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The Jackson County Chronicles

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In this issue:

January Meeting: In keeping with the "Jackson County Goes to the Movies" theme of this issue of the *Chronicles*, the JCHA is happy to announce that its January meeting will be held off site at the Stevenson Isabelle Theatre, newly reopened by Mark Evans as "Down on Main Street." The meeting will be held **Sunday, January 28** at **2:00 pm** at **114 Main Street** in **Stevenson** and the speaker will be **Sam Hall.**

Sam has given our county so much joy over the last few years by rescuing 1940s 16mm movies, some shot by Sam's grandfather, Dr. Sam Hall, and others commissioned by Robert Word. Sam crafted a machine to digitize high-resolution images of old movies frame by frame, which he then turns into high quality movies. He has movies of the opening of Lake Guntersville, of the square in the snow, of 1940s Scottsboro from the air, and of the various airshows at Sebring Field and TVA Field. After Bob Word shared his father's Arab film in March, Sam salvaged as much of this film as possible and set up a website where the film clips could be viewed. He labored for months to resurrect stills of 1941 Bridgeport from film that stunk like vinegar and fell out of the film box in chunks.

We like to think of Sam as a native son, but he is actually from Chattanooga. He graduated from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville with a bachelors in communications. His enthusiasm for regional history has evolved into an invaluable historical resource, ChattanoogaHistory.com. He was recently presented the DAR Excellence in Historic Preservation Medal in recognition of the myriads of ways he has preserved Chattanooga history. In May 2021 Hall and his website were recognized with the Certificate of Merit Award for digital preservation by the Tennessee Historical Commission.

His website was launched in January of 2014 and is maintained to present unique and historical images in the highest resolution available. His goal is to be a trusted resource for individuals and institutions wanting to share historical photographs, and to make them available online to the public. His presentation will include ways to share historical documents and photographs online.

Come early and watch a silent movie ahead of the meeting. In keeping with the movie theme, popcorn and cold drinks will be our refreshments. Members and non-members are invited.

Goodbye Old Friend: Bob Word, a long-time friend to the JCHA, died September 22 at age 89. He and his wife, Elizabeth PayneWord, have generously shared with us their long family history in Jackson County, in articles about the Payne and Word families and Payne Drug Store and in the Word movie of Scottsboro that Cactus Gay and lately Sam Hall transferred from film and shared with us. Bob was a kind and generous man whose gentle nature and encyclopedic knowledge of the county will be missed. Sam Hall's web page about the Scottsboro Word movie is at: https://chattanoogahistory.com/scottsboro_films

Cemetery Preservation Education Coming in April: Scottsboro has been selected as the site of the 2024 Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance state meeting. This meeting brings cemetery expertise like we have never seen to Jackson County. The group will have meetings at the Scottsboro Jackson Heritage Center on cemetery and headstone restoration topics and then workshops at Cedar Hill Cemetery about cleaning, leveling, and repairing headstones, including putting broken headstones back together and using D2 Cleaner and ground penetrating radar. We are also trying to assemble a mini stroll of 5 or 6 speakers for our out-of-town guests. Add **April 26-27, 2024** to your calendar and watch this space and the JCHA Facebook page for more information.

Bound Volumes in the Library: For those of you who prefer hardcopy, the complete bound volumes of all 48 years of the *Jackson County Chronicles* are available in the Scottsboro Public Library. Thank you, David Bradford for printing, organizing, and having these bound, and for donating them to the library. The complete printed *Chronicles* can also be found on the JCHA website, http://www.jchaweb.org/chronicles.html.

Paint Rock Valley High School Future Assured: Paint Rock Valley High School, which closed its doors in 2018, is being repurposed as a communiversity facility for Alabama A&M University (AAMU), the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and the residents of north Alabama. The county school board voted to transfer ownership, including future property renovations, to AAMU for educational and community activities. It is one of the largest non-monetary gifts in AAMU history.

JCHA member Donald Langston collected funds from his graduating class and other Paint Rock Valley High School friends and alumni. We have a historical marker for this school in the works and hope to install it and have a program at this school next year.

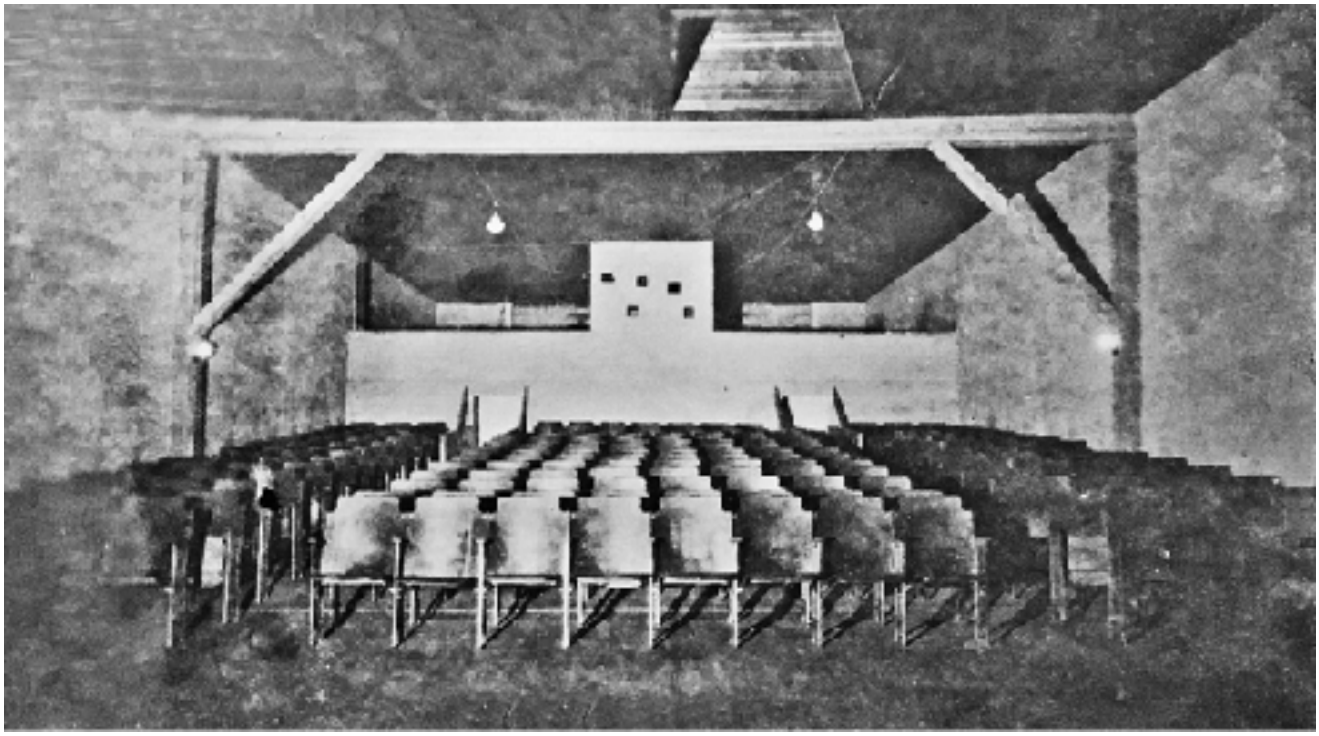
A New Book from Christine Sumner: The culmination of 40 years of research and writing, Christine Sumner's *Old Bellefonte:Historical and Genealogical* was published in late November. It represents an exhaustive and meticulously complied biography of the town, encompassing its history, prominent families, newspapers and periodicals, churches and schools, legends, and personal letters—all illustrated with photographs not previously known to local historians. Christine's devotion to gathering and organizing an overwhelming amount of information makes her book one of a handful of essential documents detailing our county's fascinating history.

More Jackson County Papers Available on newspapers.com: Annette and Nick Jones, the owner of the *Jackson County Sentine*l, are working to get more of our Jackson County newspapers available. Newspapers before 1900 are posted now, and the *Sentinel* should be up shortly. Because the Heritage Center lent Ancestry their microfilm, the center now has free access to newspapers.com. Other county papers are in the works. Watch this space and the JCHA Facebook page.

Jackson County Goes to the Movies

It is a sad but true fact to say that the heyday of the movie theatre has come and gone. We took our son to see the premiere of *War of the Worlds* in Paris in 2005 because it is difficult to have an old-time movie experience in the United States, to be dominated by the sheer size and quality of the screen and overwhelmed by the range of the sound system.

But there was a time that many of us can remember before plush, big-screen movie theatres were turned into multiplexes, and streaming made home theatres technologically possible, when the movie theatre was a palace where families went for entertainment events, where couples spent special nights and young people courted, where you could stay all day in the air-conditioned darkness for a dime. There was a time when every small town had to have its own movie theatre, and those that did not found a way to show movies in the high school auditorium, as organizers did in Skyline, or in a room deep enough for a projector to show movies, as in Hollywood.



Rockford Theater about 1920. Photo from Perry Green.

Almost no one took photos of the inside of those old local theatres, but they must have been fairly primitive affairs. Perry Green recently posted a photo of the early Rockford Theatre in Coosa County. Chairs and projector. No plush seats. No velvet curtains. No surround sound. No carpet. No elaborate sconces on the wall. Bare bones. This is how movies entered our lives.

Early Moving Pictures

The beginnings of moving pictures were not much more than a hundred years ago. There was a "proof of concept" movie in 1888, a two-second production by Louis Le Prince titled "Roundhay Garden Scene." It

1905 Ikongraph Gas-Fired Theatre Film Projector from worthpoint.com.

took eleven years for moving pictures to make it from London experimental locations to Scottsboro. That is really not very long. It took electric lights and telephones much longer.

The first moving picture shown in Jackson County was shown in "Mr. Payne's opera house" in 1899. The operator of a "moving picture machine," temporarily set up in the Scottsboro opera house for the first ever demonstration of the new technology, lost two fingers to the machine the next week in Tupelo, MS when the gas mechanism used for illumination exploded. "This broke up the show, and the company [Wargraph] had to go in for repairs," reported the *Progressive Age*.

I cannot find a satisfactory explanation of how this device worked. Gasoline was used not to power the device, but to create the light. The large chamber on the right is a gasoline-powered light (notice the chimney on top). The funnel mechanism in the middle is a concentrator for the light, which is focused directly on the film, which moves because the operator is turning a hand crank.

Another projection device exploded the next year in Stevenson, where the apparatus was being used to show a moving picture:

> ***An Explosion:*** *Coming through Stevenson, the same trip, while waiting for the eleven o'clock train Tuesday night, we attended a projectophone entertainment that was given by a traveling showman in the hotel dining room. The young people were out in force and a few of the married ones and all spent a pleasant and social evening notwithstanding the fright we got from the explosion of the gasoline tank that operated the moving picture machine. It occurred in the midst of a reproduction of the Dewey Land Parade in New York City given on the home coming of the Great Admiral. The phonograph was regaling us with a reproduction of the band music furnished on the memorable occasion and all eyes were watching the curtain in front where soldiers and sailors and beautiful equipages were marching by in rows and rows of cheering humanity when lo, there came a deafening noise that almost lifted us off our seats. At first this was generally supposed to be a rousing salute to the Admiral but when the showman jumped from the machine and those nearest began to stampede the doors and windows everybody became frightened and disorderly. The calmest ones however began to quiet the crowd and soon seeing all was well and nobody was hurt the matter turned into a joke. A smoothing iron was blown off the mantle-piece and through the stovepipe above and rested there. A picture was torn from its frame and some glass pitchers sitting near were broken. That was the amount of the damage, as nothing about the machine was hurt but the tank. After the explosion was efficiently discussed and the debris cleared away the entertainment was finished with the phonograph alone.* (Progressive Age*, May 17, 1900)*

This early silent movie is part of the collection of the Library of Congress. It has been restored and can be viewed on YouTube by searching on "Dewey Land Parade."

But the public embraced even these primitive, danger-filled entertainments because the gasoline-powered moving picture machine had all sorts of practical applications that the local newspapers touted. Army recruits in England were shown "all sorts of attractive views of army life" using a moving picture machine in 1901 (*PA*, April 18, 1901). Navy recruiters in the US used the same technique in 1906. Audiences in Scottsboro were treated to an entertainment in the College Chapel to benefit the Ladies' Aid Society of the Methodist Church in 1903, made up of "light moving pictures" with stereopticon views and illustrated songs and the Dixie Entertainers, featuring Miss Marie Carter, a New York singer. Admission was 15 and 25 cents. (*Scottsboro Citizen*, August 13, 1903). In 1905, "the Athletic Club had a special meeting Monday afternoon on Institute campus and were delightfully entertained by 'moving pictures" (*SC* April 13, 1905). The contemporary national news columns were filled with stories about the utility of moving picture machines.

In 1908, a moving picture machine was used in a political campaign, probably the first time a movie was made to promote a candidate. It was during William Jennings Bryan's third unsuccessful run for the presidency, and apparently he was no more compelling on film than in person, since he lost the 1908 election to William Howard Taft. (Wikipedia)

The April 1908 *Progressive Age* talked about the long-overdue movement to regulate moving picture shows. A January 1908 story titled "Moving Picture Machines Likely To Cause Disastrous Fires" stated, "It is not uncommon for a film to catch fire from the machine and very often the fire department is called out by such a blaze." And it was not just gasoline-powered projectors that were the problem, as in the two accidents in North Alabama; the film itself was highly flammable and in Pittsburg in October 1909, an electric spark ignited the film, causing an explosion that injured 50 people.

The reason for all this concern over the explosive nature of motion picture theatres is well-founded. As we saw in the paragraph above, the gasoline-powered projectors were undependable and likely to explode. But the film on which movies were recorded was also highly explosive. Cellulose nitrate was first used as a base for photographic roll film by George Eastman in 1889; it was used for photographic and professional 35mm motion picture film until the 1950s. It is highly flammable and also decomposes with age, becoming toxic," the British Science and Media Museum explains on its website. "When new, nitrate film could be ignited with the heat of a cigarette; partially decomposed, it can ignite spontaneously at temperatures as low as 120˚F (49˚C). Nitrate film burns rapidly, fueled by its own oxygen, and releases toxic fumes." It was replaced by a more stable film base in the 1950s." (https://historyofinformation.com/detail.php?id=535)

But this does not stop directors from loving it. "Nitrate film stock has been praised for the beauty of its images and for truly allowing cinematographers to paint with light — whites pop off the screen, blacks are deep and rich, and grey tones shimmer," National Public Radio explained in 2017. But the volatility of nitrate film certainly complicates film restoration efforts. "If nitrate film stock does catch fire, NPR concluded, "it will continue to burn even if you douse it with water." It was the film base standard until the 1950s. It is easy to see why you would not want to use it near a gasoline-powered light source.

All such emerging forms of entertainment were not without controversy. Rev. Dr. Talmage published a long sermon in the *Scottsboro Citizen* July 28, 1898 railing against the potential impact of such amusements as "opera houses, theatres, bowling alleys, and skating rinks" (Jackson County had all these dens of iniquity...) on the souls of the audience. In July 1908, a judge in New York State held that showing movies on Sunday was not in violation of the law. By December 1908, as more people were able to see moving pictures, Dr. Mitchell's Eye Salve was marketed to strengthen the eyes and diminish "panorama headaches caused by constant shifting of the waves, as by moving picture shows." Imagine needing an eye salve so you could watch a movie!

The Opera House, Scottsboro's First Entertainment and "Movie" Venue

The first building in Scottsboro that could accommodate a large meeting like a church service or performance audience was located at 107 West Laurel Street and was later known as Payne's Opera House or Scottsboro Opera House. The building was constructed around 1868 and "owned by Rev. T. J. Wood, who allowed the different denominations to worship in that building free of charge." (Baptist Church History). This building's ground floor was originally the home of the Baptist, Methodist, and Cumberland Presbyterian churches, with the Masons owning the second story. As the churches built their separate buildings in the 1880s, the ground floor was used for a time as a school and in

Brick opera house, union church, and school at 107 West Laurel. Photo from First Baptist Church history, 1968.

1892 became Scottsboro's first theatre. This building was the original home of the First Baptist Church, according to the church's centennial booklet, in which this picture was published, with the years between 1868 and 1877 indicating that the building was used as a church.

As the churches built dedicated buildings in the 1880s, the lower floor was no longer used and was sold in 1892 to W. H. Payne for use as an opera house. After W. H.'s death in 1899, it passed to his son Warwick, who operated it until shortly before his death in 1905.

The building currently on this site is the Waco Derrick building, constructed on the foundation of the older building in 1939. It is a two-story brick building with two single windows on the second floor. The ground floor has been heavily altered to accommodate display windows. A plate reading "1939 I. T. Derrick" is near the top of the second story. Izzy "Red Hot" Derrick bought the old opera house site and built a one-story building which operated as Butler and Kennamer Wholesale for several years. About 1939, Derrick went into the furniture business under the name Rough and Tumble Furniture Company. As the business grew and needed more floor space, Derrick added a second floor with an elevator that was completed in 1948. I have been told, but cannot confirm, that this elevator was originally part of Hodges Hospital. The site was the home of Rough and Tumble Furniture in the 1940s though at least 1979 and most recently of Mr. D's Furniture. To remind citizens of the footprint of the original church and later opera house, Izzy Derrick left the bottom three rows of bricks. If you look carefully at this building today, you will see those three rows are a different brick from the rest of the building.

When the building sold in 1940, the *Progressive Age* did a retrospective on the building:

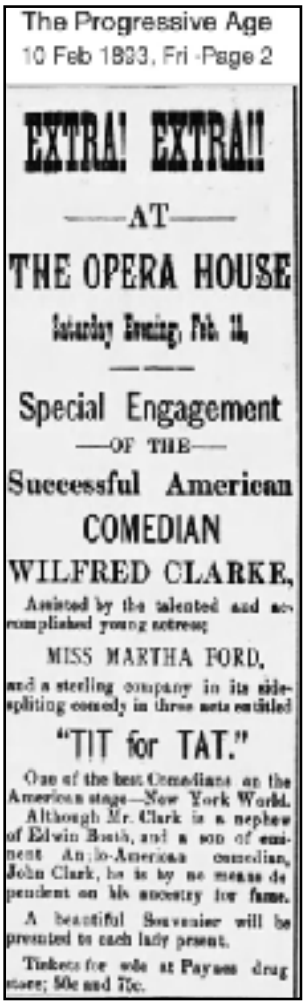
This week there was a real estate transfer in Scottsboro that involved the most historic building in the city. The W. H. Payne heirs sold their holdings in the Old Opera House brick and the lot on which it stands at the rear of Scottsboro Hardware Company. The purchaser was T. G. Collins, former Hollywood merchant who has moved to Scottsboro and already erected a residence. Mr. Collins expects to remodel the old building or build anew on the lot, and enter the mercantile business here.

The old building was one of the first structures ever erected in Scottsboro, being two story and of brick. It was originally built for a union church house and lodge hall up on the second floor.

The Methodists purchased the lower floor and used it for their church for several years and in 1892 sold it to W. H. Payne. It was used then for a theatre until about 1914, and during that period was also used for a public school building for several sessions. The Masons moved to a new home about twenty years ago and the second story was then used by other lodges and Ku Klux. The building was condemned several years ago and Mr. Collins expects to tear down to the first story before he starts remodeling.

This building was probably the second brick building (after the freight depot) built in Scottsboro. Its history as an opera house is well documented in contemporary newspapers. At the end of the 19th century, it seemed like everyone was getting an opera house. Huntsville and Decatur had them. Stevenson already had a performance venue, the college chapel at the William and Emma Austin College. Contemporary newspapers would call the Isabelle Theatre, build in 1912, "the opera house" until Scottsboro began calling their building "the opera house" in local newspapers. Over time, the Scottsboro building was called "Mr. Payne's opera house" and around 1900 the "Scottsboro Opera House." It was a venue for plays, stage performances, recitals, recitations, speeches, minstrel shows, magicians, ventriloquists, impersonators, hypnotists, mind readers, Civil War and fraternal organization lecturers, and as a meeting hall for organizations like the medical board and school advocates.

Photo of W. H. Payne from Rev. Betty Fuller


The Progressive Age
10 Feb 1893, Fri -Page 2

EXTRA! EXTRA!!

—AT—

THE OPERA HOUSE

Saturday Evening, Feb. 11,

Special Engagement

—OF THE—

Successful American

COMEDIAN

WILFRED CLARKE,

Assisted by the talented and accomplished young actress;

MISS MARTHA FORD,

and a sterling company in its side-splitting comedy in three acts entitled

"TIT for TAT."

One of the best Comedians on the American stage—New York World.

Although Mr. Clark is a nephew of Edwin Booth, and a son of eminent Anglo-American comedian, John Clark, he is by no means dependent on his ancestry for fame.

A beautiful Souvenir will be presented to each lady present.

Tickets for sale at Payne's drug store; 50c and 75c.

The opera house opened January 13, 1893. "The cornet, the flute, the violin all have their soloists of fame, who will appear at the opening of the Scottsboro Opera House," the *Progressive Age* said on January 6. Anxious to have his new venture succeed, W. H. Payne kept a steady stream of acts in his opera house. "Kiud's Comedy Company will hold the boards at the new opera house in Scottsboro February 2 (*PA*, Jan. 20 1893). It is interesting to note that Dr. Payne controlled only the first floor at the time, with the Masons continuing to meet upstairs until Dr. Boyd built the locker plant building at 122 East Peachtree Street for his medical practice in 1916, allowing the Masons to use the second floor. The Masonic symbol is still seen on the front of this building. "The secret order owning the hall above the opera house are having the hall put in excellent shape," the *Progressive Age* said on February 3. Tickets for performances at the opera house were purchased at Payne's Drug Store, usually for 15 (gallery, for Negroes), 25, and 35 cents.

A succession of acts made up the rest of the 1893 season: the Heinrich Comedy Company (Feb 17); the King's Comedy Company (Feb. 24) which the *Age* described as "two hours of solid pleasure with a lot of fun thrown in for 25 and 15 cents"; the Amateurs production of "The Turn of the Tide" (Mar 10); a musical performed under the management of Mr. Hille of Nashville, featuring locals Prof. Edmonds (Civil War bugler and first director of the Hosiery Mill Band), Misses Mary Payne and Stella Moody, and Mr. Will Hodge (Mar 17); a travelogue recounting a 500-mile camel ride through all the Bible Lands by W. A Whittle (Apr 21); and a violinist, a pianist, and a tenor (May 12).


The Scottsboro Citizen
10 May 1894, Thu -Page 3

OPERA HOUSE

One Night Only

Saturday, May 12.

Miss ANNIE ABBOTT

Just returned from a 3-years tour of Europe.

LOADED WITH GEMS

Magnificent Costumes from Parisian Designs.

The strongest attraction now before the American public.

Pronounced a success by press and public.

Admission 50c., Gallery 25c.

No Extra Charge for reserved seats.

The year 1894 held great promise as well. "As the show season approaches, Dr. W. H. Payne, the energetic manager of the new opera house, is losing no time in getting things in proper shape for an interesting season for the people of Scottsboro," the *Age* wrote on July 21, 1893, "and he has succeeded in getting some of the first companies in the country billed for the near future." Local songbird and temptress [the vixen behind the murder of R. C. Ross in 1894 by the Skelton brothers), sang there in September 1893. "Miss Annie Skelton is among the leading singers of the country, and it may be expected that her rendition of 'Angels, Serenade' at the opera house tonight will be excellent," the *Age* wrote on September 22.

Another early program that stands out is a ladies only lecture offered by the Evelyn Industrial Institute in Chicago in March 1894. "Mrs. C. O. Baker, of Chicago, will lecture to ladies, only, at the Opera House this afternoon at 3 o'clock. She proposes to tell what women should know, and what a woman should do. As to anything further in connection with her lecture we are not informed and could not say. All ladies over sixteen years of age are invited to attend. Free admission." (*PA*, Mar 23, 1894) The subject of this program remains a mystery, as does the institute.

There were also lectures from which women were excluded. In June 1897, for example, a Dr. Hall presented a lecture titled "Roasted Husbands on Toast" which was described as "a treat, rich, rare and racy." The story about this lecture notes that there seems to have been a house orchestra that played for events at the opera house. "The Orchestra furnished music for the occasion," the article said in passing.

Annie Abbott, the "little Georgia magnet" gave an exhibition of her power that year, and several benefits were staged raising money to build a dormitory for the Tri-State

Normal University [Page Administration Building]. Students regularly boarded with people in the area. The Age continued to promote Dr. Payne and his opera house venture. "Dr. W. H. Payne, manager of the opera house, has engagements with three companies for dates in August," the *Age* wrote on August 10, 1894. "It is hope the new opera house will do a good business in the coming season, as its business was poor last winter, its first season. All the opera people who have visited Scottsboro are highly pleased with our new play house, and rate it among the best arranged houses in the country. Dr. W. H. Payne is the right man in the right place. Being a genial, whole-souled gentleman, and a thorough going business man, no better man for the place could be found."

Attendance continued to be a problem. On November 23 1894, the *Age* provided support for Dr. Payne. "The fact is, Dr. Payne, the manager of the opera house, will not bill any except first class companies. The attendance was down but as usual a great number of people were jammed into the gallery [the cheap seats], and quite a number of people were turned away on account of their being no more room in the gallery. The gallery was built for the accommodation of the colored people, but one account of the differences in the price of admission to the gallery many of our people who attend the opera house even accompanied by ladies seem to have lost sight of the fact. In the future white people who attend the opera house will no doubt save the manager great worry by bearing in mind the fact that the gallery is set apart for the accommodation of the colored people, while the lower floor is intended more specially for ladies and children."

By 1897, precursors to movies were making their way into the opera house lineup. "Prof' Weston's show at the Opera House Monday night was one of unusual attraction. It embraces a combination of three separate shows in one, each being of extraordinary merit. His life-like magic lantern pictures were pleasing as well as instructive, some of them moving as in the ediscope." This photo of a magic lantern device and the wooden slide that it projected is from Etsy. It looked very much like the slide projectors we all remember from high school. Since there is no power cord, it would seem that just like the exploding ikonograph shown earlier, the light source was gasoline powered.

Photos of magic lantern and slides from Etsy.

Dr. Payne was still actively booking shows in 1897: exhibitions of hypnotism and clairvoyance and minstrel shows, like the Fields and Hanson's Minstrel Stars and the Grand Concert Band in January 1898. "About three hundred pleasure seekers found their way to the opera house," the *Progressive Age* reviewer said on January 13. "After such a good turn out on the part of town people, we think that the managers of the opera house will be encouraged to source other attractions."

A December 1898 performance by the "Down in Cuba" company suffered an accident which ended the play. "An oil or gasoline tank exploded and broke up the play. No serious damage was caused by the explosion. A few slightly burned hands."

Warwick Payne from Rev. Betty Fuller

Comments in the newspapers indicated some desire that Dr. Payne book more frequent and higher quality acts at his opera house, but recall that Dr. Payne died July 26, 1899. Son Warwick Payne bought the opera house, the *Citizen* reported on October 19, 1899 and "says he is going to book some good attractions this season." Warwick himself suffered the heart issues that plagued the Payne family, and he would die in August 1905, only 30 years old.

During his short tenure as opera house manager, Warwick Payne booked a handful of quality shows that were well received. A group of local actors produced *Esmerelda or The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, with a cast that included J. H. Hurt, Pearl Caldwell, Mrs. J. A. Kyle, Mary Nell Beech, and Misses Brown and Robinson, but the most interesting casting was of Mr. Payne himself as Quasimodo, the deformed bell ringer.

In what should have been the heart of the opera house season in 1904, nothing was happening because Warwick Payne had married a woman in Union Springs and was very ill and no longer booking acts for the opera house. The space did not sit idle. Misses Tempie and Clara Young opened a public school at the opera house on October 16, 1904, with about 50 students attending. They closed their school term February 10 of the next year with "an entertainment" that consisted of recitations, music, and several short plays at the opera house, to which the public was invited.

Warwick Payne died in August of 1905, and in November, the opera house changed hands, with Sam Gay, E. C. Snodgrass, and John D. Snodgrass purchasing it and remodeling it. "They are going to book some good plays for the coming winter. These gentlemen are live wide awake and progressive and should be given all encouragement possible," the *Citizen* wrote on November 2. By Nov 30, the *Citizen* reported that "the enterprising and progressive managers of the Scottsboro Opera House, Sam Gay and John Snodgrass, have just purchased a magnificent new rosewood piano; also they have had painted a pretty new drop curtain, which adds greatly to the appearance of things. Tickets are now purchased in Sam Gay and John Snodgrass' shops on the square."

Gay and Snodgrass began bookings, but they were not nearly as adept at this as the Paynes had been. A few first class acts appear, but mostly the opera house became a venue for ladies' meetings and fund-raising endeavors and free lectures and school musicales. People missed the opera house, and the newspapers gave them all encouragement and great reviews. Talent became purely local, visiting friends who could sing giving recitals—musical evenings by the Baptist ladies or plays staged with local talent. Some of the out of town presentations bordered on the burlesque. Quality went down and prices went up. No bookings can be found for 1909, and the theatre was rented out to W. L. "Lit" Moody, who had a business on the west side of the square, to use for storage. A March 1909 ad for Moody's in the *Citizen* said, "Stock is kept in the old opera house just back of our store." When Moody's son developed tuberculosis and the family decided to move west, one of the selling points of his business was "a paid up lease on the opera house at the rear of the store building, last 4 years from January 1st, 1910."

Ads mentioning the opera house after this time referred to E.C. Snodgrass' White City Theatre. In 1922, Kirk A. Philen had set up a shoe repair and harness factory business in the "old opera house." The building was condemned and was torn down in 1939. When Ann Chambless was a child, she remembered old costumes in the building when Waco Derrick tore it down.

The Early Tent Shows

With electrification, Scottsboro experienced its first precursor to the silent movie theatre in a production put on by Russell's Electric Show, which the *Progressive Ag*e called "one of the best attractions Scottsboro has had in a long time." The production was shown in a tent theatre. "The show is clean and instructive as well as interesting and only high class pictures are shown. The illustrated songs have made a decided hit with each audience, as the scenes are shown in beautiful colors." The nightly shows featured Paul Revere's Midnight Ride, Automobile Races, Ben-Hur, and a Passion play. Admission was 10 and 15 cents.

Scottsboro was ready to have its own movie theatre. The July 25, 1912 *Progressive Age* announced that "L. J. Hackworth will open a moving picture show the third day of August and will run Tuesday and Thursday nights and Saturday afternoon and night. The White City Theatre is to be the name of the new place of amusement, and it will be on the circuit of the newest and most up-to-date films." On April 24, 1913, the

Age announced that "L. J. Hackworth left Saturday for El Reno, Okla. He will engage in the moving picture business."

No more mention is made of this Scottsboro Theatre, though a short comment in the November 21, 1912 *Progressive Age* noted that "Luther Hackworth has put a moving picture show at Shelbyville." A moving picture theatre excited everyone. "Henry Hambrick has purchased the barber business of W. J. Austin," the *Progressive Age* reported in January 1913. "Mr. Austin is contemplating going into the moving picture business in a nearby town." That nearby town was Stevenson, and this Lyceum was the precursor to the Isabelle Theatre. It was a moving picture business as a subscription service.

In March 1913, when the town debated paying $480 for a Lyceum course [presumably at Austin College], the newspaper noted that this amount was "less than we are paying for moving pictures every month." The newspaper argued, "Parents should begin to realize that their children are going to have some form of entertainment. Shall it consist of the cheap vaudeville, negro minstrel, and circus presented occasionally or would the community rally behind the subscription Lyceum attractions?"

Eliza Woodall in *The Stevenson Story* also recounts that a traveling tent theatre spent a week in Stevenson that began on Monday, May 7, 1917:

> *Commencing Monday, May 7 Milt Tolbert's Big Tent Theatre Company will exhibit one week in Stevenson, playing under big rainproof tent and presenting a new repertoire of comedies and dramas."*
>
> *On Monday night the play will be "The Gambler and the Lady," which is four acts. The old Southern Negro part, as presented by Mr. Sam Hunter, is one of the funniest black-face parts ever written. The offering Friday (society) night is a dramatization of Bertha M. Clay's masterpiece, "Beyond Pardon." Other plays presented during the week's stay of the Tolbert Company are "Sweetest Girl in Dixie," "Darkness and Daylight," "As Told in the Hills," "The Curse of our Nation," and "The Village Parson."*
>
> *While the Tolbert show is new to Stevenson, a number of the players are not, Miss Cora Lea, leading lady, Mr. H. D. Hale, leading man, and several other members of the company having been seen in Stevenson on previous occasions with other shows of a like nature. The big tent will be erected on the usual show grounds.*

Silent Movies

In April 1913, Congress proposed a tariff on all luxury items, including a tax of 20-25 percent on moving picture tickets. But movies were a luxury that consumers were ready to pay for. Ministers showed moving pictures at church to attract new parishioners. The Live Stock Association showed a free moving picture to encourage attendance at their association meeting. (*PA*, Feb 19, 1914) References to moving pictures filled the papers in 1914. Toward the middle of 1913, the word "movie" found its way into the lexicon.

Movies produced in studios and shown in movie theatres did not become practical until 1914. The first feature-length silent drama used the same technique: "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil" (1914). (Wikipedia) Jackson County was not far behind this trend. As noted earlier, magic lantern shows had already been shown in the Scottsboro Opera House.


WHITE CITY THEATER

High Class Moving Pictures Day and Night

Electric Fans & Comfortable Seats

Admission 5 and 10 cents

Magnificent New Fireproof Opera House

When You Come To Town, Day Or Night, Don't Fail To See The Movies.

White City Theater

The White City Theatre in Scottsboro: Ed Snodgrass was an early Jackson County entrepreneur. He is responsible for some of the most memorable buildings around the square, including the group of buildings that houses Variety Bake Shop and the Snodgrass Building on the corner of Broad and Willow. His obituary states that "He built and operated the first modern picture show in our city and operated it for several years."

At some point, Ed turned to business interests, having a store at

Larkin's Landing and then building a movie theatre on the Public Square in Scottsboro in 1914. Apparently, it originally went by the name "White City Theatre," but it wasn't long before it became known as "Snodgrass Theatre." Walt Hammer has the ad on the previous page from the 1914 *Progressive Age* in his *Pictorial Walk Around Old High Jackson* book.

According to a story in the 2001 Historic Downtown Scottsboro Calendar, the White City Theatre was the first moving picture theatre with "electric fans and comfortable seats" in Scottsboro. The building contained a large stage, dressing areas, storage areas for scenery, and a second floor gallery. The charge was 5 cents for children and 10 cents for adults. For the next five years, live plays as well as moving picture shows were staged at the Snodgrass Theatre. In 1919, Ed "sold his picture show" to R. E. and B. E. Jones (*Progressive Age*, Jan. 10, 1919, p. 1). Today, the Snodgrass Theatre building still stands at 109 East Laurel Street in Scottsboro and houses the Bergman law practice.

1914 North Side of the Square, Snodgrass Theatre on the far left.

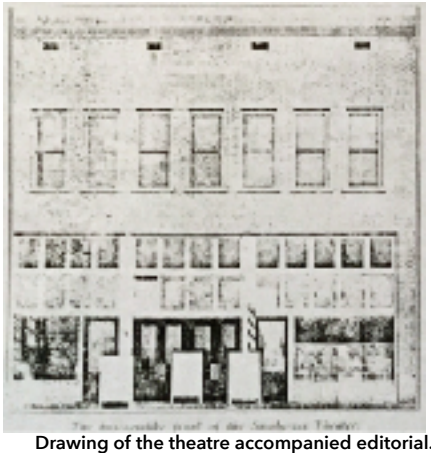
Ed Snodgrass wrote an editorial about his new theatre two years after the theatre opened titled "Be Progressive or Quit":

I have been in the theatre business nearly four years. The first two years was in an old building once used as an opera house and not on a very public street. The seating capacity could not accommodate the people. I could not advertise on billboards to any advantage, as most of the people did not have to pass that way. I used a player-piano for music, and only had one machine. Not satisfied with these cramped quarters, I decided to build a house on Main street, one that the town would be proud of. The theatre cost me $25,000. The inside is finished up to date and I have two electric pianos and a piano-player. I have a stage with scenery so that I can have vaudeville acts if I desire. I use three-sheet and one-sheet billboards and county papers for advertising, have a certain run of pictures on certain nights, and use slide to advertise a week ahead.

The picture business is a progressive business. You have to be progressive or quit. The patrons are becoming better educated in the line of pictures and you have to be a "live wire" to hold our audience. I give my patrons value received. Sometimes I give them advantages of a fine feature for the same price—this may be a mistake, but when you get in you have to continue. However, it means that you have satisfied the public, it is good advertisement and it means they will come again.

When I first entered the motion picture business, I had a partner for about a year, then I bought out his interest and decided to run the theatre to suit myself.

Photo of E. C. Snodgrass from Janet Parks.



Drawing of the theatre accompanied editorial.

A couple of interesting tidbits about this theatre and the time when E. C. Snodgrass operated it. First, Lucy Campbell Wright played piano for the Snodgrass Theatre. She was the daughter of newspaper editor Parker Campbell and his wife Della Ward and the sister of Condon Campbell, the first director of the Hosiery Mill Band. She and her husband Tom were newly married and expecting their first child. When she was quite pregnant and Scottsboro had no street lights, she was walking home after a performance along "the lane," later known as Martin Street. She tripped and fell and went

into premature labor, and both mother and baby died in 1916. Lucy was just 25 years old.

Second, film reels were small for silent movies. A typical movie took 4-5 reels to complete, just as 78 records required 8 or 9 records to complete a single symphony. Later projectionists had two projectors and had one ready to go when the first one ended, so that no time elapsed between reels. However, in 1914, having two projectors would be a luxury no small-town theatre owner would dream of. It took four minutes to remove one reel and load another one, and this gave rise to a group of patriots who showed up for every movie to deliver patriotic messages about World War I, known as the "Four Minute Men."

From the Library of Congress.

According to Wikipedia, "The Four Minute Men were a group of volunteers authorized by United States President Woodrow Wilson to give four-minute speeches on topics given to them by the Committee on Public Information (CPI). In 1917–1918, over 750,000 speeches were given in 5,200 communities by over 75,000 accomplished orators, reaching about 400 million listeners. The topics dealt with the American war effort in the First World War and were presented during the four minutes between reels changing in movie theatres across the country. The speeches were made to be four minutes so that they could be given at town meetings, restaurants, and other places that had an audience."

When this group was demobilized in March 1918, the list of Jackson County participants included attorneys Virgil Bouldin, John K. Thomas, Milo Moody, John F. Proctor, Pryor Wimberly, Judge John B. Tally, newspaper editor Mark Tucker, Col,. D. O. Austin (former sheriff), Mr. Jesse Wheeler, Mr. B. E. Jones, Mr. Cole Savage, Professor Harry LaRue, Rev . Samuel Williams, Margaret Brown Payne (wife of W. H.), Mrs. Charles Quintard Beech, and Mrs. Boyd T. Cantrell. A theatre certificate of service was presented to Ed Snodgrass.

Bill White says that when the building was converted to house his law practice, an orchestra pit was still accessible on the back end of the building. Bill Parks also remembers that Mr. Rupert Word used the window of the Snodgrass Theatre to display coffins in the 1930s and that the kids found this creepy.

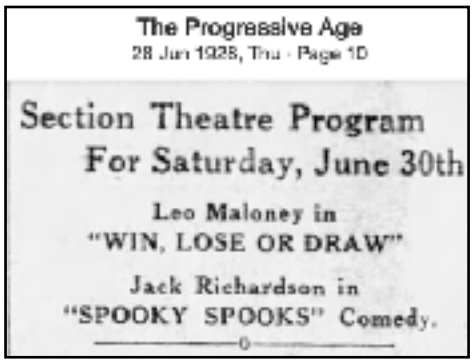
It is clear that Ed Snodgrass regretted giving up his theatre. When he built the Snodgrass Building on the corner of Willow and Broad that later housed Parks Department Store, he had planned to use the first floor as a theatre. But that pipe dream never came to pass.

The Proliferation of Small Silent Movies Theatres

There was an incredible growth in the number of small theatres in the mid 1920s: the Section theatre, several silent movie theatres in Bridgeport, and the Hollywood Theatre. This group of small silent theatres mostly disappeared at the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929.

Section Theatre: There was a silent movie theatre in Section between June 1928 and December 1929. The first movie shown there was "Win, Lose or Draw," directed by Leo Maloney and produced by Maloford Productions in New York. It was released to theatres in 1925 and starred, according to the Turner Classic Movies database, Roy Watson, Josephine Hill, and Leonard Clapham. The theatre showed new movies weekly. The October 11, 1928 *Progressive Age* noted, "A series picture, 'The Jungle Goddess,' was started at Section Theatre last Friday night. A complete action picture will also be shown every Friday night and a good Western and a comedy Saturday afternoon and night. The people here appreciate the class of pictures this theatre is showing." Hoot Gibson starred in "Painted Ponies" on October 20. The theatre showed "Money to Burn" on November 23 and "The Slaver" on November 24, a 1927 movie reviewed and covered in IMDB. Here is a photo from the movie.

Section Theatre did a benefit for Section School on December 19, 1929, the *Progressive Age* reported. The picture, "California Mail....is a good western picture you will enjoy. The admission will be 15 cents and 20 cents." No further references to this theatre are found after 1929.


The Progressive Age
28 Jun 1928, Thu · Page 10

Section Theatre Program
For Saturday, June 30th

Leo Maloney in
"WIN, LOSE OR DRAW"

Jack Richardson in
"SPOOKY SPOOKS" Comedy.

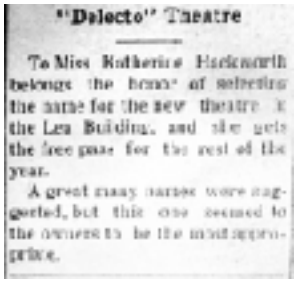

Scene from "The Slaver"From IMDB.

Steve Durham remembers talking with his mother about this theatre. She remembers going to a movie there when she was 7 years old. That visit was memorable because she was at the movie when her grandfather died and the family left the movie before it was over. The theatre was located on Main Street in Section across from the current medical clinic and in the lot next door to what was then the post office. That lot is currently owned by Bob Matthews of Section Gin and Feed.

Lea Building where the Delecto was located. From Dennis Lambert.

Bridgeport News, 1922.

Silent Theatres in Bridgeport: There were several silent movie theatres in Bridgeport. Not much is known about the short-lived Colonial Theater except that it opened in May 10, 1920 in the Whitcher Block. There was also a Princess Theatre and a tent theater, as found in Scottsboro and Stevenson. The Delecto opened in the Lea Building in downtown Bridgeport in May 1921, receiving its strange name from Katherine Hackworth in a naming contest. in 1929. The *Bridgeport News* praised the fine program at this theater, noting that "the Delecto has booked some really worth while features," including: "The Fox" starring Harry Carey; "Robinson Crusoe," a series starting Harry Myers and Gertrude Olmstead; and "High Heels" starring Gladys Walton as a"frivolous little flapper who was flung from her pedestal and found happiness thru disaster." Admission was 15 and 20 cents.


"Delecto" Theatre

To Miss Katherine Hackworth belongs the honor of selecting the name for the new theatre in the Lea Building, and she gets the free pass for the rest of the year.

A great many names were suggested, but this one seemed to the owners to be the most appropriate.

Bridgeport News, 1921.

Another short-lived movie must have arrived just in time for the Depression: the Bryarwood. References to this theater can be found to it in the *Progressive Age* between January and March 1929. It seems likely that this motion picture enterprise was run by Claude Bobo since it advertised with the Dreamland Theatre. This short-lived enterprise appeared in the paper mostly touting its showing of the serials also printed in the *Progressive Age*, "Tarzan the Mighty."

Hollywood Theatre: Hollywood had a silent movie theatre intermittently between 1928 and 1930. On September 27, 1928, the *Progressive Age* in its Hollywood column noted: 'Splendid pictures are being shown at the Hollywood Theatre and is being supported by a large and appreciative crowd. Beginning Wednesday night, they are showing every night and each feature will be different. Come out and meet your friends and enjoy the evenings together." Later in the column, the actual motion picture being shown was discussed. "Hollywood Theatre is presenting the picturization of the Zane Gray famous story, "Lightning," Saturday, Sept. 29th. Don't fail to see this wonderful Tiffany production."


The Progressive Age
14 Mar 1929, Thu · Page 6

Read this fine serial weekly in The Progressive Age and Bridgeport News-Herald and then see it each week at the following theatres:

—AT—
Dreamland Theatre
Every Friday
SCOTTSBORO
—AT—
Bryarwood Theatre
Every Monday
BRIDGEPORT
—AT—
Section Theatre
Every Thursday
SECTION

In October, 1928, the Hollywood Theatre brought "The Satin Woman" to their patrons. It is a short drama starring Dorothy Davenport, directed by Walter Lang. This film is preserved in the Library of Congress collection. (Wikipedia) "Some good pictures are being shown at the Hollywood Theatre," the *Progressive Age* wrote on October 11, "every

Movie Poster from IMDB.


Mrs. Wallace Reid in "THE SATIN WOMAN"

"The Satin Woman" is a glittering gorgeous photo-dramatic pageant of frills and fashion, forming an exotic background for one of the most powerful emotional dramas the screen has yet offered. A smashing dramatic climax seldom, if ever, equalled in the annals of photoplay. Tremendous! See it sure!

See This Great Feature Moving Picture at Hollywood Theatre, Wed. & Thur. Oct. 17-18

Admission 20c and 40c. Remember 2 days showing

night and Saturday afternoon." Though the paper did not publish every week's movies, the Hollywood column in the *Progressive Age* February 14, 1929 encouraged potential patrons: "We are having some very interesting pictures now at the Hollywood Theatre here. Come and meet your friends."

February 21, the theatre ran "The Black Cyclone," a 1925 western, as a benefit, with all proceeds going to the Hollywood school. In March, the theatre showed "The Shadow of the Law" with Clara Bow. The Baptist church used the theatre for a fund-raiser. In April, the theatre presented "Pals in Paradise," a 1926 movie shot in Europe and directed by George B. Seitz. The movies was shown "for the benefit of flood sufferers."

The last reference to the Hollywood theatre was a picture show sponsored by the P.T.A. on July 10, 1930. "The Hollywood P. T. A. will give a picture show at the Hollywood theatre Friday and Saturday night. Everyone come and see these good pictures and humorous comedies. Admission will be ten and twenty cents." Carolyn Machen told me that the theatre in Hollywood was upstairs in Shorty Machen's store.

Transition from Silent Movies to Talkies

A handful of theatres began their existence as silent movies, but were able to upgrade equipment and operators and become early "talkies." The most notable examples are the Isabelle Theatre in Stevenson and the Dreamland in Scottsboro.

The Isabelle Theatre in Stevenson: "The Isabelle Theatre was founded by Charles Edward "Tim" Timberlake (1868-1937)," Jen Stewart wrote. "The theatre opened in 1912 and continued as a movie venue until the mid 1950s. After Charles died, his son Kenan 'Weesie' Timberlake continued to operate the Isabelle." The theater was originally located in an existing building at 106 Main Street (the building is now gone and east of the new mural) and moved to the location on 106 in the early 1930s.

According to Eliza Woodall's reconstructed plat of the original town of Stevenson, the first owner of the lot where the Isabelle would eventually stand was Isaac Hames. P. B, Timberlake had a frame structure on this site that housed a mercantile business. When Stevenson burned in 1911, all but five business houses on Main Street were destroyed. P. B. Timberlake's merchandise business (at the location where the first opera house would be built) burned. The *Progressive Age* reported in May 1911 that Timberlake "lost an estimated $1,000 in building and stock" and had no insurance. A brick building was constructed at this location after the fire, 114 Main Street that the Timberlakes bought in the late 1940s. (*Stevenson Story*)

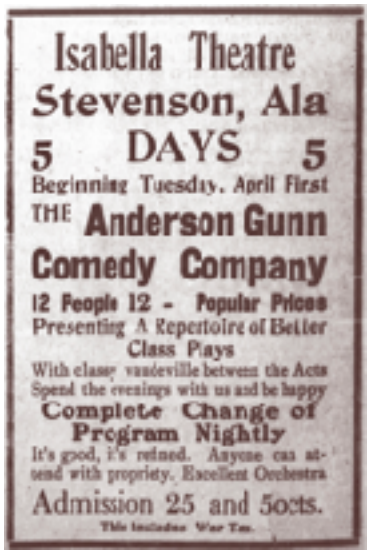

Isabelle Theatre building in the 1970s.

Before the opera house was built, Stevenson held programs known as "the Lyceum" at the William and Emma Austin college chapel. Eliza Woodall mentioned the Lyceum as a theatre, but I believe it was more an ongoing subscription festival like Chautauqua, which the Oxford dictionary defines as "an institution that provided popular adult education courses and entertainment in the late 19th and early 20th centuries." The Lyceum seems to be a concert series that brought entertainment events to Stevenson. It existed before the Isabelle building was constructed, and made use of the space after the theatre was built. The *Stevenson Chronicle* reported in October 1904 in their "At the College" column: "The first attraction of the Lyceum Bureau was presented at the College Chapel last night by the inimitable Lewis Spencer Daniels. He

made a happy effort, and the financial part was quite a success." (*SC* Oct 28, 1904) In October 1912, the *Stevenson Chronicle* encouraged theatre patrons to buy season tickets for the Lyceum series, which could be had for $1.50 for adults and $1.00 for children.

When the Isabelle became available in 1912, the program moved out of the college chapel and to the new opera house. On October 8, 1912, the Lebarge Musical Company appeared at the Isabelle Theatre as part of the Lyceum program. "The Lebarge Musical Company will be at the Isabelle Theatre Tuesday night Oct. 8th and promises to be a red hot number," the paper wrote. "This will open the regular Lyceum course here for this season. John A. Lebarge and Ethel Zimmer are music entertainers of high character and will no doubt draw an unusually large crowd. Manager Hackworth is to be congratulated on securing such a grand musical treat for his first number in this Lyceum course." (*SC*, Sep 26, 1912)

The Lyceum program was only a small part of what was presented at the new opera house. Like Mr. Payne's opera house in Scottsboro, the Isabelle Theatre in Stevenson was built as a live performance hall, not as a venue for silent movies. Known simply as the "opera house" in the *Stevenson Chronicle*, the new facility had electric lighting. "C.L. Hackworth is putting in his engine and Dynamo for lighting the opera house which is to be opened in the near future," the *Chronicle* wrote on April 11,1912. What does a dynamo look like in 1912, you might ask? Wikipedia defines it as "an electrical generator that creates direct current using a commutator. Dynamos were the first electrical generators capable of delivering power for industry." These devices are still found today in hand-cranked radios and bicycle lights.


Isabella Theatre
Stevenson, Ala
5 DAYS 5
Beginning Tuesday, April First
THE Anderson Gunn
Comedy Company
12 People 12 - Popular Prices
Presenting A Repertoire of Better Class Plays
With class vaudeville between the Acts
Spend the evenings with us and be happy
Complete Change of Program Nightly
It's good, It's refined. Anyone can attend with propriety. Excellent Orchestra
Admission 25 and 50cts.

The name of the new opera house was assigned when it opened in May. "The new 'Isabelle Theatre' owned by C. E. Timberlake is now complete and ready for business," the *Stevenson Chronicle* announced on May 16, 1912. "This handsome new building is a credit to a much larger town than Stevenson and is something that we all should feel proud of. The manager Mr. C. L. Hackworth says he is going to give the people of Stevenson some first class performances."

The theatre was embraced immediately as as a non-sectarian location for community meetings. Civic pride flourished during the progressive era of the early 1900s, and Stevenson ladies banded together to form the City Beautiful Club, which met at the Isabelle on June 11, a month after the theatre opened, and included the following women mentioned in the June 13 *Stevenson Chronicle* article: Mrs. C. L. Hackworth, Mrs. R.L. Nelson, Mrs. Frank Shoffner, Mrs. E. Mann, Mrs Allie Grider, Mrs. R. Merritt, Mrs. Leg, Miss Blanche Stubblefield, Mrs. L. R. Alston, Mrs. George L. Austin, Mrs. C. E. Timberlake, Mrs. J. L. Armstrong, and Miss Fern Mitchell. The club met there regularly over the next few years. They served ice cream and cake on September 26 and "oysters on the ground" on October 5. A benefit for the city cemetery was held there in August.

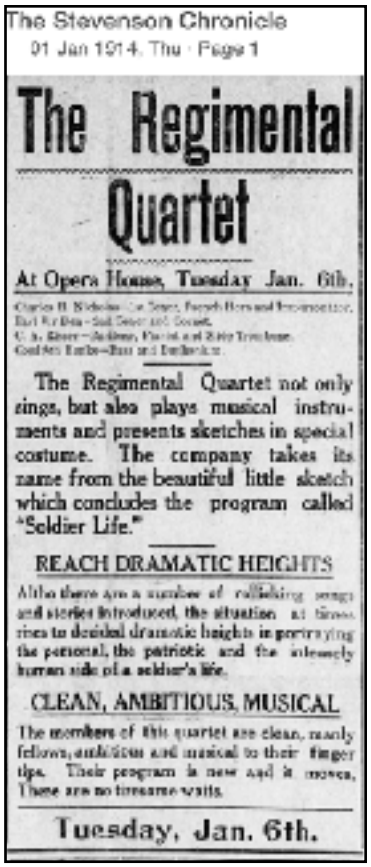
Just as air conditioning was a major selling point for attending movies in the 1930s, the Stevenson opera house needed to cater to the creature comforts of its patrons. "C. L. Hackworth, manager of the Isabelle Theatre, has installed 5 electric fans in the new theatre for the benefit of his patrons," The June 12, 1912 *Stevenson Chronicle* reported. "So you can now attend the shows and be comfortable. There will be a new change of pictures Thursday night, and Saturday matinee and night."


The Stevenson Chronicle
CARMEN
ISABELLE THEATRE
MATINEE AND NIGHT
Saturday, AUGUST 31

The opera house continued to book class acts. On August 31, the theatre presented *Carmen*. a silent movie made in the United Kingdom in 1912, three years before Cecil B. DeMille's landmark telling of this story featuring opera diva Geraldine

Farrar. The *Stevenson Chronicle* was enthusiastic, writing on August 29, "It is a well known fact that C. L. Hackworth, manager of the Isabelle theatre has heretofore given perfect satisfaction in moving picture shows and more than your money's worth but we are frank to say that on next Saturday night the 31st he will give us a show which will surpass anything of its kind that has ever been shown on the screen here."

Manager Hackworth tried various promotions the first year the theatre was opened to encourage attendance. In September 1912, he "gave away a very fine and handsome doll" where ticket stubs were put into a box and the winner drawn. "Little Ernest Mann did the drawing," the paper explained, "and Callie Moore held the lucky number." (*SC*, Sep 12, 1912) In October 1912, Hackworth published that he would put on a talent competition every Friday night where"5.00 in gold will be given as a prize."


The Stevenson Chronicle
01 Jan 1914, Thu · Page 1

The Regimental Quartet

At Opera House, Tuesday Jan. 6th.

The Regimental Quartet not only sings, but also plays musical instruments and presents sketches in special costume. The company takes its name from the beautiful little sketch which concludes the program called "Soldier Life."

REACH DRAMATIC HEIGHTS

Altho there are a number of rollicking songs and stories introduced, the situation at times rises to decided dramatic heights in portraying the personal, the patriotic and the intensely human side of a soldier's life.

CLEAN, AMBITIOUS MUSICAL

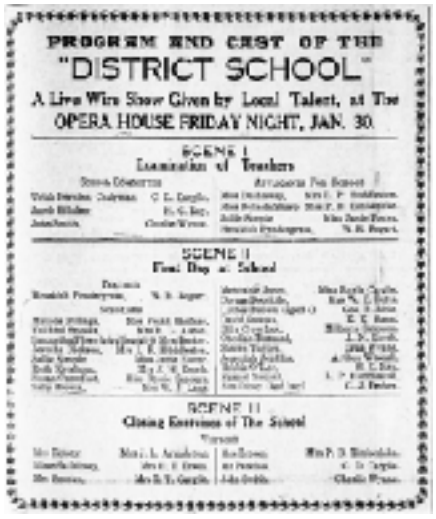
The members of this quartet are clean, manly fellows, ambition and musical to their finger tips. Their program is new and it moves. There are no tiresome waits.

Tuesday, Jan. 6th.

The December 12, 1912 *Chronicle* reviewed a show at the Isabelle put on by a magician, B. A. Daniel, whom the paper called "a natural born magician and ventriloquist of exceptionally rare ability....His performances are high class and is deserving of a packed house."

