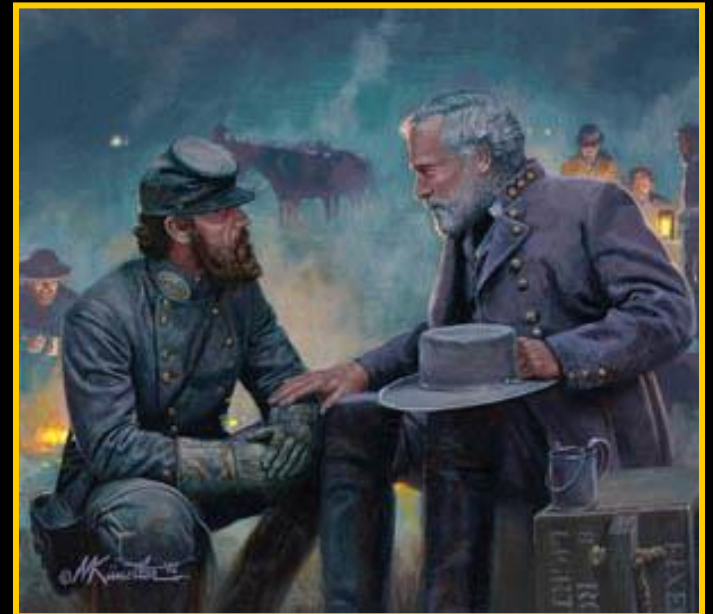


# *The Huntsville Massacre*

The Civil War Forever Changes a  
Community



## *Introduction – January 10, 1863*

- it appears that at least nine men were taken from a cold, dank guardhouse in Huntsville and led to a field on the S. P. Vaughn farm about 1 mile northeast of Huntsville and executed on the bank of Vaughn's Branch near the road that led to Carrollton

# *Introduction – Those executed*

- **Chesley H. Boatright**: age 39 - a blacksmith, former county treasurer, Deacon of the Huntsville Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and prominent Mason;
- **William Martin Berry**: age 60 - a prominent member of Odeon Masonic Lodge; brother of State Senator John Berry; his son was James R. Berry, son-in-law of Isaac Murphy;

# *Introduction – Those executed*

- **Hugh Samuel Berry**: age 31 - son of the aforementioned William M. Berry; Capt. in the Confederate army; home on leave
- **John William Moody**: age 32 – nephew-in-law to Chesley H. Boatright; Deputy U.S. Marshal (1860 Census Enumerator), farmer; Confederate Army Captain

## *Introduction – Those executed*

- **Askin Hughes** and **John Hughes**: family or military connection unknown.
- **Watson P. Stevens** age 29; cousin of the Berry's;
- **Robert Coleman Young**; age 56 – also known as – “Parson Young”; Baptist Minister

# *The Unknown 9<sup>th</sup> Person*

- Letters belonging to the Berry Family mention the name **Bill Parks**
- The name **John Parks**, age 32 is listed in the 1860 Madison County Census along with his wife Sarah J. and two children, Frances and William.

# *The Unknown 9<sup>th</sup> Person*

- The International Genealogical Index lists a **John Parks** having married Sarah Gillett in Winston, **Mississippi** on December 28, 1854.
- He also commanded one of the five regular **Confederate** companies formed in Madison County in the summer of 1862, along with **John W. Moody**.

# *The Unknown 9<sup>th</sup> Person*

- His name does not appear in the 1870 census of Madison County.
- The recollection of Mrs. Elizabeth Vaughan mentions that the lone survivor of the massacre left for **Mississippi** after he had recovered from his wounds.



## *Questions that arise*

- Why the Union Army would enter Madison County and arrest so many local citizens, and then without trial or hearing, summarily execute them in violation of the 6th Article of War?

## *Questions that arise*


- What brought Isaac Murphy to Huntsville and what role did Isaac Murphy, E. D. Ham, and Col. James Johnson play?

