

BIRMINGHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

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FARMING IN OLD ELYTON MAKING SENSE OF THE CENSUSES

This report addresses agricultural enterprise in Elyton, the county seat of Jefferson County, Alabama from 1821 to 1873. Jefferson County was formed from Indian territory at the creation of the state of Alabama in 1819. U. S. Census data, enumerating the free inhabitants, enslaved inhabitants, and agricultural production of 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880, provide a detailed view of farmers and their diverse farm practice. Today, Elyton is a residential neighborhood of Birmingham, best known for the Arlington Antebellum Home and Gardens, a museum of the City of Birmingham, and generally touted as the embodiment of a 19th century Southern plantation.

Southern plantation agriculture reached its peak in 1860. A commonly held view is that “plantations” abounded in “Old Elyton.” Although plantations were established all over the South and notably in Alabama’s rich Black Belt section by 1860, these farms generally specialized in a single crop—cotton, rice, sugar, or tobacco—that netted large profits for the plantation owner. While cotton was raised in “Old Elyton,” Indian corn, sweet potatoes, and milk cows and swine dominated production on Elyton farms. Here as across the South in the 19th century, farmers with 100 acres or less also tilled the soil to provide sustenance for their families.

Today a plantation is generally considered to be “a large estate or farm producing a crop with enslaved labor.” But how large an estate and how much enslaved labor defines a plantation in 19th century Alabama?

Historians have usually granted plantation status to those men and women who owned at least twenty slaves. . . . Only the plantations that were run by large numbers of slaves, a hundred or more, approached the manorial ideal. By this measure, there were in 1860 only about 2,300 truly large plantations, and perhaps only half of these were developed to the state of elegance promoted by widespread mythology.

— John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery.*

Ulrich Phillips in *Life and Labor in the Old South* and John Boles in *Black Southerners, 1619-1869* suggest that the manorial ideal represented only 12% of all slaveholding families, who in turn made up 24% of white southerners. By 1860, 14% of farms included in the census records for “Old Elyton” reached plantation status, defined as employing 20 or more enslaved persons. In 1860 all Elyton farms

produced 11% of Jefferson County’s cotton production, which remained less than 1% of that of the state of Alabama. One of these plantations may have reached the manorial ideal, which would be confirmed by review of records other than the census reports referenced in this report. Regardless of size, census records document farmers, farming, and farm and slave owners and never mention plantations or “large landed estates,” a common 19th century description of what today is called a plantation.

Research for this report, including transcription and formatting of census data, was done by Gerry Waters, with assistance from University of Alabama intern Salena Lee. Julius Linn and Katherine Tipton served as editors. This report provides groundwork to open the door to the many questions that remain to be answered. MLW



Walker Plantation, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Alex Bush, Photographer, 1937. HABS documented the 19th century residences of the Walker, Mudd, and Worthington families in Birmingham, making photographs and brief histories. Elsewhere across the South, remaining slave houses and other plantation outbuildings were documented. This collection at the Library of Congress forms a superb resource for studying Southern plantation landscapes.



“Slave Quarters, Williamson Hawkins Plantation,” a log structure built pre-Civil War, photographed on the property of Republic Iron & Steel Co., 1910 and published in Ethel Armes, *The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama.*

1820

The town of Elyton was incorporated in 1820. The Alabama Legislature named it for William Ely, the land agent who sold the initial acres here to benefit the nation's first school for the education of the deaf and dumb. Upon the recommendation of Kentucky Congressman Henry Clay the U.S. Congress had granted 2,560 acres in the newly created Jefferson County to be sold for the purpose of building the asylum's campus in Hartford, Connecticut. The campus remains to this day. A similar land grant in Jefferson County was made for the purpose of building the campus of the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, then the capital of the state. Elyton became the county seat in 1821.

Jefferson County's first seat of government had been at Carrollsville, now part of the southwest Birmingham Powderly neighborhood. Fertile soils here attracted early homesteaders. Soils in the Jonesboro and Trussville areas also proved attractive for farming. Settlements were about springs and along the floodplains of area creeks. These creeks flow into the Cahaba and Warrior Rivers, the



Johnson's Georgia and Alabama Map, 1861, showing all county roads crossing at Elyton. Birmingham Public Library, Agee Map Collection.

These roads included the Huntsville, Georgia, and Montevallo Roads, roads called Tuscaloosa Avenue, S.W. (U.S. 11), Cotton Avenue, S.W., and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive in today's Elyton community.

latter navigable only to Tuscaloosa, making this remote area inaccessible to distant markets until the arrival of the railroads in the 1870s.

After traveling 1,000 miles on horseback, Connecticut-bred William Ely described the Alabama frontier as "poor and barren, . . . living on hog and corn," and lacking in "every accommodation" for visitors. Following two years of successful land sales, the platting of the town, and the building of a courthouse, Elyton's population was 300 persons. Located near a Big Spring at the intersection of the Cedar Branch and Valley Creek, town lots often flooded leading to its earlier naming as Frog Level. These town lots were soon surrounded by agricultural fields as new residents arrived via the Georgia and Huntsville roads and homesteaded forests and swamps, increasing Jefferson County's population to 6,855 persons (75% white, 25% black) by 1830. After Alabama's capital moved from Tuscaloosa to Montgomery in 1849, the Montevallo Road emerged as a significant transportation artery to Selma and Montgomery.

Jefferson County Population

	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870
White	5,121	5,486	6,714	9,078	9,839
Free Colored	19	9	8	19	2,506
Slave	1,715	1,636	2,267	2,649	
TOTAL	6,855	7,131	8,989	11,746	12,345

Source: Table III. *Population of Civil Divisions Less Than Counties in Totals, and as Native and Foreign, White and Colored, at the Census of 1870; and as White and Colored at the Censuses of 1860 and 1850.*

Elyton Population

	1830	1850	1860	1870
White		446	603	661
Free Colored		8	10	394
Slave		433	709	
Foreign				12
TOTAL	300	887	1322	1067

Sources: Table III. *Population of Civil Divisions Less Than Counties in Totals, and as Native and Foreign, White and Colored, at the Census of 1870.* The 1850 and 1860 censuses for free inhabitants include persons whom BHS researchers determined to be free colored.

1850

Twenty years later in 1850, Elyton was home to 887 persons. Marcus S. McMillion, the census taker for the precinct, reported occupations for 132 free inhabitants living here at this time. Of the 77 heads of household listed in this census, 62% stated their occupation as farming. Of the farms reported in the agricultural census, 46% cultivated less than 100 acres; 23% tilled 200 or more acres. Elyton's 52 farms ranged in size from 7 to 770 acres with 6,104 total acres under cultivation. The number of slaves per slave owner ranged from 1 to 85, with 36% of farmers owning 10 or more slaves. Williamson Hawkins, Thompson Camp, and Woodson Wade each cultivated 250 or more acres with 20 or more slaves. The custom among historians is to call the Hawkins, Camp, and Woods farms "plantations."

The census for free inhabitants also lists 21 white laborers who were available to hire out for farm and other work. Additionally, 21

persons were employed as merchants, grocer, and tavernkeeper; 10 in trades; and 10 as doctors, lawyers, teachers, and Baptist clergy. Few of the white residents of Elyton were born outside the southern states. Exceptions included two Irishmen and two Connecticut-born free women: Mariah Hawkins, wife of Dr. Nathaniel Hawkins, and the mulatto Ell Ann Russell.

The U.S. Agricultural Census documents the land cultivated, livestock raised and slaughtered, and crops grown. Indian corn, sweet potatoes, and swine dominate production. Cotton was grown on 50% of Elyton farms. Of this production 98% was raised and ginned by enslaved labor. Elyton's 357 bales represented 15% of Jefferson County's production. County production was less than 1% of Alabama's production of 564,429 bales, then the second highest in the nation after Mississippi.

Elyton Precinct in 1850

No. of Houses	77
No. of Heads of Household	77
No. of Occupations Reported	132
No. of Free Inhabitants	454
No. of Slave Inhabitants	433
Total Population	887

Jefferson County

6,722
2,267
8,989

Source: Free Inhabitants and Slave Inhabitants Censuses, Elyton Precinct; Table II Population of Each State and Territory (By Counties), 1790-1870.

The Elyton precinct included 7% of Jefferson County's white population and 19% of the county's enslaved population.

Occupations of Free Inhabitants, 1850

Including data for 132 persons listed in 77 households

Occupation	No.	Percent
Agriculture		
Farmer	48	
Overseer	1	
Laborer	21	
Subtotal	70	53%
Commerce		
Clerk	10	
Grocer	2	
Merchant	8	
Tavern Keeper	1	
Subtotal	21	16%
Trades		
Blacksmith	2	
Carpenter	1	
Ditaker	1	
Mechanic	3	
Sadler	1	
Tailor	1	
Tanner	1	
Subtotal	10	7.5%
Professional		
Teacher	3	
Physician	3	
Lawyer	3	
Clergyman	1	
Subtotal	10	7.5%
Other		
Student	10	
Poor House	5	
Not listed for householder	6	
Subtotal	21	16%
TOTAL	132	

Source: Free Inhabitants Census in the Elyton Precinct, 1850.

