Yea, Alabama!

A Peek into the Past of One of the Most Storied Universities in the Nation:

The University of Alabama

(Volume I – 1819 through 1871 – Second Edition)

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By

David M. Battles

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

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This book first published 2015. This edition published 2016.

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-4438-9031-6
ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-9031-1

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to a number of people who have helped to make this project a success. All the fine faculty at the University of Alabama American Studies program are to be thanked for the years of guidance and inspiration I received as a student in their department as I was completing my American Studies degrees. This book is dedicated to the UA American Studies Department. I also wish to thank the UA History department for their inspiration in early American history and early Southern history. The staffs of the Hoole Special Collections and the Natural Science departments at UA are thanked for invaluable assistance and for allowing me to peruse their collections for hours, days, and months at a time. Clark Center is to be thanked for advice on the advance of the Union Army, while Steven Tomlinson must be thanked for sharing insight on Dr. Alva Woods.

Gratitude is also expressed to Dr. Annabel Stephens and Pat Dunbar for allowing the author to use their beach house, Lazier Daze, whenever solitude was needed for writing. Thanks to Annabel Stephens as well for insightful proofing. Many friends and colleagues have encouraged this project over the last several years. I cannot name you all, but you know who you are, and I thank you. And as always, I thank my parents, Pete and Geraldine Battles, for their support in all my projects.

Much of the information in this book has been gleaned from previous historical works and analyses on the University of Alabama, including books, lectures, diaries, letters, and other miscellaneous correspondence from many people involved in some way with the University of Alabama. All are thanked and are named in the bibliography section of this volume; however, a few of the books need to be named here. First are the works of UA historian James Sellers, titled *History of the University of Alabama*, volumes one and two. Volume one, covering 1818 to 1902, was published in 1953. The other volume is a typed and bound document covering 1903 through the 1950s and is held in Hoole Special Collections at the University of Alabama. Suzanne Wolf's *The University of Alabama: A Pictorial History*, published in 1983, contains a wealth of rare photos and prints associated with the University of Alabama, as does Mary Chapman Mathews' book, *A Mansion's Memories* (updated and reissued in 2006 in

celebration of the University's 175th anniversary). These books have been used extensively for research and publication purposes by researchers, publishers, and media for many years, and are referenced and otherwise utilized in this series. I thank these authors for their enduring contributions toward the historical preservation of the University of Alabama. I also thank the many other authors who have written articles and books whose subjects include or touch upon the history of the University. I apologize to anyone I have managed to omit from this list of important acknowledgments. Let it be said that I thank you also.

Note: James Sellers was one of UA's most distinguished faculty members. Because of his tireless research and scholarship, his name is intimately associated with UA history. I did not read Sellers's historical volumes until after I had written the first two drafts of this book, as I did not desire to be influenced by his prose and organization. If the reader discerns similarity in prose or organization in this book, please note that similarity in prose and organization is a hazard that sometimes occurs when two authors are writing of the same subject and timeline. Any similarity is unintentional, and deference is given to Mr. Sellers in any such occurrence(s).

Note: This is the second edition of the 1st Premier Edition. The 1st edition contains an index, scans, photos, and other types of illustrations which are not included in this edition. Please note that some chapter notes may refer to the centrefold or illustration section of the book; however, these illustrations are found only in the 1st Edition.

PREFACE

Most colleges and universities have interesting characters and stories associated with their histories. The University of Alabama has an exceptionally colorful and fascinating history. From its conception in 1819 through today, the University of Alabama has exemplified the southern U.S. university. The young state of Alabama was part of the American wilderness in 1819 when the University was established. It was still a wilderness when the University of Alabama opened its doors in 1831.

The first students were sons of the early pioneers of the state, and as such, shared their parents' traits of individualism and socioeconomic superiority. The first two University of Alabama presidents, who were Baptist ministers, clearly did not understand this mind-set and its accompanying corollaries. Their definition of well-trained, studious, and *submissive* academic students conflicted tremendously with these southern boys' societal codes, which defined many of those associated with academia as socioeconomic inferiors. The presidents, the boards of trustees, and the faculty found themselves and their authority challenged over and over again when these young men believed that their southern codes were being violated or challenged.

Volume 1 of this comprehensive history of the University of Alabama covers the first several tempestuous decades through the Civil War years, when the students finally put their differences with administration aside to become one of a handful of Deep South military universities for the Confederacy. The volume concludes with the dawn of the 1870s when a Union-burned University was desperately attempting to rise from the ashes.

This series also considers the University of Alabama as something of an organic–psychological entity. The parts discern periods roughly parallel to the passages of a family wherein the offspring continually attempt to establish a favorable balance of power between themselves and their elders. The story is told in present tense so that the reader is observing history as it happens. For the same reason, personal quotes are utilized as much as possible. These two approaches are not commonly used in

historical books; however the author believes that these techniques will enhance the story telling in this volume. Reminiscences of persons quoted in this volume may be in past tense, as most are direct quotes, so there may be some juxtaposition of tenses in such cases. Sections of analysis, thoughts, and synopsis [noted only as Analysis] are in standard tense.