## *Questions that arise*

- What role did Odeon Lodge and their two schools play and why did this event cause the closing of the Huntsville Institute and the Pleasant View Female Seminary?

## *We begin our story*

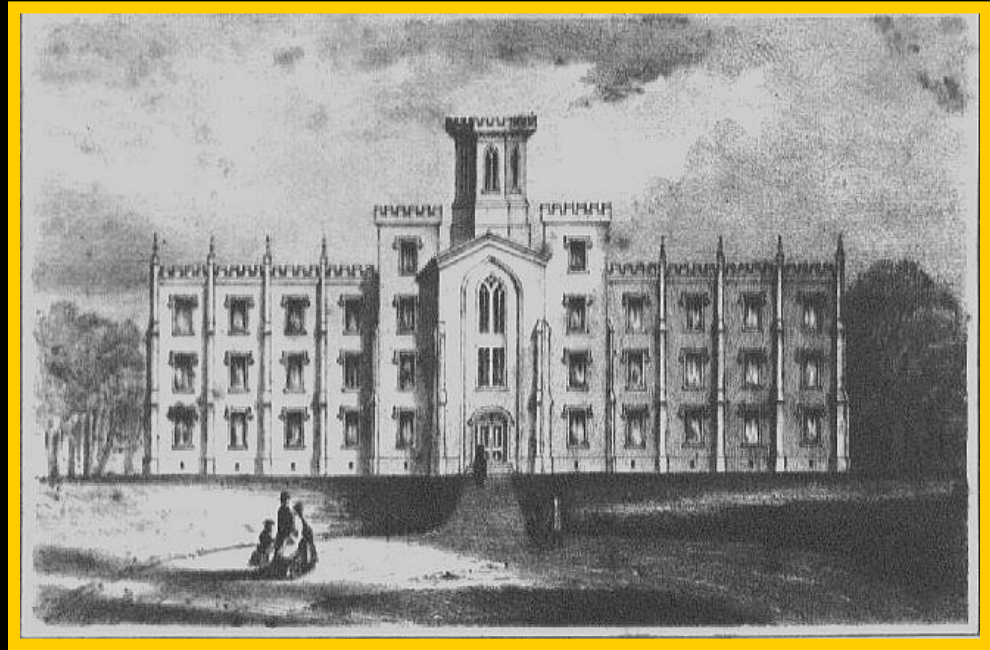
- The events that lead up to that tragic day actually begin about ten years earlier, in 1854, about seven years before the Civil War begins.



***The Arkansas General Assembly  
Incorporates  
The Huntsville Masonic Institute  
and the  
Pleasant View Female Seminary***

*November 6, 1851*

- During the Grand Lodge session of 1851, John Berry of Huntsville, also a state senator, was sent to Little Rock as the Lodge's official delegate.



*December 20, 1854*

- the Arkansas General Assembly incorporated the **Huntsville Masonic Institute** giving its Board of Trustees and faculty power to confer such degrees in the arts and sciences as are usually conferred in the United States.

*Approximately three weeks later*

- the General Assembly would also incorporate the Pleasant View Female Seminary at Huntsville.



