

The Story of Orion Hill

12055 Donelson Road, Arlington, Tennessee



ORION HILL



WEDDINGS & EVENTS

Arlington, Tennessee



By

Catherine Wilson Ed.D.

@Lulu xPress, 2019

I dedicate this manuscript to my family who has always put up with me uncomplainingly while I am in the throes of research. They also listen to my stories, and so far, no one has told me to quit (always a good sign)! Several other individuals were also pivotal in the development of this narrative. Alethea Bragg told me years ago about Andrew Jackson's family living in this area and that there was a tale worth telling about this property. I give another thanks to William J. (Mr. Billy) Armstrong (1908-2005) who first told me stories about the people buried in Chambers Chapel United Methodist Church Cemetery, including the Donelson's. He reminded me how important it was to look at the dash in between birth and death. In the early 1990s my family bought burial lots in the church cemetery—far before this project—in a straight line with the Donelson graves. It seems like a strange coincidence that so many years later, I would write about them.

There are also a number of other people who were instrumental in helping put this manuscript together. Special thanks go to Grace Siler for cleaning up historical images using Photoshop, Barbara Crane for her edits, and Chris Allen and Katie Schwehr for helping me to determine binding procedures. Finally, a note of thanks to my aunt, Barbara Fletcher, who helped in so many ways—far more than I can mention here.

-CTW, 2019

Note: Where it is possible, I have tried to add portraits and images that help provide a context to this story. The family connections are so diverse and complicated that I have only touched on several people briefly to maintain the thread to Orion Hill. For a better understanding of family connections, see Appendix A.

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For Information on Orion Hill Wedding and Events:

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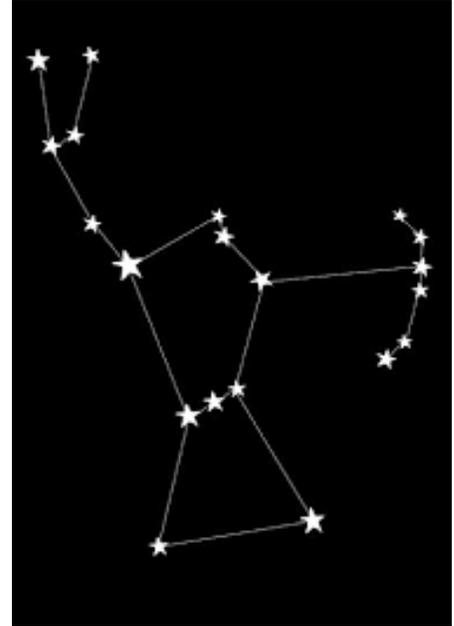


CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to Orion Hill

Introduction. The story of the property at 12055 Donelson, where the home known originally as Orion Hill was located, is rich in lore and integral to the history of the Town of Arlington, Tennessee. Orion Hill's story began in 1830 when Alexander Donelson, a nephew of the 7th president Andrew Jackson and his wife Rachel Donelson Jackson, arrived as one of the first permanent settlers in the area. Here he eventually built a home (before 1844) and called it Orion Hill (*Moore & Foster, 1923b*).

Donelson probably named his home for the constellation, Orion that is visible almost directly overhead from the home site. Orion, in Greek mythology, was a gigantic hunter who was supernaturally strong, and the offspring of the god of the sea Neptune, and a Gorgon (*Greek Heroes, n.d.; Greek Mythology, n.d.*).



The Orion Constellation (Yahoo Images, n.d.).

Orion is most recognizable of the 88-star constellations and best visible in the west-southwest sky from August through December. Three bright stars mark the hunter's belt, and four more stars his shoulders (*Greek Mythology, n.d.; Greek Heroes, n.d.; Troupe, 2012*).

Several generations of Alexander Donelson's family lived at Orion Hill until the house burned sometime shortly after 1923. The Donelson's built the original home at the top of a hill, as was the current home constructed in 1994 (*Goodspeed's 1887; Burrow, 1962; Moore & Foster, 1923b*).

To understand more fully the background of Orion Hill, it is necessary to first have knowledge of the historical period, the brave and hardy pioneers who settled in the area, the hardships they faced, the connections of intertwined, complicated family relations, and the fierce loyalty the Donelson family felt towards one another and their extended family. This account of the family provides a context to the story of Orion Hill, and an insight into what these early settlers' lives were like, and the passions that often drove them (*Williams, 1878; Inman, 2017*).

The intent of this narrative is not to give a comprehensive history regarding Andrew and Rachel Jackson, the Donelson family. There are many excellent books dealing with these topics. However, this narrative provides an essential framework to understand how Orion Hill came into being, its role, the owners following the Donelson's and how the story of the property was effectively lost to the present until only recently.



CHAPTER TWO The Donelson Family

Colonel John Donelson¹ (1718-1785)

Colonel John Donelson was a Revolutionary War veteran, politician, surveyor and an early pioneer in Tennessee. Donelson was born in Maryland. In 1744 he married Rachel Stockley Donelson¹ (1730-1801) with whom he had at least 11 children that reached adulthood. These included:

1. Alexander (1749-1785)
2. Mary (1751-?)
3. Catherine (1752-1835)
4. Stockley (1753-1804)
5. Jane (1754-1834)
6. John (1755-1830)
7. William (1756-1820)
8. Samuel (1758-1804)
9. Leven (1765-?)
10. Rachel (1767-1828)
11. Severn (1763 or 1773-1818) (*Davies-Rodgers, 1965; Moore & Foster, 1923b; Heiskell & Sevier, 1920*).



*Statue of Colonel Donelson Meeting James Robertson, Co-founders of Nashville.
(Close-up) Nashville, TN (Geni.com, n.d.).*



In 1779 Donelson led a flotilla of 30 flatboats (his being called *The Adventure*) with 300 settlers and slaves on an arduous 1000-mile, four-month river journey. The voyage started at Fort Patrick McHenry on the Holston River. From here the group traveled down the Holston, Tennessee, Ohio and Cumberland rivers until they landed at Big Salt Lick. Here Donelson helped to co-found Fort Nashborough—later known as Nashville, Tennessee. These early settlers suffered Indian attacks, an outbreak of smallpox, hunger, bitter cold, treacherous currents, loss of supplies, and along the way to the settlement—36 deaths (*Donelson, 1779; Moore & Foster, 1923a & b*).

Engraving showing the Donelson Party.

(Tennessee Encyclopedia, n.d.).

Some years later, Donelson died mysteriously while returning home from a business trip, and his murder remained unsolved. Afterwards, his widow ran a boarding house where a young Andrew Jackson came to live. During that time, he fell in love with the daughter of the house, Rachel. The cenotaph of Colonel John Donelson and his wife is located in Nashville at the Hermitage Churchyard Cemetery (*Armstrong, 1922; Carey, 2013; Owen, 2009; Ancestry, n.d.a.; Geni, n.d.; Tennessee Historical Markers, n.d.*).

Although many of John and Rachel Donelson's 11 children and approximately 63 grandchildren had roles in Tennessee's early settlement, three of their children are most pertinent to the early development of Orion Hill and Arlington, Tennessee. These three siblings were **Rachel Donelson Jackson**¹ (1767-1828), **Severn Donelson**¹ (1773-1818), whose son Alexander built Orion Hill; and **Jane Donelson Hays**² (1766-1834). Jane's son, Samuel Jackson Hays founded Haysville—later Arlington. It is important to note that the town would go by several names as the name Haysville was already in use for a post office, so the village was also referred to as Wythe or Withe Depot (*NPT, n.d.; Armstrong, 1922; Burrow, 1962; Davies-Rodgers, 1965, 1990 & 1992; Keating, 1888; Town of Arlington, n.d.*).

The ties between John Donelson's children were very strong and the siblings' paths deeply intertwined. These relationships were expanded with cousins, nieces, nephews, grandchildren, wards, and in-laws. A wealth of information on the Donelson family is available through a variety of books, genealogical sites and through The Hermitage in Nashville, Tennessee (*Keating, 1888; Inman, 2017; Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.a., b, & c*).

Understanding the complexity and overlay of these relationships is daunting, as their descendants were numerous and often shared the same names in the same, or over multiple generations. A brief genealogical chart (Appendix A) helps quickly explain the connections across five generations of the Donelson family pertinent to Orion Hill. The focus of this manuscript deals mainly with the descendants of Col. John Donelson through his daughter—Rachel, son—Severn, and grandson—Alexander.





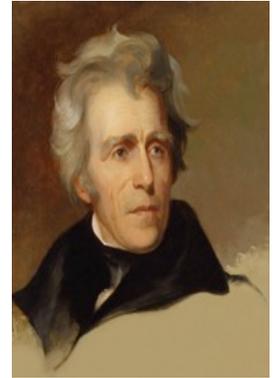
*Posthumous Portrait of **Rachel Donelson Jackson**
by Ralph W. Earle, @1831
(Andrew Jackson's Hermitage,
n.d.).*



*Miniature of **Rachel Donelson Jackson**
that Jackson wore or kept
by him until his death
(Foster, 2014).*



***Andrew Jackson**, from a
miniature by Anna Claypoole
Peale, 1819
(Yale University Art Gallery).*



*Portrait of **Andrew Jackson**
by Thomas Sully, 1824
(Andrew Jackson's
Hermitage, n.d.).*

Some years later, Jackson's opponents became aware of these circumstances. Throughout her husband's career, Rachel was publicly vilified as a bigamist, adulteress, and worse. For a woman during this time, the circumstances of her marriage meant social ostracism. Rachel and Andrew were absolutely devoted to one another, and although Jackson did his best to protect his wife's name and honor, it was often to his detriment. He was shot twice in duels and two bullets remained lodged in his body as proof. Eventually, a bullet in his arm was removed, but the bullet in his chest remained throughout his life. These injuries would eventually contribute to his death. Rachel however, although depressed regarding these attacks, was content to live a fairly retired life at the Hermitage. She oversaw their home, farming pursuits, children and many wards, having no desire to be in the spotlight. She was also deeply religious. As Jackson prepared to run for the presidency, attacks against Rachel became intolerable, and she stated emphatically that she would "rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than live in that palace in Washington." All of this took a toll on Rachel's health and emotional well-being, and her words became sadly prophetic (*NPT, n.d.; Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.a.; Historic Camera, n.d.; Kelly, 2013, p. 30; Brady, 2011; Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.a.; History Channel, n.d.a.; National First Ladies Library, n.d.; Wikipedia, n.d.c.*).

Rachel died at age 61, and from descriptions of her death, probably as the result of a heart attack. Jackson buried his wife in her garden on Christmas Eve 1828. Her death occurred shortly after Jackson's bitter fight for election to the presidency, and before his inauguration in January 1829. According to family lore, she was laid to rest in the gown and slippers she had planned to wear to the presidential inauguration. Rachel's health had been declining for several years, and the death of her adopted son, Lyncoya a few months previously, had also affected her greatly. The vicious personal attacks by Jackson's opponents added another level of distress to an already failing constitution. Although she never served as First Lady, several of her family members did (*NPT, n.d.; National First Ladies Library, n.d.; Wikipedia, n.d.c.; Moser, 2017; Meacham, 2008*).

Jackson was heartbroken and never forgave those who criticized his wife—as he felt they were largely responsible for her death. He built a lovely shrine in her beloved garden at the Hermitage

surrounded by Weeping Willows to show his perpetual loss. Her tomb has a 135-word epitaph that shows the depth of Jackson's grief and states, in part, that Rachel was: "A being so gentle, and yet so virtuous, slander might wound but could not dishonor." Andrew Jackson lived for another 16 years and never ceased grieving for his dearly loved Rachel. She had always been a cherished figure in the extended family throughout her life and remained so after death (*NPT, n.d.; Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.a.; Historic Camera, n.d.; Brady, 2011; Smolkin & Williams, 2015, para. 21; Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.a.; History Channel, n.d.a.; National First Ladies Library, n.d.; Wikipedia, n.d.c.*).

Andrew Jackson¹ (1767-1845)

Early life. Jackson “. . . came from nowhere . . . had no family, few advantages, and little education.” He was a first-generation American, born (depending on the source) in North or South Carolina shortly after his parents Andrew (d. 1767) and Elizabeth (d. 1781) came to the Carolina's with their two older sons, Hugh and Robert. The Jackson's came to America in 1765 in one of the waves of Scots Irish Protestant immigrants that settled in the U.S. and eventually became the vanguard of settlers into Tennessee (*Feller, as cited in Loller, para. 3; Historynet, n.d.; Discover Northern Ireland, n.d.; Carroll, 2018; Leyburn, 1989, [1962]*).

The Jackson's came from Carrickfergus, an old town on the northeastern coast of Ireland, about ten miles from Belfast. Their home had been located on a small road named Boneybefore facing the sea inlet of Belfast Lough. The original house the Jackson's lived in was torn down in 1860 to make way for the railway, but a similar home about 50 meters from the original cottage has been restored with many historic items to give a feel for how the family might have lived (*Historynet, n.d.; Discover Northern Ireland, n.d.*).



(Wilson, 2019)



(Wilson, 2019)



(Wilson, 2019)

Andrew Sr. died at 29 in a logging accident shortly before his youngest son's birth. The family then moved in with Elizabeth's sister's family who had also come to the new country. Elizabeth helped care for her brother-in-law's family as her sister had become an invalid. It was a less than ideal situation, but for a widow with three small children, there were few options. After Andrew moved to Tennessee, he had little contact with his mother's family. As his parent's died when he was young, little was known of his ancestors (*Historynet, n.d.; Yacka, 2017; Hermitage, n.d.; Meacham, 2008; Discover Northern Ireland, n.d.*).

Revolutionary War. Many Irish Americans fought in the Revolutionary War, much to the dismay of the British. One British major commented that half the revolutionary army was composed of Irish immigrants. The Jackson's were no exception. Andrew's oldest brother, Hugh died at 16 shortly after the Revolutionary War began from heat exhaustion following The Battle of Stono Ferry (1779) (Bagenel, 2009 [1882]).

Soon after, both 13-year-old Andrew and his remaining older brother, Robert served as Revolutionary War couriers. In 1781 the British captured the two teens. Both were sword-slashed by an officer for refusing to shine his boots, imprisoned, contracted smallpox, and nearly starved to death in British custody (Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.a.; Bagenel, 2009 [1882]).



Andrew Jackson vs. British officer
(American Minute, n.d.).

Elizabeth Jackson finally helped secure the two teenagers' release. Robert, barely 17, and already gravely ill, died shortly after the 40 plus mile trek home from the British prison. Andrew remained seriously ill for months (Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.a.; Meacham, 2008).

Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson was a remarkable woman in her own right. Andrew later said of his mother she was "as gentle as a dove and as brave as a lioness." She passed away after she brought her own sons safely home, and then volunteering to nurse American soldiers (including two of her nephews) suffering from cholera on a British prison ship. She was buried in an unknown grave—a fact that haunted her son. Shortly before she died, she sent Andrew a letter full of advice that Jackson was to use throughout his life. He in turn passed many of these maxims on to his own family. At her death, Jackson, aged 14, became an orphan, and a bitter opponent of the British for the rest of his life (Remini, 2008; Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.a.; History of American Women, 2008; Willentz, 2007; Wikipedia n.d.a. & n.d.b.; Miltimore, 2017).

Post-Revolutionary War. After the war, the young orphan lived with an extended family of relatives, more or less as a poor relation, and lacking a true home. His tried his hand as a saddle-maker and teacher, but at age 17, he decided to study law. He was admitted to the North Carolina Bar in 1787, and this background, however sparse, helped forge his character in the early frontier years as the country began its expansion. Unlike many of his political predecessors who had come from affluent and privileged backgrounds, Jackson had a very different perspective regarding leadership, representation and particularly, honor. As an adult, he became a man of strong opinions and extreme contrasts in virtually all things (Remini, 2008; Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.a.).

Early politics. Jackson became involved in politics fairly early in his life. In 1796, he supposedly proposed the Indian name "Tennessee" for the new state while serving as a delegate to the Tennessee Constitutional Convention. The word "Tennessee" was said to mean, "meeting

place, winding river or river of the great bend,” although the actual meaning has been lost. Jackson also served as Tennessee’s Attorney General, Supreme Court Justice, and in both houses of Congress; as well as being commissioned in the militia (*American Minute, n.d.; Tennessee, n.d.; Bogan, n.d.; Baker, n.d.*).

Temperament. As noted earlier, Jackson was a man of contrasts, and this was obvious in his temperament. On a personal level, Jackson was known for his argumentative nature and monumental temper. He took part in a dozen duels (one where he was wounded rather seriously having been shot in the chest, staunching the blood with his handkerchief, and then deliberately fired and killed his opponent). He was capable of flooding “a room with the gorgeous sounds of Anglo-Saxon expletives” when angered. However, he could also turn his anger on and off at will. He was a slave owner who was reportedly kind for the time period, telling his nephew to make sure slaves were treated “with humanity . . . and to feed & cloath [sic] (them) well, and work in moderation,” but could be cruel to those who crossed him. Jackson fought the Native American Indians fiercely, but adopted and lovingly raised an orphaned Creek child whose mother had died, and who would have been killed by his own people had he not taken the child (*Remini, 2008, para. 2; Jackson, 1833; Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage, n.d.a.; n.d.b. & n.d.c.*).