The theatre was used regularly for traveling live performances. In 1914, an instrumental group appeared. "It will pay you to come miles to see and hear the Regimental Quartet, at the Opera House Tuesday night," the S*tevenson Chronicle* wrote in January 1914. The group of four played brass instruments but the presentation also consisted of "sketches in special costume" with "rollicking songs." It is curious to note that Charles B. Nicholas, one of the four, lists his roles as "1st Tenor, French Horn, and Impersonator."

Later that month, political candidate Hon. Oscar Underwood spoke at the opera house, the first of a number of candidates in the 1914 race to use the opera house as a speaking venue. The state superintendent of education William F. Feagin spoke there in April. In May, Mr. Albert Mason, Professor of Public Speaking from Vanderbilt University, did a dramatic reading of an Obie Read story to raise money to update the parsonage. A "three boiler Johnson Fireless Cooker" was awarded to the lady who sold the most tickets to this event (May 14, 1914 *SC*). The opera house hosted the closing exercises of the local schools. The Nashville Bible School Quartet sang there in June.


PROGRAM AND CAST OF THE

"DISTRICT SCHOOL"

A Live Wire Show Given by Local Talent, at The OPERA HOUSE FRIDAY NIGHT, JAN. 30.

SCENE I
Examination of Teachers

SCENE II
Final Day at School

SCENE III
Closing Exercises of The School

The new theatre gave local groups a chance to hone their acting skills. Native Stevensonians will recognize a number of familiar names in the January 1914 performance announcement for *District School*. The production included "three reels of good shows" the February 5 *Chronicle* noted. The performance was a benefit. "The two shows netted the School Improvement Assn. something over $70 which is not a bad beginning by any means." (Feb 12, 1914 *SC*). A benefit later in February put on by the City Beautiful Club was poorly attended due to inclement weather, and the club thanked Mr. Timberlake for not charging for use of his opera house. (March 5, 1914) Seven actors from Bridgeport (three ladies and four gentlemen) presented "Sky Riders" at the opera house in July.

Short reels were played as part of other performances, but it is clear that by April 1914, the opera house was being used as a venue for "full length" silent movies. "The best and cheapest show on earth is a good moving picture show," the *Stevenson Chronicle* declared on April 2, 1914. "You can see them at the opera house on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday nights. Also Saturday afternoons at 1:30." In May, the paper continued its promotion. "Money spent for a ticket to the moving picture show is well invested," the


Tim and Ida Timberlake. From the family.

Stevenson Chronicle noted. "The pictures are entertaining and instructive. None but high class reels are shown at the Isabelle Theatre. They may be seen Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday night of each week. Don't fail to attend. Prices 5 and 10 cents." Jen Henninger Stewart remembers, " One of Mr. Tim's other sons, Ed, was married to my great aunt and I remember him saying when the theatre first started they showed silent movies and his mother, Idabelle, played the piano during the movie to set the mood—romance, suspense, chase scenes, etc.—and that later his brother Clarence 'Flip' did too."

In September 1914, the *Stevenson Chronicle* ceased publication, so it is no longer possible to track the comings and goings at the opera house. Occasional items in other newspapers like the *Progressive Age* and the *Scottsboro Citizen* tell us that the facility was still very much in use. In April 1919, the Isabelle began advertising in the *Scottsboro Citizen*. This must be because there was no movie house in Scottsboro because Ed Snodgrass "sold his picture show" to R. E. and B. E. Jones. In 1927, the Stevenson news column of the *Progressive Age* reported that "a patriotic program was given by pupils of the Grammar School at the opera house Friday evening." And on February 7, 1929, the *Age* reported that plans were being made in Stevenson for the organization of a garden club, and that interested parties should attend an organizational meeting at the opera house.

Once the larger-capacity high school auditorium in Stevenson opened in 1923, many meetings began using this facility and the Isabelle Theatre building was used more often for movies. The Isabelle continued to be a venue for public presentations through the years. On April 17, 1930, the *Progressive Age* carried an article about a Mr. Brewster, a landscape gardener from Auburn, presenting a talk on the care and management of summer lawns, base planting, trees, and annual flowers, made possible by Mr. M. T. Gowder, the county agent, and the Stevenson Garden Club. On November 6, of that same year, the *Progressive Age* carried two articles about meetings held at the Isabelle: a recital by five of Mrs. Albert Penny's expression students on November 7 and a Parent-Teacher Association sponsorship of the movie, "The Byrd Polar Expedition" on November 14. "Prices reasonable. Everyone come and bring the children."

Some time around 1930, the theatre moved from 106 Main Street to 114 Main Street, the location of Down on Main Street today, and equipment was updated to support movies with sound. The 1930s and 1940s were really the heyday of the Isabelle as a movie venue. "My memories of it are from my childhood in the 1950s," Jen Henninger Stewart writes. "There was a matinee on Saturday afternoons and my sister and I could use our allowance to go to the 'show' while Mama did her grocery and other shopping. With a quarter we could pay admission (10 cents) and get a small Coke and a bag of popcorn (15 cents) The matinees usually had a cartoon, and a feature like Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Lone Ranger or Ma and Pa Kettle movies. By the time I was dating age, it had closed."

The Isabelle Theatre showed its last movie in 1954. The Timberlakes sold the building in 1984. Afterward, Perkins and Allison's Markets were located at this address. Angela and Newton Guess ran a shop there in the 1980s called The Appalachian Collection. It was reopened in 2019 by Mark Evans and is used today as an event venue, known as "Down on Main Street." You can still climb up in the balcony and look inside the tiny projection room. Ken Timberlake, who visited when the JCHA met there, worked at the Isabelle just after he graduated from high school. He recalls that when he and his brother ran the projectors, it would get so hot in the tiny projection room that they would strip down to their skivvies to tolerate the heat.


JCHA Meeting at Down on Main Street, January 2024. Photo by Nat Cisco.

Dreamland in Scottsboro: The owner and manager of The Dreamland theatre, Claude Bobo, dreamed big. He had visions of recreating Atlanta's Fox Theatre in Scottsboro and would eventually succeed to some degree, but his progress toward his goal was fraught with complications.

The first mention of The Dreamland, a silent movie house, came in the August 09, 1923 *Progressive Age* with an operetta called "A Mid Summer's Day," performed by "the children of Scottsboro . . . being well trained under the direction of Miss Sadie Jones with Mrs J.B. Presley as accompanist." Claude Bobo did not acquire the theatre until 1925. Previously, he had managed eight theatres in Chattanooga, including one he owned, The Bonita.

On August 11, 1927, Bobo announced "Next week we will begin the removal of our old theatre building to make room for the erection of a new one on the lot we now occupy. [We will] move the old building from its present location to the northwest corner of the court house square next to the cotton platform, where it will be run until the new house is ready."

It seems likely that the building referred to as "the old building" sat at 145 East Laurel Street, the eventual site of his "little Fox," later to be named The Bocanita. Research has not yielded the location of the cotton platform where his frame building was moved.

However, the structure at the new site was fraught with problems. On February 9, 1928, Bobo reported:

> *On last Tuesday night, Mr. D.M. Slaughter, Chief State Fire Marshal of Montgomery, personally served notice upon me to close our show. It having been reported to him that we were operating a moving picture in a frame building, and under the state fire laws we could be closed down. The show house could have been condemned as a fire hazard under the same law before we moved it. I will leave tomorrow a.m. to purchase a regular theatrical tent and hope to reopen the show within a week or ten days. Last Monday we began work on the foundation for the new theatre [which would become the Bocanita] but this will slightly interrupt work on it until we can start running again.We are building a thoroughly modern and up to the minute theatre of 3 1/2 stories height and 168 feet in length.*

Subsequently, on February 16, 1928, Claude Bobo announced "We have just had one of the South's largest tent manufactories build especially for our use a 33 x 92 foot picture show tent which is to be delivered to us by express tomorrow (Friday). And we are locating it on the Alabama Oil Company's lot adjoining the Lipscomb Grocery Store, which will be convenient to our patrons.

But the tent presented hazards of its own. A note in the January 24, 1929 *Progressive Age* stated "[I] was at the tent theatre last Friday night when a right sharp storm came up. For a little bit it looked like the canvas might do a Lindbergh, but it soon blew over with no damage except Claude Bobo chewed up three cheroots and swallowed the juice while the storm was tugging at the sidewalls and big top."

The old frame building that had previously housed the Dreamland before being condemned was razed in February, 1928. On February 23 of that year, the *Progressive Age* reported "The Dreamland Theatre will soon be a dream sure enough. The wrecking crew is busy on the old house and expects to get it off the square by Saturday night. So far, no one has fallen off the roof, but there is a large daily attendance still hopeful."

Finally, on January 24, 1929, Claude Bobo moved his Dreamland theatre into a "brick and mortar" space on the second floor of the Claybrook building at the corner of Market and Laurel Streets where it would remain for nearly 18 months before the completion of The Bocanita. The program on the next page is from the Dreamland in April 1929. The building at the left is the Claybrook building in 1924, the location

1924 View of Dreamland space.

of the theatre for 18 months while the Bocanita was being built. Notice the windows that were later bricked up, probably in preparation for the theatre.

The entrance to that iteration of The Dreamland was on East Laurel Street where Scottsboro school students in the 1960s might remember ascending the stairs of the old Darwin's store to buy textbooks. Still visible in the old Dreamland space today is a railing, thought to have overlooked the first floor lobby of the theatre. Incandescent light fixtures dangle from the wall where sconces once hung. The space looks to have been "purpose built" as a theatre, given the "split level" auditorium space, but that is unlikely since the building, constructed in 1881 and renovated in 1914, was never previously advertised as a movie or vaudeville theatre.

PROGRAM FOR DREAMLAND THEATRE

—High Class Programs Daily Matinee and Night—

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3.
"THE CRASH"

THURSDAY, APRIL 4
"BARE KNEES"

International Newsreel
Also Comedy.

FRIDAY, APRIL 5.
"THE DIVING GALL"

"TARZAN THE MIGHTY"
Chapter 10 of the serial
And a Good Two-Reel Comedy.

SATURDAY, APRIL 6.
"THE FLYING DUTCHMAN"
And a Good Two-Reel Comedy

THURSDAY, MARCH 28.
"OLD IRONSIDES"

International Newsreel

FRIDAY, MARCH 29.
"THE GIRL FROM RIO"

"TARZAN THE MIGHTY"

SATURDAY, MARCH 30.
"SMOKING GUNS"
TWO-REEL COMEDY

MONDAY, APRIL 1.
"HUNTED BY THE LAW"

"FEET AND FIST"

TUESDAY, APRIL
"STREET ANGEL"

International Newsreel
Aesops Fables.

Dreamland Coming Attractions, Progressive Age, April 1929.

As a silent movie house, The Dreamland depended on local pianists or a phonograph to provide the soundtrack. Mary Presley Cox recalls seeing "Tarzan" there, and she recalls that the musical accompaniment was an opera being played on records.

Bobo intended to install sound equipment in the Dreamland Theatre, but despite the fact that the pioneering sound technology, which he ordered in early 1930 at a cost of $30,000, was delivered while The Dreamland was still in operation, installation never occurred there.

Hoping to install the sound equipment immediately, Bobo was frustrated by the slow progress on the construction of the building of The Bocanita, which had been ongoing for over two years when the equipment arrived. In April 1930, Bobo had told the *Progressive Age*, "Due to the bad slump in our attendance now and desiring to get our patrons accustomed to the talkies before getting into the new theatre, we have decided to install this sound system temporarily in the Dreamland Theatre."

However, the next month, Bobo revised his plans, stating in the May 15 *Progressive Age*:

> *Recently we made an announcement that we were going to install Vitaphone* and Movietone** equipment in the old Dreamland Theatre by May 15th. Since making that announcement, we have reached the conclusion that we can move into the new Bocanita Theatre building and install this equipment there within a short time by doing some three or four weeks more work on it.*

Finally, on July 10, Bobo reported, "We intend to start the picture show again next Thursday or Friday, July 17 or 18th [1930] in the new building with talkie pictures."

The Bocanita would subsequently operate for four years with dirt floors, a temporary roof, and a makeshift partition at the end of the auditorium, but Bobo's dreams of a little Fox were finally taking shape, and he had introduced "talkies" in Scottsboro.

* Vitaphone was a system that used 33 1/3 phonograph records to synch with film and was the used for feature films and short subjects made by Warner Bros. Vitaphone was the last major analog sound-on-disc system and the only one that was commercially successful. The soundtrack is not printed on the film, but issued separately on phonograph records. "The Jazz Singer" (1927), frequently cited as the first talkie, used the Vitaphone system. Note that the soundtrack Mary Presley Cox heard accompanying "Tarzan" would

not have been synched to the movie, but was simply musical background, playing independently of the action. The Vitaphone system pioneered the 33 1/3 rpm phonograph recorded that would eventually become the standard for the home audio market as well.

** The Movietone sound system was a sound-on-film method of recording sound for motion pictures that assured synchronization between sound and picture. It achieved synchronization by recording the sound as an optical track on the same strip of film that records the pictures, a technology that eventually prevailed.

Era of Modern Motion Pictures

After 1930, new movie venues in Jackson County were technologically capable of showing movies with sound.

The Bocanita in Scottsboro: Claude Bobo, the owner and manager of The Dreamland theatre secured the financial banking of Margaret Minerva Hess "Texas" Snodgrass, familiarly known as "Aunt Tex," to build his dream: a "little Fox" theatre modeled on Atlanta's opulent Fox movie house.

Best photo of the Bocanita, from the Sam Hall movies by his grandfather.

The July 19,1928 *Progressive Age* newspaper announced "All excavation and preliminary work completed, materials assembled and forms ready for concrete pouring at the new Bocanita Theatre site, our $30,000 picture palace, which is to be the very latest thing in style, beauty, and convenience." The site of the new theatre became an instant landmark as evidenced by a June 20, 1929 ad in Scottsboro's T*he Progressive Age* newspaper for the City Cafe which advertised the cafe's location as "next to the new Bocanita Theatre," a year after work had commenced but still a year before it would open to the public.

Bobo arrived at the unique name of the theatre by combining his own name with that of his wife and a relative: "Bo" for Bobo, "CA" for brother-in-law Charles Ambrester, and "Nita" for Claude's wife, Nita. The unique name is unduplicated in theatre history. Before coming to Scottsboro, Bobo had established and run the similarly named Bonita Theatre in Chattanooga.

On the 15th of May, 1930, Bobo stated in *The Progressive Age*:

> *All of the upper floors, including both balconies are complete and ready for the seats, three fourths of the building is roofed, and by putting in the lower or ground floor and building a temporary partition three-fourths of the length of the building back from Laurel Street ... we can move in and be at home. By using the first or lower balcony and the ground floor we will have twice as much room as we now have....*

The article masks an underlying problem, however: After two years of construction and $35,000 in expenditures, Aunt Tex Snodgrass's patience was growing thin. She had withdrawn financial support, and she halted Bobo's dream well short of its realization.

She retained Claude Bobo as manager, however, and in a possible veiled reference to Aunt Tex's impatience with the expense demanded by his grand design, Bobo said "Our good friend P.W. Campbell [the editor of *The Progressive Age*] suggested that we make this move [from The Dreamland to unfinished Bocanita building] now instead of deferring it until the building was nearer completion and the suggestion

and advice, 'give the Devil his dues,' helped us to decide to get into it as soon as possible."

Finally, on July 10, Bobo reported:

> *We intend to start the picture show again next Thursday or Friday, July 17 or 18th [1930] in the new building with talkie pictures. Since closing the show at the old Dreamland stand last Monday night we have doubled the work going on . . . . While the building won't be finished completely we think the lower auditorium floor and the first balcony will be sufficient until we can complete whole. Those two floors will give us approximately 500 seats. We have 250 automobile seat cushions on hand with which to partially 'upholster' our seats, so we are trying to arrange for your comfort.*

The first talkies to show at the Bocanita were *Fifty Miles from Broadway* and *Hold Everything*. Bobo described the scheduling and pricing structure for the first showings: "For a while we will continue to run silent pictures Monday and Tuesday as usual at 20¢. Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday will be talkies. Saturdays talkie Westerns will be 15¢ and 25¢. Occasionally, we may have to charge 50¢ top price on some of the big road show specials."


BOCANITA PROGRAM

"Reunion"

"The Last Outlaw"

"The Plot Thickens"

"Modern Times"

"Three Married Men"

"After The Thin Man"

Sample Bocanita Coming Attraction, Progressive Age.

There were alternatives to the usual tariffs, however: *Chronicles* Columnist Stanley Jones recounted a special deal offered by Bobo for admission to the theatre:

> *[Claude Bobo] conceived the brilliant idea of constructing a decorative mosaic floor in the building—of shining arrowheads! Moreover, any person could go to the show free with six arrowheads or six caps from Coca-Cola bottles. Regrettably, for the Bobos, their "luck and plans" did not pay out and the "picture show" property was returned to that lovely, determined, happy, friendly lady Aunt Tex Snodgrass. No one really is sure what happened to all of those arrowheads that were collected, though one legend has it that Aunt Tex ordered them all dumped in the river.*

Others claimed that the arrowheads were dumped at the city's solid waste facility near the end of the runway at Word Field. One contributor offers what he believes is reliable second-hand information from one who actually witnessed the dump. Another contributor remembers "Bub" Starkey carrying his son and friends to the dump to dig for arrowheads, telling the boys it was the site of an Indian settlement. Inexplicably, people who attended the theatre as late as the 1950s and 1960s recall gaining admission with arrowheads, although Claude Bobo's tenure was long over by then.

The theatre would continue showing movies in its partially completed state until 1934 when *The Progressive Age* reported, in an article titled "Bocanita Theatre Completion Work Starts Next Week":

> *Announcement is made today that material is being assembled for the completion of the Bocanita Theatre, the actual work to start next Tuesday, when masons will start laying brick on the unfinished . . . end of the building. When this work is finished, the building will be 165 feet long and five stories high. Work at the same time will be begun flooring the lobby, balcony, steps and other interior additions. When completed the theatre will have twice its present seating capacity. A stage for road shows will also be installed.*

The theatre had operated for four years with dirt floors, a temporary roof, and a makeshift partition at the end of the auditorium, but the 1934 work came near to realizing the smaller version of the Fox Theatre that had been Bobo's dream.

Unfortunately, Bobo had little time to bask in his creation: In October 1935, he was replaced as manager of the Bocanita by J.R. Long, a theatre manager from Fort Payne.

Claude Bobo's tenure over his grand design might have been short, but his legacy was notable: His "little Fox," which featured a portico with its great arch surrounded by bare incandescent bulbs and walls festooned with colorful posters, was reminiscent of an urban playhouse, an alien structure on the courthouse square on which it stood from the 1930s until the late 1960s.

Centered under the arch and recessed about eight feet behind mosaic tile work stood a pair of burnished wooden doors set with multiple window panes. Brass rails were set diagonally across each door. To the right of the doors recessed into the wall of the portico was a ticket booth that was rarely staffed since both Aunt Tex and her daughter, Allie Mae Hurt, who would eventually succeed Aunt Tex as owner and manager, performed all the front office duties: selling tickets, "catching" tickets, and selling popcorn. To the left of the double doors were large marquees advertising coming attractions.

Above the doors leading into the theatre were two curved stairwells on either side of the rear walls. On the right side, Mrs. Snodgrass and Mrs. Hurt sold tickets and popcorn from a stool beside the juke-box-like corn popper. In addition to popcorn at 10 cents a bag, Allie Mae Hurt also sold "hard tacks" (partially popped kernels) for prices variously reported as 5¢ and 2¢. The looping stairwells opened onto the first of two balconies. On the third floor was an apartment where Aunt Tex lived until her death in 1945.

Built on the top floor, a structure resembling a "penthouse" housed the projection booth, making the Bocanita, at five stories, the tallest building in Scottsboro with the exception of the courthouse steeple.

On the first floor of the lobby, past the concessions, stood another set of double doors that led into an anteroom for the theatre, consisting of a barrier behind which movie goers could stand until their eyes became accustomed to the subdued lighting. Smoking was permitted only behind the wall. Men's and Women's restrooms, illuminated in a an eerie violet light, were on either side of the anteroom.

The auditorium of the theatre was hung ceiling to floor with heavy burgundy-colored curtains that ran the entire length of the side walls of the auditorium to the front, where they framed the screen. The curtains were hung in panels, allowing small boys who were frightened by Frankenstein to hide behind them.

The ambitious goals for the theatre apparently did not incorporate explicit architectural renderings or technical specifications from established theatres, and as a result, the screen had to be angled backward in order to avoid parallax problems with the projection image since the projector was set so high in the small space.

An early projectionist at the theatre, Reuben T. Miller, described the configuration in the April 2002 edition of the *Chronicles* by saying: "Remember those projectors, 'standing on their heads,' looking down from the fifth floor penthouse? The screen had to be tilted back a little at the top to have the image-carrying light beam perpendicular to the screen surface. This kept the picture from being trapezoidal, or wider at the bottom than at the top. It also made for good viewing balconies and ground floor, as well as the projection booth."

Miller described the early technology of the "talkies" by relating this story:

> *An electronic vacuum tube, the 205D, was one of the final output pair which delivered the sound to a large Amplion horn speaker mounted directly behind the snow-white screen. Then new to the movie business, this screen was perforated with tiny "soundholes," allowing the sound to pass through to the audience . . . . The projectionist played a phonograph record [see the description of the "Vitaphone" system above] which provided the complete sounds and dialogue while playing the movie on the projector.*
>
> *Both phonograph and movie projector were mechanically coupled to keep sound and picture together. This worked well if the starting places were both properly observed. That is, unless the film had to be patched or repaired. In this case an exact amount of blank black film had to be spliced in to retain "synch," to assure lips and words, sound, and action all occurred at the same time. All projection booths did not always have blank film at hand. Yes, it happened too often. When it did, a serious moment could become hilarious. The theatre's*

Margaret Minerva Texas Hess "Aunt Tex" Snodgrass in front of the Bocanita. From Mary Garner Robinson.

first projectionist experienced this problem. He said that without stopping he simply jumped the phonograph needle over one groove. It was in the right direction and the right amount.

Reuben Miller also recalls that although Aunt Tex might have kept a tight rein on Claude Bobo, she was generally known as a generous woman.

In 1933, a boy of seven [Reuben Miller is speaking of himself], who had had polio (left leg) but had not yet had to go on crutches, begged a dime from his Mom to go see Tarzan the Fearless (serial) and Buck Jones, the Saturday matinee. Aunt Tex was "catching tickets." As I handed her my ticket, she rose to her feet, quite put out over the situation and said: "Honey, you don't have to pay to see ole Aunt Tex's show." She led me by the hand back to the box office, got my dime, and returned it to me. Returning home, I told my Mom who said, "No, you must always offer to pay." Well I did this the next time and got a genuine scolding from Aunt Tex. She said, "Honey, I told you that you get in free, and no matter who is on the door, you just tell 'em Ole Aunt Tex said you get in free." When I told my Mom this, she agreed, and I had a pass to the movies until I became sixteen.

At age sixteen, Miller began his part-time employment by sitting in for the regular projectionist, Albert Petty, during lunch breaks.

In Aunt Tex's 1945 obituary, the effusive writer notes " . . . it is not overstatement to say she was probably . . . one of the best liked persons ever living here. It was the usual custom at the picture show where she was ticket seller and doorkeeper for years that she never charged old people admission."

Bob Hodges wrote in his often-shared essay *Going Home Again*:

> *The Bocanita never surprised you: there were things which you could plan on to be constant. You could plan on Mrs. Allie Mae Hurt being in the lobby, selling popcorn for a dime at one machine and hard tack at the other for a nickel. Also, you could count on one song before the movie started, the same one every time, played while the lights were still on: Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys singing My San Antonio Rose. Charlie Webb was the enforcer at the Bocanita, but for some reason, he did not strike fear in us as did Philco [Horace Wilkerson, the manager at the Ritz theatre]. Charlie always struck me as a very nice and compassionate man who should have been in another line of work*

The Bocanita, despite having limited stage space, hosted periodic shows such as "Royal Revels" with the King of Jesters, Bobby "Uke" Henshaw. Webb Pierce's Pontiac Bonneville convertible, studded with tooled leather upholstery inlaid with silver dollars, steer horns for a hood ornament, and pistols for door handles, frequently sat outside to advertise his shows in the 1950s and 1960s.

In one memorable flub, one contributor remembers sitting in the Bocanita when a porn movie flashed on the screen, mid-movie: As he relates the story: "Here's a memory for you. When I was 12-13 years old I went to the Bocanita on a Saturday afternoon to watch a double feature. The first feature played just fine but before the second feature started the screen flickered in black and white and a title came on, it was something like *Bibet Does Paris*. Yep, someone had left a French porno film on the projector that had no holds barred. It was several minutes before the projectionist shut it off but not before my sex education was jiggled forward about five years."

During the war years, Aunt Tex Snodgrass relied on her granddaughter, Mary Texas Hurt (later Garner), to help with theatre management. Theatre magazines lauded her, at age 12, as the youngest theatre manager in the country. Mary Texas Garner would later become the youngest secretary of state in the country when she was elected to the post for the state of Alabama at age 26. Some years later, she, her husband, attorney Bill Garner, and her daughter Mary Garner Robinson, would return periodically to Scottsboro to stay in her grandmother's former apartment in the Bocanita building. Mary remembers walking across the

hall from the apartment to watch movies just before bedtime, wearing her nightgown. The Garner family sheltered in the apartment during the Cuban missile crisis.

Like the Ritz, the Bocanita was strictly segregated. The first of two balconies was reserved exclusively for the "colored" patrons. Black patron Allen Cothron remembers Allie Mae as being very "cordial," treating the blacks with "great respect." Allen's aunt cooked at Tom Sisk's cafe down the street. Allen and his friends would go to Tom's back door where his aunt would give them burgers to go. Allie Mae let the boys carry them to their seats in the balcony. The only restroom servicing the Black patrons was across the street in the basement of the courthouse. The single-sex bathroom was stenciled "Colored" and accessible from a recessed doorway facing the Bocanita. In a rare photo of the front of The Bocanita taken during a showing of *The Ten Commandments*, prices are advertised as 90¢ for the matinee (at 1:00 pm), $1.25 for the evening showing (7:00 pm), 50¢ for children, and 90¢ for "colored."

Just as the Bocanita opened to little fanfare, it closed as unceremoniously. In the absence of press coverage, we have come to the conclusion that the theatre closed in 1965, based on the announcement of the opening that year of Lorch's Jewelers in the new Gardner Building, built on the site of the Bocanita Theatre.

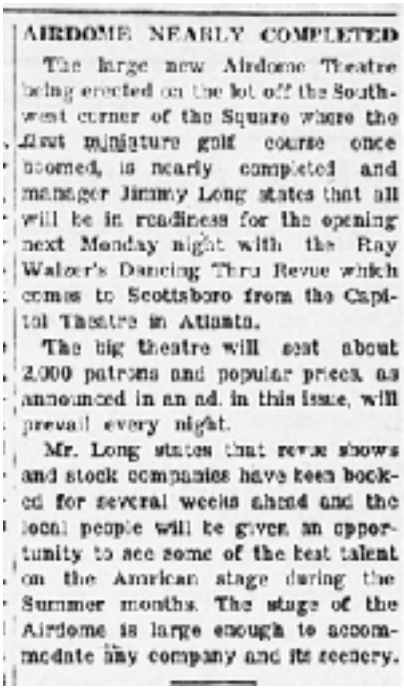
Claude Bobo spent his last years as an employee of the Alabama Department of Revenue. He had lived in Jasper for a number of years before being stricken with an undisclosed malady that left him disabled. He returned to Scottsboro to live in an apartment owned by his brother-in-law Charles Ambrester, where he died at age 60 on November 20, 1948. Allie Mae Hurt died at age 71 on Christmas Eve, 1965.

Combination of three photos, two from Raney Atkins-Simpton from 1958 Charlie Webb is pictured on the left. Identity of the woman is unknown.

The Airdome in Scottsboro: Most people cite Robert Word as the builder of the Airdome, but the tent venue was actually built as a vaudeville theatre by C & L Amusement Company. Reuben Miller would say that Robert Word was "holding the paper" on the structure from the beginning. The April 11, 1935 *Progressive Age* announced "Airdome Theatre Being Erected in Scottsboro" and gave these details about the new facility:

Something new to this part of the country will be the large new Airdome theatre now being erected on the E. D. Wood lot near the Tabernacle Baptist Church. This enterprise is owned by the C. & L. Amusement Company and will be managed by Jimmie Long. The theatre will be 70 x 113 feet with a stage of a size ample to accommodate and stage most of the road shows and vaudeville and a seating capacity of around 1500. It will be equipped with RCA motion picture

with sound equipment. The new theatre will open on the night of April 22 with a big stage show.'Dancing Thru Revue' with a large company. It is from the Fox theatre in Atlanta direct to Scottsboro and will have a splendid orchestra and special stage scenery. The management states they will maintain a policy of giving the best entertainment at the least possible cost."



AIRDOME NEARLY COMPLETED

The large new Airdome Theatre being erected on the lot off the Southwest corner of the Square where the first miniature golf course once bloomed, is nearly completed and manager Jimmy Long states that all will be in readiness for the opening next Monday night with the Ray Walzer's Dancing Thru Revue which comes to Scottsboro from the Capitol Theatre in Atlanta.

The big theatre will seat about 2,000 patrons and popular prices as announced in an ad. in this issue, will prevail every night.

Mr. Long states that revue shows and stock companies have been booked for several weeks ahead and the local people will be given an opportunity to see some of the best talent on the American stage during the Summer months. The stage of the Airdome is large enough to accommodate any company and its scenery.

A later story in the *Progressive Age* stated that the theatre would seat about 2000 patrons and defined the location as on a lot on the southwest corner of the square where a miniature golf course had once been. The facility planned to open with Ray Walzer's "Dancing Thru Review," direct from Atlanta.

Reuben Miller in the 2002 *Chronicles* wrote about the theatre with the kind of specifics that only a man in his position as projectionist at the facility could know:

In 1935, Mr. William Jacob Word, Sr. was still holding the "paper" on a structure he had built for a Vaudeville group who went broke and were never to use their open air theatre. This theatre consisted of a stage with wings right and left, adequate footlights, and a set of tinseled curtains. All were sheltered from the weather by a roof above. The auditorium was bounded by a board fence ten to twelve feet high. This fence stood on the perimeter of a residential size building lot at the comer of Peachtree and South Houston Streets (where Ms. Mary Ellen Caulfield made her home in later years.)

Seating in this unique auditorium consisted of bleachers on each side from high on the walls to the floor which had a natural, auditorium-slope front to back. The floor was dirt, covered with wood shavings from Mr.Word's lumber company planer. The center section had rows of folding, un-cushioned seats, leaving two aisles, right and left, rendering full access. Incidentally, the only shelter for the auditorium was the air and sky above. Yes, the air and the sky made loan of themselves for a name: AIRDOME. A better name could never have been chosen. Mr. Robert Word, son of Mr. Jake (as he was known far and wide), had been "after" his Dad to let him have this place for a movie theatre. Sometime early in1935, arrangements were made, and Robert got the Airdome.

WRESTLES HERE

KITTY NELSON

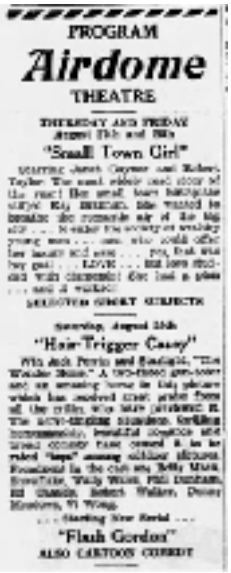
Scottsboro will see Miss Kitty Nelson, of New Orleans, wrestle Miss Mobile Fuller a petite, black-haired former chorus girl from Boston, at the Airdome Saturday night.

A snow white sound (perforated) screen was installed near the back stage wall. The sound delivery system was behind the screen. Out front a projection booth was built and mounted on four power pole-like wood supports. Yes, there it was up on stems. The projectionist climbed a ladder to his work. Inside was a pair of rather ancient, but good, Powers projectors mounted on two CTR (CincinnatiTime Recording)system sound heads (the mechanical portion of sound-on-film reproduction.)

I never knew, but always assumed, that the electronics were CTR, also. The Airdome had good sound, and even with the old Powers projectors the picture was clear, bright, and steady, steady as the stars in the dome above.

Yes, we watched the movies under the stars of the heaven. It was in the Airdome that we saw "WagonWheels" with Randolph Scott and Judith Allen, and featuring Billy Hill's grand old song whose title was the same as the picture. "TailspinTommy"was a serial we saw with thrills in the air. The thriller, "Frankenstein,"was a another feature which played the Airdome in the summer of 1935. "RoseMarie" with sweethearts, Nelson Eddy and Jeanette McDonald, played in 1936.

Mr. Robert Word told me a story of showing "Rose Marie"at the Airdome: It was late 1936, and, as some readers may remember, the weather in Scottsboro, Alabama can be quite cruel to open air theatre. During one of the play dates of "Rose Marie" the weather became unsuitable for viewing open air movies. It began to rain, and the audience went home- except one lady and her husband. They were seated under their umbrella, seeing the movie to completion, all by themselves, all the way to "The End," the management and employees wishing to close up and go home. In some cases the show had to be cancelled and played another night, with the audience in some way reimbursed.


PROGRAM
Airdome
THEATRE
"Small Town Girl"
"Hair-Trigger Casey"
"Flash Gordon"
ALSO CARTOON COMEDY

Robert Word took over management of the Airdome Theatre on May 18, 1935 and made improvements to the sound equipment (*PA*, May 16, 1939). The Airdome was a venue for first-run movies for the next 15 months. The last slate of movies scheduled is shown here, just before the Robert Word opened the Ritz on the square and movies moved indoors. This program was printed in the August 27, 1936 *Progressive Age*. The theatre must have closed for a short time during the transition.

But the Airdome continued to be used. Brass bands and strings bands played at the Airdome all day in free celebration the day that the B. B. Comer Bridge was freed of its toll status, September 29, 1936.

Two women wrestled at the Airdome in June 1937 (PA, June 10,1937), and Battling Bozo went ten rounds against Dummy Robison there the week before. Lasses White, "American's favorite black-faced minstrel star and radio personality," brought his tent show to the site, including 75 people in 15 big vaudeville acts in October 1937. Even after the Airdome tent was no longer used as a movie venue and the tent had been taken down, the site was identified as the "Old Airdome Lot" and many live performances came to the site. The World Circus set up there in April 1938.

The Word Theatres


Robert Word, from his obituary in the Sentinel.

Robert Donald Word Sr. (1911-1998) was youngest of the eight children of William Jacob Word and Ella Jane Gentle. He and his son Robert Donald Word Jr. (1934-2023) were the founders of the Word Theatres in Jackson and DeKalb Counties. As a young man, Robert Sr. worked part-time with his father in the lumber business. He was responsible for some of the most loved and iconic businesses in the county—our movie theatres and the Word Popcorn business to support their patrons.

When the builders of the Airdome failed to get the operation off the ground, Robert operated the Aerodome open-air theatre in 1935, located in a field at the intersection of Houston and Appletree streets. He opened the Scottsboro Ritz theatre on the west side of the square in 1936 in a building constructed by his brother Cecil and the Word Lumber Company, part of what is known as the "Word block," comprised of a series of buildings that began with Elmore's at the north end and ended with Reid Sundries. He also built and operated the Bridgeport Ritz and the Arab Ritz in the 1940s.

Within the next few years, he built a small theatre, the Sylvia, in Sylvania and bought the Fox Theatre in Jasper, TN. For a time, he operated the Keth Theatre in Woodville. He operated all these small theatres until the drive-in theatre became popular in the late 1940s and 1950s. Robert Word built the Tawasentha Drive-In in Scottsboro in 1949 and a drive-in in Rainsville, which included a 90-seat second floor inside theatre. He bought drive-ins in Arab, Bridgeport, and Henagar. In a few years the small theatres were gone, and the drive-in real estate was worth more than the theatres.

In 1957, his son Robert, Jr. (Bob) returned home from two years in the army and joined his father's business ventures. Together they started two businesses related to the theatres. They started Word Popcorn Company, contracting with local farmers to grow popcorn from seed and processing it at a plant in Hollywood, AL. They sold popcorn over the southeast in a six-state area. The Golden Flake Company in Birmingham was one of their largest customers. Robert Word spent most of his time with the popcorn company until he retired in 1978 and sold the company. It was sold locally and operated locally for a few years. They then sold to a large company in the midwest who expanded it greatly and operated out of

much larger facilities, still in Hollywood. Today, the company operates nationally as Great Western Food Products.

While getting the popcorn company started, the Words recognized the need for an industrial vending company to supply all types of food items and drinks to the local industries, which were growing at a tremendous rate in Jackson and surrounding counties. They organized Word Theatres and Vending in 1958. There was so much industrial growth in the sixties that finding labor was a problem. So, in 1975, Robert and his son Bob sold the vending business to Coca Cola Company in Chattanooga.

Robert Word brought Scottsboro and surrounding towns all the magic of 1940s and 1950s cinema, all the movies and stage shows. He died in 1998 at age 87.

The Scottsboro Ritz: Built in 1932 as part of the Word Block, the Ritz Theatre was located at 216 South Broad and opened for its first show in November 1936. It offered both stage shows and movies in a one-story brick building. It closed in 1972. It was not Robert Word's first foray into movie theatres. Word showed movies in a large tent prior called the Airdome prior to opening the Ritz. The auditorium of the Ritz still exists and is currently used by Hammers for storage. There are photos taken in 2016 on the page that follows.

Scottsboro, Alabama, Thursday, November 12, 1936

New Ritz Theatre To Open Monday Night

The first new Ritz Theatre, located on the west side of the public square in Scottsboro, will open its doors for business next Monday night, November 16th.

The opening night program will be a big and new feature picture and short subjects. The program will be announced by advertising before next Monday night.

The Ritz was a strictly segregated facility. A barrier consisting of a railing made of lead pipe extended from the ticket booth (one window of which was dedicated to serving black patrons) down the entire length of the lobby to the only section where blacks were allowed: a portion of the balcony to the left of the auditorium. The black section of the balcony was separated from the whites-only section by a shoulder-high barrier. On the wall of the colored section was stenciled the warning "Five dollar fine for spitting on the floor."

Black patrons wanting to buy concessions had to wait at the railing for a white patron who was willing to take their money and buy a drink (from a machine that was notorious for failing to drop a cup before beginning to dispense the drink) or the candy machine. The only manned concession was the popcorn machine, and the white patron would have to transfer the money across the lobby to the vendor stationed there.

The only rest room available to black patrons was across Broad Street in the basement of the courthouse: a single bathroom to serve both male. and females with the words "colored" stenciled on the door.The spots where the anchor bolts were placed for the railing separating the two sides of the Ritz lobby are still evident today in the building occupied by Southern All Sports.

Reuben Miller, who was a projectionist at the Airdome and the Ritz, wrote about this and the technology of the Ritz in his story below, from the 2002 *Chronicles*. When the Airdome closed:

Powers projectors, sound screen, and CTR sound ("moom picher") and all, moved to the west side of the square and became THE RITZ. Cale Brad Thomas' Cafe became the lobby and box office. A building just completed adjoined at the back became the auditorium and the first air-conditioned building in Scottsboro. Cooling was accomplished by "washing" the air. The air washer was located outside, high on the southwest comer of the building. Excess water dripped to the ground. It later was known as a water fan still used in some southwestern states. Water is forced in front of a fan in a fine spray. Cooling happens due to evaporation.

Soon after the move, the old Powers were replaced by newer Simplexes, and the CTR was

replaced by RCA. Performance was excellent! The dark lights at The Ritz were the brightest anywhere. We could easily find our seats.

In 1942, I was asked to go under the tutelage of a grand guy the whole town knew and loved, projectionist Raymond James. This came about due to several reasons: my Interest in radio (known by all because I had been heard on my own homemade radio stations), my other electronics gadgetry history, and I had been a "patron" for so many years. Plus, Mr. Robert Word's brother, Hal, recommended me. In just four weeks, Raymond James went on vacation for a week....As I remember, everything went well, even though I did have a very short three and one-half minute reel to one of the features. That one kept me hopping!

My friend, who had honored me with an admission pass for so many years, then became my "boss man." Things learned there were helpful all through my life, and I shall be eternally grateful. I served as a part-time projectionist until the spring of 1945when I went away to school and paid my room and board as, guess what, a projectionist at the Tiger Theatre.

It was in the Ritz that we laughed and cried to the antics of Mickey Rooney as "Andy Hardy"with Celia Parker as his sister; Lewis Stone as father, Judge Hardy; Faye Holden as the Mom; Sarah Hayden as the rental old maid aunt; and Ann Rutherford as Andy's sweetheart, Polly Benedict. We saw Gable and Leigh in "Gone with the Wind." Remember the Scottsboro movies when we saw ourselves and our town? We went into "the war years" with Robert Taylor and Vivian Leigh in the painfully beautiful, unforgettable "Waterloo Bridge."

The building that is now Southern All-Sports on the west side of the square in downtown Scottsboro used to house the Ritz, a one-screen movie theatre with approximately 100 seats. The Ritz closed in the early 1970s.

L to R, the floor of Southern All Sports showing the location of the railings between black and white lines; two photos of the Ritz today, used by Hammers.

Many people who share memories of the Ritz talk about Philco, the driver of the Volkswagen police car and manager of the Ritz for 17 years. David Bradford recalls that the manager, Philco, was a constant and menacing presence at The Ritz, patrolling the aisles to prevent rude boys (not him) from stomping paper cups on the floor to make them pop and blowing on empty Raisenette boxes to make them squeal (they had a cellophane cover that would vibrate like a reed). Philco's name was Horace Lee Wilkerson. His home off Tupelo Pike doubled as his radio repair shop and a "Philco" sign (Philco was a brand of appliances) hung outside the home/shop. From that association, he derived his nickname.

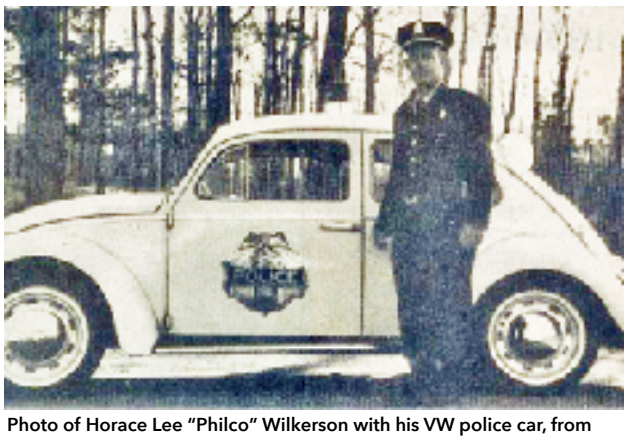


Photo of Horace Lee "Philco" Wilkerson with his VW police car, from his obituary in the *Sentinel* in 1984.

Dorothy [Heath] Trethewy contributed this memory of the Ritz:

My favorite Saturday was to go to the Ritz for cowboy movies. Philco maintained pretty tight control except when someone was able to start a Coke bottle rolling down the floor from the back of the main seating area to the front. I also remember the craze for

Early 1940s picture, showing wooden stair access to elevated sidewalk.

going to the dime store to purchase a cheap, small metal squirt gun and a small bottle of the cheapest perfume – especially "Midnight in Paris" in the little blue bottles. Then, fill the squirt gun with the cheap perfume, sneak it into the show and try to catch somebody in the back of the head with a stinky squirt. Of course, I'm not sure if I actually had one of these "stink bombs" or only thought I should have had.

Warne Heath remembers, "I spent many Saturday afternoons and Friday nights in that place. Kids would become so loud and unruly that the manager would turn on the lights and walk out on the stage and threaten to throw everyone out if we didn't behave."

1949 Photo from Paul Machen.

Bob Hodges wrote about the Ritz in his "Going Home Again" essay:

There are long lines at the two downtown theatres: The Ritz, where Viola Hamlet would sell you a ticket on this Saturday for a double feature, including a western, a who-dunnit, and a serial episode. There were two rules rigidly enforced at the Ritz by Philco, who was every teenager's substitute disciplinarian when away from home. You couldn't put your feet on the back of the seat in front of you, and you couldn't talk. It always was ironical to me that right in the middle of the who-dunnit, the only talking I could hear usually was Philco telling other people not to talk. Years later, after the Ritz closed, I thought it was fitting that Philco became a cop -- he had been in law enforcement in the theatre business for years."

The crowd that used to gather around the Bake Shop table on Saturday morning talked about the various stars who had made guest appearances at the Ritz: cowboy star Lash LaRue, Chattanooga TV personality Bob Brandy, and county singer Webb Pierce, whose 1959 Bonneville featured leather saddle seats, a pistol gear shift, derringer directional signals, and a dashboard inlaid with silver dollars.

After the Ritz closed, Southern All-Sports opened in this space and is found in the 1972 city directory.

Early 1950s, AL National Guard Company B passing in front of the Ritz heading to Korea.

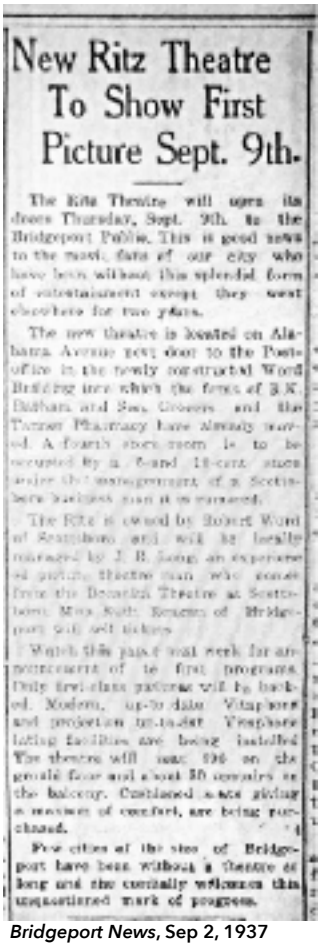
1967 Coming Attractions, from Marilyn Morris

This business is still in this space, and Hammers still uses the old Ritz Theatre itself for storage.

The Bridgeport Ritz: Information about the Bridgeport Ritz comes primarily from Dennis Lambert and his "Bridgeport, Then and Now" Facebook page, but also from period newspapers and Bob Word.

The Ritz Theatre in Bridgeport opened its doors on September 9, 1937, the year after the Ritz in Scottsboro. It was located on Alabama Avenue next to the post office. The building that housed the Ritz was built by the Word family in 1937 and opened as the Ritz Theatre. It operated at this location until 1961, when the theatre closed and the building was sold. This 1950 photo from the *Birmingham News* shows the theatre marquee and entry. The Ritz opened under the management of J. R. Long, who came to this theater from the Bocanita in Scottsboro. Mrs. Ruth Reagan of Bridgeport sold tickets. The seating capacity on the first floor was 390 and approximately 50 in the balcony.

The Spiller Building and the Ritz Theatre in 1950, from the *Birmingham News*.


New Ritz Theatre To Show First Picture Sept. 9th.

The Ritz Theatre will open its doors Thursday, Sept. 9th, to the Bridgeport Public. This is good news to the music fans of our city who have been without this splendid form of entertainment except they went elsewhere for two years.

The new theatre is located on Alabama Avenue next door to the Post-office in the newly constructed Word Building here where the firms of J. K. Dalton and Son, Grocers and the Turner Pharmacy have already moved. A fourth store room is to be occupied by a 5-and 10-cent store under the management of a Scottsboro business man it is rumored.

The Ritz is owned by Robert Word of Scottsboro and will be locally managed by J. R. Long an experienced picture theatre man who comes from the Bocanita Theatre at Scottsboro. Mrs. Ruth Reagan of Bridgeport will sell tickets.

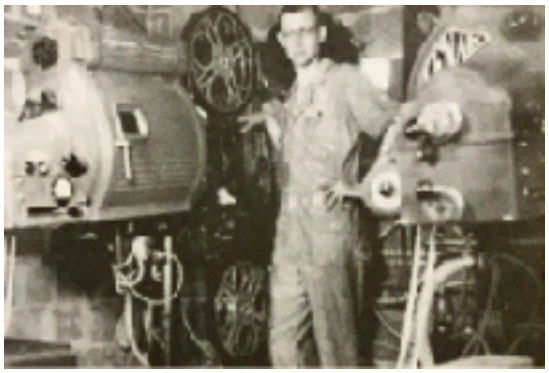
Watch this paper next week for announcements of the first programs. Only first-class pictures will be booked. Modern, up-to-date Vitaphone and projection machines Vitaphone talking facilities are being installed. The theatre will seat 390 on the ground floor and about 50 couples in the balcony. Cushioned seats giving a measure of comfort, are being purchased.

Five cities of the size of Bridgeport have been without a theatre so long and the certainly welcomes this unquestioned mark of progress.

Bridgeport News, Sep 2, 1937

The Word Building is made up of four store fronts, including the theater. A 5 and 10 cent store opened to the right of the theatre in 1952, as did the Spiller Building on the right. When the Ritz closed, this business moved into the old Ritz Theatre building and operated here until around 1984 when it too, closed. After a fire gutted the left two of the store fronts on July 4, 1985, the cutting department for Bridgeport Manufacturing Company moved into the theatre building and remained there until around 1989 when it was moved again down the block to the Jones Building. Afterwards, Rod Storey moved his Bridgeport Sports business into the Ritz Theatre building and operated in that location until 2022.

When Dennis installed faux windows on the second story of the old Word building, he discovered that the original blue windows and frames that had been covered for many years probably displayed movie posters. Originally, concrete sidewalk beneath the marquee was concrete dyed red, though this vestige of the old Ritz was torn out by city recently for new streetscape. When the dime store moved into the building, the pit that formed the theatre seating area and stage was filled. The progression of theatre managers through the years cannot be tracking, though the *Birmingham News* article showed the projection room and the projectionist, Oscar


Projectionist Oscar Moon from the 1950 *Birmingham News*.


Door of the Ritz as a crowd flows out of the theatre in 1941, from Robert Word and Sam Hall.

Moon and Dennis remembers that Bob Lee took over management of the Bridgeport Ritz from Charles Talley in 1952.

Like all theatres built in this timeframe, the Ritz was segregated and black patrons were seated in the balcony. The balcony and projection booth stood on the left wall when facing building. The best view we have of the ticket window and front area comes from Sam Hall's resurrection of the 1941 Robert Word film of Bridgeport. I cannot imagine sitting behind the woman in the hat, but I like the image of young high school men in their letter sweaters flooding out the doors to smoke.

1938 Playbill. From Lynda William Rogers.

The Progressive Age
28 Jul 1938, Thu Page 1

UNCLE NED AND HIS TEXAS WRANGLERS AT THE RITZ THEATRE MONDAY, AUG. 1

Uncle Ned and his Texas Wranglers, recent added attraction on the famous WSB and WAGA Cross Roads Follies radio broadcast, will stage their rollicking uproarious radio rodeo at the Ritz Theatre Monday, August 1st.

This breezy brigade of rough-riding rangers from the wide open spaces established something of a record on their debut at Georgia's 50,000-watt station, WSB. Their first broadcast registered so tremendous a hit that this talented aggregation was immediately booked by telephone and telegraph for twenty-two separate engagements in leading cities of this section.

Uncle Ned and His Texas Wranglers, picturesquely costumed in their ten-gallon sombreros and colorful cow-puncher regalias, offer a light-running, fast-moving and refreshing round-up of fun, foolishness, fine music and fine entertainment. Singly and as a troupe their entire performance is keyed on a wholesome, good-humored, human-interest theme that appeals to every member of the family.

No galaxy of radio stars in years has created so sudden a sensation in radio realms as this cavalcade of musical broncobusters and capacity attendance is predicted when the Texas Wranglers cut loose with their high, wide and handsome footlight frolic here next Monday and Monday night. Also regular Western feature and three Stooge comedy.

Bill Monroe and his Kentucky Blue Grass Boys appeared on the stage of the Bridgeport Ritz March 2, 1950, with western comedian Ma "Alabi" Terhune and "Elmer," who must have been a ventriloquist dummy. Admission was 25 and 50 cents.

Since Robert Word owned both Ritz theatres, if you missed a movie in Scottsboro, you could usually catch it in Bridgeport.

The Progressive Age
26 Feb 1942, Thu Page 4

The final picture, one of Dennis Lambert's, from 1961 establishes the date when the theatre closed and shows a parade passing in front of the marquee that shows only "for sale" information.

The Proliferation of Small Theatres After World War II

When the large towns in Jackson County all had movie theatres, the small towns asked themselves, why not us too? And a large number of small theatres appeared after World War II, giving people in the more remote parts of the county a way to see movies without driving miles from home.

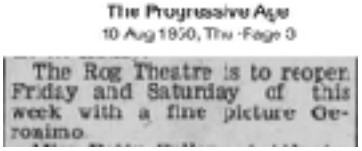
The Rog in Pisgah: The Rog (soft G, short for Rogers) Theatre in Pisgah had the hardest time getting off the ground and keeping going. The first ad I can find for the Rog Theatre was in the July 1948 *Jackson County Sentinel*. The paper noted that the theatre showed four movies a week, night only, According to Will Holloway, the theatre was built owned by Marshal Rogers in Pisgah. One notable member of the family went by his nickname "Sparky," conferred on him in recognition of his ability to blow fuses in an old fuse box by bridging two connections with his tongue.


Business Opportunities

...The Rog Theater at Pisgah, Alabama. Concrete Block Building, 25'x90', seats 250 people. Complete with 35 MM projectors, glass coated screen and excellent sound system.

The theatre was open intermittently during 1949-1950. It was put up for sale in March 1950, the *Jackson County Sentinel* reported. An attempt was made to reopen the theatre in August of 1950, according to the *Progressive Age*. No further ads showing a slate of coming attractions are found in either local paper.

Will sent this photo of the Rog Theatre building today. For a time, the Rogers family used the same building to sell auto parts.


The Progressive Age
10 Aug 1950, Thu · Page 3

The Rog Theatre is to reopen Friday and Saturday of this week with a fine picture Geronimo.


Photo of the Rog building from Will Holloway.


JACKSON COUNTY SENTINEL 1949-07-'9

ROG THEATRE
PISGAH, ALABAMA
Four Shows Weekley
Night Only.

Friday-Saturday, July 22-23
"UNCONQUERED"
Gary Cooper, Paulette Goddard. The story of those dauntless men and women who dared a thousand dangers to keep America unconquered. They fought, they died, they lived.

Monday-Tuesday, July 25-26
"THE TRESPASSER"
Dale Evans, Warren Douglas.

Friday-Saturday, July 29-30
"RUSTLERS OF DEVILS CANYON"
Red Ryder, Bobby Blake.

Monday-Tuesday, Aug. 1-2
"WATERFRONT AT MIDNIGHT"
William Gargan, Mary Beth. A cold blooded cop killer meets the cop he's sworn to get.

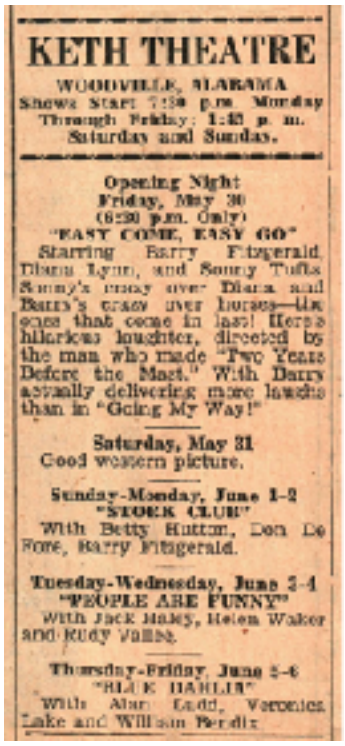
Friday-Saturday, Aug. 5-6
"ROAD TO RIO"
Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour and the Andrews Sisters.

The Keth in Woodville: The Keth Theatre in Woodville had its opening night on Friday May 30, 1947 with the movie "Easy Come, Easy Go." That same week, the theatre featured "People are Funny" and "Black Dahlia." The theatre was open every night of the first week. The last time the Keth published a slate of movies in the *Jackson County Sentinel* was May 18, 1948, and instead of showing the coming week, the ad showed only one movie: "Alias a Gentleman" and nothing was said about plans to close, so the inclusive open dates are May 1947-May 1948.


Keth Theatre building in 2021.

When I first began researching movie theatres, the building that housed the Keth was still standing. It was located on Willow Street near the intersection with County Road 8. If you look at the location on Google Earth, it sat on the empty spot in the small cluster of buildings that ends with the post office.

