

Insert: Eldred Burder Teague, was born January 20, 1820 and died November 24, 1902, is buried in Columbiana City Cemetery. He also wrote several articles on the History of Columbiana, Shelby County, Alabama; many of these Columbiana articles I have transcribed on this website for the Shelby County Historical Society, Inc. Eldred Burder Teague is buried next to his wife, Louisa E. Teague, 1836-1887. Even though they may be incorrect, the same spelling and punctuation from these newspaper articles were used. There are a total of twelve "History of Shelby County" articles/letters in 1895 by Rev. E.B. Teague and all twelve, plus a "Letter to the Editor", were transcribed by Bobby Joe Seales in February 2013.

You can read more about Rev. E.B. Teague on our website
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~alshelby/Columbiana2.html>



**Transcribed by
Bobby Joe Seales**

The Chronicle
Columbiana, Alabama
Thursday, March 14, 1895

History of Shelby County

TO THE CHRONICLE:

I propose, as far as leisure, means and material can be commanded, to write up a succinct history of our county. 1. Its physical features, soil, minerals, water—power, etc. 2. Its people, representative men especially. 3. Courts and professional men. 4. Religious history. 5. Sand like topics. Beginning as soon as may be with the first topic, presuming on the kindness and hereby request honorable Mr. Aldrich can supply me with an account of the minerals of the county, especially of Cahaba valley; Esq. Needham Lee, of the lands and early settlement of Cahaba valley and original boundaries of the county. Mr. E.V. Caldwell of the lands, timber and minerals of Coosa valley. If this account can be made accurate, it will invite the attention of settlers, for the resources of the county are remarkable. I shall, from time to time, as the work progresses, expect every aid the older citizens can afford. Indeed the attempt will turn almost entirely on such aid.

E.B. Teague

Columbiana, March 9, 1895

The Chronicle
Columbiana, Alabama
Thursday, April 4, 1895

Sketches of the History of Shelby County.

BY REV. E.B. TEAGUE

No. 2.

Before the name Columbiana was adopted, the burgh was designated by a number of names, more commonly called "Coonsboro," as some say from a coon story; but I well remember the name was older at least than one of the stories (for I have heard a second), I give the real facts of one of them, as a matter of personal knowledge. Mr. Henry Brasher lived on the place the long-time home of Jefferson Elliott, on Four Mile creek. There was a large pond at the foot of the hill east of the first house built upon the place by the original owner, Levi Weaver, then occupied by Mr. Brasher. Ms. B. had been washing, and leaving her little boy, two or three years old, at the house, descended the hill to rinse the clothes in the clear pond. Presently she heard the child screaming, ran up the hill, and found a coon biting and scratching him in the face. With a mother's heroism, she seized the coon by the throat and choked it to death! But her sleeves being rolled up to the elbow, the coon scratched her arms severely. I saw the child and mother a week or two after on a visit to my mother, and looked at the scratches on both mother and child then cicatrizing. The other story is that something similar occurred at the spring in town, that part being then a wood. Of this I know nothing personally, but probably both occurrences may have taken place, are the real one been mislocated.

The first inhabitants of the place whom I best recollect were, first, Dr. Carter Roberts, who owned the place and adjoining farm now known as the Spencer place. He was a practicing physician, older brother of the famous Texan lawyer and statesman or run any Oran M. Roberts. They were raised in St. Clair county. The doctor was a man of property, having married the only daughter of a Mr. Bridges, whose property, it used to be told, was made over to him on condition of caring for the old man in his old age and "furnishing all the whiskey he wanted!" The first merchant I knew in the place, about 1828, was a Frenchman, whose name was Genet. His store stood about where the brick building known as Mrs. Sterrett's now stands, was built of poles, perhaps a story and a half high, the family occupied the back part and upstairs. Mr. Isaac Estell was the clerk and supervisor. Messrs. Thomas and Samuel Brasher, both in after years members of the legislature, who had a store a little while on the hill above the famous spring at the head of Bullace creek, next removed their business to the place. Merchants then embraced in stock dry goods, groceries, hardware and liquors. The Brasher brothers were men of reputation for high character and business capacity, and ultimately acquired a fine property. Their store at first stood where the residence of our worthy and genial druggist, Joseph Parker, now stands, indeed it may be a part of the old building. Soon after, Charles Mundine, who had occupied a year or two the same store at the head of Bullace creek, also removed to Columbiana, occupying a log building, as the Brashers, which stood where Mr. Amos Elliott now lives. He was regarded a sharp trader, and zealous and demonstrative as he was religiously, very frequently shouting, the boys used to tell hard tales on him and often made him the subject of sportive remarks. Mr. William Baker, the father of our venerable and beloved old citizen, Mr. James Baker, had a tavern where the burnt district now is, near the crossing of Main and College streets, the first frame building erected in town. The second one was that still standing opposite the jail. About the same time "Davie" Owen opened his hotel on the Spencer lot, having purchased the fine farm adjacent. Mr. Baker's was a popular house, but I was better acquainted

with Mr. Owen's. His table was profusely provided with everything appetizing, largely supplied from his extensive farm. Mrs. Owen, however, was the ruling spirit of the establishment, a woman of great force of character, and reputed somewhat of a *vigaro*, once provoking one of her boarders to subject her to treatment such as a man rarely suffers. Coming out of the Owen's house, after dinner at the presidential election, 1840 with Thomas P. Crawford, of Centerville, then a fellow-student at the University, smacking his lips he said, "You have mighty good eatins up here in Shelby."

We came near get into a scrape that day. It got abroad we were going to speak! We were not ready for such a fearful proposition, though very zealous young whigs. Then presently something quite amusing occurred. As we passed through the crowd an outlandish-looking stranger, considerably and his cups, pointed to the buttons and stars on our University uniform and exclaimed, "I once wore that star ten years!" Meaning, I suppose, in the U.S. navy.

About 1832, the brothers, A.A. Sterrett, Esq., and Dr. Major Sterrett, appeared among us, just entering upon professional life. "Judge" Sterrett, as we afterwards knew him so well, was of most sedate appearance, grave almost to sadness in after years. He became a proverb of professional diligence, and a fidelity in every relation of life; succeeded cleverly, married eligibly, a daughter of Mr. Henry Gooch, of the "Kingdom" and spent a long life, with the exception of a few years at Kingston, in Autauga county, legislator frequently, and for a time county and probate judge, with his chosen people. A model man, socially and religiously, a strange depression and discouragement, due perhaps to softening of the brain, shadowed his last days. The doctor was quite a contrast in bearing – joyous, even hilarious, old citizens even yet remember his ringing laugh. He was a successful physician, beloved by all, and greatly regretted when, after eight or ten years he passed away, short of the meridian of life. Pure, exemplarily pure, in all his habits, he was eminently worthy of the esteem always accorded him.

John M. McClanahan, lawyer, legislator, probate judge, commencing his career a few years later, was a most interesting character. Teaching an old field school awhile, he went off to Tennessee, two or three years to a higher institution, kept, as I have heard, by a scholarly uncle; returned a good scholar and himself taught a few years more grammar, mathematics, surveying – holding office as county surveyor; read law and soon came to the bar. At about twenty-six years of age he was elected to the legislature by almost a unanimous vote. He gradually gained position at the bar and before many years accumulated a fine estate. He was a man of rare sagacity, full of sound advice, which he affectionately dispensed to those who sought it. His old pupils revered him, and when the news came back from Louisiana, whither he had gone to retrieve his fortune lost in the war, that he was slain by lightning, many a sigh escaped his friends of departed years.