Personal traits. Jackson was a tall (6’1”), pale, lean man with a pockmarked face topped by a shock of sandy red hair that had turned white by the time he had become president. He was mainly self-educated, charming, chivalrous to the opposite sex, charismatic, thin-skinned, a notorious gambler, and devoted to his family, wards and friends. For his tough decision-making, dedication to his soldiers, and resoluteness in battle he became known as “Old Hickory.” During the War of 1812, he was known for his courage, resourcefulness, suffering the same privations as his soldiers, and refusing to leave any wounded men behind. He served as a U.S. Army General and was the hero of the Battle of New Orleans (1814) for which Congress awarded him a Congressional Gold Medal. He could also be refined when he chose to do so, and took an absolute pleasure in disappointing those prepared to see him “with a tomahawk in one hand and a scalping knife in the other.” Jackson was also viewed as being astute and capable of “profound calculation”—even by his enemies (*DeGregio, 2009; Remini, 2013; Cheatham, 2014; DeGregio, 1984, p. 105-106; Meacham, 2008, p. 312*).

Land speculation. Jackson saw the value in land as the nation expanded, and was one of the three original 1819 investors in Memphis, Tennessee. This involvement in land speculation early in the state’s history influenced him, his extended family and greatly helped the family socially and economically (*Bucy, 2014; Tennessee Blue Book, 2015; Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage, n.d.a.; Yacka, 2017; Wikipedia n.d.a. & n.d.b.; Inman, 2017*).

Architectural interest. After living in a log home with Rachel for several years a few miles from Nashville, Tennessee, he began construction on The Hermitage in 1819. He and Rachel took an active interest in constructing and decorating their home in the Federal style. After a disastrous fire in 1834, he rebuilt The Hermitage in the Greek revival style, and his daughter-in-law helped create the image of the building as it is today. The home is one of the

best-preserved presidential homes in the country (*Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.a.; Brackett, 2001; Stravinsky, 2019*).

Presidency. After one of the most vitriolic elections in American history, Jackson served two terms as the seventh President of the United States from 1829 to 1837. As president, he is often viewed as being a highly polarizing figure in U.S. history, and several excellent books have been written about his life and presidency. Briefly, he was the first president to be born in a log cabin, the only president who was a prisoner of war, had one of the wildest inaugural parties recorded, and was the first president to experience an assassination attempt. After his would-be assassin fired a shot from one of the two pistols he held, the 67-year-old president beat his assailant soundly with his cane and continued doing so, as his attacker's second gun misfired—again (*History, 2017; Remini, 2008*).

Jackson had several notable accomplishments as president, including balancing the budget and paying off the national debt, founding the Democratic Party, and creating a more democratic republic for the common man. He also prevented the first real threat of state secession during the Nullification Crisis, and is attributed to giving the famous toast, “Our federal union, it must be preserved.” In addition, Jackson authorized exploration and increased trade (*History, 2017; Loller, 2016; US History.org, 2019, para. 5; Meacham, 2008*).

He also had some significant failures that tarnished his image. Although slavery was legal, many decried it. Jackson promoted slavery and became wealthy from it. However, at the time, he was not very different from many of his contemporaries in this regard. Probably his most notable failure historically was the “Trail of Tears” as a result of the *Indian Removal Act of 1830*. This relocation of Native Americans resulted in thousands of deaths (*Schoone-Jongen, 2016; History, 2017; Loller, 2016*).

While serving as president, Jackson preferred being called “General Jackson,” and not “Mr. President.” He was an opponent of having a federal bank and basically caused its demise. Jackson detested paper money, only trusting in gold and silver as a stable currency. It is therefore somewhat ironic that since his death his picture has graced several paper denominations including the twenty-dollar bill (since 1928). His image was to be replaced by abolitionist Harriett Tubman in 2020, but the change has been put on hold. Jackson's influence over a twenty-year period in American history was so pervasive that he is the only president to have an era named for him—The Jacksonian Era (*Feller, as cited in Loller, 2016, para. 5; History, 2017; Loller, 2016; Borack, 2018; Brackett, 2001*).

This president was not a man to waste resources either. One of the more amusing stories from his White House tenure came about when he received a 1400 lb. wheel of cheddar cheese as a gift (and probably had no idea what to do with it). It was four feet wide, two feet thick and remained on display at the White House for nearly a year (with the cheese reportedly giving the White House quite an odor that took some time to eradicate). For the president's final White House party on Washington's Birthday in 1837, someone famously suggested that it should be available for visitors to slice off pieces and eat. The guests ate all the cheese within two hours—but the

smell remained for some time (*History Channel, n.d.b.; American Presidents, n.d.; Kaufman, 2017; Trex, 2014; McNamara, 2018*).

Humor. Jackson also appears to have been a man of some humor and often used a raucous wit to make a point. He knew his education was lacking compared to many of his political contemporaries and supposedly joked, “It’s a damn poor mind that can only think of one way to spella word.” One of his best quotes shows self-deprecating humor about himself and temperament, stating “I was born for a storm, and a calm does not suit me” (*Conrad, 2014, para. 5 & 7*).

Life after the Presidency. After his presidency Jackson returned to the Hermitage. For the last years of his life, he was still active in running the Hermitage and played a key role politically in shaping the face of American politics. He was also active in the interests of his extended family. In 1845, he died at age 78 and was buried beside Rachel. His death was due, in part, to lead poisoning from the bullet he had carried for so long from an early duel in his body. While guests were paying their respects in the home, and before the funeral sermon, his pet parrot Poll had to be removed outside for swearing so much that guests were both awed and embarrassed, with the likely notion that the parrot’s vocabulary had probably been learned from the former president himself. His tomb is marked very simply: General Andrew Jackson, March 15, 1767—June 8, 1845 (*History Channel, n.d.b.; Atkins, 2017; Smolkin & Williams, 2015; Biography, 2019*).

Legacy. Today, Jackson’s legacy remains mixed. In his lifetime he was one of the greatest war heroes since George Washington . . . and “one of the most colossal, legendary figures to stride across American history.” However, the lens of history often changes, and although his accomplishments were many, his faults are also viewed far more critically in the present day (*Dose Staff, n.d.; Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage, n.d.a.; History Channel, n.d.b.; Wikipedia, n.d.a. & n.d.b.; Tennessee Blue Book, 2015; American Presidents, n.d.; The White House, n.d.; Encyclopedia of World Biographies, n.d.; Wikipedia, n.d.g.; Remini, as cited by Brackett, 2001; Meacham, 2008*).

Family. The great love of Andrew Jackson’s life was his adored wife, Rachel, and his devotion to her was legendary. When they married, he gained a literal army of connections in her siblings, in-laws, and their many children. He also became part of a stable family where he was seen as a great hero and idolized as the family role model and patriarch. His extended family fondly referred to him as “Uncle Jackson.” Rachel’s family saw her as a gentle and loving caregiver to her adopted children and many wards, and as a cherished sister, aunt, and friend. She could calm Jackson with a nod or look, and served as a foil to his personality (*Davis-Rodgers, 1965; Hermitage, n.d.a.; History Channel, n.d.a.; Brady, 2011*).

Although Rachel and Andrew had no children of their own, they adopted three children. At the time adoption was not made in the formal and legal sense that is present today.

1. ***Andrew Jackson Jr.***¹ (1808-1865) was the child of Severn Donelson (Rachel’s brother) who already had a number of children. He was the twin of Thomas Jefferson Donelson. In *Notable Southern Families*, the authors stated:

His aunt, Rachel Jackson, took Andrew home when he was a few days old to the Hermitage, for the purpose of relieving his mother. After a few days, the Jackson's requested the child be given to them. This request being granted, General Jackson went before the Legislature and adopted the child, changing his name to Andrew Jackson Jr. (*Armstrong & French, 1922, pp. 105-106*).

Andrew Jr. stayed in close contact with his seven siblings all his life. He married Sarah Yorke in 1831, who would eventually become one of his father's White House hostesses from 1834 to 1837. In his later years, Andrew Jr. was a poor money manager and had a variety of financial issues that General Jackson did his best to mitigate (*Meacham, 2008; Remini, 2013; Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.b.; Wikipedia, n.d.h.*).

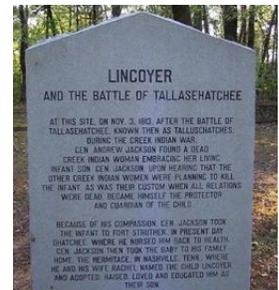
After his father's death, Andrew, Jr. became mired in bad investments and died deeply in debt. As a result, the Hermitage would pass out of the family's hands. In 1856 he sold rights to the house to the state, although the family was allowed to live there for some



time. Andrew Jr. died as the result of an accidental gunshot wound in a hunting accident in 1865. "His foot struck the trigger and the whole load of one barrel passed through his right hand . . ." Tetanus (or lockjaw) developed on Saturday, April 15, and he died two days later. His son, Andrew Jackson III remained at the Hermitage until 1893 (*Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.b., para. 1; Guerin, 2014; Heiskell, & Sevier 1920; Remini, 2013; Library of Congress, n.d.*).

Andrew Jackson, Jr. (1845, (Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.).

2. **Lyncoya (Lyncoyer) Jackson!** (@1811-1828) was an adopted Native American Creek child found in the arms of his dead mother during the Creek War after the Battle of Tallushatchee (1813). As it was traditional for the Creek to kill orphaned children, Jackson felt pity thinking of his own past and brought the child home. Lyncoya suffered poor health most of his life and died of tuberculosis at age 16. He was buried in an unmarked grave that lends itself to speculation about his family status (*Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.b.; Heiskell & Sevier, 1920; Library of Congress, n.d.; National Park Service, n.d.a.*).



Lyncoya's marker (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/95005982/lyncoyajackson>).

3. **Andrew Jackson Hutchings**³ (1812-1845) was orphaned at age five. He was the grandson of Rachel's sister, Catherine and her husband, Thomas Hutchings. The family referred to him and his cousin Andrew Jackson, Jr., as "the two Andrews." Andrew also caused the Jackson's a number of issues and heartache over the years. He married Mary Coffee, daughter of John Coffee, who had a long association with President Jackson. He moved to Alabama and died at 33 in Florence (*Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.b.; Remini, 2013*).



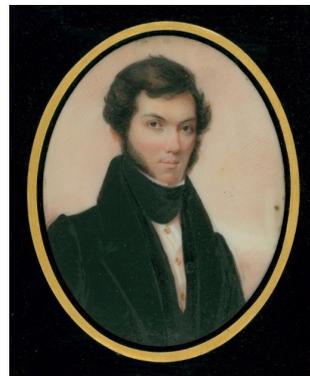
Andrew Jackson Hutchings, (Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.).

The Twins (Biological sons of Severn Donelson and brothers of Alexander Donelson)



Andrew Jackson, Jr. (early 1830s)

Andrew Jr. and his brother, Thomas eventually married sisters from the same family (Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.).



Thomas Jefferson Donelson (1835) Miniature (Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.).

Besides the children he and Rachel adopted, the Jackson's also cared for a number of children as wards adding to the family's many connections. Over time, Jackson was the guardian of 24-36 children either legally or informally. At the Hermitage it was rare for the house not to be full of these young people, additional relatives and friends (*Library of Congress, n.d.; Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.; Cheatham, 2013; Feller, 2016; Meredith, 2013*).

Later, as Jackson's career blossomed, the entire extended family gained financially, politically, and socially in their relationship with him. Throughout their lives, Jackson and his Donelson relatives often traveled across Tennessee on business and to visit one another, friends and former wards. Jackson received many of these individuals at The Hermitage in return. Because Andrew Jackson had been an early investor in properties in West Tennessee (notably Memphis), he encouraged many of his family members to settle in the area, where land could be purchased fairly inexpensively (*Inman, 2015 & 2017; Meredith, 2013; Cheatham, 2013; Tennessee Blue Book, 2015; Dobson, 1988/89*).

Because of his love for Rachel and her family, Jackson remained in touch with his many Donelson relatives through numerous letters and took an active interest in their well-being. The Jackson's played a pivotal role in their family's lives and fortunes well beyond their deaths, particularly in building a strong sense of love, patriotism, and a robust code of family loyalty and

honor (*Brady, 2011; Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.a.; Historic Camera, n.d.; Library of Congress, n.d.; Andrew Jackson Papers 1775-1874; Brady, 2011*).

Jane Donelson Hays (1766-1834)—sister of Rachel Donelson

Rachel's older sister was Jane (nee Donelson) Hays,² and they were to remain close all their lives. Jane married Colonel Robert Hays⁴ (1758-1819), a Revolutionary War veteran, and a close friend of Jackson. Hays was a lieutenant in the Revolutionary War, and later appointed Colonel of Calvary of Mero District by the North Carolina Assembly in 1788 (*Burrow, 1962; Robinson, 1967; We Relate, n.d.; Find a Grave Memorials, 2015*).

Jane and Robert's son was **General Samuel Jackson Hays**² (1804-1866). Upon Colonel Hays' death, Andrew Jackson became Samuel's guardian and a great influence on his life. Samuel Hays attended West Point, served as his uncle's secretary in the White House, and was a Major General in the 2nd Army of Tennessee in the Mexican War. He purchased a tract of 640 acres from the State of Tennessee in 1837 that eventually became known as Haysville. It was also referred to as Wythe/Withe Depot with the development of the Memphis and Ohio Railroad. In 1883, the town formally took the name of Arlington. However, by 1845, Hays, who had never lived in Haysville (later Arlington) sold much of his property in the Haysville area (*Burrow, 1962; Arlington Chamber of Commerce, 2014*).

General Hays's son, **Captain/Colonel Robert Butler Hays**^{5*} (1840-1907) lived in Haysville. In 1866 he married Josephine Ghoulson⁵ (1844-1916), a graduate of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, who was the longtime organist at The Church of the Holy Innocents (*Town of Arlington, n.d.; Burrow, 1962; Arlington Chamber of Commerce, 2014; Davies-Rodgers, 1965, 1990 & 1995; Miller, 2001*).

*He is referred to as "Captain Bob" in *Davies-Rodgers (1965)*, and "Colonel Bob" in *Burrow (1962)*. It appears that he was a private in the 3rd Reg. of the TN Calvary (*Forrest's, Company A (National Park Service, n.d.c.)*).

Severn Donelson (1763 or 1773-1818)—brother of Rachel Donelson

Severn Donelson¹ was one of Rachel's seven brothers and lived close to her. He married Elizabeth (nee Rucker) Donelson¹ (1782-1828) and they had eight children:

1. Rachel (1803-1824)
2. James Rucker Donelson (1804-1829)
3. John Donelson (1807-1879)
4. Thomas Jefferson Donelson (1808-1895)—the twin of Andrew Jackson, Jr.
5. Andrew Jackson, Jr.—the twin of Thomas Jefferson (1808-1865)
6. Samuel Rucker Donelson (1810-1851)
7. Lucinda Rucker Donelson (1812-1837)
8. Alexander Donelson (1816-1887)—Built Orion Hill

One of the twins was adopted by the Jackson's and became known as Andrew Jackson, Jr. (see children of Andrew and Rachel Jackson) (*Severn Donelson Descendants, n.d.; Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.; Cheatham, 2013; Feller, 2016*). For more on marriages and children, see *Appendix A*.

In 1818, Severn died, and unlike many of his other relatives, he gave the guardianship of his children to his nephew, William Donelson (1795-1864), instead of the Jackson's. This was probably because by the time he passed away, Andrew Jackson had committed to be the guardian of other family members, adopted several children, or had guardianship of several young children whose parents had served with him on his many military campaigns (*Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.; Ancestry, n.d.; Marsha Mullin, Vice-President, Museum Services and Chief Curator, The Hermitage, personal communication, March 30, 2018; Severn Donelson Descendants; Alexander Donelson Descendants; Mullin, n.d.; Cheatham, 2013*).



CHAPTER FOUR

The Donelson Family Settles in Arlington, Tennessee

Alexander Donelson (April, 17, 1816-April 4, 1887) and Orion Hill

Alexander Donelson⁶ (often referred to as Alex) was Severn's youngest child and an orphan by 1828. He moved to the West Tennessee area as a teenager along with several other family members around 1830 when the area now known as Arlington was still very much a wilderness. This was slightly more than a decade after West Tennessee was purchased from the Chickasaw, and an act of the Tennessee General Assembly established Shelby County in 1819 (200th anniversary in 2019). The population in the area was still very scant, with only about 20 inhabitants in the early 1820s. Memphis had a population of only 633 by 1830, and a series of epidemics and poor sanitation made the city a less than desirable area to settle. By the 1830s, there were approximately 66 planters in West Tennessee. The Donelson's settled near the community now known as Arlington (originally Haysville, and sometimes referred to as Withe Depot). Here his guardian, older brothers and a variety of other relatives raised young Alexander and saw to his education (*Keating, 1888; Burrow, 1962; Ellis, 1964; Meyer, 2009; Bruesch, 1948; Pittman, 1969*).