Crops Grown in Elyton Precinct, 1850

Crops	# Farms Growing	Percent
Indian Corn	52	100%
Sweet Potatoes	45	86%
Oats	43	83%
Wheat	15	29%
Peas & Beans	15	29%
Irish Potatoes	8	15%
Cotton	26	50%
Farm Animals		
Horses	52	100%
Milk Cows	52	100%
Swine	51	98%
Sheep	9	17%
Other Cattle	49	94%
Asses and Mules	30	57%
Working Oxen	26	50%
TOTAL # Farms	52	

Source: Elyton Beat District No. 32., 1850.

Slave Owners in the Elyton Precinct, 1850

# of slaves	# of owners	Percent
1-2	8	
3-5	13	
6-9	7	
Subtotal	28	64%
10-11	7	
12-19	6	
Subtotal	13	30%
20-30	1	
31-40	1	
80-110	1	
Subtotal	3	6%
TOTAL # owners	44	
TOTAL # slaves	433	

Source: Slave Inhabitants Census in the Elyton Precinct, 1850.

Schedule 4. Productions of Agriculture in Elyton Beat District No. 32 in the County of Jefferson in the Post Office: Elyton, State of Alabama,

Name of Owner, Agent or Manager of Farm	Acres of Land Improved	Unimproved	Cash Value of Farm	Value of Farming Implements & Machinery	Live Stock						
					Horses	Asses & Mules	Milk Cows	Working Oxen	Other Cattle	Sheep	Swine
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Williamson Hawkins	770	310	15,000	770	10	23	30	12	90	48	300
Woodson Wade	450	290	6,000	550	7	7	20	4	40	20	80
James A Hawkins	300	400	3,100	245	2	5	7	4	19		75
Abner Killough	275	591	8,000	315	5	2	8	2	25		40
Elijah Brown	250	30	3,000	150	4		6		10	3	50
Thompson Camp	250	190	3,000	275	4	3	10	12	20		75
Sam S Earle	250	300	5,000	300	5	4	7	2	16		50
Alfred H Roebuck	250	750	7,000	165	3	2	11		14		125
W C Burford	200	323	2,000	120	6	1	10		10	20	50
Richard Hudson	200	150	2,000	275	3	6	6	2	14		50
William S Mudd	200	75	1,500	80	2	2	1		4		15
Richard Tankersley	200	135	3,100	335	2	5	3	2	15	1	65
William A Walker	175	205	1,200	150	4	2	4	2	10		90
Joshua Lacy	150	90	1,300	100	4	2	8		14		40
Baylis E Grace	145	575	2,500	100	2	4	12	2	30		35
Nathaniel Hawkins	140	225	3,200	380	4	1	2		9		56
Thomas W Rockett	140	130	1,500	75	3	3	6		10		40
Edward Davis	125	190	1,500	100	1	5	8		12	1	40
Hugh Morrow	125	350	3,650	175	3	4	5		10		40
Richard S Allen	120	160	2,000	290	2	6	6		9		40
Samuel Turner Sr	115	205	2,000	70	2		2		2		40
Peter Anderson	100	140	2,300	200	1	2	6	2	9		80
Moses Kelly	100	105	1,200	150	3	3	4	2	100		100
Pashal Shackelford	100	40	250	100	3	1	5	2	12		60
Henry Furman	90	10	1,000	110	3	1	5		4	6	63
L G McMillion	80	13	2,000	90	2	2	4	2	3		
John Simmons	80	8	1,000	100	5		5		7		28
Nathan Byers	70	135	600	80	2		4	2	6		50
James Massey	70	130	1,200	80	3		4	2	9		20
William S Duprey	65	55	750	70	3	1	2	2	10		30
Andrew L Hawkins	60		600	20	2	1	4		3		50
Joseph R Smith	45	115	1,200	150	4		7		6		15
John Camp	40		600	8	1		2		1		10
Permelia Jones	40	280	1,000	65	2		3		10		15
Samuel Turner	40			10	2		1		1		35
Sarah Kelly	35	115	300	105	2		3	2	3		12
Melinda Rutherford	35	45	300	5	3		4	4		5	15
Johnny Shackelford	35	5	200	15	2		4	2	4		50
Elias Glenn	30		500	10	1	1	10		12		40
Philip T Griffin	30	90	150	5	1		ill.	2	2		2
Daniel Watkins	30	90	300	85	3	1	5		7		40
Thomas M Adkins	20		1,000	90	3	2	3	2	8		40
Samuel Byers	20	60	150	10	2		1		4		20
Samuel Turner Jr	18			5	1		2		1		15
Joseph Byers	12	148	100	90	2		5		7		30
Philemon Parton	12	80	200	55	2		1	2			11
Franklin Wideman	10	30	50	10	1		4	2	3	6	50
Joseph Igo	7	33	150	6	1		2	2	3		30
Elias M Dejarnette				10	1	1	1		2		12
Garland Jones				10	1		3		4		25
John T Massey		80	65		2		2				7
Caroline Worthington				60	3		2	2	6		30
Total of Both Pages	6,104	7,481	94,715	6,824	145	103	280	78	630	110	2,381

Editor's Note: No rye, rice, tobacco, barley, buckwheat, orchard products, wine, cheese, hay, clover seed, grass seed, hops, hemp, flax, flax seed, silk cocoons, maple sugar, cane sugar, or molasses production is recorded by the census taker M. S. McMillion.

* Census Data Sorted From Largest to Smallest Improved Acreage.

enumerated by me, December 1850. M. S. McMillion, Asst. Marshall.

Value of Live Stock	Wheat Bushels of	Indian Corn Bushels of	Oats Bushels of	Ginned Cotton Bales 400 lbs. ea.	Wool lbs. of	Peas & Beans Bushels of	Irish Potatoes Bushels of	Sweet Potatoes Bushels of	Butter lbs. of	Beeswax & Honey lbs. of	Value of Home-made Manufactures	Value of Animals Slaughtered
13	14	16	17	20	21	22	23	24	30	44	45	46
4,502	6	5,500	320	133	96	60		100	1,095	350	300	ill.
2,010		2,000	400	50	40	15	100	400	700		300	ill.
850		1,000	200	24		5			200	60	75	ill.
760	40	1,200	300	32		1		100	100		10	105
514	28	1,300	200	2	6			100	150		200	117
975		1,000	100				25	100	200		50	145
700		1,500	80					50	100			150
740	17	1,250	300			15		100	365	50	20	ill.
760		1,000	200	15	40	4			365		100	180
870	18	700	100			6		96	100		75	ill.
370		200						25	25			70
846		1,200	300	16	2	15	30	150	300	70	100	200
820		1,200						100	100			235
560		1,000	100	7				52	250		75	ill.
760	15	1,400	150			4		30	180	110		145
521	30	800	200					40	30			87
430		800	30	11				100	100	40		ill.
641		600	40	10				50	100		30	90
805		700	90	1				75	100			185
915	30	500	20	5		5		300	100		ill.	139?
248		300	50				2	30	50		20	63
450		1,000	100					20	200		50	ill.
1,240	20	1,000	75			10	5	80	100		10	305
460		300	200	2				200	300	10	150	167
349		850	40		12		1	30	200	100	100	64
190		700	ill.	2				15	100		40	87
463		900	60					40	30		70	78
220	33	300	100			2		80	200	40	20	80
455		550	200	4			1	50	60	84	50	90
340		500	20	7		4			150		35	90
425		400	50	4					100		30	31
350		200							20			35
140		250										112
200		300	40					50	100		40	84
123		615	30	2				75			30	ill.
196		500	30	6					100		10	45
302		200	200	1				30	100		40	55
300		350	60	12				50	100	60	50	ill.
340	10	450	50					25	100	105	50	82
152		350	30				20	60			35	112
370	5	300	50			2		150	300		150	49
570		800	30	7				100	100			ill.
160	22	300	10					30	40	60	25	ill.
127		300	10	1				15	50		15	35
281		90	10					15	100	60	10	ill.
145	6	315	25	1				20		80	75	32
190		100		1				50	100	120	70	ill.
156		125						50	150	3	30	20
175		150							20		40	35
150		100						75	50		75	ill.
90		100	20					15	20		50	ill.
300	7	425		1		35		60	200		40	ill.
29,006	287	37,970	4,620	357	196	183	184	3,403	7,800	1,402	2,745	3,460

Transcription by Gerry Waters, assisted by Salena Lee, for Birmingham Historical Society, 2021.