Dr. Thomas P. Lawrence, a contemporary for years, was a remarkable man. Highly educated, well read up in his profession and in general science and literature, it was a treat to converse with him. His somewhat rough and stern manner, however, repelled some people. He seemed like a man that some unexplained and hidden grief preyed upon. Careless of his toilet, for the most part, when dressed up and in genial mood, he was a Chesterfield in matters. When he spoke in public, as he sometimes did, he was a Yancey, filled with glowing and noble sentiments, that penetrated the very soul of his hearers. Though not religious, he occasionally manifested the deepest emotion on religious subjects. Leaving the community, after seven years for the West, it was rumored that he had returned to the ministry – which at the beginning of life he had exercised among the Methodists – among the Primitive Baptists. This imperfect picture of the times would lack shading if I should omit to mention "Dick" Shackelford, a man of finest personnel, of fluent and eloquent conversation, capable of anything he might attempt, whose life prospects were blasted by drink. He used to explain with great pathos, when in his cups: That having

acquired his law education, he became engaged to a "most accomplished girl," and the day of marriage was at hand, when unfortunately engaging in a social game of cards, not at all betting, the fact came to the knowledge of his prospective father-in-law, who at once interfered to break up the engagement. An explanation, he said, would have at once repaired the mischief, but he was too proud to make it, and so lost his deep first love; hence all his woes; hence a reckless, objectless life. His friends kept him up for years, but he gave way more and more to his unfortunate habits. At a late period he conceived a passion for another lady, when, wreck as he was, it was too late to expect encouragement. He lived, he died, he was buried; only in the last respect having a history much more enviable than the beasts that perish.

The Chronicle
Columbiana, Alabama
Thursday, April 11, 1895

Sketches of the History of Shelby County.

BY REV. E.B. TEAGUE

No. 3.

We learned from the "Memorial Record of Alabama," under the territorial government, justices of the peace were appointed by the governor. The constitution adopted in 1819, provided that a competent number of justices should be appointed for each county, in such mode and for such term of office as the general assembly might direct. Their jurisdiction in civil cases was limited to cases in which the amount in controversy should not exceed \$50, and right of appeal was given. When the legislature came to give effect to this provision of the constitution, two justices of the peace and one constable, were to be elected by the qualified electors within the limits of each militia captain's company in the several counties, the elections to be held by the commanding officer of each company and two freeholders or householders, all the white population eighteen years of age or over, to be eligible to vote. The provisions relating to justices of the peace remained substantially the same until the great social and political revolution accomplished by the war.

Under the territorial government the governor was empowered to appoint and commission five persons in every county, one of whom should be chief justice of orphan's court. Court was to be held twice a year. This court was given full power and authority to take the probate of wills, of conveyances, and to record the same: to issue letters testamentary and letters of administration. The first change in the law governing the county courts was the act under which one judge of the county court, for each county in the state was elected by joint vote of both houses of the general assembly. The records show that this mode of appointment went into effect with the admission of the state into the Union.

The sheriff opened the courts and territorial times: and if a quorum of justices were not found to be present, adjourned the court from time to time. Minutes were well kept, in a good hand, with correct orthography. The clerk styled the court, "the honorable the orphans' court," occasionally "the worshipful!" The first court according to the record, was held "on the fourth Monday of April one thousand eight hundred and eighteen, at William I. Wilson's the place appointed by law." This, I suppose, should be 1817, as the next minute says the court met February 1818, at court house," according to their adjournment." The justices were George Phillips, chief justice; Bennet Ware, Patric Hayes, justices. Presently the name of Nathan Lee [correction, should be Needham Lee], making four, appears as one of the justices. Then that of James Walker, making the "five," authorized to be appointed, though only three except in a single case, when there were four, ever sat together. The name of Thomas W. Smith also, once or twice, near the close of this term of county court, appears.

The name of Thomas W. Smith, as judge of the county court, is signed to the minutes Sept. 29th, 1821, two or three previous terms, having been adjourned by the sheriff in consequence of the absence of a quorum of justices or of the judge. The history of the justices is unknown, perhaps irrecoverable. That they were men of character is a necessary inference from their appointment by the governor, to whom doubtless they were recommended by the people. If, however, as I suppose, Bennet Ware was the father of the late distinguished Horace Ware, I have heard he was a man of note and great force of

character, who first suggested the feasibility of making iron from the ores about Montevallo, soon carried into effect by Horace Ware, Edmund King and Daniel E. Watrous, who made bar iron when I was a boy, forged by a trip hammer, on the large creek flowing by Montevallo. The hammer, on its anvil, which had for its handle a large square oaken beam, and weighing five hundred pounds, used to test the strength of the best men to lift it; few could do so. Of Mr. Smith, the first judge of the court, I have no means of knowing anything. The last minute signed by him is dated March 7th, 1825. From June 6th, 1825, to Nov. 6th, 1826, the minutes are signed by Joeb Lawler. Mr. Lawler, as I have heard and learned, came to the community a Montevallo, some years before, as a sort of general supervisor of the affairs of Edmund King: was soon made a justice of the peace: presently represented the county several times in the legislature: was appointed register of the land office for the district embracing the Creek nation, the last of whom were removed to Arkansas in the fall of 1836; became a member of congress, dying at Washington during his second term. He was a gifted Baptist preacher, whom when a boy, I often heard, maintaining his integrity like his honored successor, Judge Tarrant, amid the turmoil of politics. After Mr. Lawler, Leonard Tarrant became judge February 1827–1829. Judge Tarrant was a noted local Methodist preacher, a superior "school master," a farmer, and a legislator for several years. When Gen'l Jackson wanted an emigrating agent, who should protect the Indians as to their reserves, he inquired for an "honest man," and was pointed to Leonard Tarrant, though they told him the judge was a whig. For this he did not care, but true to his avowed maxim, "is he honest, is he capable?" at once appointed him. A more magnificent personnel than Judge Tarrant I never saw – full six feet high, erect as an arrow, a waist before he became corpulent like a grey hound, but powerfully muscular, with broad hips and massive chest, and a head and face like Apollo. I reckon he preached well, as I remember one of his sermons, on a funeral occasion, to this day, though when I heard it I was only ten years of age. The successors of these noble man received suitable notice in other connections.

The Chronicle
Columbiana, Alabama
Thursday, April 18, 1895

Sketches of the History of Shelby County.

BY REV. E.B. TEAGUE

No. 4.

1818-1830. – Some of the more remarkable early settlers of Coosa valley, between a serpentine range of hills and mountains and the Coosa river, constituting the eastern border of the county, were Maj. Rushing, owning a fine canebrake farm at the mouth of Wauxahatchee creek, with two good millseats on a small stream running through it, a man of brains and energy, not so estimable in other respects; coming up the valley some six or eight miles, to the neighborhood called the "Kingdom," a garden spot some three miles square, and three miles east of Columbiana. Thomas and James McAdams, Samuel McClanahan, who lived near if not on the iron lands, were now stands the village of Shelby with extensive iron works; Henry Gooch, who raised a number of most ladylike daughters: a little later, George Hill, who several times represented the county in the legislature – a man of sense and great worth; about 1832, Wade Hampton Griffin, a red hot nullifier, from whom I imbibed, when a boy of twelve, my notions of the tariff; up toward the head of Beeswax creek, William Johnson, the father of a group of beautiful and refined daughters, who to the regret of everybody, died young: later Judge Tarrant. On Bullace creek, running into the river a little higher up, Henry Brasher, the ancestor of the esteemed men of the name still or lately among us; David Owen, a man well read up in Revolutionary and political history, once sent to the legislature; James Brasher, who in old age lived very humbly, making split-bottom chairs for a support, a Methodist preacher, whom I first heard read Greek from the Gospel of John, and who frequently said from the pulpit, "If you believe my **word the** original says" so and so. He was very emotional, and I think able, though a voice palsied by age, impaired the interest with which otherwise he would have been heard. Then came, above Yellowleaf creek, Rev. J.M. Scott, a man of wealth and very exemplary character, who live to be a hundred years old: William Kidd, a man of excellent character, whose sons, Willis, Rev. William W. and John M., were of similar note; still higher up, near Harpersville, John Kidd. These brothers, William Sr., and John, were prominent, the former in the Baptist church, Big Spring, later removed to Harpersville, the latter, in the Methodist church at Harpersville. At this place annual camp meetings were held through the thirties, where many encamping in cabins and tents dispensed a wonderful hospitality to all who, men and beasts, chose to resort thither. John Kidd, a man of large means, was the leading spirit. In a noble grove of great old aboriginal oaks, a vast board arbor was erected, under which a thousand people often gathered to hear the gospel; great revivals took place, and many united with the church. The services were often protracted through the whole night, making the midnight air vocal with shouts and cries of penitence. Dr. John Singleton, father of the late Dr. William R. Singleton, so noted as a model man, was the leading physician for both communities. The Harpers, after whom the village was named, were numerous. Higher up the valley still, ultimately on Spring Creek, settled James V. McGraw, who had been the first merchant at Harpersville. He was a very worthy citizen, of great enterprise, and became a large planter as well as successful merchant. Still higher up, on Kelly's creek, the northern boundary of the county, was John Martin, father of the widely known and greatly esteemed T.J. Martin, merchant, planter and land owner. Mr. Samuel Wallace, coming later into the county, and settling on and around the famous sixteenth section, below the Big Spring, must not be unnoticed. He was a man of wealth, like two other esteemed citizens, parent of a number of remarkable daughters, and of Dr. Robert Wallace, a marvel of amiability,