Starting in the early 1830s, Alexander, and his two brothers, Thomas (see miniature portrait on page 12) and Samuel, all sold land to their uncle, Andrew Jackson. Jackson wanted these "lots" for the Hermitage tract and for his adopted son, Andrew, Jr., who was Alexander's biological brother (see portrait on page 12).

The proposed purchases from Samuel and Alexander were mentioned in a series of letters to William Donelson (Alexander's cousin and guardian) dated September 9, 1831; December 7, 1831; February 6, 1832; and referenced in letters to others continuing well into 1832. The property is referred to as "lots" and no reference to the actual size of the property was indicated in any correspondence. Alex's land was sold to his uncle for \$1500, which at the time was a very good price, and the same cost was paid for Samuel's lot. Payment was to be received at Christmas 1832. This purchase is also noted in Jackson's will (*Feller, 2016; Andrew Jackson 1831; Marsha Mullin, Vice-President, Museum Services and Chief Curator, The Hermitage, personal communication, March 30, 2018; Will of Andrew Jackson, 1843; See Appendices B & C*).

With consideration for inflation, this amount would be approximately \$43,400 in 2019. However, the value of the dollar and the cost of living were quite different at that point in history. This makes determining an equivalent amount today somewhat difficult to ascertain. Land values at this time in West Tennessee averaged \$4.00 to \$5.00 in cost per acre (*Inflation Calculator, 2019; Meyer, 2009*).

Relationships with relatives. The real affection between Alexander and his brothers (as well as the humor and wit shared) is clear in many ways. In a letter from 1831 Samuel Rucker Donelson (age 21) wrote to his older brother Thomas Jefferson Donelson (age 23) about his progress as a young doctor, the charms of the ladies, political news, and the progress young Alexander Donelson (age 15) was making in his studies (*see Appendix A for family relationships*).

Murfreesboro, May 2, 1831

Dear Thomas:

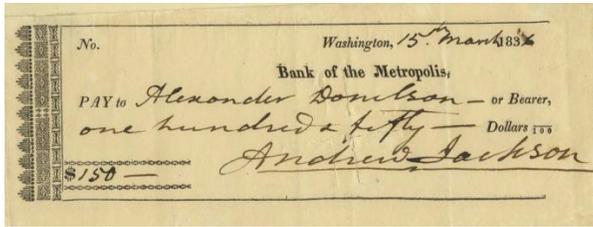
. . . . I am coming on tolerably well with my studies, sell a few pills, bleed, and pull a tooth occasionally. The quarterly meeting of the Methodist Church in this place was held on Saturday and Sunday last; the house was pretty much crowded on Sunday then with wise girls to almost any amount, some pretty good looking among them too. But none of them with all their charms or fascinating beauty could throw around me the captivating chains of love It is reported all of Uncle Jackson's cabinet have resigned, whether it be true or false, time alone must determine.* For my part I can't think for my life what is the cause Alexander is well and driving ahead in his studies at a pretty good speed. All is well with him and I hope this finds you in the same situation. Alexander sends his love to you. I remain your affectionate brother,

Samuel Donelson (*Andrew Jackson Papers, 1775-1874a*)

*This was probably a reference to the “Petticoat” or “Eaton” Affair (1829-1831) in which all but one member of Jackson's cabinet resigned over their wives ostracism of Secretary of War John Eaton and his wife, Peggy. The wives perceived the Eaton's as having lax morals and made a point of not receiving the couple. Cabinet members followed suit, which infuriated Jackson as he and Rachel had suffered from similar treatment in the past. This resulted in a government crisis, as well as divisions in Jackson's own family (*Pierce, 1999; McBride, 1969; Meacham, 2008*).

Looking at land records and correspondence in the late 1830s and early 1840s, and as Alex reached his majority, he acquired more land. He is listed as the head of his own household in the 1840 Census. After a series of land swaps between family members over time, he began construction on Orion Hill. To honor his uncle, he built Orion Hill as an “exact replica of Andrew Jackson's home, The Hermitage” (*U.S. Census, 1840; Burrow, 1962, p. 80; see Appendix D*).

Below is a check from Andrew Jackson to Alexander Donelson dated March 15, 1836 sold at Christie's in 2015. Christie's was contacted to see if there was any background information but could provide nothing other than what was provided in their catalog (*Daniel Jarmai, Archives Researcher, Christie's Archives, personal communication, March 11, 2019; Christie's 2015*).



Check from Andrew Jackson to Alexander Donelson for \$150.00 (Christie's, 2015).

Throughout this time, the extended Jackson/Donelson families stayed connected in a variety of ways. Surprisingly, news was readily available through the three local newspapers published in the 1840s, even though the Donelson home was some distance from Memphis. *The Appeal, The Enquirer and The Eagle* had a total reading population of about 1000, and although only about four pages each, were read across the Western District of Tennessee by planters, farmers and businessmen and delivered mainly by horse or wagon deliveries to the outlying areas. The Donelson's were kept further up-to-date on news and family matters through letters sent and shared with the many Jackson friends and relatives in the area. An example of this is shown in a letter written shortly before Alexander married and dated 1841 to his "Uncle Jackson" (Pittman, 1969; *Andrew Jackson Papers, 1775-1874b*).

Shelby County, April 28, 1841

Dear Uncle:

Some weeks (have passed) since we had the pleasure of hearing from you through your letter to Gen. Hays. We were pleased to hear that you were enjoying your usual good health, and that our friends around you were well. For your kind remembrance and regard to myself and brothers, permit me to thank you most sincerely. It always affords us a lively sensation of pleasure to hear of your health and continued good spirits that you may be spared to your friends for many more a year yet, and must be the prayer of all that feel that lofty patriotism which was want to dwell in the hearts of the American people.

Before this letter reaches you, it is probable you will see Brother there with his family. He left here on last Saturday. I fear he will have to have an operation performed on his son Levin tho I hope he may be delivered without it.

We have had thus far an unfavorable spring for farming operations, too much rain and too cool, tho our cotton and corn is looking pretty well. Cotton through the county is generally pretty well up, and some few have nearly scraped over. We very much need some clean, warm weather.

Our political canvass is not as yet exciting great warmth of feeling tho the Democrats are evidently in high spirits. In our county, which gave the whiggs a majority in the presidential election, there seems to be little or no doubt entertained of the sure call of the Democratic candidate. Mr. George Smith who

formerly lived in the edge of Wilson Co. will lead over his opponent Col. Alexander, who I am told is very weak in mental endowments, either by nature or by hard drink, and possibly both.

As regard between the contest between our talented Senator L. H. Coe, and Kit Williams for Congress, our friends seem to fear that Williams will succeed owing to the shortness of time and his being better known.

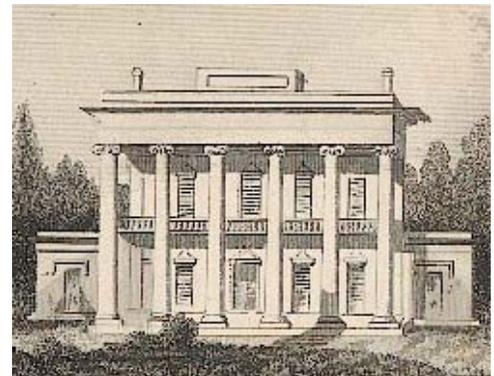
Gen. Hays and family are yet with us. They are all well, and send their love to you and relations Samuel and John Easten, and beg you will present our best regards to Sarah, Andrew, Thomas and friends, and to the young ladies whom you mention in your letter to Gen. Hays. Please present me entire, and now dear uncle accept the best wishes of my heart for your health and happiness. I am ever yours-

Alexander Donelson (Andrew Jackson Papers, 1775-1874b)

With the land he already owned, and the property his wife, Kate Royster brought to their marriage in 1841, Alex developed a fairly large plantation of over 1000 acres where he grew cotton and corn. A plantation usually comprised 500 to 1000 acres of land that produced two cash crops and had a variety of structures. Ellen Davies-Rodgers described Orion Hill in her book, *The Holy Innocents* as being “magnificently located on level, wooded acreage overlooking fertile lowlands of the plantation.” Here, Alexander and Kate raised a family of four children (Helen, Richard, Sarah, and Alexander Francis). For more information, see *Known Descendants of Alexander and Kate Donelson* further in the manuscript (*Davies-Rodgers, 1965, pp. 43; Vejnar, 2008; Shelby County, n.d.; Williams, n.d.; Williamson, 1869 & 1888; Burrow, 1962; Andrew Jackson Papers, 1775-1874b*).



The image of The Hermitage, Nashville (left) was taken prior to the 1998 tornado where 1000 trees were lost). This may give an idea of the look of the original Orion Hill. (USA Canvas Art, n.d.).



The rendering above shows what the Hermitage would have looked like architecturally). Unfortunately, no images have been found of Orion Hill (Tennessee4me, n.d.c.).

Slavery. The Donelson’s (like many other wealthy southern planters in the area) were slave owners. In Tennessee, about one in four of all the people living in Tennessee were slaves with the

highest populations in the middle and western part of the state. Today, the idea of owning slaves is untenable, but in early America, it was, unfortunately, a common practice. Individuals were considered property and as such an asset. They were denied basic rights, forced to work without pay, deprived of an education, and in many instances, could be punished severely. Slaves could also be abused sexually, not allowed to marry legally, separated from loved ones, and lived in fear of being sold to settle debts, disobedience, or as part of the settlement of a will (*History Channel, n.d.; Tennessee4me, n.d.a.; Lambert, n.d.; Vlach, 1993*).

Federal census data from 1840, 1850, and 1860 shows Alex owned between 11 and 17 slaves at different points in time. The only other information found was that the “old slave quarters were out behind the house” although nothing remains of the structures today. In 1860, 46,200 plantations existed in the South. Of those, nearly 21,000 had 20 to 30 slaves and fewer than 2,500 had a workforce of 100 or more, with the rest somewhere in between. In the 1850 and 1860 census, “slave schedules” were kept, and these provide some additional details. In these records, the owner’s name was listed, but for slaves—sadly, only the gender, age, and color were provided—and no names (*U.S. Census 1840, 1850 & 1860; Alethea Bragg, personal communication, April 5, 2018; Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness, n.d.; Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage, n.d.c.; Vlach, 1993*).

It looked as though freedom would finally become a reality for slaves in the South when President Abraham Lincoln issued the final version of *The Emancipation Proclamation* on January 1, 1863, freeing slaves. However, at that time, Tennessee did not fall under the proclamation’s provisions because the state had been under Union control since 1862, and the proclamation only applied to states “still in rebellion.” It was not until October 1864—six months before the Civil War ended—that the Union military governor, Andrew Johnson (later the 17th president) finally emancipated the slaves of Tennessee. When Congress passed the 13th 14th and 15th Amendments, basic civil rights were established, but the legacy of slavery, and poor reconstruction efforts often made it difficult for those freed individuals to gain a foothold in the post-war economy (*National Archives, 2018; Shaffer, 2015; National Park Service, 2015; Civil War Trust, n.d.; Biography.com, n.d.; History, n.d.; U.S. History, n.d.; Sage American History, 2018*).

Unfortunately, the lack of information in records makes it difficult to track individuals held in slavery. Oral traditions may survive, but there is little known of personal lives. “Letters, diaries and newspapers seldom existed for the millions of African Americans enslaved in the United States” (*Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage, n.d.c., para. 8; Sutcliffe, 2000; Bond & Wilkerson-Freeman, 2015*).

Upon emancipation, many individuals chose not to take the names of their former masters. The surname Freeman was popular as was Washington or Jefferson. Others took the surname of their previous owners, sometimes for expediency, and in other instances, because they had served in the military under that name and this expedited any pensions that might be received. Donelson is a fairly common last name for both blacks and whites in the U.S. (*Facing History and Ourselves, n.d.; Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage, n.d.c.; Donelson Family Origin, n.d.; Jackson, 2012*).

In 1840, the name Donelson was listed in seven states with the highest concentration of that surname in Ohio. By 1920, this last name was recorded in 42 states with high levels in Illinois,

Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. Today, two states, Illinois and Tennessee, have the highest concentration of the surname, and Donelson is enumerated as one of the most common 10,000 surnames across the United States overall (*Donelson Family Origin, n.d.; Names.org, n.d.*).

For those former slaves who chose the name Donelson, there is another layer of difficulty in tracing roots with a high level of accuracy. The descendants of John Donelson in Shelby County, and throughout Tennessee were numerous, shared similar first and last names across generations, often married other Donelson's and almost all were slave owners. Appendix A provides more evidence in terms of the complexity of these relationships. Gray's Creek Missionary Baptist Church and Cemetery (located at 3141 Inglewood Place, Arlington, TN*) has 14 Donelson memorials although all but one of these individuals were born after emancipation. It is likely there is a connection, but to which family is uncertain. Gray's Creek (founded in 1843) is one of the oldest black congregations and was originally made up of slaves who met twice per month with their pastor, Joseph H. "Free Joe" Harris. Continued research is being conducted to gain facts and to honor the legacy of those associated with the property. The role these individuals played at Orion Hill, both in a personal and historic sense over a 25-year period before slavery was abolished cannot be overlooked or understated (*Dobson, 1988/89; Find a Grave, n.d.b.; Pike, 2019*).

**Inglewood Place (the road) was named for the 1843 home built by Dr. Samuel Donelson also known as Inglewood Place. Samuel, the older brother of Alexander Donelson practiced medicine at his home located approximately one mile from Orion Hill. Samuel's daughter, Linnie, son-in-law, Colonel James Mortimer Crews and his second wife, Kate Ormond also lived there. The house burned in 1998 (Cotton, 1998; Goad, 1996).*

Post-antebellum years. Shortly prior to, and following the Civil War, many aspects of life, both economic and social, changed for the Donelson family and what was then, the village of Haysville. At the end of the 1850s, the development of the Memphis and Ohio Railroad brought new development and growth to the village. In 1861, Samuel Jackson Hays (another family cousin) deeded a lot to Alexander for "the consideration of one dollar and other good reasons." As a result, Alexander eventually built the second store in Arlington, called "Donelson's" in what is now, Depot Square. An Irishman named John Dwyer built the first store, and it was said, "His stock consisted mainly of bad whiskey (i.e. very little alcohol). . . . that came near to drowning out the fire" when the store burned. Regrettably, the exact date Donelson's opened and closed is unknown. The Civil War began almost at the same time the railroad lines were completed, and this effectively slowed the growth of Haysville (*Burrow, 1962; Davies-Rodgers, 1965, p. 56; Burrow, 1962, p. 3*).

By 1862, the Donelson's oldest son, Richard went to war. During his wartime experiences, he was severely wounded, recovered, and paroled in 1865. The war ended, and slaves were freed. In 1868, General Hays' estate executor laid out what was to become the town of Arlington, lots were sold at a public sale, and the village again, began to show growth (*Fold 3, n.d.; Wikipedia, n.d.i. & n.d.j.; Shaffer, 2015; Burrow, 1962; Davies-Rodgers, 1965; Rikard, 2006; Moore & Foster, 1923b; Mullin, n.d.*).

The 1870s brought further changes. The Donelson's had all their children except their oldest daughter, and a family of black servants whose surname was Wood (Harrison, 70; Hannah, 45; Lucy, 17; Sam, 12; and Anni, 6) living with them (there appears to have been no connection prior

to the war). Alexander and Kate's children married, grandchildren were born, and a son-in-law was tragically murdered in 1874. In 1878, the village of Haysville was incorporated, and a round of Yellow Fever hit the area (*U.S. Census, 1870; The Memphis Daily Appeal, 1874; Burrow, 1962; Keating, 1888*).

By the early 1880s, Alexander's wife, two sons, one daughter, one daughter-in-law, four grandchildren, and two black servants (Alex Brooks and Mattie Thomas) are all shown living with him. Further changes came to Haysville in 1883, when the town became known as Arlington, with a population of 500. In 1884, after 43 years together, Alexander's wife, Kate, died. His oldest daughter Helen also passed away in that same year shortly before her mother (*U.S. Census 1880; Burrow, 1962; The Memphis Daily Appeal, 1884a, & b; McLean, n.d.*).

Alexander died at "Orion Hill . . . at 71 years of age" on April 4, 1887, at 7:30 pm. There are no records of where he or his wife were buried, but it is probable they were interred in the Old Royster Burying Ground, that has no markers. He died intestate (without a will), but Alexander Francis, his youngest son, petitioned for and administered his estate (*Memphis Daily Appeal, 1887, para. 1; Shelby County Archives, 1887; Burrow, 1962*).

