

Union Academy

Union Academy was located in Old Bellefonte.

WHERE WAS UNION ACADEMY? by Ann B. Chambless

On July 18, 1859, the trustees of public school number 3 located at Union Academy in Township 4, Range 6 in Jackson County contracted with H. H. Coulson, teacher, for a three-month term beginning July 18, 1859. Where was Union Academy? The domain of the trustees provide the best clue. They were: Richard H. McCravey, Dillard Brooks, and John Wesley Russell.

Richard H. McCravey, born 1808 in Tennessee, was a Bellefonte merchant. Circa 1842 he married Mary Ann Holland (daughter of James and Myra (Davis) Holland). The Richard H. McCraveys had three children who would have been 15, 13, and 11 in 1859 when the trustees contracted with H.H. Coulson. The McCraveys moved to Marshall Co, MS, where Richard died in Jan, 1867.

Dillard Brooks, born 1803 in Kentucky, was a farmer who owned real estate near Centerpoint valued at \$1200 according to the 1850 census. Circa 1829 he married Delilah Hudgins (daughter of Benjamin and Martha (Ellis) Hudgins). The 1850 census recorded six Brooks children ranging in age from 19 to 4 years. The three youngest would have been 16, 15, and 13 when the school contract was signed in 1859.

John Wesley Russell, born 1813 in Virginia, was the son of David Russell. Circa 1833 John W. Russell married Tenperance (Tenpy) Burgess (daughter of Jonathan and Elizabeth (Blackstock) Burgess). John Wesley Russell was enumerated as a mechanist in the 1850 census. He owned 200 acres near the present day Jackson County Park and Roseberry Subdivision. He was the father of seven children; the youngest five were 19, 17, 15, 12, and 7 in 1859.

Bellefonte was contiguous with the acreage of all three trustees. In 1859, Bellefonte was the only incorporated town in T4, R6 and the most logical site for the location of Union Academy. Harrison Henry Coulson, the teacher, also lived in the suburbs of Bellefonte between 1850 and 1860. H.H. Coulson, born 1835-36, was the son of Jacob and Joanna (Graham) Coulson who moved here from Madison Co, TN. At the time of the 1850 census, they lived near Kirby, Burgess, and Russell families. H.H. Coulson's older brother, Lawson C. Coulson, was later Jackson County Probate Judge. Another brother, Greene A. Coulson, was listed as a Baptist minister in the 1860 census. Harrison Henry Coulson was listed as a teacher in the 1860 census, and he married Juliette Gullatt on May 17, 1863.

The original 1859 contract was preserved by the McCravey family and came to your Editor from the estate of Mary (McCravey) Triplett of Forest, MS. The contract was witnessed by Jo Phillip and Greene A. Coulson. It reads:

"It is agreed between D. Brooks, John W. Russell, and R.H. McCravey, school trustees of Township 4, Range 6 in the County of Jackson and State of Alabama and H. H. Coulson, a School Teacher of the same County and State, that the said H.H. Coulson will take charge of public school No. 3 of said Township located at Union Academy for the term of 3 months beginning on the 18th of July A.D. 1859 and ending on the 30th of September A.D. 1859 and that he will faithfully discharge the duties devolving upon him as teacher of said school under the general supervision and control of said Trustees and that for such services properly

rendered the said Brooks, Russel, and McCravey will pay to the said Coulson the share of the educational fund of said Township for the year 1859 to which said school may be found to be entitled at the rate of one dollar per month for each scholar for the actual number of days sent so soon as the same shall be drawn by them, for the public educational fund of the State. In witness where of the said. parties have here unto set their names the 18th day of July A.D.

It is agreed between P. Brooks, John W. Russell
and H. H. McCravy School Trustees of Township
to Range 6 in the County of Jackson and State
of Alabama and H. H. Coulson School Teacher of
the same County and State, that the said H. H. Coulson
will take charge of public school No. 3 of said Township
located at Union Academy for the term of three
months beginning on the 18th of July A.D. 1858
and ending on the 30th of September A.D. 1859
and that he will faithfully discharge the duties
revolving upon him as teacher of said school, under
the general supervision and control of said trustees
and that for such services properly rendered
that the said Brooks, Russell, and McCravy
will pay to the said Coulson the share of
the educational fund of said Township for
the year 1859 to which said school may be
found to be entitled at the rate of one dollar
per month for each scholar for the actual
number of days sent so soon as the same
shall be drawn by them, for the public
educational fund of the State. In witness
where of the said parties have here unto
set their names the 18th day of July
A.D. 1858

In witness of - P. Brooks
John W. Russell
H. H. McCravy

Trustees
Silas Brooks
J. W. Russell

H. H. Coulson Teacher.