Schedule 4. Productions of Agriculture in Elyton Precinct in the County of Jefferson in the Post Office: Elyton, State of Ala, enumerated by me,

Name of Owner, Agent or Manager of Farm	Acres of Land Improved	Unimproved	Cash Value of Farm	Value of Farming Implements & Machinery	Live Stock							Value of Live Stock
					Horses	Asses & Mules	Milk Cows	Working Oxen	Other Cattle	Sheep	Swine	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Williamson Hawkins	1,000	2,000	30,000	1,000	13	30	18	6	100	50	300	7,845
J A Mudd	1,000	5,000	18,000	1,000	3	7	6	12	40		100	1,500
B P Worthington	600	1,400	16,000	400	11		7	4	10	10	35	1,700
J A Hawkins	500	1,500	11,000	760	6	6	21	8	22	28	98	3,370
A H Roebuck	500	300	8,000	150	1	2	3		5		30	495
A Killough	400	1,600	10,000	430	11	3	10		20	37	80	2,144
W J Mims	400	400	5,000	175		2	2					430
A H Roebuck	400	1,000	8,000	525	4	9	15		25		50	2,275
N Hawkins	350	1,750	10,000	500	5	7	7	4	20	35	125	2,625
Washington Burford	300	300	3,000	450	12	1	12	6	15	30	125	2,840
James Brown	240	700	5,000	300	5	4	10		10		60	1,780
Nancy Brown	200	200	4,000	100	6		5	2	20	15	30	1,000
Richard Hudson	200	150	3,000	275	5	6	9	6	7		75	1,530
T W Rockett	200	300	4,500	225	3	5	5	2	12		50	1,150
David Pearson	150	682	4,500	100	5		3		9	21	50	850
Dilly Sandefur	150	150	2,000	125	4	2	8	4	15		25	1,145
Joab Bayley	110	850	7,000	125	2	1	2	2	3	50	20	520
L G Mc Million	110	80	3,000	118	2	2	2	4				660
W R Lewis	100	320	5,000	125		4	2	6	6		75	775
Wm Lucy	100	50	1,500	25	6		6		12		20	850
A J Waldrop	100	325	2,500	200	5	4	3	2	15	15	28	1,075
W S Mudd	95	180	5,000	100	1	2	4		5		15	600
John Camp	90	190	4,000	100	2	2	2	5	4		10	500
W D Satterwhite	85	255	1,500	100		3	7	4	6		65	1,110
Joshua Lucy	80			125	2	3	10		10		30	700
W G Rockette	76			25	2	3	3	1			4	550
Sarah Simmons	70	130	3,000	100	4		2	2	9	5	15	1,110
S S Duphrey	60	90	1,200	125		2	3	2			20	345
P H Jones	60	100	1,000	50	3		5	2	8		16	530
T J Scott	60	140	1,000	100		2	5	2	15		15	465
Daniel Watkins	60	140	1,200	80	4		5		5		30	710
Joshua Massey	50	100	500	75	6		2	4	8		20	500
Francis Wideman	50	70	400	100	1		3	4	10	25	20	435
Joseph Byers	42	358	700	50	2		6		3		22	287
P T Griffin	30	150	400	10	1		3	2			30	380
J L Thurston	30	50	250	10	1		2		3		12	235
Garland Jones	27	133	600	10	1		3		4		15	200
John T Massey	25	95	150	10		1	3		2		15	185
T J Davidson	6		2,000	10	2		2		1		3	400
Sarah Martin				250	3	5	8	2	10	30	44	1,010
N D Tully				200	2		1	2				350
Total	8,106	21,238	183,900	8,738	146	118	235	100	469	351	1,777	47,161

July 1860. M. S. McMillion, Asst. Marshall.

Wheat Bushels of	Rye Bushels of	Indian Corn Bushels of	Oats Bushels of	Ginned Cotton Bales 400 lbs. ea.	Wool lbs. of	Peas & Beans Bushels of	Irish Potatoes Bushels of	Sweet Potatoes Bushels of	Butter lbs. of	Beeswax lbs. of	Honey lbs. of	Value of Home-made Manufactures	Value of Animals Slaughtered
14	15	16	17	20	21	22	23	24	30	45	46	47	48
1,000	30	7,500	70	129	102	400	50	100	1,000	20	160	500	2,668
1,000		1,500	300	28		200	30	30	300				600
300		1,500		32	26	200	25	20	300	30	240	100	450
275		2,250		18	36	200	30	15	1,000	10	180	200	700
25		800	50	11		50	10	20	90			50	155
125		2,000		20	74		50	20	400	10	100	100	450
12							10	350					
150	30	2,000	200	39		100	25	25	500			200	620
150		1,500	60	20	70	200	30	40	500			150	600
50		1,500	100	26	60		100	100	600			200	600
150		1,000		23		100	20		400			150	300
90		1,000		22	36		15	30	400			150	250
90	25	1,500	23			100	20	20	300			200	375
40		1,200	41			50	30	50	200			50	150
50		1,200			42		6	30	100	7	84	100	200
70		1,200		10	102	60	10		200			200	250
50		350	60			25	10	60	100			100	140
11		400		7		30	10	20	100			50	220
		50				200	20	150	50			50	450
33		600				50			300			200	250
40	5	400			30	100	20	300	200			100	275
		400					25	20	100				210
10		400	25	4		20	20		150			100	150
		600		15		150	15	75	250	10	144	50	210
50		1,000		13		20	20	200	100			200	250
		400	25	12		50	20	100	100			50	225
50		200		1	9				200				85
100		500		2		50	20	20	150			50	175
27		600		2			12		150			50	130
		500							250			100	115
		600		3		15	20	200	200			50	100
50		300		3			10		100			50	100
		300		3		30		60	200	12	60	100	60
		200					10	25	250			50	50
84		300					10		100			50	280
		125		2					50			50	55
		100		1		10	10	20	100	5	150	50	50
20		100		2			10		100			50	50
		300					30	200	50			25	50
100		1,000		29	60	100	30	60	300	10	120	200	400
200		600		10		25		150	150			25	210
4,402	90	37,975	890	551	647	2,535	783	2,510	10,090	114	1,238	4,150	12,658

Editor's Note: No rice, tobacco, barley, buckwheat, orchard products, wine, cheese, hay, clover seed, grass seed, hops, hemp, flax, flax seed, silk cocoons, maple sugar, cane sugar, or molasses production is recorded by the census taker M. S. McMillion.

Transcription by Gerry Waters for Birmingham Historical Society, 2021.

* Census Data Sorted From Largest to Smallest Improved Acreage.

1860

By 1860, Elyton's population had grown 32% during the previous decade to 1,322 persons: 613 free (including 10 free persons of color) and 709 slave inhabitants. The 54/46 percentage of blacks to whites remained higher in Elyton than the 23/77 percentage for Jefferson County as a whole.

The census for free inhabitants reported occupations for 149 free persons who resided in 104 households. Of the heads of household reporting in the free census, 39% stated their occupations as farming. The number of farms decreased from 52 to 41 and cultivated acreage continued to vary widely from 6 to 1,000 acres. In 1860, 21 farms (51%) now cultivated 100 or more acres; 14 (34%) cultivated 200 or more acres, and of 18 farmers cultivating less than 100 acres 14 did so without slave labor.

During the previous decade the total improved acreage had increased to 8,106 acres. The slave inhabitants census reported that 26 (63%) of Elyton farmers owned from 1 to 107 enslaved persons who lived in 104 slave houses on their premises.

Staple crops grown remained Indian corn and potatoes, with milk cows and swine raised on nearly every farm. The cultivation of wheat, Irish potatoes, peas and beans, and cotton increased. Cotton was grown by 76% of Elyton farms (68% of these with slave labor). In 1860, cotton sold for \$.70 to \$.80 per pound, making Elyton's 400-pound bales worth \$154,280 each. These 551 bales comprised 11% of Jefferson County cotton production, which remained less than 1% of Alabama's production of 989,955 bales.

Owning 20 or more enslaved persons, the "plantations" of Andrew Hawkins, Nathaniel Hawkins, Williamson Hawkins, Richard Hudson, Alfred Roebuck, Joseph Riley Smith, and Benjamin Worthington cultivated more than 200 acres and produced 44% of the precinct's total cotton production. These farms represented 19% of the farms in "Old Elyton". Each had increased improved acreage and crops as well as the numbers of enslaved persons during the previous decade.

Elyton Precinct in 1860

No. of Houses	104
No. of Heads of Household	104
No. of Occupations Reported	149
No. of Free Inhabitants	613
No. of Slave Inhabitants	709
No. of Slave Houses	104
Total Population	1,322*

Jefferson County

No. of Free Inhabitants	9,097
No. of Slave Inhabitants	2,649
Total Population	11,746

* The Elyton precinct included 12% of Jefferson County's total population, including 31% of its enslaved population.

Sources: Schedules 1 and 2. Free Inhabitants Censuses, Elyton Precinct; Table II Population of Each State and Territory (By Counties), 1790-1870.

