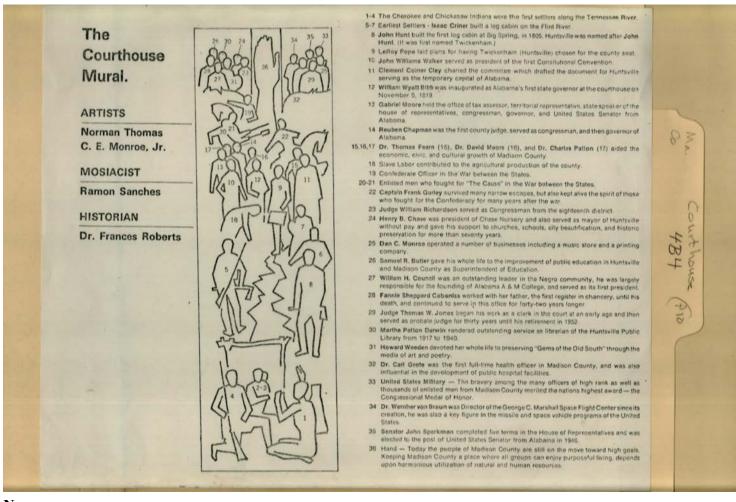
Madison County Courthouse Booklet - Madison County Buildings

Image 1 r04b04-10-000-0001 <u>Contents</u> <u>Index</u> <u>About</u>



#### Names:

Bibb, William Wyatt Butler, Samuel R. Chapman, Reuben Chase, Henry Clay, Clement Comer Courthouse Mural Fearn, Thomas, Dr.

#### Places:

Huntsville, AL

#### Types:

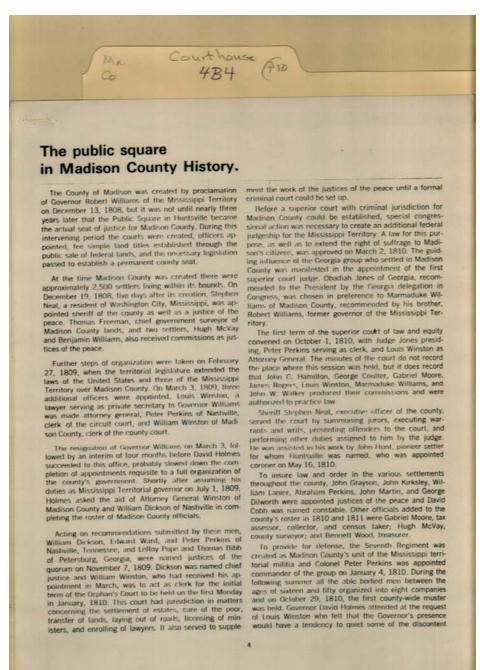
brochure

Grote, Carl, Dr. Gurley, Captain Hunt, John Monroe, C. E., Jr. Monroe, Dan C. Moore, David Moore, Gabriel Patton, Charles
Pope, LeRoy
Richardson, William,
Judge
Roberts, Frances, Dr.
Sanches, Ramon

Sparkman, John, Senator Thomas, Norman Walker, John Williams von Braun, Wernher

Madison County Courthouse Booklet - Madison County Buildings

Image 2 r04b04-10-000-0002 <u>Contents</u> <u>Index</u> <u>About</u>



#### Names:

Bibb, Thomas Cobb, David Coulter, George Dickson, William Dilworth, George Freeman, Thomas Grayson, John Hamilton, John C.

#### Places:

Madison County, AL

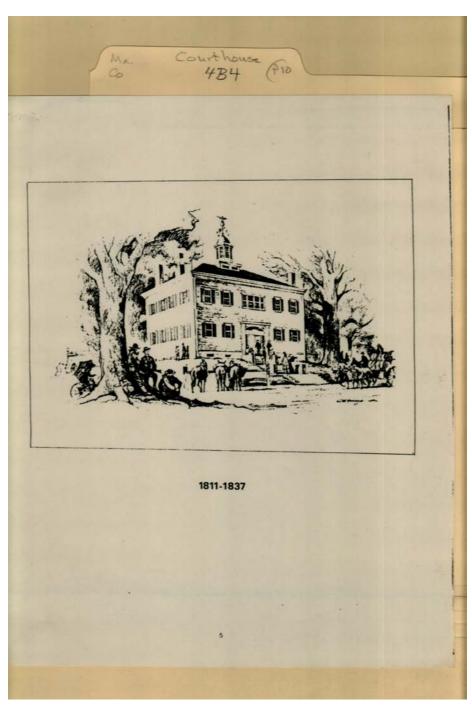
Types:

Holmes, David, Governor Jones, Obadiah Kirksley, John Lanier, William Martin, John McVay, Hugh Moore, Gabriel

Neal, Stephen, Perkins, Abraham Perkins, Peter Pope, LeRoy Rogers, James Walker, John Williams Williams, Benjamin Williams, Marmaduke Williams, Robert, Governor Winston, Louis Winston, William

brochure

r04b04-10-000-0003 Image 3 Contents <u>Index</u> About



#### Names:

Courthouse

#### **Places:**

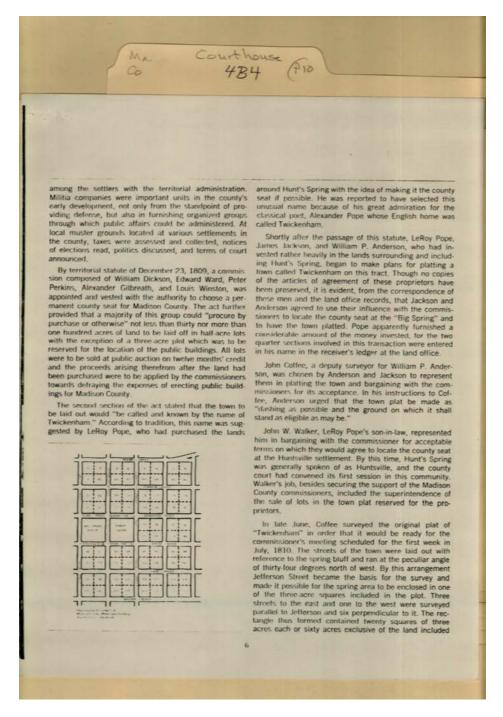
Madison County, AL

### **Types:**

drawing

Madison County Courthouse Booklet - Madison County Buildings

Image 4 r04b04-10-000-0004 <u>Contents</u> <u>Index</u> <u>About</u>



#### Names:

Anderson, William P. Coffee, John Dickson, William Gilbreath, Alexander Jackson, James Originial Plat Perkins, Peter Pope, Alexander Pope, LeRoy Walker, John Williams Ward, Edward Winston, Louis