Alexander's children continued to farm the property and operate the store in the 1890s. Burrow (1962) gave a brief description of the businesses in Arlington during this time that supports the depiction by Carter below.

. . . Businesses were built 'in a line' of stores facing the depot and railroad . . . These old stores are remembered as having one 'continuous plank porch' with benches . . . for visitors and loafers. The town children enjoyed running up and down this old rattly porch . . . (p. 12)

Arlington 1900
(Section of Print by John Carter, n.d.).

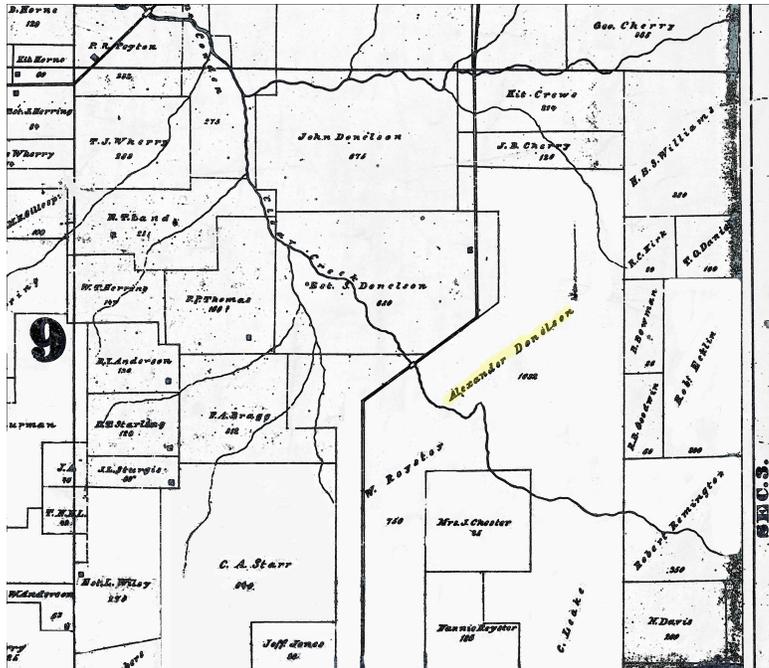


A reference is made in Captain Kenneth Garret's Diaries in 1906 about the store, and he mentions it being constructed of brick. In Burrow's book, the store is mentioned as one of the businesses operating in Arlington between 1900 and 1920, although it was probably sold around 1915. Unfortunately, land sales records are not clear on the sale, and little more material has been found on the store. Further research is being conducted, and any information would be appreciated (*Davies-Rodgers, 1965; Shelby County Register, 1915; Burrow, 1962*).

The last reference to Orion Hill as the Donelson home was in 1923, where it was described as a "historic landmark." Shortly thereafter, the house burned, but the exact date is unknown. It was about this time Alexander's descendants drifted apart, with some living in Memphis, others in the town of Arlington, and some moving to other states. For more information on family members

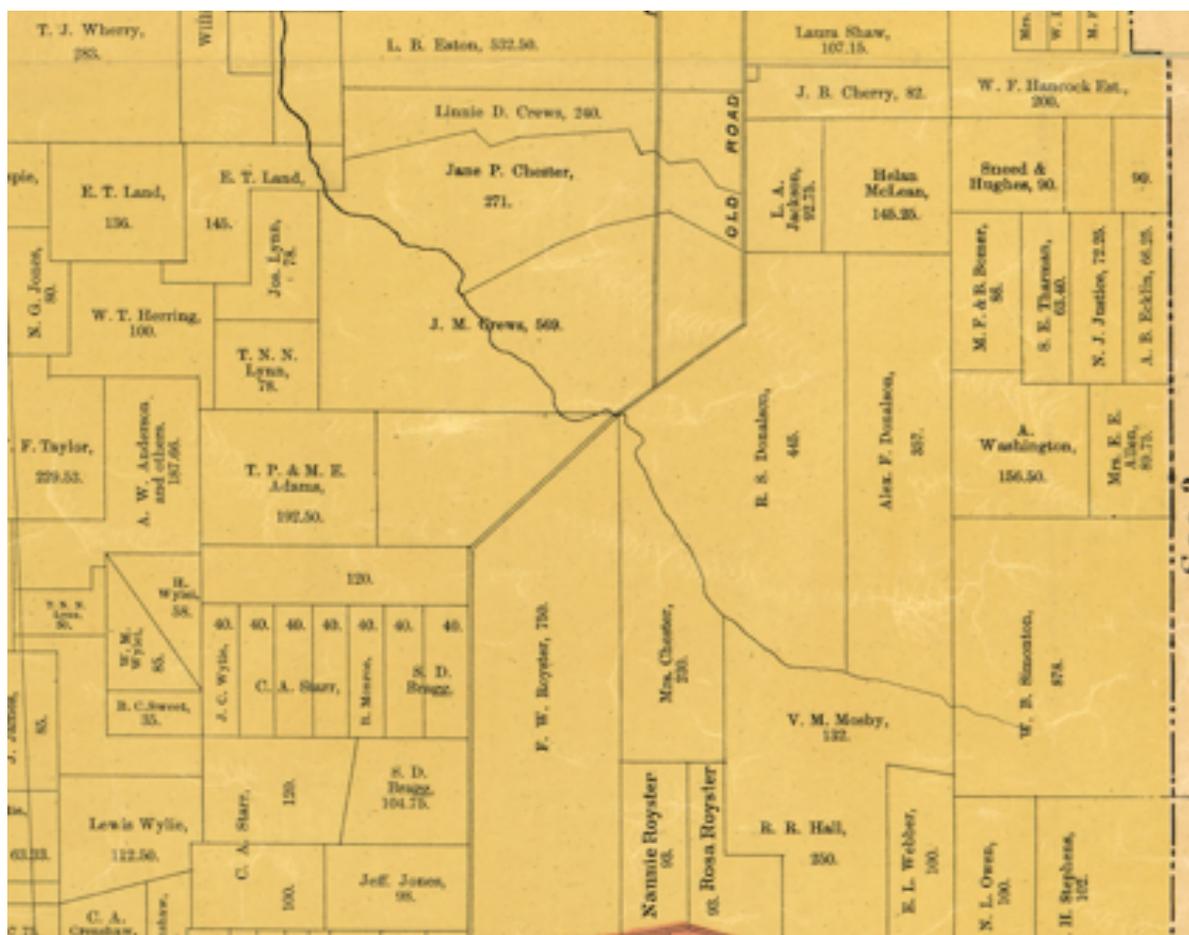
picture of land holdings (Shelby County Archives, 1850; Vincent Clark, Archivist, Office of Shelby County Register; Tom Leatherwood, personal communication, April 9 & 12, 2018).

The second and third of these maps include *Williamson's 1869 and 1888 Map of Shelby County, Tennessee Homeowners*. These maps appear to show more accurately the extensive land areas owned in the 8th District by Alexander in 1869, and how his property was divided among his children as of 1888. The property distributions indicate members of the Donelson family were fairly substantial landowners in the immediate area (Vincent Clark, Archivist, Office of Shelby County Register; Tom Leatherwood, personal communication, April 9 & 12, 2018).



Williamson's (1869) Map of Shelby County Landowners (section). Available: Shelby County Archives.





*Section of Williamson's (1888) Map of Shelby County Landowners. Shelby County Archives and online.
Note how property has been divided.*



CHAPTER FIVE
Points of Interest at 12055 Donelson (Orion Hill), Arlington, Tennessee

After the Donelson's either moved, sold property or passed away, the site of Orion Hill was quietly forgotten. The photo below from 1990 shows how the drive appeared when the Dr. Lester Graves and his wife Barbara bought the property. At that time, the drive was simply a grassy track lined by old cedars, and there was little remaining in terms of any structures.



Drive of Orion Hill circa 1990. (Graves Family Photos).

When the current home was built in 1994, the land where the original house had been located was bulldozed to prepare for new construction (as evidenced in photos and videos the Graves family made). However, several interesting points have been identified.

Possible burial site. Cedar trees, daffodils and vinca (periwinkle) cover one location on the property, to the southwest of the house going down a natural slope (probably part of the “hill”). These plants are significant in that:

Over 100 years ago, periwinkle and cedar trees were planted in cemeteries Periwinkles provided a ground cover, which did not need mowing. Cedar trees were

planted before embalming and used to help mask the smell of decomposing bodies. (Hobbs, 2012, para. 4)

This may indicate burial sites on the property. There are no obvious markers, but some depressions appear to be evident. However this may be due to a variety of factors, and without doing excavation or using ground-penetrating radar, it would be difficult to state positively there is a burial site at Orion Hill. In rural areas of the 1800s, it was not uncommon for burials to take place near a home, as cemeteries were not located nearby, or weather conditions made it difficult to transport remains in a timely fashion. As families moved away or died out, many of these were forgotten (U.S. Department of the Interior, n.d.; Black, 2003; Terry, n.d.; Creole Moon, n.d.; Wilson, 1998 & 2005; The Funeral Source, n.d.).

Old walkway and bricks. Slightly to the east of the house is a marginally raised area that shows bricks placed in a pattern under approximately one to three inches of soil. Immediately to the north and east of this are a series of daffodils planted in a deliberate L-shaped pattern. The owners uncovered an approximately 3x10-foot area in May 2018 and found bricks in a variety of colors, some with markings, others without. Looking at the area that has been uncovered, this may be part of a walkway as the pathway continues for approximately 30 feet.

The most common bricks found with markings had “Fischer” or “S.M.B.Co.” The bricks marked with Fischer may have come from Fischer Lime & Cement; a company no longer operating. In a review of the Shelby County Register of Deeds, the company was in operation in Germantown

from approximately 1849 to the late 1990s. The bricks marked S.M.B.Co probably came from the Santa Monica Brick Company operating from 1923 to 1930. This area will continue to be uncovered and further research conducted (personal communication, Tyler Hill, Communications Director, Arlington Community Schools, June 10, 2018; Calbricks, 2018; Shelby County Register).



In early August 2018, the owners removed several trees from the property to accommodate plans for the proposed venue’s parking lots. While moving dirt, a rather large stack of old bricks was found buried under dirt and debris. These may have been bricks used in the original house or surrounding structures. These bricks were unmarked and typical of the bricks often produced on site from sand and clay molded into forms and fired in kilns on site in early southern homes. The owners hope to re-purpose these bricks to be used somewhere on site (Federal Writer’s Project, 1949; Wikipedia, n.d.f.).

Historic Trees. One of the most unique features to Orion Hill is the number of ancient pecan (*Carya illinoensis*), magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*), and Osage orange (*Maclura pomifera*) trees on the property. Many of these trees have been witness to several historical events. Alex Donelson planted eastern red cedar trees to border his drive as had been done at The Hermitage (see below) (Dirr, 2011).



Trees replanted at The Hermitage after most were destroyed by the 1998 tornado (Wilson, 2018).



Cedar Lane at Orion Hill. More than 24 of the 42 trees on the driveway are more than 100” in diameter (Wilson, 2018).

Another point of interest tying this property to The Hermitage is the large (136” diameter) magnolia tree that sits at a point of honor in front of the current home site (built on the site of Orion Hill). When Andrew Jackson became president, he brought a cutting of his wife’s favorite

tree to The White House from The Hermitage—a magnolia. “Jackson had it planted outside the White House in her honor as a lasting testament to their continuing love, even after death.” Although there is no strong historical documentation to prove this, the story has been a part of White House lore for hundreds of years. The Hermitage and White House conducted DNA sampling on their magnolias, but results were inconclusive (*Wamsley, & Delahoussaye, 2017, para. 5; Marsha Mullin, Vice-President, Museum Services and Chief Curator, The Hermitage, personal communication, March 30, 2018*).

Both the White House and Hermitage have suffered major losses in historic trees in recent years. The White House magnolia was cut back substantially in 2017 due to fears that helicopter prop wash would cause branches to fall on observers. The Hermitage in Nashville tragically lost many of the cedars planted by the Jackson’s going down the lane called Rachel’s Drive in an F3 tornado in 1998. Since then,



Magnolia at Orion Hill (Wilson, 2018).

the Hermitage Association has replanted those trees (Wamsley, & Delahoussaye, 2017; Wikipedia, n.d.b.; National Park Service n.d.b.; Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.; National Weather Service, 1998).

There is no proof that the magnolia at Orion Hill came from the Hermitage. However the intent of Alexander Donelson in making his home similar to the Hermitage seems obvious when paired with the cedar trees and historical records.

Besides the magnolia, Orion Hill has a variety of old trees well over 150 years old, approximate to the time (and earlier) when Alexander built Orion Hill. Assessing the age of many of Orion Hill's trees is underway.



Largest pine tree (154" in diameter in 2018). In front of house near driveway. This pine tree is @200 years old and dates back to the Jackson Purchase, when the US obtained Western Tennessee from the Chickasaw (Wilson, 2018).



Largest pecan tree (180" in diameter in 2018). To the right of garage. This tree is @222 years old and dates back to when the land was part of the Chickasaw hunting ground (Wilson, 2018).



Largest cedar tree (132" in diameter in 2018). Near driveway. This tree is @155-170 years old and dates back to at least the Civil War (Wilson, 2018).



Largest Osage orange tree (other names bois d'arc, bodock, horse apple), Between house and pond (170" in diameter in 2018). Approximate age is being assessed (Wilson, 2018).

The only completely accurate way to verify tree age is by counting rings after a tree has been cut down. The second most accurate is to bore into the tree to determine ring growth. As these trees are very old, a tree age calculator was used to determine the estimated age of Orion Hill's trees using circumference and tree growth rate, so as not to cause any damage (Sciencing, 2017).

Nathan Baker, an ISA certified arborist with Jones Brothers Trees and Landscaping visited the property on April 4, 2018, to give a preliminary assessment. He encouraged the owners to apply for “Heritage Status” for specific trees and groups of trees on the property. He also felt that Orion Hill would qualify as a state identified arboretum (a botanic tree garden that has 30 varieties of trees), and certainly as a tree sanctuary (minimum of 10 varieties of trees).

It is important to note that the trees at Orion Hill are unique for the area. The average maximum age of open-grown trees in the U.S., according to Thomas Perry, a professor of tree physiology at North Carolina State University at Raleigh, is “much less than 40-70 years of age” and “stands of trees 120-150 years are indeed uncommon” The arborist who recently visited the property also attested to the unique nature of Orion Hill’s trees, especially regarding the numbers (*Perry, 2012, p. 3; Nathan Baker, Arborist, personal communication, April 4, 2018*).

In late April, Debbie Grieste-Evans, a member of The West Tennessee Urban Forestry Council (WTUFC) was in touch with the Wilson’s. Debbie suggested the owners allow 4-H students preparing for local/national competitions come out under the supervision of 4-H Club Director, Weida Ringly to use the site as a “practice ground” to prepare for competitions. Two groups of students from Hardin County and Shelby County came to Orion Hill on Friday, August 24, 2018, to identify trees, along with volunteers from the WTUFC. These included:

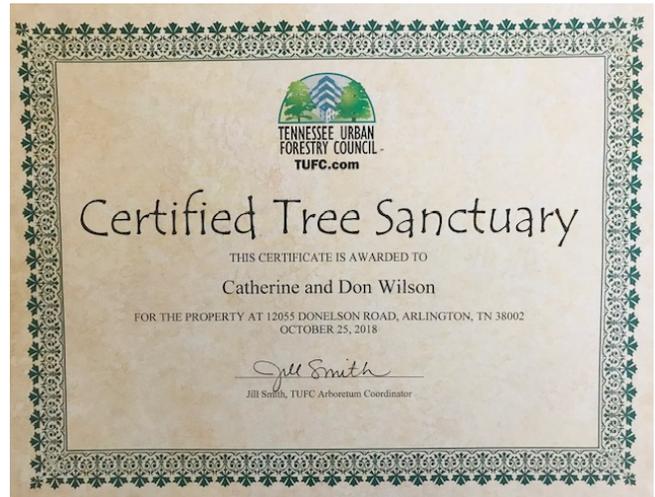
WTUFC Members	Hardin County 4-H Team Members	Shelby County 4-H Team Members
Richard Beckwith	Rosie Dodd (parent)	Carson Cooper
Jan Castillo	Alesha Dodd	Olivia Desmarais
Terry Green	Kassidy Dodd	Jack Desmarais
Deb Grimes	Mathhew Greya	Chloe Graham
	Nathanyel Grey	Olivia Desmarais
		Audrey Henderson

The students and WTUFC identified 27 varieties of trees and additional trips are being planned s to identify more.



4-H Team Members (2018).