Occupations of Free Inhabitants, 1860

Including data for 149 persons listed in 104 households

Occupation	No.	Percent
Agriculture		
Farmer	61	
Farm Laborer	11	
Subtotal	72	48%
Commerce		
Merchant	11	
Clerk	3	
Subtotal	14	9%
Trades		
Mechanic	11	
Blacksmith	2	
Tailor	1	
Shoemaker	1	
Sadler	1	
Printer	1	
Painter	1	
Subtotal	18	12%
Professional		
Physician	6	
Lawyer	7	
Teacher	1	
Judge	1	
Probate Judge	1	
Subtotal	16	11%
Other		
Domestic	10	
Laborer	7	
Student	11	
Illegible	1	
Subtotal	29	20%
TOTAL	149	

Source: Free Inhabitants Census in the Elyton Precinct, 1860.

Crops Grown on 41 Farms in Elyton Precinct, 1860

Crops	# Farms Growing	Percent
Indian Corn	40	98%
Sweet Potatoes	30	73%
Oats	9	22%
Wheat	30	73%
Peas & Beans	26	63%
Irish Potatoes	35	85%
Cotton	30	73%
Farm Animals		
Horses	35	85%
Milk Cows	41	100%
Swine	38	93%
Sheep	13	32%
Other Cattle	35	85%
Asses and Mules	26	63%
Working Oxen	26	63%
TOTAL # Farms	41	

Source: Agricultural Census for the Elyton Precinct, 1860. This census reports for the farm owners' place of business. Farm production must be of a certain size to be included.

Slave Owners in the Elyton Precinct, 1860

# of slaves	# of owners	Percent
1-2	7	
3-5	13	
6-9	9	
Subtotal	29	51%
10-11	5	
12-19	15	
Subtotal	20	35%
20-30	6	
31-40	1	
80-110	1	
Subtotal	8	14%
TOTAL # owners	57	
TOTAL # slaves	709	

Source: Slave Inhabitants Censuses in the Elyton Precinct, 1860.

1870

In 1870, the tracks of the Alabama & Chattanooga Railroad were being laid through Elyton. Judge William S. Mudd and others sold land to the railroad. Thomas Peters, agent for railroads and industrial firms, is the largest farmer. Williamson Hawkins had sold his farm to the Thomas family of Pennsylvania. The Hawkins farm along Village Creek later became the property of Republic Iron & Steel Co. and is today the site of Wade Sand & Gravel Co.'s quarry and the neighborhood of Thomas. The Walkers and Greens bought up farm lands that they later sold as residential real estate. Other Elyton residents continued to farm. Jefferson County's farmed acreage still represented 1% of agricultural lands in the state. In 1870, the census reports the Elyton area population for Township 18 Range 3 West (640 acres) as 1,055 persons: 661 white, 394 black, with 46 farms reporting agricultural production. Farms are greatly reduced in size and there are many new farmers.

1880

By 1880, the population of the Elyton area, reported once again as Township 18 Range 3 West, is 700 persons. The number of farms detailed in the agricultural census is 30, with 4 farms worked by blacks and 13 worked by sharecroppers. In 1873 Jefferson County's courthouse moved to Birmingham as did many Elyton residents. Birmingham was founded in 1871 by the Elyton Land Company at the crossing of two railroads, not at but east of Elyton. Beginning in the late 1880s as Birmingham grew to become the South's largest industrial center, Elyton's farms were subdivided as residential real estate. In 1910, Elyton was incorporated into Birmingham and remains today a residential neighborhood of the city.

Profile of Farms in Elyton	1850	1860	1870	1880
No. of Growers, Agents, Managers of Farms, Owners	52	41	46	17
No. of Renters (monthly rent or for share of production)				13
Range of Acres Cultivated	7-770	6-1,000	2-750	5-200
No. of Farms with 100 or More Improved Acres	24	21	12	2
No. of Farms with 200 or More Improved Acres	12	14	5	1
Total Improved Acres	6,104	8,106	3,718	767
Unimproved Acres/Woodland	7,484	21,238	11,739	3,180

Source: Schedule 4. Agricultural Censuses of 1850, 1860, 1870 and 1880 for Elyton.

Farms Worked With/Without Slaves in the Elyton Precinct

	1850	1860
Farms worked without slaves	8	15
Farms worked with slaves	44	26
Farmed worked with 1-5 slaves	21	3
Farms worked with 10 or more slaves	16	10
Farms worked with circa 20 or more slaves	3	7
# Farms	52	41
# Slaves	433	709

Source: Free Inhabitants, Slave Inhabitants, and Agricultural Censuses, 1850 and 1860 for Elyton.

Crops Grown	# Farms, Crops and Livestock				# Bushes/Bales				
	1850	1860	1870	1880	1850	1860	1870	1880	
Indian Corn	52	40	45	30	37,970	37,975	12,700	6,630	
Sweet Potatoes	45	30	13	8	3,403	2,510	1,005	540	
Oats	43	9	13	8	4,620	890	380	1,190	
Wheat	15	30	20	9	287	4,402	1,420	709	
Peas & Beans	15	26	8		183	2,535	125		
Irish Potatoes	8	35	2	7	184	783	20	420	
Cotton	26	30	11	8	357	551	48	32	
Tobacco	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	50	
Farm Animals									
Horses	52	35	33	22					
Milk Cows	52	41	38	26					
Swine	51	38	31	7					
Asses and Mules	30	26	13	10					
Sheep	9	13	7	1					
Other Cattle	49	35	29	4					
Working Oxen	26	26	20	0					
TOTAL # Farms	52	41	46	30					

Source: Agricultural Censuses for Elyton, 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880.

Schedule 3. Production of Agriculture in Township 18 3 West in the County of Jefferson in the Post Office: Elyton, State of Alabama, enumerated

Name	Acres of Land		Present Cash Value		Total Amount of wages paid during the year inc. Board Dollars	Horses No.	Asses & Mules No.	Milk Cows No.	Live Stock			Value of Live Stock Dollars	Wheat Spring Bush	
	Improved No.	Unimproved Wood-land No.	of Farm Dollars	Implement & Machinery Dollars					Working Oxen No.	Other Cattle No.	Sheep No.			Swine No.
1	2	3	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Peters Thomas Agent	750	2,250	10,000											
Walker C A	300	500	8,000	100	400	2		2				5	365	75
Green R N	280	840	5,000	75	180	1		2		10		10	490	
Mims W J	200	600	6,000	250		1		3	4			5	335	
Porter M T	200	400	8,000	125	275	3	2	6		4		10	950	200
Ware M E	175	475	1,800	60	100	2	2	5	2	4	16	12	760	6
Walker WA	150	2,100	15,000	200	100	7	4	6	2	20	7	20	1,559	425
Lacy H A	140	20	800	350	100	8	4	8		10		25	1,600	
Ernest W S	130	210	1,200	30	150	1		6	4	4		10	445	20
Cliff G W	100	100	2,000	200	200	1			4	2		5	250	56
Martin A	100	80	6,000	200	300		2	2				2	616	
Mudd W S	100	220	6,000	100	300	1	1	3		4			520	
Hawkins R N	90	10	1,000	5		3		2					610	
Nabors W M	90	370	1,500	30	700			2					50	118
Bagley Joab	80	348	3,600	200	200	2		2	2	1		1	343	50
Ayers T B	60	70	1,500	50		2		2		4	6	14	380	60
Draper G H	60	200	1,000	75	100	4	1	2	1	5		9	715	18
Millner E A	60	215	2,500	125		2		3		4			400	54
Wideman F	55	125	800	60		1		5	4	10	10	30	418	
Mapey Mary	50	130	600	5		1		3		4		13	288	
Russell Hiram	50	230	300	100		3		3	2	4	12	15	515	
Watkins E	50	30	800	10		1		4		9		6	330	
Downey S W	40	300	800	100	100	2	1	4	2	1		6	478	20
Griffin P T	40	360	500	100		4		2	2	1		7	510	75
Henley Amelia	40	20	1,000		150			3					90	35
Anderson James	30	42	550	15	100	3	1	2	1	3		10	537	52
Watkins D	30	160	400	20		2		3		4		5	380	
Cornelius B	25		2,500		300	1	1	2		1			360	
Downey S	25	125	500	50		3		4	2	4	15	8	410	16
Hale George	25	575	800	150	500	2	2	7	4	10		4	775	
Watkins P H	25	35	200	75	253	3		3	2	3		3	515	20
Watkins S H	25	140	600	50		1		5	2	9		15	300	50
Bearden A	20	20	300	40		1		3	4			15	250	
Brown Rufus	20	60	225	5			1	1					15	30
Land L J	20	80	500	40		1	1	2	1	3	12	4	300	40
Hodges J B	17	23	150	8		1		2				8	210	
Byers H R	15	95	500	70	75	1		3	4	1		9	340	
Walker W A Jr.	15		1,500											
Irion A	12	40	100											
Vann J B	6	60	2,000			1		1				1	235	
Whorton R H L	5		350											
Wilson W L	4		1,900											
Tegner W F	3		500											
Nabers T M	2		1,000											
Perry G W	2	78	500					2		5		15	150	
Wildsmith Thos	2	3	250		200			1	2	1			100	
TOTAL	3,718	11,739	101,025	3,073	4,783	72	23	121	51	145	78	302	17,894	1,420

Editor's Note: No rye, rice, tobacco, barley, winter wheat, buckwheat, cheese, milk, hay, clover seed, grass seed, hops, hemp, flax, flax seed, silk cocoons, maple sugar or cane sugar are recorded by the census taker, M. W. Whorter.
 * Census Data Sorted From Largest to Smallest Improved Acreage.

by me, July 1870, M.W. Whorter, Ass't Marshall.