#### Places:

Madison County, AL

#### **Types:**

brochure

drawing

r04b04-10-000-0005 Contents Index Image 5 **About** 

> Courthouse 484

the streets hat were stuy reet wise, every shock, with the exception of the Public Square and the Big Spring Square, was subdivided into four lots and numbered from left to right beginning with the northwest boundary. Names given to the streets were selected from the heroes of the American Revolution, national political figures, and peritorial officials. Near, the creater of the Dublic Square. territorial officials. Near the center of the Public Square was an elevated rocky knoll, a fitting place indeed for a Temple of Justice." Thus did Coffee fulfill the expecta-tion of his employer as well as the specifications laid down by the territorial legislature.

Persuading the commissioners to agree to accept this well-planned town proved to be much more difficult for Walker and Coffee than putting the finishing touches to a natural setting. Edward Ward, one of the commissioners who had large land holdings in the county, led a forceful fight to prevent the acceptance of Coffee's plan. Not only did Ward use his eloquent oratory in the closed sessons of the commession, but he also spoke publicly to the populace. Finally, on July 5, 1810, a majority of the commissioners voted to make Huntsville, henceforth to be called Twickenham, the county seat

According to the terms of the agreement, the pro-prietors agreed to sell thirty acres in the southern part of town to the commissioners for \$23.50 an acre, the exact amount paid by them for the tract. There was ob-viously a swap-out in the transaction by which the pro-prietors retained the southern part of the square containing the Big Spring and the commissioners received the northern part of the Public Square. The town was guaranteed the use of the spring waters, but no dams or ma-chinery could be erected that might endanger the purity of the water. Special provision was also made whereby the proprietors were to receive lots in the southern part of the town to compensate them for the acreage contained in the streets not included in the thirty acre purchase. At first two loss were received, for the first two lots were reserved for this purpose, but when the final deed was drawn, four lots were transferred because it was found that the streets in the commissioners' part of town contained a little more than three acres.

When the first contract was drawn, only one-fourth of the purchase price of the land had been paid. Consequently, it was not until the final payment was made on February 3, 1815 that a patent was issued to Pope for the southwest quarter of section thirty-six, township

in the streets that were sixty feet wide. Every block, with and his wife were the only grantors who signed the

On the evening of July 5, 1810, both the proprietors and the commissioners opened their lots for sale. Coffee and Walker disposed of only four while the commissioners sold twenty-four. The total sale netted around \$8,000 with lots selling from \$100 to \$750 each. In reporting this transaction to James Jackson and W. P. Anderson, Coffee stated that he and Walker had decided to postpone the sale of the rest of their lots to a future date when they would sell at higher prices and thus insure greater returns from their Huntsville "speculation."

Louis Winston, in a letter to Governor Holmes from Twickenham, September 23, 1810, reported that Colonels Pope and Bibb, and their friends from Georgia had all arrived in the county. In describing the populace, he wrote, "We have a fine society; Virginians are flocking to this delightful country."

Twickenham was never a popular name with the people living in the county seat for they had grown accustomed to the use of Huntsville. This question became a political issue and resulted in a special territorial act on November 25, 1811, which changed the official name of the town to Huntsville. Two weeks later, on December 9, an act of incorporation was passed, thus giving the town a charter and a government.

At the time of its incorporation, Huntsville had all the signs of becoming a thriving commercial center in the heart of a rich agricultural area. The squatter population in 1809 had numbered some three hundred, and to this group had been added a number of merchants, millers, clerks, distillers, mechanics, lawyers, doctors, and plant-ers. Many of these people had been leaders in the states from whence they migrated; others, young men trained in law or medicine, had migrated to the frontier where advancement would perhaps be more rapid.

According to the territorial act which empowered the commissioners to create a county seat and erect public buildings, the courts were directed to occupy the court-house as soon at it was "fit for the reception of the courts of said county." By November 1811, the first courthouse had been completed to the point that its courtroom could be used for the fall term of Superior Court.

The two-story brick structure on the highest part of the Public Square faced south. At first only the lower story three, range one west on which Huntsville was situated.

In the meantime he had been successful in purchasing courts. The basement portion which opened on the north the interests of the other proprietors, and when the deed to the town was drawn up on September 1, 1815, Pope

#### Names:

Anderson, William P. Bibb, Colonel Coffee,

#### Places:

Madison County, AL

#### **Types:**

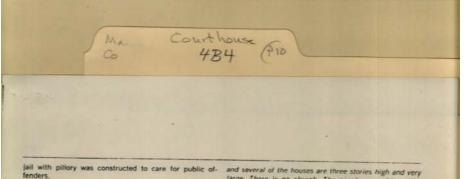
brochure

Holmes, David, Governor Jackson, James

Pope, Colonel Walker, Ward, Edward Winston, Louis

Madison County Courthouse Booklet - Madison County Buildings

r04b04-10-000-0006 Contents Index **About** Image 6



During this early period the courthouse served as a meeting place for both civic and religious groups, and the Public Square became the hub of commercial activity as stores were constructed on all sides of it.

