in charge of the destruction of the factory and its machinery, which was broken up and sold to a scrap-iron dealer in Nashville. The building was torn down and the brick and other materials sold. Mr. Williams built a two-story house from timbers and brick taken from

**Names:**

Bell Factory stopped  
Echols, W. H.  
Jones, G. W.  
McCaleb, Joseph E.

Nashville,  
Chattanooga, St.  
Louis RR  
Patton, Charles H.,  
Dr.

Patton, O. B.  
Patton, Oliver Beirne  
Patton, William  
Statements and  
Balance Sheets

Stevens, J. R.  
Stevens, J. R., Major  
Watkins, James L., Sr.  
Williams, Charles R.

**Types:**

transcription

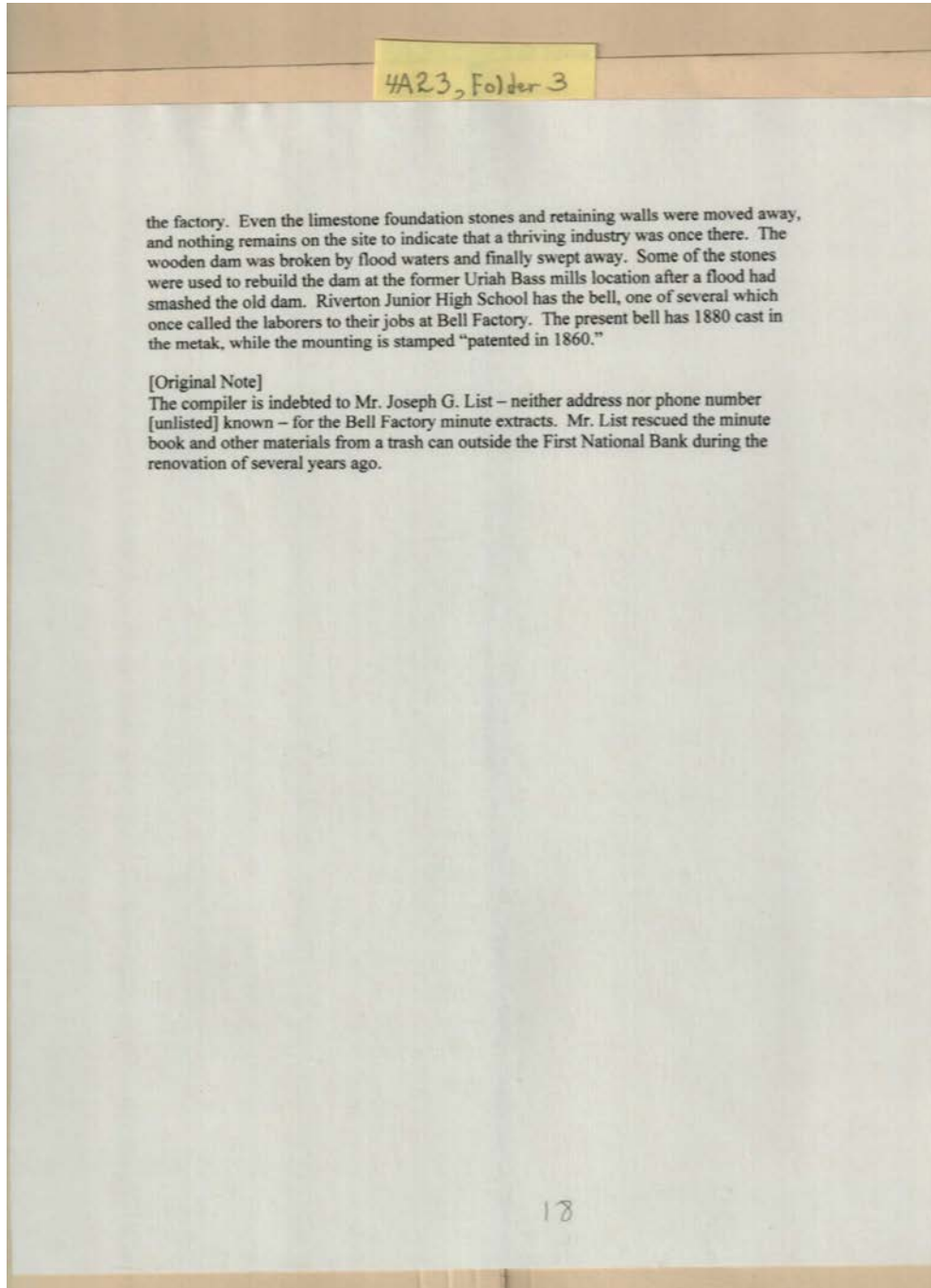
**Dates:**

Nov 01, 1884



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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**Names:**

Bass, Uriah

List, Joseph G.

**Types:**

transcription

4A23, Folder 3

1. Randall L. Miller Cotton Mill Movement in Antebellum Ala. (NY 1978) 9-24
2. H. Southern Advoc. 12/3/1851
3. Patton, Donegan & Co. NY. 29, 1847 to Shepherd & Duncan Mar. 20, 1848. Letterbook HPL Sep. 12, 1848.
4. PD & Co Time books
5. NY Herald Tribune Mar. 8, 1860.
6. Hts. Dem. July 3, 1841.

**Names:**

Miller, Randall L.  
Patton, Donegan &  
Co.

Patton, Donegan &  
Co. Time Books  
Shepherd & Duncan

Cotton Mill  
Movement in  
Antebellum  
Alabama

Huntsville Democrat  
New York Herald  
Tribune  
Southern Advocate

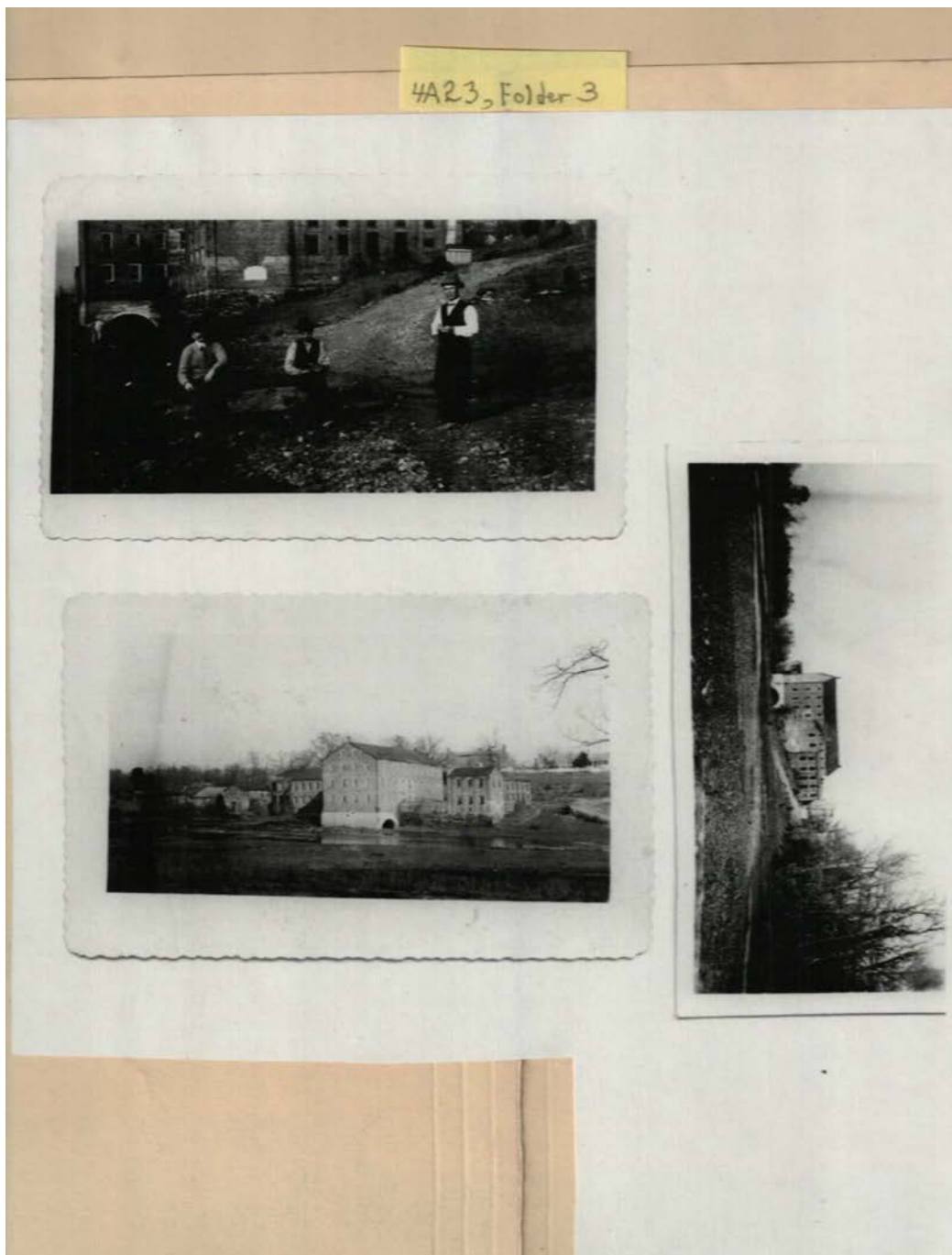
**Types:**

sources

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3

Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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**Names:**