as also of the much esteemed Captain W.W. Wallace. This catalogue must here end, no doubt to the great relief of the printer. If I had the skill of Homer, who made poetry out of a catalogue of the Grecian ships with which Troy was beleaguered, I might protract the list, and mention many others equally worthy, unknown however to the writer. The Harpersville community was noted for intelligence, schools, and a high degree of culture, for those days. The first temperance society had its nucleus in that community. Having become a member at ten years of age, I attended a meeting of the society May 6th, 1830, and listen to an eloquent address by Mr. Jasper Kidd, that thrilled me with its fervor. The gifted author was just out of Lagrange college, a man whose fine person and voice, would have been attractive without his eloquence. A cousin of his, named Hall, a blind man, of superior talents, interested us very much with repeated remarks. The society was soon dissolved, the pledge being conditioned on the pleasure of the party taking it.

The Chronicle
Columbiana, Alabama
Thursday, April 25, 1895

Sketches of the History of Shelby County.

BY REV. E.B. TEAGUE

No. 5.

1816–1830. – Cahaba valley is separated from Coosa valley on the east by a line of hills and mountains. The two valleys lie parallel to each other, extending nearly north and south. Its general width is two and one-half miles, but broadening at the upper and lower ends of that part of it within the county of Shelby to some five miles. Of the early settlers of the upper end I have no information; in the lower end where Col. Isaac M. Johnson, settling near Pelham; Moses Johnson, "Uncle Mose," as he was familiarly called, who for a long time collected taxes of the county, north of Montevallo, and William Johnson, on Beeswax creek in Coosa valley, as elsewhere mentioned. The father of these worthy citizens, however, brought them into the county, Abraham Johnson. Abraham Johnson was a Virginian, born in 1756, a soldier in Washington's army, and was with him at the siege and surrender of Yorktown. Removing thence to Tennessee he presently came into Jefferson county, this state, and there opened the first farm ever settled in the county; making a crop there with three boys, while the rest of the family were left in Tennessee; he returned to them leaving two of the boys in Jefferson county among the Indians. They had a joyful meeting with the boys who had staid sometime alone, but were unmolested, safe and sound. The venerable father and grandfather lies buried in the family burial ground near the former home of William Johnson, head of Beeswax creek, now occupied by Mrs. John Johnson. In the same neighborhood with Moses Johnson were the Crosses, Harless, Harkins and the Crowsons, Rev. Moses and Richard. After the Wilson family settling there, was Montevallo at first called Wilson's Hill. The heads of this family were Benjamin and Jesse Wilson, the former father of Dr. John Wilson, so well known as an honest man, who had no patience with shams, pretensions or untrustworthiness. Edmund King was a contemporary settler, a man of wealth, having a large farm just out of Montevallo, afterwards planting on a large scale on the Alabama river below Selma, in Dallas County. Mr. King was a man of peculiarities, somewhat angular, but withal of substantial worth. A story was told of him having a suit with a mechanic before a justice's court for \$50. The mechanic employed a lawyer, but Mr. King argued his own case. It was given in his favor, whereupon he took out \$50, and cleared his throat a time or two, as was his wont when a little excited, handed it to his antagonist, saying; "Here, I didn't care for the money but wanted my rights." Daniel Watrous was among these early settlers, an able lawyer, who did a fine practice, farmed somewhat extensively and accumulated money. He had little expenses as he was a bachelor. As he grew old he became careless about his practice, turning it over to his pupils, F.W. Bowden, and especially to John S. Storrs, a clever young lawyer, who after a successful career, as lawyer and legislator, the successor, we may say in both respects, of Col. Watrous died in the prime of life. Samuel W. Mardis, a singularly gifted lawyer rose into great reputation along side of Col. Watrous, often represented the county in the legislature, afterwards, having removed to Talladega county, in the congress of the United States, managing a case or two of great importance in the supreme court of the United States at that period. James M. Nabors was a most worthy representative of the county in early days both in the lower house and in the senate of the state. His brother, Abe Nabors, to his infinite mortification, being elected tax collector, defaulted for the whole amount of taxes and his securities had it to pay. It was lost in gambling. The honest fellow, however, before many years came back and payed up the whole amount, interest and all. A little below Montevallo, on the French Nabors' place, settled

Mr. Sterrett or his widow, the father of the well-known citizens, Judge and Dr. Sterrett. He died and his widow became successively Mrs. Stevens, Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Woods. "Aunt Sally Woods," as we called her in late life, was a remarkable woman, managing her business, complicated by the decease of several husbands with great skill, said to have attracted the attention of Judge Allen so as to terminate in their marriage. She was often criticized, but I always replied none but a superior woman could have raised such a family as David, Alphonso and Major Sterrett; Andrew B. Stevens, a model young man as I knew him in college, Mrs. Dr. Moseley, Mrs. Browne and Mrs. Brooks. Becoming acquainted with her in 1836, when I first went to the University, I was admirably entertained when stopping at her house. Never after college days which she charged me, though frequently stopping with my family, we became close friends. I was told by a man who had been her overseer, that she was a most just and generous proprietor, and remarkable for her liberalities and attention to the poor. Let her, though late, have due credit; such energetic characters are always criticized. I honor those who do something, though the strain of great trials leave scars on the mind and heart that make character less lovely than it might otherwise be.

Of the earlier business men of Montevallo or other communities of the valley I can supply little information. Mr. William Johnson, of another family connection than those mentioned above, afterwards a famous merchant at Selma, told me he sold goods at Montevallo in 1816. There must therefore have been considerable population thereabouts at that date. I saw the place first in 1830. There was then apparently a business done there quite equal to any period since, except while the Selma and Dalton road stopped at the place. I knew well, a little later, a Mr. Fancher, whose headquarters were there, who peddled all over the county. I presume he came to the place in the early twenties, as I was a little fellow, no little interested in his grooming his own fine span of horses, as he often stopped overnight at my father's. I think he located as a merchant finally, giving up the peddling business.

Good schools were maintained, I suppose, from the beginning at Montevallo, as several young men were prepared for the University in the early thirties, some of them for the higher classes – Burwell Boykin, Thos. A. Walker, George D. S. Shortridge, son of Judge Eli Shortridge, who resided there a while, F.W. Bowden, Sr., and perhaps Andrew B. Stevens. This birdseye view must suffice, perhaps; after all an outline picture of the times may afford as much interest as a detailed account. If many parties equally worthy of notice are omitted let it be attributed to no partialities, but to necessary defect of information or to the currents of rumor over which I have had no control. A paper descriptive of the more numerous if less prominent class of people, and another on the early religious history of the county, I hope will leave me to an accurate description of the physical features, and especially the agricultural possibilities of our territory, the real inducement to writing these sketches.