The first five parts tell the story of the University's conception, infancy, childhood, and early adolescence. Subsequent parts concentrate on two special stories regarding the University's early years: one reveals the untold story of slavery and the University of Alabama; the other relates the fascinating story about a Tuscaloosa editor and the radical Alabama government, whose opposing philosophies and subsequent altercations very nearly thwarted efforts to reestablish the school. A final chapter makes a nominal comparison of the University of Alabama with two other early southern universities. Volume 2 of this series will examine the extended adolescence of the institution. Future volumes will analyze the years of maturation.

Two aspirations have guided the author in the writing of this series. One is that the volumes will be eminently useful for historical, scholarly, and popular research; the other is that the book will also serve as a pleasurable and informational read for the general public, including the legion of Tide fans. In deference to these two goals, the decision was made to present these volumes in chronological fashion so that the story will flow most smoothly for the reader.

For the benefit of genealogists, some biographical information on most persons named in this volume has been included. As many of the sources of this information are quite old, please bear in mind that some of the information might be inaccurate, but it is the most accurate the author could find.

Note: The following words are capitalized throughout this book when they function as major characters within it, as they are usually capitalized in the journals and diaries of this period.

President
Faculty
Tutor
Board of Directors (and Board of Regents)
Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior

PART I

CONCEPTION AND BIRTH

Most accounts date the beginning of the history of the University of Alabama on Monday, April 18, 1831, when the University opened its doors to fifty-two students, and subsequently mention that enrollment gradually increased over the next few weeks to swell the roll to a total of ninety-four students in attendance that first year.[1] However, in order to better appreciate the birth of this beloved and storied University, as well as its contributions to and effects on the world around it, the reader should also consider the circumstances under which the institution arose. It is necessary to consider the people who conceived the very idea and mission of the institution, as well as the people who affected the institution in various ways. Some of these people include the politicians who guided (and indeed, sometimes misguided) the conception and infancy years; the president, faculty, and trustees whose fingerprints would be indelibly inscribed upon the institution; and the students, people, and places whose traditions provide us a context with which to understand the institution. One should also consider the location of the institution, the time during which the institution was created, and the decades during which it matured.

Notes

[1] Many sources indicate that April 17 marked the first day of classes. However, as April 17 fell on a Sunday, it is highly unlikely that either the Board of Trustees or President Woods, a devout minister, would have allowed a Sunday opening of a secular institution.

CHAPTER ONE

WILDERNESS, TERRITORY, STATE… AND A TOWN

Analysis

The Mississippi Territory, which would later be divided into the Mississippi and Alabama Territories, was still a wilderness even in the early 1800s. Immigration to the region that would become the Alabama Territory [sometimes referred to as just Alabama] began in earnest after the Creek War, which started in 1813 and ended on August 9, 1814, when the Creek Nation surrendered to General Andrew Jackson and ceded all lands to the federal government.[1] However, as Albert Moore notes, Congress took so long in setting up legislation to grant the area territorial and statehood rights, including land ownership laws, that people "grew tired of waiting for land surveys and the adjustment of private claims" and began to move into the region where they "staked out their farms."[2]

People migrated to Alabama from the north via the Tennessee River and the east via the Chattahoochee River. These families, consisting mostly of Scots-Irish and English, migrated primarily from Georgia, Tennessee, the Carolinas, Kentucky, and Virginia, all looking to begin a new life.[3]

Sarah Ann Haynsworth[4] notes that when her family moved to Alabama from South Carolina in 1810, roads were either nonexistent or "wild." Many Native Americans still lived and roamed throughout the region. While on their journey, Haynsworth's family was approached by Native Americans on numerous occasions, causing the family grave concern and prompting her father to begin sleeping with "arms under his head."[5]

Once these white migrants had found and staked out their land claims, they continually marveled at the vastness and sometimes intractability of the wilderness that stood before them, challenging them, and sometimes claiming lives before it would yield to these hardy pioneers. Even the

richest planters found themselves reduced to clearing land of hundreds or thousands of trees, bushes, and stones before they could begin planting crops or building their homes.

As has been noted, many of these Alabama settlers hailed from Scots-Irish descent. Senator Jim Webb of Virginia, who recently published *Born Fighting*,[6] argues that these men, women, and children helped to shape the personality of the region. Webb suggests that Scots-Irish traits from this period[7] include individualism, intense family loyalty, a healthy distrust of authority and rules, and a propensity to own and use firearms. These traits clearly influenced the actions and attitudes of Alabama college students of early to mid-1800s.