In mid-October 2018, the owners applied to become a Tennessee Urban Forestry Council (TUFC) Tree Sanctuary based on having at least 20 trees identified. TUFC granted this status on October 25, 2018, in recognition of “canopy and understory trees, and the diversity of trees.” The plaque and certificate are below (*Jill Smith, TUFC Arboretum Certification Coordinator, personal communication, October 25, 2018*).



Wes Hopper with Urban Forestry visited the property on November 28, 2018, and helped the owners confirm the identity of additional trees. WTUFC volunteer, Jan Castillo helped the owners obtain tree labels from the Memphis Botanic Garden and these were placed on trees in December 2018. In addition, the owners created a map of the property identifying trees and the location of specific varieties and have added to this as new varieties are identified. (The map is available from Orion Hill.) Forty varieties have currently been identified.

Protecting Historic Trees. Today, many of the trees planted by Alexander Donelson (or that had been on the property prior to his arrival) are well over 128-180” in diameter and have compiled DBH (diameter at breast height) computations. Although these trees have an estimated age of 150-200+ years old, they are still flourishing (*Burrow, 1962; Davies-Rodgers, 1965; TreeGuide.com, n.d.*).

Protecting these trees is an integral part of the new mission of Orion Hill, and an application was submitted (April 2018) for five specific groups of trees (cedar, magnolia, Osage orange, pecan, and pine), for consideration to receive either historic, landmark or heritage status. On August 30, the owners received notice via email from TUFC that the cedar trees down the main drive (Cedar Lane) had been designated as Historic Landmark Trees. TUFC board members encouraged the owners to reapply for additional historic designations (*TUFC, n.d.a.*).

As of 2018, Shelby County had only two groupings of historic landmark trees—The Old Forest in Overton Park in the heart of Memphis, TN, and now Orion Hill. TUFC presented a plaque to the Wilson’s at the president’s reception and award ceremony at the Tennessee Urban Forestry Conference on October 14, 2018 at Cheekwood Estates and Gardens in Nashville, TN (*TUFC, n.d.b.; David Vandergriff, Extension Agent III, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Board Certified Master Arborist SO-0846B, Certified Professional Horticulturist #4325, Knox County, UT Extension, Institute of Agriculture, The University of Tennessee, personal communication, August 30, 2018.*)

The plaque states:



LANDMARK, HISTORIC and HERITAGE TREE REGISTER
Recognition is hereby given to the Historic Group of Trees
ORION HILL CEDAR TREES
ARLINGTON, TN
The Landmark, Historic and Heritage Tree Register promotes awareness of the historic significance of trees in Tennessee landscapes.
Presented by
Tennessee Urban Forestry Council
October 14, 2018

Shelby County Historical Commission Marker. Once the owners discovered and began documenting the history of the property, an application was made to the Shelby County Historical Commission (SCHC) in April 2018 for a historic marker. Jimmy Ogle, the Shelby County Historian at the time, was the primary contact for this application and provided assistance in going through the process, as well as in procuring the marker. The SCHC Marker committee voted on the application and approved the language for the marker on June 4, 2018.

The full SCHC committee granted approval on June 14, 2018. Members of the committee included: Dr. Jay Bobo, Phyllis Burns, James Cole, Mike Freeman, John McNary, Lee Miller, Jimmy Ogle, Mark Stansbury, Lewis Sylvester, and Laura Todd.

Language for the sign had to go through the SCHC board for approval. The sign was ordered in October 2018, completed in January 2019 and was placed on the property in summer 2019. The language approved for the sign states:

ORION HILL

Orion Hill's story began in 1830 when Alexander Donelson arrived with a new wave of settlers and their slaves. Alexander, grandson of John Donelson, co-founder of Nashboro, now Nashville, and a nephew of the 7th president, Andrew Jackson and Rachel Donelson Jackson, was one of the first settlers in what is now Arlington. Before 1844, he built his home as an exact replica of the Hermitage, calling it Orion Hill. The site has many of the original Eastern Cedar, Loblolly Pine, Osage Orange, Magnolia, and Pecan trees that were planted between 150 to 200 years ago. Several generations of the Donelson family lived and farmed in this area until the house burned sometime after 1923. The original house, as is the current home, was located at the top of a small hill and took the name of the constellation Orion. In addition to being a planter, Donelson was also a successful merchant and opened the second store in Arlington.

**SPONSORED BY CATHERINE AND DON WILSON
AND THE SHELBY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION, MAY 2019**

Sewah Studios in Marietta, Ohio created the cast iron, aluminum sign at a cost of \$2,490.00. The sign's location was approved by the City of Arlington for placement near the front of the property.





CHAPTER SIX
The Architecture of the 1994 Home and Planned Renovations

1994 Home. When the current owners purchased the property in 2018, the similarities to Beauvoir, in Biloxi, Mississippi (Jefferson Davis home from 1876 until his death in 1889), were immediately noticed (*Beauvoir, n.d.; Cooper, 2010*).



Graves Home Cedar Lane (built 1994)
(Graves Family, n.d.).



Beauvoir (built 1848)
@2004 prior to Hurricane Katrina (*Beauvoir, n.d.*).

Mr. Glenn Bascom who lives nearby what is now Orion Hill (formerly known as Cedar Lane when owned by the Graves' family) and who was a friend of the Graves, pointed out the home was similar to Stewardfield in Mobile, Alabama. He believed that Cedar Lane might have been modeled on this building. Spring Hill College purchased Stewardfield, built in 1849-50 and enlarged around 1857, in 1903. Since then it has been used for a variety of purposes and currently serves as a wedding venue (*Glenn, Bascom, personal communication, March 25, 2018; Gould & Mertins, 1982; Wikipedia, n.d.e.*).



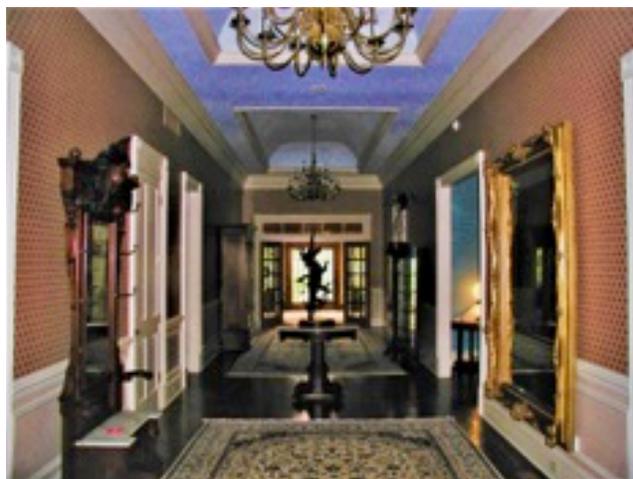
Stewardfield (built 1849-1850)
Spring Hill College (*Wikipedia, n.d.e.*).

The Wilson's contacted the architectural firm that designed the 1994 home for the Graves family, Creative Designs. Mr. Rick Ray, one of the original architects on the home, remembered Dr. and Mrs. Graves well. He said the house was not modeled on a specific home and the Graves had requested a design in a "southern plantation type style" (Rick Ray, Architect, Creative Designs, personal communication, March 30, 2018).

However, in viewing these homes for similarities, there are several stylistic consistencies. Each is based on the Greek Revival style, a subset of the neoclassical period, popular in Europe and America between 1810-1855. This type of architecture typically has a gable or low-pitched roof, dentil cornices with wide bands of trim, Doric columns, and entry doors surrounded by rectangular transom lights. Greek Revival was referred to as "the national style" because of its great popularity as an exemplar of America's democracy. Stewardfield's exterior is remarkably similar, and the floor plans for each are also comparable (Architectural Styles of America and Europe, 2011; Beauvoir, n.d.; Crist, n.d.; Wikipedia, n.d.d. & n.d.e.).



Drawing of Classic Greek Revival Architecture (Southern Living, n.d.).

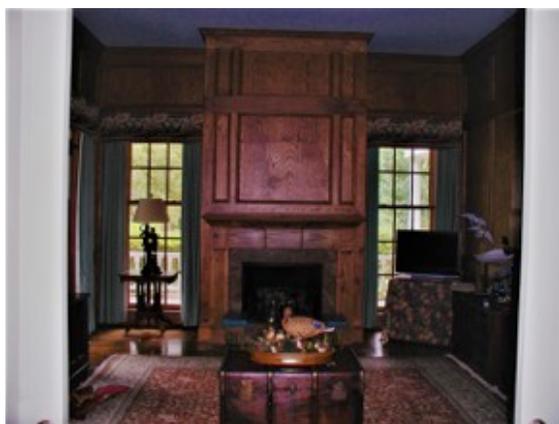




*Graves home—above) and Beauvoir below (Graves, n.d.; Beauvoir, n.d.).
The entryways of the home are very similar in scale and entry into other rooms.*

The Graves family shared pictures and videos with the Wilson/Hartman families that showed the home as it was being constructed, and at the time Dr. and Mrs. Graves lived there. A few of these photos are shown on the following pages. The Wilson's have the videos on file (*Graves Family, n.d.*).

Graves Home (At the time the Graves lived there @2000).



Study



Sitting Room



Kitchen



Sunroom



Master Bedroom



Guest Bedroom

Renovations

The original home built in 1994 was altered for use as a wedding venue. Plans for the addition included a 3400 square foot ballroom and restructuring of the back part of the house (see photo at the bottom of the page). With these alterations, the venue can accommodate up to 250 guests. Ledford Architects of Arlington designed the floor plan (see the following page), and Dan Rutledge Construction Ltd. of Collierville, TN managed the renovations. Renovations began in March and concluded in September 2019. Candace Joseph Designs developed logos and the web design for the venue.



Candace Joseph Designs (Logos) 2018.



Back view of house (Graves Family Photos).



Back view of house (Graves Family Photos).

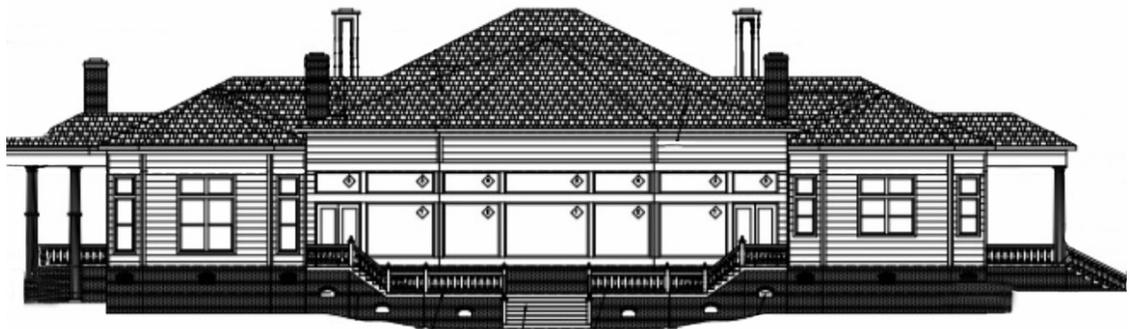
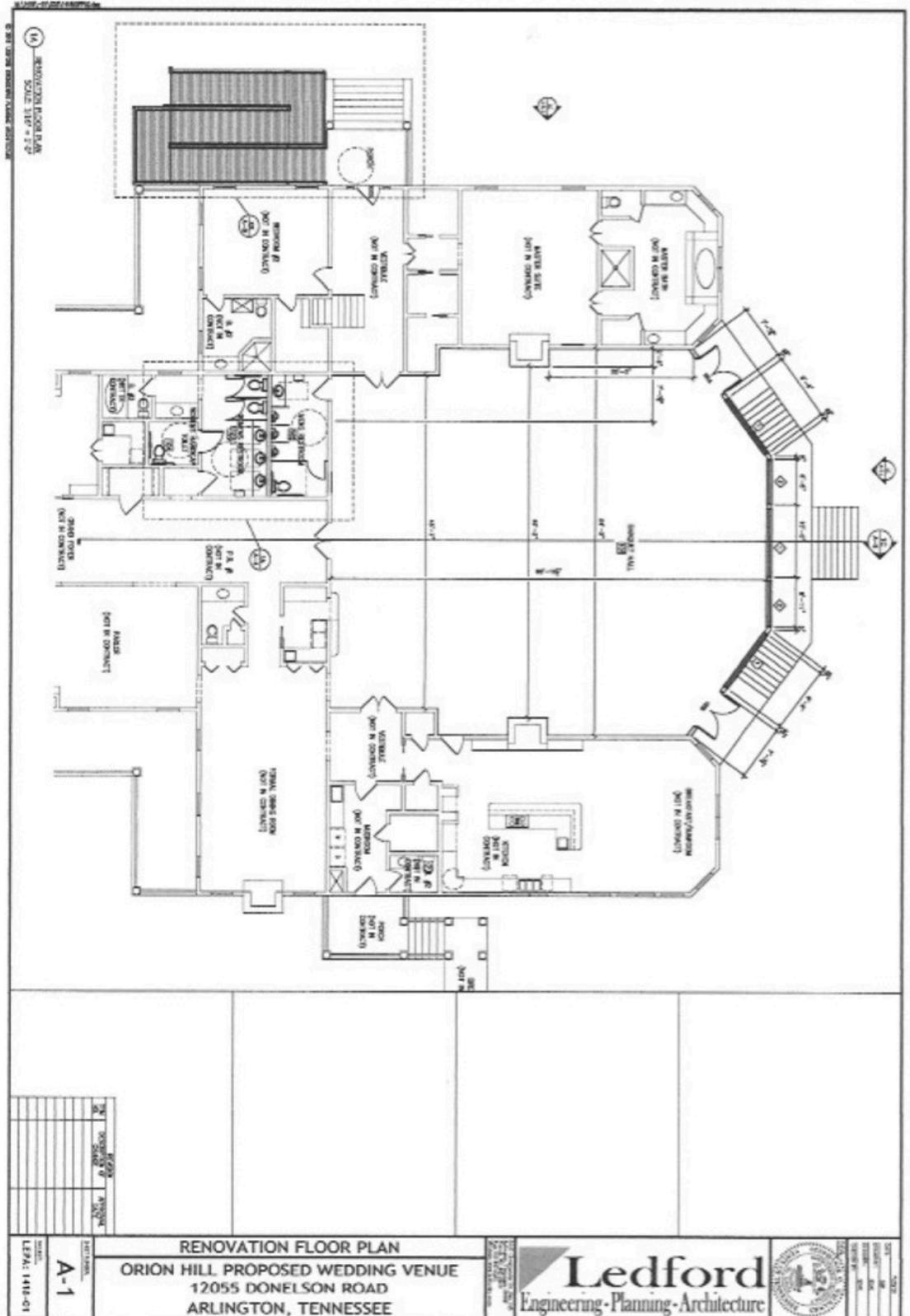


Image of proposed addition to the back of the existing house (Ledford Engineering, 2018).



Proposed Addition Floorplan (Ledford Engineering 2018).



CHAPTER SEVEN

Known Descendants of Alexander and Kate Donelson Associated with Orion Hill

Many aspects of the Donelson family history are well documented on many genealogical sites, but Alexander Donelson's family is not as well known. The following pages recount information on family members, and Appendix A provides a quick overview. Burial sites are also indicated below and in Appendix F.

*Numerals denote burial in:

¹ Hermitage Churchyard Cemetery, Nashville, TN

² Riverside Cemetery, Jackson, TN

³ Coffee Family Cemetery, Florence, AL

⁴ Non-cemetery burial at Haysboro, TN (6 mi. E of Nashville)

⁵ Holy Innocents Cemetery, Arlington, TN

⁶ Old Royster Burying Ground (no headstones or records). Presumed burial site

⁷ Elmwood Cemetery, Memphis, TN

⁸ Chambers Chapel Church Cemetery, Arlington, TN

⁹ Arlington Cemetery, Arlington, TN

¹⁰ Memorial Park Cemetery, Memphis, TN

(Find A Grave Tennessee n.d.; Tennessee Gravestones, n.d.; Wilson, 1998 & 2005; Davies-Rodgers, 1962, 1990 & 1995; Memorial Park Obituaries; Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, n.d.; U.S. Archives, n.d.).

Alexander Donelson⁶ married **Sarah Catherine (nee Royster) Donelson**⁶ (1815-1884) in 1841. Sarah Catherine (known as Kate) was the daughter of Dr. David Royster⁶ (1762-1843), a Revolutionary War veteran who settled in Shelby County in 1838, and Elizabeth Sampson Royster⁶. Kate's older brother, Joel W. Royster acquired a two-room, two-story log cabin constructed prior to 1807, and according to tradition, by a Native American chieftain. The two Indian mounds located on the property lend weight to this. Joel added the eastern portion of the house, which is as it stands today with a few minor exceptions. While he lived there, it was called Hickory House. Doubtless, Kate and Alexander's family came to visit her brother's family during this time. Joel lived there until 1851 when the family sold the property to the Davies family who changed the name. Today, Davies Manor is recognized as the oldest house in Shelby County (*Burrow, 1962; Davies-Rodgers, 1990 & 1992; Royster, 1842*).



