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Some Notes in relation to North Alabama
furnished me by Mr Charles S. Jones of
Jackson County Ala

Bolivar Jackson Co Ala
May 12th 1848

Mr A. J. Pickett
Dr Sir

When I was in Montgomery last December I promised to give you some information respecting this Section of our State I have made all the research in my power which I will give you alphabetically If however you want information on any subject not here treated of fully please direct my attention to it and I will do what I can to forward it to you

Agriculture at a low point but improveing in the Northern Counties especially in Madison Co

B-

Canals one from Huntsville to Looneys mill on Indian Creek and one around the Muscleshoals on the Tennessee both made at considerable expence this by donation of land by the General Government and that by Joint Stock company both worthless for want of repairs

Cotton is the Staple commodity about 50 thousand bales raised in North Alabama mostly short staple (or green seed) The more intelligent farmers are much increasing the crop per acre of cotton by manureing their cotton land

D & E-F- Geology No Country is so interesting in a geological point of view as North Alabama In this part of the State is the Southwestern termination of the Cumberland Mountain rich in

Iron ore and coal with the greater variety of animal remains ~~than~~ of any Country I ever saw among them I can name Cyathophillum Giganta Do cornuata Stylina perronii Pentremites head & stems Deltheris Strophomenia Archimedes Screw right & left Producta Gorgonia ~~Quartz crystals~~ Euomphalus Cirrus Columnaria and many others unknown to me with Sandstone Limestone Marble (varigated) Quartz Crystals of Do. Mistone grit &c in great abundance

I should have mentioned in its propper place the caverns They are large and numerous running either into the Cumberland or Racoon Mountains Some are saltpeter as Souta and Nickojack others without but the most interesting is the blowing Cave near the head-waters of Mud-Creek in this County It is calm at the equinox say vernal As the weather becomes warm it commences blowing out with a current in proportion to the heat of the weather at the hottest sending forth a current at the rate of 20 miles or perhaps more per hour It roars and shakes the leaves of the surrounding trees to their tops blowing off a mans hat and turning the skirts of his coat over his head Then gradually slackening until the Autumnal equinox As the cold weather sets in it commences sucking in increasing with the severity of the weather till at the extreme Winter it sucks in with the same force that it blew out with in Summer but at all times it is perfectly calm within the cave at 50 yards and upwards from its mouth How far the Cave extends into the Mountain is unknown as no one has ever seen its end I have been twice as far as I could go without wetting myself say about 1½ mile I have visited it at all seasons of the year and speak from my own knowledge except as to the velocity of the current of air this I guess at

My theory about is this the Cave connects near its mouth with a cavern of vast extent the air of which by its elasticity

rushing out when the Atmosphere is rarified in summer and in winter when the air is condensed by the cold it becomes in its turn heavier than that in the Cavern and by its gravity rushes in Whether this is the veritable Symes hole or whether the Earth is a living thing and this one of its nostrils making an inhalation and exhalation in 12 mo. the deponent sayth not

History The County of Madison was purchased of the Cherokee Indians before any other part of North Ala the first settlement after the purchase was made in 1807 in that year corn was made

Indians The Cherokees inhabited nearly all of N. Ala. the Chickasaws owning a part of the ~~E~~ W. part of the valley

About the last battle fought between the Cherokees and whites was fought about the line between Ala & Tennessee on the 13th of September 1794 at and near Nickajack The whites were from East Tennessee & Kentucky under the command of Gen. Robertson Col Montgomery and Capt Miles from West Tennessee Col Ore of East Tennessee the ast invable Commander of the whole but by consent of officers Col. Whitley of Kentucky commanded The surprise and defeat of the Indians was complete so breaking their spirit that they soon after made a peace which ~~that~~ has lasted to the present time — *

Indian War by the Creeks One of the causes if not the main one grew out of an affair on the 1st of March 1811

Two Creek Indians had resorted about the head waters of Crow Creek in Tennessee (now part of Franklin Co) where they hunted for some time visiting and trading with Mr. William London who had a powder mill They were apparently very friendly for some time but Mr. London had two very fine rifles which they wanted and could not buy so on the 1st of March 1811 at night they killed him by shooting him through the head while asleep in bed They then took the guns and some of his clothing and made the best of their way to the Creek Nation They were followed in the morning by Col George Coperton Maj Smiley and Mr. Jeffrey John Berger (Whites) and John Baldridge (more commonly known by the name of John Fox)

two Cherokee Indians They pursued the indians to near the Coosa River where they overtook one and Col. Coperton killed him after a long chase Fox and Benge mutilated his body and after skinning him the party returned home The other having made his escape into the Creek Nation The Creeks vowed that if the parties engaged in the killing of the Creek were not delivered up to them for punishment they would take satisfaction The