During the decade before statehood, which occurred in 1819, the population of the Alabama Territory increased more than 1000 percent, growing to a total of 127,901. Many who migrated to Alabama were trying to escape the poor economies of the East. Others were attracted by inexpensive land and dreams of wealth tied to the high prices that could be had for raising cotton. Leah R. Atkins notes that while some of the early Alabamians were sons of wealthy planters in the East come to Alabama to seek their own fortunes, most of the frontiersmen were quite poor.[8]

Some of these early immigrants settled on the banks of the Warrior River, commonly known as the falls, in the western part of the region. One of the earliest maps of this area, which would come to be known as Tuscaloosa, was drafted in 1707 by French cartographer Guillaume DeLisle.[9]

DeLisle spelled the town name *Taskaloussas*. Thomas Owen speculates that Taskaloussas might have existed as a minor town or village in the Maubila [Native American] Confederacy as early as 1540. Ship captain Bossu[10] noted the town in one of his reports in 1759.[11] The next mention of the area is in 1809 when Ocechemotla, a Creek Native American, with the consent of the Choctaw Americans, reestablished the settlement "at the falls of the Warrior River." The Native American settlement, which became known as Black Warrior Town, was destroyed by Tennessee militia in 1813, led by General J. Coffee,[12] Davy Crockett, and 800 cavalrymen.[13]

There is general agreement that the first white settlers to build in the falls area arrived in 1815 or 1816 and named the area *Tuscaloosa* (or

Tuskaloosa). In line with other early Alabama settlers, most Tuscaloosans of this era were of Scots-Irish and English descent.[14] The original settlers to Tuscaloosa are variously noted as John Wilson; Isaac Cannon; Thomas, John, and Jonathan York; Jesse Brown; John Dudgin; Joseph Thompson; Samson McCowan; and Zach, Joe, and Gabe Taylor.[15]

Later settlers included William Wilson, who built the first log house near the location where the state capitol would be built. Jonathan York was said to have built the first board shanty.[16] Other prominent early settlers included John King and the Lincecum family. In 1817, Joshua Halbert was said to have been the first white man to drive a farm wagon in Tuscaloosa. The first coroner was probably Dr. Jeptha V. Isbell; the first physician, likely Dr. Thomas Levell; and the first sheriff, likely Ebenezer Horton.[17] William R. Smith remembers Simon L. Perry as the first lawyer in Tuscaloosa in 1817. Physicians noted in 1821 included John Tindell, James Isbell, Samuel Meek, and William and John Owens. Many of these physicians were self-taught; one was a Methodist minister.

By this time, the Baptists and Methodists had already established churches in the area. Thomas Baines and Nathan Roberts organized Ebenezer Baptist (later called First Baptist) in 1818. In 1820, the Presbyterians had formed a church, and in 1828, an Episcopal church had been founded.[18] The first newspaper appears to have been established by Tom Davenport, although there is disagreement as to whether this first paper was the *Tuscaloosa Republican*, said to have been established in 1819, or the *American Mirror*, said to have been established in 1820.[19]

By most accounts, from 1816 to 1826, most of the early settlers lived in "dirty, small sod and mud cabins" that had leaky roofs, and which also had "rough boards on the ground" that served as floors. The population of the as yet unincorporated town of Tuscaloosa was only a few hundred in 1818. It had increased to 8,229 by 1820 and 13,646 by 1830 (by which time one-third of that population was African American).[20] James H. Dearing moved to Tuscaloosa in 1819 and built a log storehouse on Main Street. In 1827 he built a mansion, which is now known as the University Club, on University Boulevard and Queen City Boulevard.[21]

After several years of dragging its feet, the US Congress passed an act establishing the Alabama Territory on March 3, 1817, with St. Stephens "the most flourishing town" in the territory, as its seat of government until the Territorial Legislature deemed otherwise. President Monroe appointed

Dr. William Wyatt of Georgia as Governor.[22] The first meeting of the Territorial Legislature was on January 19, 1818, in St. Stephens at the Douglas Hotel.[23] On February 6, 1818, the Territorial Legislature created the county of Tuscaloosa. This was modified a week later, as well as a year later, when the Legislature created more counties in West Alabama. The city of Tuscaloosa had been incorporated earlier by the Alabama Legislature on December 13, 1819.[24] What is now known as Tuscaloosa County proper was fully realized by the Alabama Legislature on December 20, 1820.[25]

Notes

[1] Matthew William Clinton, *Tuscaloosa, Alabama: Its Early Days, 1816–1865* (Tuscaloosa, Ala: The Zonta Club, 1958), 65.

[2] Albert Burton Moore, *History of Alabama and Her People* (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1927), 385.

[3] See Clinton, *Tuscaloosa*, 3 and Thomas McAdory Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography,* vol. 2 (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921), 1334–1335.

[4] Sarah Haynsworth was later married to Alabama Governor, John Gayle. Gayle was born September 11, 1792 in Sumter District, South Carolina. He graduated from South Carolina College in 1813 and moved to Alabama soon thereafter. Gayle was Alabama's seventh Governor, serving from 1833 through 1837. He was an avid supporter of the state bank, accessed March 19, 2011, http://www.archives.state.al.us/govs_list/g_gaylej.html.

[5] Both quotes are from Lucille Griffith, *History of Alabama: 1540–1900* (Northport, Ala.: Colonial Press, 1962), 191.

[6] See James Webb, *Born Fighting* (New York: Broadway, October 11, 2005).