# *Huntsville Masonic Institute and Odeon Loge No. 44*

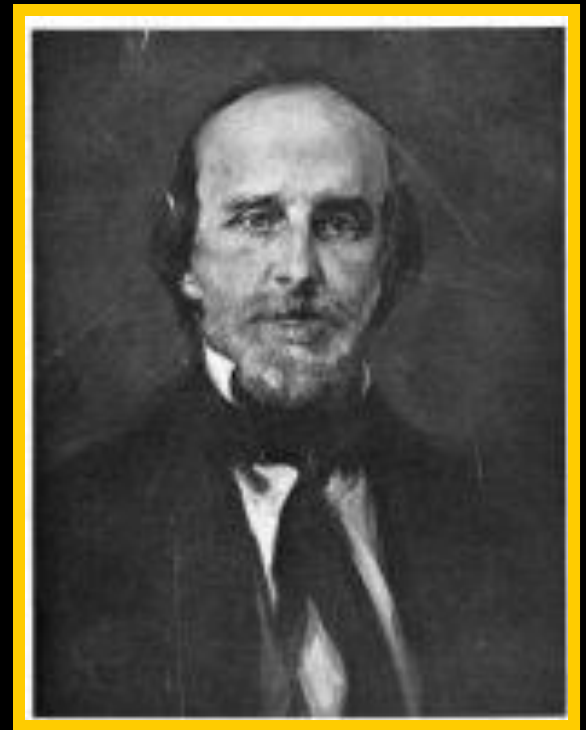


# *Isaac Murphy and his family move to Huntsville*

- Records indicate that he and at least two of his eldest daughters handled the Female Seminary of Huntsville and another school.”
- It is assumed the other school was the Huntsville Institute as the common school which was operating in Huntsville at the time would have had no need for a school administrator.

# *Isaac Murphy*

- Elected to State Senate and
- Elected a delegate to Convention on Secession in 1861



## *Elected as Delegate*

- In February 1861, the citizens of Madison County elected Murphy as its delegate to the convention on secession on a Unionist platform, he receiving over 85% of the vote

## *The first vote*

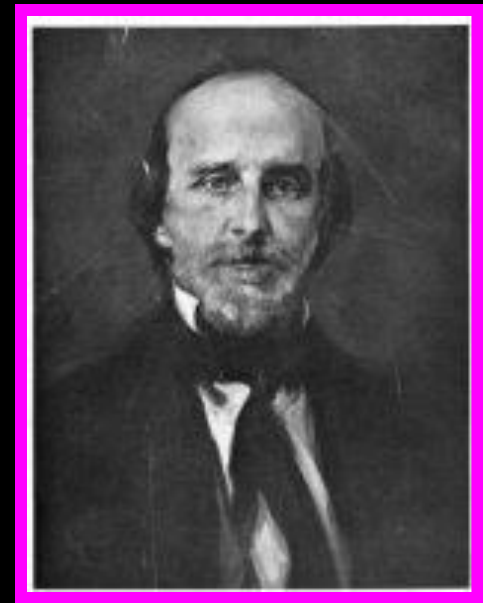
- On March 18, 1861, the Arkansas secession convention voted 39 to 35 *against* secession, but then voted unanimously to put the secession question before the people of the state in an August 19th referendum.

## *The second vote*

- only five of the seventy-five delegates voting against Arkansas seceding from the Union: Isaac Murphy of Madison County, Dr. Henry Hunter Bolinger of St. Paul (Madison County), John Campbell of Searcy County, Thomas Montague Gunter of Washington County, and Samuel Kelly of Pike County.

# *The final vote*

- I have cast my vote after mature reflection and have duly considered the consequences and I cannot conscientiously change it. I therefore vote **no**.



# *Coming Home to Huntsville*

- Upon returning to Huntsville, he was greeted well by the locals.
- However, this attitude would change as the war progressed and particularly as the war came closer to home.
- Although a majority of the people in and around Huntsville had been Unionists, sides were now being drawn.



# *War hits close to home – The Battle of Pea Ridge*

- Running short of ammunition, Confederate General Van Dorn abandoned the battlefield. The Union controlled Missouri for the next two years



# ***Murphy's Life is Threatened***

- After the adjournment of the convention, he returned to his home in Huntsville, Arkansas. The country at that time had become very much excited and agitated and notice was put up at the court house for Murphy to leave the country in ten days. I went up to the crowd there where they were commenting on the notice and learning of its purport, I told them that they could not compel him to leave; if so it would have to be done over my dead body.