The Chronicle
Columbiana, Alabama
Thursday, May 2, 1895

Sketches of the History of Shelby County.

BY REV. E.B. TEAGUE

No. 6.

I have, in other connections, spoken almost exclusively of those who on account of their talents, energies and enterprise impressed themselves on the community and made themselves conspicuous. This has been the habit of history from the heavy tome down to the pamphlet: but it is no more history than that which, in describing the physical features of a county, merely sketches the mountains and great vales, without reference to minerals, soil and products. It is meet, therefore, in this paper to give some account of the more numerous class of people; of the class who in former ages built the pyramids, turned Rome into marble; reared the cathedrals of the Middle Ages; who have founded modern cities; who run the factories; dig out of the earth the substance of mankind; man your navies and fill up the ranks of your armies.

The first saddlers of our county, mostly from the rural districts of South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia, were "A stubborn race flattering fearing none, who would shake hands with the king on his throne, and think it kindness to his majesty." They lived at home, owning their own cabin and eighty acres of land: the housewives spinning and weaving the cloth that clothed the "gude" man and his children, and the husband and father often tanning the leather and making the shoes of the family on the spot. Girls competed with each other in making the finest homespun garments and converting them into the neatest dresses. Conscious that they were the "bone and sinew of the county," when they needed anything not made at home they marched into the store and ask for what they wanted in a firm tone and untroubled manner, the soliciting party being the merchant, who felt sure of pay at the end of the year. They never thought of trading beyond their income; never dreaded pay day. The result was quietude, confidence and serenity. They despised caucuses and wireworking. Every one who chose ran for office, and everybody voted for whom he pleased. On going into a strange community, you could determine the property status of every family at the church or on other occasions of public gatherings by their apparel. This class of people were cherished by the law-makers, their rights jealously guarded, their significance understood. Men were esteemed according to character, not outward appearance. It was not their object to shine, but to deserve esteem by probity.

The people of those times were not free from the infirmities of human nature; many of them loved whiskey, which on public days they drank freely. It was not poisoned as now and did less mischief on this account, as well as because they did not drink it regularly, only at public gatherings. They thought it took six days in the week to do their work, rarely lounging around the village store for any purpose. Intoxicated men sometimes exhibited pugnaciousness, disdaining the use of any but nature's weapons, considering it cowardly to use others, even a stick. Larger men were not permitted to impose on smaller ones. I could name several who gained prowess, considered a distinction, in these primitive bouts: but it would be invidious and unnecessary to a picture of the times. Shooting did, however, sometimes take place, even in a clandestine way, at a little later period. Mr. Hughes McCormick, regarded and overbearing man by some, was in the transition to later methods killed with a shot gun, between the court house and Owen's tavern. Though there were many surmises it was never legally ascertained by

whom the homicide was committed. The Mexican war, and early forties had much to do with introducing the practice of using weapons into the rural districts of the county. The practice had earlier become common in the larger towns and cities – pistols and bowie knives. Gamblers especially often killing each other with these fearful instruments. The law soon effectually put down the nefarious practice.

A very unique element of the earliest settlers of Coosa Valley, Four Mile, and later on Yellowleaf, where the “Dutch,” as we sometimes call them, though they were not Hollanders. They were from that part of Lexington district, South Carolina, between Saluda and Broad rivers, known as the “Dutch Fork,” and the lower part of Newberry district. There, they were distinguished for industry, uprightness and enterprise. Among them were the Summers and Fairs, particularly the latter, since widely known his prominent citizens in lower Alabama. The Shelby settlers, the Saucers, Weavers, Farris, and others, whose descendents still abide among us, neighbors of my parents when I was a boy, were worthy of their South Carolina progenitors. It may be well to note the romantic history of these people. They were originally in part, Palatines from the “county Palatine” on the Rhone, and neighboring portions of “faderland,” first brought to England by George III. To rescue them from Catholic persecution; to which, as Lutherans, they were especially exposed. Maintained for a time at the public expense, murmurings arose, and they were presently removed to the colonies of America and valuable reservations given them in North and South Carolina. George III. was a good man as this act tends to show. Much inclined to piety, who once severely rebuked his bishop the bishop of Canterbury and primate of all England, for holding what he regarded a revel in his palace – not withstanding his high motions of parliamentary prerogative which provoked the rebellion of the colonies. His German proteges, therefore, were in a very perplexing predicament when the revolution came on. However, with few exceptions, they took the American side.

The old man George Salser used to have his German almanac and his German testament, one of which he sometimes read, to the great amusement of the young people unused to German gutturals. A foreign accent always attracted great attention in those days when few foreigners were seen in the interior of our county.

The Chronicle
Columbiana, Alabama
Thursday, May 9, 1895

Sketches of the History of Shelby County.

BY REV. E.B. TEAGUE

No. 7.

1820–1836. – I propose in this number jotting down with a tree hand recollection of the early religion of Shelby county, with such episodic matter as I chose or the laws of association may suggest. My first recollections of preaching were at “Chapel meeting house,” 1824–1830, before I understood what the preacher was talking about. I have, however, a vivid recollection, that the hewn-log house stood on top of the hill above the present house, and the west side of the graveyard; that is fronted westward; was about 18x24 feet in size; having one aisle through the middle; the seats, dressed slabs, jutting against the wall on either side, and without back. The sole entrance was a door in the west end, the light being admitted, I think, only by the door and a window back of the high box pulpit, in the end. The church was named, as I always understood, after Mr. Chapel, a local Methodist preacher, who owned the land around it, who died before my recollection, and was buried just back of the pulpit, at the east end of the house. I saw the second grave made there, 1829, that of old Mr. Hughes, the ancestor of the people of that name among us still. The first preachers, were “circuit riders,” whose names are forgotten, except “old brother Foust,” a little later, over whose work Bishop Paine once went, concerning whom when inquiry was made to know how the people liked the Bishop, they said Bishop Paine was a very good preacher, but that he couldn’t preach on brother Foust. Mr. Foust’s zeal and piety were quite equal, I dare say to the Bishop’s, but his preaching talent, entirely nortatory, by no means remarkable, or his grammar much conformed to Murray. I may except also “Uncle Jimmie Brasher,” whom I have described elsewhere and the brothers Elisha and Lewis Turner, resident in the Harpersville neighborhood, one or both of them on the place inherited as a nephew by Mr. Lewis Sentell. Elisha Turner was a cross-eyed man, remarkable for fluency and the use of big words connected together in his own way. One or both of the brothers, I heard, ultimately turned Baptist. Of the active members of the “society” the common term in those days used by the Methodists to designate a local church organization, even then a strong one, I remember only Elisha Sentell, father of the worthy citizen just mentioned, class-leader, a devout man, teacher of vocal music, who used to sit on the south end of a short seat under the pulpit and sing, oh, so sweetly. Of the attendants of the church in the twenties, only four now survive; Mr. Lewis Sentell, Mrs. May, of Waxahatchee, nee Caroline Sawyer, first wife of Fox Rushing whom they hanged on a tree for no other offense than feeding confederate soldiers and taking care of the orphans of those who had fallen in battle, so I have understood; our interesting old friend, wife of Rev. George Mason, nee Annie Williams, oldest daughter of Mr. Isaac Williams, a very useful man, who in those days with his man Jim built the running gear of mills and gins for everybody; the writer; and perhaps Uncle Jack Owens who, however, I think did not much addict himself to church going. I must be permitted to recall the time when, 1825–1827, Lewis Sentell, Annie Williams, and myself – the rest are all gone – attended the school at the head of Bullace creek, taught successively by Abner and James Hughes, house made of round poles with bark on, the earth for a floor, seats ranged ‘round the walls so that the pupils could lean against them a crack hewn out between two logs to let in the light on the “writing bench,” a dressed slab. James Hughes taught a three month’s school, in the fall of 1827, giving it up to “join the conference.” We loved him very much, and wept sore when he told us good bye, for he doubtless meant

God be we you. We heard after a year or two that he was dead. A pang comes over my heart now, throbbing more than three score years since, at the recollection.