[7] And indeed, today, one could argue.

[8] William Warren Rogers, et al., *Alabama: The History of A Deep South State* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1994), 54–55.

[9] An alternate date for the making of this map might be 1718.

[10] Bossu was a French Captain of the Marines who visited the Louisiana area in 1751 and 1761. For more information, accessed March 11, 2011, see http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Places/America/United_States/Louisiana/_Texts/LHQ/1/3/Bossu_Exceprts*.html.

[11] Information in this paragraph is from Owen, *History/Dictionary*, 1334.

[12] "General John Coffee was a frontier merchant, a soldier, a promoter and a planter, who epitomized the type of dependable, public-spirited private citizen who contributed substantially to the development of Tennessee and North Alabama in the 19th century," accessed March 11, 2011, http://www.cba.ua.edu/alumni/hof/general-john-coffee.

[13] Quote is from *The Story of Alabama: A History of the State,* vol. 1 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1949), 203. Crockett returned to

Tuscaloosa for a visit in 1815. A letter from August Zannelly to Dr. James A. Anderson, May 16, 1940, Hoole Special Collections, University of Alabama, notes that one of the soldiers, Colonel John McKee, liked the area so much that he returned in 1821 and registered his name for land sales.

[14] See Ben A. Green, *A History of Tuscaloosa, Alabama: 1816–1949* (University/Tuscaloosa, Ala.: Confederate Publishing Company, 1980), 3; and Owen, *History/Dictionary*, 1334–1335.

[15] See "Factors in the Early History of Tuscaloosa, Alabama: 1816–1846," UA masters thesis by Morris R. Boucher, 1947; and Owen, *History/Dictionary*, 1333.

[16] Marie Bankhead Owen, *The Story of Alabama: A History of the State,* vol. 1 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1949), 203.

[17] See Green, *Tuscaloosa*, 3, and Owen, *History/Dictionary*, 1334–1335.

[18] See Boucher, "Factors," 28, 46, 64, 66, and 69.

[19] Ibid., 17, and Owen, *History/Dictionary*, 1333.

[20] Quotes are, respectively, from Owen, *Story*, 200 and 203. Population figures are from Boucher, "Factors," 32.

[21] Concerning the mansion: "James H. Dearing, a steamboat captain and member of the Alabama Legislature. Dearing spent $14,000 to erect, reputedly under the direction of architect William Nichols, the magnificent structure that continues to maintain its position of imposing authority on University Boulevard. The house had the same general appearance it has today, although it had no sun porch on the south side, and in the center of the roof there was a square platform from which the smoke of the river boats could be seen as they approached the town bringing supplies from Mobile. The kitchen stood on the north side, separate from the house but connected by a covered walk to the north porch....The Dearings lived only two years in this beautifully planned home because students from the University helped themselves to their poultry and fruit and trampled Mr. Dearing's cherished flowers. Dearing noted in a letter to the editor of the local paper that 'night after night and week after week . . .companies of students came by . . . singing songs, most obscene, and using language that was most disgraceful and offensive to decency.'" See, accessed March 19, 2011, http://www.universityclub.ua.edu/pages/history.html. Also, see Boucher, *Factors*, 28–29.

[22] Quote and information are from Owen, *Story*, 191. The town of old St. Stephens, now St. Stephens Historical Park, was located sixty-seven miles north of Mobile in Washington County, on a bluff that overlooked the Tombigbee River. For more information see http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1674.

[23] Moore, *History*, 134.

[24] Owen, *Story,* 203.

[25] Ibid., 516.

CHAPTER TWO

NASCENT UNIVERSITY

Analysis

On April 20, 1818, Congress officially apportioned a township in territorial Alabama to be dedicated for the use of a seminary when the territory became a state.[1] This was the catalyst that enabled the Territorial Legislature to begin consideration of a state university. On March 2, 1819, Congress passed an enabling act, which allowed the citizens of the Alabama Territory to write and adopt a constitution, a prerequisite to becoming a state.[2] Congress also added an additional township to be used as an endowment for the state seminary. The Constitutional Convention met at Huntsville[3] from July 5 through August 2, 1819.

Accepting the provisions of statehood as set forth by the US Congress, including the proposal for a state seminary, the convention wrote the education portion of the constitution to read as follows: "Schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged in this State." The General Assembly "shall take like measures…for the support of a Seminary of learning…for the promotion of the arts, literature, and the sciences."[4] Further, "It shall be the duty of the General Assembly, as early as may be, to provide effectual means for the improvement and permanent security of the funds and endowments of such an institution." The University of Alabama had been officially conceived.[5]

Pursuant to this mandate, on December 17, 1819, three days after Alabama had been granted statehood, Governor William Wyatt Bibb,[6] noting the generous donation of land made by the US Congress for a seminary of learning, called upon the General Assembly to officially incorporate an institution to be known as the State University of Alabama. The General Assembly [hereafter referred to as the Alabama Legislature or the Legislature] appropriated monies needed for such outlays, and authorized the Governor to appoint commissioners to manage the lands set aside by Congress.[7]

