

SOME NOTES ON SPECIAL ALABAMA SOURCES

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For a good background on Alabama genealogical sources see Marilyn Davis Barefield, Researching in Alabama: a Genealogical Guide (1987) and for research see the chapter on Alabama by Mary Bess Paluzzi in the current edition of Ancestry's Red Book: American State, County & Town Sources (1992).

Alabama began in 1699 with the city of Mobile, one of America's oldest cities. Mobile has been ruled by France, Great Britain, Spain, the Confederacy, and the United States. Our vertical file on Mobile has a brochure on their various local archives and we have early Mobile records, 1715-1901, transcribed by the Works Projects Administration. We have the records on microfilm and the indexes as books.

Alabama became a territory in 1817 (previously it was part of the Mississippi Territory) and a state in 1818. Alabama is a Federal land state and has records of land grants at the National Archives and the Bureau of Land Management (see our handout on Federal land records.) The land grants to individuals under the previous governments were recognized by the United States and with records of early Federal grants are abstracted in the volumes of The American State Papers indexed in Philip McMullen, Grassroots of America. Military warrants, given for military service in the United States prior to 1855, have genealogically valuable petitions for land that can be ordered from Military Records, National Archives, Washington, DC 20408. Homestead land grants, grants of land made to occupants of Federal lands following the Homestead Act of 1862 are particularly good sources of personal and even naturalization information. For a very detailed account of Federal land grants in Alabama see the introduction to Wyley Donald Ward, Original Land Sales and Grants in Covington County, Alabama, a copy of which is in our "Land Records--Federal" vertical file.

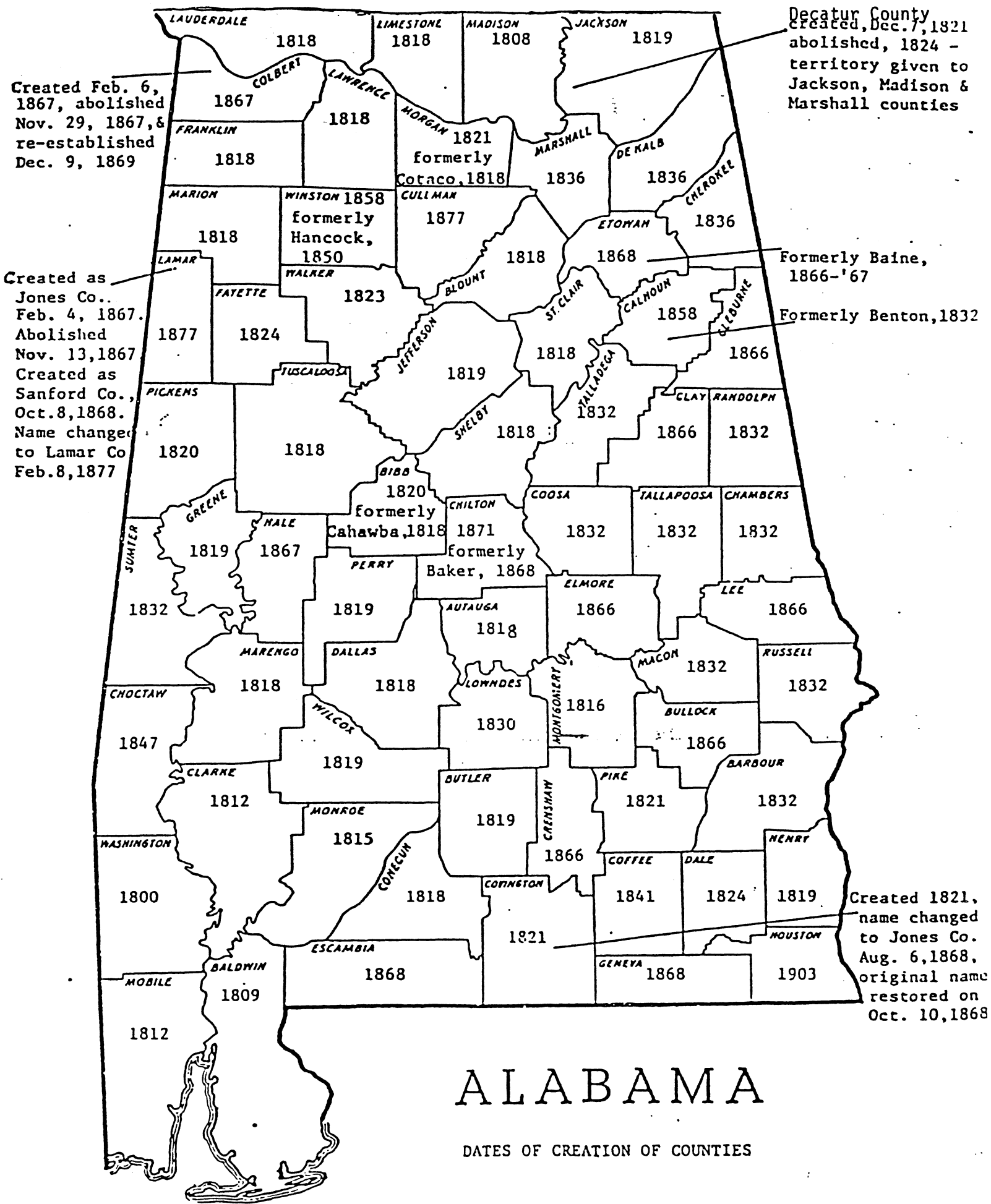
To these sources can be added other sources unique to Alabama. The Suitland Reference Branch (NNRR), Textual Reference Division, National Archives, Washington, DC 20409 has a special index to land grants that includes Alabama to 1908. The Alabama Department of Archives and History has a similar card catalog index to certain early counties of Alabama. Special Collections of the Hoole Library of the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa has indexed records of the pre-Federal land grants and of the St. Stephens and Cahaba land offices. Marilyn Davis Hahn, and also as Marilyn Davis Barefield, has published the names of the first land applicants for each of the Federal land offices of Alabama. The books for the Old Huntsville and Old Cahaba land offices are particularly valuable for locating where someone lived before

