

devastating to Adelia for reasons beyond Franklin's death, as both Victoria and little Adelia became ill and shortly after returning to Fairvue died within three days of each other, on June 11 and June 8, respectively. Their obituary in the *Nashville Union* recalled of the little girls, "their intellectual and moral developments were remarkable for their age, and none were ever more lovely and promising."⁵³ With her seventh wedding anniversary just weeks away, in July of 1846, Franklin found herself widowed and no doubt holding tight to Emma, her sole surviving child. The two spent a good amount of time following their loss with Adelia's parents at Rokeby in Nashville, as well as at Fairvue. The Louisiana plantations were under the care and direction of overseers and managers, with her father, Oliver B. Hayes, and John Armfield, executors of Franklin's estate, providing the necessary administration. It does not appear Adelia traveled there much, if at all, during the immediate period following Franklin's death.

Isaac Franklin left the majority of his considerable estate to his children, now to Emma Franklin alone. He provided handsomely for Adelia Franklin so she and their children might live "in the best style," and it was his desire they continue to live at Fairvue. Should his widow marry again, Isaac Franklin's will directed its executors to take possession of Fairvue, and provide guardianship for the children. The will stipulated a cash payment of one hundred thousand dollars to Adelia Franklin at her

remarriage, distributed in nine installments, or through payments of six thousand dollars annually throughout her lifetime.⁵⁴ As well, Franklin's will directed a school be established on the Fairvue property, the Isaac Franklin Institute, for his children, those of his siblings, and their descendants. Franklin intended the school be funded by a percentage of the proceeds realized from the Louisiana properties, and named his brothers, James and William, as trustees. On December 1, 1847, an act passed the Tennessee legislature and incorporated the Isaac Franklin Institute.⁵⁵

After an appropriate mourning period, and probably in 1848, Franklin attended a ball hosted by Jane Erwin Yeatman Bell, wife of John Bell, where, according to her son, William Ackland, she made the acquaintance of the tall, handsome lawyer from Huntsville, Alabama, who became her second husband, Joseph A.S. Acklen. Since Franklin's words are not available, it is helpful to include some of William's descriptions of his mother at the various stages of her life. He wrote that as she re-entered society following Isaac Franklin's death, she appeared "to bask in the silent but sumptuous haze of the soft second summer more ripe than the first," and revealed, as well, that knowledge of his mother's beauty and her wealth caused eligible bachelors from across the South to seek her out and make her acquaintance.⁵⁶

On paper, Joseph Acklen seems a much better match for Adelia than was Franklin. They were almost the same age, Acklen

just a year Adelia's senior, born in July of 1816; and both well educated, Acklen attended the University of Alabama before becoming a lawyer.⁵⁷ As with Franklin, a paragraph or two on Acklen's beginnings, and life prior to Adelia Franklin, is important here, as the steps he took, and choices he made certainly influenced the direction and events of her life. Joseph Acklen's pioneer roots were as deep as Adelia's; his forebears travelled from North Carolina in the 1790s, as had some of hers, first into Tennessee, then south to Alabama. John Hunt, the founder of Huntsville, Alabama, was Joseph Acklen's maternal grandfather; Hunt's daughter, Elizabeth, her husband, Samuel Black Acklin, and their oldest children, joined Hunt in the settlement later to bear his name in 1807, several years before Joseph Acklen's birth.⁵⁸ Samuel Black Acklin died in 1826, when Joseph was just ten years of age, and it seems he turned to his brother, William, Joseph's senior by fourteen years, for guidance and direction, and eventually followed him into the legal profession.⁵⁹ Biographical sketches of Joseph Acklen often erroneously identify him as a soldier in the Mexican-American War, fought between 1846 and 1848. His brother, C.B. "Kit" Acklin, did serve as a Texas Ranger in this war,⁶⁰ which may explain the misidentification. Joseph Acklen served in the American Southwest a decade earlier, in 1835-36 during the Texas Revolt, and with a company raised initially in Huntsville by Captain Peyton Sterling Wyatt.⁶¹ A twenty-year-old Joseph Acklen, his university stud-

ies recently complete, might easily have been caught up in the excitement of aiding Texas gain its independence from Mexico, as were so many others, particularly across the American South. Wyatt's Company reached Texas in December of 1835, and General Sam Houston himself mustered them into the Army of the Republic of Texas. Wyatt's Company relieved another at Goliad in early January of 1836, and then in February Wyatt returned to the United States to recruit additional troops, a handful of his men accompanying him.⁶² It is likely Joseph Acklen numbered among these, for on March 19, 1835, the Texas forces at Goliad surrendered to their Mexican foes, and on March 27, more than four hundred were executed under General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna's order of "no quarter." Had Acklen remained at Goliad it is almost certain he would have numbered among the slain, and the next chapter of Adelia's life altered significantly.⁶³ Instead, he settled into his law practice, and served as U.S. District Attorney for Northern and Middle Districts of Alabama from January of 1840 until his resignation in 1849, necessitated by his upcoming marriage and relocation to Nashville.⁶⁴

Adelia Hayes Franklin's wealth, and particularly that of her daughter, Emma Franklin, caused her to exercise caution before agreeing to marry Joseph Acklen. And while the details of both the proposal and wedding are unknown, the prenuptial agreement, without which the marriage would not take place, does survive.