Not until after the depressing years of the War of 1812 did the county officials take the necessary steps to provide for the completion of the second story of the courthouse. By a special territorial act of December 16, 1816, the justices of county court were empowered to act as commissioners to contract for and superintend its completion. The measure also provided for the purchase of a suitable lot upon which to construct an adequate jail and

On June 10, 1817, William M. Watkins and John H. Hickman entered into a contract with LeRoy Pope, Abner Tatum, and David Moore, Justices of the Quorum, to undertake the completion of the courthouse within five months. The agreement included placement of encased window sashes in the upper story, repairing the crown molding of the cornice, covering the roof of the court-house and its cupola with new poplar shingles, remodeling the cupola, and topping it with "a new and neat turned block, dressed off with gold liner and a new speare (sic) and twin blocks dressed off with gilt and crown the whole with a neat gilt Eagle not less than three feet

When it was determined that the undesignated funds in the county treasury were not sufficient to cover cost of completing the courthouse and constructing a jail, a special tax not to exceed one-half of the territorial levy was authorized by the legislature on February 13, 1818, to provide the necessary finances. Although no permanent record was made of construction and total cost of the fector was made or construction and total cost of the first public buildings, Judge Thomas Jones Taylor stated in his Early History of Madison County that the second jail was constructed on lot number fourteen located at the corner of Greene and Clinton Streets.

By 1818, the Public Square had become the hub of By 1818, the Public Square had become the hub of extensive activity. Ann Royal in her travel account, Letters from Alabama, reported on January 1, 1818, that Huntsville contained 260 houses made principally of bricks, a bank, a courthouse, a market place, and many stores. Commenting on the Square she wrote: There is a large square in the center of the town, like the town in Ohio, facing this are the stores, twelve in number. The build-ings form a solid wall, though divided into apartments. The workmanship is the best I have seen in all the State;

and several of the houses are three stories high and very large. There is no church. The people assemble at the Court House to worship, Huntsville is settled by people mostly from Georgia and the Carolinas — though there are a few from almost every part of the world; — and the town displays much activity. The citizens are gay, polite, and hospitable, and live in great splendor. Nothing like it in our country.

In August of 1819, another writer described the county seat thus: Huntsville is the principal and oldest town in the Valley of (The) Tennessee (River), and is the capital of Madison County. The United States have here a land office which, since its establishment (1811), has done Capital of 500,000 dollars (Plantlers and Merchants Bank); two printing offices, and 2,500 inhabitants. It is a most flourishing town, in the midst of one of the finest counties on earth. Here met the Convention in July, 1819. to frame the Constitution for the government of the

in Huntsville's Assembly hall located on the corner of Franklin and Gates Streets on July 5, 1819, and by August 2 it had written and adopted Alabama's first state constitution. Since many of the political leaders of the newly created Alabama Territory lived in Madison County, it was through their influence that Huntsville was chosen as the temporary capital of the state from July through December of 1819.

After the Constitution was completed, elections were held throughout Alabama on the third Monday and Tuesday of September 1819, to choose state officials and day of September 1819, to choose state officials and members of the legislature. On October 25, the legislature convened in temporary quarters to begin its work. On November 7, the House of Representatives began holding its meetings in the courtroom on the ground floor of the courthouse, and on November 9, William Wyatt Bibb was inaugurated governor in this room in the presence of a joint session of the House and Senate. Novembly, the Senate held its deliberations in a room Normally, the Senate held its deliberations in a room located in the house of James Dunn which was rented for this purpose. The work of this first legislative session was monumental in that it set in motion patterns of state and local government that served the needs of the people

Within the next few years the legislature provided a uniform system of government for all counties in the state. Since Madison, County had been one of the seven units of local government created prior to the formation

#### Names:

Dunn, James Hickman, John H. Moore, David

#### Places:

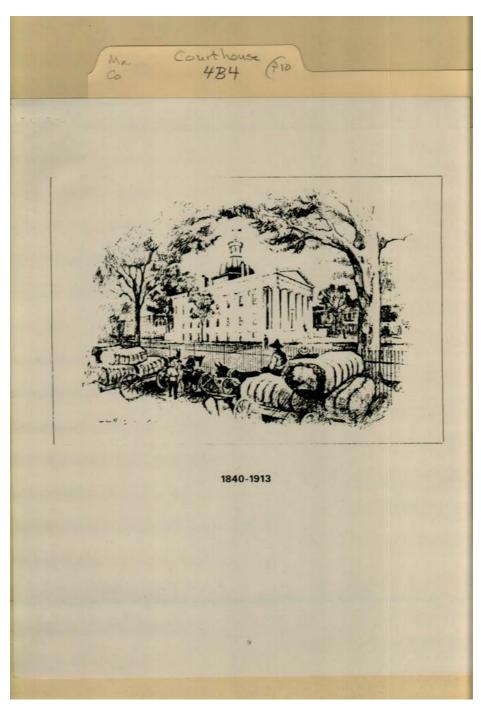
Madison County, AL

#### **Types:**

brochure

Pope, LeRoy Royal, Ann Tatum, Abner Taylor, Thomas Jones, Judge Watkins, William M. Early History of Madison County Letters from Alabama

r04b04-10-000-0007 Image 7 Contents <u>Index</u> **About** 



#### Names:

Courthouse

#### **Places:**

Madison County, AL

#### **Types:**

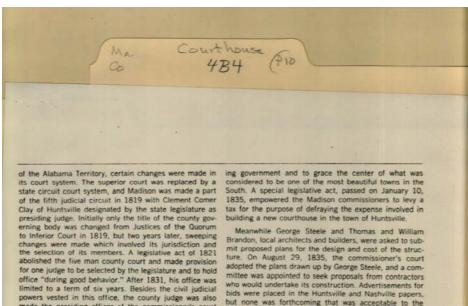
brochure

#### **Dates:**

1840-1913

Madison County Courthouse Booklet - Madison County Buildings

r04b04-10-000-0008 Contents Index Image 8 **About** 



fice was changed to three years. The powers of the commissioner's court, predecessor of the present board of commissioners, included the levy-ing of such general and special taxes as were necessary to maintain county government, controlling the property and finances of the county, constructing and maintaining roads, and appointing certain county officials as directed

made the presiding officer of the commissioner's court created by the same act. Samuel Chapman became the first judge of this court, and James Manning, Gross