When I took pictures of the Keth in October 2017, it was easy to see the shape of the old theatre. A diesel repair business was occupying the building,


KETH THEATRE
WOODVILLE, ALABAMA
Shows Start 7:30 p.m. Monday Through Friday; 1:45 p. m. Saturday and Sunday.

Opening Night
Friday, May 30
(8:30 p.m. Only)
"EASY COME, EASY GO"
Starring Barry Fitzgerald, Diana Lynn, and Sonny Tufts. Sonny's crazy over Diana and Barry's crazy over horses—the ones that come in last! Here's hilarious laughter, directed by the man who made "Two Years Before the Mast." With Barry actually delivering more laughs than in "Going My Way!"

Saturday, May 31
Good western picture.

Sunday-Monday, June 1-2
"STOCK CLUB"
With Betty Hutton, Don De Fore, Barry Fitzgerald.

Tuesday-Wednesday, June 3-4
"PEOPLE ARE FUNNY"
With Jack Haley, Helen Walker and Rudy Vallee.

Thursday-Friday, June 5-6
"BLACK DAHLIA"
With Alan Ladd, Veronica Lake and William Bendix

which was in pretty sad shape. The man working in the building told me the stories. He said that the theatre had been heated by a big pot bellied stove that was salvaged from Paint Rock High School. He said that the first movie slated to be shown in the theatre was "Gone with the Wind," and that a tornado blew the back off the theatre before it could open. I cannot find any evidence that this tall tale is true.

The strange name of the Keth Theatre was actually an acronym for the four people who built the theatre: Kenneth Hodges, Earl Kennamer, Gordon Thomas, and Houston Kennamer. The theatre struggled along. At one point, Robert Word took over management of the theatre and made it part of the group of theatres that he either owned or managed and provided movies for. Vivienne Webb Atkins reports that her father Charley managed the theatre in 1951. "The balcony of that theatre was where I first saw a movie musical, and fell in love. It was 'Showboat' with Kathryn Grayson, Ava Gardner, and and Howard Keel. Joe E. Brown played the captain. I never got over it. I founded a musical theatre company, Independent Musical Productions (IMPHuntsville) and am still in love with musical theatre—on the silver screen or on the live stage. That is also where I first saw 'The Wizard of Oz' with Judy Garland.

HYPNOTIST TO APPEAR AT RITZ THEATRE

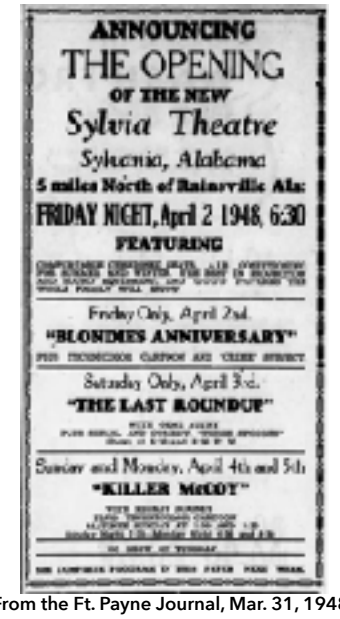
Pictured above is Preston, magician and hypnotist, who will appear on the stage of the Ritz Theatre, Scottsboro, on Monday, Sept. 15th, Rex, Bridgeport, Wednesday, Sept. 17th, Keth, Woodville, Sept. 19th. A native of Kentucky, Preston has been acclaimed internationally as a hypnotist, and is one of the few hypnotists on the American stage who does real hypnotism, using volunteer subjects from the audience. In addition to his proficiency as a hypnotist, he was recently awarded the Blackstone Cup which was presented to him for the outstanding magical performance."

From Mike Elkins.

Remains of the Keth screen 2017.

The Keth was positioned to be like the Sylvia, as a large meeting hall for events like high school plays, stage performances, and graduation. At least one stage show, a hypnotist who also appeared at the Ritz, appeared on the stage at the Keth. Even though the theatre had stopped showing movies, the senior class at Woodville High School presented their senior play there on April 28, 1949. In May, graduation exercises were held in the closed Keth theatre. The movie theatre space continued to be used for local functions.

The Sylvia in Sylvania: The opening of the Sylvia theatre was a big event for a town accustomed to driving to Ft. Payne to see a movie. The *Ft. Payne Journal* on March 31, 1948 carried the description of the new theatre: five miles north of Rainsville with comfortable cushioned seats, air conditioning summer and winter, the best in projection and sound equipment, and pictures the whole family would enjoy. The movie ran every day except Tuesday with a feature at 6:15 and a matinee on Sunday at 1:30. It operated continuously until the end of 1956. The last ad in the December 10, 1956 *Journal* announced scheduled movies through December 16, 1956. It was built and operated by Robert Word in Scottsboro. The sheer number of theatres that Word owned kept a steady stream of first-run movies playing on the Sylvia's small screen and brought entertainment to Sylvania for almost eight years.



ANNOUNCING
THE OPENING
OF THE NEW
Sylvia Theatre
Sylvania, Alabama
5 miles North of Rainsville Ala.
FRIDAY NIGHT, April 2 1948, 6:30
FEATURING
Friday Only, April 2nd.
"BLONDIES ANNIVERSARY"
Saturday Only, April 3rd.
"THE LAST ROUNDUP"
Sunday and Monday, April 4th and 5th
"KILLER McCOY"

From the Ft. Payne Journal, Mar. 31, 1948

Jerry King, who grew up a hundred yards from the door of the Sylvia, remembers how the theatre produced conditioned air. A latticework of copper pipes drilled with tiny holes circulated water around the back of the theatre, and a big fan behind the lattice blew damp air into the theatre. "It was a kind of air conditioning better suited to a place with low humidity like the southwest. In a place as humid as Alabama, it just left everything feeling damp and sticky." But, Jerry noted, shooting the copper pipes with his BB Gun produced a satisfying ping.

Jerry's brother Kenneth, 11 years his senior, worked at the Sylvia popping popcorn at the concession stand, but over time, a bored projectionist taught him to operate the projector, and Kenneth worked two years

Photo of the Sylvia posted on Facebook by Andy Thompson.

until he was 18 as projectionist at the Sylvia. Though he was only ten when the theatre closed, Jerry substituted in the snack bar.

Jerry's father Coy had worked out an important 4H-style lesson for his youngest son. He spent $5 on a pig for Jerry and gave the youngster sole responsibility for the animal. Coy kept up with what the family spent on the pig in an account book and told the child that when the pig was slaughtered, the cost of the pig and his food would be deducted from the profit realized by selling the meat, and Jerry would receive the money that remained.

From the *Ft. Payne Journal*, Feb. 15, 1949

After the first $4 spent on a bag of food for the pig, Jerry decided that the return on his investment would be greater if he could control the cost of feeding the pig. He built a pen for him about 25 feet from the back of the Sylvia and raised his pig on leftover popcorn. With his big brother working at the Sylvia, Jerry got permission from the owner to take the oil-soaked no-pops and the popcorn swept up from the floors after the movie was over as pig food. He also went with his father to the grist mill in Henagar and swept the meal that spilled out onto the floor and bagged it to feed his pig. Both sets of Jerry's grandparents, impressed with the youngster's economy, saved slops for the pig as well. The pig, fed on movie popcorn, netted young Jerry a nice profit.

Soon the town of Sylvania found other uses for the large assembly hall beyond movie entertainment. The Sylvania High School Class of 1948 held their baccalaureate and graduation exercises at the Sylvia. The theatre also functioned as an "opera house" that enabled performances like the Happy Wilson Stage Show to entertain Sylvania residents. On February 15, 1949, the county demonstration agent showed a movie in the Sylvia titled "The South Grows Green" for area farmers. In February 1950, the senior class at Sylvia High School presented a variety night that included "four note singing, mock faculty, talent show and stunts" at the Sylvia. In March 1950, the faculty at Sylvania High School presented a three-act play "Gone with the Girls" at the Sylvia and also at Henagar School. The theatre must have been cold in the winter in the early days. The ad describing movies in December 1950 said, "New heating equipment has been installed for your comfort." The theatre hosted the senior class play in 1951, "My Heart's in High" on Tuesday, May 8, and graduation on May 11. The next year, the senior play was "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" on April 1 at the Sylvia, with commencement there on May 7. In 1953, the senior play at the Sylvia was "The Perfect Idiot," and graduation was May 6. The next senior class produced their class play, "The Red Headed Stepchild," at the Sylvia in November 1953 but also put on "You Can't Always Tell" in March 1954. On December 16, the *Journal* advertised "Books of Happiness" for sale at Christmas, a book of movie tickets redeemable at either the Sylvia or the Rainsville Drive-In. "These attractive books are available in several denominations and they contain tickets good for entertainment for weeks to come. Almost any friend or member of the family can truthfully say, 'That's just what I wanted!' "

Attendance must have dropped off midweek in 1954. The theatre discontinued Wednesday and Thursday movies. (*Journal*, June 23, 1954) I could not find information about one show that Jerry King remembered: the Louvin Brothers, who appeared there under their family name of Loudermilk. If such locally organized performances took place after the theatre closed in 1956, they were not publicized in the newspaper.

Movies at Skyline: The Skyline Colony never had a dedicated movie theatre but movies were shown in the high school gym in the 1930s. This photo is from the National Archives for the Skyline project.

Skyline Project photo from the Nation Archives, 1935.

Poster from Wikipedia.

The movie showing in the gym, "Cowboy and the Bandit," was released in 1935 and was directed by Albert Herman and starred Rex Lease, Bobby Nelson, and Blanche MeHaffey. Wikipedia described it as an "action thrill drama for it has everything that a feature picture should have: drama, comedy, and added to that stunt riding, hair trigger excitement." The film was 61 minutes long and included sound. The Wikipedia article about the movie included this movie poster.


Auditorium. Skyline Project photo .1976 exhibit at the Heritage Center.

Roger Allen and Christine Paradise Sumner provided the detailed information about this movie venue.

Christine Paradise was raised in the Skyline Colony, the daughter of Jesse Sumner and Alma Lindsay. She has fond memories of movie nights at Skyline: " I well remember going to the movies at Skyline on Saturday nights. The best I remember it was started by showing in the auditorium, as we called it, but the crowd was so minimal that they moved it to the stage where the few of us sat behind the closed curtain. I cannot remember the fare but I'm sure it was in the dime range. It was much warmer on the stage behind those wine-colored draperies pulled but those folding metal chairs were a little cool and uncomfortable by the time Roy Rogers got his criminals in jail."


Chester Allen

"Red Brakefield owned the movie equipment and Paul Miller was the camera man," Christine remembers. "The movies on Saturday nights were a treat when you were almost isolated by impassable roads and the bootleggers kept the one phone line cut."

Though the movie shown in the photo is a "talkie," Roger Allen remembers when silent movies played. Roger was also raised on Skyline Mountain, the son of Chester Allen and Vesta Paradise. "Dad and Floyd (Red) Campbell played guitars for the silent movies! I remember dad talking about one of the movies where three drunk men were trying to get inside the gym at Skyline School where the town showed movies. But a man was watching for drunks to keep folks like that out of the gym, and this man just happened to keep a ball bat with him all the time. When one of them started inside the dark gym where they were showing the movie, and the "bouncer" who was told to keep drunks out popped him in the head with the bat. Dad said the man had a lit cigarette in his mouth and it looked like it lit up the whole gym!"

The photo from the National Archives is from 1935. Since Skyline movies did not advertise in the newspaper, no inclusive dates for this movie venue can be found

The Drive-Ins: the Tawasentha and the Southport

Between the popularization of talkies and the onslaught of Blockbuster and at-home movies, theatre owners looked for a cheaper alternative to the traditional movies theatre, and the late 40s in Jackson County saw the arrival of the drive-in. A drive-in movie theatre consists of a large parking lot or field, a large outdoor screen or projector, and some form of concession stand. Some of the earliest drive-in theatres date back to the early 1900s, but their true reign in American culture peaked from the 1940s through the 1960s.

There was a drive-in near my house in Auburn, with an apartment under the screen. The kids who lived under the drive-in screen rode my school bus. I remember thinking they were the luckiest kids in the world. I saw so many movies at the drive-in. I still cannot watch Moses part the Red Sea without seeing windshield wipers in my mind's eye. My father smoked in the car, and if the weather was good and our parents were parked nearby, we could get out and sit in the seats in front of the snack bar. Our lungs appreciated it. We went to dusk-to-dawn features. Four Clint Eastwood movies. Four Elvis movies. Movies all night. Our Auburn Drive-In needed little excuse to have a fireworks display. Even if we were not at the movie that night, we could walk to the edge of the yard and watch the fireworks. During the Cuban Missile Crisis and the subsequent "duck and cover" paranoia, a man selling pre-fab fallout shelters parked his sample in front of the theatre so citizens could look at this piece of pipe painted yellow of a three-foot ventilation shaft sticking out of the ground and place their orders with him. Our drive-in had bingo games before the movie and at the breaks between movies. Local merchants donated prizes—things they could not sell, I imagine. My brother won a set of milk glass serving pieces one night. The entry was monitored, but the exit was not. People were always trying to sneak in the exit, but policemen often sat in the back watching the movie and keeping out intruders.

Drive-ins provided a unique movie-watching experience from the comfort of one's car, and allowed for ultimate privacy. The true push for drive-in movie theatres came from the boom of car sales after wartime. The cost to maintain such a property was less than the cost to run an indoor movie theatre, which, in turn, allowed for ticket prices to be cheaper than the alternative, thus drawing younger audiences and families. (movieweb.com)

Dennis Lambert recalls seeing the huge image on the big screen at night. "It was cool when Dad would drive us by the theatre at night and you could see from the car the film playing on that giant outdoor screen as we passed by. Seems so long ago now."


Chattanooga Daily Times
27 Mar 1955, Sun - Page 25
SEE THE BIG OUTDOOR PICTURE...OUTDOORS!
AT THESE DRIVE-IN THEATRES!
JOHN FORD'S EPIC OF THE FIGHTING CAVALRY!
JOHN WAYNE
SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON

In 1955, the *Chattanooga Daily Times* promoted seeing John Wayne's "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon" "Outdoors! At These Drive-in Theatres!" and there were many of them: the Starlight in Athens, TN; the Southport in Bridgeport; the Broad Street, the 58th Street, the Lookout, the Red Bank, the Skyway, or the 23rd Street in Chattanooga, TN; the Cherokee or Cleveland in Cleveland, TN; the Henagar in Henagar, AL; the Twin City in McCaysville, TN; the Monteagle in Monteagle, TN; the Starlite in Rossville, GA; the Penn in Summerville, GA; and the Cross Roads in Whitville, TN.

The area's first drive-in was actually not in Jackson County, but close enough that the extra drive was not unreasonable. It was also a Donald Word business—Rainsville Drive-In. But the Tawasentha and the Southport were not far behind.

The Tawasentha: The June 16, 1950 *Progressive Age* announced the opening of Robert Word's first Jackson County drive-in, the Tawasentha, on the left between Scottsboro and Hollywood: "Big Drive-in Movie Theatre Opens Here Friday Night"

Scottsboro and Jackson County now has an ultra-modern drive-in theatre, which opens Friday night of this week. Robert Word, owner of the Word Theatre chain, is the owner of the new place of entertainment, and he has spared neither money or pains in giving our community one of the finest theatres of this kind to be found anywhere.

The drive-in is located about four miles east of Scottsboro on the Lee Highway and it can accommodate 400 cars at a time. The screen building is 55 feet or four stories high and the pictures will be projected by powerful new equipment built especially for this theatre. Mr. Word has name the new theatre "Tawasentha," which is Indian for "The Valley."

The opening night picture will be a brand new feature film, "Please Believe Me," as shown in the ad below. The entrance to the theatre is on the Stevenson side and the exit on the Scottsboro sides. Ushers will direct all cars upon entering.

For the benefit of those who ha e not been to a drive-in theatre, it works this way: You sit in your car and see the movies and hear the sound on a little speaker that fastens inside your car window. The cars park systematically on slight ramps so that the elevation will allow all in the car to see the screen.

The new drive-in has in the center of the lot a fine new snack shop where drinks, fun cheese, etc. will be sold. There are also nice restrooms in the building.

Drive-in theatres have become very popular over the country the last several years and one of the reasons is that you can load your wife and small children in the car and go see a good movie without hunting for a baby sitter. Also it is comfortable, convenient and you can come and go whenever you like without disturbing other patrons. People everywhere like the drive-ins and this theatre should have good patronage from the start.

It closed in the early 1980s. The Tawasentha looked like any drive-in: open tiered field with posts at intervals with two speakers mounted on each to accommodate two cars. Roughly in the middle of the Tawasentha parking lot was an extensively stocked snack bar with pickled eggs and pigs' feet in gallon jugs atop the glass display cases. In front of the snack bar were metal lawn chairs, mostly used by children escaping the family car.

At the base of the screen was a living space that ran the width of the screen and extended out from its base. In front of the apartment was a playground with swings, see-saws, and merry-go-rounds.When the screen was rebuilt after it was destroyed by fire, the apartment and the playground were not replaced.

Richard Matthews shared the flyer on the next page showing a month of coming attractions from June 1955. And David Bradford remembers driving by and watching the Tawasentha burn on August 16, 1960, documented in the *Jackson County Sentinel* picture above. (*JCS*, Aug 18, 1960)

Bobby Hodges in his oft-reprinted essay "Going Home Again" provides some of the best insight into the memories associated with the Tawasentha:

Coming attractions at the Tawasentha, June 1954, from Richard Matthews

If we come in from the east, from Hollywood, we pass the Tawasentha Drive In, a monument which no longer stands physically, but which will forever occupy my fondest memories. What magnificent trust the mothers of our teenage girl friends placed in us! They need not have worried. All of them in those days were taught Home Economics by Mrs. Sarah Betty Turner. We guys were never allowed into the mysteries of Mrs. Turner's Home Economics class. We never knew what she was teaching them, but whatever it was, it made them absolutely invincible. There was this constant tug-of-war between us teenage guys and Mrs. Sarah Betty Turner, who always won. Abstinence did not have to be preached to the girls in Scottsboro in the fifties - Mrs. Sarah Betty cloaked each of them in a coat of armor which was meant to remind us boys of knighthood. Her influence was felt everywhere there was a teenage girl in the community and certainly was at work at the Tawasentha Drive In. Years later, when the sexual revolution of the sixties came about, I wondered from afar if it had swept into Scottsboro. I knew that if it had invaded Scottsboro, it could only be because Mrs. Sarah Betty had stopped teaching Home Economics.

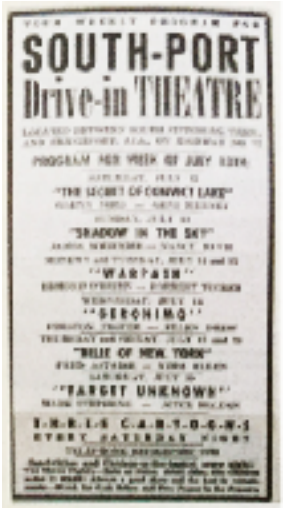
The Southport Drive-In: Judging by the enthusiastic response to a post about this theatre on Dennis Lambert's "Bridgeport—Then and Now" Facebook page, many people in the area remember this theatre fondly. Dennis and Jen Stewart provide most of the content for this movie entry.

Jen remembers that as a teenager in Stevenson that when the Isabelle Theatre closed, teenagers drove to the Southport to see movies. "I'm not sure when the Southport started, but my parents took us in my later childhood to the drive-in, and we kids took a blanket to spread on the ground in front of the car during hot weather. Living in Stevenson, we were lucky to be able to go to either the Tawasentha near Scottsboro or to the Southport between Bridgeport and South Pittsburg."

Coming attractions at the Southport, from the South Pittsburg Heritage Museum. Museum

Dennis explains that the name came from the location of the drive-in between two towns: South for South Pittsburg, and Port for Bridgeport. The address for the theatre was in Bridgeport. It was located where Coastal Transport is today along Alabama Highway 277. Dennis noted that "remnants of the old theatre including ticket booth, concession/projection building and sign post and frame still stood up until Coastal was built around 1997. Nothing remains today and the hillside was even leveled for the building of the trucking hub."

The Southport was built and operated by Mack Nation of South Pittsburg. Dennis remembers that the theatre was opened in the late 40s, but Mack's obituary said it opened in 1950. The earliest that I can document it is 1954 because it is found in the Bridgeport-Stevenson phone book. Dennis has a 1952 ad for the Southport from the *South Pittsburg Hustler.* "This ad was from 1952 and list the films being played for the week of July 13th. Geronimo being shown on the 16th was a much older film released in 1939." He remembers the drive-in closing around 1980. "What is interesting is the fact that both



1952 Southport Ad, from the *South Pittsburg Hustler,* from Dennis Lambert.

the Ritz and the Southport operated at the same time for a least 11 years," Dennis noted.

Jen Stewart described the theatre as "an open tiered field with posts at intervals with two speakers mounted on each to accommodate two cars. The Southport had swings and seesaws in an area in front of the screen where kids could play during the movie. There was a building in the middle of the field that contained the projection equipment and a snack bar." Bill Hurst commented on Facebook: "It was kinda like church. You had to get there early to get on the back row." The preference for the darkness of the back row is not difficult to explain. "There are stories of teenagers and young adults making out in the car while the movie was playing," Dennis writes. "Makes you wonder how many people around Bridgeport and South Pittsburg actually got their start of life right there at this theatre."

The drive-in showed first-run movies. Jen remembers, "The drive-ins showed different movies so you could go to one on Friday night and the other on Saturday night. If my memory serves, the movies shown were pretty current and changed either weekly or every two weeks." Deborah Moody worked there in 1978 and has "lots of good memories of Elvis, Jaws, and Mary Poppins." "Went there on my very first date in 1966," Louise Thomas remember. "Mary Poppins was playing that night. Went there nearly every weekend while I was dating." A former concession stand worker remembers that some R and X rated movies were shown. "Sometimes there would be a hard R/soft X rated movie that would show after the main feature, and all the cars would have to leave and then come back in if the passengers were old enough. I wasn't over 18, but somebody had to cook so I got to stay. Very last movie shown on the big screen there was "Emmanuelle, The Joys of a Woman." Not many people would come to get food during the late showings."

There was no shortage of treats to sustain moviegoers. Jen recalls that popcorn and other treats were available in "a building in the middle of the field that contained the projection equipment and a snack bar." People remember good times at the Southport working in the concession stand. "I worked the concession stand there, right up until it closed for good, and saw the last movies that ran." The concessions stand was managed by Bonny Thrift, Sharon Thrift's mom. "Flipped many a burger, fried many fries, lots of popcorn popped. When it was slow I'd get to see the movies." Sherry Brown Piercy recalls that her grandmother made pizza there for a time.

One of the memories that many people share about the Southport is sneaking into the theatre without paying by hiding out in the car. "I heard many stories of how kids would hide in the trunk of a car so they did not have to pay admission when the driver drove through the ticket booth," Dennis recalls. "Since they charged per person in the car, this was an easy way to cheat and see a movie for free. Of course the stowaways got out and into the car once the car was parked and ready to watch the movie."

Bettye Horton Bunch remembers hiding in the car with her sisters to see a movie at the Southport. "One of my sisters had me lie on the back floorboard of the car under a blanket to sneak me in when I was in elementary school. Friends of hers were in the back seat with their feet on the blanket. It was very uncomfortable, but it was exciting to see the movie." But Ray Rich has the best "sneaking into the movie" story. "Cecil Walker snuck me in. He was driving a '57 Chevy and he put me between the grill and the radiator." Terry Coffman remembers getting "caught sneaking in a couple of times." Good times, fun memories.

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The Jackson County Chronicles

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In this issue:

Editor: Annette Norris Bradford
Associate Editor: David Bradford

Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance
PRESERVE, RESTORE AND VENERATE

April Meeting: The Jackson County Historical Association and the Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance are co-sponsoring the annual meeting of the Alliance at the Scottsboro Jackson Heritage Center on **Saturday, April 27**. The morning meeting will be at the **Heritage Center**, and the afternoon meeting will be a series of practicum workshops on headstone leveling and repair, with demonstrations of ground-penetrating radar and D2 cleaning held at **Cedar Hill**. We will also hold a mini-cemetery stroll about 3:00 with presenters from our past strolls recreating their monologues for our out-of-town visitors.

The cost of the workshop is **$40** and includes breakfast and lunch at the Heritage Center, a performance by the Northeast String Ensemble, a mini-cemetery stroll at 3 pm, and a year's membership in the Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance. The signup sheet for this workshop is attached at the end of the *Chronicles*. You can learn more about this organization at: https://www.alabama-cemetery-preservation.com/ .

You must pre-register by **April 20** to attend this workshop and the deadline is coming up quickly. This is a unique opportunity to receive authoritative and high quality cemetery care education, better than any workshop we could set up. Please take advantage of it.

JCHA Members Invited to NCAA String Band CD Release Concert: The Mustang String Band is currently recording the band's second album, which is a reimagining of the Skyline Farms Band's recordings, last collected and released on cassette by Dr. David Campbell. The invitation came from student Hillary Green, a member of the current band, with strong family ties to the original band: "My great grandfather, Hub Green, was the fiddle player in the band, and my Great Aunt Edith was one of the dancers." The JCHA is invited to the concert and release party on May 10 at 7:00 pm at the NACC theater. It should be a fun event, and it is free.

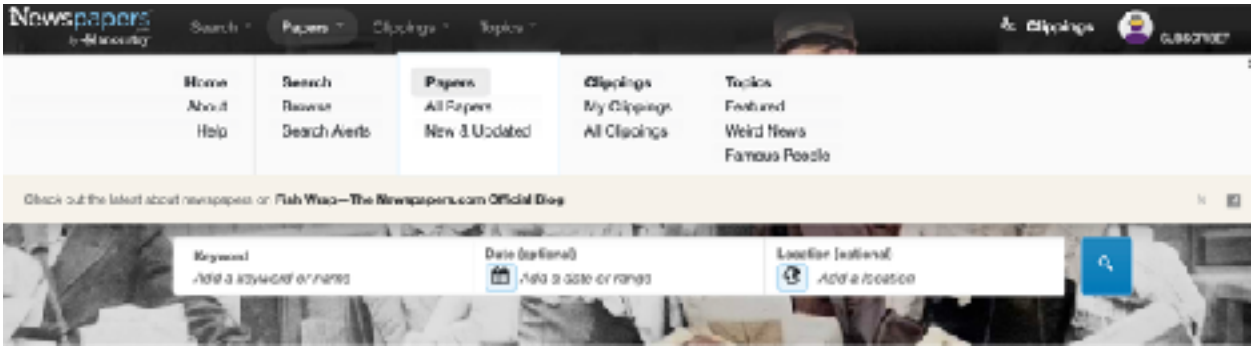
Most Surviving Jackson County Newspapers Now Online

Since December 2023, the JCHA, the Jackson County Probate Office, and the Scottsboro Jackson Heritage Center have been working with ancestry.com and newspapers.com to get more of the county's newspapers online. Having our county's newspapers under the newspapers.com interface is a real advantage to local and remote genealogy researchers. People with a newspapers.com subscription can easily search news in our county back to 1868 and forward to the present day. Because the Heritage Center and probate office provided microfilm and support for newspapers.com, the organization set up a free access to all of newspapers.com at the Heritage Center and the research room in the county probate office. Just as you can use Ancestry from the heritage center, you can now use newspapers.com.

What benefit is this to family history researchers? You might not be aware that ancestry.com, findagrave.com, fold3 (the military database), yearbooks.com, and newspapers.com are all owned by the same organization now, and the integration among these tools created by different organizations is impressive. I worked for a computer company and remember when getting one application to talk to another was a cause for celebration. All the applications, initially written by different organizations, can share data. So, if I am researching my great grandfather and I can get at least one unequivocal hit on someone (one good census record or a findagrave record), then the "hit list" displayed in ancestry is more focused and dependable. I can see fold3 military records and his marriage and death announcements in newspapers.com. If the yearbook is online, I can see his high school photos. I love it.

The newspaper.com interface lets you search something as small as a single page of a single newspaper, or something as broad as all the papers under their interface. One hit is typically not much good but neither are a million hits. The trick is getting in between. I was able to track Lucille Benson's career for a recent *Alabama Heritage* article because I could search on her name across the entire country. To contain the chaos, I searched ten years at a time.

You can also **Browse** (just open a newspaper you already know about) or set up a **Search Alert** (that is, have newspapers inform you when something you are looking for is found in a newly added resource). When you browse, start by selecting United States > Alabama >*Town* and then picking the year, month, and date you want.



Here is some guidance in how to use this interface.

Search: the default interface. This dialog box contains three fields:

1. **Keyword**. If you have just one word to search, like *Bradford*, enter that. If you are searching two words or more, you have to put them in quotation marks: *"William Bradford"*. If you want to see all instances of William Bradford when it is found on the page with Scottsboro, type *"William Bradford" Scottsboro* in the keyword field. This will launch a combination string and proximity search.

2. **Date**: Date is an optional field. If you are searching something that will have few hits, you can leave it blank, for example, a three-part family name. But if you have a common search string and need to narrow down your returns, this is a good field.
3. **Location**: If you don't want a million hits on some searches, always give a location. You can specify Scottsboro, Stevenson, Bellefonte, or Bridgeport, or you can search Jackson County, Alabama. Or just Alabama. If you search the entire United States, you have to specify that. In all instances, you have to select your search location from the drop-down menu. Otherwise, the search argument fails to see this filter and your search covers all of newspapers.

What follows is a summary of existing information about all the county newspapers. The basic history of Bellefonte newspapers is from John R. Kennamer's *History of Jackson County*, with updates and corrections from Ann Chambless and from Christine Sumner's just-published *Old Bellefonte* book. The basis of this newspaper history of Scottsboro includes and augments the excellent article titled "The Daily Sentinel" that was written by the committee that compiled *The Heritage of Jackson County*, with the time since 1996 fleshed out using newspapers.com and from conversations with Beth Law. The history of Stevenson newspapers is, of course, primarily from Eliza Woodall's *The Stevenson Story.* I am indebted to Dennis Lambert for his invaluable help with Bridgeport newspapers and his pictures of obscure Bridgeport newspapers. I also consulted the Library of Congress newspaper database.

Bellefonte

J. R. R. Kennamer in his *History of Jackson County* refers to a number of papers and states that the first newspaper was published in 1834, but no one has a copy of this newspaper. Kennamer points out that early legal notices were published in Huntsville papers, specifically the *Huntsville Democrat*. Newsworthy Bellefonte events before 1839, such as Governor Moore's July 4th address in Bellefonte and resolutions about the county's Revolutionary War soldiers, were printed in the *Democrat*. The first legal notice appearing in a native Bellefonte newspaper was a mortgage sale in 1839 made by Moses Maples. Christine Sumner recognizes at least seven Bellefonte newspapers.

Bellefonte Courier and Jackson County Republican. The new Jackson County Historical Association was excited to find the oldest county newspaper that they had seen when they organized in 1975: the April 11, 1839 edition of the *Bellefonte Courier and Jackson County Republican*. The JCHA reprinted the paper in its entirety in its fourth newsletter. Ann Chambless wrote in her biography of Robert Scott that at various times between 1836 and 1954, "Robert T. Scott served as editor of the *Bellefonte Courier* newspaper, practiced law, and received various committee and commission appointments by Alabama governors." Christine Sumner writes, "One Christmas Day 1833, John Kinkle and Anderson Hutchinson purchased a printing press from Dandridge Farris and type from Phillip Woodson, all of Madison County, Alabama" to enable the publication, four months later, of the first *Bellefonte Courier.* (p.39) By September 1837, the *Courier* had merged with the *Jackson County Republican* and started a new numbering system. In 1839, Christine reports, the paper was being published by "Sewell and Eaton" [Robert A. Eaton of Lancaster, PA] and Robert Scott was the editor. The newspaper(s) ceased publication by 1841.

Robert T. Scott, Intermittent Editor of the *Bellefonte Courier*

North Alabama Star: Christine Sumner notes that the Robert A.Eaton mentioned earlier came to Bellefonte in 1836 and for a time published a paper called the *North Alabama Star*. Ann Chambless found evidence of the existence of this early Bellefonte newspaper in the *Marshall County Probate Minutes March 1836 and December 1839* (pp. 17-18). The probate minutes covered an estate settlement that was ordered to be published in the *North Alabama Star* in Bellefonte, Alabama requiring legatees and interested parties to

appear before the county court judge in Claysville, Alabama on November 8, 1836. (*JCC*, No. 20, Oct 11, 1979). The short-lived paper ended its publication when the editor moved to Tuscaloosa later that year.

Jacksonian: With its first edition on September 29, 1837, this paper was published by the same Sewell and Eaton who had published the *Courier*. The paper was still publishing in December 1838 when a Captain Norris was its editor. The paper was referenced in the Tuscumbia *North Alabamian*.

Jackson County Democrat and the Bellefonte Democrat: In circulation by April 1, 1839, the *Jackson County Democrat* was published by R.C.T. Gill and edited by A. H. H. Roundtree, and was still in publication as late as 1855. Gill was still the publisher when the paper changed its name to the *Bellefonte Democrat i*n 1846 and continued with the paper until just before the Civil War when he sold it to Frazier and Jones. (Sumner, pp. 39-40)

North Alabama Register: Kennamer notes that other papers came and went in Bellefonte. J. F. Green and his brother published the *North Alabama Register*. Green sold the paper to J. W. Madden. Christine notes that this paper was published "upstairs on the southeast corner of the public square in Bellefonte." The paper stopped publication April 29, 1853. (Sumner, p. 40)

Bellefonte Era: Frazier and Jones, who had published the former *Bellefonte Democrat,* also published a subsequent paper called the *Bellefonte Era,* until the coming of the Federal Army under General O. M. Mitchell, in April 1862. Mitchell destroyed the printing facilities and this action ended all publication of newspapers in Bellefonte. (Kennamer, pp.94-95) The last issue of this newspaper was published March 5, 1862. This was the last newspaper published in Bellefonte; nothing was published there during or after the Civil War. (Sumner, p. 40)

Bellefonte Advertiser: This newspaper is referenced as being edited by Samuel Houston Gist. It was referred to in the *Bellefonte Era* as an "advertising sheet." (Sumner, p. 40)

Almost no copies remain of any of these newspapers. The only copy of the *Bellefonte Courier and Jackson County Republican* to survive was found in the Alabama Archives and is available on newspapers.com (United States>Alabama>Bellefonte). If you want to search for information about your family before 1868, the most practical place to look is in the *Huntsville Democrat,* also available on newspapers.com (United States>Huntsville>Huntsville Democrat).

Scottsboro

The county is fortunate to have copies of our oldest newspapers online under newspapers.com. These newspapers are not part of the Alabama Archives collection, the source of many of our online newspapers. We have those early newspapers on newspapers.com today because in 1981, the JCHA, led by Walt Hammer at that time, contributed money to have them microfilmed. Their condition online is extraordinary.

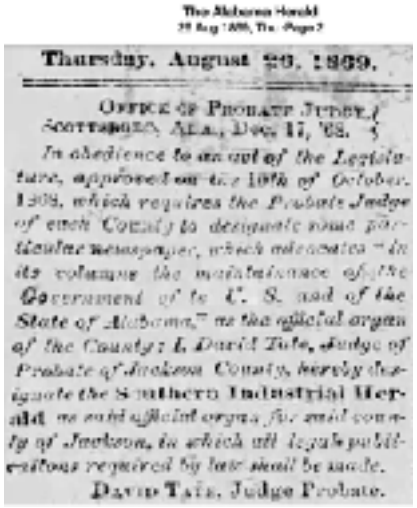
The Heralds and Alexander Snodgrass: Immediately after the Civl War, there was a series of papers with "Herald" in the name, all published by Alexander Snodgrass. The papers were printed weekly on Thursday. Kennamer notes that the "Herald" papers, the first paper after the end of the Civil War, started as an enterprise of P J. Smith and Alexander Snodgrass, but three months after the paper started publication, Smith withdrew and went to Lebanon in DeKalb County and began publishing the *Republican Union*. In July 1993, Ann Chambless abstracted Elizabeth Snodgrass' "Recollections of Early Scottsboro," written in the early 1900s. Elizabeth (1889-1934) was the daughter of David Nathan Snodgrass and Elizabeth Larkin Cotten.

Alexander Snodgrass from City Hall

On the northwest corner of Main and Railroad (now Maple [Mary Hunter] and Houston) was Granthams General Store and restaurant. On the second floor were a number of bedrooms, one

very large one that could sleep a dozen people and built especially to accommodate the juries. The printing office of the first newspaper was here, THE ALABAMA HERALD, with hand-worked press type. Perhaps it was because I was permitted to ink the type that I imbibed the love for printer's ink. Colonel Alex Snodgrass and his daughters, Fannie V. and Lex(ie), constituted the paper staff. Lex did everything, acquiring the knowledge of an encyclopedia. Dick Frazier was hired as the printer for a number of years. The Alex Snodgrass home was on the same block but faced the other street on the back (Oak Street).

The ***Alabama Herald*** was published 29 times [that survive] between April 30, 1868 and November 19, 1868. It was apparently not the only newspaper available in Jackson County and was the subject of controversy. The editor's obituary in 1897 said of him, "He was several times Jackson County's representative to the legislature, mayor of Scottsboro several terms, and for twenty years was editor of *Alabama Herald* in Scottsboro. In 1887, the *Herald* was discontinued on account of Col. Snodgrass' appointment as postmaster by President Cleveland." (*PA*, Aug 19, 1897) It is admirable that in the chaos of reconstruction, Snodgrass was able to get his paper into circulation by 1868. The *Era* referenced here was the Stevenson paper published in 1877-1878; the paper considered itself the mouthpiece of the old South Democratic party. The *Huntsville Advocate* was edited by W. B. Figures, and he advocated the post-war new world order. The *Advocate* was embroiled in a battle with the Snodgrass paper to be the printer of legal ads for the county. Snodgrass wrote on November 19, 1868 that the *Advocate* wanted "a perfect monopoly of all the loyalty of North Alabama....The *Era* wants to monopolize all the loyalty of the Democratic party, and exclude us. The *Advocate* of course would not have us in his domain of loyalty because we might lessen his opportunities for a display of his great love of country." But Snodgrass prevailed as the local paper of choice for printing legal information, a fact which, I am sure, improved circulation and was a revenue stream when revenue was hard to come by.


The Alabama Herald
29 Aug 1869, Thu · Page 2

Thursday, August 26, 1869.

OFFICE OF PROBATE JUDGE,
SCOTTSBORO, ALA., Dec. 17, '68.

In obedience to an act of the Legislature, approved on the 10th of October, 1868, which requires the Probate Judge of each County to designate some particular newspaper, which advocates in its columns the maintenance of the Government of the U. S. and of the State of Alabama, as the official organ of the County: I, David Tate, Judge of Probate of Jackson County, hereby designate the Southern Industrial Herald as said official organ for said county of Jackson, in which all legal publications required by law shall be made.

DAVID TATE, Judge Probate.

The *Alabama Herald* changed its name to the ***Southern Industrial Herald***. We have Volume 1, Number 3, which was printed on December 10, 1868, so we can assume that Volumes 1 and 2 were published between November 19, the last *Alabama Herald*, and December 10. This name lasted for 40 issues. Apparently the *Huntsville Democrat* continued to assert their right to publish Jackson County legal notices because every issue of the paper carried this notice from Probate Judge David Tate. The paper changed volumes each year but numbering was sequential. The last paper we have of this name was Volume 3 Number 57, and it was printed September 16, 1869, when the paper was renamed the ***Scottsboro Industrial Herald*** and followed the numbering convention, designated Volume 2 Number 1. There were 81 papers by this name.

Then the paper paused publication until January 11, 1872 when, without fanfare or explanation, the name of the paper was changed back to the ***Alabama Herald.*** It printed under this name until December 28, 1882, when, with Volume 15 Number 52, it ceased publication, because its long-time editor, Alexander Snodgrass, was appointed postmaster by President Cleveland. The publishing equipment was sold to a Mr. Brindley, who used it to print *Will's Valley Post*. (Kennamer, p.95)

All versions of the *Herald* newspapers are found on microfilm in the Heritage Center and are now available on newspapers.com (United State>Alabama>Scottsboro>Alabama Herald).

During the last years of the *Herald's* publication, two other Scottsboro papers had come into existence: the *Progressive Age* in 1873 and the Scottsboro *Fellow Citizen* in 1877.

Progressive Age: As most county newspapers did, the *Progressive Age* evolved from earlier papers. Walter T. Boyle (1852-1932) from Virginia was the first editor of the newspaper, which was started the last day of

December 1886 as the *Progressive Age*. Boyle called himself "the Age man." The other newspapers publishing at the same time were the *Herald* and the *Scottsboro Fellow Citizen*.

The newspaper that became the *Progressive Age* had been born in the spring of 1873 when Thomas D. Osborne combined his small paper the *Stevenson New Era* with another small paper published in Scottsboro by Charles M. Gardner, the *Star*. This paper flourished for a few years as the *New Era* before passing to the hands of B. F. Shook. In 1886, Shook sold it to W. T. Boyle and it began publication under the name the *Progressive Age*. It was Walter Boyle who originated the name the *Progressive Age*, which endured as a journalistic entity in Jackson County until 1962.

About 1885, Doyle married Annie Jones (1867–1942) of Paint Rock, the daughter of Bryant Jones and Nancy (Gwathney) Jones. About the same time that Boyle started the *Progressive Age*, he and his bride "moved to the C.S .Freeman house in the eastern part of town." (*Scottsboro Citizen*, March 18, 1886) It is likely that he was by that time a partner in the Freeman marble business, but that partnership was not confirmed until the 1900 *Progressive Age* economic supplement, which recognized Scottsboro Marble Works, started by Freeman, Boyle, and Company, established in 1897.

In the January 24, 1895 issue, W. T. Boyle was listed as editor and proprietor and T. J. Kennedy was listed as editor of the *Progressive Age*. In August 1895, Boyle sold the *Progressive Age* to Jesse Brown and his eighteen-year-old son, Lawrence E. Brown. Lawrence managed the paper under the title editor and proprietor. They called themselves The Age Publishing Company and published the paper until it was sold to Mark L. Tucker January 21, 1909.


Mark Tucker from 1911 photo

Tucker was an experienced newspaperman, a smart businessman and a good publisher. On May 5, 1909, he bought out one of his competitors, the short-lived *Jackson Union News*. Then in May 1911, prior to the death of the *Citizen's* editor and proprietor, James Armstrong, Tucker also bought the *Citizen's* subscription lists. Tucker was owner, operator, and editor of both papers, and Armstrong was associate editor until the latter's death a few months later.

Tucker tried to sell his interest in *The Citizen* to T. G. Carter on September 23, 1915 but within three months, Carter's name disappeared and Parker W. Campbell and H. O. Coffey leased the business *Citizen*. Three years later, in a February 28, 1919 article, it was announced that both the *Progressive Age* and the *Citizen* were sold to James S. Benson. The last *Scottsboro Citizen* found on file is three months later in June 1919.


James Benson. Family Photo

In turning over the *Citizen* to Benson, Tucker wrote, "In leaving The *Progressive Age* and the *Scottsboro Citizen* in the hands of my successor Mr. James. S. Benson, I do so in full confidence that he will continue to work for the community and the country on the same high plane that it has been my aim to do through the ten years of my residence here," and called on citizens to give Benson their support and friendship, "Stand by him firmly and he will not disappoint you." *(SC*, Mar 18, 1919) Benson, who later was elected probate judge, ran a progressive paper, using the latest technology, and wrote biting editorials about prohibition and other topics of the day. Parker Campbell wrote a regular column for Benson.

In the late 1920's, Benson disagreed with the direction the Democratic Party was taking, and a threat of competition soon became a reality in the form of *The Jackson County Sentinel*. Campbell switched his allegiance to the *Sentinel* to become its editor and manager. However, the *Progressive Age* never seemed to falter. The papers coexisted for nearly seven years until August 12, 1937 when it was announced that the papers were combining their lists, with the *Sentinel* to be issued on Tuesdays and the *Age* on Thursdays.

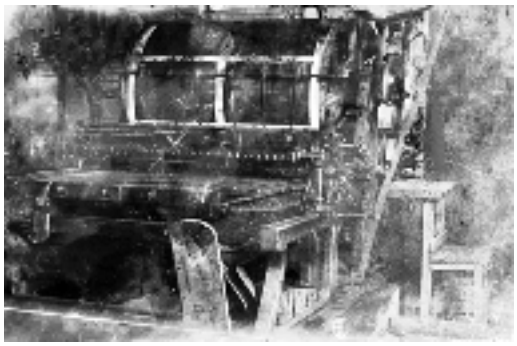
Benson worked under this arrangement about a year. In an October 1938 issue of the *Age*, it was announced that Campbell would assume full charge and control of both papers and continue as their

editor and publisher. Campbell, along with Bill Edwards and Jim Lawrence, formed the *Sentinel-Age* publishing company and operated the joint publication for 20 years.

From the Scottsboro City Directory

In March, 1962, the *Progressive Age* and the *Jackson County Sentinel* merged into one newspaper, the *Sentinel-Age*, remaining as a semi-weekly publication, printing on Thursday and Sunday until the 1970's. During this period, the paper moved from its location on the east side of the square, to a building on Market Street across from the Post Office, shown here. The earlier location at the back of what is now the Lynch Building is shown in the middle photo below. The paper continued as *The Sentinel-Age*, remaining as a semi-weekly publication, until July 1970 when the *Sentinel-Age* became a daily and changed the name to *The Daily Sentinel.*

The county has the *Progressive Age* on microfilm from mid November 1887 until it was merged with the *Jackson County Sentinel* in 1960. newspapers.com has this paper online, with some missing volumes, beginning in January, 1889 (United States> Alabama> Scottsboro>Progressive Age). An effort is being made to fill in missing volumes when the county has access to a digitizing camera.



L to R, 1911 inside the Progressive Age office. Man is probably Mark Tucker. 1930 Outside Progressive Age office, l to r, James Benson, Bill Shelton Sr., H. M. Henderson, Parker Campbell, and Andy "Dink" Cotten. Last Photo: Web press installed at the Progressive Age.

Fellow Citizen and the Scottsboro Citizen: At the same time as the *Progressive Age* was publishing, the *Fellow Citizen,* the paper that became the *Scottsboro Citizen,* was founded in 1877 by James Armstrong and C. W. Brown, both of whom had been politically active, serving as Alabama legislators.

According to John R. Kennamer:

In September 1877, the Scottsboro Citizen *was established by James Armstrong as Editor and Proprietor. He was a splendid newspaper man. The paper prospered and was widely read until his health failed. The paper was consolidated with the* Progressive Age *in May 1911. Mr. Armstrong, a native of Lawrence County, came here as a small lad. He held offices in the Alabama Legislature and was door-keeper in Congress during one of Cleveland's administrations.*

On the death of Mr. James Armstrong, the Scottsboro Citizen *suspended publication.*

About 1912, George Sehorn and brother, W. C. Sehorn, bought the DeLoach Manufacturing Company's printing plant of Bridgeport, moved it to Scottsboro, and began publication of the Citizen. *It was discontinued after a few years.*

James Armstrong printed a good paper. He managed to collect a great deal of local news. Some of his most interesting articles were written as he rode among the communities and gathered news.

James married Mary Ann Henderson, and the Armstrongs had five children, none of whom had descendants. All of Armstong's children helped with publication of the paper and most worked in newspaper-related fields.

- Phil, born in 1881, was a writer, poet, and musician who worked a time in the government printing office in Washington before he returned to Scottsboro and edited a short-lived newspaper called the *Advertiser*. Later, he wrote a column called Driftwood" for the *Montgomery Advertiser* and finally a column called "Florida Sunshine" for the *Jacksonville (FL) Times-Union*. He was an admired journalist who died in 1934 at age 54 and is buried in a marked grave in Cedar Hill.
- Andrew, born in 1883, was killed in action in France, a World War I soldier who died the day Armistice was declared, November 11, 1918. He is probably buried in France.
- Harry, born in 1885, learned printing at his father's knee and worked in the Government Printing Office while going to law school at Georgetown. He was an attorney for the Internal Revenue Service who argued many cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and died in 1953 at age 68.
- Jimmie, born in 1887, who lived only three weeks and is buried in an unmarked grave in Cedar Hill.
- Marie, born in 1891, who was studying music in Washington, D.C. when she died at age 16 of appendicitis. She is buried in an unmarked grave in Cedar Hill.

James Armstrong's Grave in Cedar Hill

It is also interesting to note that James Armstrong's mother was grandmother to *Sentinel* editor Parker Campbell. James was the son of Lucy Isabella McKissick and James Armstrong Sr.; when James Sr. died in 1855, only 30 years old, Lucy married Green Duke Campbell. They were the parents of Parker Campbell (the editor's) father, also named Parker Campbell, making newspapermen James Armstrong and Parker half uncle and half nephew.

In 1909, James Armstrong sold the *Citizen's* subscription lists to Mark Tucker, and Armstrong was associate editor until the latter's death not long thereafter, October 20, 1911. Tucker tried to sell his interest in *The Citizen* to T. G. Carter on September 23, 1915 but within three months, Carter's name disappeared and Parker W. Campbell and H. O. Coffey leased the business and took over the *Citizen*. Three years later, in a February 28, 1919 article, it was announced that both the *Progressive Age* and the *Citizen* were sold to James S. Benson. The last *Scottsboro Citizen* found on file is three months later in June 1919.

newspapers.com has this paper online beginning in October 4, 1878 with the paper designated as Volume 2 Number 5, showing James Armstrong as editor and proprietor. The papers from the years 1884 and 1885 are missing; the last paper of December 1883 is listed as Volume 8 Number 15. The next paper available is January 1886, listed as Volume 9 Number 17. Clearly, the paper was published some of the time during this missing interval. Efforts will be made when we have a camera setup from ancestry to fill in the papers that were never microfilmed. They are found in newspapers.com under United States>Alabama>Scottsboro>Scottsboro Citizen.

Jackson Union News: When Mark Tucker sold the Age Publishing Company to the Brown family, he bought out one of his competitors, the short-lived *Jackson County Union News*. According to Kennamer, the "J*ackson Union News* was established January 1, 1906 by Union Publishing Company. Thomas J. Kennedy was editor and manager. The paper was published in the interest of the Farmers' Union who had become strong in the county. When Mr. Kennedy was made Secretary of the State Farmers' Union, he moved to Birmingham, Alabama. The paper was merged with the *Progressive Age*." (Kennamer, p. 96)

newspapers.com has this paper online beginning February 13, 1907 (which is Volume 1 Number 4) and ending May 5, 1909 (United States>Alabama>Scottsboro>Jackson Union

News). T. J. Kennedy was listed as the publisher for the full set of papers that are still in existence. No paper by this title survives after Tucker bought it on May 5, 1909.

Parker Campbell from *Sentinel* obituary

The Sentinel: The *Jackson County Sentinel* (the first name of what was also called the *Sentinel-Age* and *The Daily Sentinel* and finally again the *Jackson County Sentinel*) began as a reaction to the editorial policy of the *Progressive Age*.

The *Sentinel* had been publishing for three years when Parker Campbell complied with government regulations and posted a list of his bondholders on April 18, 1932. When Campbell launched the *Sentinel*, he could not finance the operation by himself, so he sold bonds to finance his new venture. Campbell, who has learned his trade working with Jim Benson at the *Progressive Age*, flourished on his own, writing pointed editorials and eloquent obituaries.

Campbell's newspaper career lasted nearly 41 years until July 30, 1957, when it was announced the combined papers were sold to Scottsboro Newspapers, Inc., with Frank LeBourg named as publisher.

Guy Hollis purchased LeBourg's interest in the company about a year later and became its new editor and publisher for nearly two years before leaving to work for the *Huntsville Times*. In January 1960, Carmage Walls purchased Hollis' interest in Scottsboro Newspapers, Inc. Fred Buchheit was named as editor and publisher.

In May 1970, James K. Harkess replaced Bucheit as publisher and editor, with Jim Robertson (1972) and later Paul W. Dale (1978) as his managing editors. A host of people worked for the *Sentinel* over the next 17 years. Two months later on July 14, 1970, the *Sentinel-Age* became *The Daily Sentinel*. The paper moved from Market Street to an office building at 704 E. Laurel Street by 1972. The paper became a "daily" (published T-W-Th-F and Sunday). Harkness served as editor and publisher for about 17 years, leading the paper through several critical transitions. In March 1987, Harkness was replaced by Billy J. Cornwall, Jr. as editor and publisher of the *Daily Sentinel*.

In September 1989, the *Daily Sentinel* moved to the newly-constructed facility at 701 Veterans Drive. Even though the editorial office moved to the square last year, the paper continues to be published at the Veterans Drive location.

In 1992, Editor Billy Cornwell moved to Clute, Texas. His successor was Richard P. Loring, who served as editor and publisher until January 1996, when he resigned to become president of the Huntsville Art Museum. Loring was succeeded by Anita Bynum, a Jackson County native, who became the first woman publisher in the history of the *Daily Sentinel*. She began her newspaper career with the *Daily Sentinel* in 1971 as a receptionist and circulation clerk and served in various management positions before becoming editor in 1996. In 1999, she moved to South Carolina, and the new editor and publisher was Mike DeLapp, a 31-year newspaper veteran who moved to Scottsboro from Reidsville, NC.

DeLapp returned to North Carolina in July 2005, and Faye McBride, a Skyline native and former editor of the *Rainsville Weekly Post*, succeeded him as publisher of the *Daily Sentinel.* She resigned as publisher in September 2008 and was succeeded by Brad Shurett. Originally from Tuscaloosa but coming to the *Sentinel* from the South Pittsburg *Hustler*, Shurett took over as editor and publisher in 2008, winning the newspaper kudos for editorial excellence from the Alabama Press Association. Shurett stepped down in July 2017 to take a position with his father's company, and was succeeded by Ken Bonner as interim editor. Shurett was succeeded as publisher in August 2017 by Brandon Cox, and he held the post for almost a year and half. Brent Miller took over as publisher in December 2018 and held the post for ten months before he was succeeded by DeWayne Patterson.

DeWayne Patterson had been writing sports and feature articles for the *Sentinel* while still on the staff of *The Weekly Press* in Rainsville. In 2007 he became a news reporter at the *Sentinel.* In 2012 he was promoted to managing editor, succeeding Brent Miller. He was promoted to editor and publisher in 2019. The paper moved from a daily to bi-weekly and changed its name to *Jackson County Sentinel* in December 2017. When health issues caused Patterson to step down as editor and publisher in 2023, the paper was sold to Southern Torch in April 2023, with Nick Jones of Rainsville as owner and publisher, though Patrick Graham retained ownership of the presses. Jones purchased the *Jackson County Sentinel,* the *Sand Mountain Reporter,* and the *Times-Journal* from Patrick Graham in April 2023. Jones named Elizabeth Law as the new editor in July 2023. Law had joined the newspaper in November 2009 and was named editor of the *Jackson* magazine in September 2017 and and managing editor of the *Sentinel* in July 2023, a position she currently holds.

Jackson County Farmer: The arrival of the *Jackson County Farmer* was written up in the *Sentinel* on October 8, 1957: "Jackson County Has New Weekly":

Last Thursday marked the beginning of a new weekly newspaper for Jackson County. The Jackson County Farmer, published by Dale Smith, went from monthly publication to weekly. It is the fourth weekly newspaper published in the county. The Progressive Age*, The* Jackson County Sentinel *and the* Bridgeport-Stevenson News*, the latter being published by Cedric Heath in Bridgeport. The* Bridgeport-Stevenson News *is printed by offset lithography, the others being produced by conventional letterpress method.*

The offset lithography technology is the reason that the photo quality of the *Farmer* is so incredible. The article goes on to speculate how the county can support four weekly newspapers. "Circulation income scarcely covers the cost of the paper used. Printing machinery is unbelievably expensive and printers salaries are among the highest of all skilled labor." Clearly the *Sentinel* (probably Editor Parker Campbell) was bemoaning the entry of another competitor into an already tight market.

The *Farmer* was owned and published by Industrial Printers whose president was Dale Smith. To have printer access, the *Farmer* bought the weekly *Bridgeport-Stevenson News,* and retained its managing editor Cedric Heath and production editor Charles Chandler. The paper's first issue was probably April 1957 and the paper was published monthly until October 10, 1957 when it ramped up to a weekly. The early masthead carried the names of both papers:

Borden Deal was slated to be a regular columnist but wrote only two columns. Also listed on the staff were Jo Nevels, circulation and news; Autrey Gardner, social editor; H.O. Coffey, staff writer; Ida Maxwell, feature writer; and Leroy Gist, photographer. Significant stockholders in the paper (5% or more) were Loy Campbell, T. H. Green, Neil C. Know, Eugene McCamy, Donald Moody, W. Jack Steifel, R. S. Thomas Jr., and James F. Thornton. The newspaper office was at 204 E. Appletree Street, one block off the square to the southeast, shown here.