Bell Factory

**Types:**

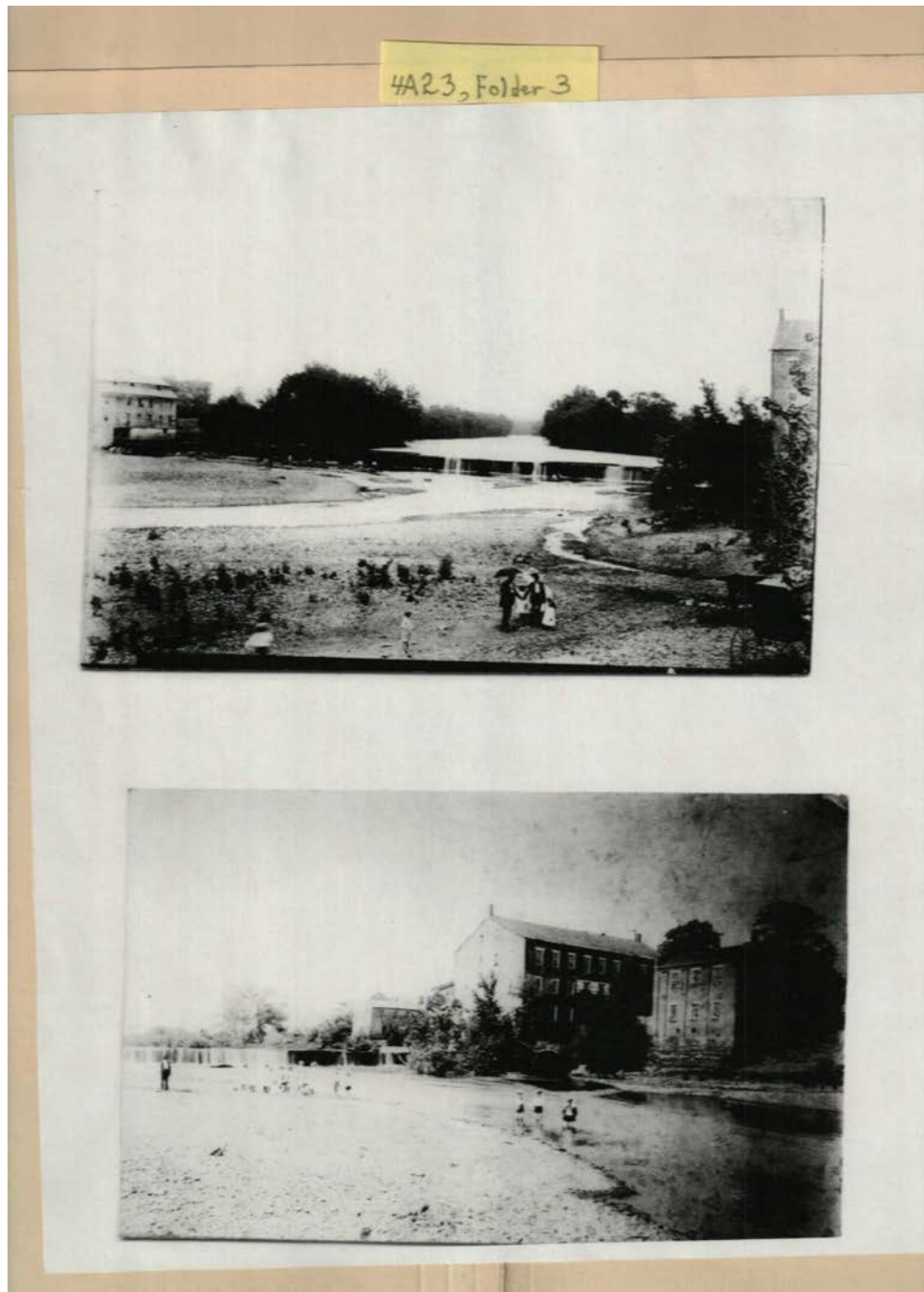
photo



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3

Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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**Names:**

Bell Factory

**Types:**

photo

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(1)  
Derrick-to-Haughton deed, another emigrant from Chowan County, North Carolina, made his appearance; Abner Eason. He and Richard Haughton had married sisters, daughters of a very well-to-do planter, James House. On an unmentioned date in March 1819, Richard Haughton and his wife, Sarah (Sally), for \$2,356.96, "lawful money" transferred to Eason fifty acres of the Rudolph Boshart tract and all the <sup>32.96-acre</sup> ~~32.96-acre~~ David Boshart tract, <sup>judging which Bennett and House sold, both halves, to Richard March 28, 1815, for \$80.25. This tract was part of the New No. 549, 1, 1/2, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.</sup> Incorporated in the deed was a reservation of four acres to be thereafter surveyed on each side of the river (a total of eight acres) at the most suitable location for a "mill tract," which was to be held jointly by Haughton and Eason. At finally surveyed, the total acreage of the dam and mill site was 10.75, and it was <sup>thereafter</sup> treated, or at least spoken of, as a separate, distinct tract.

~~Apparently, there is no surviving information as to what happened to this water power site before Horatio Jones moved downstream from his location at Haughton's Mills. At any rate, he built his factory house, installed his machinery, and began to advertise in Huntsville, Alabama, newspapers. Identically worded advertisements appeared in each paper: Tuesday morning, May 11, 1824, in the Democrat and Friday, May 14, 1824, in the Alabama Republican. This was the first time Alabama manufactured~~

**Names:**

Bell Factory  
Boshart, David  
Boshart, Rudolph

Derrick,  
Eason, Abner  
Haughton, Richard

Haughton, Sarah  
(Sally)  
House, James

Jones, Horatio

**Types:**

essay

Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(1)

Apparently, nothing happened at or to the water power site, <sup>after March 1819</sup> until Horatio Jones took steps to secure it for his projected factory. On October 21, 1822, he gave his note to Abner Eason for \$937.50 and another to Richard Haughton for \$700.00, both payable December 25, 1824, for the right to erect his factory on the Haughton-Eason site. *At that time, he was too near a very painful death to worry about the notes.* During 1823 and the first of 1824, Jones built his factory house, installed his machinery, and began to advertise in the two Huntsville, Alabama, newspapers. Identically worded advertisements appeared in each paper: Tuesday morning, May 11, 1824, in the Democrat and Friday, May 14, 1824, in the Alabama Republican. This was the first time Alabama-manufactured

**Names:**

Eason, Abner  
Haughton, Richard

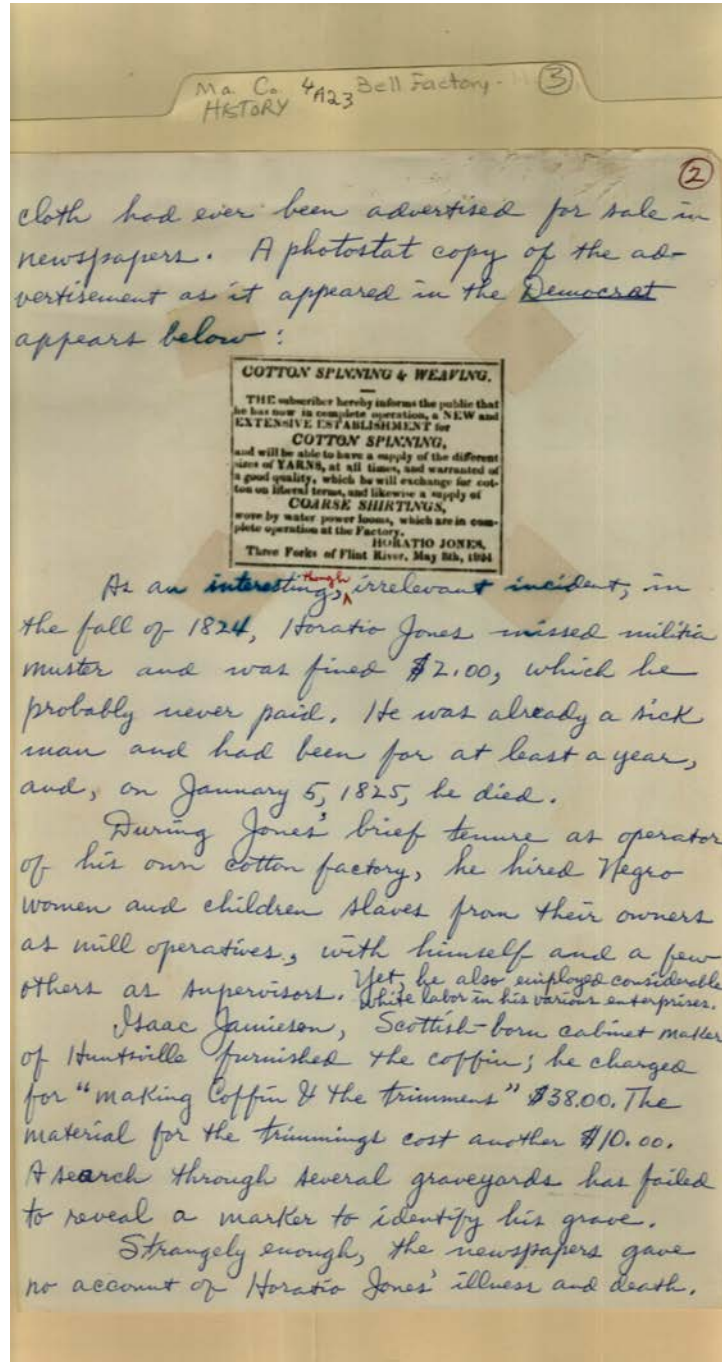
Jones, Horatio  
Alabama Republican

Democrat

**Types:**

essay





**Names:**

Coarse Shirtings

Cotton Spinning

Jamieson, Isaac

Jones, Horatio

**Places:**

Three Forks Flint  
River

**Types:**

advertisement

essay

**Dates:**

May 08, 1824

Ma Co 4A23 Bell Factory (3)  
HISTORY

(3)

Before his death, the cotton products of Jones' factory were already reaching the area around Paris and Lexington, Kentucky, and south into Jones Valley (the later Birmingham, Alabama, area). Giles, Lincoln, and Rutherford counties in Tennessee and Madison, Jackson, Citaco (later Morgan), Lauderdale, and Colbert counties in Alabama were buying his cotton products.

Jones had bought a small bronze or brass bell in Kentucky and used it to regulate his labor. At the time of his death, the factory was <sup>absolutely</sup> being called the "Bell Cotton Factory," later shortened to the "Bell Factory."

John Tilford, a merchant and speculator from Philadelphia, a close friend of Horatio Jones and his sometime informal banker, administered the Jones estate during 1825-1827. Tilford had loaned Jones money, and, under a contract drawn up between the two men, Tilford was to administer the Jones estate, in the event of his death, until the money and interest were repaid - plus certain charges for Tilford's services. Tilford's administration was a stormy one: claims of creditors poured in, and it quickly became apparent that the

**Names:**

Jones, Horatio

Tilford, John

Bell Cotton Factory

Bell Factory

**Types:**

essay

Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory (3)  
HISTORY

(4)

estate was insolvent, to the shocked surprise of all and sundry. Total assets eventually amounted to \$28,621.05, of which Tilford, as administrator, was allowed five percent commission, or \$1,431.05. Final settlement paid claimants sixty-five percent.

The Jones Cotton Factory and other facilities were completely, if somewhat flamboyantly, described in an advertisement appearing in the Huntsville Southern Advocate, August 5, 1825

Notice to Fortune Hunters.

In pursuance of a decree of the County Court of Madison County, Alabama, made on the 28th day of July, 1825, we will sell on the first Monday in December next, at the court house door in Huntsville, to the highest bidder, on a credit of one, two and three years, that well known and valuable establishment on Flint River, in said County, called 'JONES COTTON FACTORY.' The stream which drives this machinery affords at all seasons of the year a supply of water sufficient for all purposes whatsoever. The works are made

**Names:**

Tilford, John

Huntsville Southern  
Advocate

Jones Cotton Factory

Notice to Fortune  
Hunters

**Types:**

advertisement

essay

**Dates:**

Aug 05, 1825



Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(5)

of superior materials, in a substantial and workmanlike manner, and have only been in operation a little more than twelve months, consisting of five Carding Engines, 342 Spindles, with preparations for large additions. There is also on the premises a good Gin House of the largest size, a Sixty saw Gin of first rate quality, a good Grist Mill, likewise, a large Brick Still House, with Stills, Tubs and every thing necessary for immediate use, two comfortable frame Dwelling Houses, and out houses sufficient to render any situation of this kind agreeable. There are, also, 100 Acres of Land, on part of which said premises stand likewise, a never failing source of first rate water. A further description is deemed useless, as it is presumed, those wishing to purchase will call and examine for themselves.