Scruggs, Charles Betts, and Samuel Walker were elected to serve as members of the commissioner's court for a one-year term. In 1827, the commissioners' term of of-

By 1830, the roster of county offices included commissioners of roads and revenue, county and orphans' court, circuit court, justice of the peace, notary public, circuit solicitor, sheriff, coroner, constable, tax assessor and collector, treasurer, county auctioneer, road apportioner and overseer, overseer of the poor, and county surveyor. This increase in the number of local officials is but one indication of the rapid growth of the county during its formative period.

The federal census figures for Madison County in 1820 showed a population of 17,481 almost evenly di-vided between whites and slaves, but by 1830 this figure had risen to 27,990 with the slave population making up fifty-three per cent of the total. A further analysis of the Alabama census shows that Madison County con-tinued to hold first place in population and wealth in the

Amid the prosperous years of the early 1830's, the commissioner's court made plans to build an imposing new courthouse to accommodate the needs of an expand-

Brandon, local architects and builders, were asked to sub-mit proposed plans for the design and cost of the struc-ture. On August 29, 1835, the commissioner's court adopted the plans drawn up by George Steele, and a committee was appointed to seek proposals from contractors who would undertake its construction. Advertisements for bids were placed in the Huntsville and Nashville papers, but none was forthcoming that was acceptable to the commissioner's court. Because immediate funds were needed in order to let a contract prior to the time that tax funds were made available, the county officials asked the state legislature to empower them to borrow \$12,000 from the Branch Bank of Alabama located in Huntsville

The next attempt to secure bids for construction of the new courthouse bore fruit. Dr. Thomas Fearn and James 1. Donegan, prominent businessmen of Huntsville, were selected by the commissioners to receive proposals on or before December 1, 1836, and to let a contract for a building to be constructed in accordance with George Steele's plan. They also were directed "to superintend the same in every manner and respect."

Early in 1837, the firm of Mitchell and Wilson was employed to construct a two-story stone and brick building with a dome on top and a full basement beneath at an approximate cost of \$31,000.

The building of Stephen S. Ewing located on the Public Square was rented to serve as a courtroom and county clerk's office while the new courthouse was under con-struction. According to the commissioner's court records, this building served as the temporary courthouse from August of 1837 to January of 1840. Apparently the new courthouse was occupied before its final completion dur-

On April 2, 1838, George Steele was appointed superintendent over the contractors to insure proper execution of the plans which he had drawn for the new courthouse. For his services, which were to extend to January 1, 1840, he was allowed \$1,500. The agreement further stipulated that in the event the building was not completed by 1840, then he was to receive further compensation for his work after that date. Because the project did extend well into

#### Names:

Betts, Charles Brandon, Thomas Brandon, William Chapman, Samuel

#### Places:

Madison County, AL

#### **Types:**

brochure

Clay, Clement Comer Donegan, James I. Ewing, Stephen S. Fearn, Thomas, Dr.

Manning, James Mitchell, Scruggs, Gross Steele, George

Walker, Samuel Wilson,

Madison County Courthouse Booklet - Madison County Buildings

Image 9 r04b04-10-000-0009 <u>Contents</u> <u>Index</u> <u>About</u>

Ma. Courthouse (F10)

1840, he was further compensated \$500, thus bringing his total fee as architect and superintendent to \$2,000.

As the work got under way, the old courthouse was sold at auction for \$494.00 and removed. The ten-foot elevation on which it stood was then graded down and the rock used in macadamizing the area around the source.

Originally the contract called for a tin roof for the structure, but in 1839 the commissioner's court voted to spend the extra money necessary to obtain a copper covering for the roof and dome. The expense involved in this change added \$3,966.02 to the original cost anticipated and involved considerable time in securing the copper from a firm in Baltimore, Maryland.

On July 22, 1839, a contract was drawn between the commissioner's court and Thomas R. Rayon for the construction of a storie wall with oval corners around the courthouse to reach within fourteen feet of the streets on the Public Square. At this time, a contract with C. T. and R. Parker was also signed which provided for an iron railing to be placed on the stone wall. The total cost of the enclosure included \$4,761.25 for stone work and \$4,000 for the iron rail and gates.

Records of payments made to Mitchell and Wilson over a period from December 27, 1837, to February 7, 1842, show that they received \$33,893.37 for construction of the courthouse and grading the ground around it. The total expense involving this contract, the superintendent's fee, the copper root, and other incidentals came to \$40,175.00. To this figure was added the cost of enclosing the courthouse square which amounted to \$8,761.00.

Incoming revenues to defray the expenses of improving the public buildings and other costs of local government were defined thus by the commissioner's court on May 4, 1840: Ordered the following be the rates of taxation for the year 1841 being by the authority of Acts of the Legislature to raise a revenue for building a new courthouse and other purposes to wit: On every \$100 worth of land, ten cents; on every \$100 worth of town property, ten cents; on every \$100 worth of merchandize sold from, the first day of May 1839 to first day of May, 1840, twenty cents; on each slave not exceeding ten years old, sixteen cents; on each slave over ten and under sixty years of age, fifty-six cents; on each free male negro or mulatto, over the age of twenty-one years, one dollar; on each \$100 worth of pleasure carriage and harness, fifty cents; on each gold watch, one dollar; on each silver or other watch, forty cents; on each dilars; on each gold watch, one dollar; on each silver or other watch, forty cents; on

each metal clock, one dollar; on each clock not metal, twenty-line cents; on every \$100 loaned at interest, twenty-line cents; on each pack of playing cards sold, given away, loaned or otherwise disposed of, twenty-line cents; on all goods sold at auction, other than exempted by law, two percentum; on each share of bank stock of \$100 value in said state, one dollar; on each billiard table kept for play, \$150 including state tax; on all white males over twenty-one and not more than forty-live years, twenty-live cents; and on such things as are not herein enumerated and were heretofore objects of state taxation, the amount of the state and said county tax for the year 1835, and it is further ordered that thirty percentum be added to the foregoing taxation for the purpose of defraying in part the building of a bridge across Flint River at the three forks thereof.

