

Today in Columbus History: On May 26, 1859, the *Daily Sun* reported that an f.m.c. (free man of color) named Joe Clark, had turned himself in for fatally shooting a black man (assumed to be a slave) who was trespassing on his property. Clark was either found not guilty or he served little time because the next year he appears in the 1860 census as a farmer with a personal estate of \$7,000. However, Clark was also a barber. In the antebellum south, many free men of color were barbers. In Columbus in 1850 there were 4 barbers (all f.m.c.'s); in 1860 there were also 4 (2 f.m.c.'s and 2 Germans). A somewhat famous f.m.c. barber was William Johnson, "the Barber of Natchez," who kept a diary with notes on his customers – which was later published. Joe Clark died Sept. 1, 1873 of bilious fever – his obituary appeared in the *Daily Columbus Enquirer*. It revealed that he had been a slave of one Michael N. Clark, an early Columbus settler, and that he had bought his freedom. Clark was buried in Porterdale Cemetery.

Compiled by Callie McGinnis, Muscogee Genealogical Society

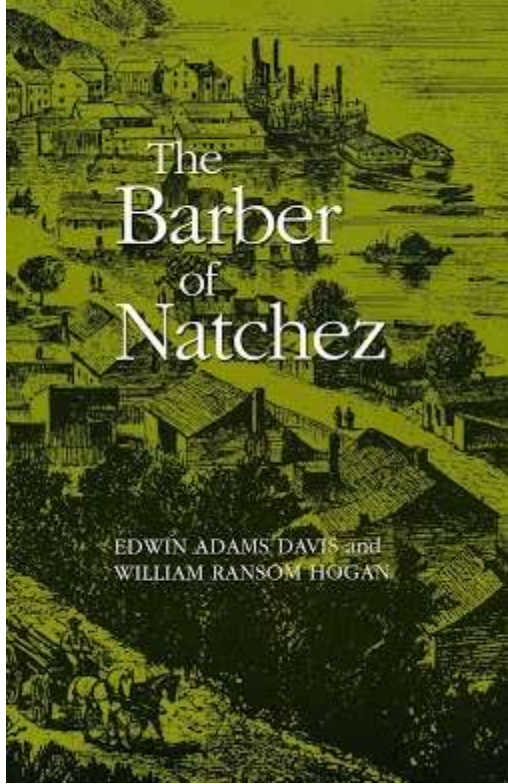
Our snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections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

Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO).

<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu>

Unfortunate Occurrence.

Joe Clark, f. m. c., delivered himself into the hands of the Sheriff yesterday morning, stating that he shot a negro man caught on his premises, the night previous, without a pass, and against his expressed orders. He appeared before Judges McKendree, and Wornum, and Justice Turman, for examination at noon, the result of which was he was ordered to prison, as the case was not aailable one. We have known Joe for years, and we can say truthfully that no man, white or black, has maintained a better character in our community than him. We sincerely regret this occurrence, and trust he may emerge from it without difficulty.



The
Barber
of
Natchez

EDWIN ADAMS DAVIS and
WILLIAM RANSOM HOGAN