I stood a few years ago, about the middle of the cemetery at Montevallo, at the head of the graves of Rev. Joshua and Hannah West, Doctor West and his wife. This good and able man was by nature and grace a leader of men, connected not only with the founding of Methodism in and around Montevallo before 1820, but soon all over Cahawba and Coosa valleys. He was a physician and local preacher, but I think sometime connected with the conference; for when I used to attend the great camp meetings at Harpersville, he was sometimes, at least there, I understood as presiding elder, always however the ruling spirit. His fame for ability and piety was wide. I think Dr. West and others established societies in upper Cahawba valley as well; I am sure the appointments of the conference penetrated every nook and corner in the county, where people had settled, at an early period.

The constituted a church on Shoal creek, right where Mr. Jack Perry lives, in 1820, Moses Crowson and presently Joab Lawler ministering to it. It flourished for a while, but soon became weak and before a great while disappeared or was removed to Montevallo. About 1825, Bethesda, on Beeswax, in what was known as the "Kingdom," later removed to Four Mile, and Big Spring, above Yellowleaf, later at Harpersville, where constituted. The main stay of Bethesda for years, was John W. Teague, father of the writer – clerk, deacon, and main pecuniary support, a man solemnly devout, who for the past twenty years of his life cared for little else than religion. He had scruples about holding African slaves, of whom he owned a good many, latter part of his life. He might have gotten rich if he had not been so tender with his slaves. Lay members of influence in Big Spring church have been mentioned before. Of the pastor of this and Bethesda, for 30–40 years, Rev. Mr. Scott, it is due farther to say, he was a well read man, intimately acquainted with the Bible; a slow sometimes stammering and prosy speaker, tediously the lengthy, but whose sterling character commanded respect even reverence.

The Baptists and Methodists of those days had their peculiar intonations, in speaking and prayer, so marked and distinct, that it was easy for a stranger passing a place of worship to distinguish them, simply by passing the house; the former had a sing-song, a good deal like, though less artistic, the intoning among the Catholics and High church Episcopalians; the latter, an original unconiusness of accent, not to the described, however well remembered. Some leading men among them, in either case, had given the key note, and the whole pack took up the cry, and echoed it throughout the hills. Education has done away with the "holy tones," that however linger in obscure corners, like the occasional notes of the whilome spinning wheel. No disrespect is meant; these pioneers were very earnest people, who believed in zeal but honesty too, and who in this last particular compared favorably with more modern times. Nay, they were terribly in earnest: believed in the imminence of hell and the realities of heaven.

The Cumberland Presbyterians appeared a little later, a people combining somewhat the faith of the old side Presbyterians and the Methodists. Rev. Mr. Meredith, afterwards so well known as Dr. Meredith, a man of education, talents and great energies was the ruling and informing spirit among them. They very much controlled the religious sentiment of Montevallo and Cahaba valley for a time, erecting academies, male and female there, the latter of which long flourished and did a great work for the education of girls, managed as it was with ability and persistence by Dr. Meredith and his accomplished lady. A beautiful and touching custom inaugurated by Dr. M. at – church **[Insert: This article had an "- as the name of the church, apparently he could not recall the name of the church.]** must be signaled. At this church the families of the Merediths and Alexanders, as they passed away, were all buried. Once

a year they and the congregation, whose dead slept with theirs, met to hold a service of commemorative talks, songs and prayers over the dust of their loved ones.

Later still, Rev. Mr. Holman, of the old side Presbyterians, used to come over from Talladega and preach in the Nickoll's settlement, near Mardis's ferry, Coosa valley. Mr. H. was a remarkable preacher, not so much on account of abilities, though they were good, as a piety of so elevated a character as to strike every one that heard him. I was once present when he christened a babe, the first time, perhaps, I had ever witnessed that act. He said in effect the authority for the act was inferential rather than direct. But if there was any subject "over which he had ever burnt the midnight oil," that was the one; exclaiming in tones broken with emotion, if he was in error he hoped God would forgive him. Later, Rev. Edward Ware, once a pupil of mine, a most estimable young man, who soon died, preached a part of his time at Montevallo.

Now for a long time the people have preaching plenty, if they will hear it. But it is no better, on the whole, than West, and Lawler, and Scott, and Holman and others, used to do sixty years ago. Those men were not learned in science and literature, but knew their Bibles, had great natural endowments, and were men of solemn piety.

After some weeks necessary to collect materials, Providence permitting, these sketches will be resumed, but will pertain wholly to the physical features of the county.

The Chronicle
Columbiana, Alabama
Thursday, June 6, 1895

LETTER FROM TEXAS.

Dallas, Tex., May 12, 1895.

Editor Chronicle: – I have been delighted in reading the letters of the Rev. Dr. Teague of the early settling of Shelby county, and in his last, he says he will discontinue them for a time, which I hope will not be long. So in order to keep up the interest and try to stir others up to writing and giving their knowledge of the early settler, and events left out by the Dr., I will write a short letter, especially as this is my sixtieth birthday, and my mind naturally runs back to the old times, but on this, when I read the Drs. letter and think it over, I feel that I am but a boy of a larger generation.

I regret that I cannot personally call to mind the earliest settling of that, to me, loved time, but I have two dependent on tradition and recollection of a later period, which seems as vivid as if it were but yesterday, when I was used to go with my father to the musters, and take a dime and buy a ginger cake and a glass of cider from Mrs. Joe Roper, and when father was the Major General, Philpot, of Montgomery, was the big General, and on Sundays would go to Chapel to hear Bro. Foust, or West, or some other circuit preacher; or to Four Mile, to hear Bro. Scott or Holcomb.

The first white persons I have any account of visiting, was on the spot of ground where Columbiana now is, was my grand father, Amos Elliott, and my great grand father, Linzie and Stump Elliott. When they came to the branch below the spring, they turned up to find good water, &c., and when they came in sight of the glade, where the square is, there was a bunch of wild horses standing in the shade of some trees, and uncle Billy Elliott tried to shoot and crease one but failed to get him. These same parties afterwards moved from where they lived, which was in Madison county, to Shelby, and Amos E. Elliott settled in the cove on Waxahachie creek, where afterwards my mother, Mahala, was born and raised in married; I was born on the same place sixty years ago today. Billy Elliott settled the place on the north side of the same creek, on the road leading toward Montgomery from the Kingdom neighborhood about 1836. Amos E. Elliott, the father of Jeff E. and Mrs. Francis and Hardie Nelson of your vicinity, settled or rather bought out the old Saltzer place and moved on it, and built the two story house that Jeff E. was born and raised in, and now known by his name, about seven miles north of Columbiana on the Harpersville road. The Elliott's and Hale's have raised one of the largest and most prolific families in all Shelby; they have a goodly number still in Shelby, and have contributed more to Texas than any one county in the United States. I think about half of Hopkins county are from Shelby, or are decendants of Shelbyites, and nearly all of the Hales and Elliotts, with a score or so of Brinkers and McGinnesses, formerly from near Harpersville. In the early twenties, Jonathan Clower with Andrew Cavaness, James Hucaby, the Greens, Mimses and Timses, settled in and around the old Rocky Mount camp ground in the lower part of Shelby County. Grand Father Clower was the only revolutionary soldier that I know of ever living in Shelby County. He was one of Gen'l. Morgan's men from near the first until the surrender of the British at the battle of the Cow Pens, Eutaw Springs and others. He settled the place afterwards known as the Jim Cobb place, where he died about 1837 with old age, over 80 years. Marion Green, who was raised from boyhood in that neighborhood as an honored old man living in Drew county Ark., in ease and comfort, never having but one child, and she still living in Monticello, Ark., with children from there to Texas all in good circumstances. Many old settlers will remember the Dollars, the younger one, Robert, and Sam Dollar, as well as the Burnsidés and many others, many of whose descendants I have met in Texas and Arkansas. The relict of Robert Dollar lives at a ripe old age in Union county Ark. Some

of the Mondigns lived in Milan county, Texas; Lemuel Burnside was alive some years ago in Union county Ark., but space forbids me to continue much longer, so when you wish cut and throw as much into the waste basket as you choose to do so.