# *Murphy moves to Pea Ridge*

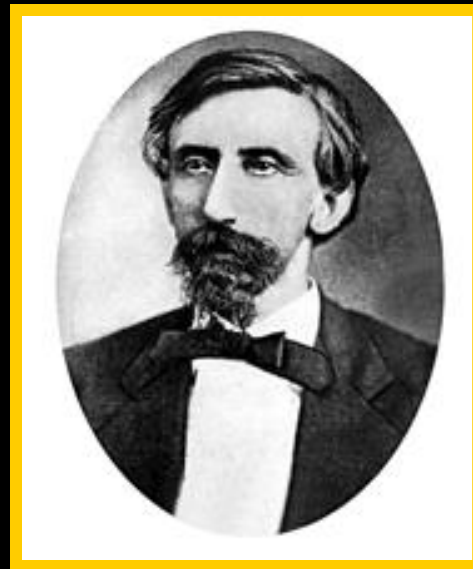
- On the advice of friends, he shortly left home accompanied by his close friends, Dr. James M. Johnson and his brother Frank Johnson, also prominent Masons in the county
- Murphy took a civilian position on General Curtis's staff and would soon thereafter accompany the army on its trek to Helena in eastern Arkansas. This was in late March of 1862. He would not return to Pea Ridge until late summer of that year.

# *The Murphy Daughters Visit Their Father at Pea Ridge*

- Things were not going well for the Murphy daughters, Louisa and Laura at Huntsville.
- No doubt they informed him of their treatment by the locals in Huntsville and one can only imagine how this made Isaac Murphy feel

# *The daughters return to Huntsville*

- On November 16th, they began their journey back to Huntsville, but for protection, Col. A. W. Bishop furnished and escort of 25 soldiers to accompany them.



# *Local Guerillas Attack the Murphy Escort*

- When the military escort and the Murphy daughters were within about two miles of Huntsville, the escort decided to send the Murphy's on into Huntsville alone
- Of the twenty five soldiers sent as escort, only seven of them would return alive to Pea Ridge

# *The Battle of Prairie Grove*

- While the battle was a tactical draw, it became a strategic Union victory as the Federals would maintain control of Missouri and northwest Arkansas for the remainder of the war



## *After Prairie Grove*

- General Herron was to take his 5,000 troops northeast to the Mississippi to join General Grant on his push towards Vicksburg. This trek would take General Herron and his troops through Madison County via Huntsville



*He sent Lt. Col. James Stewart to  
Huntsville to disperse the guerillas.*

- ... on arriving [in Huntsville], I found the enemy 150 strong, had been there the night of the 18th (December), and committed depredations on all the Union families in that vicinity, more especially that of Judge Murphy (Isaac Murphy); **the ladies of whose family they stripped of everything but what was on their bodies, leaving them in a destitute condition.** After leaving Huntsville, some of them proceeded down War Eagle Creek, others toward Carrollton, scattering all through the country in small parties of twos and threes. I caught 15 stragglers from the rebel army and paroled them. They had all left the army immediately after the Battle of Prairie Grove

# *Herron's Army Moves toward Huntsville*

- The army and staff, which included Isaac Murphy, arrived in Huntsville on January 7th. An encampment was set up in the bottoms of the Vaughn farm about 1 mile northeast of Huntsville along the road that led to Carrollton.



## *Herron's Report to Schofield*

- I have arrived at this place, having made but slow progress moving over these terrible roads with artillery and wagons. This country is full of bushwhackers, who annoy us very much. Our men shot one or two of them on the other side of Huntsville

# *Pvt. Benjamin F. McIntyre*

- It may have contained something over a hundred and fifty inhabitants at one time but at present it is comparatively deserted – No men at the place, a few women and Negroes are left in charge of the dwellings. . . . The town has but few fine dwellings and a few storehouses which would be an ornament to any place – they have all the modern improvements for business houses and are calculated to contain a very extensive stock of goods

*the Union soldiers set about rounding up several local citizens*

- **“... some of the men from Huntsville, officers of the blue uniform, came out and told these old men to come to Huntsville and take the oath of allegiance. Their wives did not want them to go but thought if they could stay at home and save what little was left, it would be better.”....**