As soon as the new courthouse had been completed, plans were set in motion to construct a larger jail, and a legistative act of 1843 made provision for Madison County to levy a special tax to cover the cost of it. Since the records of the commissioner's court are missing for the years 1844-1849, no figures are available to ascertain the cost of its construction. In 1862, however, it was partially destroyed by federal occupying forces and replaced at a cost of \$2,500.

One further addition was made to the courthouse in 1849 when the town and county governments cooperated in installing a large four-faced clock on top of its dome. This timepiece continued to serve the town of Huntsville until it was dismantled in 1964 to make way for the present courthouse, but as of January, 1967 its bell once again rang out the time on each half hour.

Between 1830 and 1860 no radical changes were made in Madison County's government, but a number of offices were created. In 1833, the duties of assessing and collecting taxes were turned over to a tax assessor and a collector. In 1839, a district chancery court was created and a chancellor appointed to handle its affairs. At the county level a register in chancery was appointed the same year. In 1850, the probate court was established by a general legislative act which substituted such a court in every Alabama county for the early county court that had previously exercised probate jurisdiction and John W. Oatey became its first judge. At this time the county court's jurisdiction in civil suits was transferred to the circuit court. In 1856, the office of county super-intendent of education was created to administer free public schools which had been created by general legislative action for the whole state of Alabama in 1854.

1

#### Names:

Mitchell, Oatey, John W.

Places:

Madison County, AL

**Types:** 

brochure

Parker, C. T. Parker, R.

Rayon, Thomas R. Wilson,

Image 10 r04b04-10-000-0010 <u>Contents</u> <u>Index</u> <u>About</u>

Ma Courthouse (

On the eve of the Civil War, Madison County was still considered one of the wealthier areas of the state and its political influence in state affairs remained strong. Huntsville also continued to be a key economic and cultural center in the Tennessee Valley. Because of its strategic position on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, it was occupied by federal troops as early as April 11, 1862, and continued to suffer the privations imposed by occupation until the war ended in 1865.

When it became evident that the courthouse would be taken over by federal military officials, most of the public records were removed to Blount County for safekeeping. Though the courthouse itself weathered the ravages of the war period, it, like many other structures in the town, received some permanent scars.

The reconstruction years in Madison County, in many respects, were more trying than the war years had been. This period was marked by inefficiency in government at all levels as well as economic depression. With the adoption of the Alabama constitution in 1875, local and state government resumed a more normal pattern of existence, and economy and honesty in government were emphasized to the detriment of needed educational and health services.

In 1879, a board of education was created for Madison County, but adequate financial aid to public education was not forthcoming until the first decade of the twentieth century. The post of county health officer was created as early as 1881, but it was not until after a series of typhoid epidemics in Huntsville that a movement was begun which resulted in the establishment of a Madison County Health Department in 1918.

Between 1880 and 1900, business leaders of Madison County worked to improve agriculture and bring in a variety of industries which would revitalize the economy. Nurseries were established, cotton textile mills built, and an assortment of small factories opened to produce wood products, small tools and implements. Monte Sano Mountain was developed as a summer resort in 1887 to attract tourists from all parts of the nation — a venture which prospered until 1900. Diversification in agriculture brought increased prosperity to Madison County's rural population, and this prosperity in turn aided the expansion of commercial interests in the town of Huntsville.

The federal census of 1910 listed the population of Huntsville as 7,611 and that of Madison County as 47,040 thus showing an increase of almost one hundred per cent within a fifty-year period. Although the county remained economically prosperous, its political influence was con-

siderably diminished in terms of state affairs. Tennessee Valley political leaders were no longer serious contenders for the governorship or other state offices.

After the adoption of the Alabama constitution of 1901, Madison County government became less autonomous. While continuing to retain its traditional functions regarding strictly local affairs, the county became more and more an administrative district of the state. As federal and state governments began to assume more responsibility for rendering services to people, Alabama tightened its control over tax assessment and collection, law enforcement, election administration, education, health, and public welfare at the county level.

As the number of county officials increased, the second courthouse was no longer adequate to furnish office space for them. Once again, as in the 1830's, the commissioner's court began to consider the feasibility of constructing a new courthouse. The commissioners as well as the people were divided on the question.

At a mass meeting held to discuss the matter on February 15, 1913, those who wished to preserve the imposing Parthenon-like structure insisted that it could be enlarged and improved to accommodate the needs of county government. Others who wanted a new and modern structure reasoned that the building should reflect the intelligence and progress of the people, and that visitors to the county would be more impressed with a new courthouse than the old delapidated one which stood on the Public Square. Some pointed out that they did not believe that the old courthouse could stand remodeling or reconstruction since the walls were badly cracked. One prominent citizen favored a new courthouse to be placed somewhere else so that the old building could be used as a place for exhibitions of products and as a home for county people when they spent the day in the city. The Chamber of Commerce presented a series of resolutions urging the construction of a new courthouse on the basis of such needs as adequate space for the daily transactions of government, adequate protection for valuable county records, and needed restrooms for the convenience of county people.