If a long credit, a beautiful stream of never failing water, with machinery almost entirely new, and in good order, situated about 10 miles north east of

**Types:**

advertisement

**Dates:**

Aug 05, 1825

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Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(6)

Huntsville, in one of the most wealthy, populous, enterprising, beautiful and healthy Counties in the World, holds out any inducement to Capitalists or enterprising gentlemen, we are sure the water privilege above described will first invite their attention, not having its equal in the western country.

The original proprietor of this establishment being dead, the above premises are sold by virtue of the decree aforesaid, to close the business of the estate and to discharge its debts.

Immediate possession will be given to the purchaser, who will be required to give bond with the most undoubted security.

S.S. Ewing,  
T. Brandon,  
Wm. Patton.  
Commissioners

Aug. 5, 1825

The property's description does not mention a saw mill, or whether the grist mill was on the east or west bank of the river. The compiler is inclined to the opinion that it was on the west bank, since that <sup>very definitely</sup> was the location of the grist mill at a later date and continued to be.

**Names:**

Brandon, T.

Ewing, S. S.

Patton, William

**Types:**

advertisement

**Dates:**

Aug 05, 1825

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory (3)  
HISTORY

(7)

The Horatio Jones Cotton Factory and the other improvements at the site were sold at public auction on Monday, December 5, 1825, as advertised, the price being \$20,020.00. Joseph Harding, Horatio Jones' Massachusetts cousin, and Abner Eason, a former partner of Richard Haughton in the ownership of the site, were the purchasers.

The partnership of Harding and Eason lasted from December 1825 until March 1828, when Eason sold his interest to Harding and moved to the Arkansas Territory. During the approximately twenty-seven-month period following the relinquishment by John W. Tilford of the former Jones establishment, it had become widely known as "the Bell Cotton Factory." During this period, too, business expanded considerably.

The decision of Harding and Eason to dissolve their partnership became final on March 22, 1828, when Harding executed three notes in Eason's favor, for a total of \$3,090.35. After March 22, 1828, the signature "Joseph Harding" replaced the former "Harding & Eason" on obligations undertaken on behalf of the establishment. Harding, however, neglected to advertise the firm's dissolution and his own individual assumption of Harding and Eason's assets and liabilities, an omission which was later,

**Names:**

Eason, Abner  
Harding, Joseph

Haughton, Richard  
Tilford, John W.

Bell Cotton Factory

Horatio Jones Cotton  
Factory

**Types:**

essay



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(8)

during the settlement of Harding's estate, to cause considerable litigation. He had, indeed, but a little time to advertise that he, too, as had his cousin, Horatio Jones, had become sole owner of his name. On March 31, 1828, there came one of those flash floods which often strike North Alabama during early spring. Joseph Harding, accompanied by a friend, William Mitchell, put out on the millpond in his boat to inspect the dam for possible damage. Both of Huntsville's newspapers took editorial notice of the event. The Southern Advocate, April 4, 1828, lamented Harding's death thus:

We very sincerely regret the death of Joseph Harding, who was unfortunately drowned at the Flint Mills on Monday morning last. Mr. H. was a respectable, industrious, and enterprising young man. He had but a year or two since, become proprietor of the Cotton Factory, and Mills, at the three forks of Flint [actually a mile below], and by his industry and perseverance was in a fair way to realize a fortune. He was one among our most valuable citizens, and his premature demise will be felt as a severe loss to the public.

**Names:**

Harding, Joseph  
Jones, Horatio

Mitchell, William

The Southern  
Advocate

**Types:**

essay

**Dates:**

Apr 04, 1828

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(9)  
The Democrat, April 4, 1828, gave bare facts and was less fulsome in praise of Harding:

On Monday morning last, whilst Mr. Joseph Harding, in company with a Mr. Mitchell [a close friend], was attempting to cross the pond on which his Cotton Factory is situated on Flint river, the boat struck upon some concealed timber and turned over. Mr. H., after an ineffectual struggle to reach the shore, was unfortunately drowned. In his loss, the community is deprived a most useful and enterprising citizen.

The editor neglected to mention that Mitchell escaped death, as is shown in the Harding estate settlement.

Joseph Harding died intestate, and Judge Samuel Chapman, <sup>in Orphans Court,</sup> on Tuesday, April 1, 1828, the day after the drowning, appointed Richard Haughton administrator of the <sup>Harding</sup> estate.

"Factory and Machinery in factory," listed as comprising a unit, were appraised at \$18,000.00. The one cotton gin of Horatio Jones' time had increased to four. There were 579 spindles for spinning cotton and 12 for baling (cotton bagging) and "2 Power Looms" and "2 Looms with flying shuttle [sic]."

**Names:**

Chapman, Samuel,  
Judge

Harding, Joseph  
Haughton, Richard

Mitchell, William  
The Democrat

**Types:**

essay

**Dates:**

Apr 04, 1828

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(10)

Administrator Haughton reported claims against the Harding estate amounting to \$22,500.00, including \$1,500.00 for slave hire and "claims in purchase [sic] of Factory" amounting to \$14,000.00.

The advertisement of the court-ordered sale appeared in the Democrat, January 9, 1829, and announced the sales date as Monday, March 2, next. The property was referred to as "the well known and valuable establishment on Flint River," in Madison County, Alabama, "called the BELL COTTON FACTORY." Description of the property varied little from that of the Horatio Jones sale.

Outsiders were not permitted to gobble up this outstanding property. Four of Huntsville's business firms formed a copartnership to buy it: Yeatman and Kent, Patton, Donegan, and Company, Isaac Williams, and Forsay and Stewart. The purchase price had shrunk to \$12,630.00, despite the expansion of manufacturing facilities during the tenure of Harding and Eason. The title was badly clouded, and, no matter what either might have thought, neither Horatio Jones nor Joseph Harding ever owned a square foot of Madison County, Alabama, lands, if the official records be true. The title was finally cleared when Richard Haughton and

**Names:**

Eason, Abner  
Forsay,  
Harding, Joseph

Haughton, Richard  
Jones, Horatio  
Kent,

Stewart,  
Yeatman,  
Bell Cotton Factory

**Types:**

essay



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co 4A23 Bell Factory (3)  
HISTORY

(11)  
for \$10,000.00 in cash,  
Abner Eason, decided the members of the co-  
partnership "a certain tract... of land... on  
both sides of Flint River and known as part of  
the Bell Factory Tract... and containing, agreeably  
to a survey and plot made by Richard Anderson,"  
10.75 acres. The copartnership paid another \$2,630.00  
to Eason for the eighty-acre tract lying on both  
sides of the river, "running with the lines of the  
Tract, reserved by Richard Haughton and...  
Abner Eason in Common for a Mill seat."

The Harding estate proved to be solvent,  
and, when settled, The widow and her two  
children had for themselves \$5,374.60, a not  
insignificant sum for that period.

The operating company for the copartner-  
ship mentioned above was called Richard Forsey  
and Company and assumed control of the Bell  
Cotton Factory and its related activities in March 1829,  
with Richard Forsey as manager. From March  
1829 to March 1834; there occurred a five-year  
transition period from the original copartnership of four  
member firms to operation by a single firm - Patton,  
Donegan, and Company. # Several weeks elapsed  
after Richard Forsey had assumed management

**Names:**

Anderson, Richard  
Eason, Abner

Forsey, Richard  
Haughton, Richard

Patton, Donegan &  
Co.

**Types:**

essay

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - 3  
HISTORY

(12)  
of the enterprise before the newspapers told the public what was happening there. On June 19, 1829, the Democrat announced the combined readiness to do business. The word "Cotton" had been dropped, and the accepted name of the establishment was thenceforth "Bell Factory".  
The store at the <sup>factory</sup> site had been expanded and would offer a wide assortment of wares.  
On January 6, 1831, the copartnerships dissolved, Forsey and Stewart "having disposed of their interest to the three remaining copartners, who formed a new copartnership" to continue business under the name and style of G. KENT & CO, "the "G" being the initial for "Germanicus."  
Governor John Gayle, on December 29, 1832, signed an act incorporating the Bell Factory, naming no specific incorporators. The act merely stated that all those who were at the time of its passage "members of the association called the Bell Factory and proprietors of the capital stock thereof" were thereby "created and declared to be one body politic and corporate by the name, style and title of the Bell Factory of the County of Madison"  
On November 9, 1833, within less than a year's time after the incorporation of Bell Factory,

**Names:**

Forsey, Richard  
Gayle, John,  
Governor

Incorporation of Bell  
Factory  
Kent, G. & Co.

Kent, Germanicus  
Stewart,  
Bell Factory

**Types:**

essay

**Dates:**

Dec 29, 1835

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(13)  
Germanicus Kent and Company dissolved, with Patton, Donegan, and Company taking over all the copartnerships assets and liabilities, <sup>paying their next copartners \$20,000.00. The transaction</sup> ~~the Democrat~~ <sup>was not completed until March, 1834.</sup> November 14, 1833, and Southern Advocate, November 19, 1833, reminded the public that the new owners intended "continuing said business" and promised to keep at their Huntsville store, which had been in operation many years, a regular supply of "YARNS and heavy DOMESTICS of the very best quality."

Patton, Donegan, and Company continually improved their facilities and offered more services, although it appears that they did drop distilling whisky. Alabama was at this period a sheep growing State, especially North Alabama. So, the company got into the wool carding business. The Democrat, September 5, 1837, announced: "They have just finished a new Carding Machine, for making Wool Rolls — The will card on the usual terms and pledge themselves to use their best efforts to please those who may favour them with their custom." On April 13, 1839, the Democrat reminded the public that "the Bell Factory Roll Carding Machines, [were] in perfect order, and ... ready for carding rolls

**Names:**

Kent, Germanicus

Patton, Donegan, &  
Co.

Roll Carding machine

**Types:**

essay



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(14)  
in the very best manner, and on the usual terms—  
10 cents per pound for White Rolls and 12½ cents  
for miled ones; or one-fifth of the Wool taken  
for toll. In all cases, toll will be taken  
unless information to the contrary is given  
when the wool is delivered; from all good clean  
washed wool, free from burrs, Rolls carded in a  
perfect manner will always be produced.  
Wool Rolls kept on hand for sale at the Factory;  
also, at the Warehouse in Huntsville.”

Patton, Donegan, and Company continued to  
use slave labor in the factory, hiring them from  
their owners and buying them, preparing boys,  
By 1840, the firm had accumulated fifty-five slaves, kept by the miller,  
and girls ten to twelve years of age. White labor  
was employed in a supervisory capacity. William  
B. Taber, a Connecticut Yankee, who was acquainted  
with textile manufacturing, was at the apex of  
the Bell Factory's labor hierarchy. His advent as  
plant superintendent “as far back as the year 1835”  
assured the factory's successful operation, for he  
“managed the affairs of the concern very creditably  
and with great profit to the owners,” one of whom  
he became sometime prior to 1840. At this time  
of reorganization, the original three members of the firm  
became five: Andrew Beirne, a Virginian and father-in-law of Charles H.  
Patton (another member), James J. Donegan, William Patton, and William B. Taber.