Cedric Heath left as editor in May 1958 to become Civil Defense director for the county, and Dale Smith filled in until Jim Thompson took over the job through March 1958 . That same month, the *Farmer* became the first county newspaper with the capacity to print local advertising two-color.Winfield Scott took over the editor's role in December 1958 and kept it until March 1959.

In April 1959 a thirty-one-year-old Browny Stephens served his first

stint as editor of a Jackson County newspaper, and the staff size was considerably reduced. Browny arrived in Jackson County as the first journalist to use the 35mm camera instead of the favored speed graphic. He took wonderful pictures. Bruce Thomas was his advertising manager and Phyllis Broadway his office manager. Rex Gardner took over as editor in November 1959 and held the post until the paper ceased publication at the end of the year, when it was absorbed into the *Sentinel*.

The *Farmer* was never digitized, but plans are to digitize this paper in the next three months using a camera and process defined by newspapers.com.

The Jackson County Advertiser: The first issue of the *Advertiser* was published July 13, 1967. It stopped publication in September 1981. In its first years, it was a tabloid mailed free of charge to Jackson County homes. Dentist Dr. Ralph Sheppard was the owner throughout the lifetime of the paper; he was also the owner of WCNA Radio, and the two organizations shared locations, resources, and personnel under the same parent organization, Mellow Sound Advertising Company. Both the paper and the radio station were initially located in the Thomas Building at Five Points, but moved to the Lipscomb Building next to the post office. For the first issue, the publisher was Bill Pendergrass, the editor was Ann Hamilton, with Mike Hollis as assistant editor and Fred Blalock as sports editor. Most of the early issues are unavailable, but Volume 1 Number 1 is on the JCHA website, thanks to Tom Underwood.


WCNA And The Advertiser
Move Business Downtown

The *Advertiser* wrote many stories that made it a good repository of local events and history. They had stringers all over the county. and always wrote a year-end review that pulled out the key events of the previous year. The paper always recognized the county's oldest citizens with such features as Senior Citizen of the Month, landmark birthdays with family information, and an "Over Eighty Club," where elderly people could receive a year's free subscription by writing their family history. The paper sent a photographer who made what, in many cases, was their last photo. In the 2nd half of 1973, the staff turned over completely, with Madge Wilbanks (who would later write grants at NACC), Carmen Wann, and Chuck Nelson putting out the paper, and Jan Bradley joining the next year.

In January 1975, the paper became a weekly with David Stout as the manager, retaining most of the same crew. In early 1975, Larry Smith replaced Madge as the editor. Browny Stephens appeared in June 1975 and wrote the stories and took the photos that had made his time at the *Jackson County Farmer* so spectacular. Browny seems to have introduced some dissension in the ranks, as his position on the masthead moved around. Naomi Seymour joined the staff., and Jerry Gentle and Donald Bradford appear on the masthead in February 1976, and the paper began publishing "North Sand Mountain This Week."

On September 2, Browny left for the *Atlanta Constitution* where he wrote mostly outdoor articles for their weekender publication. By December 1976, Larry Garner was the general manager and publisher, signaled by a change in the headline style and addition of a photo feature on page 2 called "Photos that Tell a Story" to which Jim Eiford was a major contributor. In 1978, Donald Bradford was editor.

In March the paper began publishing a standalone tabloid called the *Sand Mountain Booster*, a typically 16-page tabloid that covered events on the mountain, including the DeKalb County. "The ownership and management of the Advertiser have made a decision to attempt to extend better coverage of one of our most vital area...Sand Mountain," Donald Bradford wrote on March 2, 1978. The *Booster* became a full-size newspaper in June 1978 and got its own writing staff, notably Ruth Wooten and Sandy Schmauss. Naomi Seymour joined the staff, and Carmen Wann left.

By June 1978, Browny Stephens returned; the change in the headline type and the absence of bylines signaled his return. His columns took the paper in new directions, commenting on national issues like the metric system, nuclear energy, inflation, the TVA, and the energy crisis, always with a local tie-in. David Wilborn joined the staff as advertising manager in May 1979. Ann Hamilton returned to steer the

Advertiser in May 1980 while Browny moved to the mountain and wrote almost exclusively for the *Booster*. New writers came and left—Lathes Brown, Larry Glass, Judith Moncrief, Sandra Coffey, Jack Kalbson, Paulette Ferguson, and Jerry Dodd. The paper was struggling, and Ann Hamilton left again in early 1981. In June 1981, the *Advertiser* and WCNA were sold to KEA Radio, Inc. whose owners were Gene Risk and Ron Livengood. The paper continued to publish while the FCC granted approval for the sale. It ceased publication in September 1981. Jim Harkness, publisher of *The Daily Sentinel*, wrote a column for the last paper on September 30, stating that KEA Radio was not experienced in the publishing business and had sold the *Advertiser* to the *Sentinel*. Harkness combined the *Advertiser* with the *Sentinel's Free Press* to form the *Advertiser-Free Press*, which was "mailed or delivered to over 15,000 homes that did not subscribe to *The Daily Sentinel*", but noted that it was too expensive to maintain two news staffs, and the *Advertiser* staff would be disbanded. *Advertiser* subscribers began receiving the *Sentinel*.

Microfilm was never created for the *Advertiser*, but plans are in place to digitize this newspaper using ancestry's equipment and make it available on newspapers.com. Bound volumes of this newspaper can be found in the Stevenson Library and in the Scottsboro Jackson Heritage Center.

Stevenson


JACKSON COUNTY NEWS

Only known JC News, from the Duke Digital Repository

Jackson County News: The first known newspaper to be published at Stevenson was a four-page weekly called the *Jackson County News*, whose first issue was dated 3 June 1865. The assigned name obviously reflected the belief that Stevenson would become the county seat as had been voted by the citizens of Jackson County in 1859, now that the war was over. The editor and proprietor was A. B. Condit.

Eliza Woodall in *The Stevenson Story* wrote, "Only two partial issues of the *Jackson County News* have survived. It is a puzzling phenomenon but the four pages that survive appear to be one newspaper, at first glance. Upon careful perusal, one notes that the first and fourth pages are dated June 10, while the second and third pages bear the date June 3. The content of the paper states that the first issue (June 3) was printed at Bridgeport while the second issue (June 10) had to be limited to a half sheet (2 pages) because the editor had been so busy moving the press to Stevenson and putting it in working order. One surmises that there possibly was an over-run of pages 2 and 3 printed of the first week's paper, and Condit printed pages 1 and 4 of the second week on the over-runs as long as they lasted." (Woodall, p. 247-248)

This paper is not found in newspapers.com and apparently was short-lived. Duke University has one copy, found at https://repository.duke.edu/dc/broadsides/bdsal30017.

Stevenson New Era and the Era and Star: Eliza Woodall writes: "The next newspaper was the *Stevenson New Era* , chartered 17 August 1868 by Parham and Crawford. A year later Thomas D. Osborne and Crawford became the publishers. On 7 In September of 1870 they moved their publishing offices to Jasper, Tennessee, but continued the *Era* at least through 1872. In 1873 the *Stevenson New Era* merged with the *Star* published by Charles M. Gardner of Scottsboro and acquired the name the *New Era*." (Woodall, p. 248) The paper broadened its scope to include Scottsboro and changed the name to the *Era and Star* and its slogan to "Truth Before Favor." One edition of the paper survives (October 24, 1873) and by this time lists its editor as James Beason. This single issue is found in newspapers.com (United States>Alabama>Scottsboro>Era and Star).

In 1886 W. T. Boyle bought this paper and changed its name to the *Progressive Age*. See **Progressive Age**.

Stevenson Chronicle: Eliza Woodall writes: "On 18 January 1887 H. J. O'Shields established yet another newspaper at Stevenson; this one was called the *Stevenson Chronicle* and it flourished for twenty-seven years. In 1888 John W. Timberlake bought the *Chronicle*, but sold it on 30 August 1892 to J. H. Gregory and

J. H. Vaught. In 1905 N. C. Alston bought out Gregory's interest and in 1907 Mr. Barrett secured Vaught's interest. J. M. and C. D. Cargile are listed as editors and publishers in 1909."

"W. J. Rorex was editor and proprietor of the *Chronicle* in 1912; C. D. Cargile became publisher in August of that year. In 1914 the *Stevenson Chronicle* publishing plant was sold and Stevenson was without a local newspaper until November 1970." (Woodall, pp. 248-249)

newspapers.com has much of the *Stevenson Chronicle*, beginning in February, 1887, which is Volume 1, through September 17, 1914, which is Volume 28 Number 38 (United States> Alabama> Stevenson> Stevenson Chronicle). Some years are missing (1891, 1910, 1911, 1913).

North Jackson Community News and The Patriot: The *North Jackson Community News* was a weekly newspaper that first appeared on the scene on November 1970. Eliza Woodall writes: "An editorial in the January 6, 1976, issue of the *Community News* states:


The PATRIOT
Interest In Civil War Growing
As Memories of Conflict Linger

The Community News is now in its seventh year of service. . . The sole intent from the beginning of the paper was and still is to give Stevenson, Bridgeport, and the North Jackson area their own local paper, a voice, and an advertising media (sic) . . . Even though time and circumstances have necessitated a change in the newspaper's management, there has been no change whatsoever in the ownership or the basic desire to provide North Jackson area with its own newspaper . . . James K. Harkness, Pres. Scottsboro Newspapers, Inc.

A very popular feature of the *Community News* during the Bicentennial year was a supplement called *The Patriot* which contained items, pictures, and articles relating to local history, early settlers, and by-gone days. Larry Glass was responsible for issuing *The Patriot*.

North Jackson Progress: The *North Jackson Progress* began circulation about the middle of September 1976 with Larry Glass the editor. For its first few years, it was a tabloid weekly and carried news and advertisements of the Stevenson-Bridgeport area. Over time it evolved into a broadsheet paper that gave its exclusive attention to the northeastern part of the county. It was published for 43 years by Larry and Faye Glass and their six children. The November 1, 2018 *Progress* carried its own obituary:

The North Jackson Progress will be publishing its last edition on November 1, 2018. What a remarkable journey it has been! Forty-three years of publication, first weekly and then twice weekly, have been the legacy for this newspaper. This ending is coming sooner and is being conducted with heavy hearts. What a joy it has been for the Glass family to provide this service to the communities of North Jackson.....For years, Larry and Faye slept with a radio scanner on in the bedroom so they could be aware of any event needing coverage for the newspaper. Often the blare of the scanner would rouse them from sleep to dress, grab a camera, and find a car wreck or house fire or other emergency. Before the accessibly of cameras as prominently as today, state troopers or local police would ask for pictures taken for the paper to be provided for their use. Familiarity between Larry and Faye and the police departments resulted in lasting relationships.

The Stevenson Library has all bound volumes of the paper beginning in its third year of publication. newspapers.com has twenty years of the *Progress* when the paper was folio (full-age) size and carried legal notices for the county. Microfilm was available for these 20 years and the are available on newspapers.com (United States>Alabama>Stevenson>North Jackson Progress). Thank you to the Glass children and the Jackson County Probate Office for making this microfilm available for digitization.

Bridgeport

According the John Kennamer:

The Bridgeport News *was established in 1890, by W. W. Douglas and E. L. C. Ward. Since then the paper has changed hands several times. George R. Van Arsdale owned and edited the paper awhile; C. D. Cargile, who once owned the* Stevenson Chronicle*, was editor of the* Bridgeport News *in 1915. The paper has suspended publication*

more than once for a short time. It is now [1936] known as the Bridgeport New-Herald. *H. C. Hornbeck in editor and manager; F. W. Carr, owner and publisher.*

Bridgeport News and News-Herald: "The *Bridgeport News*, issued by the Bridgeport Publishing Company, is a four-page weekly, appearing on Thursday, which contains all local and neighboring news items, besides much general news from a distance, and a great deal of miscellany. A well equipped job printing plan enables businessmen to get every form of commercial printing done at the News office in acceptable style." (Bridgeport, Alabama 1891 by Hustler Printing Company in South Pittsburg)

The *Bridgeport News* was organized in 1890 by W. W. Douglas and E. L. C. Ward. The paper was issued by the Bridgeport Publishing Company and edited by Mr. E. L. C. Ward. In 1891 the *News* was a four-page weekly that was issued every Thursday. George R. Van Arsdale owned and edited the paper for several years; then C. D. Cargile, once owner of the *Stevenson Chronicle*, was editor of the *Bridgeport News* in 1915.

The paper was later known as the *Bridgeport News-Herald.* R. C. Hornbeak was editor and manager for several years, and F. W. Carr, Sr., was owner and publisher. The paper was later edited by Miss Eleanor Whitcher until its last publication in the early 1940's. The libraries at Auburn and the University of Alabama have isolated issues. The best collections are in the Jackson County Probate Office and the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

The years 1891-1898 (excluding 1904) are available on newspapers.com (United States > Alabama > Bridgeport>The Bridgeport News. These are the only issues that were microfilmed.

Camp Illuminator: The Library of Congress recognizes several other newspapers published in Bridgeport. A Civil War paper called the *Camp Illuminator* was published weekly from November 1864 to April 1865 as part of the Union occupation of Bridgeport. The editors were Frank J. Lamb (Nov 1864 to Feb 11, 1965) and Charles G. Guilford (Feb 28 to Ap[r 18, 1865). This is a rare paper. Both the Lincoln Library in Springfield, IL and the Cleveland (OH) Public Library have one issue each; the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland has the most complete set, missing only three issues. The copy at the right belongs to Dennis Lambert.

The Exposer: Another paper called *The Exposer* was published weekly by E.M. Fenton in 1896. No other information is available except that the only known copies of this newspaper are found in the University of Tennessee Library in Knoxville.

The Bridgeport Advance: Another short-lived Bridgeport newspaper was the *Bridgeport Advance*, which published Volume 1 Number 1 on April 11, 1903. Grant Allyn Capron is listed in the masthead as editor and publisher. Only one issue survives. Dennis Lambert found it on the top floor of a hotel that was destroyed in the 1993 natural gas explosion.

Bridgeport-Stevenson News: This was a weekly newspaper published briefly in the mid 1950s. It was bought in 1957 by Industrial Printing in Scottsboro and merged with the *Jackson County Farmer*.

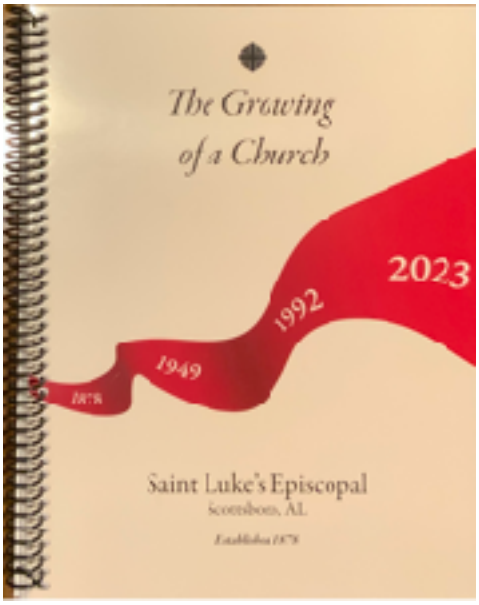
If you are looking for genealogy information about Bridgeport families, remember that Bridgeport receives coverage from other county newspapers, including the *Jackson County Sentine*l, the Chattanooga newspapers, and the now-defunct *North Jackson Progress* and the *North Jackson News.*

Jackson County is currently served by three county-published newspapers: the *Jackson County Sentinel*, the *Clarion*, and the *North Jackson News,* all available online.

Annette Bradford

New Episcopal Church History Available

St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Scottsboro, AL, celebrated its 145th anniversary in October, 2023. As a part of that observation, Barbara Jacobs Heath, a long-time member of St. Luke's, researched and wrote a detailed history of the church, entitled *The Growing of a Church—St. Luke's Episcopal Church*.



This book is the result of at least twenty years of research by the author, encompassing personal interviews with many of St. Luke's members as well as extensive research into church records. She also consulted Diocese of Alabama records which are maintained in the Birmingham Public Library Archives and the University of the South.

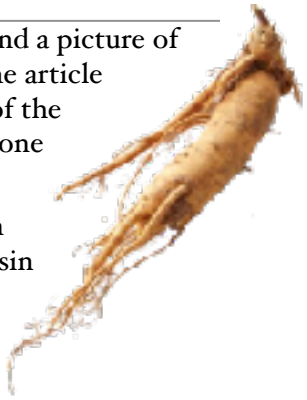
The author traced St. Luke's from its beginnings before the Civil War, when meetings were held in homes. After a hiatus during the tragic Civil War years, services resumed in a "union church building" that served several Scottsboro denominations. The entity that became St. Luke's was for years a "mission church" led by the Church of the Nativity in Huntsville, and supported by the Diocese of Alabama.

In 1878, a mere 13 years after the close of the Civil War, the courageous Episcopalians built their own church! The first St. Luke's was a frame building on North Broad Street near the railroad tracks, the center of the small town's economy, and it served the little parish from its completion in 1878 until the present St. Luke's was constructed in 1949 at the corner of Scott Street and College Avenue.

The essence of any church, though, is much more than its building alone, and Dr. Heath's history has a dual focus, describing the fascinating history of the buildings, but also providing a detailed look at the priestly leadership and the lay leadership that served St. Luke's well through these decades. The book's appendices list the priests who have served St. Luke's from its beginning, and the lay persons, both male and female, who have served as Senior Warden (i.e., chairperson of the elected vestry) through the years.

Copies of this history book were presented by the author as a gift of love to past and present members of St. Luke's. Copies for public review and study were also presented to the Scottsboro Public Library and to the Heritage Center.

Harvesting and Cultivating Ginseng in Jackson County



Recently, while looking through the newly rediscovered 1958 *Jackson County Farmer*, I found a picture of commercial fisherman Laudrey McLemore holding a 68-pound catfish he had caught. The article continued, "McLemore is not only a mighty fine fisherman, but is widely known as one of the best hunters, trappers, and woodsmen to be found. Several years ago, he was featured in one of the leading sports magazines in an article titled, 'King of the Ginseng Hunters.' "

My first acquaintance with the ginseng gathering possibilities in Jackson County came in 2009 when I was researching my husband's Washington family and visited a very old cousin who lived on a remote mountain top between Hollywood and Fackler. While we were talking, an occasional shotgun blast echoed across the hollow, and our cousin stopped talking to explain that she had hired a number of men with shotguns to scare off the ginseng hunters who regularly trespassed onto her property.

***Panax quinquefolius*, the American plant associated with ginseng production. From Wikipedia.**

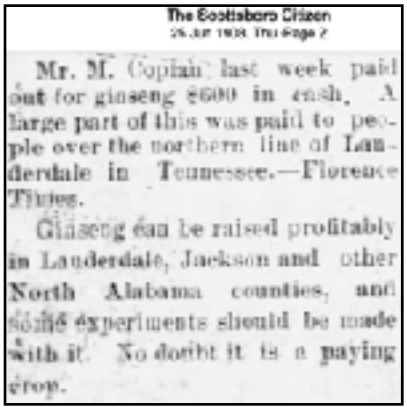
Ginseng is an herbal remedy with ancient origins. Its scientific name, *panax*, is from the Greek meaning "all-healing," the same origin as the word "panacea." It has been documented in traditional Chinese medicine in texts as old as 196 AD. (Wikipedia) There are two types: red and white. Chinese and Korean ginseng are reputed to be more effective than American ginseng.

Ginseng is sold today as a dietary supplement to boost the immune system, improve memory and physical and mental performance, speed recovery time from illness, prevent upper respiratory infections, stop blood from coagulating, improve glucose levels in people with Type 2 diabetes, ease cocaine withdrawal, act as an antiperspirant, and improve response to stressful situations. (U of Rochester Medical Center) Yet for all these miracle benefits, there is very little conclusive testing on ginseng effectiveness, and there is a real concern that it interacts with prescribed medications. It is not recommended for women who are pregnant or breast-feeding or for children. People who are bipolar or have low blood pressure should not take it. It is associated with insomnia. (NIH)

The *Huntsville Democrat* in 1823 reported that an estimated 60,000 pounds of ginseng (27 tons) valued at $15,000 was shipped by steamboat on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. (*Democrat*, Oct 21, 1823) Discussion of the herb in Jackson County papers peaked about 1882 and had all but died out by the mid 1920s (newspapers.com) Ginseng users were treated as less than mainstream. The *Alabama Herald* reported in the April 25, 1872 paper that "an editor describes a rival as a 'waspish traducer who subsists on ginseng, sassafras and goose eggs, and wears a sprig of pennyroyal in his boots in summer.' " The *Scottsboro Citizen* carried an ad for a patent mixture substituted for tobacco that included ginseng." (*SC*, Feb 14, 1879) Serious promotion of local ginseng was evident in the April 26, 1883 ad in the *Citizen* from J & B Lambert in Huntsville who paid highest prices in cash for "hides, wood, ginseng, metals, iron, dry bones, and empty oil barrels" and advertised through most of 1883.

The February 8, 1887 *Stevenson Chronicle* carried a story about herb gatherers in North Carolina. Merchants in Statesville, NY were accepting herbs from their traders in exchange for goods. "Ginseng was the most marketable article. China never gets too much of it, and has, when it was scarce, given its weight in gold for it." The May 17, 1888 *Citizen* carried a story about the Chinese using the herb to restore

"youth to the aged." The weekly Scottsboro Market report in the *Progressive Age* reported that ginseng sold for $1.50 when chickens and eggs were bought for 15-20 cents. The growing market for the herb encouraged new producers. "It is reported that C. L. Cargile has quit the log business," the *Stevenson Chronicle* reported on Feb 11, 1890, "and gone to digging ginseng in the Owl Hollow." The *Citizen* did nothing to slow the frenzy. "A small box of ginseng roots sold for $30 in Guntersville," the paper reported on June 13, 1895. "Big money in this medical plant. Cultivate it." In 1897 a stringer for the *Citizen* from Greerton said, "Ask a Milan merchant if he bought $10 worth of ginseng and two-thirds proved to be seneca snake root." That same year, the *Progressive Age* reported that Lipscomb Grocery was paying $2.50 a pound for ginseng, and the *Stevenson Chronicle* the next year reported "Cash for beeswax and ginseng a E. L. Jordon & Co.'s." A business in Nashville reported selling "NEW GINSENG—Clear of strings and tops and washed clean before drying, per pound $2.25.' The business also bought pink and yellow root and seneca root.


The Scottsboro Citizen

Mr. M. Coplain last week paid out for ginseng $600 in cash. A large part of this was paid to people over the northern line of Lauderdale in Tennessee.—Florence Times.

Ginseng can be raised profitably in Lauderdale, Jackson and other North Alabama counties, and some experiments should be made with it. No doubt it is a paying crop.


The Progressive Age

GROW GINSENG
GROW RICH
½ acre will yield $10,000 or more. Write for details to
RED MOUNTAIN GINSENG NURSERY
1404 South 13th Avenue Birmingham, Ala.

The "Farm, Garden, and Dairy" column of the *Stevenson Chronicle* in March 1898 reproduced a short article from the *Farmer's Voice* titled "Ginseng Culture": "Every year there is new interest in ginseng culture, yet I have never seen nor even heard of a man who made any money growing it, outside of those who have seed to sell. It is true that the Chinese esteem it very dearly as a medicine and pay large amounts for it, but these prices are high because of the scarcity of the roots. If any considerable increase in the available supply were put to the market it would result in a reduction in the price. When a farmer comes forward and gives evidence that he has grown a crop of ginseng and received at the rate of $2000 to $10,000 an acre for it, there will be ample opportunity to go into the business." It sounded to practical farmers more and more like a pipe dream. Still enough stories were out there to keep farmers interested.

The *Progressive Age* reported in October 1902 that "a grower of ginseng at Houston, MO., netted $17,000 from two acres of that valuable root." It was like buying a lottery ticket! But stories of crop failures abounded. "Ginseng has been tested at the Oklahoma experiment station and proved a failure," the *Age* reported in December 1902. "This plan succeeded only in most soil and climate and plenty of shade. B.J. Miller advertised that he would pay for ginseng through his agent in Stevenson, H. J. Vann.

A short item in the *Progressive Age* on July 2, 1908 put these promises of ginseng wealth in their place: "Under the head of fool farming may be enumerated such fads as raising frogs, squabs, skunks, and even raising ginseng. Such fads may work with those who thoroughly understand the business, but the average farmer will find that the potato patch will stand him in better stead than of any of these schemes which seem on paper to offer big inducement."

In July 1987, J.H.Wheeler wrote about Jesse Harrison Wheeler and his father's life as a county educator. Born in 1882, Jesse grew up in Jones Cove, "a steep sided creek valley notching into the western escarpment of the Sand Mountain tableland." We know it today as the location of the Boy Scouts' Camp Jackson. Much of the land where Jesse grew up is submerged today beneath Lake Guntersville. In 1894 the family moved to Huntsville and worked at Dallas Mills, though most of the family moved back to Jones Cove in 1899. Though Jesse wanted more formal education and stayed in Huntsville, "he went back to the Cove and there engaged in various moneymaker enterprises with some of his brothers. They farmed, grew ginseng and marketed it to China through a wholesaler in St. Louis, and cut timber." (*Chronicles*, April 1987)

This only photo of ginseng production in Jackson County that I have (and I have had it so long, I do not know where it came from) shows the Wheeler family growing the herb in Jones Cove in 1906.

Ginseng surfaces in books from all over the county. In the second of his three books about the Limrock community, Marlin Tucker wrote about people getting through the hard times after the Great Depression. "In the 1930s anything that grew wild was considered common property and not solely belonging to anyone. Anyone was free to harvest ginseng or honey or nuts or wild animals...Ginseng was gathered and sold to companies. Observation indicated that the local men did not need the aphrodisiac. Families were usually large. Companies processed the plant and sold it to the oriental countries where some of their men felt they could use the potion to help them make more war babies." (p. 42)

The small book *The Crow Creek Scene* by various authors published in 1986 includes an article titled "Early Occupations" by Felix G. Matthews. Matthews says that while trapping had been a winter months activity in the area, "by 1924 the fish and game had become mostly depleted as prices for hides zeroed...Some of the people in the Valley earned extra income by collecting herbs, such as star root, May apple roots, yellow root, and ginseng."

In 1986, Dr. David Campbell interviewed Edmund Bain about the 75 years he spent in Pisgah Gorge. In his early life, he was a trapper. Walking through the gorge with David, Bain pointed out "rare flowers called lady slippers" and told "of how ginseng, much of it sold eventually to the Chinese, is still found in the Gorge area." The presence of "the trees, plants, ferns, flowers, all rare in the deep south find a home in the Gorge, reminding us that Jackson County is a part of Appalachia." Our Hollywood cousin was certainly aware of the encroaching presence of ginseng hunters in 2016.

Scottsboro Produce Co. was buying ginseng in 1922, advertising "any amount from an ounce to ten pounds."(*PA*, May 4, 1922) Wallace Woodall was in Edgefield in May 1933 digging ginseng. (*PA*, May 25, 1933) As late as 1953, you could buy ginseng root for $1.25 an ounce in Crossroads Grocery in Hollywood. (*PA*, May 21, 1953)

Alabama still has very strict rules about digging for ginseng. All collectors, growers, and dealers are required to register with the state annually. The harvest season for wild ginseng in September 1 to December 13 (excepting personal use on the collector's own land). Wild ginseng cannot be harvested from an immature plant (defined as fewer than three five-leaf prongs or unripe seed). Wild ginseng can be sold in Alabama between September 13 and March 31. Ginseng permits have to be obtained from the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industry. (www.wildgrown.com)

In 2000, the *Sentinel* ran a story about property owner complaining about ginseng diggers on their property. Jackson County District Attorney Charles Rhodes said that the law clearly stated the ginseng was a protected plant in Alabama. "Those who sell ginseng are required to buy a permit from the Department of Agriculture and Industries. Alabama law also requires a person digging ginseng to have written permission from the land owner." (*DS*, August 25, 2000)

In 2002, Congress passed a law to protect consumers from roots that were not actual ginseng, an herb called Siberian Ginseng. The law was called the Ginseng Truth in Labeling Act of 2001. President Bush signed it into law. The law specified the genus of the plant from which ginseng could be extracted. excluding the ineffective Russian product from being sold under the ginseng name. (Wikipedia)

Ginseng is still touted as a miracle drug and sold in health food stores and conventional drugs stores alike. It is recognized for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. And I am sure people still dig for it in Jackson County.

Annette Bradford

The Best Human Being I Ever Met

Consider your legacy if a prominent columnist wrote and published your obituary in 450 newspapers and then reissued it five years later from his own deathbed in over 600 newspapers as one of the final installments of his decades of weekly columns. Imagine that writer's eulogizing you as "the best human being I've ever met."

That was the case in the obituary written for on-again, off-again Jackson County resident Browny Cline Stephens. He was eulogized in January 19, 1989 by Lewis Grizzard in his nationally syndicated column following Browny's death of cancer earlier that month. Grizzard, facing his own demise five years later in 1994, chose the column for rerelease when he was unable to write new material for his column: he was dying of complications of multiple heart surgeries in Emory Hospital.

Grizzard said of Stephens, "There's not enough room in a thousand columns to say what there is to say about Browny Stephens. He was the best human being I ever met. He was my friend. He was my older brother. Often, I wished he were my father."

Grizzard was known for his cynicism and his caustic humor. He was not a writer given to tender reflection. Is his autobiographical work, *If I Ever Get Back To Georgia, I'm Gonna Nail My Feet to the Ground*," Grizzard said of Stephens:

> *After graduation [from the University of Georgia], he began an odyssey that would take him to more towns and more jobs than even he could remember. I doubt there are many people left in the newspaper business today like Browny Stephens. There were once a lot of them, people who bounced from one paper to the next, always seeking another ten bucks a week here, a publisher who wasn't as tight there. Browny worked the small-town circuit. I doubt he ever in his life made over $250 a week as a newspaperman. It was photography he enjoyed most. He could make the Ladies' Garden Club Carnival Awards look like the raising of the flag on Iwo Jima.*

Browny was born in Chattanooga, graduated from Chattanooga's Central High School, did a short stretch in the Army, then received his journalism degree from the University of Georgia, where he slept on a cot in a bakery where he worked part time. He was the father of two children—Clark and Miranda—and fond stepfather to a woman, Kathy, with whom he remained close until her death at age 22 by carbon monoxide poisoning.

I worked for Browny Stephens. I was one of many ex-colleagues. By his own count, Browny had worked for 47 newspapers in a career spanning fewer than 40 years. If you take into account that he held the same job for several years at the end of his career, you're looking at an average of around 10 months per job.

That 10-month average tenure is pretty much in line with his first stint in Scottsboro. He joined the staff of the *Jackson County Farmer*—a newspaper that began publication in mid-1957—in April 1959. He left the job six months later in October 1959, but not before remaking the newspaper and regional journalism before his departure.

Later, he served two stints with the *Jackson County Advertiser*, the first for a brief period beginning in May 1975 and the second lasting from 1978 to 1981. Between his first and second tenures at the *Advertiser*, he was a copy editor and an outdoors writer for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* from 1976 to 1978.

As Browny reminisced on his return to Scottsboro 16 years after his first stint here:

> *Scottsboro in 1958, for anyone who cares to remember, was a sleepy little river town that took its basketball and football seriously, was filled up every First Monday with farmers ad folks wanting to swap dogs or knives or what have you, partially closed down on Thursday afternoons so the fishermen and fisherwomen could wet a line, and didn't have a single "chain" grocery store.*
>
> *That's the way I found it when I moved in to be the editor of the weekly Jackson County Farmer. On my return to Scottsboro this week has that much changed? Perhaps. It doesn't appear as sleepy anymore. There are plenty of large supermarkets, such as Piggly Wiggly, Winn-Dixie, M&J Warehouse Groceries and A&P. But other than that, the above description isn't that far from today's Jackson County.*

I choose my words carefully when I say I worked with him, because although Browny was my editor, he would have been uncomfortable with anyone saying he'd worked "for" him. He was absolutely egalitarian. He disliked any authoritarian structure. Anyone on his staff was seen as an equal. He even declined to put his name in the masthead in most of the newspapers he edited. He also shied away from bylines on his photographs and articles, a practice that renders much of his work unsearchable on newspapers.com. He attributed the photographs he took for the *Jackson County Farmer* simply as "Farmer Foto."

Left, Gov. John Patterson speaking on the square at First Monday, *JC Farmer* Sept 10, 1959; Right, Man and little girl reading in the back of a pickup truck, Willow Street, *JC Farmer*, June 11, 1959.

However, on his return to Jackson County in 1975 to edit the *Jackson County Advertiser*, he set aside his traditional modesty to state: "I introduced 35mm cameras to news photography in north Alabama. Now most newspapers use these, but in those days, most folks thought 35s were nothing but a 'slide camera'."

He never betrayed anger or frustration. His son, Clark, remembers one evening when he believed his father was asleep, he drove the family's trail bike to Trammell Stadium in the rain where he had a drink with friends. When he returned home, Browny was standing in the yard in pajama bottoms and a raincoat. "All he ever said was 'that wasn't very smart,' and that was the end of it. I got the message. I never did it again."

During that final stint in Scottsboro, he depended on a bicycle to get him to work from his home out on the Old Larkinsville Road. Not a man to be be given to complaining, he was frequently appalled by the unsafe conditions local drivers created for cyclists.

On the weekends, he would head to the Tennessee and North Carolina mountains to camp and kayak. Clark accompanied him on those outings, and in Clark's recollections, those trips were pretty much consistent with his life of weekdays. "It's like we were always camping," Clark said of his father's nomadic lifestyle. Browny and Clark lived in a trailer that was towed from town to town. By the time Browny did

his last stints in Scottsboro, his wife Nancy and daughter Miranda had opted for a more settled life in Atlanta. Clark says that even today in his mid-50s having in a permanent home feels alien to him.

On one of those camping trips, accompanied by Lewis Grizzard, the three ran completely out of money. In response, Lewis Grizzard gathered neighbors from the campground and preached a sermon. When he passed the hat, there was money for "food, gas, even beer," Clark recalls.

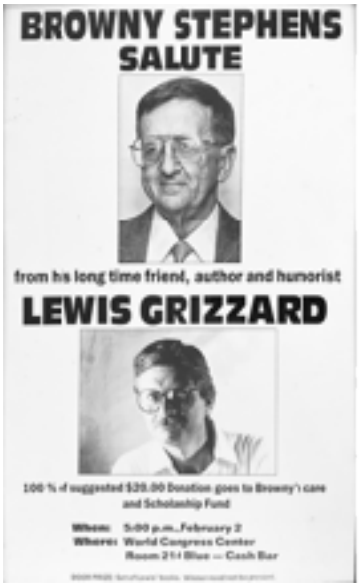
Browny left Scottsboro in 1980 in disillusionment. He had covered a dispute that was playing out with the Scottsboro Board of Education. His coverage of the contentious meetings was even-handed and factual. But a vocal and vehement faction in the dispute harassed him for his portrayal of the conflict. "He could never have made it as a newspaperman today," his son mused. He thought the news was no place for the voicing of personal opinion. "There's an op-ed page for that," he would frequently point out.

The experience marked the end of Browny's journeyman newspaper days. In his last decade of life, he worked for various periodicals that focused on poultry and egg production. He was managing editor of *Poultry Times* magazine. He left the magazine to serve as a field representative for the American Egg Board from 1985 to 1988. He became editor of *Poultry and Egg Marketing* in 1988.

Browny died at age 59, one hour before he was scheduled to appear at a "Browny Stephens Salute" held in conjunction with the Southeastern Poultry and Egg Show at the Georgia World Congress Center, according to his obituary in the *Atlanta Constitution*. He was to have been transported there by ambulance from his hospice in Atlanta. The reception was organized by Lewis Grizzard and his colleagues. The proceeds paid Browny's accumulated medical bills and funded a scholarship fund at the University of Georgia's school of journalism.

He donated his body to Emory University. His ashes were spread in the Tellico River basin, and a small cenotaph was erected in a family cemetery near Tellico Plains, TN.

David Bradford



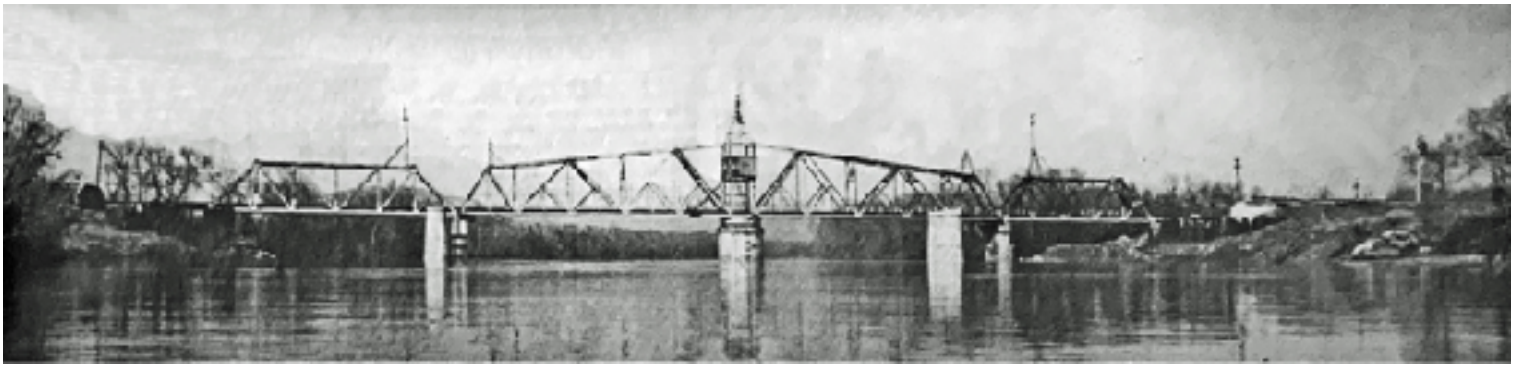
Top L to R: Benefit that Lewis Grizzard set up for Browny, who died an hour before. Dog Trade at First Monday, *JCF* Sept 10, 1959; Obe Collins, first cotton bloom , *JCF* July 9, 1959; Browny Stephens by Leroy Gist; Bad call on a baseball game, *JCF*, June 4, 1959; Family vacation, 1964. Other photos from Clark Stephens.







Top to Bottom, L to R: Cigar Box Guitar Player (*JCA*, June 19, 1975) ; Town of Paint Rock being cleared for Highway 72 (*JCA*, Aug 7, 1975); Paint Rock Mayor Popejoy as town disappears (*JCA*, Aug 7, 1975); New Sinclair service station in Scottsboro (*JCF*, 1959); Long Island swinging railroad bridge (*JCA*, Feb 18, 1981); Canning lid crisis feature (*JCA*, July 24, 1975); Bridgeport Ferry Operator Aubrey Collins (*JCA*, July 10, 1975); Engineer in front of the Widow's Creek smokestack, the 2nd tallest structure in Alabama (*JCA*, Nov 20, 1975). All photos by Browny Stephens.



The Larkinsville Guards at Gettysburg

Known as the Larkinsville Guards, thirty-one men from Jackson County began their military career on April 27, 1861, in what would become Company K of the Fourth Alabama Volunteer Infantry. The company was organized at Larkinsville, Alabama by Captain Lewis E. Lindsay. (1) Marching to Gettysburg, the men spent the night of July 1, 1863, near New Guilford, Pennsylvania, twenty-five miles west of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The next day, July 2, was an eventful one for the men of Jackson County. At the end of July 2, the men had completed a "rapid and fatiguing march" (2) of twenty-four miles, made the three-mile march into position along Warfield Ridge, and then assaulted the Union-held, rocky slopes of Little Round Top.

Capt. Lewis E. Lindsay (3)

Confederate General Evander Law's Alabama brigade, to which the Fourth Alabama and Company K belonged, was posted along the South Mountain range, near New Guilford Pennsylvania on July 1, 1863. Their purpose was to picket the flank of the Confederate Army. (4) Near two o'clock on the morning of July 2, 1863, the men of the Fourth Alabama began the long march to Gettysburg, in the rear of the marching column.(5) Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence Houston Scruggs stated in this official report, "On the morning of the 2nd, we took up the line of march from New Guilford in the direction of Gettysburg." (6) The morning was already humid and the further the sun rose rose into the sky, the hotter it got, and canteens ran dry. Marching through Cashtown, Pennsylvania and into the Gettysburg valley, the men began to see the effects of the battle. They passed makeshift hospitals, with wounded soldiers lying nearby and captured Union prisoners being held, all results of the fighting on the first day of the battle. The brigade arrived about a mile west of Gettysburg on Herr Ridge, where Hood's division rested along the Chambersburg Road. (7)

After a short rest, Confederate Lieutenant General James Longstreet began moving his two infantry divisions under Major Generals John B. Hood and Lafayette McLaws south towards the assigned positions for the attack. It was already eleven-thirty in the morning as the units began to move. The men of Company K, led by Second Lieutenant William S. Harwell, a farmer by trade, made that famous march as they moved into position along Warfield Ridge, south of Gettysburg. A soldier later wrote: "We found the Texans and Third Arkansas occupying the right of the division. We moved beyond them and took a position on their right. The Forty-Eighth Alabama was the right regiment of the brigade, the Fourth Alabama the left of the brigade, touching elbows with the Fifth Texas. (8) Skirmishers from the brigade were deployed to the front, and almost immediately became targets for the Union's Second United States Sharpshooters.

The Fourth Alabama, Company K near the center of the regimental line, was not in position long before the order came to advance. The men gave a cheer. As the regiment advanced, they moved at the double-quick pace, 165 steps-per-minute, across a plowed field. (9) Reilly's North Carolina artillery battery was temporarily paused from their work when the Fourth Alabama passed through the battery. (10) On Little Round Top, Amos Judson of the Eighty-Third Pennsylvania observed the advance and wrote "...scarcely had the troops been put in line, when a loud, fierce, distant yell was heard, as if all pandemonium had broken loose and joined in the chorus of one grand, universal war whoop." (11) As the men from Jackson County moved down the hill, they began to receive fire from the Second United States Sharpshooters, under the command of Colonel Homer R. Stoughton. These men where some of the best shots in the Union Army and as General Law's men advanced, the Union sharpshooters began their bloody work. A stone wall bordered the Slyder farm lane, and the Union sharpshooters used it to their advantage. A New

York battery of artillery atop Devil's Den also began firing into the Fourth Alabama as they advanced. As the Fourth Alabama got closer to the stone wall, Stoughton's sharpshooters fell back towards Big Round Top and Houck's Ridge, allowing the Fourth a slight break. It is at that moment Lt. Col. Scruggs collapsed from heat exhaustion and command of the Fourth Alabama fell to Major Thomas K. Coleman.

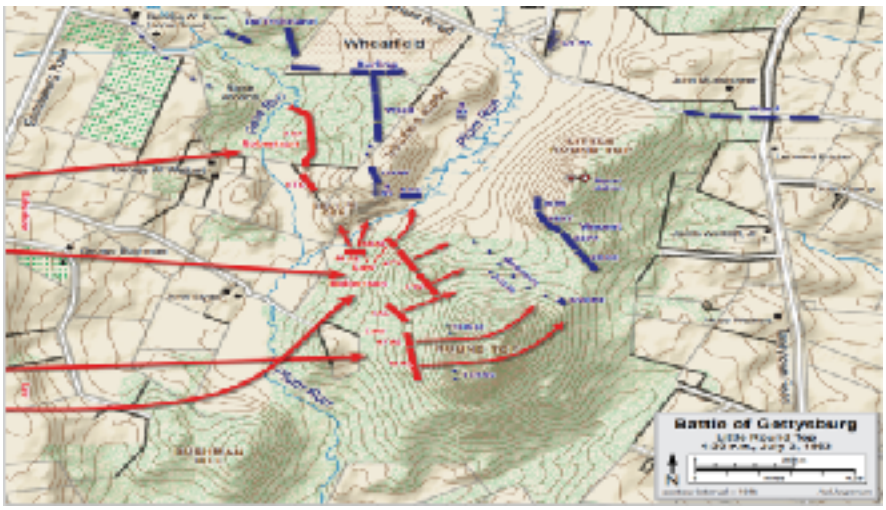
Little Round Top, western slope. (12)

The further into the valley they advanced, the larger the boulders became, some the size of a house. Splashing across Plum Run, the Fourth Alabama began climbing the wooded western slope of Big Round Top.

In front of the Fourth Alabama on the southern slopes of Little Round Top, a small brigade of Union troops led by Colonel Strong Vincent was deployed. That brigade was facing south, the Twentieth Maine under Colonel Joshua Chamberlain being the eastern-most regiment. To the right of the Twentieth, the Eighty-Third Pennsylvania was deployed, men from Erie, Pennsylvania. To their right was the Forty-Fourth New York, and on the open western slopes of Little Round Top, the Sixteenth Michigan.

The Fourth Alabama exited the woods on the western slope of Big Round Top and walked straight into the blazing hot fire of the Eighty-Third Pennsylvania. (13) Amos Judson would later write: "In an instant a sheet of smoke and flame burst from our whole line, which made the enemy reel and stagger and fall back in confusion." (14) Many men of the front rank went down, killed or wounded. This may be where Second Lieutenant William Harwell, of Company K, fell. Under the intense fire, Major Coleman found it difficult to hold the Fourth Alabama in position. (15) The Fourth Regiment and the two Texas regiments to their left, fell back to regroup. This was the first of three attempts to take the hill by the Fourth Alabama.

Major Coleman rallied his men who, with the newfound courage, scrambled up the lower mountain slopes a second time. Using the terrain to the best of their advantage, the Alabamians sought cover behind rocks while loading, then moved to the next rock higher up the hill. The men worried about not just rifle fire, but also splintered tree branches, chips and pieces of rocks and wood hitting them as they advanced. Fatigue from the long march and the vicious fighting over the rough terrain began to affect the men from Jackson County. The Fourth Alabama fell back again to regroup.



Little Round Top Action (16)

As the survivors retreated into the woods, many of the Alabamians collapsed from exhaustion. Major Coleman rallied the survivors and attempted one more time to break the Union line. This time, Lt. Colonel Bulger's Forty-Seventh Alabama accompanied the Fourth on the final charge. This assault was the easiest for the Union troops to repulse.

The men at this time were almost completely used up. The Fourth fell back, and the Union men opened fire from behind rocks and trees on the western slope of Big Round Top. Lieutenant Colonel Scruggs wrote in the Official Report of the Fourth Alabama: "Owing to the exhausted condition of the men and the roughness of the mountain side, we found it impossible to carry this position." The Fourth Alabama's fight on July 2 ended as darkness fell.

Many of the dead and wounded from the Fourth Alabama lay between the lines on the night of July 2, 1863. Four men from Company K were killed or mortally wounded at Gettysburg. Second Lieutenant William Harwell and Private John S. Sublett were killed in the assault on Little Round Top. Private George Booker Whitfield was mortally wounded on July 2. He was taken to the Edward Plank Farm where he would die and be buried behind the barn, under a large locust tree. His grave is still be marked in 1866 but mismarked as being in the Eighth Georgia. On August 3, 1872, his remains along with ninety-eight others from the Plank Farm were shipped to Richmond Virginia for burial in Hollywood Cemetery. Private Samuel H. Manning was shot in the right portion of his chest and right arm. He lingered until July 22. His grave was mismarked too, as was F. G. Manning's; both were buried at the Francis Bream farm in a field near the Adam Butt farm woods, near the run or road. Manning's remains were also later moved to Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond Virginia.

The wounded included First Sergeant Elijah Hall, who was taken with the Confederate army as they left Pennsylvania. He survived the wound he received at Gettysburg and returned to the company. Wounded again outside Knoxville Tennessee, he was captured and sent to Camp Chase, Ohio, where he died of hepatitis on January 5, 1865. He is buried in the camp cemetery. Private William Burks was also wounded and sent to De Camp Hospital in New York Harbor. He was paroled and present with the company when Lee surrendered at Appomattox. Private John D. Jones was captured and sent to the same hospital in New York Harbor as Burks, where his arm was resected. He was paroled and retired from the company.

Those captured were Privates Ephraim Burrow, John H. Stokes, and Robert Swafford. Stokes and Swafford were sent to Fort Delaware. Stokes died there and is buried at Finn's Point New Jersey. Swafford took the oath of allegiance May 3, 1865 and was released. Burrow had been captured on the battlefield July 2, possibly on the slopes of Little Round Top, near the Union lines. He was listed as absent in his service record. He was exchanged in March of 1864, and returned home and did not return to the unit.

These men from Jackson County Alabama served in one of the most famous regiments of the Confederate Army: waking before the sunrise, marching twenty-five miles in heat and humidity, then assaulting a hill covered with boulders and trees, and facing one of the best brigades in the Union Army. Lt. Colonel Scruggs wrote of these men: "...both officers and men behaved with much coolness and gallantry, and many brave and good soldiers fell, a noble sacrifice to the countries cause." From Manassas, to Gettysburg, to the final surrender at Appomattox, Company K and the Fourth Alabama served with distinction in all of their endeavors.

Phillip Muskett

Phillip Muskett is a first-time author for the *Chronicles*. Born and raised in Gadsden Alabama, he retired after twenty years in the U.S. Navy. For the last fourteen years, he served as a Licensed Battlefield Guide in Gettysburg Pennsylvania. You can find his recently published article on Cadmus Wilcox's Alabama brigade during the Gettysburg Campaign in in *Gettysburg Magazine* #70.

Notes:

1. Fourth Alabama Infantry, Company K Record, *Fold 3* https://www.fold3.com/unit/167906/alabama-4th-infantry-company-k-confederate-civil-war-stories. Lindsay will be killed at the battle of First Manassas.
2. Ronald N. Scott, ed. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies,* 128 Vols. (Washington D.C., 1880-1901, Vol. 27, Pt. 2) 391. (Hereafter referred to as *OR*, Vol. 27, Pt. 2).

3. *Alabama Department of Archives and History* Lewis Ervin Lindsay, C.S.A. - Alabama Photographs and Pictures Collection - Alabama Department of Archives and History. Lindsay will be killed at the Battle of First Manassas on July 21, 1863.
4. *OR*, Vol 27, Pt 2, 358.
5. Jeffrey D. Stocker, eds, *From Huntsville to Appomattox: R.T. Cole's History of the 4th Regiment, Alabama Volunteer Infantry, C.S.A., Army of Northern Virginia* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1996) 103. (Hereafter referred to as Cole's 4th Alabama).
6. *OR*, Vol. 27, Pt. 2 391.
7. E. McIver Law. "The Struggle for Round Top." *Battles & Leaders of the Civil War*. Vol. 3. (New Jersey: Castle Books, 1995) 319.
8. Coles, 4th Alabama, 103.
9. *OR* Vol 27 Pt 2 391.
10. J. Gary Laine & Morris M. Penny, *Law's Alabama Brigade in the War Between the Union and the Confederacy* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Publishing Company, 1996), 85.
11. Amos M. Judson, *History of the Eighty-Third Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers* (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside, 1986) 126.
12. Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. *Little Round Top. United States*, 1863. [July] Photograph. *https://www.loc.gov/item/2018672403/*.
13. Phillip Thomas Tucker, *Storming Little Round Top: The 15th Alabama and Their Fight for the High Ground*, (July 2, 1863 Cambridge MA, Da Capo Press, 2002) 204.
14. Amos M. Judson, *History of the Eighty-Third Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers* (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside, 1986) 127.
15. J. Gary Laine and Morris M. Penny, *Struggle for the Round Tops: Law's Alabama Brigade at the Battle of Gettysburg* (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 1999) 77.
16. *Wikipedia*. Map by Hal Jesperson. Updated December 2022.
17. J. Gary Laine and Morris M. Penny, *Struggle for the Round Tops: Law's Alabama Brigade at the Battle of Gettysburg* (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 1999) 81.
18. *OR* Vol 27 Part 2, 392.
19. John W. Busey and Travis W. Busey, *Confederate Casualties at Gettysburg: A Comprehensive Record Volume 1*(Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc,2017) 46-47.
20. Ibid.
21. "Ephrain Burrow Civil War Service Record" *Fold 3* https://www.fold3.com/image/21958561/burrow-ephraim-page-6-us-civil-war-service-records-cmsr-confederate-alabama-1861-1865.
22. John W. Busey and Travis W. Busey, *Confederate Casualties at Gettysburg: A Comprehensive Record Volume 1* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc, 2017) 46-47.
23. John W. Busey and Travis W. Busey, *Confederate Casualties at Gettysburg: A Comprehensive Record Volume 1* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc,2017) 46-47.

Roster of the Larkinsville Guards at Gettysburg

Name	Rank/Notes
George W. Larkin Jr	2nd Lieutenant
William Burkes	Private (WIA/Captured)
Ephraim Burrow	Private (Captured)
John A. Clayton	Private
Enoch E. Finney	Private
William A. Harris	Private
William S. Harwell	2nd Lieutenant (KIA)
Eisha R. Hall	Private (WIA)
Franklin J. Hicks	Private
Rufus Hollis	Private/ In Company at time of Gettysburg. Assigned as a nurse in Richmond.
Andrew Hembree (Drew Hembree)	Private
Robert P. Jones	Private/ Tracher Wood Cove/Sauta area
John D. Jones	Private (WIA)
Andrew P. Jones	Private
William R. Judge	Private
Thomas J. Judge	Private
Lewis M. Kirby	Private
John H. Larkin	Private
Joel C. Ledbetter	Private/ In Company at time of Gettysburg. Assigned as a hospital steward.
Thomas L. Matthews	Private
Absalon H. Morris	Private
Samual Manning	Private (KIA)
John B. Pinkston	Private
Hancock Powell	Private/ Not sure from Service Record on Fold3 if he was or was not at Gettysburg.
Francis M. Stokes	Private
John H. Stokes	Private
John Sublett	Private (KIA)
Henry Z. Shelton	Private
Robert Swafford	Private
Duke Tatum	Private/ Assigned as Teamster
Arthur J. Taylor or John Arthur Taylor	Private/ May have been at Gettysburg but record unclear.
William Thompson	Private
Thomas J. Vann	Private
Thomas W. Warren	Private/ Assigned as a Teamster
G. Booker Whitfield	Private (KIA)

Weather Extremes in Jackson County

Weather extremes in Jackson County are difficult to validate: Newspaper accounts based on observations by local citizens are frequently unreliable, as determined by the fact that they can differ so significantly from observations taken on the same day in surrounding communities. As explained in the notes section below, the data quoted here are from the national weather observer program and are occasionally at odds with reports in local papers.

The most destructive storm in county history occurred on March 21, 1932 when thirty two Jackson Countians lost their lives in a tornado that destroyed the town of Paint Rock. Over 300 Jackson Countians were injured. Statewide, 268 died.

On Thursday March 24, 1932, the *Jackson County Sentinel* reported:

> *Last Monday night, March 21 between 7:00 and 9:00 o'clock a tornado swept through Jackson County carrying with it death and destruction totaling the greatest catastrophe in the history of the county. Up to Thursday morning the known death list in Jackson County has reached 32 men and women and children with hundreds injured and more than a million dollars property damage.*
>
> *The storm was the most vicious on record in this section and virtually cut a path across Jackson County its entire breadth of more than fifty miles.*
>
> *A torrential downpour came with the storm. In fact it was "a waterspout," for water rose to heights heretofore not known in this county a few minutes after the wind had past.*
>
> *Every doctor in the county was on the job constantly trying to relieve the suffering of the unfortunate's. Hodges Hospital in Scottsboro was thrown open to the storm sufferers and volunteer extra nurses called in to assist. McAnelly's funeral home was a gruesome place with eleven bodies being taken care of Monday night and Tuesday.*

The town of Paint Rock was demolished in the storm. But for the fact that a hosiery mill, the largest employer in town, ran out of yarn and closed at 4 p.m. on the preceding day and cancelled the night shift, the death toll in Paint Rock would have been considerably higher. Still, three people were killed at the facility. Fortunately, only one other person was killed in Paint Rock that night to the amazement of those who witnessed the almost total destruction of the town.

The county's second largest storm occurred on Friday, February 17, 1956, focusing most of its wrath on the town of Scottsboro. Around 12:20 a.m., a tornado tore through Scottsboro, seeming to cut a swarth through the area near Cedar Hill Cemetery and then doubling back, striking the area around the square at some point in its trajectory.