After considering the question for two months, the commissioner's court voted on March 26, 1913, to remodel and improve the old courthouse at a cost not to exceed \$75,000. On April 21, the plans of architect C. K. Colley of Nashville were accepted with the stipulation that bids for construction would not exceed \$65,000. According to his plan, only the columns and sidewalls of the old building would be retained, and two wings with

Names:

Courthouse

Places:

Madison County, AL

**Types:** 

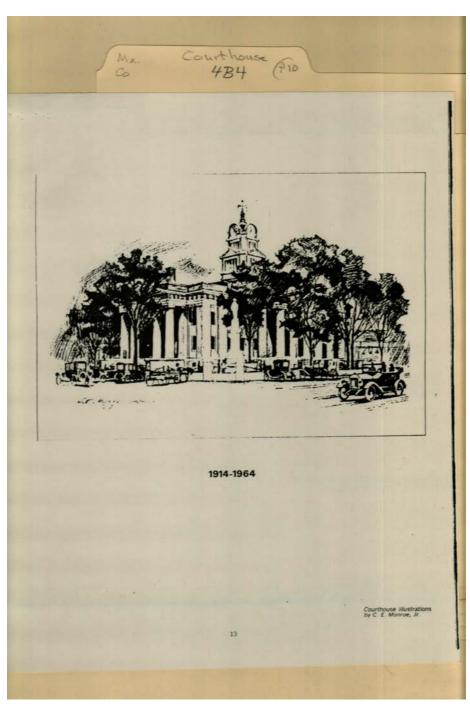
drawing

Dates:

1914-1964

-

r04b04-10-000-0011 Contents <u>Index</u> Image 11 **About** 



#### Names:

Art Metal

Construction Co.

#### **Places:**

Madison County, AL

#### **Types:**

brochure

#### **Dates:**

Sep 10, 1914

Courthouse dedication Little-Cleckler Construction Co.

r04b04-10-000-0012 Contents Index Image 12

> Courthouse 484 a third entrance facing west were to be added to the do so long and well as the old. The cornerstone will be structure. To finance this project, warrants were to be laid at 11:00 o'clock on September 10, 1914 by the issued by the commissioner's court bearing interest at a Masonic Lodge of Alabama. Everyone in Madison County

rate not to exceed six per cent per annum and payable by means later to be determined by the court. On November 3, 1914 a special election was held to empower the commissioner's court to issue \$85,000 worth of in-terest bearing bonds in order to buy up these original warrants and to pay for the total cost of the courthouse and its furnishings.

The bid submitted by Little-Cleckier Construction Com-pany for \$59,000 was accepted on June 16, 1913, and plans were put in motion to remove the county officials' offices to the Elks Building the second week in July.

As work progressed during the summer months, it be came evident that the walls and columns of the old build-ing were in a crumbling condition, thus making it necessary to reconsider the construction of an entirely new building. The commissioner's court agreed on October 6, 1913, to build a new structure of the best quality of light or gray-colored brick with four entrances. Columns to be used on all four porticos were to be of hewn solid stone: and fluted like the ones in the old courthouse. A sum of \$10,000 was appropriated to cover the increased cost wolved in these changes.

accept the offer of the custodian of the United States Court Building to allow the various county courts use of this facility while the courthouse was being constructed.

Work progressed on schedule, and by April 22, 1914, a contract was let with the Art Metal Construction Coma contract was ner with the Art Meta of Constitution Company to supply the furnishings for the courthouse at a cost of \$12,522.18. By mid-August Little-Cleckler Construction Company had finished their work and plans were made to dedicate the building on September 10,

On September 9, the Huntsville Mercury Banner announced the forthcoming event and took occasion to nounced the forthcoming event and took occasion to comment on the courthouse which had recently been torn down: The old building was designed after the Greek Parthenon. It had a great history, and could its old walls have spoken they could have told of the oratory and elo-quence of great lawyers, distinguished Congressmen, famous Senators in Congress and Presidents of the Re-public. But, like all things of earth, having served its purpose and lived out its years of usefulness if passed away to make room for the new, larger, and better suited struc-ture for the present day demands. May it (the new one)

Masonic Lodge of Alabama. Everyone in Madison County is invited. Retreshments will be served and several speeches will be made.

The crowd that came to view the new courthouse found it generally acceptable. The town clock encased in its new home, the old iron fence, and the massive doric columns supporting all four entrances helped to placate the feel-ings of those who had been the most severe critics of

The Confederate Soldier, a memorial to the confederate dead, placed on the west lawn by the U. D. C. in 1905 and the D. A. R. plaque containing a roll of Revolutionary sol-diers buried in Madison County placed at the north en-trance also remained to lend further evidence that all was not changed amid the rush of economic progress.

Late in 1914, the herd of pet deer which had lived on the courthouse lawn was transferred to the McCormick estate on Meridian Street, but the iron fence continued to serve as hitching posts around the Public Square for some years. After a heated argument concerning its removal, it was finally taken down in 1921 and a heavy iron chain put in its place. When it was discovered that the Big Spring, the town's main water supply, was being pol-luted by manure seepage from the hitching area around the Public Square, the commissioner's court had to take action in spite of the protests of those who hated to see the old landmark go.

Amid the economic expansion engendered by World War I and the boom period of the 1920's, the county government increased its activities as an administrative agent of the state. In 1911, the office of farm agent was created and in 1915 the position of home demonstration agent was added to farm extension service in Madison County. A license inspector was appointed in 1919 and in 1923 the Board of Review, later called the Board of Equaliza-tion, was established on a permanent basis. In 1923, the board of county commissioners replaced the board of revenue which had replaced the old commissioner's revenue which had replaced the old commissioner's court in 1919. A county court which combined the offices of a number of justices of the peace was initiated in 1911, and a circuit court for the individual county of Madison was created as the twenty-third judicial circuit of the state of Alabama in 1931. With the coming of the depression in 1929, the need for the expansion of welfare led to the permanent establishment of a Department of Welfare in 1935 which later became known as the Department of Pensions and Securities. ment of Pensions and Securities.

#### Names:

Art Metal Construction Co. Construction Co.