**Names:**

Beirne, Andrew  
Donegan, James J.  
Kennedy, Charles

Kennedy, Dorothy  
Patton, Charles H.

Patton, Donegan, &  
Co.  
Patton, William

Taber, William B.

**Types:**

essay

Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory (3)  
HISTORY

(15)

Each member of the reorganized firm held a fifth of the stock, which was worth between \$75,000.00 and \$85,000.00.

On June 30, 1841, the factory burned. The Southern Advocate made no mention of the disaster, and the Democrat gave only a brief account. Neither paper announced any plans for or progress of rebuilding. <sup>July 3, 1841,</sup> The Democrat story follows:

The Bell Factory, in this county, owned by Messrs. Patton, Donegan & Co, was consumed by fire on Wednesday night last, together with about one hundred bales of Cotton. The loss we have heard estimated at between thirty and forty thousand dollars. - about \$20,000 of which was insured in Nashville. - The fire was discovered at a late hour of the night, which induces the belief that it was communicated by an incendiary.

The factory was rebuilt of stone blasted from a limestone bluff a short distance above Three Forks of Flint and hand-made brick burned a short distance north of the factory site. On July 13, 1842, the company was receiving two shipments of machinery, and, not very long thereafter, Bell Factory was back in business.

**Names:**

Patton, Donegan, &  
Co.

**Types:**

essay

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(16)

After the fire, Patton, Donegan, and Company experienced great difficulty in getting fire insurance for the factory. The Tennessee Marine and Fire Insurance Company had already paid out \$20,000.00 and refused to issue more than \$10,000.00 at the old rate of three per cent. Their co-insurers would issue none at less than three percent. Cotton factories were especially susceptible to fires. We gain some knowledge of the prewar Bell Factory from the correspondence between Charles H. Patton and Haddock, Haseltine, and Company, of Philadelphia, in a letter of December 11, 1847, seeking their assistance in finding an insurer:

... We have since our last policy was effected added about \$12,000 more in Machinery to our former supply and wish to increase our insurance. We have about 2000 cotton spindles with all the necessary preparation and about 48 or 50 looms. Our operatives are blacks and all belong to the proprietors except one. We keep two watchmen constantly employed, who relieve each other at 12 o'clock at night. Our Factory is a substantial three story brick house One hundred feet long & fifty two feet wide, with a Wing Two stories high and about 70 feet long & Twenty wide, which Contains our Supplies, Cotton & Woolen Machinery on lower floor & above it for warping

**Names:**

Haddock, Haseltine,  
& Co.

Patton, Charles H.

Patton, Donegan, &  
Co.

Tennessee Marine &  
Fire Insurance Co.

**Types:**

essay

**Dates:**

Dec 11, 1843



Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(17)

& Beaming & putting up our cloth. All is drawn by Water power. Our Machinist-Weaver, who Superintends, & Watchmen are White men, And the Superintendent of all is one of the owners of the establishment And is an eastern man and conducts the establishment in an eastern manner.

... I forgot to mention the whole of our concern is surrounded by a brick wall ten feet high and no one is admitted after work hours except the Watchman or one of the Owners.

The new plant was valued at \$60,000.00, and the firm was willing to "take the risk of the other half" themselves.

Whether the firm ever succeeded in getting their factory insured for the full \$30,000.00 sought is unknown. Ironically, however, insurance was never needed, since no further fires ever struck the factory. Goods shipped by river boat during the 1850's were insured.

From the very beginning of the Horiatio Jones Cotton Factory, barter had played a very important part in disposing of the factory's output. Patton, Donegan, and Company were past masters at the art of barter. For instance, the Bell Factory store at Huntsville

**Names:**

Bell Factory Store

Patton, Donegan, &  
Co.

Horiatio Jones Cotton  
Factory

**Types:**

essay

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory (3)  
HISTORY

(18)

would receive an order for perhaps 5,000 pounds of bacon from a Mississippi plantation owner. C. P. Cabaniss, who managed the Huntsville store, knew exactly what Tennessee agents <sup>agents</sup> could obtain the bacon at the shortest notice and <sup>the</sup> lowest prices. Spun yarn or cloth were swapped for bacon, and the plantation owner got his bacon. Naturally, Patton, Donegan, and Company profited at both ends of this transaction. No barter deal was too large or too small. Among the items bartered for were lard, bacon, hams, shoulders, wool, hamp, feathers, wheat, beeswax, leather, home-knit socks - wool and cotton, and country-woven linsey.

So efficiently were the factory and its sales operations managed that the terrible slump of the late 1840's, when the best cotton dropped as low as four cents per pound, failed to dent Patton, Donegan, and Company.

Bell Factory's cloth entered markets spread widely and distantly from home base. The following item appeared in the New Orleans Times-Picayune, September 18, 1849:

The first samples of Southern manufacture ever sent, it was believed, to the New Orleans market, consisting of cottonades,

**Names:**

Cabaniss, Charles P.

Patton, Donegan, &  
Co.

New Orleans Times  
Picayune

**Types:**

essay

**Dates:**

Apr 18, 1849

Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(19)

ginghams, osaburghs, drillings, sail duck, bed tick, striped shirting, etc., from the 'Bell Factory,' Huntsville, Ala., were available to dry goods merchants at Messrs. Fearn, Donegan & Co.

The newspaper was correct as to the kinds of goods and the name of the firm receiving them but missed the mark completely as to the time Bell Factory broke into the New Orleans market. Actually, the factory's cloth was being sold there in 1841 or 1842. It is interesting to note that the Fearn of the brokerage firm was Huntsville's Dr. Thomas Fearn, and the Donegan was James J. Donegan one of the firm Patton, Donegan, and Company.

At the earlier date, goods were sold in New Orleans through Fearn, Crenshaw and Company, the predecessor of Fearn, Donegan and Company. Crenshaw was a son of Patton.

The Bell Factory management emphasized quality. According to the Alabama Manual and Statistical Register for 1869, "specimens of the Bell Factory goods were forwarded to the Paris Exposition [1867], and, in the report of the Committee, honorable mention is made of them." In exhibits in the Southern United States, Bell Factory goods won several awards. Letters to customers and prospective customers spoke of quality, though

**Names:**

Donegan, James J.  
Fearn, Crenshaw &  
Co.

Fearn, Donegan &  
Co.  
Fearn, Thomas, Dr.

Paris Exhibition of  
1867

Patton, Donegan, &  
Co.

**Types:**

essay



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - 11 (3)  
HISTORY

(20)  
The goods were also competitive. In addition to spun cotton, cotton and wool bats, the factory produced osalburgs (a rather coarse cotton cloth, used largely for clothing Negroes); cotton checks, stripes, and plaids; sheeting; striped cottonade; <sup>bed</sup> tickings; bagging (heavy cloth used for cotton pick sacks and other rough uses); cotton drills; fine and coarser "domestic" (used largely for shirts); <sup>sheetings</sup> striped osalburgs; and woolen plain and twilled linsey, linsey kersey, and jeans.

Wide distribution of Bell Factory goods was mentioned above. Agents <sup>in Alabama</sup> operated in Jackson County, Athens, <sup>Decatur</sup> <sup>Moreville</sup>, Courtland, <sup>Buzzard's Rent</sup> Florence, <sup>Prainsborough</sup> Tusculum, <sup>and</sup> Mobile. In Tennessee, Bell Factory goods had agents in Eagle Furnace, Pulaski, Fayetteville, Memphis, and Nashville. One bill of goods went to the Tennessee State Penitentiary at Nashville to clothe the convicts. Abingdon, Virginia marked the northern limit of Bell Factory goods, as New Orleans marked the southern limit. The Bell Factory was represented at Aberdeen, Yazoo City, Vicksburg, and Jackson, Mississippi. And, during the latter part of the 1840's, Bell Factory cloth cracked the St. Louis market on a somewhat unusual occasion: Missouri had a bumper wheat crop and had neither sacks for the grain nor material to make them. Bell Factory osalburgs came to the rescue.

**Names:**

Tennessee State  
Penitentiary

**Types:**

essay

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory (3)  
HISTORY

(21)

The 1850 census listed only the Patton, Donegan, and Company cotton factory, omitting any mention of <sup>or machinery and the value of the</sup> woolen goods. <sup>capital</sup> was \$116,000.00, which must not have included the value of the slaves. The factory used 270,000 pounds of cotton, valued at \$21,600.00, and "other articles" worth \$4,650.00. <sup>For the last 12 preceding months, the</sup> Average number of males employed was 58 and of females, 30. <sup>average monthly</sup> Cost of male labor was \$696.00 and of female labor, \$360. "Various" kinds of cloth, <sup>were</sup> valued at \$37,400.00 for the 312,000 yards produced. Except for a mere handful, all labor was slave <sup>as mentioned above in a description of the factory.</sup> Superintendent and part owner William B. Taber, as mentioned above, was from Connecticut, Dyers William Berry and James Clark were English-born, as were Weaver William Robinson and Machinist Samuel Greenhalgh. Clerks John J. Angell and Hugh Stephens were born in New Hampshire and Ireland, respectively. Alabama furnished the watchman.

Hunt's Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review [XXXVIII (January-June, 1858), New York, p. 507], in a discussion of Southern cotton factories, mentioned the Bell Factory: "... There are a number of establishments in North Alabama and Western Tennessee that have been eminently successful, among them the Bell Factory near Huntsville, which has for many years been paying large profits from the manufacture of various kinds of plaids, checks, tickings, &c., which command in the markets where they sell a higher price than those from any other factory. All their operatives are negroes owned by the company. Their establishment is now worth some \$400,000." This <sup>figure, ~~is~~ including the investment in slaves.</sup>

**Names:**

Angell, John J.  
Berry, William  
Clark, James

Greenhalgh, Samuel  
Patton, Donegan, &  
Co.

Robinson, William  
Stephens, Hugh  
Taber, William B.

Commercial Review  
Hunt's Merchants'  
Magazine

**Types:**

essay

**Dates:**

Jun 1858

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - 11 (3)  
HISTORY

(27)

The 1860 census listed the capital investment of the Bell Factory Company at \$180,000.00, using 600 bales of cotton, <sup>worth \$25,000.00</sup> and 40,000 pounds of wool, <sup>worth \$12,000.00</sup> during the previous twelve months, operating 2,200 spindles, and 49 looms, and employing 93 slave operatives, <sup>55 male and 38 female,</sup> who were included in the capital invested. <sup>Five stuffs and small looms, valued at \$1,600.00, were used.</sup> The factory produced 483,600 yards of cotton fabrics, <sup>valued at \$58,032.00,</sup> and 52,200 yards of woolen fabrics, <sup>valued at \$19,314.00.</sup>

Headed by <sup>Superintendent</sup> William B. Taber, the white labor force included "Carder & Spinner" P. S. Dow, of Maine; <sup>Clark</sup> H. S. Scruggs, of Alabama; Machinist Thomas Cunningham, of Connecticut; Dyer James Hamilton, of Scotland; Machinist William Eyles, of England; Weaver Alfred Leach, of England; and Watchman Robert Nelson, of Tennessee. It is to be noted that neither the census of 1850 nor that of 1860 listed a single <sup>Southern-born</sup> skilled workman.