The Legislature also passed an act that authorized Governor Bibb to appoint commissioners in the townships of the counties that had been given as an endowment to the University. The Governor then authorized these commissioners to lease the land in tracts through January 1, 1821. The funds realized from these leases were to be set aside for anticipated outlays of construction and materials needed to construct and open the state seminary.[8] On December 18, 1820, the Legislature officially named the seminary-to-be, **"**The University of the State of Alabama."[9]

In December 1821, at its third annual session, the Alabama Legislature appointed a Board of Trustees, made up of the Governor ex-officio and twelve men (two from each judicial circuit, to be chosen by ballot of both houses to serve for three years), to administer the new University, to sell the congressionally ceded lands as needed to fund the enterprise, and to submit annual financial reports to the Legislature. In a subsequent session, the Legislature ruled that the site was to be chosen by joint ballot of both houses.[10] In 1822, six more Board members, who were required to live within fifty miles of the University, were added to the Board of Trustees, their terms set to coincide with the terms of the original members. The Alabama General Assembly allowed an honorarium of three dollars per day, plus three dollars for each twenty-five-mile segment that a Trustee had to travel to attend meetings[11]

During the first meeting of the newly appointed Board of Trustees, the recording secretary of the Board was directed to write, "In pursuance of an Act of the General Assembly of the State of Alabama, passed at Cahawba, the 18th day of December in the year of our Lord, 1821, entitled, 'An Act supplementary to an Act to establish a State University,' a meeting of the Trustees was begun, and held, in the town of Tuscaloosa on the fourth day of April, 1822."[12]

One of the first directives of the Board was the hiring of individuals to continue the leasing of the tracts the federal government had given as an endowment to create and sustain a state university. The Board president also asked members to consider a location for the University. In their final action, the Board authorized the designing of a University seal.[13] Attendees of these meetings included Governor Israel Pickens,[14] George W. Owen,[15] Hume R. Field,[16] Henry Hitchcock,[17] John McKinly,[18] Thomas Fearn,[19] Jack Shackleford,[20] Henry Minor,[21] Robert W. Carter,[22] and Clements C. Billingslea.[23] In December 1822, the Alabama Legislature appropriated fifty thousand dollars "from the receipts of such

sales" and leases of University lands "for the erection of necessary buildings," while earmarking excess funds to be used only toward "the benefit of the University."[24]

In 1823, the Board of Trustees, in its annual report to the state, complained of problems in ascertaining the amount of income from land sales. Members requested that the Legislature reiterate its ruling that authorized the application of the funds from the sale of the lands to be used only for "the construction of the necessary buildings for the University." Because the Legislature had not yet chosen a site, the Trustees were obliged to wait for the Legislature to act before they could appropriate monies to begin building the State University. The Trustees authorized funds from the University Land Funds for payment of Board expenses, including advertising the sale of lands in newspapers, creation of a University seal (for which fifty dollars was paid to George S. Gaines),[25] surveying of lands, and general printing. University funds from land sales and bonds totaled $132,503.07 as of December 16, 1823, before expenses noted above were subtracted.[26]

That same year, the Trustees deposited $52,602.75 into the state treasury. Governor Pickens, who was an avid supporter of a state university, considered the creation and funding of a state bank as more important. Pickens, who intensely disliked the presence of the federal bank in the state, persuaded the Legislature of the imminent need for a state bank. On December 20, 1823, the Bank of Alabama was established by the Legislature. The bank's first president was Andrew Pickens, brother of Governor Pickens.

Pickens was also aware of the keen need to fund the bank both at its birth and during its first years of service. Eying the steady inflow of funding from the State University land sales and leases, Pickens convinced the Legislature that forcing the University Board of Trustees to invest $100,000 of these funds into the state bank would keep the bank afloat and allow the state to have a major influence in the financial affairs of the new state. The Legislature then directed that all funds from the sale of University lands be deposited as part of the capital of the new bank.

The Trustees strongly, but futilely, protested this legislative action as a state appropriation of funds that had been raised solely for the benefit of the University. Although funds that were required to be on deposit in the state bank were originally limited to $100,000 in 1826, the Legislature

changed the law such that all University land sales were to be deposited in the Bank of Alabama.[27]

Pickens realized that the flow of dollars from the sale and lease of University lands would slow and diminish once the Board of Trustees began appropriating funding for the erection of University buildings. The Governor adroitly manipulated the selection of a definite location for the state University to keep the issue in flux for several years, during which the funds from land sales kept the state bank in business.