But I do want to say that the Sam Brasher who now has the scar of the coon bite is still living in Texas, although I have not seen him in several years, and he was bitten at Columbiana, or that was always my understanding of it, which gave it the name of "Coon Town." I never heard of "Coonsborro" until I saw it mentioned in the Dr's letters. **[Insert: See letter No. 2.]** Texas is now having fine rains and the prospect for crops are good except for wheat, which will be short of acreage, as it was too dry in the fall to sow. Fruit prospects were never better. Times are looking up, and a general state of improvement going on.

Respectfully,
Your Ob't Serv't
D.M. Clower.

The Chronicle
Columbiana, Alabama
Thursday, June 6, 1895

Sketches of the History of Shelby County.

BY REV. E.B. TEAGUE

No. 8.

Geologically, the whole county of Shelby is underlaid by the mountain limestone formation, exposed on a pretty large scale in North Alabama, and more or less farther south. The lime rock makes a lime equal as cement, and, for plastering purposes, to the famous Thomaston lime, formerly imported from Maine. The surface of the underlying limestone formation is always and everywhere decidedly undulating, consisting in depressions, sometimes quite deep, divided by corresponding elevations into rounded hills and sometimes mountains. Overlying this formation are masses, varying in thickness from a few feet to much greater thickness, of clay, gravel, mixed detritus, and slate beds in the section I am about to describe. This section some, some fifteen miles north and south, by twelve east and west, constituting the lower or southern end of Coosa valley, may be described as the slate section, drained by Waxahatchee and Beeswax creeks and their tributaries. On it are the towns of Calera, south, Columbiana and Shelby, north. The soil is composed of friable slate, mixed with vegetable matter and clay, tangled into a chocolate color by iron, with occasional portions, where the limestone formation is exposed, of deep red. The limestone slips or plateaus are the best land, chiefly because they are level, while the prevailing slate lands are very rolling, the slopes of the hills sometimes quite steep, and very liable to wash. Hillside ditching and terracing might delay serious washing, or, better still, instead of burning the timber cut off and clearing, it might be laid horizontally along the hillsides at distances say of fifty yards apart, so as to prevent washing and decaying, to enrich strips of some width where they lay. The soil is nearly all tillable, generally fertile, often producing when fresh twenty-five bushels of corn or thousand pounds of seed cotton per acre. The county is thickly settled by small farmers, the stationary and industrious ones thrifty. One-third to one-half is, or has been, in cultivation – one-half forest. The two creeks mentioned above are perennial: Waxahatchee, however, not sufficiently so to furnish waterpower for mills or gins; the lower reaches of Beeswax furnished good millseats that have been utilized at several points, notably at a point near the ford of the creek where it is crossed by the valley dirt road, from St. Clair county to Wetumpka and Montgomery.

Judge J.T. Leeper, in his lifetime, had a fine grist and flouring mill at that point, now owned by Mr. Browning, though the gradually diminishing amount of wheat grown in the vicinity, renders the flouring business less considerable. The low prices of cotton are inclining the people to produce as much of everything as they can at home, and it is to be hoped they will soon produce again all the wheat needed for bread and more, as in the early history of the county. Drinking water, on the purest character, is abundantly supplied by springs, limestone in the lower places, soft or freestone, in the more elevated or by wells easily obtainable in every part, not even needing to be curbed where slate prevails.

I am persuaded that most valuable quarries of roofing slate would be revealed, on a large scale, by thorough scientific exploration. I have examined places where in the ravines slate is exposed that looks to and unscientific eye of the character suited for roofing, near and on the lands of Mr. Shelby Nelson; and I am told there are many such exposures, all over the section. The same slate formation, however, reaching across the Coosa eastward, has been examined and found too soft and brittle. I do not think

this would be found to be on the west side. The specimens I have examined are quite hard, and divided seams or lines into plates of the right laminar thickness of every width from a few to many inches. Transportation would be easy, as the section I am describing is traversed by two important railroads running right through the deposits. I may here say that iron is very extensively and profitably mined and smelted in the eastern part of the section, near the Coosa river, found in broad pockets running into each other, over an area several miles in diameter. Indeed, the Shelby Iron Works, where rolling mills, as well as making pig iron, were some years ago operated, are widely known. The ore is the best brown hematite, suitable for car wheels, and for every purpose where strength and tenacity are wanted. Limestone is right at hand, and both in practically unlimited quantities. A few miles north is a vein of considerable length of red ore. All around Calera, at the crossing of the L and N and Southern railroads, in vast extent, is a great exposure of lime rock, whence the name, Spanish Calera, Latin, Calx, English lime. The timber, over the whole section, was once thick, tall, and varied in character; many species of oak, short leaf, in some cases long leaf, pine, in abundance, and yet remaining in considerable quantities. Fencing, therefore, is yet easy, and lumber cheap.

I will enumerate some of the products of the soil, italicising those to which it is best adapted, capitalizing a few that come to the greatest perfection: Corn, COTTON, WHEAT, rye, barley, oats, ground peas, SORGHUM and RIBBON CANE, in the lower places; tobacco, potatoes, sweet and Irish, apples, SUMMER and WINTER, peaches, especially on the higher places, PEARS, GRAPES, STRAWBERRIES. Cotton matures especially well, wheat better than on any other soil in the county; pears until more or less affected by blight of late years – a temporary difficulty no doubt – come to the greatest perfection as witness those sold from Mr. Adams' orchard, south of Calera. Grapes of the finest character, have been produced where-ever tried, by Dr. J. Read Morgan, Col. Gardner, Frank Hazard, colored, west, north and east of Calera. Hazard sold, a year or two ago, from a single acre, second crop of young vines \$125.00 worth.

The people of this favored section need only to settle down on permanent homes, build the houses or cabins on inviting sites, arrange out houses with reference to making sites attractive; let the women have every encouragement to raise flowers, and embower their houses with vines; build and maintain churches and schools. Such people have the most happy and contented lives, and form the substratum of the state and the county, and serve their day and generation quite as effectually as any other class. Indeed we need nothing else so much as intelligent farmers. It is a great mistake to suppose that any other calling demands more intelligence. Science, united with experience and observation, will yet work wonders in this direction. The farmer needs to know chemistry and botany as much as the professional man, the science indispensable to ability in his calling. Nor need he be discouraged if he have not enjoyed the privileges of school, though that were a great advantage. What is necessary to understand the philosophy of fertilizing and plant-culture he can easily learn and scraps of time. But if he can go to college, let it be so; college training is not thrown away on him who proposes to be a great farmer, a character so rarely, alas, to be found, in the present condition of our county.

The Chronicle
Columbiana, Alabama
Thursday, June 13, 1895

Sketches of the History of Shelby County.

BY REV. E.B. TEAGUE

No. 9.

I shall designate the next section, immediately north of the "slate" section, the Wilsonville section, regarding that thriving village especially worthy of notice, for its enterprise in business, the maintenance of churches and schools, and the intelligence and thrift of the farmers in its vicinage. I don't think it invidious to name such man is John W. Bolin, the brothers Taylor, Col. W.T. Smith, Mr. Fowler, the Weldons, and others. They realize what many are slow to understand, that the red line lands on which they are situated are unsurpassed, all things considered, by any lands in the whole county.