# *The Oath of Allegiance*

- **Oath of Allegiance**
- **I, \_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly swear or affirm, in the presence of Almighty God, that I will henceforth faithfully support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Union of the States there under.**
- **Signed:**

---

# *Taking the Oath*

- It was common place to round up locals and bring them to the county seat or other place to administer the oath publicly or have the person sign a copy of it before witnesses, which was even more degrading.
- In some cases, the locals were immediately released and sometimes they were held in a stockade or other guardhouse for a time.

# *Local Citizens Arrested*

- “Uncle Chesley Boatright went to town (Huntsville) for a purchase of some kind and taken while in town. As he left the house, his father, William B. Boatright, [age 85] asked to let him go instead of Chesley. He told Chesley that he might be caught be the bushwhackers”, [he probably meant jayhawkers or union troops] but Uncle Chesley told his father that he did not fear them because he was too old to go into service. (Chesley was 39 years old at the time.)



# *Local Citizens Arrested*

- Shortly after the arrival of federal troops in the area, soldiers arrested
- Hugh Berry, John W. Moody, Chesley Boatright and William M. Berry.

## *Nancy Berry visits Hugh at Huntsville*

- Mrs. Nancy Berry, wife of Hugh Berry, would visit with her husband at the stockade shortly thereafter.
- There she would see Col. James Johnson, Isaac Murphy, and E. D. Ham.
- Col. Johnson apparently obtained a pass for his brother Frank Johnson to escort her outside of the pickets.

# *Strange occurrences*

- Frank would confide to Mrs. Berry that he felt that there was something wrong, no doubt fearing for the men's lives
- On Wednesday, January 7th, Hugh Berry was granted a "parole of honor" to go home for a few days.

## *Strange occurrences*

- Col. James M. Johnson apparently made a trip to visit Hugh Berry at his home on Thursday or Friday evening.
- Upon his arrival, Hugh was visiting his father William at his home. Nancy Berry and Col. Johnson then went to the home of William Berry where all had supper together

## *Hugh and William return as promised*

- In the early morning hours of January 10, 1864, Chesley H. Boatright, William Martin Berry, Hugh Samuel Berry, John William Moody, Askin Hughes, John Hughes, Watson P. Stevens, Robert Coleman Young, and possibly John Parks were marched to a spot along Vaughn's branch at the encampment.

## *William V. Polk – Affidavit 1890*

- William V. Polk who was arrested the day before on January 9th, stated that about 4:00 a.m. on the morning of January 10th, Robert Young, Hugh Berry, Billy Berry, Chesley Boatright and others were led out so close to me that they brushed my clothing as they passed by”.

# *The Execution*

- Lt. Col. Elias Briggs Baldwin, commander of the 8th Missouri Calvary, Volunteers, Union army gave the order to have the men executed.
- Sgt. Thomas B. Payne of Company G was in charge of the firing squad.

# *Three Accounts after the shootings*

- **The first account** is that of Mrs. Elizabeth Vaughn, the widow of Samuel P. Vaughan, whose home was about a half of mile west of the spot where the execution occurred.
- Sheltered and cared for the wounded man for over a month
- He would leave for Mississippi







## *The Second Account after the shootings*

- The second account is from the memoirs of Lizzie J. Mitchell, grand niece of William Berry, who wrote that a Mary McRunnells. (this is no doubt **Mary Elizabeth McReynolds**, wife of Isaac D. McReynolds who apparently had a farm adjacent to or near the Vaughn farm).

## *The Second Account after the shootings*

- She went to see if she knew any of the men who had been shot.
- According to her story, all but one of the men at the scene was dead.
- She then took a hat, dipped it into the cold stream to get water to bathe the lone survivors' face.