“Grandmother Donelson,” Mrs. Alex Donelson, @1870s-80s (McLean, n.d.). She is listed as “beloved wife” and “consort of Alexander Donelson, Esq.” and died at the age of 69 (*Memphis Daily Appeal, 1884 a, b.*).

Kate and her sister Jane wed brothers in the Donelson family in 1841. Kate married Alexander in September and her sister Jane married Alexander's older brother, Samuel, in December. Both Samuel and Alexander are listed with their families in the 1850 Census. Kate inherited 301 acres from her father shortly after her marriage that became a part of the Donelson holdings. (*Burrow, 1962; Mozo, 2009; U.S. Census, 1850; Davies-Rodgers, 1990; Nazor, 1992*).

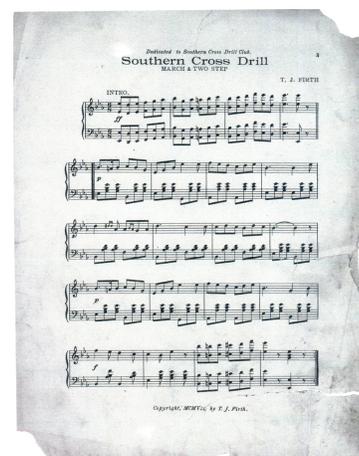
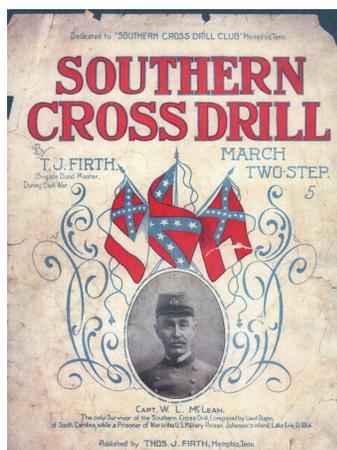
Dr. Royster and his wife were buried in the old Royster burying ground. Ellen Davies-Rodgers in *Along the Old Stage Coach Road* described this family cemetery as being located “north of the Old Plank Road—now Highway 64—about one half mile east of Grays Creek Church” where there are “no tombstones, only grave mounds.” Today (2019), this graveyard is located on the Bragg property, off of HWY 64, near a cellular tower. An aerial view is available on the Shelby County Archives site. It is also probable that Alexander and Kate are buried here as no records of their burial have been found (*Burrow, 1962; Davies-Rodgers, 1990, p. 73; Memphis Daily Appeal, 1884; Shelby County Archives, n.d.; Alethea Bragg, personal communication, April 5, 2018; Nazor, 1992*).

Alexander and Kate had four children:

1. **Helen (nee Donelson) McLean**⁷ (1842-1884) was described as “physically frail, but intellectually strong and vigorous,” and a “devoted daughter, mother, and friend.” The Reverend S. S. Gill married Helen and Captain William Love McLean⁷ (1842-1917) at

Orion Hill, Shelby Co., Tuesday evening, May 4, 1866 (*The Memphis Daily Appeal*, 1884a, b.; *Burrow*, 1962).

William Love McLean was a Civil War CSA captain and veteran (Co. B, 12th Battalion, Arkansas Sharpshooters). After the Battle of Vicksburg, he was captured and imprisoned at the infamous Johnson Island in Ohio for two years. While there, the men developed a drill to fight off boredom and the bitter cold. They called it the Southern Cross Drill (*McLean*, n.d.).



McLean was paroled in 1865 and

given two days of rations for his journey home. Capt. McLean made the long walk back to Memphis across six states starting March 1 and arrived in the middle of June. He settled at his home (near present-day McLean Avenue) called Belleair Woods. Capt. McLean's father, Colonel Charles D. McLean fought in the War of 1812 with Andrew Jackson, so the family had additional connections through this relationship. Helen died in March 1884, and her mother, Kate, in September of the same year (*Tennessee Genealogical Magazine*, 1996; *Tennessee Genealogical Magazine*, 2001; *Wilkerson*, 2015; *McLean*, n.d.; *Ancestry*, n.d.; *Marsha Mullin*, Vice-President, Museum Services and Chief Curator, *The Hermitage*, personal communication, March 30, 2018; *Severn Donelson Descendants*; *Alexander Donelson Descendants*; *Mullin*, n.d.; *The Memphis Daily Appeal*, 1884a & b.).

The Southern Cross Drill was set to music in 1907 and William's picture is on the cover of the sheet music as he was the only living survivor who had taken part in the march. He had the piece copyrighted, and it was performed at social events where he was often the guest of honor. A copy of the sheet music can be seen at the Rendezvous Restaurant in downtown Memphis in the upstairs dining room (*Library of Congress Copyright Office*, 1918; *McLean*, n.d.).

2. **Richard Sampson Donelson**⁸ (1844-1918). It is noted in Rachel Burrow's book, *Arlington: A Short Historical Writing of the Town* that Richard was "born at Orion Hill," so the house was built prior to this date, although an exact time frame is unknown. Looking at land records, it may be fairly safe to assume Orion Hill was built either shortly before his parent's marriage in 1841 or shortly thereafter. None of his siblings are mentioned as being born at the home (*Burrow*, 1962, p. 80; see Appendices B and C).

In 1860 Richard enrolled in Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, a Presbyterian preparatory school (similar to today's high school) at a cost of \$30.00 a semester, and \$3.00 extra for fuel, servants, repairs, etcetera in a class of 41 students. In order to move forward to freshman status, he would have had to pass examinations on *Bullions Grammar*, *Bullions Entire Latin Reader*, *Caesars Commentaries*, *Sallust*, *Conspiracy of Cataline and Jugurthine*, Virgil's *Ecologues*, six books of the *Aeneid*, and *Prosody*. However, when war seemed inevitable, he came home intending to enlist. As he was only 16, his parents asked him to wait and continue his studies at another Presbyterian college—LaGrange Synodical College in LaGrange, Tennessee (*Centre College, 1861*; *Stan R. Campbell, Director of Library Services, Centre College, personal communication, April 13, 2018*; *Severn Donelson Descendants*; *Alexander Donelson Descendants*).

LaGrange Synodical College began its operation in October 1857 with a sizable endowment. LaGrange was a booming small town with a population of slightly over 1000 and far larger than Haysville. Tuition was \$50.00 with monthly rooming fees of \$5.00 and additional fees of \$15.00 for washing, lights, and servant hire. The college had only one graduating class (1861), and they were all dismissed early so that the entire body could volunteer for the Confederate Army. By the summer of 1862 the college had been used as a Union hospital and in the severe winter of 1863-1864, torn down to construct huts and chimneys for Union forces (*Utley, 1954*; *Parham's Letters, 2014*).

When Fort Donelson (named for another cousin, Gen. Daniel Smith Donelson, CSA, fell in February 1862, Richard felt honor bound to enlist. In 1862, he enlisted as a private in Company H of the Yancey Riflemen in the 13th Regiment of the Tennessee Infantry. An attack of the mumps prevented him from fighting at the Battle of Shiloh in April 1862. However, the family suffered the loss of several family members resulting from the battle. Richard's cousin David Royster served in the same regiment and died at Shiloh. Joel, David Royster's father and an uncle to Richard, was so distraught over the loss of his son and the course of the war he took his own life after taking the Oath of Allegiance (*Fold 3, n.d.*; *Davies-Rodgers, 1990*).

Although Richard was sidelined by illness early in his military career, he served in several other major engagements, until he received a severe wound in the left leg at The Battle of Chickamauga in September 1863. At this battle, the casualties were second only to the devastating losses at Gettysburg, and several Donelson cousins died in this battle (Samuel, the son of Andrew Jackson, Jr., and John, the son of Andrew Jackson Donelson). Several other cousins died, either from illness or during different engagements throughout the war, notably General Daniel Smith Donelson (CSA) and Colonel John Martin Donelson (CSA). However, Richard's injuries ended his military career and left him on crutches for several years. After he took the Oath of Allegiance in Memphis and was paroled on June 2, 1865, he returned home to Orion Hill, and a family grateful for his survival. Coincidentally, this was also the date the Civil War officially ended (*Fold 3, n.d.*; *Mullin, n.d.*; *Lenow, 1874*; *Moore & Foster, 1923b, & c*; *Rikard, 2006*; *Cheatham, 2012*; *Memphis Provost Marshal, 1861-1865*; *Mullin, n.d.*; *History Channel, n.d.c.*).

Richard (who signed most documents as R. S.) was described on his parole document as being age 20, light haired, with gray eyes and standing at a height of 5'9". His rank is listed as "private." He later studied at the University of Mississippi (1866), and became a successful planter and merchant (*Fold 3, n.d.; Provost Marshal, 1861-1865; Ancestry, n.d.c.; Moore & Foster, 1923b; Ancestry.com, 1998; Ancestry.com 2012a; Mullin, n.d.*).

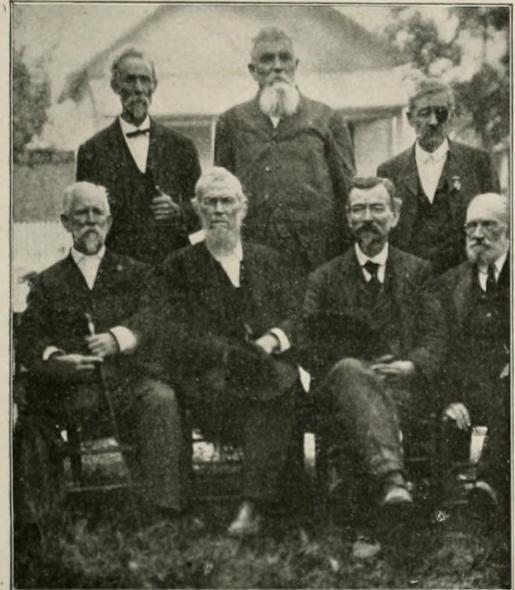
He married Frances Cuthbert "Fanny" (nee Bragg)⁸ (1852-1889) in 1874. Fanny came from another family of early area settlers and together they had five children. She died relatively young at age 36 (*Burrow, 1962; Marsha Mullin, Vice-President, Museum Services and Chief Curator, The Hermitage, personal communication, March 30, 2018; Severn and Alexander Donelson Descendants*).

Richard applied for a military pension in 1907. In 1909, Richard became a founding member of the Arlington Presbyterian Church. He sold land to the trustees of the church for "one dollar . . . and other good and valuable considerations" for the purpose of constructing the church near Quintard and Campbell Streets in 1912 (*Tennessee, Confederate Pensions Application, 1907-1908; Burrow, 1962; Shelby County Register of Deeds, 1912*).

All these men were involved in the early history of Arlington. R. S. Donelson (far right, seated) would have been @63 years old when this picture was taken (Confederate Veterans Magazine, 1907).

SEVEN CONFEDERATES OF ARLINGTON, TENN.

Beginning at left of group, first row, are Capt. K. Garrett (with cane in hand), Company C, 7th Tennessee Cavalry; Dr. J. P. Bone, Company B, Forrest's Cavalry; W. B. Stewart, 154th Tennessee Infantry and 12th Tennessee Cavalry; R.



S. Donelson, Company H, 13th Tennessee Infantry. Standing just behind these are J. C. Land, Company I, 51st Tennessee Infantry and 12th Tennessee Cavalry; J. W. Zellner, Company E, 13th Tennessee Infantry; J. S. Wyatt, Company A, 38th Tennessee Infantry.

Richard passed away from acute pneumonia while living with his daughter Kate⁸ at 1158 Agnes Place in Memphis in early August 1918 at age 74. It is possible he died during the Spanish Flu Pandemic 1918-19 where deaths were listed as "acute pneumonia" (to prevent widespread panic). He outlived all of his siblings, and on his death certificate, his profession is listed as "retired merchant and farmer" (*State of Tennessee, 1918; Family Tree, 2008; Carey, 2014; Coggins, 2018*).

3. **Sarah Jackson (nee Donelson) Lake**⁷ (1850-1906) married Thomas Winchester Lake⁷ (1844-1874). According to his obituary in *The Memphis Daily Appeal* (1874), Winchester (29) was attacked and murdered on his way home by an unknown robber. His body was found only 300 feet from his home on Poplar (listed then as 2.5 miles from the city). Lake's untimely death left his widow, and a young son, Henry (1871-1950)⁷ to struggle alone. In 1880 Sarah and her son are shown living with her father. By 1895, Sarah was living on Vance Street and was listed as an officer in the Daughters of the American Revolution. In 1918, Henry received over 300 acres from his family and later married Nettie Wilson (*U.S. Census, 1880; Ancestry.com, n.d.; DAR, 1895; Shelby County Register of Deeds, 1918*).
4. **Alexander Francis Donelson**⁹ (1851-1913) was known as "Mr. Sandy." There is no record of his having married. On the 1880 Census, he is listed as a "farmer." He died as a result of being struck by a passenger train at the age of 62 (*Burrow, 1962; U.S. Census, 1880; Board of Health, 1913*).

Richard Sampson and Fanny Donelson had five children; four who grew to adulthood. They spent their childhood happily together, playing with the five Bragg, and six Armistead children who lived nearby. They spent many days "berry picking, wading in creeks and gathering nuts" (*Burrow, 1962, p. 61*).

1. **Mary Donelson**⁸ (1876-1960). Both Mary and her sister Kate were unmarried. Mary is shown in the Memphis Phone Directory living at 1540 E. McLemore, where she and her sister lived for many years. Her obituary states she passed away at age 84 after an illness of some two years. On her death certificate, there were two causes of death listed: one is unreadable, and the second is recorded as "senility." Evidently, Katie helped support Mary, as there are no records of Mary ever having worked (*McLean, n.d.; U.S. Census, 1920, 1930 & 1940; The Commercial Appeal, 1960; Tennessee Department of Health, 1960*).
2. **Richard Sampson Donelson, Jr.**⁹ (1877-1964) served as a private in Regiment Two of the Tennessee Infantry, Company E during the Spanish American War. This unit was formed in Memphis after war was declared in April 1898, following the sinking of the USS *Maine*, and Spain's refusal to grant Cuba independence. Richard arrived in Memphis along with other volunteers from Jackson, Arlington, and Mason, Tennessee on April 27, 1898 after traveling to the city on the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. During the two days the volunteers of several companies were in Memphis, they were feted and prayed over. As they prepared to depart for war on April 30, an honor guard of Confederate veterans led them to the train station while several bands played "Dixie," "Yankee Doodle" and "The Girl I Left Behind Me." Weeping family members and sweethearts wishing to give a final farewell swarmed the volunteers as they prepared to board the train. The emotional nature of the crowd was epitomized by one mother who told her son to remember that he came from a fighting people and then promptly fainted. The

Second's last view of Memphis was of flags waving and flowers being thrown in their wake (*Ancestry.com, 2012b; Fold, 1973; SITREP Military, n.d.; Lanier, 1964*).

However, of the approximately 4000 men who served in Tennessee's four volunteer infantry units, only the 1st Tennessee Infantry saw action. The 2nd and 3rd Infantry were dismissed after months of inactivity and boredom from Camp Fornance, SC and the 4th helped serve as occupying units in Cuba after the war was over. Richard's unit (the 2nd) was mustered out of service from Camp Fornance, South Carolina in early February 1899 (*SITREP Military, n.d.; Tennessee Secretary of State, n.d.; Tennessee4me, n.d.b.*).



2nd Tennessee Infantry, Camp Fornance, 1898,
THS Photography Collection (*Gordon, n.d.*).

In 1906 Richard married Mary McNutt Armistead⁹ (1875-1955) in Tuscumbia, Colbert, Alabama. In census records, Richard is listed as living on Brown Street in Arlington, and his profession is listed as “merchant” in a general store (1910). The store is mentioned in Burrow's book as a mercantile business in 1915 known by the name of Donelson, Cooper, and Gibbons. It appears the store was sold after 1915. In 1918, at age 40, Richard registered for the draft for World War I, although it does not appear that he was called to serve. On this record, he was described as tall, with a slender build, blue eyes, and light colored hair. By 1920 he was living first on College Street (1920) and later on Chester Street (1930). In 1920 and 1930 he is listed as a “farmer.” By then both his uncle and father had died, so he may have taken over the farm with his brother for a few years. After Richard's daughter, Elizabeth's wedding, in 1944 and before 1948, he and his wife Mary moved to Tucson to be closer to her. He is shown in the 1948 Tucson City Directory. Richard's wife Mary, died prior to him in 1955, and he later passed away in Arizona. On his headstone, there is no death date, but his death certificate states he died in 1964 at age 87. No further information has been found (*Burrow, 1962; Shelby County Register, 1915; Family Search, 1918; U.S. Census, 1920 & 30*).