At dawn, amazed residents drove into town to witness a car in a tree and a steel beam from the National Guard Armory that had torn through one home and come to rest in a child's bedroom a few houses away.

The McGahey family, who lived across the street from the armory, found their daughter covered in shattered glass in her crib and feared she'd not survived, unable to see her buried under the debris. Next door, Leland "Skinny" Roden pulled his daughter from her bed moments before the lethal steel beam landed in her bed. Debris from Roden's storage shed was found in Tennessee.

Debbie Roden Zinser remembers "There was some lady on Thomas Street who was trying to get to relatives' house on Cedar Hill Drive. She was in our back yard when it hit and she clung to a tree until it passed...how I don't know. My dad and Joe McGahey found her. She had to be taken to the hospital but lived. It was really bad on our side of town."

The largest flood in the history of the TVA crested on Sunday, March 18, 1973 with the river rising seven feet above flood stage. The TVA noted that the flood was the result of cumulative rainfalls of over 10

inches beginning on March 15. In Roseberry Creek, the water began rising so rapidly in one evening that sleeping owners of lakefront property woke to find their boats had floated to the top of boathouses and broken through the boathouse roofs.

The TVA predicted that in the absence of TVA flood abatement measures, the flood crest would have reached 52 feet in Chattanooga. With TVA management, the crest came at 37 feet.

The largest single day rainfall came on December 23, 1990 when 6.8 inches fell in a 24-hour period. Rainfall on July 17, 2010 registered 6.6 inches.

The largest single snowfall in the county came on January 7, 1926 when 27.5 inches fell in a single day. Peculiarly, local newspapers made little of the event. The January 14, 1926 *Progressive Age* reported simply "Snow was reported all over north Alabama on January 8. In the extreme northern part, it was several inches deep." The 1926 snow event was 15 inches greater than the second largest snow event in 1993.

The coldest day on record is a matter of some debate. In the absence of solid evidence to the contrary, the record was on February 12, 1899 at 13 degrees below zero. The February 16, 1905 edition of the Progressive Age states that temperatures the previous Monday had plunged to 16 degrees below zero, but official records do not bear out that claim. The same 1905 Progressive Age report acknowledges that February 13, 1899 was the previous low, but states that the low temperature on that date was only eight below. The county has seen temperatures drop to zero or below on 31 occasions since 1899.

The hottest day in the county came on July 13, 1930 when the mercury reached 109 degrees. Temperatures have reached 106 or higher on 11 occasions since records have been maintained, most recently on July 15, 2023.

David Bradford

Note: How were these statistics gathered?

The information presented here was compiled from databases maintained by the Cooperative Weather Observer Program. The Cooperative Weather Observer Program is staffed by citizen volunteers and has been active since 1890 when Congress passed the National Weather Service Organic Act.

The organization keeps a close eye on the reported data as evidenced by an incident in 1954 when the organization took thermometers from Scottsboro's designated local weather observer Kenzie Bobo to verify their accuracy after they registered 105 degrees on two consecutive days, September 4 and 5. The accuracy of the instruments was verified and Bobo's equipment was returned to service.

Our local observer today is Greg Bell, who compiled and submitted 13 decades of weather reports to the JCHA. Those reports are the basis of the tables below and much of the information presented in the text above. We are grateful to Greg for his support of our organization and his devotion to his duties as the Cooperative Weather Observer Program's local observer.

Left: Drought in September, 1925. Wayne Phillips' car parked in the middle of the Tennessee River just below the old Section Ferry. People L to R: Charlotte Taylor, Dillard Taylor, Pluma Taylor Sparks, and Pearl Taylor Benjamin. Right: The Paint Rock Hosiery Mill after the 1932 tornado, from Dendy Rousseau.

Rainfall – 24-hour Period	Rainfall – Calendar Year	Rainfall – Calendar Month
6.80 – 12/23/1990	87.32 – 2020	16.48 – March 1980
6.60 – 8/17/2010	77.00 – 1990	15.56 – March 1899
6.00 – 7/16/1894	75.94 – 1948	15.49 – November 1948
5.81 – 12/26/1973	75.60 – 1946	14.73 – December 1990
5.75 – 12/28/1942	74.87 – 2013	14.40 – February 2020
5.55 – 4/5/1892	74.73 – 2011	14.36 – March 1917
5.35 – 9/6/2011	73.95 – 1977	14.21 – March 1973
5.32 – 12/26/2015	72.22 – 1932	14.19 – March 2021
5.00 – 4/16/1900	72.14 – 2021	14.05 – December 2015
4.92 – 9/28/1979	71.56 – 1949	13.85 – April 1892
4.90 – 11/17/1927	71.02 – 1989	13.80 – January 1937
4.88 – 3/16/1973	69.27 – 1973	13.73 – May 2003
4.79 – 4/17/1924	68.76 – 1957	13.67 – December 1961
4.77 – 9/5/2011	68.08 – 1975	13.50 – February 1939
4.60 – 3/15/1964	67.87 – 1997	13.33 – March 1965
4.43 – 9/18/2012	67.86 – 1951	12.95 – June 1928
4.40 – 3/13/1909	67.65 – 1994	12.80 – February 2019
4.40 – 6/2/1909	67.53 – 2015	12.69 – November 1957
4.40 – 9/24/1975	67.44 – 2001	12.61 – December 1932
4.40 – 9/12/1988	66.83 – 2017	12.46 – March 1897
4.23 – 9/25/2020	65.87 – 2004	12.44 – February 1903
4.19 – 1/7/2009	65.39 – 1996	12.36 – March 1951
4.14 – 4/4/1911	65.21 – 2018	12.35 – April 1911
4.12 – 1/2/1937	64.41 – 2009	12.22 – February 1944
4.12 – 5/3/2010	63.43 – 1961	12.20 – March 2011
4.10 – 10/16/1932	63.21 – 1962	12.15 – March 1929
4.10 – 2/16/1995	63.07 – 1945	12.07 – April 1900
4.08 – 3/14/1899	63.06 – 2003	11.99 – September 2011
4.06 – 11/28/1983	62.97 – 1974	11.94 – December 1942
4.03 – 11/30/2016	62.81 – 1906	11.87 – January 1947
4.02 – 2/6/2020	62.67 – 1900	11.60 – January 1946
4.00 – 8/31/1905	62.28 – 1979	11.43 – November 1977
4.00 – 3/23/1929	61.98 – 1971	11.20 – December 2008
4.00 – 2/23/1962	61.78 – 2022	11.18 – July 1953
4.00 – 2/11/1994	61.36 – 1972	11.16 – November 2000
4.00 – 10/5/1995	61.33 – 1991	


JACKSON COUNTY SENTINEL

32 DIE IN JACKSON

TORNADO BRINGS GREATEST DISASTER IN HISTORY

Enormous Death and Property Toll In Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee

Record High Temps

109 – 7/13/1930
108 – 9/9/1925
108 – 7/28/1930
107 – 7/12/1930
107 – 7/27/1930
107 – 6/28/1931
107 – 6/29/1931
107 – 7/29/1952
107 – 7/17/1980
107 – 8/15/2023
106 – 7/11/1930
105 – 7/2/1897
105 – 7/3/1897
105 – 9/3/1925
105 – 9/8/1925
105 – 9/18/1925
105 – 9/19/1925
105 – 7/7/1930
105 – 7/10/1930
105 – 8/7/1935
105 – 8/26/1943
105 – 8/27/1943
105 – 7/23/1952
105 – 8/16/1954
105 – 9/4/1954
105 – 9/5/1954
105 – 9/6/1954
105 – 7/18/1980
104 – 8/29/1924
104 – 9/2/1925
104 – 9/10/1925
104 – 9/20/1925
104 – 9/22/1925
104 – 7/31/1930
104 – 8/6/1935
104 – 8/8/1935
104 – 8/21/1983
104 – 8/22/1983
104 – 8/24/1983

Record Low Temps

-13 – 2/12/1899
-10 – 2/15/1905
-10 – 1/26/1940
-9 – 1/30/1966
-8 – 2/13/1899
-8 – 1/31/1966
-8 – 2/1/1966
-8 – 1/21/1985
-7 – 1/27/1940
-7 – 1/28/1940
-6 – 1/23/1963
-6 – 1/24/1963
-5 – 1/20/1893
-5 – 1/29/1897
-5 – 2/18/1958
-3 – 1/19/1940
-2 – 2/17/1958
-2 – 1/11/1962
-2 – 1/12/1962
-2 – 1/17/1977
-2 – 1/18/1977
-2 – 1/22/1985
-1 – 2/8/1895
-1 – 2/16/1905
-1 – 1/13/1918
-1 – 2/19/1958
-1 – 12/25/1983
0 – 12/12/1962
0 – 1/9/1970
0 – 12/27/1983
0 – 12/22/1989

Snowfall – Single Day

27.5 – 1/7/1926
12.0 – 3/13/1993
10.0 – 2/15/1958
9.0 – 1/6/1988
8.0 – 1/18/1893
8.0 – 1/29/1966
7.2 – 2/26/2015
6.0 – 2/25/1894
6.0 – 2/11/1895
5.7 – 2/14/1960
5.5 – 1/23/1940
5.0 – 1/24/1948
5.0 – 1/10/2011
4.8 – 2/10/1912
4.0 – 1/3/1919
3.6 – 2/13/1960
3.0 – 12/30/1894
3.0 – 1/28/1895
3.0 – 2/16/1895
3.0 – 2/3/1905
3.0 – 11/14/1906

Snowfall – Calendar Month

27.5 – January 1926
14.7 – January 1940
12.0 – March 1993
11.5 – February 1895
10.0 – February 1958

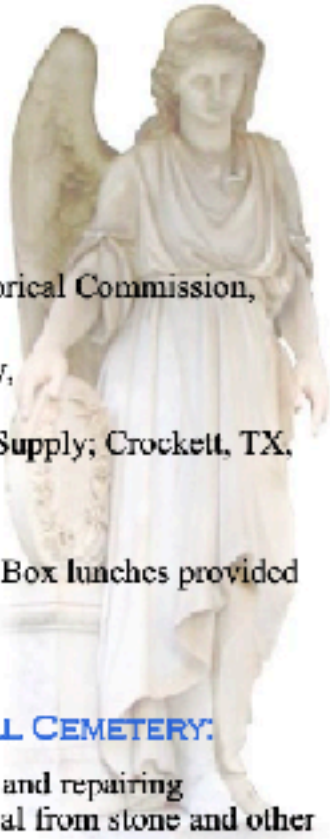
BamaTuft after the 1956 tornado in Scottsboro. Photo by Harris Keeble.

ALABAMA CEMETERY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE
PRESENTS

22ND ANNUAL CEMETERY PRESERVATION WORKSHOP AND ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 2024
8:30 AM UNTIL 4:00 PM
SCOTTSBORO-JACKSON HERITAGE CENTER
208 S HOUSTON ST
AND CEDAR HILL CEMETERY
SCOTTSBORO, AL

SCOTTSBORO-JACKSON HERITAGE CENTER (SATURDAY MORNING)



GUEST SPEAKERS:

BLAKE WILHELM: Vice-President, Jackson County Historical Association (JHCA), "A Brief Overview of Cedar Hill"

ANNETTE BRADFORD: Editor, Jackson County Chronicles, JCHA: "How to organize a Cemetery Stroll"

LEANNE WALLER-TRUPP: Historical Cemetery Programs Coordinator, Alabama Historical Commission, "Alabama State Cemetery Laws and the Permitting Process"

COURTNEY PINKARD: Reference Coordinator, Alabama Dept of Archives and History, "Requesting Military Markers"

RUSTY BRENNER: Owner, Texas Cemetery Preservation; and Cemetery Preservation Supply; Crockett, TX. "How to Properly Care for, Maintain, & Repair Tombstones & Monuments"

DOOR PRIZE DRAWINGS: Must be present to win.

FOOD: Breakfast and refreshments provided by Jackson County Historical Association. Box lunches provided by Subway.

HISTORIC CEDAR HILL CEMETERY, (AFTER LUNCH)

EDUCATIONAL STATIONS AND A MAGICAL CEMETERY STROLL OF CEDAR HILL CEMETERY:

RUSTY BRENNER: Will discuss and demonstrate approved techniques for maintaining and repairing tombstones and demonstrate the proper use of D/2 Biological Solution and graffiti removal from stone and other surfaces.

JEREMIAH STAGER: Sr. Cultural Resources Assistant, Office of Archaeological Research (OAR), University of Alabama Museums, Moundville: Will demonstrate locating unmarked gravesites using Ground Penetrating Radar.

Followed by:

ANNETTE BRADFORD: Will lead us on a cemetery stroll where some of the residents will come alive, albeit for only a short time, to retell their stories.

Registration Fee includes conference folder, light breakfast, refreshments and a box lunch:

$25 (ACPA Members) and $40 (General Public—includes courtesy membership for remainder of current year for first-time workshop attendees).

For more information, contact Scott Martin at: BEVEL67@aol.com.

2024 Annual Cemetery Preservation Workshop Registration Form
April 27, 2024

Name

Address

Email

Phone

Mail registration form with check or money order to:

Lucy Gallman, ACPA Treasurer
PO Box 937
Livingston, AL 35470

Registration needs to be **received by:** April 20, 2024

Description	Qty	Price	Subtotal
ACPA Members		$25	
*General Public		$40	
		Total:	

Method of Payment:

Check: ☐

Money Order: ☐

Make Check or Money Order payable to ACPA.

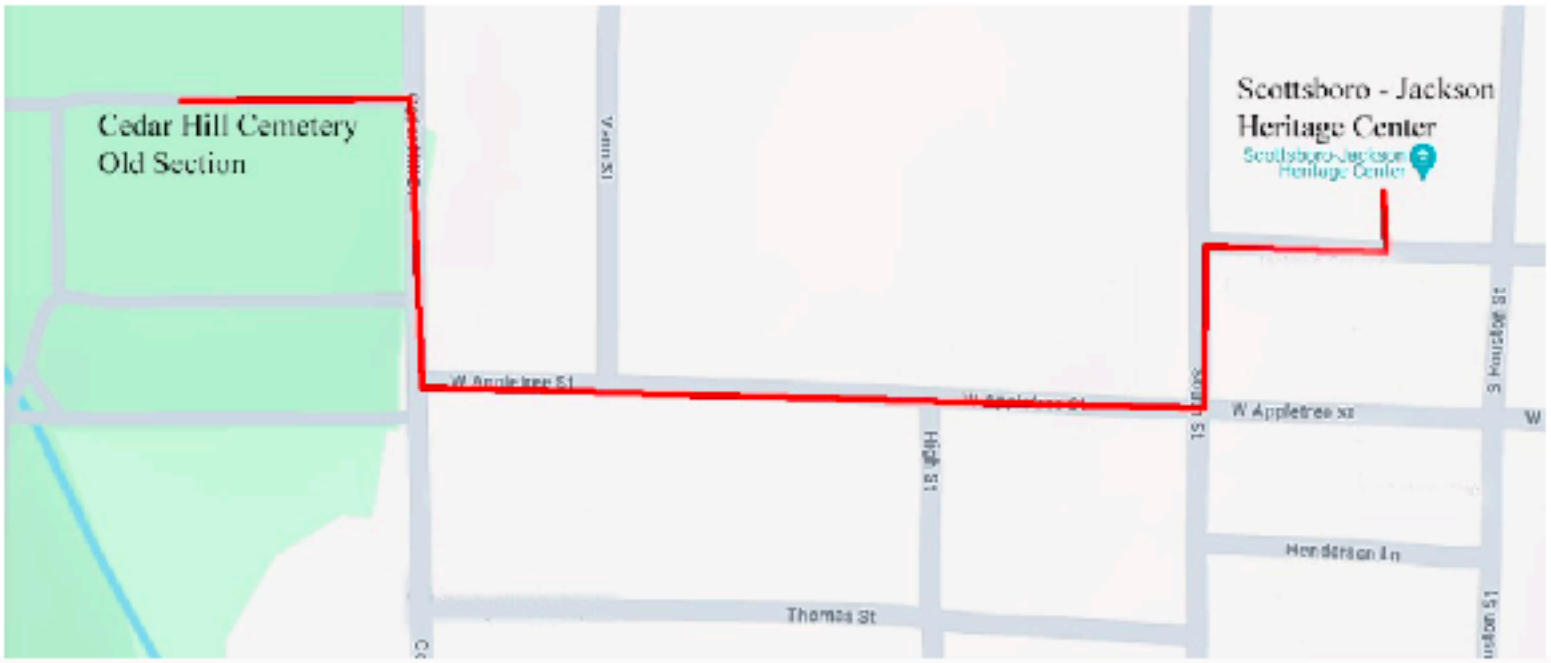
☐ *Check here if First-time Workshop Attendee to receive Courtesy Membership for remainder of 2023

☐ * Check here to opt-out of Courtesy Membership

Motel Reservations

Group rates have been established with the Comfort Inn & Suites, 25775 John T Reid Pkwy, Scottsboro, AL for Friday night, April 27, 2024. Ten single King Bed, No Smoking rooms have been reserved at the discounted rate is $98.00 + taxes for a total of $112.72. The same rate also applies for Saturday night if the motel is notified when making reservations. Reservations will be made on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Reservations must be made by calling the motel direct rather than by on-line reservations.
Comfort Inn & Suites Scottsboro direct phone number: (256) 259-8700.
Group Name: ACPA Group
Cut Off Date: April 21, 2023, 6:00 PM Reminder: Ask for Reservation Confirmation Number.



ISSN-1071-2348 July 2024

The Jackson County Chronicles

Volume 36, Number 3

In this issue:

Editor: Annette Norris Bradford
Associate Editor: David Bradford

Photo from the Paint Rock Valley Community Advisory Board Facebook Page

July Meeting: The July meeting of the Jackson County Historical Association will be held **Sunday, July 28 at 2:00 pm** at **Paint Rock Valley High School** in Princeton where we will dedicate a new historical marker recognizing the school years of Paint Rock Valley High School and hear about plans for the building from its administrator, Mike Sims.

This marker is primarily the work of one man: JCHA member Donald Langston, part of the PRVHC Class of 1961. He raised the money to have the marker created. He secured permission from the land owner to place the marker on the main road. When the marker was delivered, he organized the expedition to Scottsboro to retrieve the heavy marker, and helped with its setup.

Our meeting will be inside the school. Mr. Langston and our speaker Mike Sims will serve as our guides, with Mr. Langston talking about the past and Mike the future of this historic school. Mike talked to the JCHA at Graham Farms and is always an interesting speaker.

Quarter of a Million Pages Added: The JCHA has been working with Newspapers.com coordinator Emily Perkins to make Jackson County newspapers accessible to Newspapers.com and Ancestry.com. Emily wrote this summary for the company newsletter: "In 2023, Newspapers.com partnered with Annette Bradford of the Jackson County Historical Association to digitize some of Jackson County's most historically significant newspapers. Thanks to the assistance and cooperation of many parties, we were able to digitize over 250,000 pages of newspapers, dating as far back as 1868. Huge shout out to Annette Bradford, the Jackson County Probate Office, the *Jackson County Sentinel*, the Scottsboro Jackson Heritage Center, and the Larry and Faye Glass family for their efforts on this project."

Remembering T. G. Collins Store on West Willow

The old coffee grinder from the window of Collins Store,, 2024

This week I noted the apparent imminent demise of one of the oldest Scottsboro buildings in my personal memory. A recent wind storm has apparently severely damaged the building, with much of the roof being blown off.

I remember going there with my parents on weekly visits to buy groceries. The first item of business was always to pay for groceries bought the previous week. This allowed for purchase of the week's needs, the cost duly noted on a hand written pad for which a carbon copy was made. The pad was kept in a wooden box with the top of the pad showing the name of the customer.

I think there was some distinction if one "had credit" at the local grocery store. This was in the days when our country was at war. We were just beginning to emerge from the "Great Depression." Credit worthiness was akin to trustworthiness.

On West Willow Street, I think it is the corner of South Street, is the location of what was then the T.G. Collins General Merchandise. The business was operated by T. G. Collins himself, better known as "Pete," and his wife Stella. I never knew what the T. G. initials stood for, nor can I remember ever hearing him called T. G.

Pete and Stella lived across the street for many years. They are certainly a couple of people who historically left their mark on this community, not only in the memories of former customers, but also by their progeny who remain prominent in the City of Scottsboro and Jackson County.

Louis Letson

Thomas Gordon "Pete" Collins was born in 1903 in Hollywood. He married Stella Machen and they had two children: Mildred, born in 1923 and Ray, born in 1926. He was a merchant operating a general store in Hollywood in 1930. In the 1930s, he moved his store to 401 West Willow in Scottsboro and moved his family into a house near his store in 1938. He enlarged the store in 1947. Pete died in 1966 and Stella in 1987. The store remained open until at least 1973.

L to R, Pete Collins from a 1958 ad in the *Sentinel-Age*; Collins Store in 2024; and a 1948 ad for Collins Store, from the *Jackson County Sentinel*.

Avondale Mills in Stevenson

Textile mills in the South were always a mixed blessing. They brought good-paying jobs. They provided an alternative to families weary of clawing a living from depleted soil when, after giving the boll weevil his cut, there was little left. My grandfather farmed cotton in the early 1920s, and he lost money every year he did it. And he hated it. He stopped farming in the mid 1920s and took a job as deputy sheriff of Coosa County. Many men in his county stopped farming and went to work in textile mills.

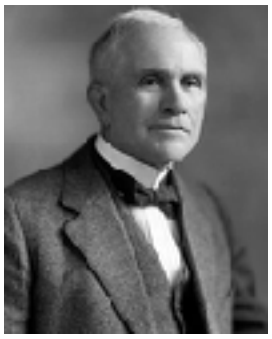
However you felt about the textile mills, there is no doubt that we miss them today. Tariffs that had protected the U.S. textile industry expired, and cheaper foreign goods and raw materials flooded the U. S. market. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which was enacted in 1994, created a free trade zone for Mexico, Canada, and the United States, making it cheaper for heavy manufacturing, including textiles, to move overseas, and that is what they did, taking many American jobs with them. In fact, conservative think tanks argue that 4.5 million American jobs have been lost since NAFTA passed. (1) But textile jobs were disappearing before 1994. The Stevenson Avondale mill sold to Shaw Industries in 1984. Shaw closed the last mill in 2009. Domestic textile production was floundering long before NAFTA.

Avondale in Alabama

Avondale Mills had a history of operations in the South long before the organization purchased the Stevenson Mill in 1930. Avondale was a system of textile mills located predominantly in Alabama, but also in Georgia and South Carolina, with headquarters first in Birmingham and later in Sylacauga. "The Birmingham neighborhood of Avondale was chosen to be the site of the first mill, hence the naming of the company," Wikipedia explains. "Founded in 1897, the mills employed thousands of Alabamians throughout its 109-year history until they closed in 2006." (2) Braxton Bragg Comer was the first president.

Avondale enjoyed a good reputation even from its earliest days. In 1901, the *Gadsden Times-News*, in a summary of state textile news, referred to the city's Avondale Mills plant workers as "one of the most orderly and well behaved communities in the entire country." (Feb 5, 1901) The *Montgomery Advertiser* on October 23, 1901, proclaimed that Avondale Cotton Mills was "one of the largest cotton mills in the South

operating as it does 39,000 spindles." On August 25, 1904, the *Montgomery Times* announced that ground had been broken in Sylacauga for a new Avondale mill that would double the capacity of the existing mills. The combined mills had a capability of 65,000 spindles. (*Progressive Age*, Jan 17, 1907)



Braxton Bragg Comer, 1848-1927. From Wikipedia.

Braxton Bragg Comer, the father of the Comer dynasty and first president of Avondale (and the man for whom our first Tennessee River bridge was named), was immensely popular in Alabama. Comer's popularity in steering the Avondale company led to his being discussed as the Democratic candidate for governor in 1902. He ran for governor in 1906 and won, and served as governor from 1907 to 1911. He did not run for another term, returning to the management of his various business concerns. But in 1920 he was appointed to fill the Senate term of the late Senator John H. Bankhead. He died in 1927 and his sons, J. Fletcher Comer, B. B. Comer III and Donald Comer, took over his business roles. (3)

Avondale was certainly not the only Alabama textile giant. Central Alabama was dominated by West Point Manufacturing and represented in the 1930s the sixth largest textile manufacturing center in the United States. LaFayette Lanier and his brother operated textile mills in Chambers County. Benjamin Russell dominated in Alexander City. "Each of Alabama's nine largest urban areas had a least one cotton mill by 1900," Auburn University history professor Wayne Flynt wrote, "and half of the 32 towns with a population of more than 2,000 boasted one....By 1925, Alabama had become the South's fourth leading manufacturing state (behind the Carolinas and Georgia) with nearly 67,000 wage earners. Of them, 23,500 worked in textiles." (4)

Child Labor and a Dangerous Workplace

Avondale Mills brought jobs to the state, but it perpetuated the endemic problems of early 20th century industrialism, one of the worst of which was child labor. Alabama had tried for some time to regulate child labor. The first child labor law was passed in the 1886-1887 Acts of the Legislature. The crudely written law stated that women and children could not work in factories and manufacturing establishments. It was repealed in 1894. The second child labor law passed in 1903. It protected children under age 12 from factory work, but exempted orphans and children of dependent families. No child under ten was permitted to work under any circumstance, and a child had to be sixteen to work a night shift. (5)

Governor O'Neal recommended raising the age limit. "The main lobbyist for the mills is going about making the absurd statement that raising the age limit from twelve to fourteen will put every mill in Alabama in the hands of a receiver," Baldwin said, quoting local contemporary sources. The law passed as the 1907 Child Labor Act but failed in its enforcement and gave factories liberal license in their interpretation.(6) It was obviously still an issue when the April 3, 1914 *Andalusia Star* ran the predatory political cartoon shown here, showing Avondale Cotton Mill welcoming little children to enter with the Biblical phrase, "Suffer the little children to come unto me" and added "They are my jewels."

Mill Workers in Stevenson.

Child labor was not the mill's only controversy. In the days before the

Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA), the company was frequently in litigation over work-related injuries. In 1910, H. J. Kircus sued the mill, asking for $10,000 damages for "alleged injuries received...in the machinery at the cotton mills at Avondale." (*Birmingham News*, Mar 25, 1910) Another Birmingham suit was brought by the widow of Henry Stewart who was killed by a boiler explosion at Avondale Mills (*Birmingham News*, May 31, 1910) Another personal injury lawsuit was brought in 1913 by Ernest Tomlin (*Birmingham Post Herald*, Feb 22, 1913). In October 1984, a worker in Stevenson won a judgment of $90,000 against the Stevenson Avondale plant related to falling on a oil spill. The company was involved in many injury-related lawsuits.

Mill work was hard and dangerous, especially in the early years. In 1910, millworkers typically worked a 60 hour week, five 12-hour days. As one can easily observe from the textile mill pictures of Jackson County, more women than men worked in textile jobs. Workers were predominately white. In 1910, "among semiskilled workers in knitting and cotton mills, women led 5,102 to 4,912" in the mills Flynt studied. (7) At its height, Avondale owned ten mills with more than seven thousand employees and processed 20 percent of all the cotton grown in the state.

Women millworkers in Greensboro, NC in 1909. Photo from National Museum of American History.

The money that employees made in the mill seemed like a fortune compared to the money made by farming. (8) Wayne Flynt tells the story of Mrs. L. A. House, married at 14 to a farmer and raising five children. When her husband died. she lost the farm and became a tenant farmer, forced to work with her oldest son, only 9, to keep the family going. "After three years of futile effort, she moved into Sylacauga where she found work at Avondale Mills. The work was arduous and boring, but she remembered that it was 'easier than digging.' "

The Comers were widely regarded as benevolent factory owners. Mrs. House recalled her boss, Donald Comer, as a kind and caring man. On one occasion, she remembered running old cotton on a frame. Each time she tried to tie a knot, the strand broke. When a man 'dressed very ordinary, just cool and common' inquired what was wrong, she blurted out in frustration, 'It's just cotton, the only kind the Comers will buy.' He laughed heartily and walked on." When the fellow worker identified the man as Donald Comer, she expected to be fired. But she was not. "She remembered Comer as a fair-minded owner who extended to a young widow from the country the opportunity for a decent job and a steady wage. She reciprocated with loyalty and devotion." Her son-in-law received an Avondale scholarship to pursue his ministerial education. (9) Donald Comer listened to this complaint of poor quality cotton and addressed it.

Charges of Paternalism and Isolation

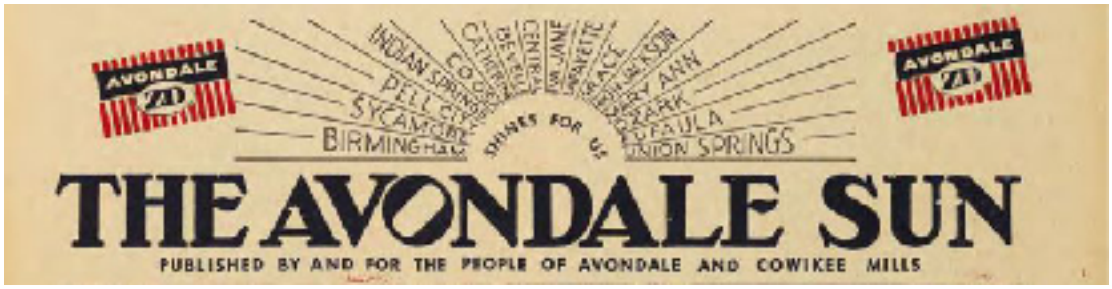
As he studied the roots of poverty in Alabama, Dr. Flynt came to the conclusion that the negative aspects of mill work outweighed the positive ones. Mills, Flynt felt, isolated their workers. Many mills built homes for their workers, churches inside the mill villages, commissaries where mill workers shopped, and schools for their children. They created towns. Flynt refers to these practices as a dangerous paternalism that led to the isolation of workers within the mill village, interfering with integration of mill children with the rest of the town. Townspeople looked down on workers from the mill village in many parts of Alabama. (10)

But the orderly nature of mill villages appealed to many mill workers. Flynt wrote: "Many a white tenant farmer fancied his salvation in a cotton mill town, with its row upon row of sturdy houses, its orderly dirt streets, angular commissary, trim rectangular church, all presided over by a towering grey mill. They did not compare long hours spent before cacophonous machinery to the life of better-paid industrial workers elsewhere. They compared such conditions to the arduous monotony of cotton picking or tobacco chopping, to the years when they scarcely saw a dollar between harvests." (11) Hard as it was, it was "easier than digging."

It cannot be denied that the Avondale system of mills "committed" many of the paternalistic practices that Flynt calls out. During the Depression, cotton mill jobs were precious and coveted. Avondale inspected their mills every year; the inspection was reason for picnics and games, of mill management celebrating with mill workers. The town fathers turned out in big numbers, and the society ladies feted the out-of-town visitors with teas and luncheons. Every year (except for the year when Donald Comer lingered at death's door), Avondale inspected and partied and recognized employee achievement.

Stevenson is a small town, and the attention lavished on Stevenson by Avondale was generally welcomed. The yearly mill inspections that characterized the Comer family approach to hands-on operation were hosted by town leaders and featured day-long picnics and family events. Avondale exemplified the community building practices that Flynt criticizes—building houses, churches, and school, sponsoring sports teams and music groups, becoming self-contained towns. But the mill owners were hands-on industrialists. Even in the early days under B. B. Comer, attention was given to the human engineering side of being a mill owner. Avondale supported education. The 1906 *Birmingham News* (Feb 24) makes reference to events held at the "Avondale Mills school house." Fully half of the Avondale Mill newspaper references I researched turned out to be box scores for Avondale baseball and basketball games. In 1921, the Mignon public school in Sylacauga (associated with Avondale) offered textile engineering courses to students that included "daily lessons in carding, weaving and spinning." (*Birmingham News,* Sep 21, 1921) In Sylacauga, a 76-piece Avondale band was organized with J. M. Henley as director. This band performed all over the state, including the "opening" of the Stevenson plant in 1930 when Stevenson became an Avondale mill, and the Scottsboro ceremony to "free the bridge" that removed the tolls from the B. B. Comer Bridge in 1936. The mill in Birmingham sponsored an Avondale Mill Girl Reserve organization that was featured in the *Birmingham Post Herald* on December 16, 1928, packing "Good-Will" bags to be sent to Mexico. These are just examples from the public press.

The Birmingham Public Library has all 82 years of the employee newspaper the *Avondale Sun*. The newspaper captures a history of recognizing important events in employees' lives: the birth of children, graduation from high school, service milestones. Every paper included a page of news about the employees of each Avondale plant.The *Avondale Sun* ran from 1924-2006. Over its 82 year history, it ran community and employee news, company information, and photographs. The B.B. Comer Memorial Library in Sylacauga also has *Avondale Sun* online. Every paper after 1930 (when Stevenson became an Avondale mill) contains multiple references to Stevenson. It is a good place to look when you try to determine what it was like to work for Avondale.



Avondale, TVA, and Social Engineering

In October 1937, the *Sentinel* reprinted an article from the *Chattanooga News* titled "Comer Mills Worth Much To State of Alabama" :

The Avondale Mills in Alabama were established forty years ago by Gov. Braxton Bragg Comer. They now [1937] employ 6,000 people, representing a community of 20,000 souls. Their leader is Donald Comer, retired President of the American Cotton Manufacturers' Association. The Avondale Mill should be visited by severe critics of Southern industry who reside in other parts of the country. These mills would convince the critics that wages and hours do not constitute the whole picture. There is a human side of industry." Interviews with Donald Comer explained "We have

tried to picture a trend toward an ideal....Can you value in dollars the peace of mind that comes to parents over the knowledge that their children are playing, going to school, and growing up under the supervisions of wise and interested directors and teachers; their children have a chance for life that they themselves missed....Doesn't all this give life to that interpretation of industry which says; 'The function of industry is to take certain things that grow on the surface of the earth, or are buried beneath the surface, and convert them to sizes, shapes, and colors that the public wants; and to do that at the lowest possible cost, with any exploitation along the route?' These are noble words, and they constitute a splendid creed for Southern industry."(JCS, Oct 19, 1937)

There is little doubt that, for better or worse, the Comers saw themselves not just as industry leaders but as social engineers. It is the same rhetorical stance that Franklin Roosevelt and Arthur E. Morgan used to sell the Tennessee Valley Authority to the U.S. Congress. Just as Avondale was organizing in Stevenson, the mill owners ran a full page story titled "Better Citizen Is Aim of Social Work at Avondale Mills." When the mill opened, there was a full page reprint in local papers of this December 15, 1930 article by C. B. Wilmer Jr. from the *Atlanta Constitution*:

If you were to sum up in a few words the principal end and aim of the industrial relationship work in this organization, it could be said that the Avondale Mills, operating 10 units in six different Alabama communities, are sponsoring a program for better citizens by enabling some 2,000 children of their employees to enjoy better than average educational, social, and recreational advantages under trained leaders of the highest type....This company has its attention centered for the most part on the coming years and on the men and women of tomorrow. (JCS, Feb 12, 1930)

In about the same timeframe, Arthur Morgan was making similar social engineering statements to sell the notion of the TVA to Congress. As Morgan voiced it, "The wreckage of rugged individualism has been handed to us with a request that we try to do something about it." (12) He envisioned the TVA as "not primarily a dam building job, a fertilizer job or power transmission job" but instead suggested that "improvement of that total well being, in physical, social, and economic condition, is the total aim."(13)

In its defense, it is fair to say that in Stevenson, Avondale was a good corporate citizen. For example, when opportunity schools opened all over the county in the 1930s working to combat adult illiteracy, Avondale opened a school for Avondale employees. Avondale participated in high school career days and job fairs. Their general manager was active in the Chamber of Commerce. In 1987 they were part of a group hiring handicapped workers. They offered scholarships to high school students and bought ads about employment opportunities and scholarships in the back of high school yearbooks, as in the 1982 ad in the Bridgeport High School yearbook. They used high school yearbooks for recruiting too, as this 1980 Stevenson High School yearbook shows. When the county was being scrutinized by the federal government over Clean Air Act violations, Avondale Mills voluntarily discontinued their use of coal-fired boilers.

Whether you view the Avondale approach to mill management as paternalism and social engineering or simply good management practice that developed over time and peaked in the 1930s and 1940s depends on the opportunities that Avondale offered the town of Stevenson and the people who worked there.

Comer Efforts at Improving Cotton Quality

As someone with the most to gain from high-quality cotton, Donald Comer worked with farmers to improve the mill's raw material. Cotton was and still is graded by the physical characteristics of the fibers produced—the length, strength, fineness, maturity, trash content, etc. U.S. cotton is assigned one of nine recognized grades, from low to high: middle fair, strict good middling, good middling, strict middling, middling, strict low middling, low middling, strict good middling, strict good ordinary, and good ordinary. A remnant of cotton grading that has invaded our daily talk is evident when we describe something as "fair to middlin." (14)

As early as 1903, "some deterioration in the cotton crop conditions" was observed and attributed to heat and drought. But this observation was the beginning of Comer and other mill owners' encouraging farmers to grow higher-quality cotton. (*Montgomery Advertiser,* Sept 27, 1903) In 1926, Donald Comer began urging farmers to "grow cotton of a good length staple." He also suggested that the state might well engage in producing such a variety on its prison farms and furnishing seed to farmers of Alabama at cost. (*Birmingham Post Herald*, Mar 18, 1926)

The March 20, 1930 *Progressive Age* published a letter that Donald Comer wrote to the Snodgrass Cotton Company in Scottsboro detailing the efforts to improve cotton production in the county: "I am also tremendously interested in what you say about the improvement in cotton seed. We have also bought some seed through the Farm Demonstration Agent here in Scottsboro for handling with the farmer in Stevenson. I think we contracted to take 200 bushels.....Cotton is more and more being sold on its staple merit and while producers have been getting away with short stuff, in the future that is going to be harder and harder and those of us who are interested in the South can hardly today occupy ourselves with anything more worthwhile than the program of improving cotton staple."

J. W. Sartain, Walker County Agent, said in 1931 that he was pleased with the progress his county was making in growing longer staple, and said that Donald Comer "deserves a great deal of credit." (*Daily Mountain Eagle*, Nov 25, 1931) Donald Comer, who was then president of Avondale Mills in Birmingham, appealed to bankers, merchants, cotton demonstration agents, and agriculture teachers to produce better cotton. "Those of us who spin cotton know to what extent short fibre, or buzz-fuzz, has been penalized during recent years....We know the premium value that attaches to full inch or inch and a thirty-second cotton." (*Anniston Star*, Apr 7, 1933) The Comers were also involved in efforts to create a professional organization for Southern cotton producing states. Donald Comer was on the board of the Southeastern Cottons Inc. and other organizations responsible for regulating textile production.

Jackson County Mills Before Avondale

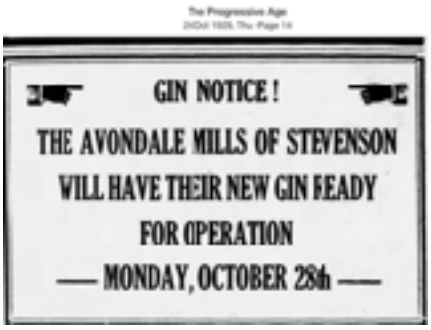
There is no doubt that Jackson County courted textile jobs and was happy to have the underwear and rug mills that helped the county through the worst of the Depression. Our most traditional textile connection, though, was in Stevenson and began life as the Broadus Cotton Mill. According to Eliza Woodall, "the Broadus Cotton Mill was a private corporation with stock valued at $100,000 when it was formed in 1901. The founders were Samuel Barnes, Charles T. Bogart, W. H. Bogart, W. J. Potts, W. J. Tally, P. B. Timberlake, J. F. Washington, T. F. Allison, and J. L. Armstrong, all of Stevenson, and S. S. Broadus, H. C. Ray, and M. B. Shelton of Florence, Alabama. S. S. Broadus served as president of the company and Phil Timberlake was vice-president." (15)


Broadus Cotton Mill in Stevenson. From John Graham.

Ms. Woodall continued: "The mill was a large stone structure with warehouse space and quality machinery. It was the largest manufacturing establishment in Stevenson at that time. The officials of the mill provided houses for the employees and, in time, the area around the mill became known as Cottontown. A street lined with these houses still exists. On 29 November, 1911 the name of the mill was changed to Stevenson Cotton Mill." (16)

There were other textile operations in the county as well. Claude Spivey started Scottsboro Hosiery Mill, the first successful textile operating in Scottsboro, making hosiery and later rugs in the early 20s. His mills spread across the area. One of the Paint Rock buildings destroyed in the 1932 tornado was a Spivey hosiery mill. Spivey's brother-in-law Dayton Benham built an underwear mill in Scottsboro in the late 1920s. Alabama Bedspread, which became GayTred, was established in 1930. The Maples Company

started in 1932. But no player with the reach of Avondale had set up business in Jackson County until the Stevenson plant in 1930.


GIN NOTICE !
THE AVONDALE MILLS OF STEVENSON
WILL HAVE THEIR NEW GIN READY
FOR OPERATION
— MONDAY, OCTOBER 28th —

1930: Avondale Comes to Stevenson

The *Progressive Age* first reported Avondale's plans to acquire the Stevenson Cotton Mill in the July 18, 1929 paper. "The mills at Stevenson have been unable for some time to operate profitably and for the past few months have been idle, having closed down indefinitely. Through the effort of J. V. Stubbs, of Scottsboro, and others, the Comer brothers, operators of the Avondale mills, were induced to come here and investigate the proposition." The Avondale Band came to town and performed in Scottsboro and Stevenson. After the Stevenson performance, a reception was held at a local hotel where business people in Stevenson were able to meet Mr. Comer, and "dainty refreshment were served by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church." (*PA*, Sep 26, 1929) The company built a gin to support their cotton mill, an action that sparked considerable interest, being the only gin on the north side of the river. (*PA*, Sep 19, 1929) Avondale Mills at Stevenson eventually included five mills: Grace Mill, completed in 1962 and named for Mrs. Lee Bowles; Dye House Mill (1964); High Jackson Mill (1965); Heat Set Mill (1966); and the original Mary Ann Plant. (17)

When Avondale came to Stevenson, the company was past its growing pains, and the management was recognized as some of the best in the industry. Here are some of the events from the company's first decade in Stevenson.

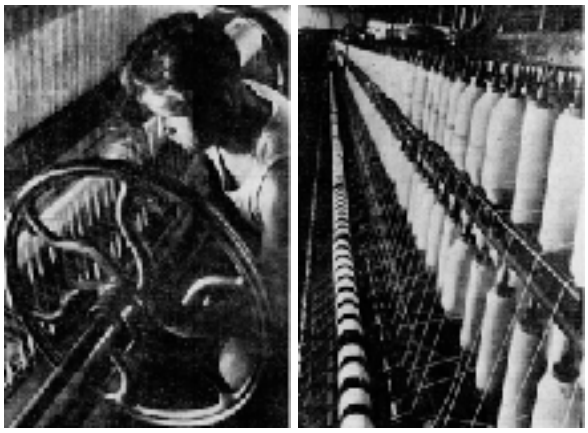
1930 February: Bragg Comer presented a loving cup from the people of Mignon in Sylacauga. (*PA*, Feb 19, 1930)

1930 July: J. F. Comer, one of the Comer sons, spoke at the dedication of the Comer Bridge in Scottsboro. (*JCS*, July 24, 1930)

1932 January: Bragg Comer brought fourteen new Angus beef cattle bulls into the county to improve breeding stock. (*PA*, Jan 28, 1932)

1932 March: "Modern machinery costing $500,000 is being installed in the factories of Avondale Mills....Replacement of older type machines are being made at all the mills." (*JCS*, Mar 3, 1932)

1934: When the company was still new in Stevenson, the entire country was embroiled in the textile workers' strike of 1934, known colloquially as The Uprising of '34. "It was the largest textile strike in the labor history of the United States," Wikipedia writes, "involving 400,000 textile workers from New England, the Mid-Atlantic states, and the U. S. Southern states, lasting twenty-two days."(18) The primary cause was the over production that came out of ramping up for World War I production, followed closely by the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. It was complicated in other states by the communist-led National Textile Workers Union.


NEA Service Photos, Margaret Burke White, *Birmingham Post* 1934

The strike turned violent in places, and martial law had to be declared at Calloway Mill in LaGrange, GA. The whole experience soured the South on textile unions and resulted in an anti-union sentiment in the South that kept Southern wages below the national average for decades.(19) The *Birmingham News* reported on September 7, 1934 "State Tense as Mills Reopen": "Violence broke out in scattered sections but was quelled without bloodshed....Third mill to reopen after a shutdown forced by the strike was the Avondale Mill plant at Stevenson. The mill closed last week." Clearly the Stevenson plant was reticent to join. The

strike across the country lasted 21 days, but only a week in Stevenson. (*PA*, Aug 30, 1934)

One reason for the loyalty of Stevenson workers might well have been the "newness" of the Avondale buyout and the perception that the Comers appreciated and advocated for the same issues that their employees felt were important. A February 22, 1934 story in *Avondale Sun* Employee Newspaper titled "Donald Comer Works for Cotton Farmer" discussed Comer's advocacy of a bill under consideration in Washington requiring the sale of all cotton on a net weight basis, a bill that benefitted the cotton farmer.

The Comers were never absentee managers. B. B. Comer III was the first manager of the Stevenson Avondale plant. The company held an annual inspection meeting that was a company-wide holiday. Avondale owned and operated a holiday resort in Camp Helen, Florida to which groups of employees often vacationed. The mill superintendent stated that "the trip to Camp Helen was inexpensive to the employee, and was just one of many ways which the owners of the the Avondale Mills have for the welfare and pleasure of its employees." (*LaFayette Sun*, Sep 13, 1933) County newspapers noted frequent groups coming and going to Camp Helen (August 2, 1934 and August 2, 1938, for example). Here is a 1963 photo from the Avondale employee newspaper, the Avondale Sun, of a group from Stevenson on their way to Camp Helen.


THE AVONDALE SUN

E Award Celebration in Stevenson

Stevenson At Camp Helen

Avondale Sun Employee Newspaper, Aug 5, 1963

1935 July: J. Fletcher Comer, one of the sons of B. B. Comer and Vice President of Avondale Mills, committed suicide in Alexander City. He was said to be in failing health. (*PA*, July 11, 1935)

1936 April: Stevenson Avondale Mill donated generously to Red Cross relief for storm victims. (*JCS*, Apr 19, 1936)

1936 May: Donald Comer was elected president of the American Cotton Manufacturers' Association. (*PA*, May 11, 1936)

1936 Sept: Jim Benson in the *Progressive Age* praised the county's new connection to Avondale on his editorial page. Benson had observed the new Avondale advertising campaign in the *New York Daily Record*. The ad said: "The Avondale Mills were founded 40 years ago by the late Governor Braxton Bragg Comer and since that time have been operated by the Comer family. In our oldest units, it is an interesting fact that children and grandchildren of the employees who produced the first bolt of cloth in the Avondale Mills are today operating Avondale's modern machinery, doing a good job and carrying on the traditions of integrity, good faith, and loyalty to the name and product." Benson said of this advertising campaign, "One of the very fine facts connected with this great organization is the spirit of cooperation...The employees love and honor the Comer boys. We have no finer men in this state than these boys. They are the worthy sons of a great sire." (*PA*, Sep 26, 1936)

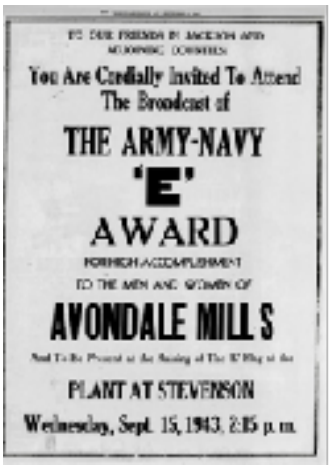
Avondale in the 1940s

World War II took place in the first half of this decade, and Avondale ads were filled with patriotic messages indicating how Avondale was supporting the war effort. The second half was more about the quality of Avondale products and the human engineering aspects of the industry.

1941 May: Donald Comer, Chairman of the Board of Avondale, wrote editorials about new federal laws to protect the investments of domestic farmers and textile mill owners by imposing tariffs on imports. (*PA*, May 8, 1941)

1942-45: Avondale in Stevenson contributed generously to national defense. Ads typically described patriotic activities and ended with "The men and women of Avondale, 7500 strong, are doing their part with pride and determination." Avondale employees are shown canning vegetables from their war gardens. (*PA* Aug 5, 1943) In 1943, the men and women of Avondale were awarded the Army-Navy E Award. A

ceremony was held at each plant, and each plant flew an E Flag commemorating the support that Avondale provided for the war effort.


You Are Cordially Invited To Attend
The Broadcast of
THE ARMY-NAVY
'E'
AWARD
FOR HIGH ACCOMPLISHMENT
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF
AVONDALE MILLS
PLANT AT STEVENSON
Wednesday, Sept. 15, 1943, 2:15 p.m.

1946-47: Avondale branches out into new fabrics like denim and chambray.

1947 April: To commemorate their 50th anniversary, Avondale hired "one of America's foremost artists, Douglas Crockwell," to illustrate a series of ads placed in prominent magazines like the *Saturday Evening Post,* illustrating "how employees and management at Avondale have combined in a "partnership to work amicably and prosperously together for many years." The article in the *Sentinel* on April 22 said, "Avondale executives described the advertising program as a means of 'telling in a down-to-earth fashion what our people made it possible for us to do in this Crockwell painting from B.B. Comer Library in Sylacauga.' "




Douglas Crockwell paintings commissioned by Avondale on their 50th anniversary. Photos by AB from the BB Comer Memorial Library in Sylacauga.

Many of these original paintings are hanging in the B. B. Comer Memorial Library. in Sylacauga. They recall the work of Norman Rockwell. The illustration at the top of this story is from the Sylacuaga library.

This *Progressive Age* ad from January 22, 1948 is from one of those paintings. Local papers printed each Rockwell ad before it appeared in the national campaign and pointed to where employees could find the ad. "They reflect a better way of life sought by the members of Avondale community, as a normal part of the American Experience." (20) The paintings recall the work of Norman Rockwell. These illustrations ran in the *Saturday Evening Post* in the second half of the 1940s.

1947 Aug: Avondale takes out full-page ads in the local newspapers and the company newspaper, the *Avondale Sun*, advocating a **Yes** vote for the federal income tax amendment. The amendment passed in the state by a 4 to 1 margin, but in Avondale towns by a 12 to 1 margin. (*JCS*, Sept 9, 1947)



Crockwell painting from B.B. Comer Library in Sylacauga in the Progressive Age, January 22, 1948

1947 Nov: C.I.O. union talk circulates in city newspapers where Avondale mills are. (*JCS*, Nov 4, 1947)

1948 Feb: Avondale begins making Plastron, an unwoven waterproof fabric. (*JCS*, Feb 8, 1948)

1949 July: Avondale Mills develops a new fashion style line of chambrays treated with a SUPERSET Resin to make the fabric wrinkle resistant. (*PA*, Jul7 7, 1949)

1949 Aug: The Fashion and Promotion Department of Avondale Mills in Sylacauga created a traveling fashion show featuring clothes made with Avondale fabrics worn by Avondale models. The show was at Jackson County High School on September 3. (*JCS*, Aug 30, 1949)

1949 Sept: Donald Comer is appointed by Frank P. Sanford, president of the Alabama State Chamber of Commerce, to be the Alabama advocate for the Hoover Report, a plan to reorganize the federal government (*JCS*, Sept 27, 1949)

Avondale in the 1950s

1950 May: Avondale Mills was featured in the *Modern Industry* magazine whose audience was industry executives. The article was titled "I Want To Make the Company Us." It was about how Avondale Mill people worked and lived, and featured stories about Avondale Mill employees involved in such tasks as home farming and health-checkups. The story centered on Donald Comer's belief that "management and labor, working together, can successfully solve the problems of living." (*PA*, May 18, 1950)

1950 June: Avondale participated in Alabama Industry Days. (*JCS*, June 13, 1950)

1951 March: Donald Comer, chairman of the board, is pictured signing a check for Avondale's contribution to the employee retirement fund: $1,396,887.36. The program started in 1945 and was funded by profit-sharing. This figure is reported yearly. (*JCS* Mar 6 1951)

1951-52: Avondale ads center on organizations they support, such as the March of Dimes and Boy Scouts. Other ads during this time period focus on the Avondale fabrics, companion colors, and local stores where they can be bought.

1951 Nov: Avondale sets up a board of directors, noting that Avondale has returned a dividend every year since 1904. Donald Comer has been chairman of the board since 1935. (*JCS*, Nov 20, 1951) J. Craig Smith, newly named President and Treasurer, wrote about his goals for the company under his leadership, from the *Avondale Sun*, reprinted in the *Progressive Age*. (*PA*, Nov 22, 1951)

1952 April: Donald Comer Day held in Sylacauga commemorating his and employees' 25th service anniversaries. (*PA*, Apr 24, 1952)

1954 Apr: Many of Avondale's officers lived in New York City. They were all directed to move to Birmingham. (*PA*, Aug 12, 1954)

1955: The Stevenson Mary Ann plant was converted to the manufacture of man-made carpet fiber. Robert R. Sanders, Jr., a native of Greenwood, South Carolina, became General Manager of the Carpet Yarn Division Mill in Stevenson; he remained here until 1976.

1955 Mar: Hugh Comer spoke to the Beta Club Convention in Birmingham with 21 members of the Stevenson Beta Club in attendance. (*PA*, Mar 10, 1955)

1955 June: Avondale begins awarding five yearly textile scholarships. Recipients receive $3000 from the Avondale Educational and Charitable Foundation to attend API. (*JCS*, June 14, 1955)

1955 Sept: Donald Comer is an old man. The new point person for the corporation is President J. Craig Smith. Smith published a column in the *Avondale Sun,* reprinted in the September 20 *Sentinel,* titled "Domestic Market for American Cotton to Shrink Unless Emergency Steps Taken." He states that American production is threatened by "low-wage Japanese competition" and that "textile tariff reductions at Geneva confront U. S. spinning and weaving mills with a grave crisis." (*JCS*, Sept 20, 1955)

1955 Nov: Smith again, in an article titled "An Intolerable Situation," writes explaining that Mexico sells cotton created with the same seed and processed on the same gins as Texas cotton is being sold 4-7 cents cheaper than American cotton and being used by the Japanese to produce inferior textiles. He calls on the U. S. to establish import quotas. (*JCS*, Nov 15, 1055)

1956 Dec: Smith is again warning the U. S. Tariff Commission about a "massacre of our industry" by the flood of cheap Japanese textile imports. (*JCS*, Dec 18, 1956)

1956 Dec: B. B. Comer Sr. named to the Alabama Hall of Fame. Excellent biography. (*PA*, Dec 20, 1956)

1957 Jan: Another reprint from the *Avondale Sun* "The Shooting Has Stopped" announced a limit on Japanese textile imports for the next five years. Smith thanks textile state senators and congressmen for their help. (*PA*, Jan 24, 1957)

1957 May: *Avondale Sun* ran a photo of the Stevenson High School graduating seniors that was reprinted in the *Progressive Age*. (*PA*, May 16, 1957)

1957 May: Avondale took first place in the Alabama State-Wide Textile Safety Contest. (*PA*, May 23, 1957)

1957 June: Kenneth Holder was the first student from Jackson County to qualify for and receive an Avondale scholarship. He went to API to study textile engineering. (*PA*, June 6, 1957)

Inspections, vacation pay and visits to Camp Helen, retirement fund contributions, and pay increases continued to be documented in local newspapers.