## *The Second Account after the shootings*

- She recognized him as young Hugh Berry.
- As soon as possible, she sent word to the Berry family to inform them of what had just transpired
- Later in the day, Nancy Berry, Margaret Berry, wife of William and one of her sons would arrive at the scene where they would find Hugh still alive
- Hugh was transported back home where he told what had happened to his wife.

## *The Second Account after the shootings*

- “...Hugh, who did this? He said men out of the 8th Missouri Regiment did the shooting, but J. M. Johnson, E. D. Ham, and Isaac Murphy had it done. He also told the same to several others before he died on January 13, 1863. The day before he died, some Federal officers together with a doctor, came out and dressed his wounds and took his dying testimony. He told them the same thing, that Johnson, Ham, and Murphy had it done and the officers wrote down his testimony.” .

## *Third Account after the shootings*

- On receiving word of the executions, Chesley's wife Drusilla, her young son John along with Sarilda Boatright Hale and Tennessee Boatright Bowen, both sisters to Chesley, drove a wagon to the site of the murder and brought Chesley Boatright's and J. W. Moody's bodies home to prepare the remains for burial and later buried them in their family plots in the Huntsville Cemetery

# *Troops Begin to Leave Huntsville*

- During the next week, the encampment began to break up with columns and detachments leaving at different times. The execution must have had a chilling effect on the people of Huntsville as many were reporting to officers at the encampment requesting protection and now wishing to take the oath of allegiance.

## *Pvt. Benjamin F. McIntyre*

- **I learned that after our departure . . . seven rebels were shot by order of Major Baldwin. I hope this may prove incorrect for it is establishing a precedent which must end in rapine and murder and is giving the butternuts an excuse to put to death every Union man that should fall into their hands**



# ***Troops Begin to Leave Huntsville***

- **The division remained in Huntsville until January 18th, the troops suffering under a more than ordinary complication of all the discomforts and ills incident to a winter campaign.**
- **Sometimes on half rations – occasionally on quarter rations, and frequently with no rations at all**

# ***Troops Begin to Leave Huntsville***

- **This state of affairs culminated on the 16th in some bold and successful attempts of robbery in the town [Huntsville]**
- **Accordingly, our brigade left Huntsville on the morning of the 18th**

# ***News of the Shooting Spreads: Baldwin Arrested and Charged***

- **I have called upon Lt. Col. Baldwin, provost marshal of the division, to furnish a written statement of what disposition was made of nine prisoners of war (referred to in Col. Dan Huston's letter) supposed to have been murdered at Huntsville, Ark. on the 10th instant and will report as soon as the matter can be investigated. I have no doubt that some officer of this division ordered these men shot, and regard it myself as a great outrage**

**- Col. James O. Gower**

## *Lt. Col. Baldwin*

- Lt. Col. Baldwin was only 28 years old and had been promoted to the provost position on January 7, 1863, three days before the murder of the prisoners.



## *Lt. Col. Baldwin*

- His orders at Huntsville were
  - ◆ to keep the soldiers in line,
  - ◆ keep the infantry off their horses,
  - ◆ and prevent the soldier's from plundering, shooting, or otherwise violating direct orders and the general orders of General Schofield concerning respecting the rights and property of the locals

## *Lt. Col. Baldwin*

- Lt. Col. Baldwin resigned his commission two days later, on January 27th when an order was issued for his arrest in connection with this crime.
- He would be formally arrested by Col. Gower when he reached Forsythe, Missouri, on January 29th.

## *a trial before a military commission*

- **“violation of the 6th Article of War or for the murder of prisoners of war, C.H. Boatright, W. M. Berry, Hugh Berry, Askin Hughes, John Hughes, Watson Stevens, J. W. Moody, and Young, called Parson Young; this before the Chesley Boatright, et. al., had been tried, convicted, and sentenced to death by the legally constituted authority of the United States “**

# *The Court Martial*

- **Baldwin did not go with his soldiers to the shootings. Instead, they were sent under Sergeant Payne who, during his defense fell back on his orders from Baldwin. Baldwin's defense was simple.**



# *The Court Martial*

- That whatever was done, was done with the knowledge and consent of the general commanding and others then and there present and not on his part.

