Madison County Facts and Firsts – the first 100 years . . . Did you know?

The first known people lived here about 12,000 years ago – the Paleo Indians. (The exodus of the Israelites from Egypt Is thought to have occurred about 3,500 years ago.)

The French explore the region in the 1500’s and discover the Wahzahzhay Indians (Osage).

1825 - The area now known as Madison County was ceded to the United States by the Osage Chief Hurachias, who was also known as “The War Eagle”

1827 - The first white settlers arrived in Madison County from Lauderdale County, Alabama: John Coulter, Thomas Cunningham, and Henry King.

1827 - Henry King becomes the first non-native to die in Madison County – Kings River named for him.

1828 - Leonard Koker arrives and becomes the first farmer in Madison County.

1828 – George Tucker settles in the Richland Creek area.

1829 - Turner Hamblin purchases the Koker farm, the first real estate transaction in Madison County.

1829 - William Henderson Burney, son of Charles and Mary King Burney, is the first non-native child born in Madison County.

1831 – David Phillips, John Phillips, Richard Withrow, George W. Sanders and John W. Sanders settle on the present day site of Huntsville.

1832 - The first community and post office in Madison County was War Eagle , located near present day McConnell’ s Chapel. The first postmaster was Isaac Crow who also started the first known business, a general store.

1832 – William and John Hind settle in the area now known as Hindsville.

1833 - John F. King, a Cumberland Presbyterian minister is the first recorded minister and school teacher in Madison County, 1833.

1833 - The King’s River Congregation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church is the first known church in the county.

1833 - The first school in Madison County was constructed on Sweden Creek, near Kingston. The second and third were near Huntsville and old Saint Paul.

1836 - Prior to Madison County being created on September 30, 1836, the area now encompassed by the county had previously been part of nine other counties: Lawrence (1813-1815), Independence (1820 – 1825) Izard (1825 – 1827), Lovely, (1828) Washington (1828), Carroll (1833) Crawford, Johnson, and Pope. (1835 – 1836)

1836 - The first County and Probate Judge was John Bowen; County Clerk, Henry B. Brown; Sheriff, Pleasant M. Johnson; Treasurer, Hill C. Daugherty; Coroner, Hilton Perryman; Surveyor, Thomas McCuiston.

1836 – John W. Sanders becomes Madison County’s first State Representative.

1836 - The first session of Court was held in the barn of Evan Shelby Polk (near the corner of Polk and Parks Streets)

1837 - The Huntsville area was first surveyed by Isaac Murphy .

1837 - Old Saint Paul founded by John C. Sumner . Sumner was postmaster and later State Representative.

1837 - Huntsville was formally surveyed and laid out in lots by County Surveyor Thomas McCuiston.

1837 - Joel D. Blair built the first house in the newly platted town.

1837 - Joel Blair built the first general store in Huntsville. The second business was a drinking saloon.

1837 - Thomas Elsey was the first recorded Blacksmith.

1837 - Huntsville’s name was changed to Sevierville and remained so until 1840.

1839 - The first jail in Madison County was built (corner of Lee and Main Streets) – contained a dungeon for the more dangerous inmates.

1840 population of Huntsville is 39 whites, 12 slaves.

1845 - The second courthouse is constructed in the middle of the town square.

1845 - William Houser was the first recorded attorney to practice in Madison County.

1850 population of Huntsville is 212 whites, 43 slaves.

1850 – There are six townships in Madison County: Bowen, Hilburn, King’s River, Prairie, Richland, and War Eagle.

1852 - The first newspaper in the county was *The Independent.*

1853 - Kingston is surveyed and platted by King Johnson and by 1860 has a population of 45 whites, 14 slaves. Johnson builds the first house and business in the town.

1854 - One of the first colleges built in Arkansas was the Huntsville Institute, incorporated by the Arkansas General Assembly on December 20, 1854.

1855 - One of the first colleges for girls was chartered three weeks later – the Pleasant View Female Seminary.

1861 - Madison County’s delegate to the Convention on secession , Isaac Murphy, was the only person to vote no on secession.

1863 - Nine citizens executed near Huntsville by Union Army , “The Huntsville Massacre”

1863 - Huntsville burned to the ground in late 1863 (except for Masonic Hall). Courthouse records taken to Springfield, MO by the Union Army where they were lost or destroyed.

1868 – County Judge G. W. Vaughan orders the first schools districts, under the new state school law established on November 13th: - Huntsville No. 1, McConnell’ Chapel No. 2, Mountain Grove No. 3, Lower Whorton Creek No. 4, Upper Whorton Creek No. 5, Bohannon No. 6, Baldwin No. 7, Lone Star No. 8, Alabam No. 9, Park Hill No. 10, and Jackson Creek No. 11.

1871 - One of the first members of the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas was Dr. James Johnson, of Wesley. Dr. Johnson was also elected to Congress in 1864 and 1866, elected Lt. Governor of Arkansas in 1867, appointed Secretary of State in 1869.

1871 - Third Courthouse constructed in Huntsville Town Square.

1877 - Huntsville becomes an incorporated town on November 14, 1877.

1879 - J. H. Daugherty publishes the first edition of *The Madison County Record*, May 31, 1879.

1879 - Fire destroys 3rd courthouse on December 1, 1879.

1879 – There are 4,397 school age children in Madison County but only 987 are enrolled in school with only 484 attending school on any one day.

1880 - Fourth Courthouse built in town square.

1880 – Population of Huntsville reaches 312.

1881 – The first steam Grist Mill is constructed in Huntsville by F. M. Sams which could produce 20 barrels a day.

1886 - Professor Jesse Bird opens the Hindsville Academy in 1886.

1887 - The Frisco Railroad begins building the St. Paul branch from Fayetteville to St. Paul. Due to space requirements for the railroad, Saint Paul is moved to its present site and is surveyed in March, 1887.

1889 – The population of Saint Paul reaches 300.

1890 - The first bank in Madison County, The Madison County Bank, is established 1n 1890.

1892 - Professor Jess Bird established Bird College in Huntsville.

1897 - The Frisco Railroad extends the railroad to Pettigrew and Pettigrew becomes known as the Hardwood Capital of the World. Over 8 million railroad ties shipped valued at $2 million dollars. (worth over $40 million by today’s standards.)

1897, Madison County had 125 separate school districts enumerating 7,547 school age children, 14th largest population in the state.

1900 – Saint Paul exceeds Huntsville’s population of 600 and there is talk about moving the County Seat to Saint Paul.

1901 - City of Huntsville votes to surrender its charter on July 22, 1901.

1902 - Fire destroys most of Huntsville business district and courthouse on Dec. 1, 1902.

1905 - Madison County’s fifth courthouse is constructed on the North side of Huntsville square (corner of College and War Eagle streets) in 1905.

1905 - City of Huntsville reincorporates on December 29, 1905.

1920 - Around 1920, the Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church begins to implement the “Kingsplan” at Kingston by constructing a massive church and school campus.

1925 - The first high school diploma ever awarded in Madison County was to Arthur Johnson, Kingston High School, 1925.

1925 - Alfred Hawn becomes the first official Mayor of Huntsville and the first Town Council of Huntsville is created and passes the town’s first Ordinances on Sept. 21, 1925.

1927 - The first State Vocational School in Arkansas constructed at Huntsville.

1937 – The railroad in south Madison County is dismantled.