Avondale in the 1960s: New Generation of Leaders

1960 Feb: Employees at the Stevenson Plant received a 5% raise. (*PA*, Feb 25, 1960)

1960 Apr: Donald Comer Jr, addressed the Textile Research Institute meeting. (*PA*, Apr 20 1960)

1960 Apr: The Stevenson Mary Ann plant employs 100 and "is the largest single installation of large package spinning in America and is the most modern of its kind now producing yarn for the carpet trade." Statements were made by J. Craig Smith who was recently elected president of the Nation Cotton Council. (*JCS*, Apr 26, 1960)

1960 May: Hugh Comer delivered the graduation address at Stevenson High. (*PA*, May 12, 1960).

AS HUNDREDS ATTENDED the 57th annual inspection and open house last Friday at Avondale Mills, Stevenson, employees continued working (top picture) to illustrate the machinery of the plant. Then adjourning to the Sanders Bagnell farm to witness the running of some of the nation's top trotting horses (see pictures on page 4) and Royce to the music of the Stevenson High School band (middle picture), directed by Johnny Shock. After a barbecue was served, refill and local officials addressed the crowd briefly (bottom picture). Note the man in dark suit at far right using a sub-miniature camera to take a picture. President J. Craig Smith told the crowd that Avondale has ordered $200,000 worth of new equipment for the Stevenson mill. (Farmer Photo)

1960 June: Dunk Hale received the second Avondale scholarship awarded to Stevenson students. (*PA*, June 9, 1060)

1960 June: Avondale paid out $404,412 in employee vacation pay. (*PA*, Jul 7, 1960)

1960 Oct: J. Craig Smith announced profit sharing figures paid into employee retirement for the previous fiscal year and stock dividends. (*PA*, Oct 6, 1960)

1960 Nov: J. Craig Smith addressed the Sylacauga Rotary Club and warned that "as a result of import competition, U. S. businessmen in ever increasing numbers can be expected to take their operations overseas" so that they can "enjoy some of the same advantageous ground rules their competitors have." (*JCS*, Nov 29, 1960)

The Progressive Age

STEVENSON STUDENT GETS HIGH HONOR

1960 Dec: Stevenson home improvement winners announced in the Avondale-sponsored home betterment program. (*PA*, Dec 15, 1960)

1961 Jan: Hugh Comer named Alabama chairman of Brotherhood Week. (*JCS*, Jan 24, 1961)

1961 Apr: Avondale purchases Pepperton Mill in Jackson, Georgia. (*PA*, Apr 6, 1961)

1961 Apr: Donald Comer Sr. suffers a stroke and remains in serious condition until his death on May 31, 1963. (*JCS*, June 2, 1963)

1961 Nov: Avondale enlarges the Stevenson plant, building a completely new woolen unit at an estimated cost of $2,250,000. When complete, the change added 100 jobs,. (*JCS*, Nov 19, 1960)

1961 Nov: Smith warns the Huntsville Kiwanis Club that the flood of textile imports threatens domestic mills, taking cotton away from the domestic market. Domestic textile workers earned "many times the wages their foreign counterparts earn," stressing that the company did not want to move production overseas. (*PA*, Nov 30, 1961)

1962 Apr: President Kennedy was poised to decide if the U. S. Tariffs Commission should place a fee on cotton textile imports to offset the $42.50 per bale price advantages that imports have over U.S. producers. (*SA*, Apr 19, 1962)

1962 Apr: Avondale's 40th annual inspection in Stevenson was called off due to the illness of Donald Comer Sr. (*SA*, Apr 26, 1962)

1962 Sept: Avondale chairman of the board Hugh M. Comer dies Sept 18, 1862.

1962 Oct: W. Bew White elected to the Avondale Board of directors replace Hugh Comer. (*SA*, Oct 14, 1962)

1962 Oct: Governor-elect George C. Wallace and Avondale president J. Craig Smith are in Stevenson for the dedication of the new Grace plant, named for the wife of Stevenson superintendent Lee Bowles. Building cost a half million dollars and with modern equipment produces 24,000 pounds a day of yarn. (*SA* Oct 28, 1962)

1963 Apr: Sewage lines in Stevenson extended to serve the Avondale mills and about 20 houses. (*SA*, Apr 11, 1963)

1963 July: James Free and Gene Wortsman, Washington correspondents for the *Birmingham News*, criticize Avondale for the overwhelming volume of letters sent to Congressmen asking them to support the Cooley Bill. Avondale President Smith defended the action as "absolutely vital to the existence of the cotton industry in Alabama." (*SA*, Jul 11, 1963)

1963 Aug: Reprinted J. Craig Smith article from the *Avondale Sun* titled "Cotton's Maginot Line." Smith argues that the cap of 16 million acres planted in cotton in the U.S. is a "Maginot line" that protects cotton producers and keeps the price competitive. (*SA*, Aug 8, 1963)

1963 Aug: Avondale sponsors a local girl in the Miss Alabama contest. (*SA*, Aug 8, 1963)

1963 Dec: Avondale takes out a full-page ad supporting Amendment 1 which raises the corporate tax rate in Alabama from 5 percent to 15 percent. Rationale is that schools need the money badly and if this form of school aid does not pass, the State would be forced to tax citizens on money paid in federal income tax. (*SA*, Dec 6, 1963)

1964 Feb: Avondale President Smith is arguing that cotton is certain to become a minor crop in this country unless the price is competitive. Cotton prices receive congressional protection. (*SA*, Feb 2, 1964)

1964 March: Donald Comer Jr., VP of Avondale, was elected to the board of an insurance company. (*SA*, Mar 22, 1964)

1964 May: During the inspection tour, plans are disclosed for a million dollar dye plant addition in Stevenson, slated for completion fall of 1964. (*SA*, May 21, 1964)

1965 Feb: Ryan DeGraffenreid highlights Avondale in a speech to the Stevenson Civic Club. (*SA*, Feb 11, 1965)

1965 May: Stevenson High School Student Nolan Peters receives a third area Avondale scholarship. (*SA*, June 20, 1965)

1965 Aug: Governor Wallace to give the dedication address for the new High Jackson plant in Stevenson. (DS, Aug 19, 1965) Mrs. Henninger welcomes new people moving to Stevenson to work in this plant. (*SA*, Sep 26, 1965) Ribbon cutting for the High Jackson plant held October 11. (*SA*, Oct 14, 1965)

1965 Oct: Avondale president Smith said in an editorial in the *Avondale Sun*: "Those of us who worked under the signs of Avondale Mills last year as individuals earned more money than any other textile workers in the world," after the company announced its best year in the history of the company.

1965 Dec: Avondale employee Howard Wooden was killed in an accident at the Stevenson dye plant. (*SA*, Dec 5, 1965)

1966 Jan. Even as the Alabama textile industry was in the midst of a $30 million expansion, J. Craig Smith, speaking for textile producers said: "The cold fact is that we are about the lose the little tariff protection that we have now" as labor costs continued to climb. Imports are the issue. (*SA*, Jan 13, 1966)

1966 June: Avondale participated in a Youth Opportunity program open to the 4500 Avondale employees. The Stevenson dye plant was recognized by Smith for reducing waste by 45 percent. (*SA*, June 16, 1966)

1966 July: New Zero Defects program initiated by Avondale. Stevenson is the first winner recognized by Smith. Shirley Arnold is flown to New York as part of a recognition event. Mike Burton, Will McAllister Jr., Grothy Wilkerson, George Hubbard, and William Sanford also recognized. (*SA*, July 14, 1966)

1966 July: Avondale builds a new $5 million plant in Rockford, AL. (*SA*, July 31, 1966)

1966 Aug: Stevenson Plant Manager Lee Bowles gives Charles Fredrick a $5000 donation to the Boy Scouts on behalf of the mill. The money will be used to expand camping facilities at Camp Jackson and Camp Westmoreland. (*SA*, Aug 21, 1966)

1966 Sep: Stevenson Plant Manager R. Lee Bowles retires and is recognized with a retirement dinner in Chattanooga. (*SA*, Sep 8, 1966)

1966 Sep: Stanley Eli Bryant of Stevenson receives a fourth area Avondale textile scholarship. (*SA*, Sep 18, 1966)

1966 Oct: For the third year in a row, Avondale has earned record profits, the third best year in the history of the organization. (*SA*, Oct 30, 1966)

1967 Jan: Avondale declared a 10 percent common stock dividend. (*SA*, Jan 15, 1967)

1967 Feb: Stevenson's Mary Ann Plant recognized as one of three spinning plants with a perfect accident-free record. (*SA*, Feb 12, 1967)

1967 June: Six Stevenson Avondale employees recognized with Zero Defect awards. (*SA*, June 1, 1967)

1968 Jan: New Rockford plant reduced to four-day work week because of imports. J. Wilson Patterson, president of the Alabama Textile Manufacturers Association, wrote: "Our mills, expressing a lot of confidence in the future, have spent a great deal of money on new plants and equipment and it is very discouraging to see what the import problem has done to this confidence." (*SA*, Jan 7, 1968)

1968 Jan: Avondale's Sylacauga plant, though a grandfathered water polluter, builds a $500,000 solution abatement system to comply with the 1965 anti-pollution laws. (*SA*, Jan 18, 1968)

1968 Feb: Avondale's Grace Plant receives a safety award as more than 200 Alabama textile officials attend an industrial safety seminar. (*SA*, Feb 11, 1968)

1968 Mar: Stevenson plant visited by Avondale president J. Craig Smith to recognize Zero Defect winners. (*SA*, Mar 24, 1968)

1968 Aug:Indian Springs Mill in Jackson, MS converted to produce carpet yarns. (*SA*, Aug 1, 1968)

1968 Nov: Donald Comer Jr. chosen to serve as chairman of state cancer crusade. (*SA*, Nov 21, 1968)

1969 Feb: Stevenson Grace plant recognized for 264,091 man hours without an accident, part of the state's campaign toward zero defects. (*SA*, Feb 16, 1969)

1969 June: A safety recognition barbecue held at Stevenson City Park. (*SA* June 5, 1969)

Wages continue their annual 5% increase. Retirement funds are financed. Employees receive record high vacation pay and go to Camp Helen. Inspection celebrations were well attended. Avondale contributed generously to fund drives like the United Way and Boy Scouts. The company continues to recognize achievement.

Avondale in the 1970s

Avondale is generally quieter as this new decade starts.

1972 Sep: Walter Frank Curtis was caught in a piece of equipment at the Avondale Grace Plant and died. (*DS*, Sep 14, 1972)

1972: Ads recognizing Avondale's accomplishments as an industry and employees are the new rule.

1973 June: Donald Comer Jr., President and Treasurer, announced that net sales were up: $129,121,004 compared to $111,834,638 for the previous year. Shares on common stock paid $3.16 compared to $2.04 the previous year. Employees still shared in Avondale profits. Avondale still contributes to funds like the United Givers Fund. (*DS*, June 22, 1973)

1973 Oct: A detailed profile of the company in the *Sentinel* says that the company employs 600 in the county with an annual payroll of $2,700,000. The innovative company is using computer dye mixing. The four Stevenson plants—Mary Ann (1929, 180 employees), High Jackson (1965, 190 employees), Stevenson Dye Plant (1965, 100 employees) and Grace (1962)—all focus on producing synthetic carpet fibers: polyesters at Mary Ann, nylon at High Jackson, and acrylics at Grace. The plant is "really a family affair" with a number of lifetime employees who appreciate the generous benefits. (*DS*, Oct 7, 1973)

1973 Oct: Textile Week in Alabama recognizes the 100,000 employees in the textile industries in Alabama, the largest state employer, and recognizes the industry's focus on skill and precision. (*DS*, Oct 7, 1973)

1973 Oct: Donald Comer Jr. reports that net sales for the fiscal year ending in September were $174,707,199, compared to $153,101,518 the previous year. Net earnings went up comparably, resulting in stock dividends of $4.32 per share of common stock, compared to $2.77 previously. (*DS*, Oct 21, 1973)

1973 Dec: At the 76th annual stockholder meeting, Avondale is optimistic about the company's future, with all economic indicators trending upward and no layoffs planned. "The textile industry is hiring people, not laying them off," Donald Comer told stockholders. (*DS*, Dec 12, 1973)

1974 Jan: A front-page story summarized state textile industry profits, touting record sales and increased profits, and predicting a good year in 1974. Donald Comer Jr., however, far down in the article, in his role as president of the American Textile Manufacturers and president of Avondale Mills, states that industry "prospects for 1974 are weakened by the government's continuation of economic controls." The picture was "further clouded by the economic uncertainties of the raw material supply and wage controls and reduction in fuel." (*DS*, Jan 6, 1974)

1974 Jan: Superintendent of Avondale Robert Sanders told the Stevenson Civic Club meeting that Avondale was suffering because of the energy crisis and that the company was devoting as much as 10 percent of its efforts to implementing a number of energy-saving measures. (*DS*, Jan 11, 1974) This drumbeat of energy conservation continues.

1974 Jan: Donald Comer Jr. announced that net sales for Avondale in the previous quarter continued to climb. (*DS*, Jan 20, 1974)

1974 Feb: Textile plants across the state are recognized for their safety records, with Avondale plants recognized in several categories of award. (*DS*, Feb 7, 1974)

1974 Mar: Avondale plant manager Robert Sanders is recognized as Stevenson Man of the Year in a Chattanooga ceremony. (*DS*, Mar 14, 1974)

1974 Apr: Avondale Mills is recognized as "one of many textile organizations in the state and nation to make considerable savings in all types of energy," saving the equivalent of 325,000 gallons of fuel since implementing its savings program the previous November. (*DS*, Apr 2, 1974)

1974 May: Donald Comer Jr. points out that Avondale pays the going wage, which he described as "comparing favorably with the top wages paid elsewhere in the textile industry" and reminded the report that Avondale's Retirement Trust "had the highest earnings of any textile workers in the world." (*DS*, May 9, 1974)

1974 June: A front-page story states that "Avondale is featured is a model mill" for the country in the June issue of *Textile World* magazine. The magazine focused on low labor turnover and the Zero Defect programs. Ads continue to recognize the workforce. In another article, Donald Comer Jr. reported that net sales for the previous quarter continued to go up. (*DS*, June 19, 1974)

1974 July: Avondale declared a 10 percent stock dividend. The same article reported that Avondale Directors had authorized Chairman of the Board J. Craig Smith to enter into negotiations to merge with Cowikee Mill, based in Eufaula, all under the management of Donald Comer Jr. (*DS*, July 17, 1974)

1974 Oct: Avondale reports that net sales and earnings from the "consolidated audit figures" are up from the previous year, but the company changes the LIFO method of valuing the cotton raw materials, reducing stock earnings to $.34 a share. (*DS*, Oct 27, 1974)

1974 Dec: Donald Comer Jr. is honored with the Annual Textile Section Award in New York and stated that "productivity is the anti-inflation treatment that works" and continues to be optimistic about textile industry growth. (*DS*, Dec 4, 1974)

1975 Jan: A page-four story carries the headline "State Textile Picture Bleak Now, but Expected to Brighten" and states that Alabama's textile industry "experienced a slowdown in production and a reduction in employment in 1974 but industry leaders are optimistic that conditions will improve in 1975." Donald Comer Jr. states that "inflation is beginning to relax its grip on the economy." (*DS*, Jan 2, 1975)

1975 Jan: Avondale reports that the last 16 weeks of 1974, net sales at Avondale were down for the first time, as were net earnings, with common stock dividends of $.75 compared to $1.06 the previous year. (DS, Jan 21, 1975)

1975 Feb: Stockholders approved the merger with Cowikee Mills. (*DS*, Feb 4, 1975)

1975 Apr: Avondale earnings dropped again for the first quarter of 1975 with earnings of $2,208,183, compared to $7,769,160 for the same quarter the previous year. (*DS*, Apr 23, 1975)

1975: Foy McCrary was promoted to manager of the High Jackson plant (*DS* July 23, 1975) and retirees were recognized (*DS*, Sep 30, 1975)

1976: Avondale is among the state textile plants honored for outstanding safety records. (*DS*, Feb 19, 1976) Avondale VP Wendell Morris is a new officer in the Alabama Textile Manufacturers Association

(*DS*, Apr 29, 1976) and Stevenson's Robert S. Sanders is appointed as a marketing representative. (*DS*, May 28, 1976)

1976 June: Sears honors Avondale employees and management for excellence of their products and services. (*DS*, June 17, 1976)

1977 Jan: Revere has a layoff of 200 workers due to the critical situation with natural gas supply. Avondale reports that they prepared for this day by curtailing demand and switching to alternate power sources and plans no layoffs. (*DS,* Jan 12, 1977)

1977: J. M. Brooks was promoted to department manager at the Mary Ann plant. (*DS*, May 18, 1977) Hal Summers of Stevenson Avondale is the Bridgeport and Stevenson chairman for the United Givers. (*DS*, Oct 2, 1977)

1977 Nov: Avondale announces employee profit sharing. "Company sales for $250,005,469 were the highest in its history for the fiscal year just ended." Earnings per share of stock were $2.97 compared to $2.60 the previous year. (*DS*, Nov 9, 1977)

1978 Dec: Donald Comer III is elected Chief Executive Officer at the Board of Directors meeting. (*DS*, Dec 26, 1978)

1979 Feb: Avondale re-roofs the Stevenson mill and upgrades air conditioning. (*DS*, Feb 14, 1979)

1979 Aug: Avondale announces management changes, making John Hudson president of Avondale Fabrics and John Loving president of Avondale Carpet Yarns. (*DS*, Aug 1, 1979) More management changes announced on August 26.

Avondale in the 1980s

1980 Jan: Avondale receives a positive review by Charles Grider in a county-wide industry review. (DS, Jan 22, 1980) New Avondale credit union board pictured (*DS*, Mar 5, 1980) Senior VP Robert White retires. (*DS*, April 16, 1980)

1980 July: Avondale quietly lays off 130 workers as county unemployment climbs to 11.1 percent. John Brown of the Alabama State Employment Service says: "With layoffs at Revere and Avondale, I don't see how unemployment could help but get worse in the coming months," reporting that youth is the hardest hit group. (*DS*, Jul 2, 1980)

1980 Nov: A page-six story says, "Avondale has record year" as the close of the 1980 fiscal year shows sales for the company up 15% over the previous year." (*DS*, Nov 5, 1980)

1980, Nov: Headline: Avondale attributes success to good working relationship. "Avondale Mills success must be attributed to the company's involvement with the people," Greg Mullins, Avondale's general manager stated. He added, "The mill's chief executive Donald Comer Jr. makes regular visits to each plant and knows most employees by name. It makes a difference in the operation of the plant when employees have a voice in what is being done."Mullins mentioned the Zero Defects program as a focal point: "The program stresses the fact that each job in the company is important and is necessary for a successful operation." (*DS*, Nov 18, 1980)

1980 Nov: Avondale complex in Stevenson includes two plants: Grace and High Jackson, with 533 employees working three shifts. Both plants work in polyester and nylon fibers and blends, providing raw materials to a number of carpet and rug mills. Avondale Mills had a record year with sales of $310 million.

1981 Jan: 140 employees lost their jobs in the last eight months of 1980: 60 from the Heat-Set Department at High Jackson and 80 when Avondale was forced to close the Mary Ann Plant. General Manager Grider did not "see signs of more layoffs in the immediate future."

1981 Apr: Avondale continued to modernize its Stevenson plants to install new, continuous heat-setting machinery and new devices for manufacturing "fourth generation" nylon fabrics.

1981 Nov Avondale announced plans to enlarge their plant and build a completely new woolen plant. As part of an Industry Appreciation event, Avondale took out full-page ads recognizing their Zero Defects employees.

1982 Dec: Avondale closed the Indian Spring GA plant and moved the equipment to Stevenson, creating 100 new jobs and making the Stevenson operation "the largest carpet yarn producing facility in the United States."

1983 Jan: More than 700 applied for the 100 new jobs. By October 1983, the Stevenson Avondale plants employed 700 workers.

Shaw Purchases Avondale Mill in Stevenson

1984 April: Shaw Industries purchased the Stevenson Avondale Mills operation.

1985 April: Avondale's Sycamore plant in Sylacauga closed. "Cheap foreign labor has crippled the U. S. textile industry and Congress should curtail imports," an employee said.

1989 April: "Officials at Shaw Industries credit the high quality of its employees for the company's continued success and they feel the future of the operation is bright." Shaw employed 650 in a 465,000 square foot facility.

1990 February: Avondale continued to recognize safety achievement awards in its remaining plants.

1990 October: Shaw's accomplishment recognized during state-wide Textile Week. Shaw employed 620 people in Stevenson.


Shaw — Largest producer of yarn

TEXTILE WEEK

We salute Textile Week and also the 13,400 weeks (200 years) that have taken place since the founding of the textile industry at Slater Mill in 1790.

OCTOBER 13 - 21, 1990

West Point Pepperell

1999 March: Avondale was part of a $52 million suit brought in Jefferson County by Lake Martin families accusing Avondale, Russell Corp., and Alabama Power of polluting the lake.

2006 October: Shaw Industry closed the Grace Plant purchased from Avondale in 1986, resulting in the layoff of 236 of Shaw's 640 employees in Stevenson

2008 May: Shaw Industries announced that the company was closing its Stevenson Mill at the end of the year, resulting in the loss of 400 jobs at the carpet yarn facility. (*DS*, May 30, 2008)

Shaw still owns the property and maintains a skeleton staff at the gate of the facility because the company uses the Stevenson storage facilities.

Avondale had the same growing pains as any early 20th century industry—working conditions, child labor. But by the 1930s, they had become a model industry that, at least in Stevenson, struck a balance between the overreaching paternalism of other state mills and the caring atmosphere which attracted workers and held their loyalty. Donald Comer seems to be the guiding light that enabled them to be the good textile mill example.

A quote from a 1973 article best summarizes work at Avondale from an employee perspective: "We have moved from an

agricultural economy to a balance between agriculture and industry. Many of our employees are still part time farmers and gardeners. They work hard for pretty homes, to send their kids to college...the same ambitions and aspirations as people most everywhere." (*DS*, June 24, 1973)

Notes: References to newspapers are from newspapers.com and documented inline.

(1) NAFTA impact, https://www.citizen.org/wp-content/uploads/nafta_factsheet_deficit_jobs_wages_feb_2018_final.pdf.

(2) Wikipedia, "Avondale Mills," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avondale_Mills.

(3) Wikipedia, "B. B. Comer," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B._B._Comer.

(4) Wayne Flynt, *Alabama in the Twentieth Century*. (University of Alabama Press: 2004), p. 124.

(5) Dr. B. J. Baldwin, "History of Child Labor Reform in Alabama," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Jul., 1911, Vol. 38, Supplement: Uniform Child Labor Laws (Jul., 1911), pp.111-113.

(6) Baldwin, p. 111.

(7) Wayne Flynt, *Poor But Proud: Alabama's Poor Whites*. (University of Alabama Press: 1989), p. 92.

(8) Wayne Flynt, *Poor But Proud: Alabama's Poor Whites,* p. 98.

(9) Wayne Flynt, *Alabama in the Twentieth Century,* p. 127.

(10) Op. Cit.

(11) Wayne Flynt, *Poor But Proud: Alabama's Poor Whites,* p. 98.

(12) A. E. Morgan, as quoted in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. *The Coming of the New Deal* (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company: 1959), p. 321.

(13) Morgan, p. 327.

(14) Grades of U.S. Cotton, https://www.cottoninc.com/cotton-production/quality/us-cotton-fiber-chart/grades-of-us-cotton/.

(15) Woodall, Eliza. *The Stevenson Story.* (1982: Stevenson Depot Museum), p. 213.

(16) Op. Cit.

(17) Allen L. Knox Jr. *Rivers and Rails, Truth and Tales of Stevenson Alabama* (Alabama Dept. of Education, 1968), p. 110.

(18) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_textile_workers'_strike_of_1934

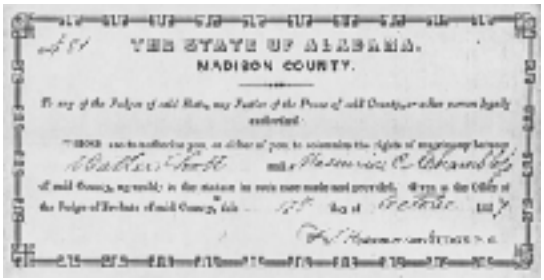
(19) Op. Cit.

(20) Douglas Crockwell Exhibit, B. B. Comer Memorial Library, Sylacauga, AL.

Walter Scott: Robert and Elizabeth's Unknown Son

Much has been written about the children of Robert and Elizabeth Scott. Five of their twelve children survived childhood, married and have descendants. Mary Jane (1828-1912) married James Monroe Parks; Charlotte (1831-1906) married James T. Skelton; Lucy (1946-1925) married Robert Hugh Bynum; and Robert Thomas Jr. (1847-1910) married Nancy Jane Kennamer and Laura Catherine Moon. Almost nothing is found in genealogical records about Walter (1841-1873). When I copied the Scott family records of Mark Scott Skelton, I found that descendants of the Walter Scott family had been in touch, albeit sporadically, with the Jackson County branch of the family. This story presents those records and some research and contains some other insights from the Mark Scott Skelton papers.

Walter Scott was born March 16, 1841, and died April 7, 1873 (according to what is represented as his wife's or ex-wife's pension application). He is found in the 1850 census, nine years old, living at White Cottage on Backbone Ridge with his family. On October 17, 1857, he married Missouri C. (maybe Custus or Curtis) Chambliss in Madison County, Alabama.


THE STATE OF ALABAMA.
MADISON COUNTY.

The 1860 census states that Walter is 18 years old, married to 15-year-old Missouri Chambliss with two children: a son Joel born in 1859 (who died before 1870) and a son Warren born in March 1860. Walter was actually 19 and Missouri 20 (she was seven months older than Walter).This is the only census where Walter appears as a married man with his family. His occupation is listed as painter.

Walter enlisted in the Jackson Rifles in Stevenson on February 1, 1860. When the Civil War started in April 1861, this group of Bellefonte men became Company G of the 7th Alabama under Captain Ragsdale. Walter spent the first 12 months of the war [1861-62] in Pensacola, and was sent home because of illness. He re-enlisted with the 4th Alabama Cavalry under A A Russell in Company G of the "Jackson Guard" under Captain Flavious Graham. This company was one of 10 companies totaling about 1000 men who were in Tennessee until 1863, under Nathan Bedford Forrest. Walter was proud of serving under Forrest and named his last child (born in 1865) after his commander, a daughter named Lucy Forrest but called Forrest.

There are two pieces of evidence that corroborate Walter's Civil War service. First, when Lucy Forrest Scott Hill's daughter Nell wanted to join the Daughters of the Confederacy in 1917, she wrote her cousin Lizzie who related this story: "Aunt Lucy Bynum tells me that he [Walter] first joined the army at Stevenson, Ala. Capt. Ragsdale Co. They were stationed at Pensacola, Florida for twelve months, on account of ill health was honorably discharged and later joined General Forrest Cavalry. His captain Berry Burnett is still living. His address is Shellmound, Tennessee." And second, there was a letter between Governor John Gill Shorter and Robert Scott dated March 11, 1862, in which Scott wrote,"Walter Scott, 7th Alabama Regiment, and Robert Scott, both of my sons are now in service."


The Scottsboro Citizen
Fri, Dec 13, 1878 Page 2

NEW ADVERTISEMENTS

SALE OF TOWN LOTS!

Pursuant to an order and decree of the County Court of Probate, for the county of Jackson, Alabama, rendered in the matter of the Guardianship of the estate of Warren Scott, Forrest Scott, and Annie Tidwell, minors, etc., I will offer for sale in front of the Court House, in the town of Scottsboro, Ala., on the first Monday in January, 1879, the following described town lots: Number, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 126, 127, 128, 129, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, as numbered in the plan of said town.

TERMS OF SALE.—One half purchase money in cash—the remainder in twelve months, with bond and approved security.

JAMES T. SKELTON,
Guardian.

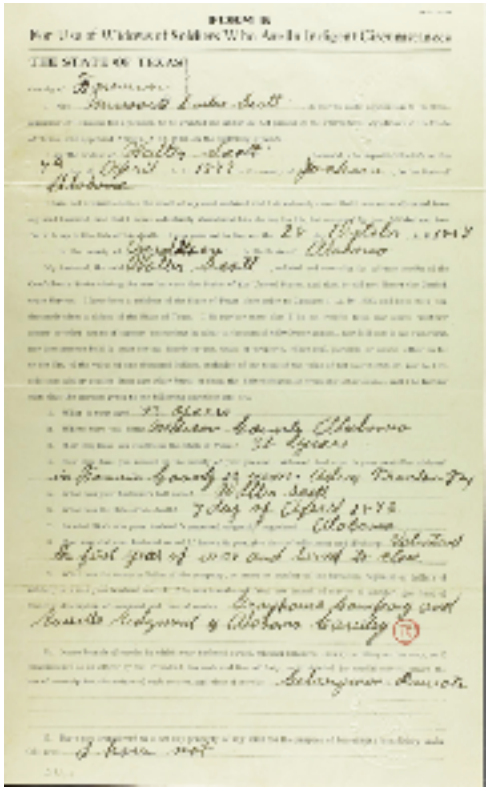
Dec. 13—td.

What became of Walter after the Civil War? There is nothing definitive. He was deceased by August 3, 1874 when all the heirs were named in the Chancery Court records settling the Scott estate. A somewhat suspect Civil War pension application based on Walter's service states that Walter died April 7, 1873, six months before his mother Elizabeth Parsons Scott on October 13, 1873. Walter was with his wife and children in August 1864 when daughter Forrest was conceived (she was born in April 1865). But in the 1870 census, son Joel has died and Missouri and the other three children are found in Madison County, living with Missouri's mother Jane and siblings. In the 1880 census, after Walter's death, Missouri is living in Jackson County. Daughter Anna has married C. C. "Cem" Tidwell and has given birth to the first two of her thirteen children. However, she is only 19 and still a minor, which is why James T. Skelton was named her guardian in January 1875, and negotiated for Anna and her two siblings when the Scott estate was settled. Cem is five years older than Anna and listed as head of household. Missouri is not mentioned in the 1878 settlement negotiations.

In the 1900 census, Missouri is 59 and living in Franklin County, Missouri with Anna and Cem and 10 of their children. An interview letter from one of Warren's descendants (found on Ancestry) indicates that the family left Scottsboro after the property settlement and went to McMinnville, TN where Forrest lived after she married in 1881. Anna moved to Texas 1882-1884 (where sons Walter and William were born). Brother Warren met Emily Florence Overton when the family lived in McMinnville and followed his fiancée's family to Texas, where they married in Cooke County, TX in 1883. When Anna and Cem moved their family to Texas 1881-1882, Missouri probably went with them. Two of Anna's children were born in Texas, though the family moved to Missouri by 1887 where their remaining children were born.

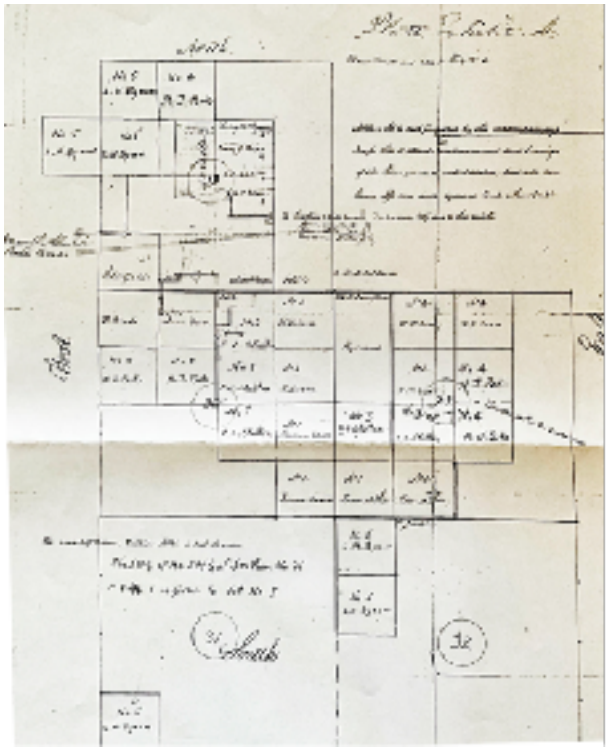
In the 1900 census, Missouri is living with her daughter Anna and her husband Cem Tidwell and their 10 children in Franklin County, MO. In this census, Missouri states that she is a widow who was married for only five years. Since we know that Walter lived until 1873, we have to assume that they were divorced though no paperwork can be found. At this point, some Ancestry trees state that she died in Franklin County, Missouri, though there are no records that back this up. Another record says, yes, she died, but before she did, she married a man named George Plyant. Again, no records. No family tree or census data says that Missouri lived past 1900.

Other people trying to trace this family are just as confused as I am. One mention is made in Mark Skelton's records of Walter moving to Illinois after the war, but no record of him can be found there. His middle name is Thomas, but he is often confused with an earlier child, Walter Parsons Scott, who was born in 1827 and lived only two years. He is often confused with the Walter W. Scott who was born the same year in Sumter County AL and married a Martha Drummond. The only fact that can be validated is that he was dead by April 7, 1873, proven with Jackson County Chancery Court records, and the January 15, 1875 probate record naming James T. Skelton as guardian. Skelton brought a legal motion before the probate court on the children's belief that ordered the sale of real estate held by the Robert and Elizabeth Scott estate, for the maintenance and education of Walter's three minor children who were without other means. The legal notice of this sale was published beginning November 29, 1878.


"Missouri's" Texas pension application based on Walter's service, submitted in March 1917.

After 1900, Missouri is not found in another census record. No one with the first name of Missouri has a headstone in either Franklin County, Missouri or Fannin County, TX. There is nothing in newspapers. Daughter Ann and her husband Cem have moved to Fannin County, TX by 1900. But in 1917, someone claiming to be Missouri, backed up by three affidavits from local officials, filed for a Civil War pension using Walter's service record. The pension application states that Missouri is 73 years old (but not in Anna's household) and that Walter died on April 7, 1873. It also states that Missouri has lived all of her life since 1800 in Texas (which is not true) and has never remarried, and the date of their marriage, which can be validated with Madison County records, is wrong in the pension application. Only one signature can be found signing for the pension checks, and it is Anna's. This pension record did not appear in Ancestry until I did something I seldom do: I created a findagrave record for Walter Thomas Scott without knowing where he was buried. Once Ancestry had a name to hang this record on, the application was found in an Ancestry search. I think it is suspect since the Warren family interview document does not mention seeing his mother again.

What became of these children's inheritance from their father Walter? Robert Scott made his will dated December 27, 1859 where he named his wife Elizabeth as executrix and stated that each of his children would receive an equal share of his estate, real and personal, after Elizabeth's death, and at their death their children. A codicil enabled Elizabeth "to sell lots in Scottsborough either at public or private sale and to donate lots for public purposes should it be deemed necessary to grow up said town." Robert Scott died in 1863, but his estate was not settled until December 1865 when his possessions were inventoried and entered into probate records. Much of his wealth was tied up in Confederate currency and a great deal was "taken by the Yankees." In July 1866, Elizabeth sold 58 shares of Memphis and Charleston Railroad stock that netted $1015 in order to pay off Robert Scott's debts. In July 1869, probate minutes report that Elizabeth "sold at public outcry" on October 18, 1866 land purchased by the railroad for $550. At the same time, Elizabeth petitioned for dower support, and lawyer M. L. Swan was appointed guardian ad litem for Robert and Elizabeth's youngest child, Lucy, who was a minor.



Drawing made by the county surveyor showing Robert Scott land holdings in 1874, entered into Chancery Court Records.

When Elizabeth and Walter died in 1873, Walter's children (who had returned to Jackson County) petitioned the Chancery Court through their guardian and uncle James T. Skelton for division of the estate. County surveyor Joseph F. Frazier was called to create an accurate accounting of the Scott properties. The property was separated into five equitable portions, and the family drew lots to determine what parts of the estate they received. Walter's children drew Lot 1. This is the original plat. A colored version overlaying a modern Scottsboro map is available in the Scott papers from Mark Scott Skelton. These papers are scanned and can be found on the Downloads page of the JCHA website: http://www.jchaweb.org/downloads/ScottRecords_MarkScottSkelton.pdf

Here is what can be discovered about their children:

Joel Scott

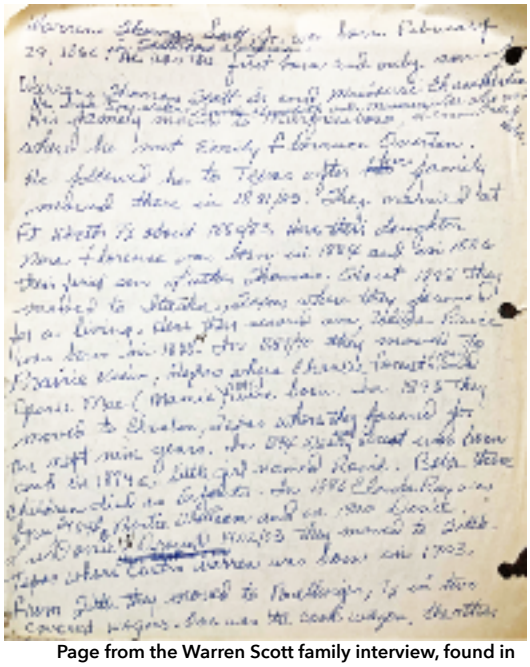
Joel Scott was the first child of Walter Scott and Missouri Chambliss. He was born in May 1859 and it is assumed that he died, either in Scottsboro or Brownsboro, some time before the 1870 census since he is not part of the family shown in the 1870 census and not mentioned in the 1878 property settlement. His

grave, wherever it is, is unmarked. If he had died in Jackson County, he should have been buried in the Scott Cemetery.

Warren Thomas Scott

Warren Scott was the second child of Walter Scott and Missouri Chambliss. He was born in February 29, 1860 in Scottsboro. He married Emily Florence Overton on July 1, 1983 in Cook County, TX. He died December 22, 1933 in Fort Worth, TX and his death certificate says he was taken to Sherman, TX for burial. His wife lived another 23 years and is buried in the Carson Cemetery in Ector. The family had 10 children and 13 grandchildren, most of whom lived in Texas, at the time of Emily's death. There should be many descendants named Scott in Texas.

According to the family history interview about Warren's family, Warren married Emily in Ft. Worth and lived there until their first two children, Nora Florence in 1884 and Luther Thomas in 1886, were born. The family moved to Itaska, TX in 1888 where Warren was a farmer and son Ulice Price was born in 1888. In 1889-90 the family moved to Prairie View, TX where son Charlie Forrest was born in 1890 and daughter Jessie Mae in 1892. In 1893, the family moved to Blanton, TX and farmed for the next nine years. Warren and Emily had two children (Wesley and Rosie) there who died as infants. Son Claude Ray was born in 1896, daughter Bertie William in 1900, and daughter Dovie in 1903. In 1903, they moved to Little, Texas where son Curtis Warren was born. The family moved in two covered wagons to Ballinger, TX. In all this moving about, Warren had become separated from his sisters when he moved to Texas and later located Anna from an ad that she placed in various newspapers. After a reunion where the two had difficulty connecting, Warren quit farming and went to work for the Texas and Pacific Railroad in 1915. The railroad transferred him to Ft. Worth, where he was living when he died of a heart attack in 1933. He is buried in Carson Cemetery in Ector, TX.



Page from the Warren Scott family interview, found in several trees on Ancestry.

Anna Elizabeth Scott

Anna Elizabeth Scott was the third child of Walter Scott and Missouri Chambliss. She was born September 14, 1861 in Scottsboro. She married Columbus Clemson "Cem" Tidwell on July 30, 1877 in Madison County, Alabama. She died March 7, 1936 in Ector, Fannin County, TX. She is buried in the Carson Cemetery with her husband and brother.

In the 1880 census, the couple is living in Jackson County, where Cem is a farmer. By 1900, Cem is farming in Franklin, Missouri. Anna is 36 years old and reports that 12 of the couple's 13 children are living. Her mother Missouri Scott is 59 years old and living with her. By 1910, Anna in living in Trenton, Fannin County, TX with one additional daughter, and several of her older children have married. No mention is made of her mother. The census says that the couple has an additional daughter, Katie, about whom nothing can be found. No 1920 census record is found. The couple is also found in the 1930 census living in Ector, Fannin County, TX with a Hughes granddaughter living with them. Cem died in 1932 and Anna in 1936. They are buried with several of their children in Carson Cemetery.

They had 14 children. Here are 13 of them. When Cem died, his obit said that he had 27 grandchildren.

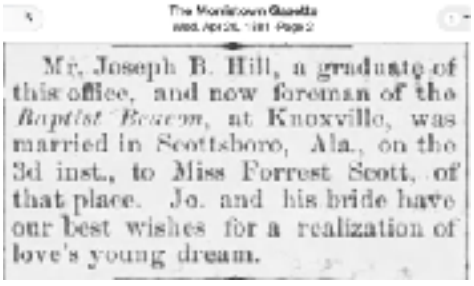
- **Walter Harrison**, born September 4, 1878 in Huntsville, Alabama and died March 7, 1948 in Bonham, TX. He married Annie Lee Maupin and they had one daughter.

- **Robert H.** born December 22, 1979 in Alabama and died June 28, 1973 in Savoy, TX. He worked for the railroad and was a farmer. He had at least one daughter. He is buried in the Carson Cemetery with his parents.
- **Jessie L**. born in October 1881 in Missouri and died in 1948 in Newton County, MO. She is buried in the Macedonia Cemetery in Stella MO. She married James E. Hance in 1897 and they had five children.
- **Thomas Franklin**, born 1883 and died 1929. He married Mary Elizabeth Pierce and they had at least two daughters. He is buried in Delray Cemetery in Walton, TX.
- **William Alfred "Alf'**, born February 18, 1884 in Missouri and died in 1916 in Trenton, TX. He married Mary Elizabeth Lasater and they had at least one daughter, Bennie. He is buried in the Burns Cemetery with several of his siblings.
- **Inez**, born September 2, 1887 and died July 9, 1976. She married Rufus Lee Nichols and had at least four children. She is buried in Floydada, TX in the Floydada Cemetery.
- **Nellie Forrest**. She was born December 8, 1889 and died October 8, 1909, only 18 years old. Named for her father's sister in Tennessee. She is buried in Trenton, TX in the Burns Cemetery.
- **Ida Ann.** On April 19, 1914 she married John David Hughes in Grayson, TX. She died in 1917 from tuberculosis, apparently with no children. John married Noba Rogers in 1922, and they had four children.
- **Maude Leona** born January 8, 1890 in Missouri and died March 4, 1948 in Floydada, TX. She married William Henry Sadler.
- **William A.,** born May 25, 1894 in Missouri and died December 13, 1972. He married Maggie Butler in 1912 and they had at least one daughter. He is buried in the Carson Cemetery in Bonham, TX.
- **Clara Cordella**, born August 29, 1897 in Missouri and died March 4, 1879 in Bonham, TX. She married George H. Eaton and they had three children. She is buried with much of her family in Carson Cemetery.
- **Katie Lee**, born May 1900 in Missouri and disappears after the 1910 census. She probably died.
- **Homer T.**, born May 9, 1906 and died December 29, 1980 in Ector, TX. He is buried in the Carson Cemetery with most of the family.

Lucy Forrest Scott Hill. From Mark Scott Skelton.

Lucy Forrest Scott

Lucy Forrest Scott Hill was the youngest of four children of Walter Scott and Missouri Chambliss. She was born April 3, 1865 in Scottsboro, Alabama and died April 6, 1946 in Los Angeles, Ca. She married Joseph Briggs Hill April 3, 1881 in Jackson County. She died April 6, 1946 in Los Angeles, California. In the 1870 census, she is in Madison County with her mother. In the 1880 census, she is back in Jackson County with her sister Anna's Tidwell family and her mother.



Mr. Joseph B. Hill, a graduate of this office, and now foreman of the *Baptist Beacon*, at Knoxville, was married in Scottsboro, Ala., on the 3d inst., to Miss Forrest Scott, of that place. Jo. and his bride have our best wishes for a realization of love's young dream.

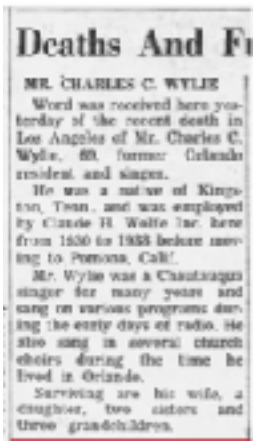
In 1881, when she married Joseph Briggs in Scottsboro, her marriage was reported in the Morristown, TN *Gazette*. Her husband was editor of the *Baptist Beacon* in Knoxville. By the time this family appears in a census (1900), they are living in Morristown, TN, and Joe is 43 and Forrest is 37. They have one daughter, Nellie born in May 1888. Forrest reports 1 of 1 living children, so Nell is her only child. Mark Scott Skelton had these photocopied pictures of Nell and of Nell with her granddaughter Margaret, taken in Morristown, TN.

By the next federal census in 1900, Forrest's husband Joe is 43 years old and works as a printer in his hometown of Morristown, TN. Daughter Nellie is 15 and still living at home. Joseph died May 21, 1927 from cirrhosis at age 69 and is buried in the Emma Jarnagin Cemetery in Morristown, TN with his parents.

In 1910, daughter Nellie has married Charles Wylie, and the young couple is living with her mother in Morristown. They have a young daughter, Margaret, who is 2, and a foster son Harry Pole. The situation is unchanged in the 1920 census.

Left, Nell Hill Wylie young, and right, Nell with her granddaughter Margaret Wylie Brydon. From Mark Scott Skelton.

In 1930 Forrest is a widow, still living in Morristown, and her daughter Nellie is living with her in Morristown without either husband or daughter. Nellie's husband Charles Wylie was a singer and later a salesman, and was apparently gone when the census was taken. His obituary says that he was a Chautauqua singer. When he registered for the WWI draft, he listed his occupation as singer. He lived in Orlando between 1930 and 1938 working for Claude H. Wolfe, Inc, before moving to Pomona, CA.



Orlando Evening Star
Tue, Apr 27, 1954 - Page 19

Deaths And F

MR. CHARLES C. WYLIE

Word was received here yesterday of the recent death in Los Angeles of Mr. Charles C. Wylie, 69, former Orlando resident and singer.

He was a native of Kingston, Tenn., and was employed by Claude H. Wolfe Inc. here from 1930 to 1938 before moving to Pomona, Calif.

Mr. Wylie was a Chautauqua singer for many years and sang on various programs during the early days of radio. He also sang in several church choirs during the time he lived in Orlando.

Surviving are his wife, a daughter, two sisters and three grandchildren.

Charles and Nellie moved around with her husband's job. They lived a time in Orlando and in the 1940 census, they are living in Los Angeles, CA, and her mother Forrest is living with them. Forrest died in Los Angeles in 1946, and Nellie died September 3, 1960 in Fresno, CA. Their graves are unmarked or undocumented. Charles and Nellie are found together living with daughter Margaret and her three children in 1950. Margaret is divorced with children ages 14, 13, and 5 working as a fiction writer.

Former Johnson City Girl Weds Prominent Publisher

ORLANDO, Fla., April 26—An announcement is made of the marriage of Miss Margaret Wylie, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wylie, and Mr. William A. Brydon, of Orlando, formerly of Maryland, on December 11, 1934.

Mr. and Mrs. Brydon are leaving immediately for their honeymoon trip in California, going by motor.

Charles and Nellie's only daughter, Margaret, was born September 26, 1906 in Tennessee and died January 21, 1979 in Contra Costa, CA. She married William Brydon, a prominent publisher, in December 1934. They lived with her father in Orlando for a time. Margaret was a writer who graduated from Rollins College and then attended the Dramatic Arts School in Philadelphia. Her husband worked later for the *New York Times* and was an advertising manager. When William died in 1976, he was editor of the *Citrus Valley News* in Calaveras County, CA.

Margaret and William had three children: Charles born in 1936, Beverly born March 3, 1938 (who married a Marker and died in Florida in 1953), and Anne in 1945. The couple divorced before 1950. Here is another photo of Forrest Scott Hill with her granddaughter Beverly Brydon. All of these CA gravesites are unmarked or undocumented, likely cremations.

Annette Bradford

Forrest with her granddaughter Beverly about 1940.

Many thanks to Andy Skelton for allowing me to scan the family records that his father Mark Scott Skelton collected during his lifetime. These records are now available on downloads page of the JCHA website. A summary of all information known and collected about Robert Scott is forthcoming.

Remembering the Bailey Hotel

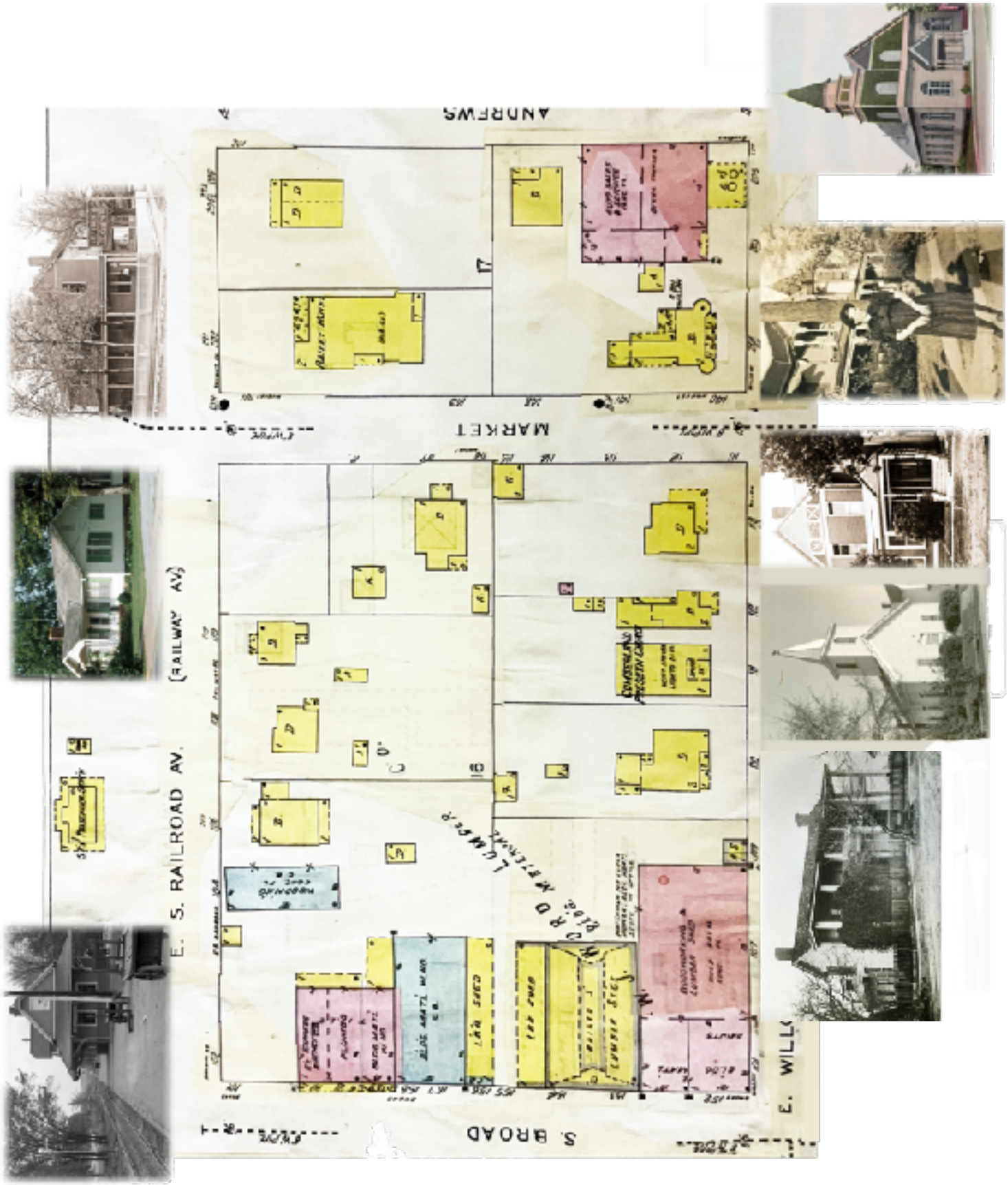
1915 Postcard of the Bailey Hotel, from Genna Lipscomb Pitt. Parks Hall identified the woman on the left side of the porch as Nannie Bailey.

When the Bailey Hotel was torn down in the early 1960s to create parking spaces for the square, it was the oldest hotel in town, established in 1905 by widow Nannie Bailey to support her three children. "One of the things that keeps perplexing me is how very quickly, perhaps over a period of 10 years, that part of Scottsboro vanished from the face of the earth," Parks Hall wrote earlier this year as we discussed the part of town where he lived in the 1940s. "And for what? Parking lots. Not only the hotel, but the wonderful houses and the beautiful Presbyterian Church and the marvelous passenger depot, all disappeared. I can't help but wonder what led to that."

That makes two of us. Just before it was torn down, my husband David Bradford was 12 and had a paper route that included the Bailey Hotel. He described it as something out of New England, a beautiful little piece of the county that looked out of place with the rest of Scottsboro.

But you don't have to take the word of a 12-year-old paperboy. Author Bill Heath (born in 1924) remembers the area as something quite special:

When I was a boy growing up in Scottsboro in the early thirties, the railroad station, with its environs, was the garden spot of town. Well-kept and clean (despite six passenger trains a day and numerous freights belching smoke from coal burning engines), it was such an attractive locale it gave rise to a custom known as "meeting the train." Every Sunday afternoon carloads of people would show up to await the arrival of the "36" from Memphis—not because they knew someone getting on or off, but simply because it was a pleasant place and a suitable occasion for convivial folks to share their leisure....Along the platform there were shade trees, and across the tracks, directly opposite the depot, there was a lily pond stocked with goldfish and skewbald carp. This area, a landscape of rocks and ferns and carefully tended flower beds, was as pretty as any garden in town. (p.27 *Ties: The Southern Railway Historical Magazine, October 2008.)*



1923 Sanborn Insurance map with photos of the lost buildings around the edges. Thank you to Parks Hall for the photo of 107 Market, Bill Tally for the photo of the Tally house, City Hall for the photo of the Staley House, and Mary Presley Cox for the photo of the Robinson house. The photos of the Methodist Church and Bailey Hotel are postcards. The photo of the passenger depot is from the internet. The photo of the church is from the newspaper.


Bailey Hotel in 1917.

The Bailey Hotel opened in 1905. Nancy Bird Thompson "Nannie" Bailey (born in 1865) was 40 years old and had been a widow six years when she opened the Bailey to support herself and her three children: Leonard (1889-1953), Myrtle (1890-1971), and Harry (1892-1965). Harry, the only one to marry, wed Lois Little in 1915 and Kitty Belle McCormick in 1950. Harry and Lois lived in Huntsville and after Lois' death, in Section. When Harry Jr. died in 2008, a graduate of the Naval Academy, two sons and a daughter are listed in his obituary. Len and Myrtle never married and helped their mother run the hotel.

Ten years later than Bill's memories, Parks Hall remembers the Bailey Hotel as his refuge. Parks was born in Scottsboro in 1939, and he lived across North Scott Street from the Bailey until the early 1950s. His father was Dr. Sam Hall who practiced medicine in what would later be Boots Photo at 106 East Laurel. His father's nurse was Vesta Skelton. When he was 9 in 1948, Parks walked to school down Market Street early in the morning to attend Central. "My very best friend was Bobby Keeble, son of Daisy Keeble, who you may know of. We stayed in touch for years but I'd haven't been in touch for probably 40 years. Don't know whatever happened to him." After school, he spent time in his favorite place: the Bailey Hotel. "I would often walk home from school and my first stop would be the hotel. I would go and find Aunt Myrtle and I would be greeted with a leftover biscuit and an ice cold bottle of Coke, both of which she knew I loved." Parks explained:

I want to express just how important the hotel was to my growing up. I felt and was accepted as a member of the family. I came and went in that hotel as I pleased. I could not and did not have a real aunt that I was anywhere as near close to as I was to Myrtle Bailey. In some ways I was closer to her than my own mother. Hardly a day would go by in my childhood and youth when I wasn't in the hotel at least once. As I grew older and was pretty much allowed to come and go as I chose, I would choose to spend evenings at the hotel, just listening to the banter between the adults. In the hot summer time, the guests almost all men who would gather on the front porch. Many cigars were smoked and a lot of chit chat passed between them. I was the invisible kid sitting at the bottom of the steps just listening. I loved to do that.

What made this part of town so special to all three young boys? How did we let that magic slip away?

Paradise Lost

This is a story about the Bailey Hotel, but since we are talking about a beautiful part of town that morphed into a nightmare in ten years, let's begin by talking about the buildings around the Bailey Hotel.

Passenger Depot: The depot was built in 1891 when the Memphis and Charleston was already in receivership. The 272 miles of track which had been completed 1857 had been narrowed to conform to the American standard of 4 feet 8 1/2 inches. Passengers waited in the depot for the four passenger trains daily, until passenger service stopped in 1964. By then, Southern Railway owned the passenger line and the depot. The building was offered to the Smithsonian, who refused it, and it was about to be torn down when, in 1969, lawyer Joe Dawson bought the building and moved it to his farm on Old Larkinsville Road. The platform and station base remain to remind us where the building sat. Parks Hall shared these memories of the depot:

One chilly evening when I was about 12 years old, I walked up to the passenger depot and peered in. There was a wood burning stove in the small waiting room with a roaring fire and the room felt nice and warm. I went over and looked in the colored side. It was empty also. I went in and sat down first in the white side. There seemed to be no ticket agent. No one in the building quiet as a mouse on both sides. There were roaring fires in the stove in the middle of the room. After taking that in I went over and sat down in the colored side. It was the same! Both sides look the same and felt the

same. You know the questions that came into my head. I remembered that experience all my life. Scottsboro could have been a poster child for the Jim Crow South. Not alone of course, but I was always aware of how segregated the town was. The train station that night has been with me always.