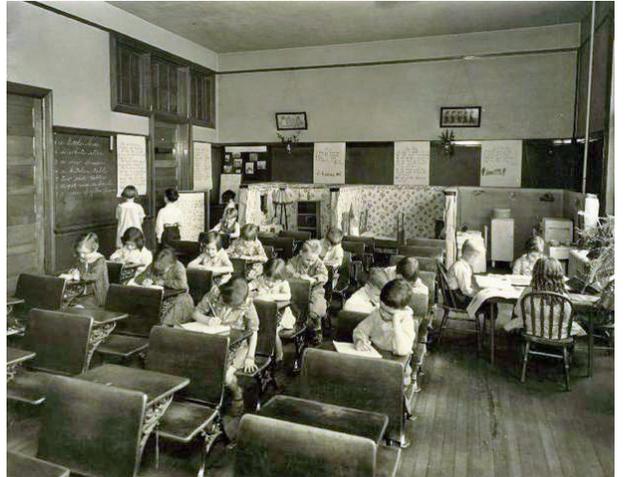
Richard had three children: **Richard Sampson Donelson III** (b. 1907-1985) who moved to Henry, Georgia; **Elizabeth Donelson** (1908-1973), who married Roscoe V. Hensler in 1944 and moved to Tucson, Arizona; and **Fannie Rosalie Donelson**⁹ (1911-1913) who

died as an infant (*Burrow, 1962; Marsha Mullin, Vice-President, Museum Services and Chief Curator, The Hermitage, personal communication, March 30, 2018; Severn Donelson Descendants; Alexander Donelson Descendants; Mullin, n.d.; Ancestry.com., n.d.c.*).

3. **Alexander Donelson**⁸ (1879-1881) infant son who died young at age 2 (*Burrow, 1962; Wilson, 1998, 2005*).
4. **Francis Armistead Donelson**⁴ (1881-1922). Francis spent most of his life in Shelby County, with some exceptions. He is recorded as studying engineering at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville between 1900-1902. He also spent a 15-year period “devoted to agricultural pursuits in Arizona.” He married Margurett Emma Sanders Minter (@1884-?) in 1916 in Arizona. This is the spelling of Margurett’s name on the marriage certificate, but it varies in other places as “Margaret.” Two years prior to his death he returned to Arlington to “resume management of the large plantation,” so he was probably working with his brother. He and Richard were the last Donelson’s farming the property. Francis is shown on the two death certificates found as a “farmer” or “planter” in Arlington, Tennessee at the time of his early death at age 41 from “peritonitis/appendicitis” or “acute bowel obstruction.” Moore and Foster stated: “at his demise, the community lost a prosperous, influential and valued citizen.” His wife is not listed on one death certificate but is on the second. Shortly after Francis died, his wife is shown on several land sales as his widow. No other records were found on Margurett/ Margaret (*The University of Tennessee, 1901 & 1902; Moore & Foster, 1923b, p. 396; State of Arizona, 1916; State of Tennessee, 1922a; & 1922b; Shelby County Register of Deeds, various dates*).
5. **Kate (Katie) Donelson**⁸ (1882-1974). In 1910, Katie was as still living at her parent’s home. In 1920 she is shown as a “teacher in a public school” and living as a boarder with her sister in Memphis. She was a teacher for many years at Cummings Elementary and retired from Memphis City Schools. In 1922, the Memphis City Schools began requiring that teachers have “two years normal school or college work on top of a high school education” to retain their teaching positions, so Katie went to college. She is shown in *The Desoto* yearbook in 1924 as a sophomore at The West Tennessee Normal School (now The University of Memphis) (*Ancestry, n.d.c.; U.S. Census 1910 & 1920; Commercial Appeal, 1922, para. 3*).

In the 1930 census, she is shown as the household head and living with her sister, niece, Elizabeth; and a boarder residing at the home. Her highest level of education listed on the 1940 census was “college, two years” and she is still shown teaching as late as 1948 (*Ancestry, n.d.c.; U.S. Census 1930 & 1940*).

Classroom at Cummings Elementary in 1932. Katie would have taught in a classroom much like this (Gill, n.d.).



The next phone directory available was for 1954 and there is no career listed for Katie. She lived in a house a few blocks south of Immaculate Conception Church at 1540 E. McLemore Avenue from 1926 to 1964. Ironically, the Donelson's had purchased or swapped a great deal of land for Orion Hill from land speculator John Christmas McLemore nearly 100 years before and their street was named for him. McLemore had been a large landowner and purchased the interests on land that Andrew Jackson held in Memphis. He also married another niece of the Jackson family, Elizabeth Donelson. For more information see Appendix D (*Ancestry, n.d.c.; Shelby County Registrar, 1926 & 1964; Tripsavvy, n.d.; Tennessee Encyclopedia, n.d.; The Commercial Appeal, 1974; Tennessee Department of Health, 1974.*)

From correspondence and records, it appears Katie cared for her father, sister, and one of her McLean cousins at different points, took in boarders and was listed as the sole household "wage earner." Katie applied for Social Security in 1962. After a life devoted to caring for her family, she spent her last years in Resthaven Nursing Home on Bellevue Avenue in Memphis, and passed away on April 10, 1974, at age 91. Her will (dated October 3, 1968) left all of her possessions to her niece, Elizabeth Donelson Hensler, of Arizona, and her nephew, Richard S. Donelson, of College Park, Georgia (*McLean, n.d.; Ancestry, n.d.c.; The Commercial Appeal, 1960 & 1974.*)

Both Katie and Mary attended Idlewild Presbyterian Church, where another distant Donelson cousin, and well-known attorney, Lewis Donelson, and his family also attended services. Katie and Mary are the only children in this generation where photos were found. She was also the last of the Donelson family who had lived at Orion Hill, and the family's involvement with Orion Hill ended with her death (*Ginny Moore, System Administrator, Idlewild Presbyterian Church, personal communication, March 15, 2019; Ancestry, n.d.c.; McLean, n.d.*).

Back: Irwin Shelby, Mary Armistead, William Love
 McLean, & William Stamback.
 Front: Kate McLean, Helen May McLean, Mary Donelson,
 two unknown children (McLean, n.d.).



Second from left: Kate Donelson. Far right: Mary
 Donelson. This photo was taken at the McLean home.
 The Donelson's were first cousins to the McLean's.
 (McLean n.d.).





Alexander's descendants owned property in Arlington for a number of years but as time went by, the property was divided, added to, or sold off as noted on the Shelby County Register of Deeds site (various dates) and Williamson's maps. Because of this, it is difficult to track all the owners of the original property. It appears that due to family members moving away, illness, death, and possibly financial concerns, the Donelson's sold most of their land between the 1920s and 40s (*Vincent Clark, Archivist, Office of Shelby County Register, Tom Leatherwood, personal communication, April 9, 2018; Shelby County Land Records, various dates*).

The most recent owners of what became (between 1989-1990) an 82-acre plot including the grove of trees and home site were:

Louis Wearen Hughes⁹ (1883-1945) was originally from Stanford, Kentucky, and his wife **Mabel Williams Hughes**⁹ (1881-1970) was born in Shelby County. They owned the property for a number of years. A search on The Shelby County Registrar of Deeds site showed that over a period between 1931 and 1942 the Hughes family appear to have acquired a great deal of the Donelson property including the original homestead location (there was no house at the time) and land in Arlington, as they are often listed on land sales listed in the Shelby County Register of Property Deeds. Mrs. Hughes was principal of Arlington School, Germantown High School and Superintendent of Shelby County Schools (1909-1914) until her marriage. She later served as President of the Tennessee Congress of Parents and Teachers from 1936 to 1939, and as President of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers from 1946 to 1949 (*Burrow, 1962; Arlington Chamber of Commerce, 2014; Shelby County Registrar of Deeds, various dates*).

Their oldest son, **1st Lt. Logan Williams Hughes**⁹ (1915-1943), died tragically at age 26 during WWII while training advanced pilots in South Carolina. His wife, Ruby Evelyn Godwin, and a young daughter—Claire were living with his parents (*Burrow, 1962; Find a Grave Memorials, n.d.a.*).

The Hughes' second son, **Lawrence Thomas Hughes**⁹ (1920-2003), was a decorated WWII veteran who took part in the Normandy landing, invasion of Holland, and the Battle of Bastogne. Lawrence also served in the Korean War. He farmed the property for many years and sold part of the acreage to Dr. Lester Graves in 1989 (*Burrow, 1962; Shelby County Registrar of Deeds, 1989*).

Robert Fogelman, a prominent local developer, sold an additional piece of property to Dr. Graves in 1990, as shown on The Shelby County Registrar of Deeds site (1990). The Fogelman's still own a great deal of property in the surrounding area (*Shelby County Registrar of Deeds, 1990*).

Dr. Lester Graves, Jr.¹⁰ (1930-2015), was a well-known local OBGYN, who delivered over 14,000 babies in his 60 plus year career. He and his wife, **Barbara Flippin Graves** (1930-2011) purchased 82 acres in 1990 and had the architectural firm, Creative Home Designs in Bartlett, Tennessee draw the plans for their home in 1991. The Graves named this 6400 square foot home completed in 1994, "Cedar Lane." The Graves, their three children (Gwen, Lester III, Cindy) and grandchildren, enjoyed the property for over twenty years, hosting wonderful parties, fishing, hunting and enjoying the beauty of the property. Dr. and Mrs. Graves made several

improvements to the property, besides building their new home. These included adding another half-acre lake and a well in the back of the property. The Graves documented these improvements in photos and videos they graciously shared with the new owners (*Creative Home Designs, 1991; Memorial Park Cemetery, 2011; Memorial Park Cemetery, 2015; Gwen Graves Maxwell, personal communication, February 2018; Everett Hill, personal communication, March 8, 2018; Glenn Bascom, personal communication, March 25, 2018*).

Don and Cathy Wilson. In 2018 Don (a retired Delta pilot and decorated Viet Nam veteran-U.S. Army, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry), and his wife Cathy Wilson (Vice President of Academic Affairs and professor at Memphis College of Art) put a contract on the house and 20 acres of the property at 12055 Donelson, Arlington, Tennessee. The Wilson's, long-time residents of Arlington, along with their daughter and son-in-law, **Shelby and Adam Hartman** plan to convert this wonderful house into a wedding/event venue and arboretum. Shelby, a wedding videographer, owns her own business—Twenty-two Magnolias, and Adam has also successfully run his own business—Premier Auto Glass for over 10 years. Both the Hartman's and Wilson's feel that sharing the story of this property will only add to its charm, as well as provide information on a lost piece of Arlington history; and they look forward to bringing new life to the property.

In order to change this property into an event venue, several approvals had to be given by the Town of Arlington based on conditional use. The Wilson's and Hartman's had a preliminary meeting with the Arlington town planner, engineer, and assistant fire chief to discuss their plans on March 5, 2018. The Arlington Planning Commission approved the Wilson/Hartman proposal for Orion Hill on March 19, and The Board of Zoning Appeals gave the final approval for the venue on April 12, 2018. Additional approvals were sought and renovations began in March 2019.

One of the Wilson's neighbors, Paul Childress is also interested in history. With the owner's permission, he began visiting the property in early April 2018 with his metal detector to search for artifacts. He found the following items at a depth of 8" below the surface under large trees in the front of the property. Some of these "finds" will be taken to the University of Memphis for help in identifying. In addition, he has found hand mirror frames, wheat pennies, and old bottles. More finds continue to surface. (Paul Childress, personal communication, May 15, 2018; October 2018; Childress, 2018).



The Wilson family is a member of the Tennessee Historical Society, Tennessee Preservation Trust, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. They are still seeking information on the

property and would be happy to hear any local stories old-time residents of Arlington may wish to share. Photographs of Donelson family members or of Orion Hill prior to 1923 would also be most welcome. Consequently, this document remains very much—a work in progress.

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Appendix A

Donelson Family Tree for Orion Hill

For photos of graves of family who are discussed at length in the narrative see Appendix F.
John Donelson had nearly 3,000 descendants as of 2007 (Rootsweb, 2007).

GENERATION 1

<p>Col. John Donelson (1718-1785) m. Rachel Stockley Donelson (1730-1801) Co-founded Nashville, TN. Had 11 children. <i>*See the continuation of the line for Alexander Donelson below</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LEGEND FOR MALE LINE GENERATIONS 1-5 HIGHLIGHTED IN GRAY</p> <p>GENERATION 1: Col John Donelson GENERATION 2: Severn Donelson GENERATION 3: Alexander Donelson GENERATION 4: Richard Sampson Donelson GENERATION 5: Richard, Jr., Alexander, Francis Armistead</p>
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GENERATION 2

(1) Alexander Donelson (1749-1785) Unmarried.	(2) Mary Donelson (1751-1823) m. John Caffery. Had 12 children.	(3) Catherine Donelson (1752-1835) m. Capt. Thomas Hutchings. Had 9 children.	(4) Col. Stockley Donelson (1753-1804) m. Elizabeth Glasgow Martin.	(5) Jane Donelson (1754-1834) m. Col. Robert Hays, founded Haysville, TN. Had at least 6 children.	(6) Capt. John Donelson (1755-1830) m. Mary Purnell. Had 8 children. One of these was William Donelson (1795-1864) who became guardian to Severn's children.	(7) Capt. William Donelson (1756-1820) m. Charity Dickerson. Had at least 8 children.	(8) Samuel Donelson (1758-1804) m. Mary Ann Smith. Had 5 children.	(9) Leven Donelson (1765-?) Unmarried.	(10) Rachel Donelson (1767-1828) m. Andrew Jackson, 7 th President of the United States. Adopted her brother, Severn's child, Andrew Jackson Jr., as well as other children.	(11) SEVERN DONELSON (1763 or 1773-1818) m. Elizabeth Rucker Donelson. Had 8 children. <i>*See line continuation below.</i>
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*Some sources cite at many as 63 children born from this generation. However, the number of children listed varies from source to source.

GENERATION 3

(1) Rachel Donelson (1803-1824) m. William Donelson. No children.	(2) James Rucker Donelson (1804-1829) No records of marriage or children.	(3) John Donelson (1807-1879) m. Laura Matilda Donelson. Had 12 children. Moved to Arkansas.	(4) Thomas Jefferson Donelson (1808-1895) m. Emma Yorke Farquar Donelson. Had 5 children. Twin of Andrew Jackson, Jr.	(5) Andrew Jackson, Jr. (1808-1865) Twin of Thomas Jefferson Donelson. Adopted by Rachel and Andrew Jackson. m. Sarah Yorke. Had 5 children.	(6) Samuel Rucker Donelson (1810-1851) m. 1 st Elizabeth Eastin. Had 3 children. m. 2 nd Jane Royster Chester. Had 1 child.	(7) Lucinda Rucker Donelson (1812-1837) m. George Washington Martin. Had 2 children.	(8) ALEXANDER DONELSON (1816-1887) m. in 1841 to Sarah Catherine Royster. Had 4 children. Built Orion Hill Late 1830s early 1840s Had 4 children. <i>*See line continuation below.</i>
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GENERATION 4

(1) Helen Donelson McLean (1842-1884) m. Capt. William Love McLean at Orion Hill on May 4, 1866. Had 3 children.	(2) PVT. RICHARD SAMPSON DONELSON (1844-1918) m. Fannie Cuthbert Bragg Donelson. Had 5 children. <i>*See line continuation below.</i>	(3) Sarah Jackson Donelson Lake (1850-1906) m. Thomas Winchester Lake. Had one son.	(4) Alexander Francis Donelson 1851-1913 Unmarried,
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GENERATION 5 ↓



<p>(1) Mary Donelson (1876-1960) Unmarried. No children. Sold several sections of the property over time.</p>	<p>(2) RICHARD SAMPSON DONELSON, JR. (1877-1964) m. Mary McNutt Armistead Had 3 children. Moved to Arizona. Sold several sections of property over time.</p>	<p>(3) Alexander Donelson (1879-1881) Died young. No children.</p>	<p>(4) Francis Armistead Donelson (1881-1922) Married Margaret Minter. No children. Last person to farm the property.</p>	<p>(5) Kate Donelson (1882-1974) Unmarried. No children. Teacher in Memphis, TN. Sold several sections of the property.</p>
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Appendix B
(Transcription with original spelling)