Mounds or Tumili of considerable extent abound in the Tennessee valley The most conspicuous ones are in Long Island and near Florence About 3 miles above Larkins Landing on the Tennessee River and not far from the river are the remains of an ancient fortification enclosing about 10 Acres The ditch and wall very distinct All of the mounds have the appearance of having been enclosed by a ditch and on examining into them the human bones are found some of ordinary size and others of gigantic size

All along the River in the low grounds are found at intervals Shell banks Shells of the production of the River without regard to size or species Within every Shell-bank is found human bones of various sizes

I believe that these shell-fish were put on the graves of the departed worthies for subsistance under a vague idea of the immortality of the Soul

The Muscle Shoals is one of the grandest sights I ever saw Here the Tennessee River flows over a projection of the Spurs of the Cumberland Mountain There is at no place any considerabee fall of water but the channel of the River varies from 1 to 3 miles in breadth this with the fall of the river makes it too shallow for large flat boats except at high tides boats of light draft can descend at all times The Shoals are about 18 miles in length including the Elk River Shoals In the Shoals are many Islands of good land some of large size with many smaller ones Towheads and Islands of drift wood

Owing to the width of the River and its fall it rarely ever rises in the shoals more than 3 feet By deepening the channel by blasting the rock and the construction of suitable wing-dams without any very considerable expence good navigation for Steam boats could be obtained In this opinion I am sustained by the Topographical Engineer of the U. S. who surveyed these shoals There is water power enough to spin all the cotton raised in the valley State and grind all the grain too

Minerals Coal (Bituminous) & Iron in great abundance and lead in small quantities

Roads We have a Rail Road from Tuscumbia to Decatur a miserable affair One McAdamized from the Green bottom by Huntsville to Whitesburg 14 miles in good order

I thought that I would put every thing down in alphabetical order but some things did not occur to me until I had passed their propper place I hope it will be of no inconvenience to you — I cannot close this letter without reverting again to the lovely Tennessee It is the most interesting river I ever beheld Descending at the State line you find Long Island 5 miles in length following the river you have a bold yet gentle current by Pine Island so called from its howeing several pine trees on it 4 miles long thence by Several of considerable size by Gunters Landing one old Ft Deposite Here General Jackson received subsistance for his men in the Creek Campains there bluffs begin on the river perpendicular in many places Still farther down you pass the celebrated Paint Rock Bluff so called from the painted heeroglyphics on its face for a long time believed to be inaccessable I have seen them when they

were very plain They consisted of a hand pointing to the East and some other characters not so distinctly recollected as to enable me to attempt to imitate them on paper but the prying american at length discovered a ledge around the Bluff sufficient for a footing by which he goes around and to immortalize himself cuts his name or the initials of it then another and yet others till in time the old hieroglyphics are destroyed This Bluff up to the names must be 300 ft from the water and the ledge appears to be just a seam Passing by the mouth of Paint Rock River and in 4 miles by that of Flint River by Hobbs Island Whitesburg Triana Decatur Brownes Ferry and the five Islands contiguous to Bs Ferry all of the best navigation you come to the head of Elk River shoals with thier shoals Islands and waterfowl with every variety suitable to the season The crane wading silent but intent The fish hawke on high hovering over the water preeuing the finny tribe in a different manner now hovering ballanced in the air then like an arrow darting down with the velocity of thought now submerged but after a while riseing out of the water with his victim in his tallons which he bears away in triumph to the woods then observe the divers (several species) pursueing their prey more fairly by fair race here the graceful Gull there the noisy geese and ducks these of various species with plovers &c but see he comes the observed of all observers dealing terror to all the is recognized at once and known to be the Eagle perchance he has merely come for an airing be it so or to feast on a fat goose or duck he has the power to do it or if opportunity permits to rob the fish-hawke of his booty However his object is soon

known

which he consumates and then as if unwilling to disturb the general harmony existing before his unwelcome visit returns to whence he came The occurrence appears soon forgotten and all is gayety & life again In like manner you pass through the Muscle Shoals just below thence by Florence under one of the finest bridges in the West or south West to Luscumbia Landing thence through Colberts Shoals to East Port Miss- where you meet the large Steamboats which run in the New Orleans trade

Our mutual friend Capt. James Williams desires me to present his compliments to you

With much respect I am very respectfully your

Obt. St

Charles S. Jones

* Indians killed at Nickajack 70 - Whites killed 0 wounded 2

Bolivar Ala 15
May 16

Mr. A. J. Pickett
Montgomery
Ala