107 North Market: According to a 1982 Naomi Seymour story in the *Sentinel*, Myrtle Bailey contracted with W. J. Word in 1930 to build the house across the street from the Bailey Hotel. "Two physicians who came to town to establish a medical practice were the first to occupy the home, Dr. and Mrs. Sam P. Hall and Dr and Mrs. John Martin. In the late 1950s [actually early 1960s] the hotel was closed and Miss Myrt moved into her home. The old hotel was torn down in the early 60s....Built during the Great Depression, the home was impressive with its modern plumbing and built-in kitchen facilities. It was also one of the first homes in the city to feature a central furnace." In 1955, the house was the location of the Gray Chiropractic Clinic. When the clinic closed, the house was renovated and painted pink. Martha Gay and Ruth Tannehill started their decorating business in this space. Later it took the name "Wimberly House" and moved into the Wimberly house on the corner of E Laurel and Scott. The business remained at this location at least through the end of 1984. Some time after 1984, the business was sold to Shirley Vines Dawson, who operated it at 304 S. Andrews Street and Scottsboro Plaza until her death in 2014. It closed shortly thereafter.

107 Market Street in 1980s from Parks Hall

Staley Hotel/Hurt House: The building that the 1917 Sanborn map calls the Staley Boarding House was located here. John Tally remembers the building as the Hurt House. It was between Word Lumber Co. and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Its history as a hotel goes back to just after the Civil War when this building was the Harris Hotel. In the 1880s-90s, James Staley had a harness and saddle-making business, first along the tracks and later behind the old Skelton Hardware building. The February 15, 1900 *Scottsboro Citizen* notes, "Mrs. James Staley has rented the Capt. J. R. Harris residence and will keep a select private boarding house." Capt. Harris moved to his Larkinsville home and died in 1916. James Staley died in 1922. The 1900, 1910, and 1920 census records find the Staley Hotel on Willow Street. Hal Hurt was a resident of the Staley Hotel in the 1920 census. He married and brought his new wife "home" to live in the Staley Hotel. After James Staley died, Mrs. Staley moved to the corner of Martin and Andrews Street and continued to run a boarding house. One of her boarders, dentist Elias Ingram, remained in the house after it ceased to be a boarding house, looking after Mrs. Staley, though she outlived him. He died in 1948, and she in 1951. The original Staley house on Willow Street was torn down when the new Word Lumber was built in the mid 1950s.

Cumberland Presbyterian Church: According to Kennamer's *History of Jackson County*, *Alabama* ,the Cumberland Presbyterian congregation first met in building on the corner of Caldwell and West Laurel, which was early on called "the old brick church" but by the end of its life was known as "Mr. Payne's opera house," under the leadership of the Reverend E. J. Stockton. The Willow Street church was built in 1883 and served the congregation until Easter Sunday, March 14, 1954 when the new building on Kyle Street was dedicated. The building was jointly owned by the United Presbyterian Church and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and both used the building. The Willow Street location was sold to W. J. Word Lumber, and it was torn down to create parking space. It was a favorite place for young Parks Hall:

...the beautiful little Presbyterian Church. How sad it wasn't preserved! It was never locked and several times during my childhood I went in the church and climbed the ladder up into the steeple bell tower. I was fascinated by the big bell with a rope dangling down and of course all the pigeon nest and I could look out the louvers of the steeple and look out over the town square. My goodness, kids today just don't know what they missed growing up!

Tally House: Built in the 1880s by John Benton Tally II (1851-1929), the old house was occupied by a number of different family members over its lifetime. After John and his wife Sidney Skelton Tally (1861-1935), the house passed to Robert Scott Skelton's widow Nannie Huff Skelton (1865-1945) who sold it

Daily Sentinel, February 10, 1966

to John Benton Tally IV (1914-1984) and his wife Blanche McCutchen (1917-2015). They lived there until moving to their house on Martin Street. After the family left, the house was rented out for a time and then stood empty and fell into disrepair. Cecil Word bought the lot and tore down the house several years after the Presbyterian Church was torn down. Word sold it to the city for parking and parts of it were later sold to Jack's Hamburgers in 1968.

Proctor House: I cannot learn much about the house on the corner where Tokyo Japan is today. It was probably built about the same time as the Tally house. The corner lot was apparently an empty house in 1910 and lived in by an Austell family who moved to Texas in 1920. Thomas Albert Proctor and his wife Lula Brown owned the house until her death in 1958. Thomas owned a dry goods business on the square for many years. The Proctors also owned a home in Florida and were out of town frequently.

Robinson-Campbell House: This striking house was built by W. J. Robinson. In the 1900, 1910, and 1920 censuses, Evelyn "Evie" (Brown) Robinson, the daughter of Milton Perry Brown, lived here. In the early 1930s, Evie Robinson had sold her house to Parker Campbell in the early 1930s. It had been a showplace that the *Progressive Age* featured in its 1900 business supplement. In 1960, the house sold to J. C. Jacobs Banking that stated in the Sentinel: "The present structure will be demolished and moved within the net month. A completely new and modern bank building will be constructed on the premises as soon as practical." This did not happen.

First Methodist Church: Like all the denominations holding regular services in early Scottsboro, the Methodists held service for 25 years in the "old brick church" building on the corner of Caldwell and West Laurel. The congregation began erecting a frame building on what is now the site of what is now the post office, the lovely building shown here. Elizabeth Parsons Scott, Robert's widow, donated the corner lot for the church and parsonage, and the building was dedicated in 1895. The lot was sold to the U. S. government during the WPA construction era and the new post office was built on that site in 1938. At the same time, the Methodist church built and dedicated a new building on the corner of Scott and East Laurel.

The Bailey Hotel

The Bailey Hotel opened for business October 1, 1905. There had been a rooming house just across the tracks when Mrs. Bailey opened her hotel. "Mrs. Nannie Bailey will be ready to open up her house as a hotel on October 1st, which is the time Mrs. Parks leaves. The Parks House closes the 23rd of September." (*SC*, Sep 21, 1905) The hotel's slogan was "The Home of the Traveling Man."

One of the best accounts of the Bailey Hotel comes from the July 20, 1967 second issue of the *Jackson County Advertiser*, which is lost. The earliest issues we have in bound volumes today are from 1969. Thankfully, Walt Hammer reproduced the article in his *Pictorial Walk Thru Ol' High Jackson* book:

Very few people in Scottsboro remember when President Teddy Roosevelt came to Scottsboro. This fact has long since been forgotten in the passing years that have followed. The biggest dignitary that the present generation can recollect is a senator, congressman, or a governor. T. R. was the 26th President of the U. S. and served from 1901-1909 in that capacity. It was during one of his terms that he paid his short but exciting visit. The President was on the 1:35 p.m. train from Chattanooga to Muscle Shoals when he made his stop here. A scheduled lunch stop at the Bailey Hotel was cancelled because the train had become late and didn't

People waiting on President Roosevelt to arrive. Depot Collection.

arrive until almost 3:00 p.m. That day "chicken and 10 or 15 other dishes" were ready for the President who didn't come to lunch. When the train did finally arrive, it stopped for only 15 minutes at the most.

The President's car was on the rear of the train, and when it come to a stop, he came outside to greet a large crowd that had formed to meet him. Perhaps America's most colorful and vivacious Chief-of-State then addressed the crowd in his big, booming voice and said, "I am delighted to be here." The crowd roared its approval though most of them were Democrats and he Republican.

Walter Bouldin, son of the late Judge Virgil Bouldin, then only 9 years old, presented Roosevelt with a bouquet of roses. Bouldin in now president of Alabama Power Co.

Even though the Bailey could not claim the honor of having a President for a guest, it has been host to a Presidential candidate and a world famous ballerina. William Jennings Bryan, who ran unsuccessfully for the Presidency three times, ate at the Bailey after delivering a speech on income tax in the county. He is reputed to have had a voracious appetite.

The Bailey had a history of over five decades. It started operations in 1905 and boasted 20 rooms, a dining room, and a kitchen. The Bailey Hotel fed train passengers for three and a half years. It was probably during this time that it received a state-wide reputation for its fine food. The hotel, which was a landmark for 52 years, finally succumbed to progress. The years took their toll, but not before the Bailey distinguished itself. If Teddy Roosevelt had eaten there, after finishing his meal, he probably would have cleared his throat, scratched his mustache and would have more than likely bellowed a loud, boisterous "bully"! (*JCA*, July 20, 1967)

The Bailey grew in credibility and popularity quickly after its 1905 founding. The hotel added new rooms in 1912 and soon became the place for salesmen to stay and offer their goods to local citizens. And the hotel was clean and well kept. In 1928, the state inspected 1,654 hotels and gave only 12 of them a perfect score. One of them was the Bailey.

Before Jackson County had its own optician, Dr. M. C. Carey, "the great eye specialist" from Atlanta, saw patients at the Bailey, soliciting visits from children "who become myopic from book strain" or citizens suffering a "dullness about the temples." (*PA*, Dec 11, 1912) Another optician provided glasses for citizens using the Bailey as his base in 1916. (*PA*, May 30, 1916) and Dr. Ralph H. Styring was still performing eye exams in 1932 (*JCS*, Jul 28, 1932) Many others conducted job interviews from the Bailey. The Mooreman Manufacturing Company needs a "reliable, energetic man who has an automobile and has had experience feeding livestock" in 1929. (*JCS*, Aug 28, 1929)

The Bailey was the demonstration site for several local innovations. Mr. W. C. Butcher, the demonstrator for Peaslee Gaulbert Paint, applied his product to the parlor and residence rooms at the Bailey. If you were impressed you could buy the paints from W. H. Payne. (*PA*, Oct 16, 1913) In December of that year, the London Plumbing & Electric Co. set up a business in the old Hugh Boyd Office location on the east side of the square and started "the work on installing waterworks at the Bailey Hotel at once." (*PA*, Dec 11, 1913). As late as 1955, Guy Hollis was holding a clinic at the Bailey for women who wanted to learn to use electric washers and dryers. (*JCS*, Mar 1, 1955)

The members of the Baraca Baptist Sunday School class seem to have been the first to take advantage of the Bailey's dependable kitchen. The group enjoyed fellowship and a four-course dinner before attending the performance at the White City Theater. (*SC*, Jun 18, 1914)

The *Huntsville Daily Times* wrote about the Bailey on July 15, 1915: "Bailey Hotel Very Popular; Dixie Highway Tourists Will Make It Their Headquarters When They Stop In Scottsboro—Mrs. Bailey Friend Of Huntsville:

For sixteen years Mrs. Nannie Bailey, proprietor of the Bailey Hotel here, has done her part to keep Scottsboro on the map and now that the Dixie Highway is to come through this progressive town she and her son, Len Bailey, are enthusiastic to do more if possible to please the publics, which is happily delighted with the Bailey hotel service. Mrs. Bailey, who is an aunt of Mrs. A. M. Booth, of Huntsville, is one of the most charming women and a business genius.

The popularity of the Bailey Hotel is attested by a well filled register nearly every day of the year. The rooms are large and airy, strict sanitation is enforced, the meals are well cooked and splendidly served and all together the Bailey Hotel is one of the most popular Stopping places enjoyed by the traveling public. It goes without saying that the Dixie Highway tourists will make the Bailey Hotel their stopping place when they reach Scottsboro.

In 1917, the Bailey was one of the first places in town to have one of Lem Moody's Independent Phone Company phones: 56 was the hotel and 18 was the hotel office. And there is reason to believe that the hotel had a switchboard and phones in its guest rooms. Thanks to Parks Hall, who lifted a page from the 1917 hotel register, we have a snapshot of who was staying at the Bailey in May-June 1917.

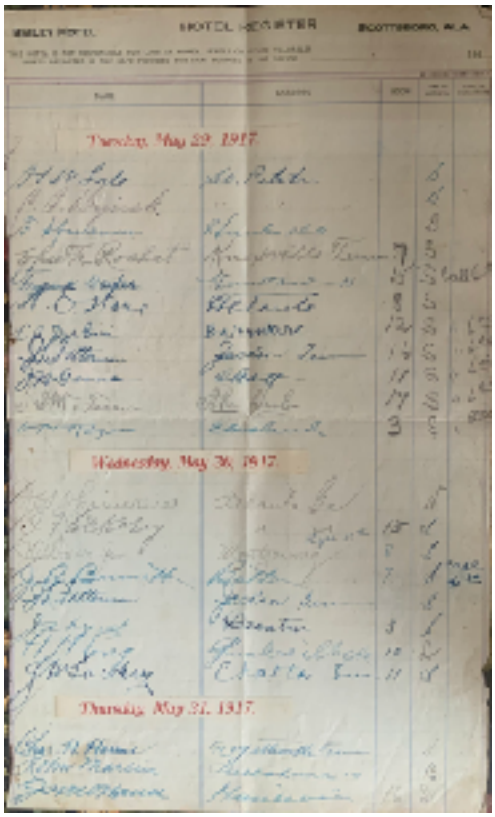
On Tuesday, May 29, nine of the Bailey's rooms were occupied by "local" people from Huntsville, Chattanooga, and South Pittsburg but also by visitors from Atlanta, Knoxville, Baltimore, and Cleveland. Wake-up times are also included in the register. Since the notation says "call" perhaps there were telephones in the rooms and a switchboard at the hotel office. One May 30, some of the previous guests remain, and new ones have joined from Decatur and Montgomery, totaling eight.There are ten guests on May 31, and eleven on June 1, which is a Friday. with new folks from Biloxi, Birmingham, Detroit, St. Louis, and Loudon, KY and some near-locals. This example shows how many people passed through the hotel during a typical week, and says that the turnover in 1917 was high.

The Bailey was the location of many meetings and parties and bridal luncheons and celebrations. In 1922, Rev. J. R. Martin married John F. Bullard and Susie Stiles in front of the Bailey. (*PA*, Dec 21, 1922) The Young Business Men's Class of the Methodist Sunday School met there for a banquet in April. (*PA*, Apr 13, 1922) Out of town visitors used the Bailey as a "home away from home." When Birmingham Chamber Secretary Oscar Bunn visited his boyhood home, he entertained his relatives and family with an informal luncheon at the Bailey (*PA* June 7, 1923)

Running water. Telephone service. The Bailey offered a lot of advantages. In 1923, the hotel added radio. "Lynn Bailey has installed a big radio outfit at the Bailey Hotel and is enjoying the program sent out from all parts of the United States." (*PA*, Feb 1, 1923)

In June 1925, the first of several fashion shows was held at the Bailey. Miss Virginia Deakins of the Style Shop in South Pittsburgh brought her "complete line of afternoon, street, and sport dresses, scarves, knicker-bockers, bathing suits, and caps" for the ladies in town to see. (*PA*, June 4, 1925)

In 1925, Mrs. Evie Robinson was still living in the house and she and her husband built, the house next door to the Bailey that would later be occupied by Parker Campbell. When the house caught fire on September 3, there was no water pressure in the line. "Mr. Filmore Martin, at the first alarm, rushed to the station and started the big pump and within a few minutes sufficient pressure was raised to bring the fire hose into play....After the fire someone remarked that when the fire saw sulphur



Pages from the 1917 Bailey House Guest Register, from Parks Hall.

water coming it just laid down and died of its own accord." The city sulphur well was located at the NW corner of the courthouse and used to extinguish the fire a block away. (*PA*, Sep 3,1925)

In 1926, the Bailey became the home of the Civitan Club, who met there every Friday and brought a host of famous speakers to the hotel—Alabama Power President (and former Scottsboro lawyer) Thomas W. Martin, former governor Bibb Graves, Justice Hugo Black, three-time presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan. Alabama Supreme Court Justice Virgil Bouldin always stayed at the Bailey for family visits and indeed, resided there permanently after he retired in May 1944 (May4, 1944). The PTA, the Red Cross, the tri-county Medical Society, the JCHS Honor Society, the Ladies Junior Book Club, the DAR—all held meetings at the Bailey Hotel.

In 1928, Mrs. Bailey installed steam heat in her hotel, meaning, I think, that radiators powered by a coal furnace in the basement were installed in every room. Parks Hall recalls how the complex, modern system worked when he saw it in the 1940s.

The hotel was heated with steam heat radiators which I believe were original. There was a very large basement underneath the hotel that held the big furnace and boilers to provide the hot water for the heating system and the hotel itself. I was never allowed to go into the basement only to look in through the entrance door. There was a sort of living space in there with a single bed and table and chair. The floor was dirt. I never saw anyone but the same old black fellow that was in charge of and took care of the furnace and its associated equipment. There was a huge coal bin in there. The furnace was loaded with coal manually until the late '40s. At that time, the hotel and my house were equipped with a coal stoker. An electrical motor driven device that automatically loaded the furnace with coal using a worm drive that took coal from the stoker box to the furnace. One could set the temperature that was desired with a thermostat inside the building and the stoker would automatically load cold into the furnace to maintain that temperature. Very advanced for its day.

As time went on, the Bailey grew less fashionable. In 1955 Guy Hollis held a washer-dryer clinic at the hotel to help the PTA, with 25 cents admission and a $329.95 Imperial washer given away as a door prize. (*DS*, Mar 1, 1955) The Daughters of American Colonists held their state conference at the hotel in 1956. (*DS*, Nov 20, 1956) Near the end of its long life, the hotel was reduced to housing jurors during long circuit court cases and being reimbursed at county-defined rates.


Myrtle Bailey in 1966.

By 1957, Myrtle Bailey was 67 years old and had been involved in running the Bailey her whole life. It was time to retire. Mr. and Mrs Faucher Adams leased the hotel from Myrtle and her brother Harry for ten years in April 1957. The Adamses came with good hotel-running credentials. "I am coming to Scottsboro as a permanent resident," Mr. Adams explained. "and want to do my part to make this even a better place to live." The Adamses redecorated and refurnished the old hotel and served two meals a day to guests. He introduced a Smorgasbord dinner on Sundays and invited local residents to offer suggestions.(*DS*, April 30, 1957) But their efforts could not keep the old hotel going. It closed without fanfare in the early 1960s. The only closing word for the county's oldest business was a 1966 story accompanying a picture of Mayor John T. Reid with a headline that proclaimed "Approximately 200 Parks Spaces Are Added Here." The article noted that some of these parking spaces were on the "site of old Bailey Hotel on North Market." The miracle of urban planning made "parking on the square easier for customer and visitor." Nothing that had been loved by so many ever got such a lousy sendoff.

But the hotel held pleasant memories for many, most of whom are gone now. When Parks Hall lived at 107 North Market, he knew everyone at the hotel: the guests, the residents, the cooks, the men who tended the furnace, the family, and the hotel maids:

One of my fond memories was following around the middle-aged Black woman who cleaned rooms during the day. We would go into the rooms and as she cleaned I would pretend to help her and she would scare me to death with ghost

stories or stories about the ghost of men who had stayed in the room. Spirits were lurking under the bed or in the closet. I always knew it was all in good fun but nevertheless I could let myself get into it and be scared and play the game and she so enjoyed doing it. I wish I could remember her name.

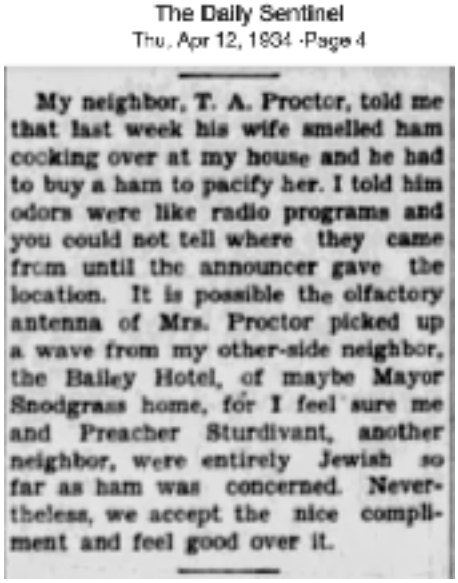
Nothing is known about the black woman or women who cooked for the Bailey or the various women who cleaned. There were a number of black porters. The *Sentinel* ran a story in 1936 about the death of Eddie Hendrix, who died young. In a rare obituary for a person of color, the *Sentinel* said, "He was a World War veteran and worked as a porter and waiter at the Bailey Hotel here for many years until his health broke down." (*JCC*, Jun 25, 1936) In the 1920 federal census, a young black girl 13 years old named Rosa Walker is working as a maid in the hotel. World War II registration cards show the names of two black men, Earl and Walter Henry, who probably tended the furnace.

By the time Parks was living on Market Street, most White families had moved out of downtown and most of the homes north of the tracks belonged to Black families. Parks recalls a Black child named Henry, one of this earliest playmates:

Given that the houses and the people in the neighborhood were all old, there were no children of my age or at all. The only friend I had in my early childhood was a little Black boy named Henry who lived just on the other side of the tracks. We stayed friends for several years and played together in both his yard and my yard. I shared several meals with him both in our house and his. This was during the war and you could get no sand for sand boxes and you know all kids were supposed to have sand boxes to play in. My dad secured some sawdust from Word Lumber Company and they built a little wooden box that we put the sawdust in and Henry and I played in it.

Parks also knew many of the guests, especially those who resided in the hotel for a period of time. The *Chronicles* included an article about H. H. Betts, the Chicago painter brought here by Dayton Benham to paint the Lee and Washington larger-than-life portraits for Page Auditorium, and who stayed on painting portraits of many Scottsboro citizens. I wrote about his going to the west in the early 1900s looking for subjects for railroad posters and offending the Indian tribe he was painting. They destroyed his brushes and canvasses and held him prisoner for several days. Or the time he floated all the way down the Mississippi. Or the watercolor paintings he made for Tom Sisk, often getting paid with fried chicken legs that he wrapped in napkins and put in his breast pocket, so that greasy spots appeared on his shirt about midmorning every day. It turns out that the most vivid local story about H. H. Betts comes from Parks Hall:

Many of the guests were traveling salesman or other businessmen who would return from time to time. My very favorite was Mr. Betts, a traveling artist who would move from town to town seeking and getting commissions to do oil portraits of luminaries and family members in the town. I'm sure he did many in Scottsboro. One summer he came and did an oil portrait of Grady Jacobs, J.C. Jacobs' father and president of Jacobs Bank at that time. He stayed in the hotel for almost a month. I enjoyed going and sitting behind him in his room and watching him paint—silently very silently. I love the smell of the turpentine. He didn't seem to mind and sometimes we would talk a little bit about his travels. When he came to the Bailey he always had the same room. It was the nicest one in the hotel right off the big living room and it got north light.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My neighbor, T. A. Proctor, told me that last week his wife smelled ham cooking over at my house and he had to buy a ham to pacify her. I told him odors were like radio programs and you could not tell where they came from until the announcer gave the location. It is possible the olfactory antenna of Mrs. Proctor picked up a wave from my other-side neighbor, the Bailey Hotel, of maybe Mayor Snodgrass home, for I feel sure me and Preacher Sturdivant, another neighbor, were entirely Jewish so far as ham was concerned. Nevertheless, we accept the nice compliment and feel good over it.

From Parks, you get an idea of the furious activity that goes on in the background to make the experience of being a guest at the Bailey Hotel go so smoothly. For example, the hotel kept chickens and a kitchen garden. Parks wrote:

Behind and well hidden from the hotel in the street was a very large chicken pen and hen house. It was kept sparkling clean by the woman who cooked for the hotel for many years. In reflection, she looked just like the Aunt Jemima picture on baking products of the era. I loved to follow her down to the chicken yard and gather eggs. It

was an every morning ritual. They were lots of happy hens in the hen houses and some very proud roosters, which woke up the entire neighborhood early every morning.

Parks and Parker Campbell both remembered the smells that filled the neighborhood originating from the Bailey kitchen. Parks reminds us that folding money was scarce during the Depression, and his father was often paid in kind, with vegetables and country ham:

The little gravel driveway led to the hotel carriage house which is now used to house an old car. It had three horse stalls in it and my dad used one of them to hang all of his country hams that people gave him in payment for services because they had no money. He called it a smokehouse! Good thing we all loved country ham as I still do because we ate country ham at least once if not twice a week.

I watched every spring and summer Uncle Len Bailey tending his beautiful garden just across the driveway from my house.Uncle Len's garden which of course during the war was called a victory garden grew many different vegetables. During the growing season, they all ended up on the table at the Bailey Hotel. It was one of his contributions to the business. He did not actively participate in running the hotel.

Parks also remembers Nannie Bailey, though she was less actively involved in the day-to-day running of the hotel by that time he knew her:

During my childhood Aunt Myrt had pretty much taken over the hotel operation. Nanny Bailey was getting rather old and frail. While she still loved greeting and chatting with guests, she spent most of her time sitting in a rocking chair in the corner of the dining room. When I was a very young lad I would sit with her and she would tell me stories of her childhood and youth, growing up in the aftermath of the Civil War and during Reconstruction.

We appreciate Parks Hall for sharing his insights and his memories of growing up across from the Bailey Hotel, and for allowing us to glimpse a version of Scottsboro that is long gone. This is my favorite of Parks's memories:

Even as a child, I had a sense of the specialness of that neighborhood as being perhaps the only neighborhood left with one foot in the 19th and the other in the early 20th century. Besides the historic Bailey Hotel, there was the beautiful little passenger depot. I could look out the window of my bedroom in my house and look directly at the station. It took only 2 or 3 minutes to walk there from my house. Once I was old enough that I was allowed to roam the neighborhood by myself, I often went up to the station, especially when I knew a train such as the Joe Wheeler was scheduled to come through. I would usually sit on top of one of the baggage wagons and wait for the train, enjoying the activity and then watching it as it went out of sight. I loved the old steam locomotives and especially the ones coming through pulling the Tennesseean at night. Many times I would stay awake on warm summer nights with the windows open and wait for the Tennesseean to slow down and come through town, since we were only a flag stop. I would watch the coaches with lights in them go by and wonder where all those people were going. On many occasions, depending on the wind after the train had faded into the night, I could smell the smoke and hear the cinders falling on the roof of my house.

Parks Hall age 12 riding his bicycle in front of Maples Company. From Sam Hall.

Not many people living today can recall the sound of cinders from a steam engine landing on a tin roof. Few living folks have such precious memories, and even fewer of them share them.

Annette Bradford and Parks Hall

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The Jackson County Chronicles

Volume 36, Number 4

In this issue:

October Meeting: The October meeting of the Jackson County Historical Association will be held at the Scottsboro Depot Museum on the corner of Maple and North Houston on **Sunday, October 27 at 2 p.m.** Our speaker will be **Greg Bell,** who will talk about recording and compiling weather statistics and the Sports Hall of Fame.

There are so many reasons why JCHA people know and love Greg. He has portrayed Jackson County sports figures John O'Linger and Shorty Robertson in our cemetery strolls. He compiled the history of Scottsboro municipal office holders on our website. He maintains the Cooperative Weather Observer Program, which is staffed by citizen volunteers and has been active since 1890. He and David Bradford have written some wonderful weather stories for the *Chronicles*, including the killer tornado article in this issue. His real job, of course, is WWIC-AM radio, where he has been a broadcaster since 1986 and owner and operator since 2001. He is the voice of Partyline weekday mornings, and the broadcaster behind all area high school ball games—football, basketball, and baseball. He has converted a library of historical county sports broadcasts. He is the organizer of the Sports Hall of Fame which has, since 2014, recognized ten outstanding county athletes with a dinner and career review presentations each January. He was recognized by his broadcasting peers of the Alabama Broadcasters Association as Broadcaster of the Year in 2023.

Myron Gardner/Danny Dolberry 1930s-1940s Photos: When a team of Mennonite men and and boys recently began tearing down the old Myron Gardner Gulf Distribution facilities on Old Larkinsville Road, Danny Dolberry saw the activity in his rear view mirror, slammed on his brakes, and saved a box of county photos as the building literally came down around him. This collection of almost 80 photos from the 1930s and 1940s is an incredible addition to county history. Annette Bradford scanned them and, with Danny's permission, made them available on the JCHA Facebook page. If you are not one of the 12,000+ people who subscribe to this page, you are not getting your money's worth out of your JCHA subscription.

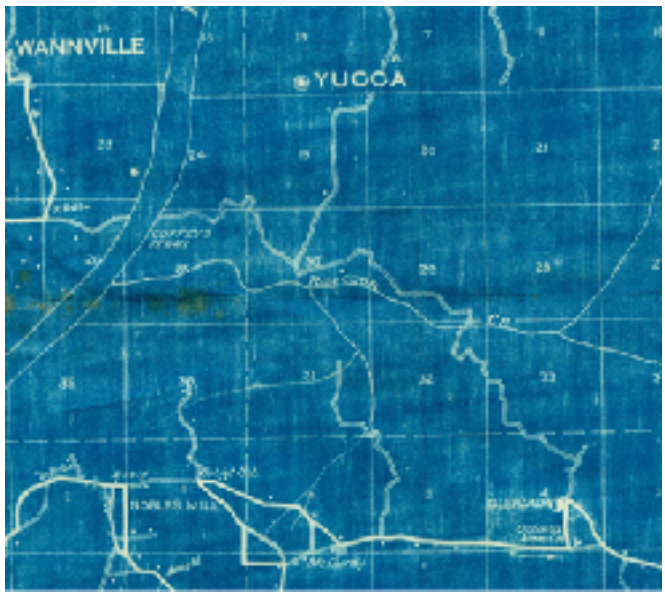
Myron Gardner and Bill Blount in Stevenson.

Summer Retreats on Sand Mountain: Glenzaida, Fern Cliff, and Porter's Bluff

Over the last couple of years, the *Chronicles* has been exploring the places where Jackson County residents in the past went to escape the heat and malaria of the river valley during the "heated season." In July 2020, the *Chronicles* included a discussion of the 1900s wellness movement that gave rise to Monte Sano and other North Alabama spas. During this period, in 1897, Scottsboro discovered its health-giving white sulphur water well on the northeast corner of the courthouse square. The October 2022 *Chronicles* included an article on Dr. Barton Smith's sanitarium on July Mountain where those who could afford it spent their summers. At least three more places in Jackson County deserve mention in this spa discussion: Glenzaida, Fern Cliff, and Porter's Bluff, all of which were on Sand Mountain.

Glenzaida

Glenzaida, according to Ralph Mackey, was located on County Road 60, between Rosalie and Pisgah on Sand Mountain. The town had a resident population of 20; its only business was C. W. Brown's general store. Ann Chambless listed all the water mills in Jackson County in 1886 and noted that Charles W. Brown operated a lumber and timber mill at Glenzaida. (*Bulletin, Geological Survey of Alabama,* by Truman H. Aldrich, in the 2015 *Chronicles*). The October 1896 *Citizen* mentioned that C. W. Brown had "a fine flouring mill" called Glenzaida Mill, which might have been in Wannville, though in 1899, the paper describes Senator Brown as being "down from Glenzaida" and Hon. Jesse Stallings spent time with Brown "seeing Sand Mountain." (*PA*, Sep 7, 1899) In the early 1900s, it was one of the communities with a stringer who reported news in a "Glenzaida" column to the *Progressive Age*. The mountain house was added to the rural mail routes in 1905. The *Ft. Payne Journal* carried accounts of baseball games between Glenzaida and Pisgah, so there were enough men in town to field a baseball team. This 1919 map shows the location of Glenzaida in the lower righthand corner



A 1919 county map showing the locations of Glenzaida, from Ann Chambless.

The best description of the town comes from a May 1897 article in the *Progressive Age:*

All over the farm may be found the latest improved machinery, and a general atmosphere of activity and prosperity prevails. The scenery is all that could be desired. On the summit of one of the tree-crowned and verdant river hills, stands the residence commanding at every window and from every door a splendid view of the sun-kissed waves of the Tennessee rolling between green banks through a broad domain of rich farm lands. (PA, May 13, 1897)

The 1919 map also shows the location of Octavia Memorial Church, a house of worship that Charles Brown built for the town residents and named for Octavia,


Octavia Brown, from *The History of Rosalie* by Wanda Moore Wilson.

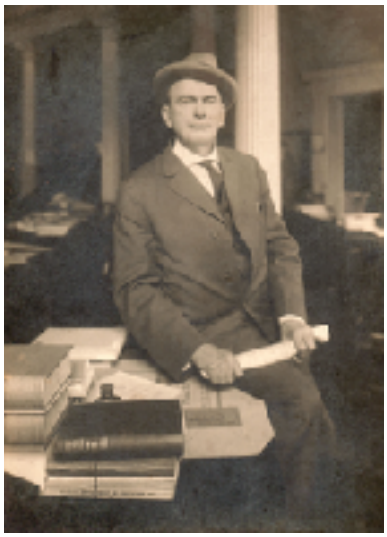
the young daughter he lost. This church still exists today, Nat Cisco contends, and it is called Grace Baptist Church on Highway 59 in Pisgah.

The newspapers around 1900 are filled with the names of people coming to visit and stay at Glenzaida. Mary Brown, the senator's mother, spent the summer there in 1900. (*PA*, Jul 19, 1900) and Mrs. Betty Payne and Miss Ellen Payne "have secured a cottage on the mountain at Glenzaida and expect to spend the summer there." (*PA*, Jul 19, 1900) When she was established, Mrs. Payne advertised for boarders "on Sand Mountain." (*PA*, Aug 9, 1900) and did not return until October (*PA*, Oct 18, 1900) Maggie Payne (Mrs. W. H. Payne) spent two weeks with her brother, Senator Brown, at Glenzaida. (*PA*, Aug 23, 1900) Matt Wann (the Jackson County sheriff associated with the Scottsboro Boys) and his wife moved to Glenzaida in November 1900 (*PA*, Nov 22, 1900) Charley Beard opened a store there in 1901 (PA, Apr 18, 1901) and Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Jacobs spent time there. (PA, Jun 13, 1901) Glenzaida had its own new column in the paper by 1901.

There were 10 mentions of trips to Glenzaida in the Ft. Payne paper between 1901 and 1906, often in the Pisgah column. There were 260 mentions of Glenzaida in the Jackson County papers between 1896 and 1930. As early as 1901, the column stated that "Prof B. R. Hickman and family and Miss Bell, of Chattanooga, are visiting C W Brown" and many other such notations followed over the next ten years. In 1909, Allie Roden accepted the position as governess to the Browns' youngest daughter, Forrestine. (*PA*, Nov 4, 1909)

Lewis T. Wicks and his oxen in front of Glenzaida in 1918, from the Wicks family. Reprinted in *The Daily Sentinel*, Nov 12, 1995.

In the 1920s, the Charles Keith Bradford and Matilda Luter Jennings family "built a home at Bellefonte near the river... During the summer months, the family retreated to their cottage at Glen Zaida, a summer resort atop Sand Mountain. Ruth [Bradford] Clopton, late of Scottsboro, was a daughter of Charles Keith Bradford and had many fond memories of the summer her family spent at Glen Zaida." (Christine Sumner, *Old Bellefonte*, p. 115)



Senator C. W. Brown, from the Rudder family.

The story of Glenzaida is the story of Senator Charles William Brown (1854-1940). He married Sallie Coffey (1857-1937), the daughter of Mary Ann Cross and John Reid Coffey, and they were the parents of five daughters: Mary Ann (11887-1952), Eula Maude (1889-1965), Anna Bell (1893-1953), Octavia Eliza (1897-1900), and Forrestine Ruth (1902-1977). Senator Brown was one of the four amazing Brown siblings who were mostly ensconced on Episcopal Hill, the area around the present Scottsboro Jackson Heritage Center. Senator Brown built the house that became the Heritage Center. His sister Margaret Brown Payne lived across Peachtree Street with her husband W. H. Payne, who built Payne's Drugstore. Behind these two impressive houses was the home later known as the Morgan house that sits where the chiropractic office is today on South Street. It was built by John Whitfield (who also built the Maples house) and occupied for much of its existence by Col. John Snodgrass and his wife, the third Brown sibling Mary Jane. The fourth sibling, Jesse Edward Brown, built instead just off the square on what is today the vacant lot at the corner of E. Laurel and Andrews. His home was later part of the Jessica Hotel.Their father, Jeremiah Brown, came to Jackson County to serve as principal of the new Scott Academy, married Mary Williams, his third wife, and begat

these four children who had such an impact on Jackson County history. His house still stands on the corner of Elm and Dr. Martin Luther King streets, and is painted dark blue.


Senator Brown and his sister Maggie Payne about 1930, from the Ruddder family.

Nat Cisco's research on Senator Brown found that "after attending the State University (now University of Alabama), Charles had set up law offices and become the Register in Chancery for the County, before becoming the head clerk of the State Board of Education in Montgomery in 1887. He co-owned the *Scottsboro Citizen* for a short time with James Armstrong. Around 1888, he built the Brown-Proctor House, now the Heritage Center....Later in 1888, C.W. Brown listed his mansion for rent while he was in Montgomery. In 1889 he resigned his post in Montgomery and was shortly after appointed school superintendent for Jackson County. He ran unsuccessfully for state superintendent in 1890. He lived part of his time in Stevenson and settled into farming and mercantile business in Wannville over the next decade, with a residence known as "River Hills" in a beautiful area along the river near his father-in-law John Reid Coffey."

Brown spent much of his time across the river in Glenzadia, a town that he founded where he built his mountain house. We know from public records that he had a lumber and timber mill there in 1886. Nat found in his research that Brown moved his family to Glenzaida full time in 1900. Brown served a term in the state senate 1911-1914 and one in the lower house 1915-1919. In 1914, he announced his candidacy for governor but later withdrew from the race. (Dennis Lambert, *Bridgeport Then and Now*) The *Stevenson Chronicle* noted that Brown had stopped by the paper office to visit in 1914 and said, "whether Mr. Brown is elected or not, he is going to get more real pleasure out of the campaign than all the rest of the candidates put together." (*StC*, Jan 1, 1914) By the 1920 census, Brown had moved his family to Bridgeport, where he lived out the rest of his life in one of the Queen Anne houses on Douglas Avenue. Senator Brown also was renowned as a poet and often wrote poems to include with obituaries.

Glenzadia can still be found on some old maps. It is on the 1936 USGS map, for example. But no trace of this turn-of-the-century community can be found today.

Fern Cliff


Fern Cliff on a 1907 map.

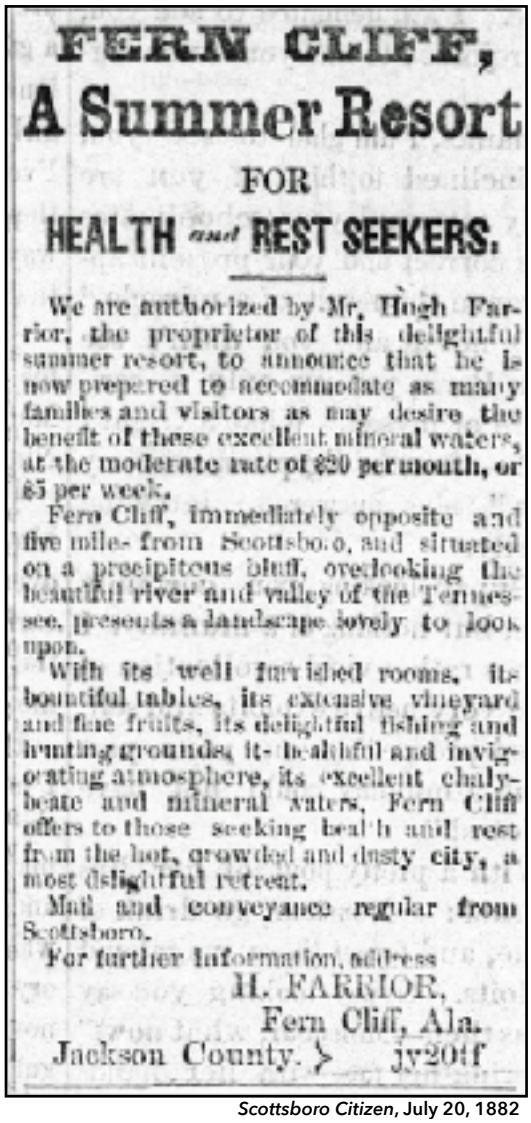
The town of Fern Cliff is located, according to Ralph Mackey, on County Road 124, WSW of Hodge on Sand Mountain. The original road up the mountain from the Garland Ferry took you to the top of the mountain and then turned left and went past Fern Cliff, according to the McGriff family. This route is shown on the 1907 map on the right. The area was settled in 1852 by Richard and Annie Wood, formerly of Woodville. Fern Cliff was a recognized resort when J. R. Kennamer wrote his *History of Jackson County, Alabama* in 1935. In his description, he notes that the building, which functioned as a hotel and sanitarium for summer visitors, was built in 1852 by the Wood family, but opened as a sanitarium in 1872. He provided a great thumbnail history, in a style more purple than usual, that takes us up to the place where newspapers can fill in the details:

Fern Cliff, situated on the brow of Sand Mountain like an eagle on its aerie, looks out over the broad and rich Tennessee Valley spread out at its feet. The river winds like a silver thread through the center of this valley. Beyond appear the rich hills with Scottsboro nestling in their midst, and in the distance the Cumberland Mountains may be seen clothed in a purple haze, presenting a scene of quiet and peaceful beauty that would be hard to surpass.

Fern Cliff in 1907 with the W. J. Jackson family, from the Heritage Center.

The place was originally settled about 1852, by former residents of Woodville, persons from whom the town took its name, Richard Wood and his beloved wife Annie. This aged couple spent twenty years here at this beautiful resort, with the healthful water and cool invigorating air, Mr. Wood sold his mountain home and Chalybeate spring in September 1872, to Capt. Henry J. Cheney of Nashville, Tenn. Capt. Cheney owned that unexcelled tract of land on the south side of the Tennessee River, known as the "Straton Farm." Captain Cheney improved the Cliff residence, which became a very popular resort. He and Mr. Johnson built a road up the mountain in 1876. As deer and turkeys were plentiful in those days, Capt. Cheney, with others, would hunt for a week or ten days each fall and would return laden with venison and turkey.

Captain Cheney sold the valley farm to Jerre Williams and Anderson Hess. He sold the Fern Cliff property to Hugh Farrior. Mr. Farrior came from South Georgia. He made the Cliff famous far and wide, by the splendid hospitality of his family. Foster V. Brown, one of the smartest lawyers in Tennessee, married Miss Lula Farrior. Mr. Farrior sold the place to John Harris of Scottsboro. Mr. Harris sold it to a syndicate of Northern capitalists. Mr. T. N. Haynes improved the house and premises. It is now [1935] owned by J. A. Williams, Marvin Campbell and others.



FERN CLIFF,
A Summer Resort
FOR
HEALTH and REST SEEKERS.

We are authorized by Mr. Hugh Farrior, the proprietor of this delightful summer resort, to announce that he is now prepared to accommodate as many families and visitors as may desire the benefit of these excellent mineral waters, at the moderate rate of $20 per month, or $5 per week.

Fern Cliff, immediately opposite and five miles from Scottsboro, and situated on a precipitous bluff, overlooking the beautiful river and valley of the Tennessee, presents a landscape lovely to look upon.

With its well furnished rooms, its bountiful tables, its extensive vineyard and fine fruits, its delightful fishing and hunting grounds, its healthful and invigorating atmosphere, its excellent chalybeate and mineral waters, Fern Cliff offers to those seeking health and rest from the hot, crowded and dusty city, a most delightful retreat.

Mail and conveyance regular from Scottsboro.

For further information, address
H. FARRIOR,
Fern Cliff, Ala.
Jackson County. } jy20tf

Scottsboro Citizen, July 20, 1882

Captain Henry J. Cheney is credited with giving the area the name "Fern Cliff." The August 29, 1878 *Alabama Herald* recognized Captain Cheney for growing grapes on the brow of Sand Mountain. The *Alabama Herald* carried this short story titled "Captain Cheney's Vineyard:

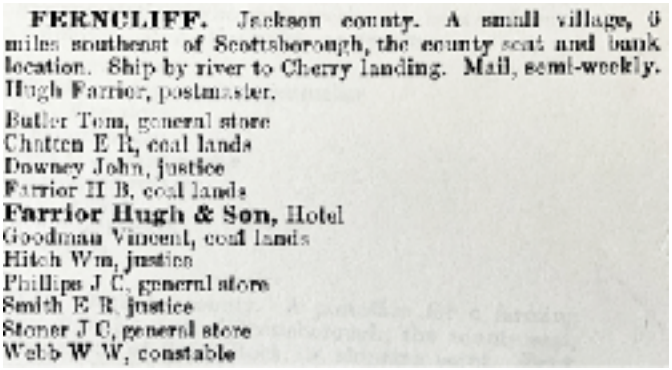
Captain (Henry J.) Cheney has a six acre vineyard of the finest grades at Ferncliff on Sand Mountain, and his native vines are said to be as delicious as any of foreign make. We are proud to claim Captain Cheney, one of Nature's noblemen, as a countryman. Would that Jackson [County] had a thousand such energetic men.

Walt Hammer added to the Kennamer information in his *Pictorial Walk Around Old High Jackson* book, stating that "Fern Cliff, once a well known resort and eating establishment on Sand Mountain,

overlooks the river. The site is now owned by Marvin Campbell and is located next to the Agee Strickland home....Captain Cheney," Hammer added, "improved the Cliff residence which became a very popular resort. Captain Cheney sold the valley farm to Jerre Williams and Anderson Hess. He sold the Fern Cliff property to Hugh Farrior who came from South Georgia. He made the Cliff famous far and wide by the splendid hospitality of his family."

As early as 1882, ads for Fern Cliff as a summer resort appear in local newspapers. The ads touted the well furnished rooms, bountiful tables, extensive vineyard and fine fruits, delightful fishing and hunting grounds, and healthful, invigorating atmosphere with its "excellent chalybeate and mineral waters" and states that inquiries can be directed to H. Farrior. The *Jackson County Herald* in 1883 recognized two sites under the headline "Health Resorts:" Porter's Bluff and Ferncliff, remote from each other, but both on the brow on the Sand mountain, with indescribably grand scenery belong to Jackson county." Roads to Fern Cliff were improved. "A new road has been surveyed and is being opened from Fern Cliff to Rising Fawn, which will be a mail route." Announcements appeared most springs accepting reservations for the summer. "That Fern Cliff is a very popular resort," the *Citizen* said on July 4, 1889,. "They have twenty-five boarders now."

The *1887-1888 Alabama Gazetteer* listed Ferncliff as a town and listed the town's businesses. That listing is shown here.



FERNCLIFF. Jackson county. A small village, 6 miles southeast of Scottsborough, the county seat and bank location. Ship by river to Cherry landing. Mail, semi-weekly. Hugh Farrior, postmaster.

Butler Tom, general store
Chitten E R, coal lands
Downey John, justice
Farrior H B, coal lands
Farrior Hugh & Son, Hotel
Goodman Vincent, coal lands
Hitch Wm, justice
Phillips J C, general store
Smith E R, justice
Stoner J C, general store
Webb W W, constable

The early Jackson County newspapers are filled with references to Fern Cliff. The *Scottsboro Citizen* speaks of Fern Cliff not as a single resort building but as a location. In March 1881, the paper noted that "Handsome Mr. Sam Price and his charming sister, Miss Pearl, accompanied by their mother, have moved to Fern Cliff where they will reside on their farm." And in November 1881, the ever-vigilant *Citizen* noted that "Miss Emma Farrior, of Fern Cliff, left on Monday last for the Atlanta Exposition." In February, 1882, "Miss Mollie Brown, of Jasper, Tenn., is visiting here. Also Misses Katie, Mollie and Georgia Skelton, pretty young ladies of Fern Cliff, are visiting friends here." The comings and goings of the Farrior children are tracked through the social columns in the 1880s. and the presence of visitors was reported in the local papers. "Mrs. Alexander, of Jasper, is visiting Fern Cliff" one paper noted in 1886.

During the 1880s, short items begin appearing naming visitors to Fern Cliff. The *Citizen* stated on July 18, 1889, "Fern Cliff is to Scottsboro what Monte Sano is to Huntsville." Visitors published their summer addresses at Fern Cliff in local newspapers. Between 1880 and 1900, local papers referenced Fern Cliff some 200 times, mostly accounts of who was staying at the resort at the time.

In 1889, 72-year-old Hugh Farrior died. His obituary in the *Citizen* on July 18 called him "an intelligent, courteous gentleman" and noted that he had moved to the mountain for his health. He and several of his family members are buried in Section. His sons, H. B. and Fred, continued to operate Fern Cliff. In 1889, the *Progressive Age* noted that a group of fashionable young ladies, "matronized by Mrs. Johnson...went out last Saturday to spend several days 'roughing it' at Ferncliff." In 1902, the hotel was sold to a Mr. Ritter. The writer for the *Progressive Age* said on May 29, "Fern Cliff, I understand, is to be overhauled and made ready for the family of Mr. Ritter, a member of the Alabama Coal and Mineral Co (*PA*, May 29, 1902)

But the privatization of Fern Cliff was short lived. On May 26, 1910, the *Progressive Age* announced "Fern Cliff to Open June 15" and noted that "the delightful summer resort near Scottsboro" would receive guests after June 15th and that T. N. Haynes should be contacted for further information.

Fern Cliff To
Open June 15

The management authorizes the Progressive Age to announce that Fern Cliff, the delightful summer resort near Scottsboro, will be prepared to receive guests June 15th. For further information, address T. N. Haynes, Fern Cliff, Ala.

A member of the Woods family (who referred to the original settlers as "Uncle Dickey and Aunt Annie") recounted the history of Fern Cliff in a long article in the *Progressive Age* on May 19, 1910. The writer remembered the time that Chaney had owned the home."Captain Chaney, who now lives in Nashville, and who at the time owned the entire valley on this side of the river from Jones creek to Section." Just after the Civil War, the writer recalled, "every fall, Col. Ad White, of Huntsville, who owned a large plantation near Bellefonte, would come to Fern Cliff, and he and Capt. Cheney would organize a camp hunt which lasted a week to ten days and was an annual event on this part of the mountain." Addison White was the son of James White of Huntsville who supplied Southerners with salt needed to cure meats. He is usually a character on the Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll, portrayed by his great-great-grandson Gilbert White. The 1910 writer referred to Hugh Farrior as "a typical gentleman of the old school, and during his ownership Fern Cliff was noted far and wide for its hospitality." (*PA*, May 19, 1910) The Farrior descendants sold Fern Cliff to John Harris (owner of the Harris Hotel in Scottsboro) who for a time employed the Farrior sons to run the Scottsboro Harris Hotel.

In perhaps a foreshadowing of the area's future horticultural value, a group of botanists and geologists visited Ferncliff in May 1895 "for the purpose of obtaining geological and biological specimens." (*SC*, May 2, 1895) People who had suffered some long or debilitating illness recovered at Fern Cliff. "Fern Cliff on the brow of Old Sandy, six miles away, is known of old and its waters still paint the old sand stones and give health and appetites to the invalid." (*PA*, June 23, 1898)

In 1901, John Harris sold Fern Cliff to a syndicate of Northern capitalists.The syndicate had installed the T. N. Haines family at Fern Cliff. Prior to its reopening, "the house has been recovered, plastered and painted; the grounds neatly and tastily cleaned off, and with its flowers and evergreen looks as fresh and inviting as in its palmiest days." The writer mentioned the annual Bible conference held there and the good schools and churches in the area. "Good roads lead from Fern Cliff in every direction and two gasoline ferries with pike roads to Scottsboro are convenient ways to come and go." A steady stream of visitors spent summers at Fern Cliff for the next twenty years.

In 1901, J. R. Harris sold Fern Cliff and about 2000 acres of "mineral and timber land" to Morris, Ritter, Seidel and Miller of Reading, PA. These men represented the Alabama Coal, Mineral, and Lumber Company. They planned to open "lithograph quarries" (internet has no idea what this is but seems to be a type of coal mining) in the area around Fern Cliff. Toni McGriff, who grew up in the area, recalls, "There was coal mining of a very limited nature, but it was in-ground and only a few years ago, remnants of those openings were still visible." The *Progressive Age* wrote on November 28, 1901, 'The large and spacious house at Fern Cliff will be remodeled and a nice boarding house opened up." Local people were excited about the mining prospects. "The people of Fern Cliff are expecting a great boom when the northerners get their business in progress. Men are now getting a dollar per day cutting wood on the mountain side and it is not doubted but that rich veins of coal can be found in vast quantities." (*PA*, April 17, 1902)

A group of Alabamians joined in this coal mining frenzy. "The Alabama Land and Improvement Company are still delving in the mountain in and around Fern Cliff, and have found coal of excellent quality, but are still digging for a thicker vein." (*PA*, May 15, 1902) The *Progressive Age* stringer from Dutton was the only person to express regret over the desecration of this beautiful area. "Fern Cliff is a delightful place....There are some very tender war reminiscences connected with it and our family and I involuntarily sigh to see it pass into the hands of the stranger." (*PA*, May 29, 1902) The mining operation

seems to have closed down fairly quickly, and no more mention of coal mining in the area is found until 1922 when the *Progressive Age* reported, "There is a probability of the coal mines at Fern Cliff being opened up." (*PA*, April 20, 1922)

Fern Cliff remained an active town, even though the resort hotel was taken over by the mining company, and local news was still reported. Mrs. J. A. Hess, the mother of James Gay, fell over the bluff trying to drive off goats in her yard. (*PA*, June 20, 1901) Samuel Rudder's barn was burned, and bloodhounds failed to track the arsonist. (*PA*, April 3, 1902) Mr. and Mrs. Jim Garland welcomed a son. (*PA*, July 7, 1904) Captain J. A. Hess died. (*PA*, May 23, 1907) There were arrests during this time period for distilling, well before the beginning of prohibition in 1920. (*PA*, April 16, 1908) Distilling was big enough news at that time to have been written up in all three county papers.

Fern Cliff in 1910.

By 1909, the verdict on the new owners of Fern Cliff was positive, and the area again returned to being a summer resort. "Extensive improvements are being made at Fern Cliff," the *Progressive Age* wrote on September 16. "In fact, it is being converted into a first class summer resort." The May 19, 1910 *Progressive Age* announced that the "famous summer resort will accommodate guests this summer." Again, the social columns were filled with names of Fern Cliff visitors. The *Progressive Age* "Sand Mountain News" column carried a rare photo of the hotel as it appeared in 1910. Several educational and religious institutes were scheduled and "an elevated cable incline is to be built soon from Section to the river." This, of course, never happened (unless you count the Bobo Incline that was built between Pisgah and a ferry landing but not until 1920), but recall how poor the quality of the road from the river to Section must have been at this time. (*PA*, June 20, 1910) There is no documentation that this expected renaissance at Fern Cliff came into fruition.

FERN CLIFF LAND CO.

Sells Entire Real Estate Holdings At

AUCTION

TWO BIG DAYS

THURSDAY and FRIDAY

OCTOBER 29 and 30

A Special Cash Prize To Person On Sale Ground Guessing Nearest Amount of Sale!

Tennessee-Alabama Auction Company

Jackson County Sentinel, October 22, 1936

The next mention of the area is in 1917 when O. T. Perry, president of the budding farmers' union held a rally at the top of the mountain at "Fern Cliff Gap." (*PA*, March 2, 1917) Some picnics were held at Fern Cliff. Nothing significant happened until December 1929 when Fern Cliff land, originally held by Elna Durham, and mortgaged to the Fern Cliff Land Company was sold because the holder defaulted on the mortgage. The land company, we find out in 1936, was composed of Marvin H. Campbell, J. Arthur Williams, and J. W. Gay. No one had money to buy lots, however beautiful the view, and the entire area of Fern Cliff was sold at auction on October 29 and 30, 1936. The sale consisted of 690 acres that included 90 acres "cut into these beautiful brow lots and the remainder cut into small farm tracts of ten to thirty acres." It was an event at Section High School where a string band played, lunch was served, and liberal cash prizes were awarded.