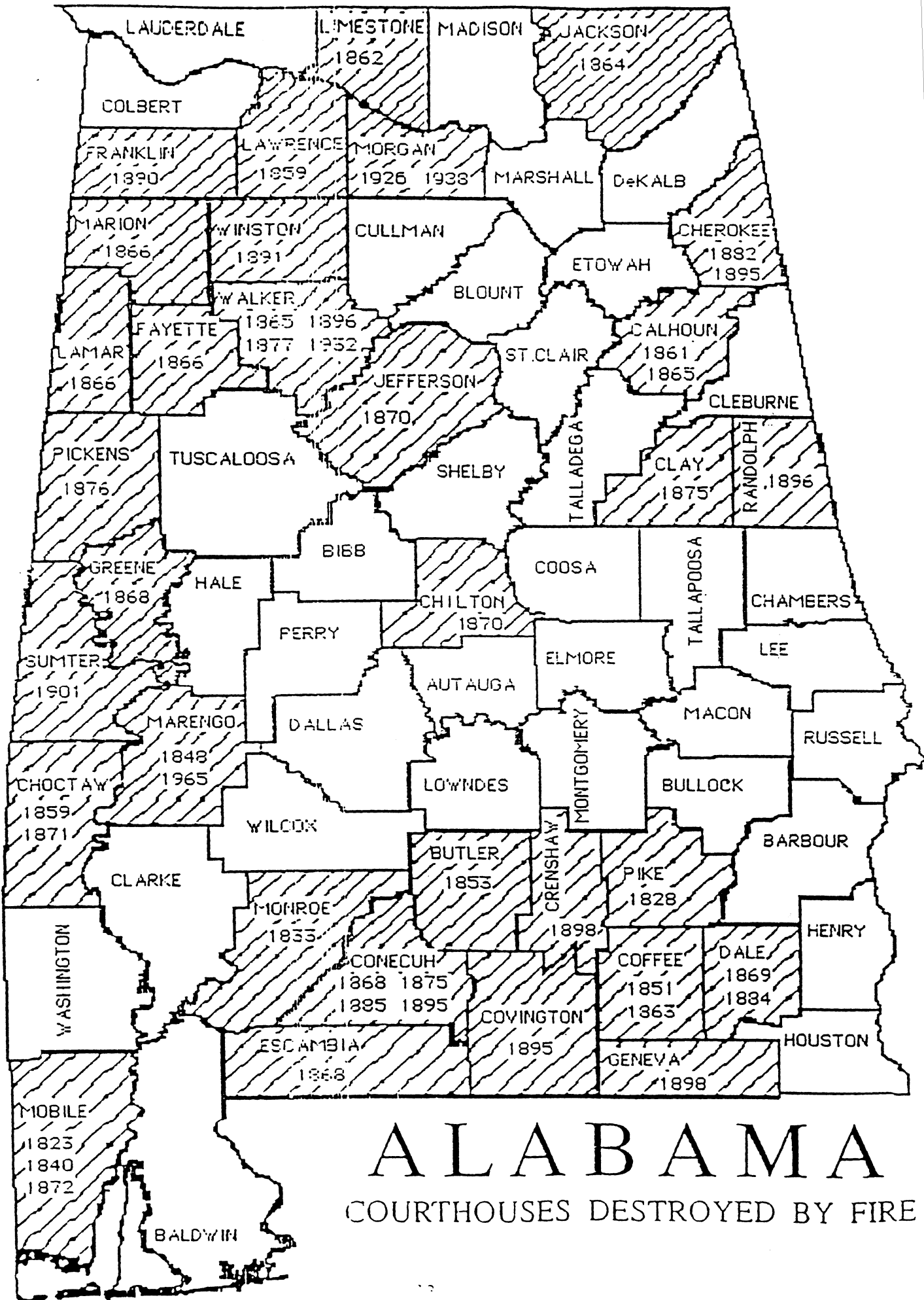
on microfiche.)