Indian Corn Bushels	Oats Bushels	Cotton Bales (450 lbs.)	Wool Lbs.	Peas & Beans Bushels	Irish Potatoes Bushels	Sweet Potatoes Bushels	Orchard Products Dollars	Wine Gallons	Produce of Market Gardens Lbs.	Dairy Products Butter Lbs.	Molasses Gallons	Bees		Value of Home-made Manufactures Dollars	Value of Animals Slaughtered Dollars	Total Value Estimated Value of All Farm Production including betterments & additions to stocks
												Wax Lbs.	Honey Lbs.			
19	20	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	46	47	48	50	51	52
1,000																1,500
450	20			12		125									200	600
1,000	20	16		10		10									200	3,700
700		3		30		150		10							200	1,200
350															100	640
50	25															
1,000		2												25	500	5,000
200					10	250	20	14		30		30	200		200	500
200			20												120	470
60	50					75									70	350
150									10						100	500
300	25															
400	50															600
150																
200					10									25	100	440
200	10	1												50	180	600
800	50															
250	20	15		8		100									75	490
50		1				40									40	100
200	25		20	20										25	75	300
500		3		20		60									130	600
250	25	2									25			50	175	480
400														60	130	430
200	20			15		100									70	400
100														30	30	260
150																
200							35									50
200		1					12							50	100	400
200		2	20			25									200	720
75	40					20									30	375
200																
400															100	500
75						10									100	215
300														20	80	466
150																
200		2	20			40									40	300
600																
100																150
200																500
30															130	700
25																500
30																500
25																500
100																
280																
12,700	380	48	80	125	20	1,005	20	24	10	30	72	30	200	335	3,475	25,036

Transcription by Gerry Waters for Birmingham Historical Society, 2021.

Schedule 2. Productions of Agriculture in Elyton & Birmingham in the County of Jefferson, State of Alabama, June, 1880, Sam Thompson,

Person who conducts farm	Tenure			Acres of Land				Farm Values				Labor			Est. Value	Grass Lands		Horses
	Owner	Rents Money Rental	Rents for share of production	Improved tilled No.	Improved meadows No.	Unimproved woodland & forests No.	Unimproved No.	Land fences & buildings Dollars	Farming implements machinery Dollars	Livestock Dollars	Cost of fertilizers Dollars	Paid wages for farm labor Dollars	Weeks Hired farm (and dairy)			Production sold, consumed on hand Dollars	mowed & not mowed	
Name												White No.	Black No.					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	13	14	15	16	17	18	20	23
Walker W A	1			200		1,800		10,000	25	700		120	52		1,200			3
Smith, J R	1			100	40	1,000		10,000	75	400	50	500	52	52	800	46	10	5
Green, Robert N	1			65		200	50	4,000	20	150		20		8	450	33	15	8
Alley James T			1	50				1,000	15	200	30	30		12	400			2
Earle Alexander			1	40				500	5	200					500			
Sterret R H	1			35				3,000	3	100		50	20	300			1	
Mudd W S	1			30		20	40	5,000	5	200		100	52	300			4	
Smith John F	1			30			70	1,000	5	300				500			1	
Smith W N			1	30				2,000	5	200				300			2	
Sadler Merit			1	25				500	5	75				200			1	
Wildsmith Thomas	1			20				1,200	5		30		12	200				
Williamson John H			1	18				500	2	150				200			2	
Montgomery R S			1	15				1,000	5	200				300				
Montgomery W C	1			15				15	5	100				300			1	
Lynn R E			1	8				700	3	200				150			2	
Hawkins Harkless			1	7				2,000	2	50				100			1	
Steele Sylvester	1			7				1,000	3	100	50		20	100				
Bradford Daniel	1			6				500	1	100				100			1	
Williams Dan		1		6				1,500	2		25		12	100				
Edwards James L	1			5				500	5	100				100			1	
Morefield T W		1		5				500	2	100				200			1	
Smith W D	1			5				500	2	50				100			1	
Terrell R A	1			5				500	2	100				200				
Eubank Alfred	1							1,000	2	100	20	8		100			1	
Freeman		1						500	2		10	4		100				
Hahn Charles		1						500	2		10	4		100				
McMillian C L	1							1,000	15	500	400	100		700			5	
Plaxico M A		1						500	2	75				100			1	
Smith T S	1							600	2	100	25	8		100			1	
Tegner W F	1							500	2	75				100			1	
Total	17	5	8	727	40	3,020	160	43,015	229	4,625	80	1,390	128	288	8,400	79	25	46

Editor's Note: Farmers listed in bold face are black; all others are white.
 The following categories listed by the census taker have been removed as no production was listed: barley, buck wheat, cane, molasses, cow peas, hemp, clover, & grass seed.
 No farms recorded the presence of working oxen or the commercial production of butter, cheese, poultry or lamb. Production of orchards, nurseries and vineyards was not listed.
 Rye and flax were grown at three farms. Sylvester Steele grew 50 lbs. of tobacco. Robert N. Green produced 130 gallons of Molasses and Joseph Riley Smith spent \$400 repairing fences.

Enumerator.

Farm Animals							Crops										Forest Products					
Mules	Milk	Other	Calves	Butter	Swine	Poultry	Indian Corn		Oats		Wheat		Cotton		Potatoes				Bees	Wood cut	Value forest	
asses on hand No.	cows No.	cattle No.	No.	Lbs.	No.	No.	Area Acres	Crop Bush.	Area Acres	Crop Bush.	Area Acres	Crop Bush.	Acres	Bales	Irish Acres	Crop Bush.	Sweet Acres	Crop Bush.	Honey Lbs.	Wood cut Cords	Value forest products Dollars	
24	26	27	28	34	46	48	56	57	58	59	62	63	64	65	82	83	84	85	101	103	104	
4	2		2	100			100	1,200	30	300	20	200	50	12							500	500
6	7	9	7	1,100	12		50	600	12	75	30	150	8	4							500	500
	6	10	6	300	11	125	37	400	13	230	8	15	5	3					100	100	100	
	1		1	50			20	300	10	100	10	75	10	1								
2	2		2	100	2	40	25	250	5	35	6	9	4	3								
	1		1	50			20	300	5	50	10	50										
	4		4	200			30	300													20	20
1	1		1	50	14	25	10	100	12	300			8	5								
	7	1	7	400			20	250			10	100										
1	2		2	100			20	300					5	2								
2				75			10	100			10	50										
							18	200														
2	1		1	50			15	300														
	1		1	75			13	300														
							7	70								1/2	20	1/2	40			
	2		2	100	11	20	5	150					2	2								
2	1		1	50			6	100									1/2	50				
	1		1	50	4		5	50							1/2	50	1/2	50				
				50			4	90														
	4		4	150			3	40			1	50	1	100							20	20
	4		4	200			3	40			1	100	1	100								
	1		1	50			5	100														
1	3	1	3	150	6	100	5	100														
	2		2	100			4	50			1/2	50	1/2	50								
	1		1	50			5	50														
	3		3	150			3	50			1	100	1	100								
2	3		3	150			30	600	15	100	12	60										
	1		1	50			6	100														
	4		4	200			6	100														
	2		2	100			3	40			1	50	1	50								
23	67	21	67	4,250	60	310	488	6,630	102	1,190	116	709	92	32	4	420	4	540	100	1,140	1,140	

A Few Farms and Farmers in “Old Elyton,” 1850-1880

The agricultural and free and slave inhabitants censuses showcase a range of farming practice. All heads of household reporting their occupations as farming are married with large and often extended families and boarders living in their households. From 1850 to 1860, most acquire and

farm additional acreage: some without enslaved labor, others with increased enslaved labor. By age 17 or 18, all teenage boys are in the work force. Several farms are still operating in 1870 and 1880. Comments of the author are italicized in the summaries that follow.

Elijah and Nancy Brown

In 1850, Elijah Brown is 53 years old, his wife Nancy is 46 years old. Born in South Carolina, the couple have 6 children: daughters Caroline, Margaret, Florence, Marinda, and Susan, ages 18, 15, 12, 8, and 5 and son William, age 2. **In 1860**, following Elijah Brown’s death in this year, his wife heads the household. Three children—Marinda, age 22; Susan, age 15; and William, age 12—reside at home.

In 1860, the Brown’s plantation has increased in value. While they have purchased additional land, they farm 200 acres, less acreage than in 1850. With additional slave and possibly family labor, they produce more wheat and cotton and raise sheep and card wool.