A special correspondent of the New York Herald did a series of four stories on Alabama in February 1860. He visited the Bell Factory and proceeded to write a very sympathetic story about what he saw there, that is, sympathetic South-wise. The story appeared in the New York Herald, Thursday, March 8, 1860, and follows verbatim:

**Names:**

Cunningham, Thomas  
Dow, P. S.  
Eyles, Willam

Glenn, Robert  
Hamilton, James  
Leach, Alfred

Scruggs, G. S.  
Taber, William B.  
New York Herald

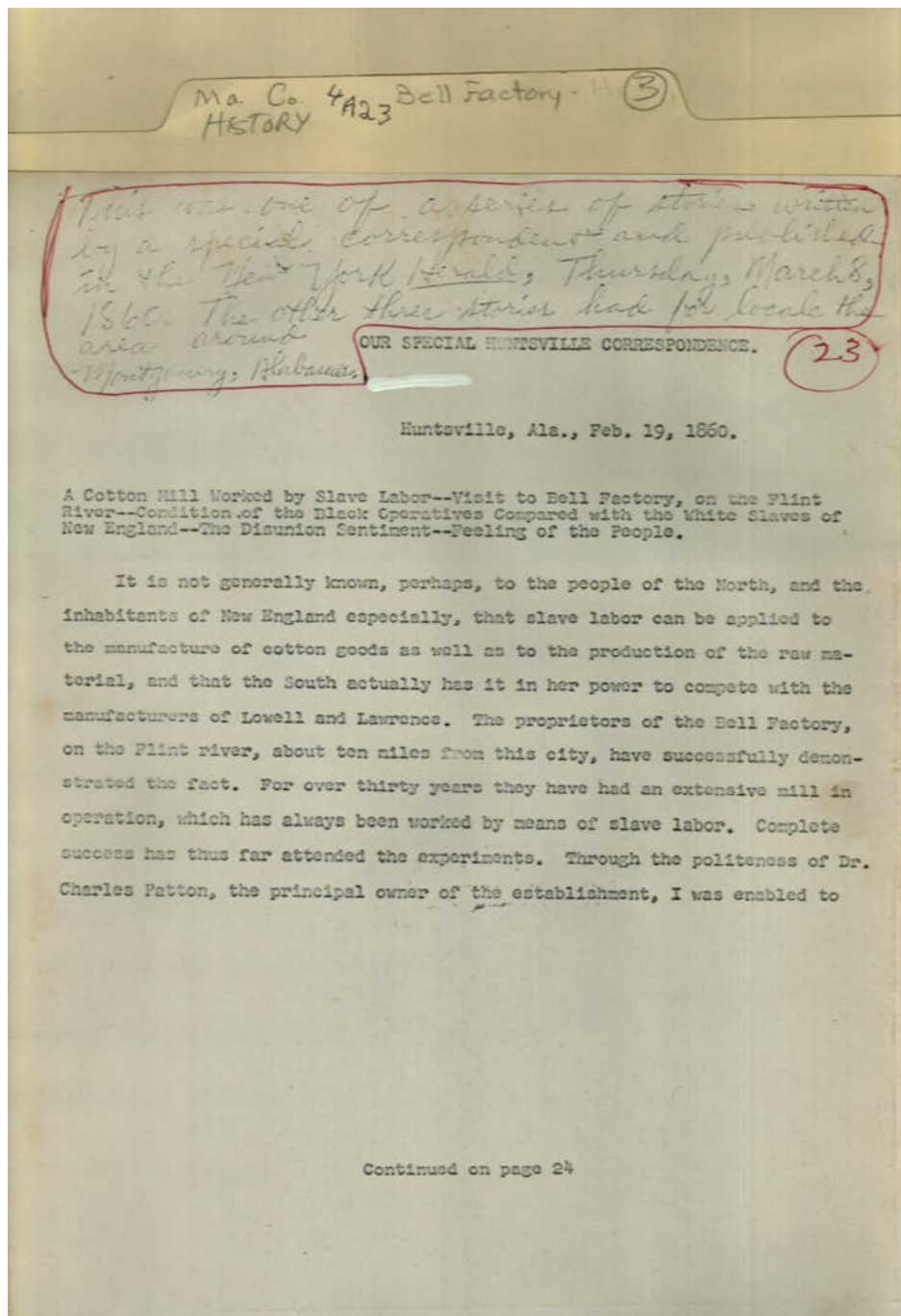
**Types:**

essay

**Dates:**

Feb 1860





**Names:**

Bell Factory  
Cotton Mill

Patton, Charles, Dr.  
Slave Labor

Special Huntsville  
Correspondence

New York Herald

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

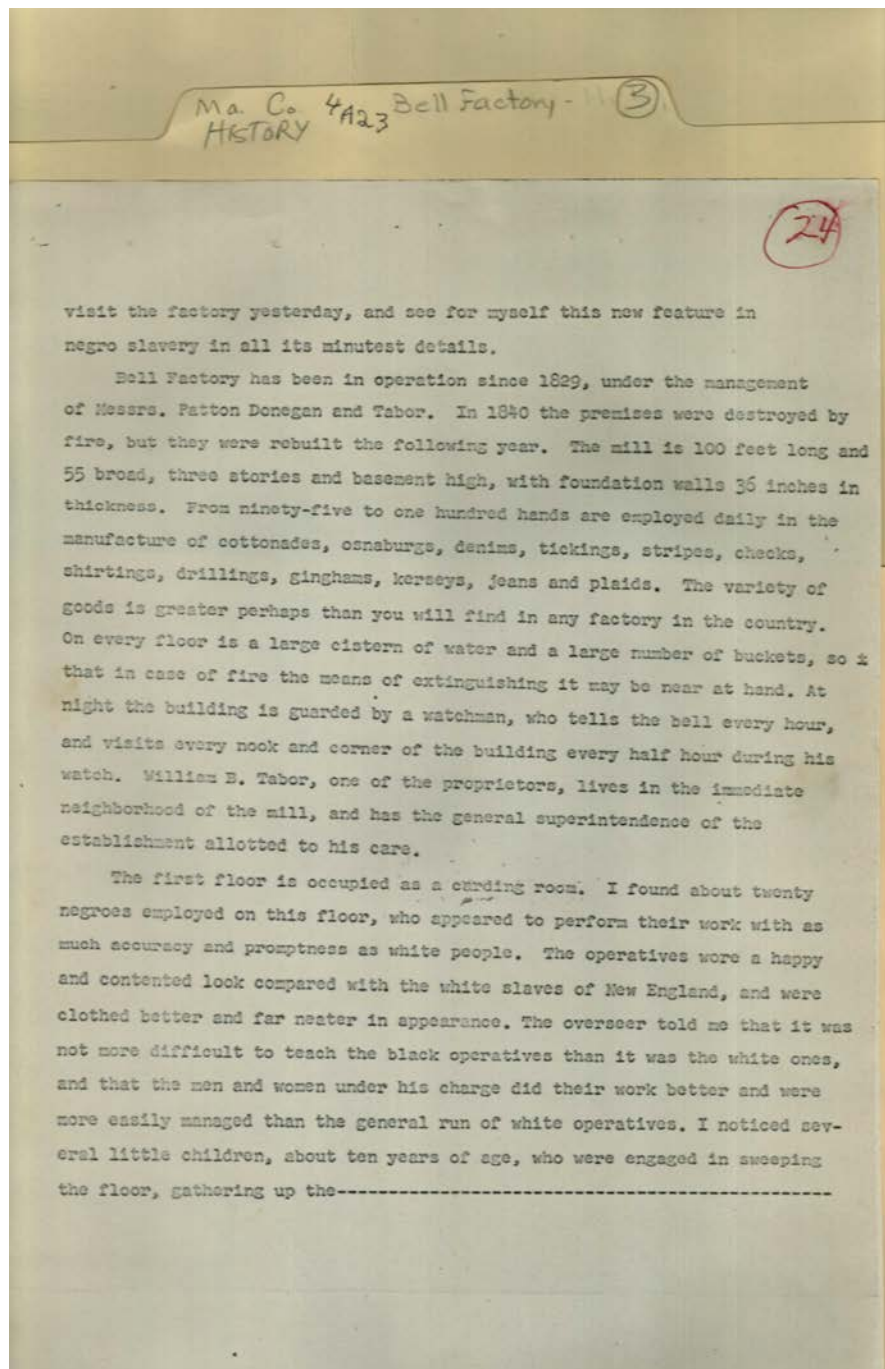
article

essay

**Dates:**

Feb 19, 1860

Mar 08, 1860



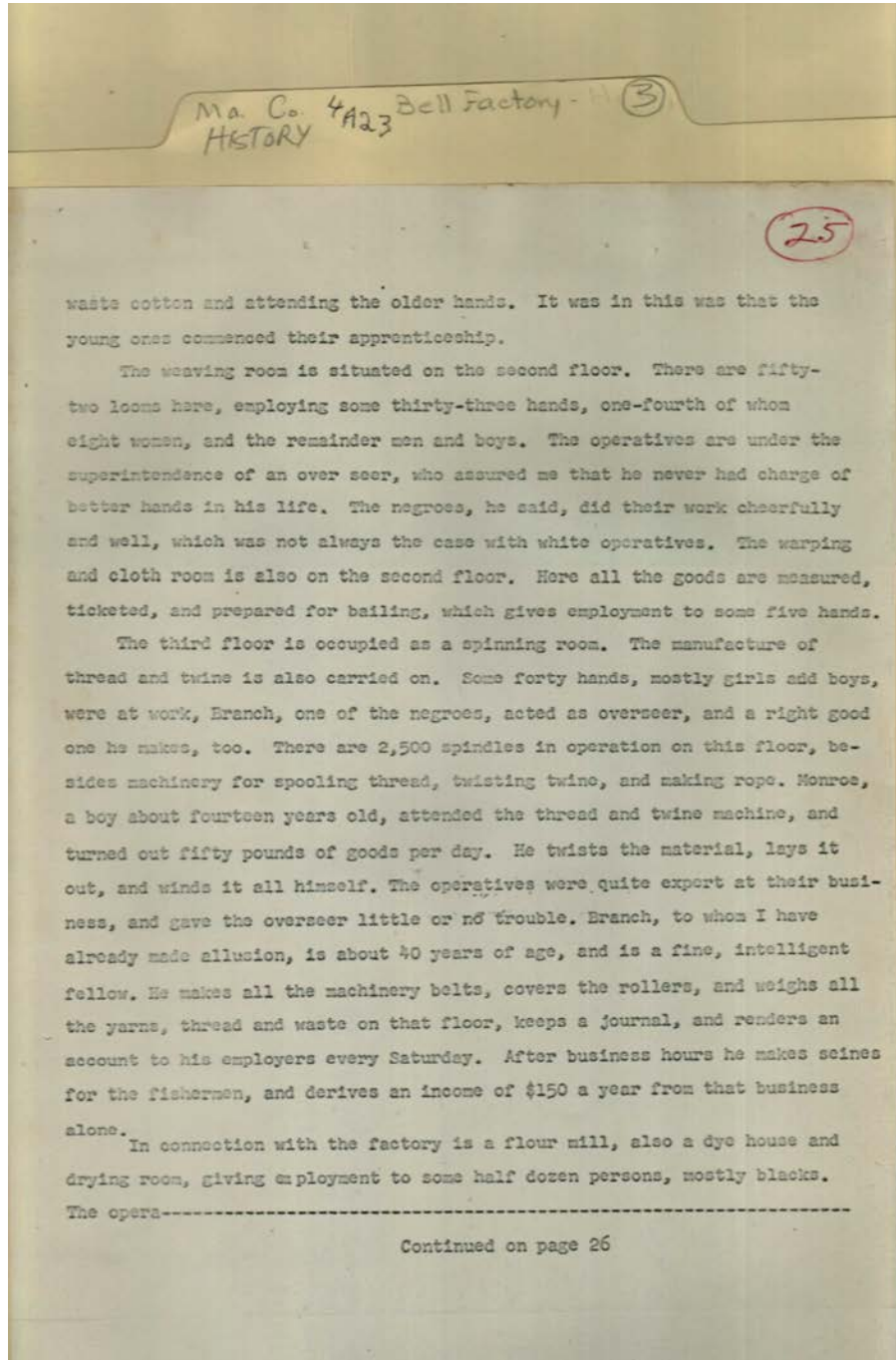
**Names:**

Patton, Donegan &  
Tabor

Tabor, William B.