The territory in this section, as I shall distinguish it, is quite circumscribed, embracing only the area drained by Bullace and Four Mile creeks, extending up and down the Coosa six or eight miles, and back from the river westward twelve or fifteen miles. Up and down the river is a slip of very fine land, of the character just described, reaching westward and forming their tiny valleys, to the heads of Bullace and Four Mile creeks, embracing, in all, a very considerable territory. The little valley of the former is about two miles in breadth and five in length; the latter, a similar length and breadth, fanshaped, however, the western end a little broader. Almost all of this land is lime land, reddened by oxide of iron to a deep color, rarely as light as chocolate. Some of it is gray land, underlaid by a red clay, quite equal to the red, productive even when the surface is very light colored – this last of the pine lands especially. Farther west, as well as between and on the borders of the little valleys, the land is generally poor, originally, however, clothed with pine of the largest growth, showing stamina of some kind producing these noble trees, and undoubtedly available for others growths if we could ascertain them. Denuded now very much of this long leaf yellow pines, sawn into lumber, the cross-tie man following close in the wake of the lumber man. I suggest that these lands are exceedingly well adapted to grape growing and tobacco of a fine quality. Such, I find, is the impression of the parties who have grown tobacco to some extent, and of the few who have given any attention to the vine.

I will not, as in the slate section, enumerate at length the varied products to which this section is so well adapted, but content myself with saying that much of it is good wheat land, in former years producing enough for home consumption, and a good deal more; would do so still with proper care in preparing and sowing, as one gentleman at least is yearly proving. What these red, level, valley lands, so durable and to be recuperated, need, above all things, is plowing. They have, for the most part hitherto been only scratched, at best plowed to the depth of a few inches. Not unfrequently the soil is a foot thick, over acres together – it has never been stirred up to the depth of six, rarely four, inches. The plant-food, therefore, chiefly lodged about the line where soil and clay meet, is largely stored there still, and unused. But the most impartial idea is, that deep plowing, once in the spring, secures a mellow subsoil all the summer, and on the principle of capillary attraction, the raising of the moisture from below to the surface, so as to be provision against any ordinary drouth. Mile power, certainly, is demanded to carry out this suggestion, and that we know is difficult with most of our people – the means cannot be commanded to desirable extent; nevertheless, some can command them: and it is to be hoped more will be able in the near future.

Perhaps I need only farther say, that the health of this region is admirable, water being pure and abundant, gushing springs sweetened by a little carbonic acid, and wells both lime and freestone, according to locality. Limestone rock is more or less exposed at many points, available where there need for it for making lime. I will not omit, however, to say that the Coosa affords fine water power at the islands east of Wilsonville. There are three of these islands, one uppermost small and sterile, two of some fifteen and eighty acres, respectively, lower down. Opposite the larger of these two, between it and the Shelby shore, is a waterfall, made by a natural dam running out into the river diagonally some two or three hundred yards. On this natural dam, years ago, brush, secured in place by rocks, were piled so as to raise the water above four or five feet, turning a current already strong, to the western bank, and driving a huge water wheel, to which complicated gearing was attached that ran respectively a grist mill. This rude addition to the natural dam, might be replaced by an addition of a stone and mortar dam, or built with hewn rocks, so as to command unlimited power. A few feet more elevation of dam would be sufficient. The elevation west of the factory site, I suggest, would be an admirable place for an employe town overlooking the river and the island. A more enchanting view I never enjoyed, when as the sun rose over it, I used to see it, early sent to mill when I was a boy.

I may append to the mention of the Weldon place, at Wilsonville, some account of the Hawkins family, who first settled the place. The head of the family was Benjamin Hawkins, who like two or three others I have signalized, raised a very interesting family of daughters. Three of them married three brothers, Brasher. The eldest, Mr. Thomas Brasher, the widely-known merchant of Columbiana. This singularly excellent christian lady, finally sacrificed herself on the altar of hospitality, receiving into her house a family infected with small pox, not at first known, though under circumstances to be apprehended. She contracted the disease and died.

Mr. Benjamin Hawkins, had an older brother, whom I once saw, whose name was Stephen, who settled among the Creek Indians, and married an Indian woman. One of his sons, became a chief who lived on the Tallapoosa river while another chief, McIntosh, also a half-breed, lived on the Chattahooche. These principal chiefs, along with the majority, sold the lands on the eastern side of the Chattahooche to Georgia or the United States, against the wishes of a minority of chiefs. These, headed by Opothleoholo, instigated the death of McIntosh and Hawkins, on the same night. I had a full account of the killing of Hawkins from one of his slaves, – “Ranty,” whom Thomas and Samuel Brasher, afterwards used to great advantage in trading with the Indians for their lands between the Chattahooche and Coosa – their “linkester,” (linguist,) as they used to call him. These chiefs were men of high character, McIntosh being a scion of the famous Scotch family so distinguished in history and in the highest circles of South Georgia. Two sons of the chief, Gen. Chilly McIntosh, and William, became the former a chief and Baptist preacher in Arkansas, the latter a Baptist preacher and a Colonel in the Confederate army. I secured a salary of \$200, several years, for William as a missionary, supported by the Western association, Georgia, Opothleopolo, whose Alabama home had been at Tuckabachee, just below the present town of Tallassee, retained his intimacy to the Southern whites after his removal to Arkansas, and the last I heard of him a company he was commanding in alliance with the Northern army, was encountered, and cut all to pieces, by a Confederate command. I was in his camp, at Jemison’s Mills, west of Tuskaloosa, fall of 1836, when on his way with three thousand, to Arkansas. Saw him in council with his chiefs and noted him being introduced to the students of the University. His wife, son and daughters, were well dressed, the latter wearing costly jewelry. He had the appearance of great force of character, and was said to be quite and orator.

[Transcribed by Bobby Joe Seales]

The Chronicle
Columbiana, Alabama
Thursday, June 20, 1895

Sketches of the History of Shelby County.

BY REV. E.B. TEAGUE

No. 10.

It would have been amusing to describe Yellow Leaf as an agricultural country six years ago! There were only a few squatters settled on the south prong. A vast territory drying by the north are muddy prong, was left to wolves and straying herds of cattle, without an inhabitant, regarded too poor for human habilitation. But I am not now ashamed to celebrate it as abundantly fitted for men to dwell in, proved by the fact, for much of it is thickly settled by people not at all destitute of facilities for comfort. The territory is fan-shaped, the stem formed by a narrow strip as you approach the debouchure of the creek into the Coosa, where is situated the fine farm of Captain Walthall. A few miles above this farm is a fine mill seat, long utilized, known as Morgan's mill, now owned, I understand, by a sagacious Columbiana merchant. Above this, in the broad end of the fan, embracing extended territory, very rolling and mountainous indeed, but the mountains and hills are interlined by strips of very free land, the slopes themselves not without value. A nobler fruit, vine and tobacco country cannot be found. I am told a Virginian, acquainted with the tobacco business, is proposing to test the adaptation of the country to tobacco raising. I have no question about his sagacity.

A sulfur spring is found near Mt. Calvary church, where people used to resort, in tents in the summer, to drink the water and hunt the abundant game in the hills around. I used to hear that farther out northwest there was a cabin resort in summer around a fine sulfur spring. Doubtless mineral water will be discovered here and there all over the territory. It may happen someday that wealthy men from South Alabama and elsewhere will build summer homes extensively in this salubrious region, and carry culture and refinement into the district. Strange things how often happened.

Cotton matures admirably well in this region, and strawberries thrive phenominally. This, I know, is considered a small affair, but that is a mistake. In some of the best territory of Texans, the great land of promise, strawberry raising is being substituted for cotton as more profitable. I am informed of a community there, where is a large and flourishing school that gives its vacation in spring that the children may hire themselves out to pick strawberries, which they find very profitable. Abundant market facilities are afforded to sell strawberries raised in Yellow Leaf, at Birmingham and other towns. The facilities will be utilized fully in time.

Near Liberty meeting house, running across the farm of Mr. Martin, crops out a wonderful vein of coal, I should think eight feet thick, dipping at about an angle of forty-five degrees. A cursory examination, a few years ago, impressed me that the coal is well-fitted for coking. Expiration will doubtless reveal neighboring veins, reaching out and connecting with the coal region of Broken Arrow in St. Clair county.