Not usually microfilmed, however, are the early birth and death records of Alabama, beginning in the 1880s and ending in 1908, found in the records of the judges of probate for Alabama's counties. Birth and death records from 1909 to the present must be sought from Alabama's state vital records office (see our handout). On microfilm we have an index to Alabama death certificates, 1908-1959; divorces, 1950-1959; and marriages, 1936-1969. We also have on microfilm an incomplete, statewide, index to early Alabama wills. Many Alabama counties have or are creating county archives.

Many genealogically valuable records are the result of the Civil War in Alabama (see our handout on Civil War records). The thousands of North Alabamians in the Federal army have service and often pension records in Military Records, National Archives, Washington, DC 20408. On microfilm we have the service records for the 1st Alabama Cavalry, United States Army, and a nationwide index to Federal pensions. Also see our vertical file on Alabama Union soldiers. In addition to the many National Archives microfilms of Alabama Confederate records, we have on microfilm from the Alabama Department of Archives and History a special index to Alabama Confederate service records; the Confederate pensions to resident veterans and widows; the 1866 state census (sometimes giving number of men in each family killed, wounded, or missing in the war); and the 1867 voter lists. The latter are a rich source of naturalization information for men in several counties (see our handout on the voter lists). We have the 1907 census of Confederate veterans in Alabama in book form by county, with a statewide index, and the censuses of Confederate pensioners for 1921 and 1927 on microfilm. The 1907 and 1921 censuses are rich sources of personal information. National Archives microfilm M816 and M817 include records of the Freedman's bank branches in Alabama, a valuable source for African American research. The records for the Huntsville branch have been partially published.⁵

The Alabama Department of Archives and History, 624 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36130 is the oldest state department of archives in the United States. Its extensive collections of private papers and complete collections of official papers of governors are being cataloged on computer on the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN). Several county libraries have excellent locally oriented genealogical collections but the Huntsville and Birmingham public libraries have much broader holdings. The Birmingham Public Library, 2020 Park Place, Birmingham, AL 35203 has the largest genealogical collection south of Washington, DC. The Harwell G. Davis Library, Samford University Library, 800 Lakeshore Drive, Birmingham, AL 35229 has a good genealogical collection and also the archives of the Alabama Baptist Convention. They microfilm Alabama church records of all denominations loaned to them by individual churches.