Misuse of these funds by the bank and the Legislature over the ensuing years cost the University tens (if not hundreds) of thousands of dollars in losses of legitimate revenue. Scant records appear to remain of the land leases, payments, and amounts given to the bank. These records are likely untrustworthy. Many records were made, but are apparently lost to history.[28] In 1848, the Board, in a hotly worded report to the Legislature, claimed that the state owed the University at least $255,745.73. Dr. W. S. Wyman later made the bitter remark that the prescribed investment of University funds into the state bank was a "forced loan" in which the University was "not made a stockholder in the bank to share in the profits."[29]

Agents of the Trustees continued selling and leasing University land over the next several years, depositing the funds into the state bank. The Trustees noted that sometime before or in 1827, the federal government accidentally sold 904 acres of University-grant lands in Madison County. In 1829, the government ceded an equivalent number of acres to the original grant.[30]

Meanwhile, the Board fumed at the Legislature for putting politics above the educational needs of the state.[31] Political infighting among the Legislators was due to disagreement as to the selection of a location for the state University. Encouraged by Governor Pickens, it seemed that every region of the state had a town in which its Legislator wanted to situate the school. Locations lobbied by Legislators included Greensboro (Hale County), Athens (Limestone County), Lagrange (Colbert County), Montevallo (Shelby County), Honeycomb Springs (Jackson County), Moulton (Lawrence County), Somerville (Morgan County), Davis (Autauga County), Greenville (Butler County), Village Springs (Jefferson County), Elyton (Jefferson County), Gage's (Perry County), and Tuscaloosa (Tuscaloosa County).[32]

An ongoing matter of concern to the Legislators was the problem of continual flooding of Cahaba, the first state capital, which was located near the confluence of the Cahaba and Alabama rivers. This had been the choice of the Territorial Legislature, and the State Legislature had been meeting there since 1820. However, as the state population began to see a heavy concentration in its eastern counties, residents demanded a capital that was more centrally located. The 1825–26 Legislature provided an amendment to the state Constitution, passed by a vote of the people, to move the capital to Tuscaloosa. This gave Tuscaloosa legislators a little more clout in state affairs.[33]

On December 13, 1827, the Board of Trustees notified the Legislature that "the financial situation of the University will now authorize the commencement of this great and desirable work." The Board, in making this publicly known, was hoping to prod the Legislature into acting sooner rather than later in naming a region to be developed as the University grounds.[34] The maneuver worked. A few days later, the Legislature took up the issue of location. All the locations noted above were placed into nomination by their respective legislators. After nineteen sometimes contentious ballots, Tuscaloosa was chosen, and the legislators directed that the buildings be erected within fifteen miles of the town.[35]

The Board of Trustees, during its next scheduled meeting in March 1828, concurred with the selection of Tuscaloosa, noting, "It is the opinion of this Board that a site for the University buildings should be selected within [an unnamed number of] miles of the Town of Tuskaloosa, provided a suitable place can be found within that distance."[36] Three locations were mentioned as being in contention for the construction of the campus, including Marr's Field, on the Huntsville Road (now University Boulevard); Childress' Place, which was also on the Huntsville Road; and Taber's Place, although no record seems to remain that would locate Taber's Place.[37]

On March 22, the Board narrowed the location in Tuscaloosa to Marr's Field, which lay one and one-quarter miles east of Tuscaloosa. As a bonus, this land was already part of the land Congress had donated for the purpose of the University. The acreage was 1062.88 acres. Major Marr was a "wealthy plantation owner"[38] who had been growing crops on this land at the time the location was selected. William R. Smith, an early University of Alabama student, and later, University President, recalls that this person was Major William M. Marr, whose home stood "on or near

the spot where the steward's hall is now located." Smith also recalls that Marr's slave cabins were located "along the brow of the hills overlooking the ravine running north toward the river; at the foot of this ravine issued numerous springs of delicious water; the largest of these springs was known by name as Marr's Spring."[39] After one final vote of the Board, "Marr's field on the University land" was "therefore declared by the President of the Board to be duly selected the scite [sic] on which the University buildings were to be erected."[40]

The Board purchased the adjacent fifty acres to serve as a moral buffer zone between the University and the town proper (i.e., to prevent local rabble-rousers from exerting an undesirable influence on students). The fifty acres were purchased from James Paul, a tinsmith, for $1,250.[41] This tract would also provide clay and trees for building purposes.[42] The nearby quarries would supply stone for not only the University but also for the State Capitol and state bank buildings. By the end of 1828, contracts had been awarded for the first buildings, and the Board and Legislature began to refer to the University proper.[43] In addition, the first slave was purchased.[44]

The Board of Trustees created the following standing committees in 1830 to take care of day-to-day business: University land, property and grievances, the library, accounts and claims, and University of Alabama regulations. A committee was also created to draft the Board's annual report to the Legislature.[45]

During the eight years between the naming of the University and selection of a location, the young state of Alabama had begun to climb out of its infancy. Most of the young boys who comprised that first 1831 University of Alabama class were born between 1807 and 1816,[46] thus giving them the distinction of being the first non-Native American children and teenagers to have matured in the state during this period.[47] It was their mostly Scots-Irish and English parents who defined the life, traditions, and work ethic during this period, and these traits were passed along to their children, who brought these individualities with them to the University in 1831. Since these characteristics and mores had a distinct bearing on the functioning of the University, the following section is a synopsis of life in Alabama in the 1820s and 1830s.