#### **Places:**

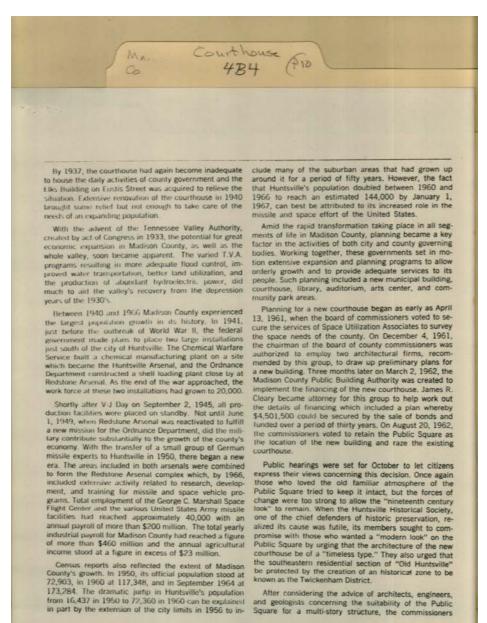
Madison County, AL

#### **Types:**

brochure

Little-Cleckler

Image 13 r04b04-10-000-0013 <u>Contents</u> <u>Index</u> <u>About</u>



Names:

Cleary, James R.

Huntsville Arsenal

TVA

Places:

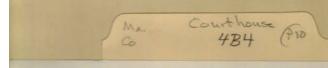
Madison County, AL

**Types:** 

brochure

#### Series 4, Subseries B, Box 4, Folder 10 Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Madison County Courthouse Booklet - Madison County Buildings

r04b04-10-000-0014 Image 14 Contents Index **About** 



to build on the original courthouse sit. At this time, architects Loyd Kranert and Thomas Jones were authorized to submit preliminary plans for the building and on
December 20, 1963, these drawings were approved.

The annex on Gallatin Street which had housed the educational program of the First Baptist Church before it was moved to Governors Drive was rented for use as a temporary courthouse, and county officials moved their offices to this location on August 20, 1964. The United States Courtroom located in the downtown postoffice on Holmes Avenue was used by the courts from September 1964 until December 1966.

On October 1, 1964, Barna Wrecking Company was awarded a \$37,050 contract to demolish the old court-house. The contents of the 1914 cornerstone were removed for safekeeping, and the twenty massive stone columns were retrieved to be used elsewhere as a recolumns were retrieved to be used elsewhere as a re-minder of Huntsville's architectural past. In 1966, the Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee pro-posed a plan for their use in constructing a Parthenon-type structure on the Burritt Museum property on Round

The architect's final plans for the new courthouse were accepted by the commissioners on November 16, 1964, and the Public Building Authority awarded a contract to Pearce, Demoss, and King of Decatur, Alabama, on March 16, 1965, for \$4,501,500 to construct an eleven-story building with basement. Since the jail was to be placed on the ninth and tenth stories of the new courthouse, the commissioners voted on October 8, 1965, to sell the old jail. They also agreed at this time to sell the courthouse annex on Eustis Avenue. As work on the new structure progressed, it was determined than an additional court-room was needed to provide space for the four circuit judges new serving Madison County. For this purpose the commissioners voted to spend a maximum of \$75,000. To the original contract price, the county contributed \$800,000 in cash for construction costs and interior furnishing and equipment thus bringing the total cost of the courthouse project to approximately \$5,301,500.

During the summer months contracts were awarded to various business firms for equipment and furnishings at a cost of approximately \$300,000. Business Equipment Company, dealers for Art Metal Construction Company, and Roberts and Sons of Birmingham were the two principal contractors selected to supply most of the items required. Though the original September 26, 1966, dead-line for completion was not met, the new courthouse was occupied within three months of the target date. County

decided on December 3, 1962, to move ahead with plans officials began moving into their new offices on De cember 26, and county court was held in its new quarters

For the first time since 1818, the Public Square pro vided space for the jail which was located in streamlined quarters on the ninth and tenth floors of the new courthouse. When the third jail on lot number fourteen had become too small, a site on Jefferson Street had been secured and a three-story brick building completed in 1920 at at \$4,000 Pricesors. 1929 at a cost of \$84,000. Prisoners were transferred from this location to their new quarters on January 28,

The one part of the original courthouse complex no longer associated with Public Square was the market house. When the first courthouse was torn down, the pub-lic market was moved to the Holding Block east of the Square. In 1850, it was transferred to a site near the corner of Clinton and Washington Streets where it recorner or Clinton and Washington Streets where it re-mained until 1914. Between this date and 1935, farmers once again marketed their produce in the parking area on all four sides of the Square; but in 1935, the county furnished farmers a covered market house near the Big Spring branch directly across from the present City Utilities Building. In 1963 this facility was moved to Cook Avenue, N.W. to make way for the relocation of a portion of Callistic Street in the Heart of Huntersille Dist of Gallatin Street in the Heart of Huntsville Plan.

Although the courthouse lawn was newly landscaped in 1966, the historic markers and monuments were returned to their places to remind people of their heritage. Temporarily missing from his pedestal was the old confederate soldier who was undergoing repair after losing a battle with a demolition squad employed by the Huntsville Housing Authority. As the last brick wall on Cotton Row same throughing down, the crew accidential last it crew came thundering down, the crew accidently let it crush the soldier as he stood on the lawn of the First National Bank awaiting his transfer back to his station on the Public Square.

