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Fayette County, Alabama

~ The Baker Family of Newtonville ~

[Part 1]

In 1821, most of the land which would become Fayette County, Alabama, in 1824, lay in dense wilderness. Wild animals and Indians roamed this vast forest. Settlers had just begun to arrive in this area.

In 1821, George BAKER and his family left their home, near Charlotte in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. After about seven or eight weeks, they covered over 500 miles of land in their rugged horse-drawn wagons. Their journey ended in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama. A short time later, they moved on into what would become Newtonville in Fayette County.

In the late 1820's, they were joined by other settlers, who were the POEs, SHEPHERDs, NALLs and LUCAS families. The early 1830's brought the HOLLIMANs, GUINs, BLAKENEYs and STRONGs. Most of Newtonville's earliest settlers came from Anson, Union, and Mecklenburg counties in North Carolina or Chesterfield and Lancaster counties of South Carolina. Many of these early pioneers were kin folks. After arriving in the Newtonville area, all would marry into the other families.

George Baker was born about 1783. He married Mary ROBERTSON. One of the oldest of this couple's children was Francis Richard BAKER who was born in 1804 in North Carolina. On December 1, 1831, in Tuscaloosa County, Francis Richard married Martha Ann JONES. Martha Ann was the daughter of Thomas L. JONES and his wife Mary D. HOGG. Thomas L. Jones was the oldest of the seven sons of Harrison JONES, who was a Revolutionary War Soldier. Thomas was born about 1783. He died young in 1818, while living in Morgan County, Georgia. Thomas and Mary had two sons, Richard, born 1798, and Thomas Hogg JONES. The daughter, Martha, was only a very small child at the time of her father's death.

These Jones brothers moved on to Tuscaloosa County, Alabama. There in 1838, Richard married Nancy BAKER. They later moved to Jasper. Richard who was a grown young man at the time of his sister's birth, raised her. After Martha Ann married, she and her husband settled in Newtonville where they would live the rest of their lives.

Francis "*Frank*" [Baker] died there in 1890 at the age of 80. He and Martha are both buried at Shepherd's Church Cemetery. Frank and Martha had a family of ten children, seven sons and three daughters. Of these children, the oldest was Richard Jones BAKER, who was born in 1833. He married Dicy BURTON, from Walker County. It is known

that Richard and Dicy had a son, John Francis BAKER, and probably some other children. While serving in the Confederate Army, during the Civil War, Richard had a severe case of smallpox which affected his health the remainder of his life.

Frank and Martha's second child was Alford Newton BAKER, who was born in 1835. Alford and his wife, Sarah, moved to Walker County. They were known to have had two daughters, Dicy L. and Martha F. On December 28, 1862, Alford died. It appears that he was serving in the Confederate Army at the time of his death.

The third child was Elizabeth Ann BAKER. She was born July 2, 1837. On March 9, 1854, she was married to Isaac Marion WHITNEY from Walker County. Isaac, who was born in 1830, fought in the Civil War. He and Elizabeth lived in Walker County for many years. Among their children were Richard Graves WHITNEY and Minerva WHITNEY who married Benjamin Giles JONES. Isaac died in 1903 and Elizabeth in 1916. Both are buried in Newtonville.

Frank and Martha's fourth child was Cynthia Lenora BAKER who was born in 1839. Her first husband was a BURTON from Walker County. They moved to Arkansas and had two children. After Mr. Burton's death, Cynthia married Thomas SMITH and had several more children.

Source: Sharlene McGee Stough, "Winding Trails," *Fayette County Broadcaster*, 01 May 1980.

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[Part 2]

William Harvey Harrison BAKER was the fifth child of Francis Richard Baker and Martha Ann Jones Baker. William was born April 4, 1841, and died September 25, 1925. He and his wife, Mary PALMER, (1854- 1909), had a large family. Their children included: Yerby, Nora, Jennie, Alice, Arthur, Richard, Ada, Ethel and Harey. William and his family lived near Northport in Tuscaloosa County.

Francis and Martha's sixth child was a son, Francis Fuller BAKER. He was born in 1843. Francis Fuller enlisted in the Confederate Army and was killed, while in battle, on December 31, 1863. He was not married.

The seventh child was Thomas Hillman BAKER, who was born in 1845. He died February 21, 1863.

The eighth child, and youngest daughter, was Lavinia Guyton BAKER who was born May 7, 1849. Lavinia married William J. HASSELL and lived in Fayette County. Their marriage occurred there on March 19, 1866. Lavinia's family included sons, Francis Marion and Zeb, and a daughter, Ada, who married a STANLEY. Lavinia and William are buried in Fayette County at El Bethel. Lavinia's death occurred on December 18, 1917.

The ninth child of Francis and Martha's was George Washington BAKER. He was born

March 13, 1851, while his parents were living in Walker County. On November 27, 1878, he and Belzy Ann BLAKENEY were married in Fayette County. This couple lived in Newtonville all of their married life. Most all of the Newtonville Bakers descend from this set. In 1891, George received a Government Land Grant consisting of land near Newtonville. Here, he and Belzy Ann raised a large family of nine children. Three others died very young.

Belzy Ann Blakeney Baker descended from another very early pioneer family. Her parents were William BLAKENEY (1819-1862) and his wife Elizabeth CLANTON. William died while serving in the Civil War. Belzy Ann's grandparents were Thomas BLAKENEY and Sarah ROBERTS. This couple settled at Newtonville in the early 1830's.

George, who farmed all of his life, died at Newtonville on November 21, 1928. Belzy Ann lived until March 16, 1960, thus making her several months over the age of 100 years at the time of her death. Both are buried in Newtonville at Shepherd Cemetery.

George and Belzy Ann's children were all born at Newtonville. They are: Anna Elizabeth, who married James Monroe HOLLIMAN; Francis Hillman, who married Elsie DUNSCOMB; James Mutius, who married Ela YERBY; Allie Mae, who married Eura CARTER; Ruth Guyton, who was married first to B.T. LOVETTE and then to F.N. HENDERSON; Pearl, who married Virgil Benton GIBSON; Montie Lea, who married Lynn Davis BOSHELL; Frederick Coleman, who married first to Fleta WILLIAMS and second to a lady from Ohio whose first name was Bernadetta; Georgia Bell, who married Earl RAY; Nora Louise, who died at the age of six years and two infants who died shortly after birth. Several of the mates of George's children were also descendants of old Newtonville pioneers such as the Yerbys, Gibsons, Rays and Hollimans.

The tenth and youngest child of Francis and Martha's was Gustavius Adolphus BAKER. He was born in 1857. On February 14, 1884, he married in Fayette County to Minnie DAVIS. This couple had a large family which included: Floyd, Fred, Ethel and several others. After living in Fayette County for several years, this family moved to Amarillo, Texas. Gustavius died there.

This concludes the Baker families, all of whom played a part in the early history of Fayette, Tuscaloosa and Walker counties.

Source: Sharlene McGee Stough, "Winding Trails," *Fayette County Broadcaster*, 08 May 1980.

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