

Letter details early life of settlers to this area

(Editor's Note: This letter was written to the Marshall County Historical Museum about early Marshall County.)

Mansel Hall was born July 15, 1785. He was the second of eight sons and three daughters born to John and Martha Gladden Hall of Fairfield County, South Carolina. He was reared and educated in his native state and became a planter on an extensive scale, first in South Carolina and then in Mississippi.

He ventured first into Maury County, Tennessee, in 1808 along with his oldest brother, Darlington Hall. Their wagons were pulled by double mule teams and carried all of their furniture, tools, farm equipment and other personal items together with several slaves.

He married Delphia Porter in Maury County, Tennessee, on January 4, 1810. In 1812 he and his family moved to Tuscaloosa, Alabama. After only a few years in the newly settled territory a tragedy occurred.

Mansel and his wife went to lend their assistance to a neighbor who was building a new house. The men would do the carpentry work while their wives would prepare the noon meal. Before leaving his home, Mansel had given strict instructions to his slave cook that while he and his wife were away from the homestead that the four children were not to be permitted outside of the house.

John, the oldest son, disobeyed his father and slipped into the nearby woods to watch the slaves plowing in the fields. When John arrived at the fields, he noticed the slaves were running into the woods so he followed them. One of the slaves saw young John and picked him up, placed him upon his back, and ran all the way to where Mansel was helping his neighbor.

The slave informed Mansel that his other three children and the slave cook had all been murdered and his home burned to the ground. The Red Sticks, led by their chief Savannah Jack, was the Indian party responsible for the massacre. The Indians were trailed by several settlers and many of the raiders were killed. This account is recorded in the

Alabama State Archives.

A short time after this incident, Mansel and his family moved back to his native state of South Carolina and lived there for about eighteen years.

In 1836, Mansel moved to Mississippi and to the newly formed county of Marshall. He became quite prosperous as a planter. He purchased several hundred acres of land and soon acquired over 2,300 acres. He also owned a plantation in Pontotoc County, Mississippi.

Besides being an extensive planter, he was also a merchant. He purchased eight of the first town lots of Waterford, Mississippi, where he was the proprietor of his own mercantile business.

With ten sons and two daughters, his next project was to build a large plantation home. It was a two-story Southern colonial mansion with twenty rooms. It was built in the Waterford section of Marshall County. It was one of the largest homes in the county and was said to be very formal and furnished lavishly. It was painted white and trimmed with green shutters. Large porches surrounded the entire home and it was shaded by large old oak trees.

In 1840, Mansel died from a fever and nineteen years later, in 1859, his wife Delphia died. His family kept the beautiful home and large acreage and went about the life of a planter's family.

When the Civil War came through Marshall County, Grant's Army took over this house as a Federal hospital. The Hall brothers were all away fighting for the Confederacy. Upon the departure of the Northern Army from this home, they burned it, together with all of the barns, horse and mule sheds, the gin, the mill, the smokehouse, blacksmith shop, stock barn, tool shed, wagon shed, and all of the negro cabins. When the war was over, several of the brothers moved back and built new homes, but they stayed only a few years before moving to Texas.

Written by Russ Hall