Acres, Value, Product, Slaves	1850	1860
Improved acres	250	200
Unimproved acres	30	200
Cash value of farm	\$3,000	\$4,000
Value of real estate	\$4,000	
Value of personal estate		\$2,875
Value of farming machinery	\$150	\$100
Value of livestock	\$514	\$1,000
Value of slaughtered animals	\$117	\$250
Value of homemade manufactures	\$200	\$150
Bushels of Indian corn	1,300	1,000
Bushels of Irish potatoes	0	15
Bushels of oats	200	
Bushels of sweet potatoes	100	30
Bushels of wheat	28	90
Ginned cotton bales of 400 lbs.	2	22
Horses	4	6
Milk cows	6	5
Lbs. of butter	150	400
Sheep	3	15
Lbs. of wool	6	36
Working oxen		2
Swine	50	30
Other cattle	10	20
Slaves, age 8 and older	10	12
Slaves, age 7 and under	6	7
Slave houses		4

Joseph Byers

In 1850, Joseph Byers is a 70-year-old, South Carolina-born Baptist clergyman who farms 12 acres. His household includes his wife, the 45-year-old South Carolinian Clarissa, and their Alabama-born children, 5-year-old Marshmon and 3-year-old Mary. Mary Pullin, age 80, who was born in Virginia, also lives in the Byers household. A Samuel Byers, age 46, lives next door with his wife and farms 60 acres; he does not own slaves. A James Byers, age 37, who boards with Washington Ware, lists his occupation as “grocer.” **In 1860**, Joseph Byers, his wife, and two children remain in their household. Byers reports his occupation as “farmer” at this time.

From 1850 to 1860, working his land either by himself or with his sons and possibly contracting for labor, Byers triples the size of his farm to 42 acres. The farm’s size, value, crops, and productivity likewise increase. He owns neither slave nor mules, asses, or oxen and does not grow cotton.

Acres, Value, Product, Slaves	1850	1860
Improved acres	12	42
Unimproved acres	148	358
Cash value of farm	\$100	\$700
Value of real estate	\$633	\$700
Value of personal estate		\$1,090
Value of farming machinery	\$90	\$50
Value of livestock	\$281	\$287
Value of homemade manufacturers	\$10	\$50
Bushels of Indian corn	90	200
Bushels of Irish potatoes	10	10
Bushels of sweet potatoes	15	25
Bushels of oats	10	
Lbs. of beeswax and honey	60	
Horses	2	2
Milk cows	5	6
Lbs. of butter	100	250
Swine	30	22
Other cattle	7	3

John Camp

In 1850, John Camp is a 49-year-old farmer born in Georgia. His South Carolina-born wife Eliza is 46 years old. The couple have 5 children all born in Alabama: William, 17, who works as a clerk; Ann Eliza, 15; Joseph, 12; Mary, 6; and Hosea, 4. Also residing at the Camp residence are John W. Montgomery, age 10; Robert Hall, a 15-year-old student; Samuel Hall, a 19-year-old clerk; and Jane Deberney. **In 1860**, Camp, his wife, and daughter Mary remain at the Camp residence.

From 1850 to 1860, Camp purchased additional acreage and doubled his improved acreage to 90 acres that he works with several slaves. His personal estate, farm, and livestock greatly increased in value as did his range of produce. Boarders no longer live at the Camp residence.

Acres, Value, Product, Slaves	1850	1860
Improved acres	40	90
Unimproved acres	0	190
Cash value of farm	\$600	\$4,000
Value of real estate	\$600	\$6,500
Value of personal estate		\$8,215
Value of farming machinery	\$8	\$100
Value of livestock	\$140	\$500
Value of slaughtered animals	\$112	\$150
Value of homemade manufactures	\$0	\$100
Bushels of Indian corn	250	400
Bushels of Irish potatoes		20
Bushels of oats	0	25
Bushes of peas and beans	0	20
Bushels of sweet potatoes	20	
Bushels of wheat		10
Ginned cotton bales of 400 lbs.		4
Horses	1	2
Milk cows	2	2
Lbs. of butter	100	150
Mules and asses		2
Working oxen		5
Swine	10	10
Other cattle	1	4
Slaves, age 8 and older	2	3
Slaves, age 7 and under	0	1
Slave houses		1

Samuel S. Earle

In 1850, Samuel Earle is a 57-year-old physician born in South Carolina, as was his wife Harriett, age 49. Their Alabama-born children John, Sarah, Thomas, Joseph, Harriet, James, Paul, and Robert, ages 24, 20, 18, 16, 14, 13, 11, and 9 live in the household. John is a farmer, Thomas a student, and Joseph a clerk. The 40-year-old merchant Thomas Wright lives with the family.

In 1860, the Earles and their sons John B., a 24-year-old farmer, and Thomas, an 18-year-old student, remain in the household. Thomas Wright, a 52-year-old merchant, remains with the family.

From 1850 to 1860, Earle acquires additional land and slaves and increases the value of his farm, livestock, and real estate but not his agricultural production other than cotton. An early land holder in Elyton, the physician and his descendants subdivided their farm-lands, but remained in their Greek Revival style plantation home on 40 acres until 1939, when the property was redeveloped as the Elyton Village public housing.

Acres, Value, Product, Slaves	1850	1860*	1870*
Improved acres	250	270	120
Unimproved acres	300	1,000	380
Cash value of farm	\$5,000	\$8,000	\$6,500
Value of real estate	\$6,200	\$8,000	
Value of personal estate		\$25,000	
Value of farming machinery	\$300	\$200	\$20
Value of livestock	\$700	\$1,600	\$864
Value of slaughtered animals	\$150	\$375	\$100
Value of homemade manufactures	\$0		\$15
Bushels of Indian corn	1,500	1,500	300
Bushels of sweet potatoes	50	100	60
Bushels of Irish potatoes	20	25	
Bushels of oats	80		20
Bushels of peas and beans	20	20	
Bushels of wheat		70	40
Ginned cotton bales of 400 lbs.		43	1
Lbs. of beeswax and honey			55
Horses	5	4	1
Milk cows	7	5	3
Lbs. of butter	100	600	100
Swine	50	30	7
Mules and asses	4	8	4
Working oxen	2	4	4
Other cattle	16	18	4
Slaves, age 8 and up	13	21	
Slaves, age 7 and under	4	5	
Slave houses		n.l.	

*Listed in the agricultural census for the Carrollsville precinct, 1860 and 1870.

Philip T. Griffin

In 1850, Phillip T. Griffin is a 31-year-old South Carolina-born farmer. His 22-year-old wife Mary Ann was born in Alabama. In 1860, the couple have three children: Sarah, age 9; Nancy, age 6; and Charles, age 2.

In 1860 Griffin farms the same 30 acres as in 1850, making use of limited farm machinery. The value of his farm and of his livestock increase, but crop production decreases with the exception of wheat. Griffin does not own slaves, nor raise cotton. In 1870, he was one of few antebellum planters still farming and producing corn and wheat. He continued to purchase land and increase the value of his farm.

Acres, Value, Product, Slaves	1850	1860	1870
Improved acres	30	30	40
Unimproved acres	90	150	360
Cash value of farm	\$150	\$400	500
Value of real estate	\$100	\$400	
Value of personal estate		\$400	
Value of farming machinery	\$5	\$10	\$100
Value of livestock	\$152	\$380	\$510
Value of slaughtered animals	\$112	\$280	\$130
Value of homemade manufactures	\$35	\$50	\$60
Bushels of Indian corn	350	300	400
Bushels of sweet potatoes	60		
Bushels of Irish potatoes	20	10	
Bushels of peas and beans		10	
Bushels of oats	30		
Bushels of wheat		84	
Horses	1	1	4
Milk cows		3	
Lbs. of butter	100		
Swine	20	30	7
Working oxen	2	2	
Other cattle	2	1	

Williamson Hawkins

In 1850, Williamson Hawkins is a 60-year-old, South Carolina born farmer. His 61-year-old wife Elizabeth was also born in South Carolina. The 1850 censuses for the Elyton precinct also list Nathaniel, Josiah, and Andrew Hawkins, ages 32, 25, and 19, who report their occupations as physician, laborer, and farmer. In 1860, Williamson and Elizabeth Hawkins remain empty nesters. Josiah Hawkins has become a mechanic; Andrew remains a farmer.

The Williamson Hawkins plantation of 1,000 acres remains the largest farm in the Elyton Precinct agricultural census. Hawkins has purchased 2,000 additional acres. His farm, employing 77 enslaved persons age 8 and older, the largest number in the precinct, produces 129 bales of cotton, significantly more than any other farm.

From 1850 to 1860, Hawkins has increased both improved and unimproved acreage and the value of his farm, his real and personal estates, his farming machinery, and his livestock. Production of Indian corn remains high, and the production of wheat and peas and beans has been increased. Sheep, cows, and cattle are raised. Farm labor cards wool, slaughters swine, and churns lots of butter. By 1870, Hawkins has sold his farm lands to the Thomas family from Pennsylvania for use as an industrial site. Here watered by Village Creek, the farm also contained coal, iron ore, and limestone.