Notes

[1] *3 U.S. Statutes at Large*, 1818, 466–67.
[2] *3 U.S. Statutes at Large,* (1819), 489, and *Independent Monitor* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: May 29, 1841). Also see Moore, *History*, 136.
[3] Huntsville is considered the first English-speaking settlement in Alabama, settled by John Hunt around 1805.
[4] Quotes are from *Constitution of State of Alabama,* 1819.
[5] Quote is from Willis G. Clark, *History of Education in Alabama: 1789–1889* (Washington, DC: Washington Government Printing Office, 1889), 31. Clark was a University Trustee from 1876 through 1898. For more information, see *Constitution of State of Alabama* 1819, and *Crimson-White,* July 25, 1923.
[6] The Alabama Department of Archives notes that Alabama's first Governor, William Wyatt Bibb, was born in Amelia City, Virginia. He entered politics while residing in Georgia, serving in the US Congress. He was appointed Governor of the Alabama Territory in 1817 and was elected as the state's first Governor, serving 1819 through part of 1820. "He died on July 10, 1820. William Wyatt Bibb's brother, Thomas, automatically became acting Governor by virtue of his position as President of the Alabama Senate. William Wyatt Bibb was married to Mary Freeman," accessed March 28, 2011, http://www.archives.alabama.gov/govs_list/g_bibbwm.html.
[7] Willis G. Clark and H. Taylor, *Memorial Record of Alabama* (Madison, Wis.: Brant and Fuller Publishing, 1893, reprinted by Spartansburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company, 1976), 154.
[8] See Clark, *Education*, 31 and Harry Toulmin, *Digest of the Laws of Alabama*, 1823, 544.
[9] Notes from "2nd Annual Session of the General Assembly of State of Alabama," 1820, and *Independent Monitor* (Tuscaloosa newspaper), May 29, 1841.
[10] Notes from "3rd Annual Session of the General Assembly of State of Alabama," 1821; Clarke, *Memorial*, 155; and Owen, *History/Dictionary*, 1356.
[11] See "Acts Passed at the Third Session of the General Assembly of the State of Alabama," 1821, 3–8. While this compensation was to end when the University opened its doors, records of its cessation are murky.
[12] Quote and information are from the "Journal of the Proceedings of the Board of Trustees," [hereafter referred to as "Minutes of the Trustees"] April 4, 1822, 1.
[13] "Minutes of the Trustees," 1822, James Anderson, and *Crimson-White Centennial Edition,* May 1931, 2.
[14] Alabama's third Governor, Israel Pickens, hailed from North Carolina. He served from 1821 through 1825.
[15] George Washington Owen was born October 20, 1796 in Virginia. He graduated from the University of Nashville and began practicing law in Alabama at about the time Alabama became a state. He was later a Congressman and Mayor of Mobile.
[16] According to Ancestry.com, accessed March 11, 2011, Hume Rigg Field was a Virginian who moved to Alabama in 1821. Field was the first Judge of Tuscaloosa County Court, Alabama, serving from 1821 to 1827.

[17] According to the online *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, "Henry Hitchcock (1792–1839) was a leading citizen of early Alabama who served as the first secretary of the Alabama Territory, participated in the writing of Alabama's first constitution, won election as the state's first attorney general, authored the first book published in Alabama, received appointment as a United States district attorney, and served on the Alabama Supreme Court as both an associate justice and chief justice," accessed March 20, 2011, http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1095.

[18] This is likely former Virginian John McKinley who was serving as a representative to the Alabama Legislature at the time. He was appointed in 1837 as an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, accessed March 19, 2011, http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=m000519.

[19] Born in Virginia in 1789, Fearn moved to Alabama in 1810. He became a well-respected physician. He was an Alabama state representative from 1822 through 1829 and was also a UA Trustee. Owen, *History/Dictionary*, 567.

[20] Genealogy.com notes that John "Jack" Shackleford was a physician who bought a plantation in Shelby County, Alabama in 1818. Shackleford was probably born in Virginia, accessed March 24, 2011, http://genforum.genealogy.com/shackleford/messages/414.html.

[21] Judge Henry Minor, originally a Virginian, was an attorney general in Alabama, and later served on the Alabama Supreme Court, accessed March 29, 2011, http://www.theowensfirm.com/CM/Custom/TOCMinor-SearcyOwensAlmondHouse.asp.html.

[22] No information has been found on Robert W. Carter other than his being a UA Trustee from 1821 through 1823. *Register of the Officers and Students of the University of Alabama, 1831–1901* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama, n.d.), 32–47. Thomas Waverly Palmer is noted as editor. [Subsequent citations are in the form of *Register of Officers*, page number.]

[23] James Clement Billingslea was born in Georgia and became a physician. He lived in Marion, Alabama for some years. See Jeannette Tillotson Acklen, *Tennessee Records: Bible Records and Marriage Bonds*, n.d., 225.

[24] All quotes are from Clark, *Memorial*, 155.

[25] If this is George Strother Gaines, he was born in North Carolina in 1784. He moved to the Alabama Territory in 1804 to work at the Choctaw Trading House at St. Stephens. He worked extensively with Alabama Native Americans, accessed March 13, 2011, http://www.history1700s.com/articles/article1018.shtml.