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coming to Alabama.¹ We have the tract books, giving information on all buyers of Federal lands in Alabama, by county and lot number, on microfilm. Margaret Matthews Cowart has been indexing and publishing the Alabama land grant tract books by county.² Modern Alabama highway maps are divided into the townships, ranges, and sections used in Federal land grants and modern Alabama county road maps. The road maps can be ordered from Map Sales, Alabama Department of Transportation, 1409 Coliseum Blvd. RM. R-109, Montgomery, AL 36130-3050. The Alabama Department of Archives and History has property owner maps by land lot designation for eighteen south Alabama counties, prepared by the Works Projects Administration in the 1930s.³

Several other sources are also useful in documenting early American arrivals in Alabama including Dorothy Potter, Passports of Southeastern Pioneers 1770-1823 (1982); The Territorial Papers of the United States series; James Edmonds Saunders, Early Settlers of Alabama (1899); and the indexes to tax records and state census records of early Alabama (Mississippi Territory before 1817) by Accelerated Indexing Systems for 1810, 1811-1819, 1820-1829, 1831-1839, 1855, and 1866. Alabama does not have surviving Federal census records prior to 1830 although state census returns for 1820 survive and have been published for Baldwin, Conecuh, Dallas, Franklin, Limestone, St. Clair, Shelby, and Wilcox counties. Census indexes have been published for the Alabama Federal census returns, 1830-1870, and exist as soundexes for the 1880 and 1900-1920 Federal censuses. Only a few fragments of the returns for Perry County survive of the 1890 census.

For statewide sources of biographical and family information on Alabama there is the microfilm of the Alabama family folders of the Alabama Department of Archives and History; the funeral and anniversary notices from Alabama newspapers, 1950-1979; a special index to select counties in the 1870 census of Alabama⁴; and the Alabama military records card catalog indexes for wars from the American Revolution to World War I. In book form there are Pauline Gandrud and Kathleen Paul Jones, Marriage, Death, and Legal Notices From Early Alabama Newspapers, 1819-1893; the four volumes by Flora D. England, Alabama Notes; and, for North Alabama, the five volumes by Claude Elliott, Annals of Northwest Alabama. The Birmingham Public Library has an unpublished alphabetical list of biographical sketches of Alabamians that is also in our vertical file under Alabama biographies. In our file "Alabama Doctors," we have an alphabetical list of the medical examinations files, 1881-1962, at the Alabama Department of Archives and History. Special Collections, Hoole Library, University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, has the genealogical correspondence of Alabama researchers Pauline Gandrud and Kathleen Paul Jones. Their notes from Alabama county records have been published as a series of books.

The major county records for all but a few Alabama counties have been microfilmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah. This microfilm is available at the Alabama Department of Archives and History and can also be borrowed by us from Utah (see the catalog

NOTES

(1) Marilyn Davis Hahn, Old Cahaba Land Office Records and Military Warrants 1817-1853 (1986) and Marilyn Davis Barefield, Old Huntsville Land Office Records & Military Warrants 1810-1854 (1985). Also see Dorothy Scott Johnson, Madison County, Alabama Deed Books A, B, C, D, E 1810-1819 (1976).

(2) Margaret Matthews Cowart, 7801 Tea Garden Road SE, Huntsville, AL 35802, has so far published the tract books for Colbert, Franklin, Jackson, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marshall, and Morgan counties.

(3) The counties are Autauga, Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Coffee, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Dallas, Elmore, Geneva, Henry, Houston, Lee, Lowndes, Macon, Montgomery, and Pike.

(4) The index is to a state copy of the 1870 Federal census of Alabama and covers the counties of Autauga, Baker, Baldwin, Barbour, Bibb, Blount, Bullock, Calhoun, Chambers, Chilton, Clarke, Colbert, Conecuh, Coosa, Crenshaw, Dale, Dallas, DeKalb, Elmore, Escambia, Etowah, Geneva, Green, Hale, Henry, Houston, Jackson, Jefferson, Lauderdale, Lowndes, and Macon counties. We also have the Alabama Department of Archives and History's microfilm of the state copy of the 1850 Federal census and the state censuses of 1855 and 1866.

(5) Fred Charles Rathbun, Names From Huntsville, Alabama, 1865-1869 (1986). We have the complete records for the Huntsville branch on microfilm.