Much of the Yellow Leaf country is covered with abundant pine forests, inviting a large lumber business. Sandstone, suitable for building purposes, I think is found in many parts. The once supposed valueless part of Alabama territory is being found rich in minerals and valuable as the agricultural land, for long alone attracting notice. God has lavished resources for wealth and comfort all over our goodly land. We

need only to recognize our advantages, and to get rid of the illusion that we can find the end of the rainbow and the bag of gold in Texas. Texas is right around us and under our feet if we could only know it.

The denizens of the comparatively unnoticed section of Shelby so briefly and imperfectly sketched, may be a little piqued that I have neglected to say that the best parts of the Harpersville section, next to engage our attention, is drained by tributaries of their long-known and noted creek. The apology must be that it is natural to group the kindred features of a county together – slate lands, red lands, gray land; and that the Harpersville people would be very loath, with their eviable tradition to be located on Yellow Leaf, coming into notice in the late history of the county. So, I must submit myself to whatever criticism may be forthcoming.

The Chronicle
Columbiana, Alabama
Thursday, June 27, 1895

Sketches of the History of Shelby County.

BY REV. E.B. TEAGUE

No. 11.

I never visit the Harpersville community without being reminded of the vale of Galilee around the sea of Genesareth, Palestine. If the portion of Coosa valley in which Harpersville is situated were duplicated on the eastern or Talladega side of the river we should have a valley exceedingly like that of Galilee of, say, one-third to one-half the extent; the former being some fifteen by ten miles in extent, the latter forty-five by fifteen, soil identical and climate similar. The difference in productiveness of the Palestine valley, and the portion of Coosa valley in question, is due entirely to deeper plowing and better fertilization in the former. They plowed it, as a missionary to that country, who has written a monograph on the subject states, eighteen inches deep and fertilized to the utmost; so that in real fact, it yielded, "some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold," of the grain sown on it. If the very fine lands around Harpersville were plowed to half the above depth, or even less than that once a year, a similar yield might be obtained. But putting aside all speculation, that part of Coosa valley extending some fifteen miles from Yellow Leaf to Kelly's creek, with an average width of five miles, the soil deep and dark, composed of the detritus of lime rock and vegetable matter, with the requisite amount of oxide of iron, was originally well-nigh as fertile as the best prairies of South Alabama, and is proving more durable. When worn it is said to be more easily recuperated. It is certain that with scientific application of fertilizers, the level portion might be brought back to original productiveness much cheaper than the clearing and removal of timber and stumps required to clean it off for cultivation at first. Its value, therefore, has scarcely been diminished by seventy-five years growth and removal of crops. The elements of plant food most needed, I think, are potash, phosphorus and nitrogenous or vegetable matter, though I know little of these matters and name them simply to suggest the necessity of analysis, and the study of a little agricultural chemistry on the part of farmers. As it is, it is certain that they are applying commercial fertilizers very much in the dark, liable constantly to mistake what is needed, or even to use what is injurious. Intelligent farmers ought to make the whole area a garden.

In the absence of a full list of productions, kindly furnished by E.V. Caldwell, to the manor born, but mislaid, I enumerate from personal knowledge and memory: Peaches, PEARS, APPLES, strawberries, native and cultivated; corn, cotton, rye, barley oats, potatoes, sweet and Irish, sorghum, RIBBON CANE, wheat, peas, all garden products, italicizing and capitalizing some of them deemed most remarkable. The section is the Eden of the country, unsurpassed in desirableness by any portion of earth. The hill portions of North Shelby, of course have the same adaptation to fruit, apples, grapes, tobacco, and the like already described in the accounts I have given of other sections.

The whole area of the section now being described is abundantly supplied with the best water – springs and flush streams burst forth from the foot of the hills as well as up from the rocks beneath, in every part.

Fine forests of yellow pine clothe the hills west of the valley, saw mills are frequent and large quantities of lumber are being marketed.

At various places the underlying limestone is exposed, notably on the Pitts place at the Big Spring. The railroad passes across the valley, giving every facility for transportation up produce east and west.

No other portion of Coosa valley has so long and fully attracted attention. Its only rival in this respect has been the narrow Cahawba valley. But the portion of Coosa valley below Yellow Leaf, embraces quite as much good land as this. The merits, particularly, of the Four Mile region, are well nigh equal, a large portion of which is still forest and unutilized. The difference is found in the facts, that Harpersville lands lie in large bodies together, almost all not only tillable, but good; while the lower portion of the valley consists of smaller tracks divided by poor hills.

I have thus finished what I have to say of the eastern portion of our county. A similar survey of the western portion, in one more number, will conclude these papers.

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Sketches of the History of Shelby County.

BY REV. E.B. TEAGUE

No. 12.

I must dispatch Cahawba valley in a single number. This will be sufficient, I suppose, when it is stated that it differs little in general characteristics from Coosa valley; and therefore, much that has been said of the one is equally applicable to the other.

As before stated, it consists of a long, narrow vale of some twenty-five miles in length within the county, broader at the lower end of the Bibb county line, averaging two and a half to three miles in width. It is a red lime valley, originally very fertile. Still so, in the main, having attracted first attention, and having been at once thickly settled, 1816 to 1820. This population naturally suggested the first location of the court house, afterward removed by the vote of the more extensive territory of Coosa valley. The low mountains on either side are, that on the east freestone, that on the west limestone; the former affording abundant sandstone for building purposes; this true, indeed, I believe of both. I may say here, that in crossing the mountains from Cahawba to Jones valley, I once noticed vast amounts of flag stones of every thickness, in squares from a foot to several feet in size. These I have heard, are being utilized in Birmingham. I know, from a mere glance, they are of admirable character. Of the vast coal deposits, particularly of the lower borders of the valley, I need not speak, having only a general personal knowledge of them in common with everybody else, having had no response from Mr. Aldrich, from whom I requested a reliable account. The lower end of the valley presents large exposures of lime rock, manufactured extensively into the finest grade of lime, particularly around some Siluria, the lime rock covering the surface being the only exception to general agriculture adaptation.

To distinguish a little, the Montevallo section, drained by Shoal creek, affording for many miles up and down the finest water power, long utilized to considerable extent, was once amazingly fertile to the very tops of the hills. The level portions, quite extensive over an area of five or six miles in diameter, are still so; and the "clay," so-called, exposed by washing, needs only a little intermixture of vegetable matter to produce again like the virgin soil. The hill sides, soil divested of vegetable matter, will one day be terraced, re-supplied with vegetable mould and restored to original productiveness. One thing the matter with our people is, they have too much land; consequently permit much of it to go to waste, whereas recuperation would be cheaper than cutting away more forest. What I have said as to fine "clay" being really soil, is proved by the test on the lot front of Mrs. Lyman's residence in Montevallo.

Above the Montevallo district the whole length of the valley is singularly fertile, the average fertility of Cahawba valley surpassing that of Coosa, even of the Harpersville section. In both valleys the level red lands are proving more durable than the prairies of the "black belt." Even the "white flats," as they used to be called, often marring fine plats of red land, fit only for oats and rice on the count of a superabundance of lime, mixed with a little clay and sand, become very fertile, rich "basins."

Of course, Cahawba valley, and adjoining hills, is fitted to produce all the crops I have mentioned in these papers, only more abundantly. Its healthfulness has always been proverbial. There is not a more favored spot on the globe.

Now the sole motive of writing these sketches has been the interest I feel in a people among whose ancestry I spent my boyhood and among whom I am spending my later years. Though in other parts forty years of mid-life, I can truly say of my old country:

My heart untraveled ever turned to thee.

A pretty wide acquaintance with other portions of the South at least, has fully impressed me with the conviction that there is no better country. If the facts to which I have called attention serve in any way to impress others as myself, I shall be amply rewarded. So, pour prendreconge.