

Today in Columbus History:

On April 7, 1874, a story appeared in the *Columbus Daily Enquirer* with the headline "Death of Ex-Ordinary John Johnson" that reported on the death of one of the earliest settlers in Columbus.

The son of Robert and Nancy Dolvin Johnson, John Johnson came from Greene County, where he was born in 1801. The story says that Johnson came to Columbus when it "was a mere collection of huts, with Indians roaming all over it at will..."

Johnson joined the Presbyterian Church at age twenty-three while he still lived in Greene County. Upon arrival in Columbus, he helped organize the First Presbyterian Church here. In January 1831, the state legislature was petitioned to grant a lot in town for religious purposes. By the end of the month, the trustees of the new church solicited bids to build the "first" Presbyterian church in Columbus. The trustees subdivided Lot C into four half-acre lots to raise funds for the building. Johnson served as trustee and elder and was also on the committee selling the land. He remained a church elder until his death.

Johnson married Rhode Island native Hannah Briggs in Columbus in August 1837. The couple had a daughter Mary Briggs Johnson in 1842. He became clerk of the Inferior Court in Muscogee County in 1845 and elected judge of the Court of Ordinary upon its organization in 1847. He remained in that position until 1868. Johnson then took the position of County Treasurer, where he remained until at least 1870 when the census enumerated him as such.

Johnson was a trustee of the Muscogee Asylum for the Poor for twenty-two years, as well as treasurer of that organization. At the time of his death, he also served as treasurer of the First Presbyterian Church, a position he held for forty years. The institution had constructed two more churches since they first organized. It was this third structure, dedicated in 1862, that held his funeral service.

Johnson's wife Hannah Briggs Johnson died in 1878 and is buried with him in Linwood Cemetery along with their daughter. Mary Briggs Johnson never married and died in Columbus in 1924.

Unfortunately, this story is a short one. For all of John Johnson's involvement with the city, there is no stately home or long list of descendants to remind people that he was here. Nonetheless, he deserves some recognition for his contribution to the development and growth of Columbus.

Compiled by Daniel A. Bellware, Muscogee Genealogical Society.

Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO).

Our weekly snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.

Death of Ex-Ordinary John Johnson.

Another of the first settlers of Columbus, a good man and a good citizen, is gone. A long life of usefulness is ended, and a model officer, of the olden school, when honor and probity reigned, has taken his departure from earth.

Mr. John Johnson died at his residence in Columbus yesterday morning at 10 o'clock. He was born on May 10th, 1801, in Greene county, Ga., and hence was nearly seventy-four years of age. The vast changes in the material progress of this century he has witnessed and advanced with, step by step. To Columbus he came from Greene county in 1828,

Portion of the story on John Johnson's death from the *Columbus Daily Enquirer*, April 7, 1874, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.

FUNERAL NOTICE.

The friends and acquaintance of JOHN JOHNSON and family are invited to attend his funeral services at the Presbyterian Church at 11 o'clock this morning (April 7th, 1874.)

Funeral notice, *Columbus Daily Enquirer*, April 7, 1874, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.



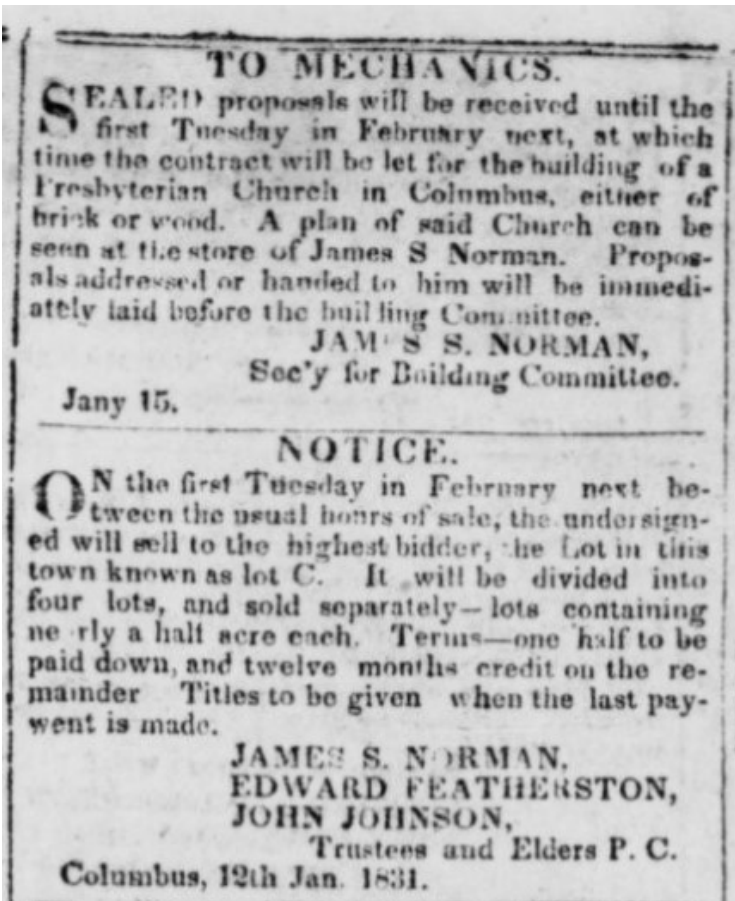
The third building to house the First Presbyterian Church in Columbus, built in 1862 it held the funeral for John Johnson, one of its founders, from Wikipedia.org



Graves of John Johnson and Hannah Briggs Johnson in Linwood Cemetery from FindAGrave.com.



Grave of Mary Briggs Johnson in Linwood Cemetery from FindAGrave.com.



Notices for bids for the building of the Presbyterian church and for the sale of lots to raise funds for the church. The Columbus *Democrat*, January 29, 1831, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.