**Types:**

article



**Names:**

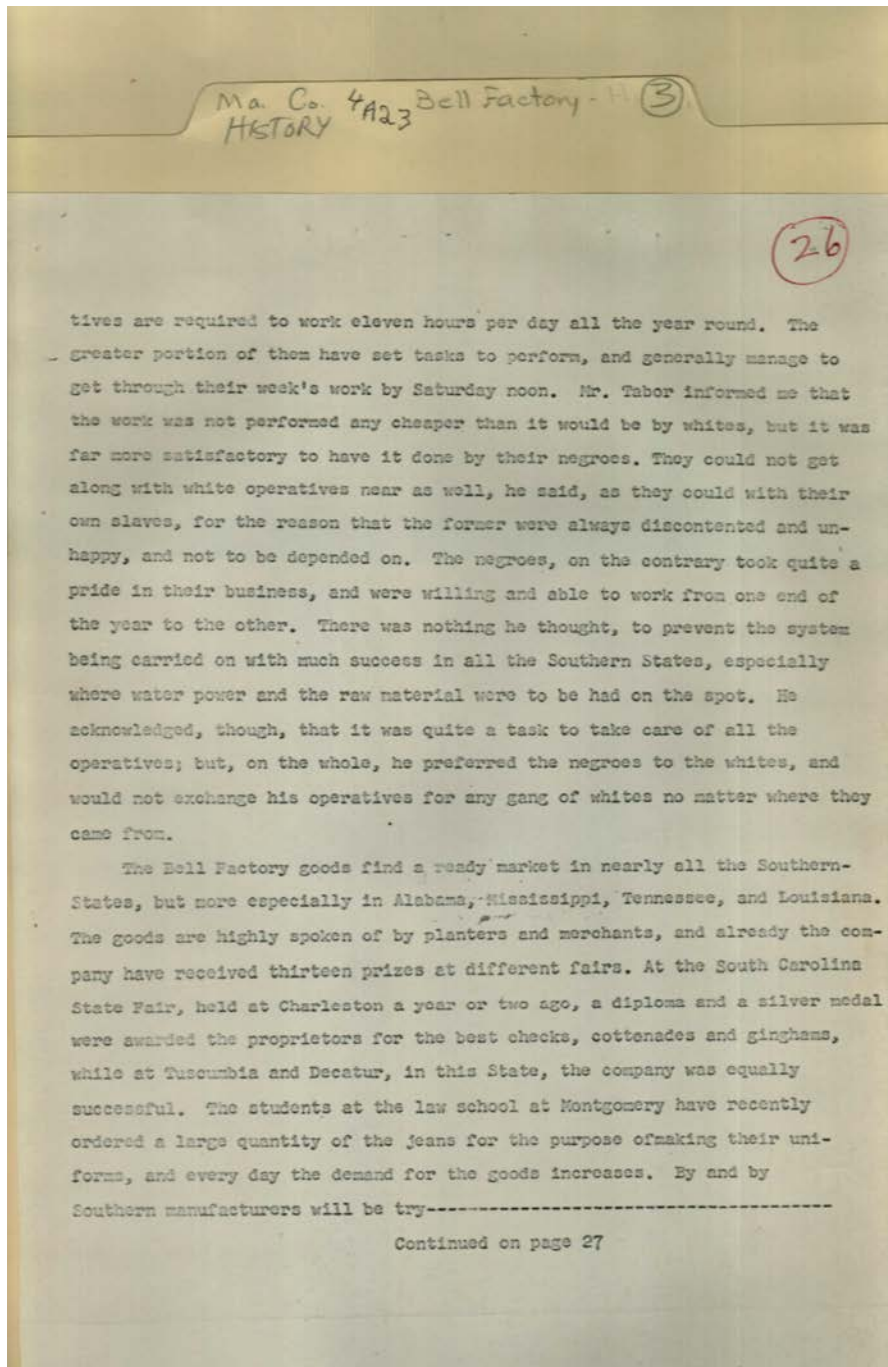
, Branch (slave)

, Monroe (slave)

**Types:**

article



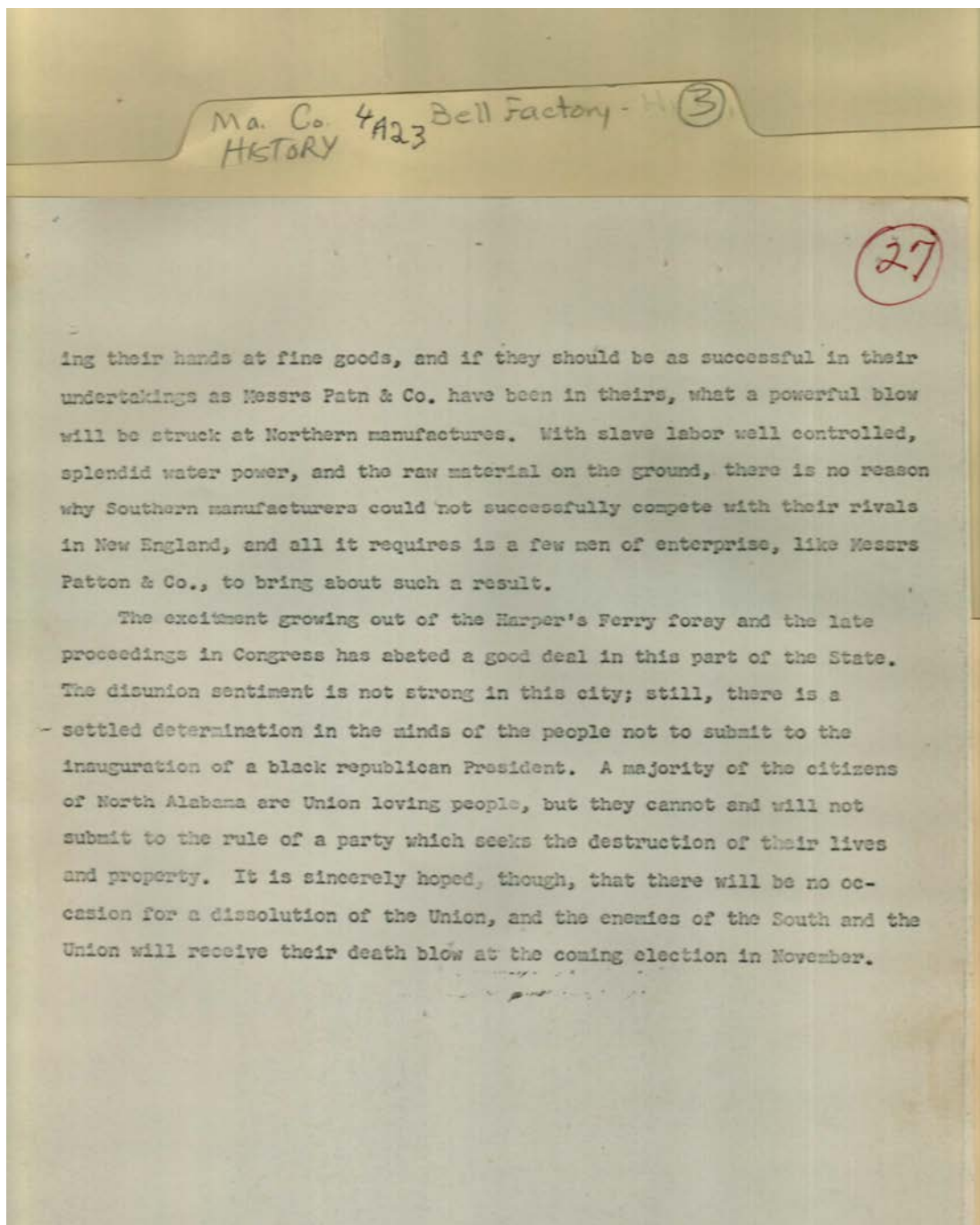


**Names:**

Tabor, William B.

**Types:**

article



**Names:**

Disunion Sentiment

Patton & Co.

**Types:**

article

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(28)

But a Black Republican did become President, and the South girded up its loins for the struggle that very many believed would not materialize. It did materialize.

James J. Donegan was an ardent Confederate sympathizer. Dr. Charles H. Patton was much less ardent, although he did join a group of middle-aged men for drill. William B. Taber kept quiet and did not drill. Donegan and Patton sent male slaves to work on the fortifications at Fort Henry on the Tennessee River. <sup>Taber, as an individual, owned no slaves.</sup> Donegan served as Salt Commissioner and in various other capacities. Late in the war, when Huntsville was continuously occupied by Union troops, Donegan succeeded in making himself completely persona non grata with the invaders.

It will be remembered that about 1841 or 1842, the old firm of Patton, Donegan, and Company was reorganized, with five equal partners, each holding twenty percent of the Bell Factory Stock; Andrew Beirne, William

**Names:**

Beirne, Andrew  
Donegan, James J.

Patton, Charles H.,  
Dr.

Taber, William B.

**Types:**

essay



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory (3)  
HISTORY

(29)  
Patton, James J. Donegan (the three original members of Patton, Donegan, and Company), Dr. Charles H. Patton (son of William Patton), and William B. Taber.

In 1945, Andrew Beime died, and, in 1946, William Patton followed. Dr. Patton had married Andrew Beime's daughter, Susan, and she received Beime's Bell Factory stock as a portion of her share. Dr. Patton received his father's Bell Factory stock in the settlement of his estate. Charles H. Patton, then, controlled three-fifths of the Bell Factory stock. That was the situation at the outbreak of the Civil War.