Andrew Jackson to William Donelson

(Private) Washington Decbr. 7th. 1831—

Dear William

I have received your letter of the 20th. ultimo, and size the first leisure moment, that has been afforded since its receipt to reply to it. Congress met on Monday last, & preparing for it has employed us very much for some time, and by the mail that takes this will convey my Message to you—it has met with the approbation of my friends, and silenced my enemies. Clay & Calhoun will find but little room for attack. On the subject of the Lots of land of Samuels & Alexander Donelson I have barely time to remark, that to gratify my son I will purchase them—for Samuels, I will pay on making a tittle, or you executing a bond for the conveyance of Samuels lot as laid out and marked by the commissioners the sum of fourteen hundred dollars payable on or before the first day of April next (If it should be from any pressing cause, necessary that the mony should be paid sooner, I will raise it.) if I receive the cash for Bolivar, I, will pay at any time thereafter; if I fail in this, I will have my cotton in markt soon, & by that time, will agree to pay to your order presented here the above amount of \$1400. I For Alexanders, I will give the same amount to be paid on the 25th. day of Decbr. 1832—on you and John Donelson giving your bonds, for the conveyance of Alexanders lot, as marked & laid off. I have money owing to me, that I can collect to meet the payment of the purchase of the latter Tract, but I cannot agree to pay interest, because as you justly remark it is a high price for the land, and perhaps more than it will ever hereafter bring. On the receipt of this write me, that if the contract about Saml's Lot be closed, I must make arrangements to meet it with punctuality, and from my accumulated expences here I must look else where than my salary to meet it. My son has presented me with a daughter amiable and accomplished, which has added to my expences a little, but as he has made, as I believe, a good & prudent choice, I am cheerful in meeting it. I am well pleased with his little sarah; I have no doubt from her amiable disposition she will endeavour, in all things, to add to my happiness. Andrew will present her to his friends at the Hermitage next Spring. The last purchase I made of Capt Mosely, to gratify Andrew and to benefit Thomas, between whom their are a sympathy of feeling & attachment, that can only be accounted for, from their being twinns, I told him that he might exchange the two hundred & fifty acres with his brother for his lot of land adjoining Samuel & Alexander. This exchange is made, and Thomas writes Andrew

that Albert Ward wants to buy the lot out of him and has offered fifteen dollars per acre. Mr. Ward cannot buy this lot because Major Donelson, informs me, that he has treated him badly about part of Mr Watsons tract adjoining him that he was in treaty for. But I wish you to see Mr Ward, and say to him, that I will exchange Thomass Lot acre for acre, Beginning at My south west corner, run south so far as will, by running due east to Stoners Lick Creek, include the same number of acres as are in the Lot got from Thomas. This will add to Major Andrews tracts as much of Watsons as will give him the spring, and an outlet for pasture and will add to mine which I intend for my son, what will be as valuable as Thomases Lot, altho Thomases, is much the most more valuable than Wards and its situation very desirable to Mr Ward. This is the only way Mr Ward can get that Lot & this you can say to him, and was it not to gratify & benefit Major Donelson, I would not make this exchange. I wish you to see Mr Ward upon the receipt of this, & write me the result. See Mr Thomas J. Donelson, and tell him also, to say to Mr Ward that by exchange is the only way he can get it. I have a great desire to be informed of the size and appearance of my stud colt, the (Citizen) out of my pacolet filly that died, by Stockholder, and my Sir William stud colt, out of the Oscar filly, as well as the two year old, guelded, colt by Sir William, out of the sway back mare. Will you have the goodness to see them & give me a description of them, as well as my other colts, but particularly the Citizen by Stockholder, and the two, two years old, by Sir William out of the oscar filly & sway back. I had great hopes of the Citizen, and the stud colt out of the oscar filly would make first rate runners, and I think so still. I want your description of them, & the two year old guelding out of sway back. I thank you for the flattering account you give me of my cotton crop—hope it may turn out as well as you anticipate. It is now 12 at night & I must close. Present my kind salutations to Elizabeth, & to all the connection—say to them we are all well, and the Major, Emily, Mary Eastin, Andrew and Sarah, with Mr Earle, being my whole family, join in kind salutations to all, & believe me yr friend Andrew Jackson

Andrew Jackson (Dec. 7, 1831). *Letter to William Donelson (1795-1864)*. State University Libraries of Florida. Publication of Archival Library and Museum Materials. PALMM Collection. Retrieved from <http://palmm.digital.flvc.org/islandora/object/fgcu%3A27362>

Appendix C
(Transcription with original spelling)

To William Donelson
Washington February 6th. 1832

Dr. Sir,

I wrote you some time since on the subject of Samuel & Alexanders Lots of land which had been proposed for sale, and my son had a wish, as it was to be sold, to buy, having made an exchange with Thomas.¹ I informed you in my letter that I would buy these two lots, giving for each, fifteen hundred dollars, paying for Samls. (as I found that was wanted for Mr G. Martin) the sum of fifteen hundred dollars on the first day of april next, and the same sum for Alexanders Lot, on the 25th. of December next. If it would be a convenance to you, & Mr John Donelson, I would let you have the note for \$500 payable in the B. Bank at Nashville in august next—the payment of which is guranteed by Doctor Butler.² This is for my stud Colt by Stockholder, sold by Mr Steel agreable to my directions & for which he holds the note—& a note on Capt Stockly Donelson and others for \$312, being due this spring for the stud colt by Sir William, out of the cotton mare, This last note is here & will be taken out at home & will be delivered to you in the spring by my son.³ I am assured by Doctor Butler that the mony will be punctually paid, that the obligors are good & punctual men. I wish you to call on Steel for a sight of this note, and if you think proper to take it in part, you can do so—the ballance at Christmas. • 76 • • February 1832 • The object of this letter is, to be informed whether you will let me have Saml Lot, for the sum proposed & Alexanders for my son—it is time I should have notice whether I have to pay the \$1500 on the first of april next, if so, it is necessary that I should make arrangements to meet it punctually. I have no controle of my expences here, therefore is this information to me important. Therefore I shall expect to hear from you on the receipt of this, and your positive determination on this subject. If you say, I shall get the land, say whether you prefer the mony sent to the Bank at Nashville, or whether you will draw upon me here—choose for yourself. I would prefer paying it here, but I give you the choice. Write me positively whether you agree to my proposition or not, and that on the receipt of this letter. you will have seen the rejection of Van Buren by the opposition faction in the senate—all our representation but one (Arnold) since the rejection has come boldly out for Van Buren for vice President.⁴ There never has in the U. States a greater excitement. Clays vote made it a tie, and Calhoun gave the casting vote against him. This has politically finished both. Poindexter wielded by Branch, with Moor of Alabama voted against him. The insult was to the Executive, and the injury to our national character, and to all Europe and the people seem determind to put Van Buren in the Seat of him who consumated the disgrace of our national character. This is what I know of Calhoun Ingham Branch & Berrien from the first dawn of the conspiracy against Major Eaton to destroy me. This now, every one knows & admits. Still Moor & Poindexter, say they are Jackson men—but are wielded by Calhoun against the administration where their vote can injure it away with such hypocrites. The people of Alabama & Mississippi will settle this account with them Present my kind salutations to Elisabeth to your mother Stockly & family to Mr and all the connection, & to my good neighbours.⁵ We all enjoy good health. I am much employed, have no time to write to friends, or

on business, & no time to correct this. I wrote you my great desire to have your opinion of my (citizen) stud colt by Stockholder his appearance & size—of my Sir William guelding, and my Sir William stud colt out of the oscar filly, & the rest of my blood stock, but suppose you have not time, & Mr Steel is bad at description. I am very respectfully your friend Andrew Jackson ALS, College of Life Foundation, Inc. (mAJ's). AJ Jr. also wrote William Donelson this day about purchasing Samuel and Alexander Donelson's land (37-0433). AJ wrote George Martin about it on March 5 (below). 1. Thomas Jefferson Donelson (1808–1895) was AJ Jr.'s birth twin and the brother of Alexander and Samuel R. Donelson. 2. John Donelson (1807–1879) was another of AJ Jr.'s brothers by birth. William Edward Butler (1790–1882) was the husband of Rachel Jackson's niece, Martha Thompson Hays Butler.

Feller, D. (Ed.) (2016). *The papers of Andrew Jackson, vol. x, 1832*. (pp. 75-77). Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press. Retrieved from https://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1008&context=utk_jackson

Appendix D Donelson Land Transactions

Points to Consider

- Donelson was born in 1816 and settled in what is now the Arlington area around 1830.
- Alexander was probably named for his oldest uncle, Alexander Donelson (see Appendix A).
- Alexander's guardian was his cousin, **William Donelson** after the death of his father, **Severn Donelson**.
- **John, Samuel, Thomas & Andrew Jackson Jr.** (adopted son of Andrew & Rachel Jackson) were older brothers.
- Alexander came of age (21) in 1837.
- Alexander is listed as the head of household in the 1840 Census.
- Alexander was deeded properties by William Donelson, John Donelson and Samuel Donelson (1840-1841).
- Married **Kate Royster** 1841 (@age 25) and families become related by marriage.
- The Stockley, Hays, McLemore, and Royster families were related to Alexander by marriage.
- First reference to Orion Hill is in 1844 with the birth of Alexander's son by Kate Royster Donelson (R. S. Donelson).
- Last reference to Orion Hill found is in a book by Moore & Foster dated 1923.
- Aerial photo from 1937 shows no house.

Land Transactions

BOOK	YEARS	PG IN BOOK	GRANTOR	GRANTEE	INST	INDEX PAGE OR MICROFILM
D	1833-35	190	Donelson & Hays	J. C. McLemore	D	38
D	1833-35	190	J. C. McLemore	Donelson & Hays	D	99
D	1833-35	192	J. C. McLemore	Wm & S. Donelson	M	99
D	1833-35	211	Donelson	McLemore & Plummer	?	Microfilm
D	1833-35	211	McLemore & Plummer	W. & S. Donelson	M	99
D	1833-35	346	W. Donelson	J. Donelson	D	38
D	1833-35	346	J. Donelson	S. Donelson	D	38
D	1833-35	346	S. Donelson	J. Donelson	?	Microfilm
E	1835-37	226	Donelson & Stockley	J. C. McLemore	D	39
E	1835-37	294	J. Donelson	S. Donelson	D	39
E	1835-37	295	S. Donelson	J. Donelson	D	39
E	1835-37	296	J. Donelson	S. Donelson	D	39
E	1835-37	296	W. Donelson	J. C. McLemore	PA	39
E	1835-37	294, 295, 296 & 467	J. Donelson	S. Donelson	PA	Microfilm
*E	1835-37	423	T. Hopkins	J. Donelson	D	68
*E	1835-37	467	W & S Donelson	J. C. McLemore	PA	Microfilm
F	1837-38	111	Jno. C. McLemore	Thos. Hopkins	D	1??
F	1837-38	423	J. Donelson	T. Hopkins	D	41
F	1837-38	394	T. Hopkins	J. C. McLemore	D	71
F	1837-38	523	J. Donelson	T. Hopkins	D	Microfilm

G	1838-39	310	S. Donelson	J. W. Royster	D	41
H	1839-40	62	J. Donelson	A. Donelson	D	42
H	1840-40	177	A. Donelson	S. Donelson	D	42
H	1840-40	179	S. Donelson	A. Donelson	D	42
H	1840-40	180	S. Donelson	J. Donelson	D	42
H	1840-40	407	Donelson & Stockley	J. C. McLemore	QC	42
I	1840-41	177	S. Donelson	A. Donelson	D	44
I	1840-41	179	A. Donelson	S. Donelson	D	44
I	1840-41	180	J. Donelson	S. Donelson	D	44
I	1840-41	177, 178, 179, 180	Donelson			Microfilm
I & J	1840-41	407	J. C. McLemore	W. & S. Donelson	TC	109
K & J	?	177, 178, 179, 180	Donelson		?	Microfilm

**Special thanks to Vincent Clark, Shelby County Archives in obtaining materials for this appendix.*



Appendix E

Deed of Samuel Donelson to Alexander Donelson
(Shelby County Register, Archives, 1841. Book I, p. 177)

Samuel Spradlin here this day bargained and sold to hereby transfer and convey
 to Alexander Donelson and his heirs forever for the consideration of five hundred
 and twenty Acres of land by the said Alexander ^{Donelson} this day deeded to me, a tract
 of land in the State of Tennessee Shelby County and district number 8 contain-
 ing by estimation five hundred and forty three Acres, be the same
 more or less, and bounded as follows; Beginning at a white oak marked
 as a corner on the division line between John Donelson and ^{James} ~~James~~ ^{Donelson} ~~Donelson~~
 with a maple white oak and hickory as pointers, thence east with division
 line fifty eight chains and fifty links to said John Donelson's South
 East corner, in the eastern boundary of a 5000 acre Survey entered in
 the name of John C. McSorres and Thomas Hopkins James South with the
 eastern boundary of said entry fifty seven chains to the South East corner of
 said entry, thence west with the Southern boundary of entry fifty chains and
 fifteen links to a black oak marked R.P.H. at the West corner of William's 5000
 acre entry, thence South thirty two chains to an ash marked R.H. thence
 west twenty eight chains to a maple marked R.H. in Cypress Creek,
 thence down said creek with its meanders to a cypress tree in said creek
 marked R.H. on the Southern boundary of the before mentioned 5000 acre Survey
 thence North fifty five yards east, forty one chains and ninety links to a
 stake with two white oaks a black oak and hickory as pointers, thence North
 forty three chains and twenty five links to the beginning, to have and
 to hold the same to the said Alexander Donelson his heirs and
 assigns forever, I do covenant with the said Alexander Donelson
 that I am lawfully seized of said land have a good right to
 convey it and that the same is unincumbered, I do further coven-
 ant and bind my self, my heirs and representatives, to warrant and
 forever defend the title said land and every part thereof to
 the said Alexander Donelson his heirs and assigns against the
 lawful claims of all persons whatever this the 12th day of March 1840
 Witness

John Donelson
 Robert C. Daniel
 Samuel Donelson & Co.

State of Tennessee Personally appeared before me John H. Fuller, Clerk of the
 Shelby County Court of Shelby County Samuel Donelson the within
 named bargainer with whom I am personally acquainted and acknowledged that he
 executed the within deed for the purposes therein contained, up to my
 hand at office, April 10th 1840.
 Received State Tax John H. Fuller C. K.

State of Tennessee
 Shelby County Register of office April 10th 1840. Thus the foregoing
 deed of conveyance with the certificate of acknowledgment thereon
 endorsed was this day only recorded in my office in Booked page 179
 W. P. Heard Register S. C.

B

GENERATION 1 ↓

Col. John (1718-1785) and Rachel (1730-1801) Donelson Cenotaph
Hermitage Churchyard Cemetery

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/6639237/john-donelson>



GENERATION 2 ↓

Rachel (1767-1828) and Andrew (1767-1845) Jackson
The Hermitage, Nashville, TN

<https://thehermitage.com/learn/mansion-grounds/jacksons-tomb/>



Jane Donelson Hays (1766-1834)

Riverside Cemetery, Jackson, TN
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/78484530/jane-hays>



Severn Donelson (1773-1818)

Hermitage Churchyard
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/6639324/severn-donelson>



GENERATION 3 ↓

Andrew Jackson, Jr. (1808-1865)

The Hermitage, Nashville, TN
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/10797595/andrew-jackson>



Thomas Jefferson Donelson (1808-1895)

Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia, PA
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/114691326/thomas-jefferson-donelson>



Dr. Samuel Rucker Donelson (1810-1851)

Wells Family Cemetery, Shelby County, TN
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/40603324/samual-donelson>



Alexander (1816-1887) and Kate (1815-1884) Donelson

Assumed to be buried in the Old Royster Burying Ground, Shelby County, TN
(Burrow, 1962)



GENERATION 4 ↓

Helen Donelson McLean (1842-1884)
 Elmwood Cemetery, Memphis, TN.
 No marker remains at the burial place for Helen or her husband as their headstones were apparently stolen according to family members. (*Tennessee Genealogical Magazine*. 2001).



↓
Richard Sampson (1844-1918) and Fannie Bragg Donelson (1852-1889)
 Chambers Chapel Cemetery, Arlington, TN
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/7664922/fannie-c-donelson>



Sarah Jackson Donelson Lake (1850-1906)
 Elmwood Cemetery, Memphis, TN.
 Sarah, her husband and sister's family were all buried in the same section (Fowler Section) at Elmwood. Their headstones were stolen. (*Tennessee Genealogical Magazine*. 2001)



Alexander Francis Donelson (1851-1913)
 Alexander, R.S. Donelson Jr. and his wife, Mary McNutt Armistead Donelson are all listed on this headstone. (see Generation 5).
 Arlington Cemetery, Arlington, TN
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/105614984/mary-mcnutt-donelson>



GENERATION 5 ↓

↓
Mary Donelson (1876-1960)
 Chambers Chapel Cemetery, Arlington, TN
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/7664939/mary-donelson>



R. S., Jr. (1877-1964) and Mary McNutt Armistead Donelson (1875-1955)
 Arlington Cemetery, Arlington, TN
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/105614984/mary-mcnutt-donelson>



Francis Armistead Donelson (1881-1922)
 Chambers Chapel Cemetery, Arlington, TN
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/7664969/francis-armistead-donelson>



Kate Donelson (1882-1974)
 Chambers Chapel Cemetery, Arlington, TN
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/7745980/kate-donelson>





Complevit nunc, donec inveniatur aliquid aliud
(Finished until I find something else)