# *The Court Martial*

- He asked that others then far way in southeast Missouri, and elsewhere, including General Herron and Isaac Murphy, be brought back as his defense witnesses.

# *The Court Martial*

- Col. F. M. Sams and Mrs. Elizabeth Vaughan also appeared before the tribunal.
- Exactly what information they furnished to the proceedings is not clear, but it appears that they were providing information that would substantiate that those shot were indeed part of a guerilla band and that E. D. Ham was not directly involved in the shootings.

# *The Court Martial*

- **Since General Herron and Murphy could not attend and other witnesses for the defense could not be present, Lt. Col. Baldwin was not further tried.**
- **He was given an honorable discharge on June 24, 1863 and granted transportation back to his home in Young America, Illinois.**

# *The Aftermath of War and the Massacre*

- For the next 80 years, children would bring flowers and mussel shells to the site in order to memorialize it.

# *Isaac Murphy*

- Murphy would become the 8th Governor of Arkansas (1864 -1868)
- He would die after a short illness in Huntsville on September 8, 1882.

# *Col. James. M. Johnson*

- elected to Congress in 1864 and 1866, representing the 3rd Congressional
- In 1867, he was elected as lieutenant governor
- be appointed as Secretary of State and would serve in that position for about five years

# *Elijah D. Ham*

- There are some who imagine Ham held a bitter grudge against several of the prisoners possibly over having been blackballed by the Masonic Lodge
- state senator (1864 – 1866) District Attorney, 1866, circuit judge (1868-1873).



# *Elijah D. Ham*

Washington, March 2, 1865.

To the Senate of the United States:

I nominate Elijah D. Ham, to be attorney  
of the United States for the western  
district of Arkansas.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

# ***Chesley H. Boatright***

- He and his wife Drusilla are buried in the Huntsville Cemetery.

# *William Berry and Hugh Berry*

- William Berry is buried at the Alabam Cemetery
- He had four small children at the time and is buried in the Alabam Cemetery.

# *John William Moody*

- His wife, Mary Elizabeth Waits Moody would give birth to a baby girl, a few weeks later. She would name her Johnnie.
- He is said to be buried in the Huntsville Cemetery with a headstone with no markings.

# *Askin & John Hughes; Watt Stevens*

- Thought to be buried at the site of their execution

# *Robert Coleman Young*

- He was buried at the Harris Farm Gravesite, 3 miles south of Huntsville.

## ***Lt. Col. Elias Briggs (E. B.) Baldwin***

- Following his honorable discharge from the army in 1863, he moved to Illinois for about a year. Due to ill health, he and his wife moved to Clinton County, Iowa where he resided until 1868.
- He would later move to Kansas where he served two terms as County Clerk of Labette County. He would retire to his home near Edna, Kansas. He died at Oswego, Kansas in 1921.

# *Odeon Lodge No. 44*

- The three members, Samuel Kenner, J.S. Polk, and John Vaughn were found guilty of Un-Masonic conduct and were expelled from membership by the lodge.
- The resulting trial and expulsion of the three members destroyed the fellowship and brotherhood of the lodge



# *Afterword*

- No firm evidence was ever produced that linked Isaac Murphy, James Johnson and E. D. Ham to the event.

# *Afterword*

- Be there no doubt, a lot of people did a lot of talking about this event following the Civil War.
- Much of it was done in private conversations, some were written years later in 'reminiscences' about the times, and some accounts were given in public letters to local newspapers. Those written accounts quite often contain verifiable errors in names and dates.

# Afterword

- One of the most interesting omissions about this event is its noticeable absence in the *Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northwest Arkansas*, published in 1889. Even though seven pages were dedicated to Civil War events in Madison County, no mention is made of the massacre.