Dedication of the fourth courthouse was set for March 5, 1967. At this time the cornerstone, containing items selected by the Huntsville Historical Society, was laid, speeches made, and refreshments served just as in Sep

#### Names:

Bama Wrecking Company

Places:

Madison County, AL

**Types:** 

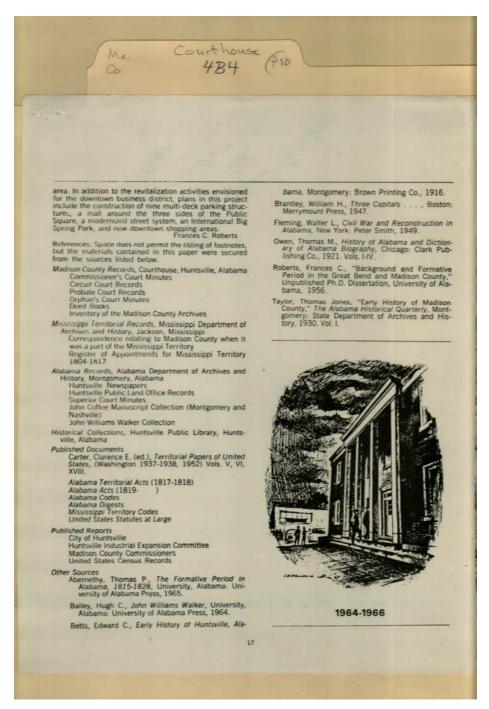
brochure

**Dates:** 

Mar 05, 1967

Courthouse dedication Pearce, Demoss and King

Image 15 r04b04-10-000-0015 <u>Contents</u> <u>Index</u> <u>About</u>



#### Names:

Roberts, Frances C.

#### Places:

Madison County, AL

#### **Types:**

brochure

### **Table of Contents**

<u>Image 1</u> (r04b04-10-000-0001)	<u>Image 6</u> (r04b04-10-000-0006)	Image 11 (r04b04-10-000-0011)	<b>Table of Contents</b>
Image 2 (r04b04-10-000-0002)	Image 7 (r04b04-10-000-0007)	Image 12 (r04b04-10-000-0012)	Name & Place Index
Image 3 (r04b04-10-000-0003)	Image 8 (r04b04-10-000-0008)	Image 13 (r04b04-10-000-0013)	<b>About the Collection</b>
Image 4 (r04b04-10-000-0004)	<u>Image 9</u> (r04b04-10-000-0009)	Image 14 (r04b04-10-000-0014)	
Image 5 (r04b04-10-000-0005)	<b>Image 10</b> (r04b04-10-000-0010)	Image 15 (r04b04-10-000-0015)	

### Name & Place Index

A 1 177'11' D 4 5	M ' I 0
Anderson, William P. 4, 5	Manning, James 8
Art Metal Construction Co. 11, 12	Martin, John 2
Bama Wrecking Company <u>14</u>	McVay, Hugh <u>2</u>
Betts, Charles <u>8</u>	Mitchell, $8, 9$
Bibb, Colonel <u>5</u>	Monroe, C. E., Jr. <u>1</u>
Bibb, Thomas 2	Monroe, Dan C. 1
Bibb, William Wyatt <u>1</u>	Moore, David 1, 6
Brandon, Thomas <u>8</u>	Moore, Gabriel <u>1</u> , <u>2</u>
Brandon, William <u>8</u>	Neal, Stephen, 2
Butler, Samuel R. <u>1</u>	Oatey, John W. 9
Chapman, Reuben <u>1</u>	Originial Plat <u>4</u>
Chapman, Samuel 8	Parker, C. T. 9
Chase, Henry <u>1</u>	Parker, R. 9
Clay, Clement Comer 1, 8	Patton, Charles 1
Cleary, James R. <u>13</u>	Pearce, Demoss and King 14
Cobb, David 2	Perkins, Abraham 2
Coffee, John 4	Perkins, Peter 2, 4
Coffee, 5	Pope, Alexander 4
Coulter, George 2	Pope, Colonel <u>5</u>
Courthouse dedication 11, 14	Pope, LeRoy <u>1</u> , <u>2</u> , <u>4</u> , <u>6</u>
Courthouse Mural 1	Rayon, Thomas R. 9
Courthouse <u>3</u> , <u>7</u> , <u>10</u>	Richardson, William, Judge <u>1</u>
Dickson, William 2, 4	Roberts, Frances C. 15
Dilworth, George 2	Roberts, Frances, Dr. 1
Donegan, James I. <u>8</u>	Rogers, James 2
Dunn, James 6	Royal, Ann <u>6</u>
Early History of Madison County 6	Sanches, Ramon <u>1</u>
Ewing, Stephen S. <u>8</u>	Scruggs, Gross 8
Fearn, Thomas, Dr. $\underline{1}$ , $\underline{8}$	Sparkman, John, Senator <u>1</u>
Freeman, Thomas 2	Steele, George 8
Gilbreath, Alexander <u>4</u>	Tatum, Abner 6
Grayson, John 2	Taylor, Thomas Jones, Judge 6
Grote, Carl, Dr. 1	Thomas, Norman 1
Gurley, Captain 1	TVA 13
Hamilton, John C. 2	von Braun, Wernher 1
Hickman, John H. 6	Walker, John Williams 1, 2, 4
Holmes, David, Governor 2, 5	Walker, Samuel <u>8</u>
Hunt, John 1	Walker, <u>5</u>
Huntsville Arsenal 13	Ward, Edward 4, 5
Huntsville, AL 1	Watkins, William M. <u>6</u>
Jackson, James 4, 5	Williams, Benjamin 2
Jones, Obadiah 2	Williams, Marmaduke 2
Kirksley, John 2	Williams, Robert, Governor 2
Lanier, William 2	Wilson, <u>8</u> , <u>9</u>
Letters from Alabama 6	Winston, Louis <u>2</u> , <u>4</u> , <u>5</u>
Little-Cleckler Construction Co. 11, 12  Madison County, AL 2, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 0, 10, 11, 12, 13	Winston, William 2
Madison County, AL <u>2</u> , <u>3</u> , <u>4</u> , <u>5</u> , <u>6</u> , <u>7</u> , <u>8</u> , <u>9</u> , <u>10</u> , <u>11</u> , <u>12</u> , <u>13</u> ,	
<u>14, 15</u>	

### **Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection**

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**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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