[26] Quote and information are from *Annual Report of the Board of Trustees to the Alabama Legislature*, December 16, 1823. No page numbers available.

[27] For preceding paragraph, see Clark, *Memorial*, 156.

[28] One story accuses a student associated with the storage of these documents with accidentally burning some of these records in his fireplace on a particularly cold day when he could not find other means to build a fire.

[29] Quote is from Owen, *History/Dictionary*, 1356–57. For more information on the bank debacle, see Clark, *Education*, 34; James Anderson, *Crimson-White*

Centennial Edition, May 1931, 1–2; and *Alabama Legislature Committee Report on the State University*, 1848.
[30] "Minutes of the Trustees," 1822–32, 107.
[31] Ibid., December 22, 1826, 90.
[32] See *Independent Monitor*, Tuscaloosa, May 29, 1841, and Clark, *Education*, 36. The counties listed for each town are based on maps of the time. Any that are found to be inaccurate will be corrected in future volumes.
[33] According to the Alabama Department of Archives, Andrew Dexter, a Tuscaloosa founding father, had long been holding property in Tuscaloosa in anticipation of such a move. This piece of land was often referred to as goat hill because it was prime pastureland. When the capital moved to Tuscaloosa, the appellation, goat hill, stuck, and is often used today when referring to the state capital and/or politics, which has been seated in Montgomery since 1846, accessed March 11, 2011, http://www.archives.state.al.us/capital/capitals.html.
[34] "Minutes of the Trustees," December 13, 1827, 103.
[35] Quote is from "Minutes of the Trustees," December 13, 1827, 103. Other information is from *Senate Journal,* December 29, 1827*; Independent Monitor,* Tuscaloosa, May 29, 1841*;* Clark, *Education*, 36; and Clark, *Memorial*, 156.
[36] "Minutes of the Trustees," March 18, 1828, 123.
[37] Ibid.
[38] William R. Smith Sr., *Reminiscences of A Long Life: Historical, Political, and Literary,* vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Press of Rufus H. Darby, 1889), 202. Hoole Special Collections, University of Alabama.
[39] All quotes and information are from Smith, *Reminiscences*, 202.
[40] See "Minutes of the Trustees," March 22, 1828*;* Clark, *Education*, 36; James Anderson, *Crimson-White Centennial Edition*, May 1931, 2; and "Ordinations and Resolutions of the Board of Trustees," 1831. A natural spring is still located on the University campus on Marr's Field. Marr's Street (located between Campus Drive and Stadium Drive) and *Marr's Field*, one of UA's literary journals, are both named in honor of the original site. University of Alabama (or UA) records reveal that a Major Marr's son, Daniel Price Perkins Marr, enrolled as one of the first students at the University in 1831. *Register of Officers*, 42.
[41] Boucher, "Factors," 59.
[42] *Alabama Senate Journal,* 1828.
[43] "Minutes of the Trustees," December 13, 1828, 145.
[44] In the ensuing years, a number of African American slaves are either purchased or hired to build and maintain the campus. For the complete story of slavery in connection with the University of Alabama, see part VII.
[45] Smith, *Reminiscences*, 202.
[46] *Register of Officers*, 32–37.
[47] It should be noted that there were African American slave children who passed their teen years in the state during this time; however, these adolescents are generally relegated to the dustbins of history, unnamed and unremembered.

CHAPTER THREE

ALABAMA IN THE 1820S AND EARLY 1830S

Analysis

By the close of the 1820s, Alabama's population stood at 309,527, with an estimated third of that number being African American slaves who worked on the larger farms and plantations. This represented a population increase of 142 percent since 1820. The four generally recognized major regions of population in the state were the Tennessee Valley area, the Tombigbee district (which included Tuscaloosa at its northernmost reach), the Alabama River district (which included Montgomery), and the old Mobile district.[1]

Most Alabamians were small farmers or plantation owners. At first, in the 1810s and early 1820s, many (if not most) farm homes and plantation homes were actually two-room log cabins, usually with a breezeway built between the two large rooms. Housewives were often the administrators of the plantation, while the men in the family were engaged in the oversight of workers, work, and financial matters. Sometimes, the family of the planter constituted the entire workforce and administration of the plantation, living in these log cabins until the plantation afforded them the luxury of better living quarters (i.e., plantation mansions), workers and slaves, and time for the leisurely activities now associated with antebellum southern plantations.[2]

Many families planted climbing plants, such as the *Glycine frutescens* (wisteria) with lilac-type blossoms, scarlet and crimson Cypress vines, and Trumpet Honeysuckles to adorn the entrances to these breezeways and to provide a little more shade during Alabama's hot summers. Rough-hewn logs were the primary source of lumber even in richer planters' homes during this early period. These logs could shrink and warp, resulting in crevices of an inch or more that had to be filled. Often, there were no windows in these houses; rather there was a twenty-four inch square cut into one of the rooms to provide extra ventilation and air. The door was