Acres, Value, Product, Slaves	1850	1860
Improved acres	770	1,000
Unimproved acres	310	2,000
Cash value of farm	\$15,000	\$30,000
Value of real estate	\$15,000	\$30,000
Value of personal estate		\$129,975
Value of farming machinery	\$770	\$1,000
Value of livestock	\$4,502	\$7,845
Value of homemade manufactures	\$300	\$500
Bushels of Indian corn	5,500	7,500
Bushels of Irish potatoes		50
Bushels of oats	320	70
Bushels of sweet potatoes	100	100
Bushels of wheat	6	1,000
Bushels of peas and beans	60	400
Bushels of rye		30
Ginned cotton bales of 400 lbs.	133	129
Horses	10	13
Milk cows	30	18
Lbs. of butter	1,095	1,000
Lbs. of beeswax and honey	350	180
Mules and asses	23	30
Working oxen	12	6
Sheep	48	50
Lbs. of wool	96	102
Swine	300	300
Other cattle	90	100
Slaves, age 8 and older	25	77
Slaves, age 7 and under	27	30
Slave houses		n.l.

Lemuel G. McMillion

In 1850, Lemuel McMillion is a 56-year-old farmer. Both he and his 47-year-old wife Altermirah were born in South Carolina. Their children—daughters Jersosha, Melissa, and Margaret, ages 21, 17, and 10; and son William, age 13—were born in Alabama. M. S. McMillion, age 25, the census taker for the Elyton Precinct and a teacher, and his wife Harriett live next door.

In 1860, Lemuel McMillion reports his vocation as a “S. Teacher.” Living in his household are his adult children William, who is the Elyton census taker in this year, and Margaret and six members of the Denson family: the 31-year-old physician G. T. Denson; Mittie, age 26; Alta, age 5; William, 2; H. Denson, an 18-year-old student; and Frederick Denson, a 13-year-old painter, as well as Samuel and Albert Bennett, ages 7 and 4.

From 1850 to 1860 McMillion increased his farmed and unimproved acreage, the number of his slaves, as well as the value of his farm and his real and personal estates, his livestock, and cotton production. His farm does not raise swine or sheep.

Acres, Value, Product, Slaves	1850	1860
Improved acres	80	110
Unimproved acres	13	80
Cash value of farm	\$2,000	\$3,000
Value of real estate	\$3,000	\$3,000
Value of personal estate		\$9,075
Value of farming machinery	\$90	\$118
Value of livestock	\$190	\$660
Value of slaughtered animals	\$70	\$220
Value of homemade manufactures	\$40	\$50
Bushels of Indian corn	700	400
Bushels of Irish potatoes	10	10
Bushels of peas and beans		30
Bushels of sweet potatoes	15	20
Bushels of wheat		11
Ginned cotton bales of 400 lbs.	2	7
Horses	2	2
Milk cows	4	2
Lbs. of butter	100	100
Other cattle	3	
Mules and asses	2	2
Working oxen	2	4
Slaves, age 8 and older	3	7
Slaves, age 7 and under	4	1
Slave houses		2

William S. Mudd

In 1850, the Mudd household includes the Kentucky-born William S. Mudd, a 33-year-old lawyer, his 26-year-old wife Florence, and the couple’s 5 pre-school children: Harriet, Sarah, Florence, Virginia, and William, ages 7, 5, 3, 2, and 3 months, all born in Alabama.

In 1860, residing in the household with the new judge and his wife are seven of their children: Sarah, Flossie [Florence], Jennie [Virginia], William, ages 15, 13, 12, and 10, and James, Mary, and Joseph, ages 8, 6, and 1.

By 1860, Mudd reduced the size of his farmed acreage to 95, while increasing its value and that of his personal estate. With additional slave labor, the 95-acre farm raises Indian corn and swine. Farming the same acreage in 1870, productivity drops. Mudd sells property and invests in the new city of Birmingham, founded 1871. By 1880, Mudd’s 30 farmed acres appear to be growing corn to feed his livestock. He hires black farm laborers. In 1884, Mudd sells his farm. The majority of its land is later subdivided into residential lots. His residence and 5 acres survive as today’s Arlington Antebellum Home and Gardens.

Acres, Value, Product, Slaves	1850	1860	1870	1880
Improved acres	200	95	100	30
Unimproved acres	75	180	220	60
Cash value of farm	\$1,500	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$5,000
Value of real estate	\$2,500	\$7,500		
Value of personal estate		\$60,000		
Value of farming machinery	\$80	\$100	\$100	\$5
Value of livestock	\$370	\$600	\$520	\$200
Value of slaughtered animals	\$70	\$210		
Value of homemade manufactures			\$100	
Bushels of Indian corn	200	400	150	300
Bushels of Irish potatoes		25		
Bushels of sweet potatoes	25	20		
Bushels of wheat				50
Bushels of oats				50
Horses	2	1	1	4
Milk cows	1	4	3	4
Lbs. of butter	25	100	200	200
Swine	15	15		
Mules and asses	2	2	1	
Other cattle	4	5	4	
Value of farm wages paid			\$300	\$100
Slaves, age 8 and older	4	10		
Slaves, age 7 and under	0	4		
Slave houses		2		

Alfred H. Roebuck

In 1850, Alfred H. Roebuck is a 36-year-old Georgia-born farmer. His wife, Susan, age 31, was born in Alabama as were their 6 children: Mariah and Ann, ages 12 and 8; James, age 10; Mary, age 7; George W., age 5; and Susan, age 3. **In 1860**, Roebuck appears to have a 28-year-old second wife, E.W., and two little children: S. L. and A. H., ages 2 and four months. The household also includes his older children Ann, James, Mary, George, and Susan and the 22-year-old mechanic David Sams from Tennessee.

By 1860, Roebuck significantly increases his farmed acreage, its value and that of his real and personal estates. With increased slave labor, his cultivation of livestock, crops, and cotton also increased on both of his farms.

Acres, Value, Product, Slaves	1850	1860
Improved acres	250	900
Unimproved acres	750	1,300
Cash value of farm	\$7,000	\$16,000
Value of real estate	\$7,000	\$15,000
Value of personal estate		\$42,695
Value of farming machinery	\$165	\$675
Value of livestock	\$740	\$2,770
Value of slaughtered animals		\$775
Value of homemade manufactures	\$20	\$250
Bushels of Indian corn	1,250	2,800
Bushels of sweet potatoes	100	45
Bushels of Irish potatoes		35
Bushes of peas and beans	15	150
Bushels of oats	300	60
Bushels of wheat	17	175
Bushels of rye		30
Ginned cotton bales of 400 lbs.		50
Horses	3	5
Milk cows	11	18
Lbs. of butter	365	590
Lbs. of beeswax and honey	50	
Mules and asses	2	11
Swine	125	80
Other cattle	14	30
Slaves, age 8 and older	8	33
Slaves, age 7 and under	2	5
Slave houses		7

Joseph Riley Smith

In 1850, Joseph R. Smith is a 32-year-old physician married to Margaret, age 24. Their children are Lucy, Mortimer, Mary, and Sara, ages 5, 3, 1, and 1.

In 1860, the Smith household includes the physician and his wife, and their children: Sara, Mary, John, Joseph, and Thomas, ages, 11, 11, 9, 4, and 1.

Census records identify Smith's farm lands in the Elyton vicinity. These and other records note that Smith's pursuits as physician, newspaper publisher, and later merchant and developer appear to have engaged his keen intellect more than agricultural pursuits other livestock and horses. "I used to cultivate corn and cotton there," said Smith to an Age-Herald newspaperman in 1885, "but the land became exhausted and I stopped it." He further stated that "I have found that real estate is the best way for a man to keep money. He has only to get his board and clothes and home comforts. What good will it do him besides that? . . . Most of [my acreage] I bought at \$10, and I have sold some for "\$600 per acre." Beginning in 1886, Smith developed 600 acres of his Elyton lands as Smithfield. Born in Jefferson County in 1818, Smith became the county's wealthiest resident by time of his death in 1905.

Acres, Value, Product, Slaves	1850	1860*	1870*	1880
Improved acres	45	400	300	100
Unimproved acres	115	600	500	1,040
Cash value of farm	\$1,200	\$18,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Value of real estate	\$2,200	\$8,000		
Value of personal estate		\$41,350		
Value of farming machinery	\$150	\$600	400	\$75
Value of livestock	\$350	\$3,350	\$1,725	\$400
Value of slaughtered animals	\$35	\$980	\$100	
Bushels of Indian corn	200	2,000	700	600
Bushels of sweet potatoes				
Bushels of Irish potatoes		25		
Bushels of peas and beans		30		
Bushels of wheat		100	80	150
Bushels of oats		300		75
Ginned cotton bales of 400 lbs.		20		4
Cords of wood				500
Horses	4	20	5	5
Milk cows	7	4	6	7
Lbs. of butter	20	1,100		1,100
Swine	15	75	6	12
Asses and mules		6	5	6
Working oxen		2		
Other cattle	6	16	2	9
Value of farm wages paid			\$500	\$500
Slaves, age 8 and up	6	18		
Slaves, age 7 and under	2	4		
Slave houses		n.l.		