Whether Dr. Patton was a heart a unionist or whether he thought the South would lose the war is unknown. At any rate, Patton, Donegan, and Company refused to make cloth to clothe Confederate troops. Dr. Patton's son "Willie" was a rebel himself. When he left home to enlist but never achieved the honor of wearing a Confederate uniform. Before reaching the ranks of industrial indistinctness, he was stricken by and died very soon thereafter.

On August 19, 1861, Alabama Governor A. B. Moore telegraphed Robert M. Patton, Dr. Patton's brother, at Florence:

Can I make a contract with the factories of North Ala. for from Fifty to Seventy five Thousand [yards] or less quantity of cloth suitable for Soldiers winter clothes — Can I contract for from five to ten thousand pair Soldiers shoes —

**Names:**

Confederate uniforms  
Donegan, James J.  
Moore, A. B.  
(Alabama

Governor)  
Patton, Charles H.,  
Dr.

Patton, Donegan, &  
Co.  
Patton, Robert M.  
Patton, William

Patton, Willie  
Taber, William B.

**Types:**

essay

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4 #23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(30)

Examine particularly and telegraph me prices and how much cloths can be delivered pr week, number of shoes pr week. Send pattern of cloth and write me by mail also. Have written to companies in North Ala but can get no answer,

But Patton, Donegan & Co. had already <sup>been</sup> answered on August 10. — briefly and curtly: "Letter Answered. Cannot furnish soldiers clothes."

The Bell Factory furnished "The Cause" goods to the amount of \$10.01, as indicated below:

State of Alabama	Huntsville, Alabama
1862	Bot of Patton, Donegan & Co.
Jan'y 1st	39 1/4 yds Drill 1/6
	2 Balls Thread
	9.81
	20
	<u>\$10.01</u>

Recd of A. B. Moore the above A/c in full  
Patton, Donegan & Co.  
Jan. 6/62 By C. P. Cabaniss

The Union troops destroyed cotton factories downriver from Huntsville, making a clean sweep of them, but both the Bell Factory and the Bell Factory Mills survived intact. The Federals did break down the dam, however, and pour out 12,000 bushels of wheat stored at the mills by people of the area. And the vandals carried

**Names:**

Cabaniss, Charles P.  
Moore, A. B.  
(Alabama)

Governor)  
Patton, Donegan, &  
Co.

State of Alabama

**Places:**

Huntsville, AL

**Types:**

essay

invoice

**Dates:**

Jan 06, 1862

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - 3  
HISTORY

(31)

away the grain bags.

The long interlude of war ended at last, and the Huntsville Advocate, April 4, 1866, let the world know that the Bell Factory was back in business:

Bell Factory  
The proprietors of the above Establishment have resumed business, and are now offering for sale, at their old stand, on Commercial Row, 400, 500, 600, 700, and 800 Spun Cotton [and] 4-4 Domestic Shirting.

Mar 31 Patton, Donegan & Co.

Later, in May 1866, the Advocate quoted the factory's cotton yarn at 40 to 45 cents a pound.

Dr. Charles H. Patton survived the war about fourteen months. He went to Blount Springs for his health, <sup>it was of no avail;</sup> but the Huntsville Daily Independent, Thursday, June 14, 1866, <sup>announced</sup> his death. Dr. Frederick A. Ross, Presbyterian pastor, preached the funeral.

As had Andrew Beirne and William Patton before him, Dr. Patton died intestate. His brother-in-law, George P. Beirne, was appointed administrator, and the heirs signed an agreement to permit a commission to divide the estate. There were to be no court fights to devour the estate, though negotiation was necessary to settle with the widow, Dr. Patton's second wife, Martha L. The other heirs were Mary B.

**Names:**

Beirne, Andrew  
Beirne, George P.  
Patton, Charles H.,  
Dr.

Patton, Donegan, &  
Co.  
Patton, Martha L.  
Patton, William

Ross, Frederick A.,  
Dr.  
Huntsville Advocate

**Types:**

essay

**Dates:**

Apr 04, 1866



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory (3)  
HISTORY

(32)  
Echols, wife of William H. Echols, late major of engineers in the Confederate Army; Mattie Lee Patton, soon to become wife of James R. Stevens; and Oliver Beirne Patton, who was not yet 21 years old.

In the meantime, something had to be done about the Bell Factory Corporation, which was limited <sup>to a life of thirty years</sup> by the act of incorporation in 1852. The second act of incorporation, "An Act to Incorporate the 'Bell Factory Manufacturing Company'" was approved January 23, 1867. It was November 18, 1868, however, before the corporate organization took place to enact by-laws and elect officers. Capital stock was set at \$200,000.00 - 2,000 shares at \$100.00 par.

In the first quarter of 1870, William B. Taber gave "notice of his intention to quit" his position as factory superintendent. He sold 200 of his 400 shares of stock to W. H. Echols and the remaining 200 to Eliza Patton Watkins, husband of J. L. Watkins and sister of the deceased Dr. Patton. Taber took his capital to Nashville and joined with others in building a cotton factory, the Tennessee Manufacturing Company, which became a very successful establishment. William H. Echols succeeded Taber as factory superintendent.

**Names:**

Bell Factory Corporation  
Echols, Mary B.  
Echols, W. H.

Echols, William H.  
Patton, Charles H., Dr.  
Patton, Mattie Lee

Patton, Oliver Beirne  
Stevens, James R.  
Taber, William B.

Tennessee Manufacturing Co.  
Watkins, Eliza Patton  
Watkins, J. L.

**Types:**

essay

Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(33)

For some few years in the 1870's, the factory <sup>from time to time</sup> was all panded. More building was done and <sup>eventually</sup> the machinery is said to have reached about 3,000 spindles and 100 looms, with the factory employing 100 operatives. These figures are in accord with improved machinery installed. There seems, however, to have been some dissension among the stockholders, with some rather strong sentiment to liquidate the business. <sup>And</sup> J. J. Donegan, in some obscure, mysterious manner was finally maneuvered out of the organization. There was, in the stockholders' meetings, talk of his indebtedness to the firm; for what never appeared in the minutes of those meetings.

The census of 1870 listed the Bell Factory Corporation as "cotton & wool manufacturers," with <sup>the</sup> cotton <sup>manufacturing</sup> facilities valued at \$150,000.00 and the wool at \$50,000.00, for a total of \$200,000.00. Operated by waterpower, the cotton manufacturing machinery required 130 horsepower and the wool machinery 20 horsepower, with 2 wheels furnishing the motive force. Devoted to cotton were 18 cards, 100 looms, and 1,675 spindles and to wool 2 "loppers," 2 "N. looms," 1 wool card, and 50 "Spindles, cap[acity] 25 lbs." Male employees numbered 36; female, 80; and "children and youths," 10, drawing during the preceding year wages totaling \$24,500.00. The factory

**Names:**

Donegan, James J.

**Types:**

essay

Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

used 250,000 pounds of cotton, valued at \$52,500.00<sup>(34)</sup>, fuel, valued at \$500.00; mill supplies, valued at \$1,500.00; and miscellaneous supplies, valued at \$500.00. Checks, muscadings, and shirtings, totaling 90,000 yards and valued at \$18,000.00, were produced and 40,000 yards of sheetings, valued at \$61,500.00.

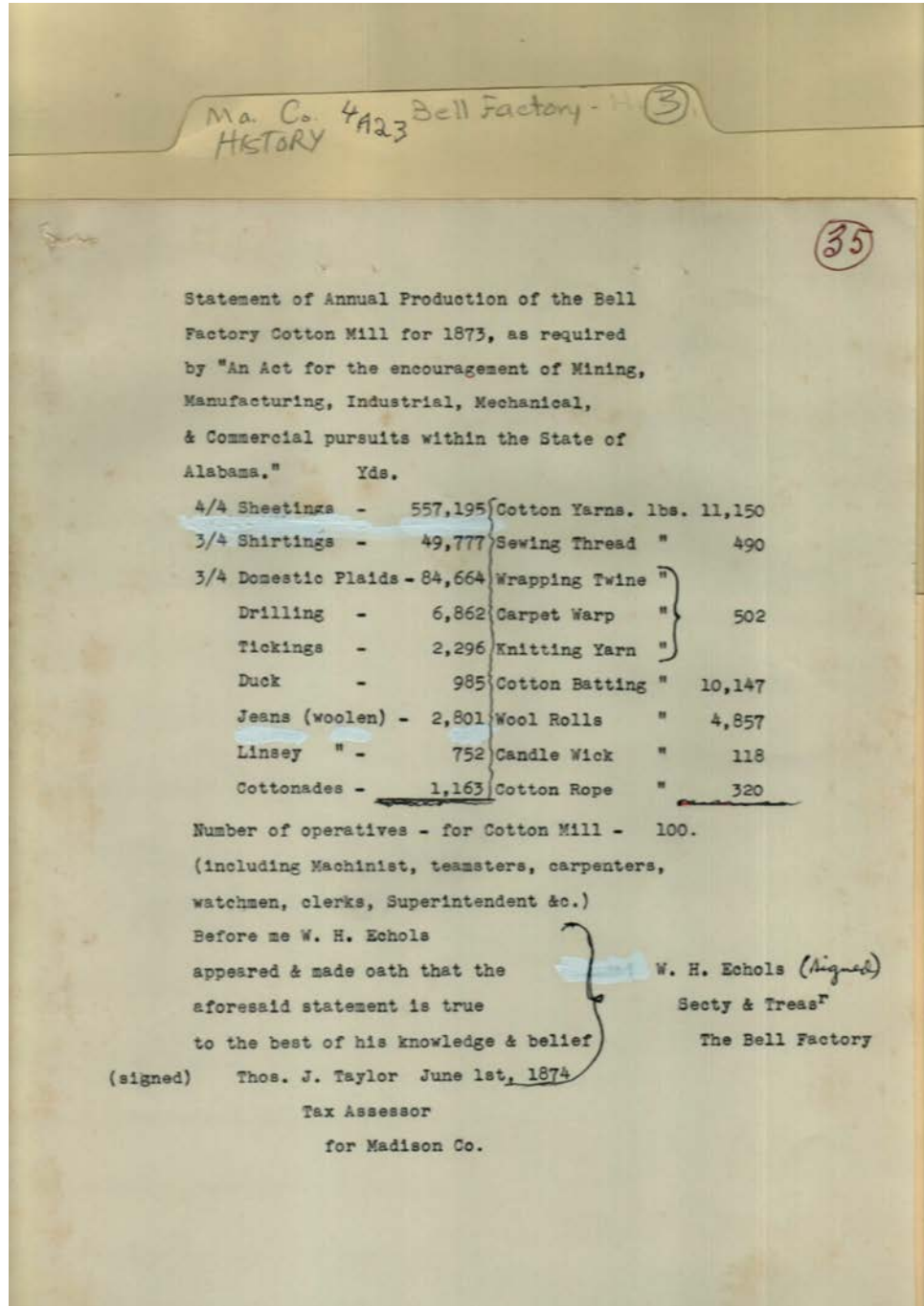
Below is a statement of annual production of the Bell Factory for 1873, as required by law. Whether another was ever rendered is not known by the compiler; he never discovered it, at least. It will be noted that this statement is far more complete than the 1870 census and reflects increased production after the installation of more and improved machinery.

Types:  
essay



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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**Names:**

Echols, W. H.

Statement of  
Production 1873

Taylor, Thomas J.,  
(Tax Assessor)

**Places:**

Madison County, AL

**Types:**

essay

Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory (3)  
HISTORY

(36)

The 1870 census lists few Negro employees remaining at the Bell Factory. William Hall and Mack Patton were "wood cutters." Dock Glasgow was a "porter." Samuel Glasgow and Walker Bivins were "dyers." Lane James was a "factory operative." What had happened to Branch, who back in 1860 received such a glowing write-up in the New York Herald, remains unknown according to the 1880 census.

Between 1870 and 1880, the Bell Factory motive power was converted from water wheels to water turbines and a 40-horsepower steam engine added to provide auxiliary power. Capital investment was listed as \$150,000.00. The greatest number of hands employed during the preceding year was a hundred, including 21 males above sixteen, 65 females above fifteen, and 15 children and youths. The factory ran 11 months full time, with the "no. hours in ordinary day of labor... 11 1/2." "Ordinary labor" received 50 cents per day, with total wages for the year amounting to \$14,000.00. "Value of material" used was \$25,000.00, and the "value of product" was \$45,000.00.

At a Stockholders' meeting held on Monday,

**Names:**

Bivins, Walker  
Branch,

Glasgow, Dock  
Glasgow, Samuel

Hall, William  
James, Lane

Patton, Mack

**Types:**

essay

Ma Co 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(37)

January 28, 1884, "the Statements & balance sheets were laid before the meeting. Major [late C.S.A.] J.R. Stevens [son-in-law of the late Dr. Charles H. Patton,] moved that the operations of The Bell Factory as a manuf'g concern be stopped on the 1st Nov 1884. The motion was unanimously carried." The Huntsville store was to be retained. A price was to "be fixed at \$60,000 to \$70,000 above the commissions, expenses &c of selling the same for the Real Estate, Machinery & buildings of The Bell Factory. Chairman James L. Watkins, Sr., son-in-law of William Patton, appointed Oliver Beirne Patton, J.R. Stevens, and W. H. Echols as a committee to negotiate a sale.

The factory closed as scheduled, and time passed without any buyer appearing. There was talk, based upon more than rumor, that, with proper encouragement, the N.C. and St. L. company would extend its line from Clora, Tennessee, to Huntsville. On January 19, 1887, the Bell Factory stockholders met and agreed to "subscribe as a bonus \$5000 to the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway, upon condition that the said Railway Co. construct a Railway from Clora to Huntsville, to pass

**Names:**

Bell Factory stopped  
Echols, W. H.  
Nashville,  
Chattanooga, St.

Louis RR  
Patton, Charles H.,  
Dr.  
Patton, Oliver Beirne

Patton, William  
Statements and  
Balance Sheets  
Stevens, J. R.

Stevens, J. R., Major  
Watkins, James L., Sr.

**Types:**

essay

**Dates:**

Jan 28, 1884

Nov 01, 1884



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries A, Box 23, Folder 3  
Bell Factory Paper (Found in Frances C. Roberts Files)

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Ma. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(38)

between the 3 forks of Flint River & the Factory & that they establish a permanent station on our lands not more than a half mile from the River...." Moreover, the stockholders agreed to grant a free right-of-way through the company lands for the railroad and the station. And that explains the route of the railroad and the location of Bell Factory Station, now abandoned.

The glory had departed, but the stockholders continued to meet each <sup>solemnly</sup> year and elect company officers.

On October 12, 1898, the Bell Factory directors met and agreed to the first sale of land owned by the corporation, certain small tracts of land aggregating about 200 acres, located in the Hurricane neighborhood, for \$1,800.00. The purchasers were G. W. Jones, founder of G. W. Jones and Sons, Huntsville engineers, and Joseph E. Mc. Caleb.

At a called meeting of the directors on November 16, 1898, President O. B. Patton was authorized "to sign receipts for the rent of their ware houses in Huntsville, Alabama, to the U. S. Govt Quartermaster at \$35.00 per mo during

**Names:**

Jones, G. W.  
McCaleb, Joseph E.

Patton, O. B.

Sale of Bell Factory  
Land

**Types:**

essay

**Dates:**

Oct 12, 1898

Ma Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - (3)  
HISTORY

(34)  
the time U. S. troops were [sic] stationed at  
H'ville in 1898 & 1899."

The last recorded meeting of the  
Bell Factory stockholders was held  
January 15, 1910.

Mr. Charles R. Williams, a native of  
the Bell Factory neighborhood, was in charge  
of the destruction of the factory and its  
machinery, which was broken up and sold  
to a scrap-iron dealer in Nashville. The  
building was torn down and the brick and  
other materials sold. Mr. Williams built a  
two-story house from timbers and brick  
taken from the factory. Even the lime  
stone foundation stones and retaining walls  
were moved away, and nothing remains  
on the site to indicate that a thriving  
industry was once there. The wooden dam  
was broken by flood waters and finally  
swept away. Some of the stones were  
used to rebuild the dam at the former  
Uriah Bass mills location after a flood  
had smashed the old dam. Riverton.

**Names:**

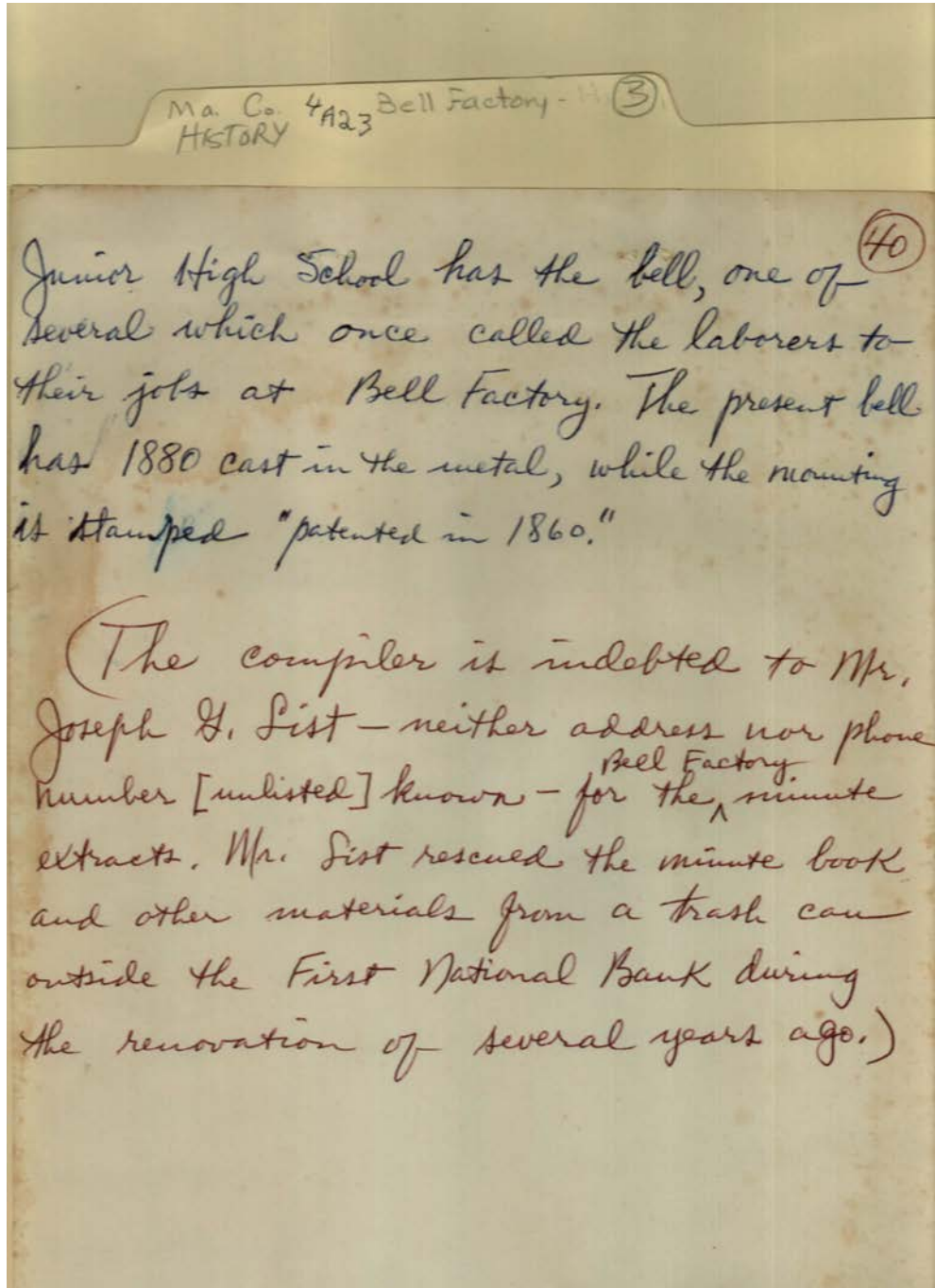
Final Board Meeting

**Types:**

essay

**Dates:**

January 15, 1910



**Names:**

Bass, Uriah  
List, Joseph G.

Riverton Junior High  
School

Williams, Charles R.

**Types:**

essay



Statement of Annual Production of The Bell Factory Cotton Mill for 1873. as required by "An act for the encouragement of Mining Manufacturing. industrial - mechanical & Commercial pursuits within the State of Alabama." Yds.

1/4 Shuttles	- 557.195	Cotton Yarns. <del>11.15</del>	
3/4 Shuttles	- 49.777	Sewing Thread	490
3/4 Domestic Plaids	84.664	Wrapping Twine	502
Drilling	- 6.862	Carpet Warp	
Fittings	- 2.296	Knitting Yarn	
Duck	- 985	Cotton Battings	10.147
Leans (broken)	- 2.801	Hoop Ropes	4.857
Linen	- 752	Candle wick	118
Cotton add	1.163	Cotton Rope	52

Ma. Co. 4423 Bell Factory - H (3)  
 HISTORY

**Names:**  
 Statement of  
 Production 1873

**Types:**  
 photocopy

Linn - 2 752 Cotton Rope 820  
 Cottonade 1163  
 Number of Operatives - for Cotton Mill - 100.  
 (including Machinist - teamsters - Carpenter  
 Watchmen - Clerks - Superintendent &c  
 Before me W H Echols  
 appeared & made oath that the  
 foregoing statement is true  
 to the best of his knowledge & belief  
 Thos J Taylor June 12<sup>th</sup> 1874  
 Tax Assessor  
 for Madison Co

W. H. Echols  
 Secy & Treas  
 The Bell Factory

MA. Co. 4A23 Bell Factory - H (3)  
 HISTORY

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY  
 MONTGOMERY, ALA.

**Names:**

Echols, W. H.

Statement of  
Production 1873

Taylor, Thomas J.,  
(Tax Assessor)

**Types:**

photocopy

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# 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

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



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