*Listed in the Carrollville precinct.

William A. Walker

In 1850, North Carolina-born W.A. Walker is a 39-year-old merchant. His wife, 26-year-old wife, Carilla, was born in Alabama. The couple have 4 children: Mary Ann, 9; Margaret, 7; William, 5; and America, 2, all born in Alabama. **In 1860**, the Walker household includes 5 children: Margaret, William, America, Francis, and Lucy, ages 19, 17, 15, 9, and 3. Thomas Turner, a 22-year-old farm laborer, and John C Williams, a 20-year-old clerk, reside with the Walkers.

The 1860 census notes a substantial increase in building value of Walker's real and personal estate and of his land and his slaves. Principal crops grown are corn and cotton. Listings in the 1870 and 1880 agricultural censuses note the practice of hiring white farm hands for 52 weeks of the year. His farm raises cotton, corn, wheat, oats, cows, sheep, and other cattle. Walker and his son will continue to acquire land and subdivide it into residential lots, notably in the Titusville area of Birmingham. The Walker residence built in 1848 remained until 1969. The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) photographed it in 1937 (see photograph on page 1).

Acres, Value, Product, Slaves	1850	1860*	1870	1880
Improved acres	175	800	150	200
Unimproved acres	205	1,395	2,100	1,800
Cash value of farm	\$1,200	\$14,000	\$15,000	\$10,000
Value of real estate	\$3,700	\$15,000		
Value of personal estate		\$36,000		
Value of farming machinery	\$150	\$200	\$200	\$25
Value of livestock	\$820	\$2,300	\$1,559	\$700
Value of slaughtered animals	\$235			
Bushels of Indian corn	1,200	1,500	50	1,200
Bushels of sweet potatoes	100	50		
Bushels of Irish potatoes		20		
Bushels of peas and beans		15		
Bushels of wheat			425	200
Bushels of oats		20	25	300
Ginned bales of cotton 400 lbs.		35	12	12
Cords of wood			500	500
Horses	4	10	7	3
Milk cows	4	6	6	4
Lbs. of butter	100			100
Sheep			7	
Mules and asses	2	5	4	4
Working oxen	2	4	2	
Swine	90	50	20	
Other cattle	10	30	20	
Wages paid for white farm labor			\$100	\$120
Slaves, age 8 and older	6	15		
Slaves, age 7 and under	2	4		
Slave houses		4		

* Listed in the Carrollsville agricultural census.

Daniel Watkins

In 1850, Daniel Watkins is a 50-year-old farmer born in North Carolina. Also born in North Carolina is his wife, Drucilla, age 46. The couple's 8 children, all born in Alabama, live with them: Elizabeth, 23; Wiley and Stephen, both "laborers" ages 20 and 17; daughters Passa and Martha, ages 15 and 12; sons Pleasant and Dudley, ages 9 and 5; and Margaret, age 3.

In 1860, Daniel and Drucilla Watkins; their sons Wiley, Pleasant, and Dudley; Nancy Watkins, age 37; Drucilla Good, age 19; and Margaret Jones, age 10, live in the household. Pleasant and Wiley list their occupations as "farm laborers."

From 1850 to 1860, Watkins perhaps with the assistance of his two teenage sons has doubled his farm's acreage to 60 acres, increased its value and that of its livestock, and begun production of cotton. Corn and sweet potato crops have also increased.

Acres, Value, Product, Slaves	1850	1860
Improved acres	30	60
Unimproved acres	90	140
Cash value of farm	\$300	\$1,200
Value of real estate	\$3	
Value of personal estate		\$1,100
Value of farming machinery	\$85	\$80
Value of livestock	\$370	\$710
Value of slaughtered animals	\$49	\$100
Value of homemade manufactures	\$150	\$50
Bushels of Indian corn	300	600
Bushels of sweet potatoes	150	200
Bushels of Irish potatoes		20
Bushels of wheat	5	
Bushels of oats	50	
Bushels of peas and beans	2	15
Ginned bales of cotton 400 lbs.		3
Horses	3	4
Milk cows	5	5
Lbs. of butter	300	200
Mules and asses	1	
Swine	40	30
Other cattle	7	5

What Happened to Old Elyton's Farms and Fashionable Residences

As Birmingham grew, Elyton farms, lying between the city center and mines and industrial plants, evolved into the city's closest-in western neighborhoods. Across the relatively flat lands, streetcars extended, encouraging subdivision and homebuilding in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

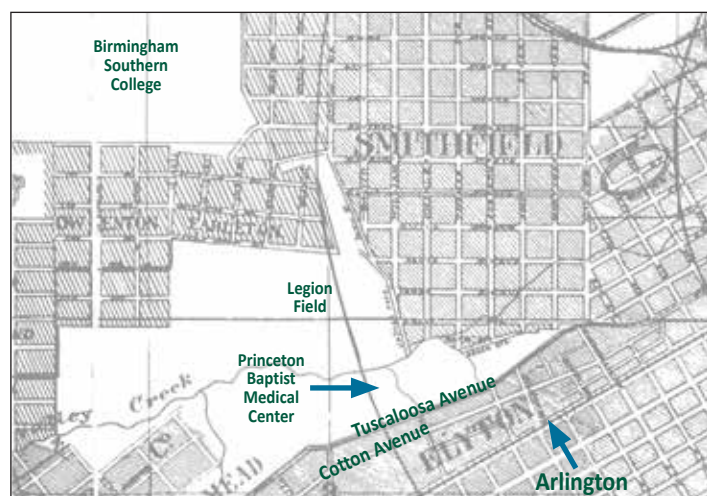
In 1884, Birmingham industrialist Henry DeBardeleben bought the 96-acre Mudd estate, quickly selling off acreage to a railroad and the remaining 32 acres to an Iowa surveyor who unsuccessfully subdivided the property as "Arlington." In 1902, cotton gin manufacturer R. S. Munger purchased and renovated the deteriorated residence in which he and his family lived for the next 50 years. Munger bought and he and his heirs subdivided many acres of "Old Elyton" from 1916 to 1951, before selling the residence and 5.47 acres to the City of Birmingham for use as a house museum in 1953. In 1952, former Mudd farm lands became part of the Loveman's Village Housing project. Nearby the Walker residence stood until 1969 when it was demolished for the construction of a church.

In December 1886, physician Joseph Riley Smith subdivided 600 acres as "Smithfield." Well-timed to the market, it grew to become what contemporaries considered "the most important subdivision of Birmingham." Later portions of Smithfield became Birmingham's first public housing project completed in 1937 for black residents.

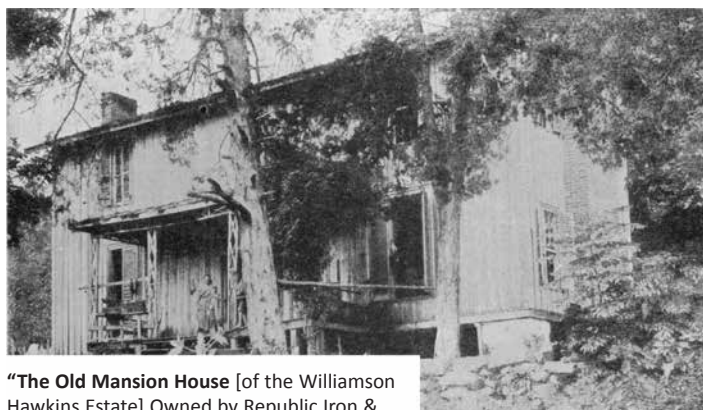
By 1887, the 2,000-acre Williamson Hawkins plantation, sold to Samuel Thomas, had become the site of the future Republic Iron & Steel Co. furnaces at Thomas, today a city neighborhood and the site of the Wade Sand & Gravel Co. quarry along I-20.

In 1939, 40 acres of the Greene homestead that physician Samuel Earle purchased from the government in 1824, and the home of five generations of the Earle and Green families, made way for construction of the Elyton Village Project, a low-rent federal housing project for white families.

While the Hawkins residence probably more accurately reflects "Old Elyton's" antebellum farm residences, the Greek Revival style Earle-Greene, Mudd, and Walker town houses came to dominate the popular conception of life in "Old Elyton" . . . and still do.



O'Brien's Map of Birmingham, 1887, showing subdivisions of Elyton, Smithfield, and Earleton. Agee Map Collection, Birmingham Public Library. Note that the early subdivisions hug the higher ground above Valley Creek.



"The Old Mansion House [of the Williamson Hawkins Estate] Owned by Republic Iron & Steel Co." Photographed in 1910 and published in Ethel Armes, *The Story of Coal & Iron in Alabama*, with the caption cited above.



Earle-Greene Plantation House, photograph by O. V. Hunt, 1939. Birmingham Public Library Archives.



Mudd-Munger-Montgomery House-Arlington Antebellum House and Gardens. Photograph by Jet Lowe, 1993, Historic American Buildings Survey.