Remember that by 1936, development of the Guntersville dam and reservoir was well underway. The full-page ad for the auction from the October 22, 1936 *Sentinel* stated, "When the valley is covered with water by the building of the Guntersville Dam, the scenery


Jefferson Jones family in 1934, from Richard Matthews.

from this point will be much more beautiful." The October 29 *Progressive Age* reported that "hundreds of people" attended the auction. Apparently people enthusiastic for the mountain lots overextended themselves, and 1937 includes a number of foreclosure announcements. With the advent of bussing, consolidation of small schools began and in 1938, County Superintendent L. W. Jordan accepted bids for a Hodge-Dutton-Section-Scottsboro bus route. (*PA*, October 6, 1938)

Fern Cliff as a landmark continued to exist. When the health department set up locations for county-wide typhoid inoculations in 1941 and 1942, "Fern Cliff House" was one of the stops. In May of that year, it was also a place to have your dog vaccinated for rabies. The Jefferson Jones family was living in the hotel during this time. Richard Matthews, whose mother was a Jones, commented on the JCHA Facebook page, "My mother's family, the Jones family, lived at Fern Cliff during the depression years and mother talked about them walking up and down the mountain to visit Scottsboro. They would carry mill sewing work home from the mills in town and return it to the Mill after finished." Roland Matthews identified the family members: L to R, Ruby Bell, Howard, Nelloise, Gladys, Boyd, Jefferson, Lucille, Leon, and Alice (Richard's mother).


Last photo of Fern Cliff, by Wendell Page. 1942

The last photo of this hotel was taken by Wendell Page in 1942. The hotel/Jones home burned January 11, 1945. Jeff Jones published a card of thanks from the family in the *Progressive Age*: "We take this method of trying to thank the many kind people who assisted us in numerous ways after we lost our home at Fern Cliff by fire on the night of January 11th. Your friendship and help was worth a lot in an extreme emergency and we will always remember you for your being so good." (*PA*, February 11, 1945)

After 1945, Fern Cliff is mentioned in local newspapers only as a reference point in accidents, land sales, historical summaries, and obituaries. A farm house was built on the site and offered for sale in 1959: "55 acres, house, barn, large caves, 35 acres in cultivation, 7.1 acres cotton allotment," sold because the owner moved out of state. In 1985, the county commission cited illegal dumping on Fern Cliff road. The name was last used by a graphic design group in Dutton.

James Sentell notes that "the road is well defined and documented as to location on the 1907 map of Jackson County. The alignment, basically, would have ascended the mountain from the old ferry site which is now the B.B. Comer Bridge location, and run up the mountain, bending south to reach the plateau at Fern Cliff Gap. The map only has the W. J. Jackson House shown for Fern Cliff in 1907. I also would add that if this is the hotel photo, running water was not available in the rooms at the time of the photp. TVA has owned the area below the escarpment since the early 1930's, I would think one could

walk the entire old road bed from the foot of the mountain to its location in the Fern Cliff Gap, with the road being very defined upon the ground. Most of these old alignments in the wooded area really jump out when you engage in a field trip." (JCHS Facebook post)

The Fern Cliff property is a valued reserve of rare plant species. It consists of about 290 acres on the southeast side of the river owned by the heirs of Marvin Campbell. It connects TVA lands with lands owned by Auburn University. On some maps you can still see the old road that was the main road to Scottsboro that parallels Hwy 40 but is deep in the forest. The TVA lands donated its part of this property to Auburn University.

Porter's Bluff

There is no indication that Porter's Bluff ever was recognized as a specific hotel or town, as Glenzaida and Fern Cliff were. For a short time in the late 1890s, Porter's Bluff had its own named column in the *Bridgeport News* but was more likely to be folded into Bryant or Long Island. It has always been mentioned as an area, and even today there is a Porter Bluff Road (also known as County Road 262).

The road and area took its name from settlers Henry and Elizabeth Porter, who lived in the area before the Civil War. "Several families with roots in New York and the New England states settled along Porter's Bluff, the western brow of Sand Mountain," Ed Carter explained in the January 2017 *Chronicles*. "Among the early arrivers were Henry and Elizabeth Porter, William and Nancy Guilford, Ben and Wealthy Castle, George and Elma Starkweather, and Stephen Fitch. In time their neighborhood came to be called Jamestown. Many other northerners joined them after the Civil War." Two of the homes on the bluff large enough to accommodate guests were the Standish House and the Alpine House. Some cottages could also be rented.

Standish House on Porter Bluff, from Ed Carter.

If the Standish name rings a bell for you, recall that the first public hanging in Jackson County for which records still exist occurred in 1884 when Jackson County executed three men convicted of arson. The hanged men were charged and convicted of burning the Henry Porter home near Bryant after the family refused their extortion demands.

Very early in our county's written history, Porter's Bluff was a summer destination, celebrated in print because the editor of the *Alabama Herald* and mayor of Scottsboro, Alexander Snodgrass, summered there with his wife and children. In 1872, Snodgrass noted in his May 30 paper that he was "off to the mountain," he said, "hoping for "recreation and needful rest from the incessant and monotonous routine of daily cares" where he, Mrs. Snodgrass and the children could enjoy "the invigorating mountain atmosphere, water, and superior education facilities." His family was "moving to Porter's Bluff, on the Sand Mountain, to spend the summer months." (*AH*, May 30, 1872)

Alpine House on Porter Bluff, from Ed Carter.

On June 6, 1872, Snodgrass in his *Alabama Herald* provided the best description of the resort area of "Porter's Bluff: Its Locality and Inducements as a Summer Resort":

In traveling from Stevenson, in this county, to Chattanooga, Tenn., from the time you get near Bridgeport and for several miles, you can see off to the right on the Sand Mountain at an elevation, above the Tennessee River, of about one

thousand feet, two white residences of inviting appearances. These are the homes of Mr. Henry Porter, a Northern man, who has resided on the mountain, near this place, for many years, and of Mr. Fitch, a Northwestern man, who came there since the war. The original purpose of these gentlemen in choosing for themselves a permanent abode on this mountain, so far as we are concerned, was to escape the rigor of Northern winters, and at the same by elevation, to avoid the malaria of Southern valleys. These men are both intelligent, industrious citizens, and have opened farms, planted orchards and made improvements, until they have an abundance, with not only comfort and convenience, but many luxuries....The water is generally freestone, with chalybeate, at almost every settlement. There is a lady of education and refinement, a former teacher at the Lookout Mountain Institution, Miss Sue Z. Standish, who is a sister of Mrs. Porter, and resides with her, who proposes to take charge of and instruct all pupils entrusted to her care. In the same family and room as a companion and associate of Miss Standish is Mrs. Chubbuck from the city of New York, in whom there is a combination of all the qualities essential to true excellence of female character, who joins Miss Standish in attention to pupils, and is said to be untiring in her devotedness to whatever pertains to their improvement and welfare. These ladies are isolated, modest and retiring, they love seclusion, and fairly idolize their quiet mountain home. They have a rustic schoolroom some hundred yard from Mr. Porter's residence, and a music room, where they give lessons in vocal and instrumental music in Mr. Porter's house....The view from the Bluff, near the residences of Messrs. Porter and Finch, is extensive and enchanted. With the naked eye we viewed Stevenson and Bridgeport, with all the prominent surroundings of Jasper, Tenn., from the same point of observations....Porter's Bluff is opposite and in sight of Carpenter's Station, two miles east of Bridgeport, on the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad. The road has no depot there, but there is one being erected , and will be ready for use in a few days, by Mr. B. F. Hembree, a clever gentleman, who is merchandising there. Mr. Throup, postmaster and merchant there, is a Northern man, full of energy and industry. We are greatly indebted to him for favors in getting us moved out from the station. The distance out from the road to the "Bluff" is by path about two miles and a half and around the wagon road about four or five miles.

The social columns of the *Herald* were filled with news of these families and the cultivated northern ladies. Regular school sessions took place at Porter's Bluff. In 1880, the much lauded Gilford place was sold to settle a legal dispute. (*StC*, Jan 16, 1880) The Prentice family moved there in March. In 1882, the *Herald* carried a short piece arguing that Mr. Farrior's grapes at Ferncliff were equal to those on Porter's Bluff, though John Lorfen's apples and peaches were superior. (*AH*, Mar 9, 1882) There was competition and exchanges among the resorts.

The tragic event that occasioned the triple hanging in Scottsboro—the robbery and burning of the Porter home—took place March 26, 1883. George and Asburry Hughes and John Grayson were tried and hanged. (*StC*, Mar 29, 1883) Alexander Snodgrass collected contributions for Mr. and Mrs. Porter, who were old and homeless. (*StC*, Apr 24, 1883)

In October of 1883, an illustrious new name was associated with Porter's Bluff. "Dr. R. V. Pierce, of Buffalo, NY, of infirmary fame, is looking after the interest of an infirmary which he is having built near Porter's Bluff about three miles from this place. The institution will be quite an acquisition to the county,." (*StC*, Oct 18, 1883) Ultimately, Dr. Pierce did not come to Alabama to practice as a physician, though his fame in treating women's ailments rivaled Cardui. In 1907, Pierce and his brother "purchased the property of the Alabama Black Band Iron and Coal Railway Co., consisting of about 16,000 acres of coal, timber, and mineral lands." *(Daily Bulletin of the Manufacturers Record,* Vol. 17-19, Nov 27, 1907)

Even after the burning of the Porter house, the Porter Bluff location continued to be held in high esteem by the local newspapers. "The school at Porter's Bluff, under the care of Miss Standish, is a success and far the best of any that has ever seen that place." (*StC*, Jan 3, 1888) New houses continued to be built. Picnics were held. News was reported in the Long Island and Moore's Gap columns. Local news was reported; for example, in June 1889, little Rosa Wilson fell off Porter's Bluff but recovered. (*StC*, Jun 25, 1889)

Fruit from Porter's Bluff was featured in the 1893 *Bridgeport News*, where M. H. Reed, a horticulturist from the North, was raising and selling "fancy fruit," specifically peaches for $4.80 a box, which seems like a lot, and were planting pears and tobacco. (*BN*, Dec 2, 1893) There is no report on how planting tobacco fared.

The real heyday of Porter Bluff news items seems to have been the late 1890s. By 1896, Porter's Bluff had its own column in the *Bridgeport News* providing details about residents. George Bryant, we learned on April 3, had secured a contract for a sawmill, the same week residents were gathering Trilling, Arbutus, Bluets, and Anemones. On May 15, we learned that "Misses Anna and Fanny Selles and Mrs. French of Missionary Ridge" were spending a couple of weeks with Mrs. S. H. McGee." The article extolled the beauty of the location: "Porter Bluff is one of the most picturesque spots found in all the south, with a scenic beauty that is grand to behold. Sand Mountain here is about 500 feet high and the view from the bluff includes a scope of many miles of territory cut in twain by the Tennessee River." (*PA*,, Sep 18, 1902) The summer people left by October 16, when the Long Island column noted, "All of the people who have been summering on Porter's Bluff, have departed for their respective homes." (*PA*, Oct 16, 1902)

In July 1903, George McGee built a new house on Porter's Bluff. (*PA*, Jul 30, 1903) but the location received only a couple of mentions the rest of the year. The McGees enjoyed their new home and "gave a most delightful dance in honor of Miss Belle Cargile." (*PA*, Aug 11, 1904) In fact, the McGee home became the center of social activity and far-away visitors into the 1920s and 1930s. In September 1905, Mrs. R. J. Chubbuck died and was buried at her home on Porter Bluff. (*PA*, Sep 14, 1905) Another of the original settlers was gone.


The Progressive Age
Thu, Oct 18, 1934 -Page 2

AUCTION SALE

JACKSON COUNTY ALABAMA ON BIG SAND MOUNTAIN

Saturday, Oct. 20th

NEAR BRYANT

Sale Starts at 10:00 A. M. on the Property

SOLD BY

TENNESSE-ALABAMA AUCTION COMPANY

FORT PAYNE, ALABAMA

In 1928, the *Age* announced that "Mr. and Mrs. Bruce McIsaac and two children and Mrs. Green from New York are spending some time on Porter's Bluff with Mesdames Lilian Johnson and Elizabeth McGee." (*PA*, Jun 28, 1928)

Reference to Porter's Bluff all but disappeared by the 1930s. The county was consumed by the Depression and put all of its energies into surviving and recovering. By then, the area was no longer known as a resort but reported on as any place name in the county would be, that is, this person of Porter's Bluff is in the hospital, or had an infected foot or was visited by out-of-town family. In 1934, Miles Standish and Margaret Nicholson sold their 200 acres of bluff property. Visitors who owned cottages, like Mrs. R. T Porter and her daughter from Chattanooga, were still mentioned in the papers when they took up residence in their cottages, (*JCS*, May 21, 1936) but such mentions came with diminishing frequency.

Porter's Bluff continued to be a place name in Bryant columns well into the 1970s. Many visitors were recognized in the papers—like the McGees of Chattanooga and descendants of the original home owners—though the most attention paid to the area since the 1950s came from the long series that Carlus Page wrote about the Triple Hanging in the 1990s.

Annette Bradford

Note: I am indebted to Ed Carter, Richard Matthews, Toni McGriff, and Beth Finch for their assistance in writing this article.

New Historical Marker in Princeton

A new historical marker was dedicated to Paint Rock Valley School on July 28. Pictured left to right are Dr. El-Dweik, AAMU; Donna Sims, Graham Farm and Nature Center; Judge John Graham; Donald Langston, JC Historical Association; Tom Furman; Themika Sims, Graham Farm and Nature Center; Dr. Webb, AAMU; Taylor Myers, Graham Farm and Nature Center.

From the *Jackson County Sentinel,* July 31, 2024.

On July 28, the Jackson County Historical Association met inside the Paint Rock Valley High School to dedicate a new historical marker for the school and discuss future plans for the school building. The meeting, held in the school's library, had a large turnout filling the room full with people interested in the plans for the Paint Rock Valley High School building.

Donald Langston gave a tour of the school. He graduated from Paint Rock in 1956 and raised the money to have a historical marker created to memorialize the school.

In 2018, the Jackson County Board of Education voted to close the Paint Rock Valley High School. It sat empty and not maintained for years. In 2023, the board transferred ownership of the school to Alabama A&M University. Dr. Majed El-Dweik, Vice President of Research and Economic Development of AAMU, said that AAMU understood the value of historical structures as AAMU has several on campus.

"Thank you for the opportunity you have given to us so that we can continue building on the treasure you have established here in the valley years and years ago," El-Dweik said.

Themika Sims of Graham Farms and Nature Center introduced the attendees to Graham Farms employee, Taylor Myers, who will run the Paint Rock Valley High School facility. Myers said he was really excited to "have the opportunity to be a part of honoring the past and also bringing this facility into the future."

"Just seeing all of you here energizes me. There is such a passion here in this community for this place and its history and I'm excited about ushering in a beautiful future," Myers said.

Sims said that the goal for the building is to put it to use for community activities and educational opportunities. He said AAMU can use it for forestry programs and vegetable horticulture programs, and the engineering school can use it for a drone training program. El-Dweik added that the facility can be used to teach small-animal farming and other agricultural activities.

Donald Langston of the Jackson County Historical Association then led the crowd of people on an informative tour through the halls of the Paint Rock Valley High School. Langston shared lots of facts and history about the building.

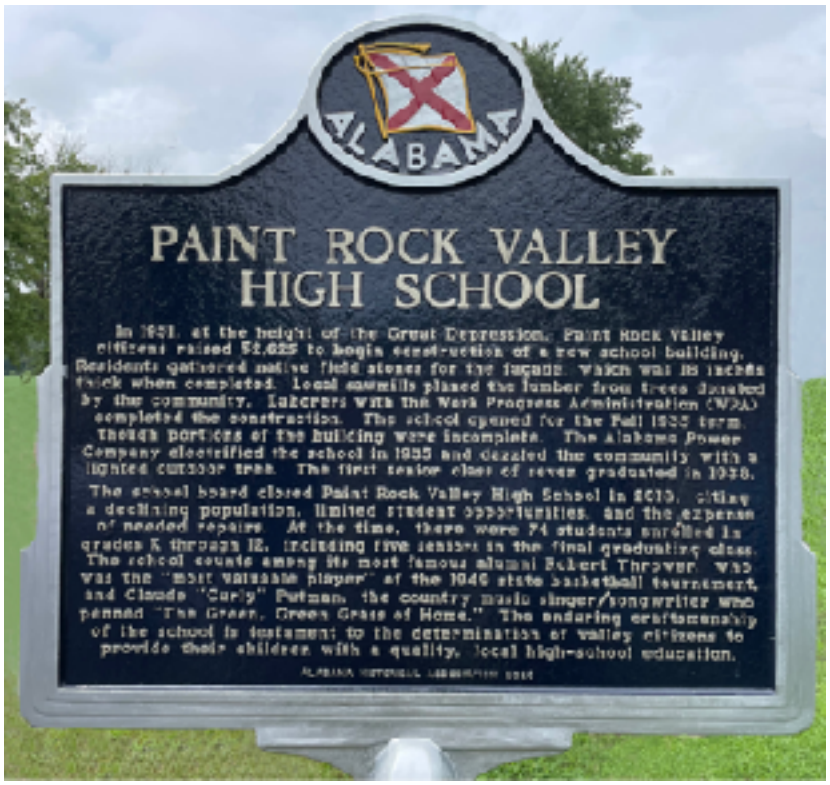
"When this building was built, there was no electricity so everything was done by hand. There was no heating and air because there was no such thing back then. There were 19 pot-bellied coal-burning stoves: one in each room and two in the auditorium. A janitor had to get up early and start all those fires," Langston said.

Taylor Myers, who will be running the Paint Rock Valley High School facility, spoke to the Jackson County Historical Association.

Mike Sisk, who attended the event, said he was proud to see the building opened and to see something become of it. He said he hoped the repair work on the building won't take very long.

Sims said the dedication of the historical marker was a "handshake" to the Paint Rock community to maintain the facility. He said if anyone is interested in keeping up with any future activities with the school, they can find them on Facebook.

Katie Hightower



The Incredible Leola Matthews

Seventeen-year-old Leola Matthews teaching at Martintown School in 1916, from the Matthews family.

Some piece of family research recently sent me out to read up on Leola Matthews. She was an absolute marvel. Leola was the first child of nine, born in 1897 in Jackson County, Alabama, to John Michael Matthews and Rona Gold. She was only 16 when both of her parents died, her mother first and nine days later, her father. She was left with six siblings to look after, the youngest still in diapers. Well-meaning family members wanted to break up the family and adopt the young children, but Leola stood firm. "Miss Matthews managed to settle the family financial affairs, bought a small home and won the battle to keep her small flock together in their own home," an article in the *Birmingham News* said about her in 1937.

Early stories about her are typical of any accomplished young lady born in 1897. Her family lived in Hollywood. She studied the piano and played a duet with her sister Pearl at Jackson County High School and did a declamation with Sabina Bradford at graduation in 1914. She passed the teachers' exam shortly thereafter and was already teaching in Martintown when her parents died in December 1915. She served as Secretary to the County Superintendent of Education for the next eight years. She gave up this job to travel to San Antonio where her sisters Irene and Pearl were confined to a tuberculosis hospital.

Chattanooga Daily Times, August 11, 1929

In 1926 when she ran for tax collector, there were eight candidates running against her but she won by a margin of 500 votes. Her victory made all the area newspapers because she was the first woman to serve in elected office in the county, taking this post on October 1, 1927. She published quarterly statements about county tax collection, compiled a list of land for sale because of failure to pay taxes, and reminded local voters to pay their poll taxes. She bought her own desk in the courthouse, but was reimbursed by the county. In April 1932, Leola and Lucille McClendon helped farmers complete the paperwork for government loans. After two terms, she lost to Dahl Starkey.

Her sister Eunice needed a career, so Leola bought a business—the Cinderella Beauty Salon upstairs in the Hackworth Building—and put her sister in charge. In May 1930, Leola purchased the salon from Cressye Brewer and kept Nettie Jo Traylor on staff to manage it for her. She expected to personally take charge of the business when her term as tax collector expired but Eunice took over instead.

When Leola left office in 1934, she had always wanted to go to college, so with the children grown, she went to Montevallo and received her degree in Home Economics. During World Ward II, she was Red Cross Treasurer for eight years and also treasurer of the Jackson County War Fund where she, Boyd Turner, and Lawton Kennamer tracked county contributions to the fund. She was, in fact, treasurer of whatever group she was a member of, be it Eastern Star or the Red Cross or the Twentieth Century Book Club or the County War Fund. She was honest and accurate and always handled the money.

She went to work for First National Bank when she completed her degree at Montevallo. She was for many years a teller and finally assistant cashier. She retired from First National on February 8, 1960 after more than 25 years of working for the bank.


Leola Matthews when she retired from the bank, 1960

And while she was doing all this, she was raising her six siblings and getting them situated in life. "She helped her next oldest sister finish high school and take a business course and saw her become a successful secretary to a lawyer in Nashville," the 1937 *Birmingham News* article stated. "Through the years she has seen that two sisters have obtained degrees from Montevallo and helped a brother through Auburn. One of her sisters is a business woman here, the other recovering from several years' illness but with the prerequisites of becoming an English teacher in a high school. The brother is a vocational agriculture teacher in South Alabama. The other brother is in high school. Wanting a degree herself but lacking the time, Miss Matthews has seen that her family is well supplied. Once she went to Florence State Normal but had to leave before the term was ended because of the death of one sister and the illness of another."

Of her eight siblings, a baby brother died at birth in 1899 when Leola was only 2 and a baby sister Lilian died at age 2 in 1913. Her sister Irene was only 24 when she died in San Antonio, TX where she had gone hoping the dry climate would improve her tuberculosis. Sister Pearl died two years later also of tuberculosis, having completed a business course and was working in Nashville before falling ill in 1925. Brother James David received a *Birmingham News* scholarship, though down with appendicitis and missed Irene's funeral. He was a vocational agriculture teacher who married Mattie Lou Howell and had a son. James died in 1957 at age 57 of a heart attack. Sister Hazel was educated as a teacher and taught English in Panama. She died at age 75 in 1985. She lived with Leola on Tupelo Pike in later life, and Leola was her executor. Leola herself died in 1988 at age 90. John Will, the baby of the family, outlived Leola; he married Dorothy Roden of Scottsboro and had descendants. With Hazel, he worked in the Panama Canal Zone in the Civil Service before dying in England. One sister outlived her, Eunice, who taught home economics at Paint Rock Valley School most of her career and died in 1993 at age 90.


The Matthews Sisters in front of their mother's Gold homeplace.

Three unmarried sisters—Leola, Hazel, and Eunice—grew old together and did some of our county's earliest cemetery censuses. I have battered looseleaf notebooks filled with cemetery transcriptions written in a dull pencil, often reinforced with obituaries cut from their personal set of bound volumes. They were dedicated Cumberland Presbyterians and active in the Missionary Society, and the sisters frequently picked up those less mobile for church activities.

"During her years of labor in public work she saw many dark places where family illness and sorrow was long and heavy but she never faltered. And now it would be hard to name a person more deserving of a retirement to catch up on some bright spots and happiness missed during the long years of work and responsibility." (*JCS*, Feb 18, 1960).

Annette Bradford

Attending JCHS in 1938-39

Earlene Swaim Storey (1919-2020) was the youngest of nine children of Hugh Franklin Swaim and Maggie Carter. Her family lived near Goosepond, and Earlene attended Temperance Hill School and Jackson County High School, graduating in 1938. After graduating she worked at the City Cafe, owned by her brother Mose Swaim, on the north side of the square. Her brother Hugh owned Dixie Cafe on the west side of the square. She managed City Cafe for two years when her brother was called into active service and kept the business profitable. This was during the war years when there were supply shortages and rationing. After WWII she married Ewing Storey, a recent veteran and teacher from Sand Mountain, and settled in Huntsville. The couple had three children. She lived her life in Huntsville and died in 2020. Just before her death, Earlene penned this memory of attending JCHS.

I have fond memories of my high school years. It was a growing up time for me from child to adult. I will soon be 100 years old and I still remember most of the time spent at Jackson County High School. I graduated from JCHS in May of 1938, 80 years ago. To my knowledge there was not any reunion for our graduating class. I have attended several gatherings of JCHS classmates in the past. I always enjoy seeing school friends from the old days, hearing their stories and travels.

The 1930's were an eventful era in our country and Jackson County, so much has changed. It is strange how time brings some people who were not that close years before, together. The last reunion I attended was for our 55th in 1993. We all met at the Western Sizzlin Restaurant and shared old memories again talking about our friends, those alive and gone. We had lost so many class members by that time. Everyone had a wonderful evening and took pictures of each other.

Reflecting on 1938 Jackson County High School, located on Scott Street, served not only Scottsboro at that time but also the surrounding communities of Hollywood, Langston, Sand Mountain, and the area where I lived, Temperance Hill. Like other kids from outside the city many of us traveled to school every day by bus. That was an experience in itself. I spent six years at that high school building. From seventh grade to twelfth was considered high school. I remembere how huge that building appeared compared to our three-room Temperance Hill school house.

The school looked modern but at first a little intimidating. It was nice to have running water and indoor plumbing. We had lockers and had to change rooms and teachers throughout the day. That was very different though and I soon adjusted and learned the routine. As a shy girl from the country , I and most of the kids I knew were those who had been with me at the Temperance Hill. I did know Kathryn Thomas who lived down the street from my Grandmother Carter.

My sister (Vickey) and I made new friends like the Patrick Girls, Libby, Patty, Sue, and Frances. We enjoyed spending time at their house in the Five Points area. They had a swimming pool which made an impression on me. I remember we all went to the circus together once and I won a little tea set playing bingo. The Patrick girls also really seemed to enjoy coming to our home in the country, riding horses and bikes over the hills and the dirt paths.

I liked the new classmates but always remained close to the Temperance Hill friends through the years.

Riding the school bus, I missed out on many after school activities. 1938 turned out to be a good year for the Wildcats basketball team who were the state champions. Coach W.G. "Mickey" O'Brien was the basketball coach at that time. I remember the tournament was held at our gym. D.I. Durham, Glen Phillips, Walter Webb, Owen Selby, Fate McClendon, Blane Thomas, and Jim Thomas were classmates on that special team. Several of the best players were from the Sand Mountain.

School wasn't free back then and many children weren't able to go. I think it cost $10 a year per child and extra if you took courses like typing. I remember my father brought gravel from his pit to the school to help with my tuition. I'm sure other families made similar trades to offset the cost.

They had built a large auditorium and the gymnasium while I was a student. Back in those days there was no real school cafeteria that served lunch. Many kids brought their lunch and would stay around campus during the hour break. My brother, Hugh Swaim, owned a café on the square that some of the others would walk to and get a sandwich or a bowl of chili and a coke. I would usually go over to my Grandmother's house on Thomas Street about a mile away.

Back then I was anxious to get through with school, graduate, and find a job. Teachers I had in my senior year included Jane Hodges—P.E Class; Coburn Thomas—History; and Frances Blair—English. Even though it was such a long time ago some memories of high school are vivid. I do remember during a field trip to a nearby mountain in Mr. Couch's biology class we all got spooked by a lot of whoops and screams that caused the whole group of us to run back towards town. Talking about it later we think we might have gotten too close to somebody's still. It's funny the things that stick out in your memory after such a long time. I even played hooky once. One afternoon several other girls and I decided to skip class and see a movie at the Bocanita. Someone actually saw us slip back to school but didn't turn us in.

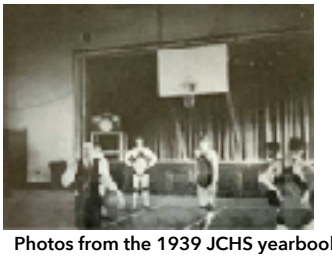
I.J. Browder was the principal at JCHS when I started there. By twelfth grade C. P. Nelson had assumed that role. Fortunately, I was never sent to the principal's office for misbehaving. Mr. Nelson seemed like a nice man. I remember him commenting on the day I received my diploma about my being small and skinny during graduation exercises saying, "we're going to have to put something else in there with you to fill up that cap and gown".

The Jackson County High School Class of 1938 had 96 members I believe. I was told it was the largest class of graduates to date from Jackson County High. A boy named John Will Matthews was our senior class president. Everybody liked John Will. Our graduating class for some reason did not have a school yearbook as the class of 1939 and even years earlier. Before graduating many of us bought personalized engraved cards to exchange with other members of our senior class. I had mine in a book and unfortunately, they got misplaced through the years. Some of the names of my senior class include: Lloyd Money, Doris and Katherine Rice, Alice Thomas, Louise Bryant, Virginia Jane Stockton, Floye Gant, Bobby Womack, Opal Benson, Edith McKelvey, Katherine Carter, Sue Downey, Elliote Payne, Mary Johnson, Leona Clemens, Mary Gay, Mary Evelyn Campbell, Mary Virginia Freeman, and Marjorie Proctor. Four of our class lost their lives in World War II, Marvin Petty, Billy Parks, Dick Hunter and Cecil Floyd. So many fine people got their start at Jackson County High School during that era. Let me know if anyone from the Class of 1938 is out there.

Earlene Swaim Storey







Photos from the 1939 JCHS yearbook. Note Mr. Gist setting up a photo, father of Leroy Gist.

Dixie Cafe, City Cafe, and the Swaim Family

We "young folks" born after the Depression forget how hard it was to live through the early 1930s. Born in 1927, my mother was a Depression baby who could not bear to throw anything useable away. But recall, in Jackson County, the banks closed. The schools closed. There were no jobs and no cash money. Farming families limped along on home gardens. Cotton prices bottomed out. Five thousand men showed up to apply for 3000 jobs that paid $1 a day, generated by the building of the Cumberland Mountain Road. Franklin Roosevelt inherited a country in crisis in 1933 when he took office and began implementation of his "alphabet programs" that, along with World War II, put the country back on a sound economic footing.

Into these hard times, Hugh Maples Swaim and Uncle Rip Waller opened the Dixie Cafe on the west side of the square in 1928. The business changed hands many times before closing in the 1940s. Hugh sold his interest in the Dixie Cafe in 1931, but was not done with the restaurant business. Hugh bought the City Cafe on the north side of the square in 1934 with partner C. B. Thomas and sold it to his brother Moses in 1937, who operated the Cafe on and off until his death in 1961. Both cafes benefited from their proximity to movie theaters—the Dixie by the Ritz and the City by the Bocanita. Both restaurants were family affairs, with wives and sisters helping run the businesses. City Cafe lasted longer and occupied a more central place in the history of the square.

L to R, G.M. Waller, Unknown, Hugh Swaim.

Dixie Cafe

The Dixie Cafe was one of the first businesses to go into the brand new Word Building, which occupied the west side of the square between First National Bank and the vacant lot where the Coffee Shop was. It was the first restaurant venture by the Hugh Franklin Swaim family. His son Hugh Maples Swaim owned and operated the Dixie Cafe. Young Kinzie Bobo was waiting tables there in February 1929 when Parker Campbell ran this joke in the *Progressive Age*: "They say this happened down at the Dixie Cafe over on the west side of the Square: Customer: "I'll have pork chops and potatoes, and have the chops lean." "Which way, sir?" asked Kinzie Bobo.

On August 23, 1928, the *Progressive Age* announced the opening of a new restaurant "spotlessly clean and best of cooking" with G.M. "Uncle Rip" Waller and Hugh Swaim as proprietors. The paper promoted the new establishment in the editor's column. "This is one of the prettiest little restaurants you have seen with everything new and clean as it can possibly be made. It looks good." Almost immediately (November 15, 1928), a rooming house opened over the cafe. "We can take care of four more boarders. Brick house over the Dixie Cafe." The person placing the ad was J. L. Matthews.

In April 1929, Waller and Swaim advertised that dinner every day cost 35 cents, 40 cents with a drink, and the restaurant, next to the Western Union Office, prepared "short orders at all hours." (*PA*, Apr 18, 1929) On July 4, Dixie Cafe, like other merchants on the square, offered prizes for the town holiday celebration to give away to "lucky ticket holders"; the prize from the cafe was a carton of Chesterfield cigarettes.


WE LIKE TO FEED

School Folks, Teachers, Pupils, Trustees and All and

We really do appreciate your patronage. Of course, we want the general public too. We serve many of them well.

DIXIE CAFE

West Side Square

G. M. Waller, Hugh Swaim, Proprietors

Scottsboro, • • Alabama

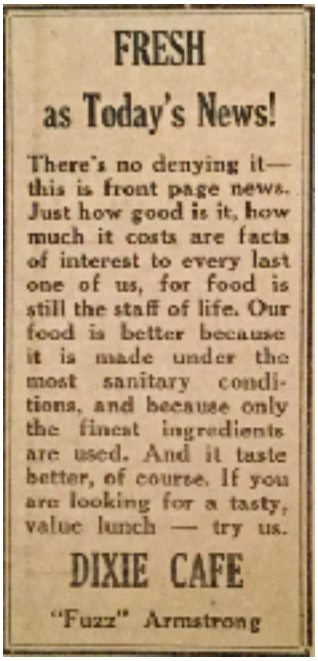
Ad from the 1930 JCHS Yearbook.

L, Charles "Sam" McCutchen and friend, 1937, from Charles McCutchen.

In the early 1930s, other businesses occupied the new Word Building—Adams Barber Shop and Palace Dry Cleaners (owned at the time by Robert Word) moved adjacent to the Dixie Cafe. The popularity of the cafe is seen in the fact that the new tenants described themselves as "next to the Dixie Cafe."

In November 1931, Hugh Swaim sold his interest in the Dixie Cafe to his partner G.M. Waller. (*JCS*, Nov 26, 1931) Waller continued the business with the same enthusiasm as before until March 19, 1932 when the *Sentinel* ran a legal notice from Justice of the Peace A. D. Kirby stating that in order to satisfy the case of E. C. Morris vs. Refrigeration Discount Corporation of Detroit, MI, property of the defendant was being garnished, that is, the Dixie Cafe. The cafe closed, and then reopened in August 1932 as The New Dixie Cafe with Robert Word as the owner. The news story accompanying this ad said that Robert Word had redecorated and renovated the cafe and had put Bill Walsh in charge of the dry cleaning business so he could concentrate on the Dixie Cafe. The reopened cafe featured lower prices and a special dinner that offered dessert and drink for only 35 cents, with 25 cent lunches and chicken dinner on Sunday, apparently in the same location on the west side of the square. (*JCS*, Aug 4, 1932) The cafe was billed as "modern in every way" with "eats that taste like Mother's." Full menus were posted in the ads.

In October 1932, Robert Word named Roy Carpenter as the new manager of the Dixie Cafe and the news story stated that the cafe "will be open until late at night during the Winter season giving both table, counter, and curb service in all kinds of sandwiches, short orders, and drinks." (*JCS*, Oct 6, 1932) The new year brought a new manager for the Dixie Cafe—Charley "Fuzz" Armstrong leased the cafe. Armstrong pledged to make the service "better than first class" and turn it into the "Delmonico of the West Side." Parker Campbell intoned, "Fuzz is one of the livest wires this town has ever had and the public can look for the Dixie Cafe to be exactly what he wants it to be." (*JCS*, Jan 5, 1933) Enthusiastic ads followed. Armstrong promoted the cafe and its Sunday chicken dinner as the place to take your family after church.


FRESH
as Today's News!
There's no denying it—this is front page news. Just how good is it, how much it costs are facts of interest to every last one of us, for food is still the staff of life. Our food is better because it is made under the most sanitary conditions, and because only the finest ingredients are used. And it taste better, of course. If you are looking for a tasty, value lunch — try us.
DIXIE CAFE
"Fuzz" Armstrong

In June 1933, the cafe sponsored Elizabeth Owens in the Miss Scottsboro beauty contest. (*JCS*, Jun 8, 1933) But Armstrong did not just recognize beauty. The *Progressive Age* sponsored five scholarships to attend Spenser Business College to young men and women. (*PA*, July 27, 1933) If you spent 25 cents or more at the cafe or at many other square businesses, you could cast a vote for the scholarship candidate of your choice.

Food quality in area restaurants during the Depression apparently suffered because of tight money. Armstrong advertised "Ham that is not tissue paper, hot dogs that are not shriveled, hamburgers that are not flavored with bread crumbs, eggs that are not pre-war. If you want good sandwiches, and want them quick, let the DIXIE show you sumpin that is sumpin." (*JCS*, Sep 28, 1933) Fuzz Armstrong was a favorite of Parker Campbell, and the editor frequently included jokes with Fuzz Armstrong as the butt of the joke. The cafe during this times was called "Fuzz's Dixie Cafe." Robert Word apparently still owned and managed

the physical location, the Word building. In November 1933, Robert Word was listed in an ad renting the storage space next to the cafe. (*PA*, Nov 2, 1933)

On November 7, Fuzz Armstrong published a notice in the *Sentinel* stating that he had sold his interest in the Dixie Cafe and had retired from this business. (*JCS*, Nov, 1933) The *Progressive Age* announced the next week that Roy Ambrester had taken over the cafe. (*PA*, Nov 16, 1933) But this story was premature. On November 30, the *Sentinel* announced that two JCHS Wildcat stars—Hugh Parsons and Bill Jones—had leased the Dixie Cafe. (*JCS*, Nov 30, 1933) Parsons married Miss Joel McClendon in December. (*PA*, Dec 7, 1933) Enthusiastic ads followed. The restaurant participated in a trade booster campaign the next year. (*JCS*, Nov 22, 1934) In December, L.D. Bell and Son opened next door to the Dixie Cafe, in the space formerly occupied by the Vann Five and Ten. (*PA*, Dec 20 1934) All businesses struggled. The Dixie stopped advertising, not a good sign.

In June 1935, the Dixie Cafe changed hands again. A. A. Vann, who owned the department store next door, bought the cafe and also "Berry Meat Market in front of the Red Hot Store." (*PA*, June 27, 1935) By December, the cafe had changed hands again. The wedding announcement for Miss Madge Gann and Mr. Edmund Bain, a marriage kept secret because the bride was a nurse at Hodges Hospital, also announced that Bain was the "present proprietor of the Dixie Cafe." (*PA*, Dec 19, 1935)

In January 1936, the *Progressive Age* carried an ad that said R. O. Chafin was the proprietor of the Dixie Cafe. (*PA*, Jan 2, 1936) With this owner, ads were smaller and less frequent, but Chafin managed to keep the cafe open for all of 1936. The Ritz Theater opened almost next door to the Dixie Cafe in November 1936. In 1938, businesses that engaged in food preparation (cafes, drug stores, and meat markets) began to be inspected by Albert S. Dixx, M.D., the county health officer. In June of 1939, the Dixie Cafe was given a health rating of 96 (*JCS*, June 13, 1939), up from the 88.5 it received in February that year.

The effort to keep the cafe in business was helped along by Florence Hackworth redecorating the rooms above the cafe and giving the rooms the name "The Inn." (*PA*, Jan 28, 1937) By December 1939, Mrs. V. C. Towers was advertising a curtain laundering service in the same space. After that, there is no indicator that the cafe is open. In the 1940s, L.D. Bell and Son next door continued to describe their location as "west side of the square next to Dixie Cafe" through March of 1940. There are no further references to it. Judging by the position of the sign in McCutchen photo, Reid Sundries occupied this space after World War II when John T. Reid returned from the war and moved his business from the east side of the square to the west.

City Cafe

The other restaurant business on the square associated with the Swaim family was the City Cafe. The City Cafe was located in the Garland Building, the second oldest building on the square. City Cafe was a popular name: there were City Cafes in Bridgeport and Huntsville before a cafe of that name came to the square. Paul Campbell advertised his cafe, the City Cafe Company, in the Henderson Building on the west side of the square in 1913, though nothing else is found about this business beyond its opening notice.

In 1927, J. B. Patterson announced the opening of City Cafe "on Main Street, next to the theater" and welcomed old friends and new ones for "first class meals" and short order lunches. (*PA*, Jan 20, 1927) In March, he published a second ad touting the cafe as "a growing success from the opening day."(*PA*, Mar 24, 1927) His estimation was a bit more modest by the end of the month: "The City Cafe is not the oldest and may not be the best—but it's a darn good, clean place to eat." (*PA*, Mar 31, 1927)

In February 1928, "Jim Patterson and George Armstrong of the City Cafe" entertained the Hosiery Mill Band with an oyster supper. The article praised the boys for their work and dedication and noted that "Pat's oyster supper filled out" some of their new uniforms to "complete fullness." (*PA*, Feb 2, 1928) In fact, the City Cafe called itself "Pat's Place" in a March 1, 1928 ad in the *Age*, shown here. In 1937 the city's first food truck, the Blue Wagon Cafe, opened in the empty lot between the Benson Building and Word Motors on the east side of the square, but the proprietor of the "Home of the Five Center Hamburger" was C. M. Floyd.

City Cafe closed on October 14, 1928 and reopened in a "nice brick house" next to the Bocanita on November 12, 1928. Patterson promised his customers "a comfortable and sanitary place to eat." (*PA*, Oct 11, 1928), a "warm brick building with first class equipment and service." (*PA*, Nov 8, 1928) This is the location in the Garland building, where Bill Tally's office is now located. Patterson and Armstrong sold the business to Johnny Bryant in March 1929. "Johnny Bryant, who used to run the Big Sandy Restaurant at Section, but who now owns and operates the City Cafe in Scottsboro, has his cafe repainted and fixed up inside," the *Age* explained in April 1929 (*PA*, Apr 25, 1929) His wife was a stringer for the *Age*. The story in the *Age* looked forward to the opening of the Bocanita and noted "if Johnny is going to keep stride with his elbow neighbor, the new Bocanita theater, he will have to wear a full dress suit with polka dot vest and serve finger bowls with sandwiches, and never again yell 'two up and over.' " During this time, bus and taxi services operated out of the cafe, using the cafe's phone. In 1930, Bryant published the cafe's menu in the paper, shown here, and began selling five cent hamburgers with the want ad, "WANTED—10,000 men, women, and children to buy 5 cent hamburgers. Apply to City Cafe, next to Bocanita Theater." (*PA*, Aug 17, 1930) Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Hale celebrated their 34th anniversary at the Cafe with a luncheon for 25 friends and relatives. (*PA*, Apr 19, 1934)

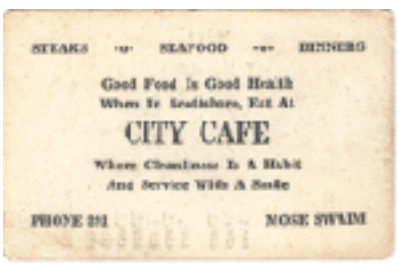

SUMMER SPECIALS!

CITY CAFE

"Home of Good Coffee"

In 1934 Hugh Swaim and CB Thomas bought it the cafe. In November 1934, Hugh married Rose Gann and was cited in the paper as "a young man of sterling character and reputation." (*PA*, Nov 12, 1936) Civic clubs and private parties went on at the cafe. Workmen without phone numbers, like painter Earl Matthews, could be reached through the cafe. The cafe supported charity projects and local football.

In November 1937 Swaim and Thomas sold the cafe to Hugh and Martin Holder and to 19-year-old Mose Swaim and his wife Elizabeth. This was Mose's first time to be proprietor of the cafe, and he was a zealous owner. July 1938 saw the end of the five cent hamburger. All the restaurants in town (H.A .Helm, Fred's Cafe, Pool Room Cafe, C.B. Thomas Cafe, Blue Moon Cafe, City Cafe, Check's Cafe, and Pat's Place) made a joint statement of a price fixing scheme. Burgers would be 10 cents or two for 15 cents due to increased meat prices. (*PA*, Jul 26, 1938) The year 1938 saw the beginning of health department inspections and ratings of local soda fountains, restaurants, and meat markets. City Cafe scored 97.5 in December, 100.0 in April and June. (*PA*, Dec 15, 1938)


STEAKS -or- SEAFOOD -or- DINNERS

Good Food Is Good Health

When In Scottsboro, Eat At

CITY CAFE

Where Cleanness Is A Habit

And Service With A Smile

PHONE 211 MOSE SWAIM

In 1939, Mose sold four electric refrigerators. (*PA*, Jun 22, 1939) and Harry Word began selling his fryers and promoted their superior taste by telling potential buyers that they could sample them at the City Cafe (*PA*, Dec 14, 1939) In 1941, the *Age* congratulated the City Cafe on "securing new records for their nickelodeon." (*PA*, Jun 12, 1941) There might be an undertone of sarcasm in this quip. Mose was often the butt of jokes told by editors of both papers, a measure of their familiarity with the editors. The cafe had a bowling team in December 1941 with a 5-4 record against Banker, Five Aces, and Bedspread teams.

Matchbook cover and business card, from Rick Storey.

(*PA*, Dec 4, 1941) and in 1943, a basketball team. Mose invited people to eat their Christmas Dinner out at his cafe that served "man-sized portions" of deliciously cooked food. (*JCS*, Dec 9, 1941) Clubs began to take advantage of the cafe as a venue for meetings. "Mrs. Walter Johnson was hostess to her Needlecraft club Tuesday after a theater party," the *Age* wrote, "where a delicious salad course was served." (*PA,* Mar 12, 1942)

Businessmen in the City Cafe in 1941, from the Robert Word movie.

World War II started. Mose registered for the draft in 1940 and enlisted September 27, 1944 and was discharged a year later. The December 14, 1944 *Age* reported that Mose was stationed at Camp Wolters, Texas but on leave a few days and was visiting his wife and daughter. The Army appreciated his culinary experience and Mose stated that he was showing the Army "some high and handsome K.P service and ability." (*PA*, Dec 14, 1944). The paper reassured cafe customers that Mose would not be serving army chow when he returned home.

While Mose was in the service, his sister Earlene, a year younger than Mose, ran the cafe for him. In 1943, the Brakfield Bus Service that ferried defense workers between Scottsboro and the Huntsville Arsenal left from the City Cafe (*PA*, Apr 29, 1943). The cafe supported the war effort, offering prizes for a June 1944 auction (*PA*, Jun 29, 1944) The cafe sold their jelly jars for use by home canners (*JCS*, Jul 18, 1944) The cafe was broken into just before Mose returned by a 17-year-old from Chattanooga. Their canine burglar alarm must have failed, since Mose sold a four-year-old fawn Great Dane in January 1946. (*PA*, Jan 3, 1946)

In December 1946, Mose sold his business to Mrs. Vernon Thomas and her daughter Alice. They ran the business for barely two months and sold it to J. R. Argo, who said in his announcement February 13, 1947 that he was new to Scottsboro but had been in the cafe and restaurant business for a number of years. Argo hired two cooks, C. O. Garland and Minnie Goolesby. The *Age* explained on February 27 that he had moved to the Boro from Anniston and was "a hustler if our city has ever seen one" who had bought the Ed Michaels house on Scott Street and moved to town with his wife and two small sons. He claimed to have caught "Scottsboro fever" when he was stationed in Fort Sill, OK with Mose Swaim. In spite of his enthusiasm, he did not keep the cafe for long.

City Cafe, from the 1949 JCHS yearbook.

On September 2, 1947 the *Sentinel* announced that Argo had sold to cafe and fixtures to his cook C. O. Garland. The paper called Garland "a popular veteran" who had been with the cafe for some time, the young son of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Garland. Garland reached out to veterans and service men in his announcement on September 4 in the *Age* about buying the business. The next year, Garland married Mary Rivers Lankford. But like all the recent owners, Garland did not keep the cafe for long. On November 8, 1949, the *Sentinel* carried notice that Mose Swaim had bought City Cafe again. "The cafe has been thoroughly reconditioned and improvements added," Mose said in the November 15, 1949 announcement in the *Sentinel*. So within three years, the cafe had been owned by Swaim, then Thomas, then Argo, then Garland, and finally

Swaim again. Mose was now 31 with a wife and two daughters.

Mose launched into his second stint as cafe owner with enthusiasm. City Cafe was the site of the district Boy Scout meeting two days later and continued to be the locale of Scout leadership meetings. His ads in 1950 referred to him as "Old Man Mose." The cafe wished the best to Company B as they shipped out for Korea from "Mose Swaim and the whole crew." (*PA*, Aug 24, 1950) Mose served Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners and said in January 1952 that the business had grown steadily, with the entire staff signing 1951 New Year greetings: "Mose, Bobby, Christine, Bill, Gay Nell, Pauline, Rosalee, Hunter, Mae, Mrs. Petty, and Hills." (*JCS*, Jan 2, 1951). Mose was a popular local merchant and musician. He and his daughter performed at least once on WROS. Mose played spoons with a band at the old skating rink.

In the three years when he was away from the cafe, Mose seems to have bought a farm. He advertised cedar posts in the paper in April 1951 and a pair of mare mules six years old in May. He wanted to sell or trade a three-quarter-ton 1950 pick-up truck in June. He lived on Charlotte Street but apparently had property out of town. By the end of 1951, he was clearly back in the cafe business, hosting the annual Christmas banquet for the Scottsboro firemen (*JCS*, Dec 25, 1951). He ran for tax collector against D. L. Cargile, whose father had been probate judge, and lost in 1954. On October 12, 1954 he announced in the *Sentinel* that he had sold the cafe business to J. S. Liles from Pisgah who operated the business with his daughter Jean. (PA, Oct 14, 1954) The Lions Club held their Christmas party and ladies' night at the City Cafe in 1954. (*JCS*, Jan 4, 1955) The cafe sponsored a successful softball team in 1955. But less than a year after Liles bought the cafe, Mose Swaim bought it back in July 1955. (*JCS*, Jul 26, 1955) Sadly, Mose died August 20, 1961. He was only 43.

After Mose's death, City Cafe sold and was quietly remodeled; it had become the Charles Restaurant by November 1961. It remained a popular restaurant until Bill Tally bought the building in 1980 and renovated it to be his law office. Bill had a fire in 1982 that required a more extensive remodel. Before the fire, Bill recalls that the restaurant served white diners downstairs and black diners upstairs. Restaurants were segregated, but Mose kept an outside back staircase used by black diners. Bill remembers that the menu was written on the wall. Brother Hugh Swaim took a position with General Dynamics in Ft. Worth, Texas and worked 28 years for them before retiring in Scottsboro. They had no children. Sister Earlene, who ran the cafe for Mose while he was in the service, married and lived in Huntsville. Sister Vesta Swaim married Ray Hembree. For a time they operated another restaurant on the west side of the square, the rock Coffee Shop by Hammer's. But that is a tale for another time.

Ray Hembree and son Eddie Ray at the Coffee Shop, from Rick Storey.

Three shots from the 1941 Robert Word Scottsboro movie. L to R, Mose Swaim, outside the City Cafe, and Hugh Swaim waiting tables.

Jackson County's Killer Tornados

This listing of tornados that have claimed lives in the county since the late 19th century is drawn from the National Weather Service Alabama Tornado Database.

Although it might be tempting to conclude that such fatal incidents are much more common in the 21st century, it's important to remember that weather reporting and the associated weather tracking technology are much more advanced in recent decades. It's telling, for instance, that only four tornadoes were recorded in the first 52 years (1880-1932) of reporting. Three of those four tornados resulted in fatalities with 42 cumulative deaths.

In the 88 years since 1932, 54 tornados have been recorded in the county. Nine of the fifty-four resulted in deaths. Clearly, the destruction threshold for reporting a tornado was much higher in the early years. Nor is the database complete: a devastating tornado that hit Scottsboro in 1956 was somehow excluded from the database.

However despite some of its oversights, the database almost certainly records the most devastating of the storms to hit our county. Particularly noteworthy in the listing is the disastrous day of April 27, 2011 when four tornados (three of which caused fatalities) tore through Stevenson, Bridgeport, and across Sand Mountain.

April 24, 1880 (Jackson-Madison) 9:00pm
Damage Scale – F2
Path Length (miles) – 15.66
Max Path Width (yards) – 800
Fatalities – 3
Injuries – 2
Location: Owens Crossroads to Paint Rock

Three children in the Edwards family were killed as a tornado moved fifteen and a half miles from Owens Crossroads to Paint Rock. At least five homes were destroyed. Many more were certainly injured but no further statistics about the the storm can be found in any regional newspaper. This was one of four tornadoes that the national weather service cites for the year 1880. In reporting on the storm, the April 29 *Huntsville Independent* noted "A few years ago, Paint Rock village was literally blown away; the spot was leveled with the earth. From this, it would seem that a well-fixed hurricane course takes in the unfortunate village." That prophecy would prove tragically correct in 1932.

October 14, 1909 (Jackson-Marshall) 5:00pm
Damage Scale – F2
Path Length (miles) – 15.0
Max Path Width (yards) – 400
Fatalities – 7
Injuries – 50
Location: Woodville to Scottsboro

A major tornado outbreak killed at least 37 people across the Southeastern US. An F2 tornado that was part of that system killed at least 7 people south of Woodville and Scottsboro with rumors of as many as 18 deaths.

March 21, 1932 (Jackson-Morgan-Madison) 8:00pm
Damage Scale – F4
Path Length (miles) – 75
Max Path Length (yards) – 400

Fatalities – 32 in Jackson County
Injuries – see below
Location: Lacey's Spring-Paint Rock-Bridgeport- Jasper

The tornado that killed 32 in Jackson County was part of a larger tornado outbreak that struck March 21 and 22. It was made up of at least 36 tornados, including 27 killer tornadoes and several long-lived tornado clusters. Across the south, more than 330 people died. The storms affected an area from Mississippi to Illinois and moved as far east as South Carolina; Alabama was the hardest hit, with 286 of the 330 fatalities occurring in our state.

In Jackson County, 32 were killed, 125 seriously injured, 375 were listed with "minor injuries," and estimated property damage came to $1,250.000.00.

April 3, 1974 (Jackson-Morgan-Limestone-Madison) 9:24pm
Damage Scale – F3
Path Length (miles) – 46.5
Max Path Width (yards) – 700
Fatalities – 2
Injuries – 7
Location: Decatur to Redstone Arsenal to Princeton

Red Cross tallies indicated that the 16 counties surrounding Jackson suffered 81 deaths, 838 injuries (with 223 hospitalized), and the destruction of 1125 dwellings, according to the April 11, 1974 *Daily Sentinel*. Huntsville was particularly hard hit. In Jackson County, Princeton bore the brunt of the storm, with four members of the Putman family hospitalized. In Huntsville, 18 died and 300 were injured.

The weather service stated: "Numerous reports of strange optical phenomenon were reported including ball lightning."

February 6, 2008 (Jackson) 5:17am
Damage Scale – F4
Path Length (miles) – 10.9
Max Path Width (yards) – 660
Fatalities – 1
Injuries – 12
Location: Pisgah to Flat Rock

On February 5 and 6, 2008, 86 tornados swept across large portion of the South in an event known as the 2008 Super Tuesday tornado outbreak. Five of those tornados touched down between Pisgah and Rosalie. The most powerful of those tornadoes which had winds of at least 180 MPH, giving it a rating of EF-4 on the Enhanced Fujita Scale. The most significant damage occurred at the corner of County Road 60 and 177, between the Rosalie and Pisgah communities in eastern Jackson County. This is also approximately the location where one fatality occurred.

April 27, 2011 (Jackson) 5:58am
Damage Scale – F1
Path Length (miles) – 27.85
Max Path Width (yards) – 300
Fatalities – 1
Injuries – 0
Location: Section to Ider

The four tornados that touched down in Jackson County on April 27 were part of a violent weather system that was termed the 2011 Super Outbreak. It killed 44 people in and around Tuscaloosa. In total, 348 people died as result of the storms, 238 in Alabama alone.

April 27, the day of the Jackson County outbreaks, is the most active tornado day in history with a record 218 tornadoes touching down that day from midnight to midnight. Four of these storms were rated EF5, the highest ranking possible on the Enhanced Fujita scale.

Locally, the first tornado touched down just south of Section, crossed State Highway 35, then traveled nearly parallel to State Highway 71, through Dutton, into southern portions of Pisgah before it crossed into far northern DeKalb County. One fatality occurred in the Pisgah area.

The tornado took a very similar track to a violent tornado of EF-4 intensity that occurred later the same day, making it made it difficult to distinguish the damage between the two tornadoes. A second tornado, rated an F2 touched down at Rosalie 12 minutes later and tracked five miles toward Henagar. Although property damage was severe, there were no human casualties.

April 27, 2011 (Jackson-DeKalb) 3:01pm
Damage Scale – F4
Path Length (miles) – 27.66
Max Path Width (yards) – 1260
Fatalities – 14
Injuries – 50
Location: Hodge to Higdon

A violent long-track tornado began its life about 3 miles northeast of Section where it snapped or uprooted several softwood and hardwood trees. The tornado rapidly intensified and began producing high-end EF-3 to low-end EF-4 damage within a matter of minutes, with peak wind speeds of 150 to 170 mph, and a path width of 1/2 to 3/4 mile as it roared into areas northeast of Pisgah and north of Rosalie. Residents interviewed remarked that up to 3 tornadoes merged into one very large tornado. There was evidence of their observations being correct in the damage swath.

Three people were killed in 3 separate residences (6 total fatalities—2 in Pisgah and 4 in the Higdon/Flat Rock Communities). Several vehicles were launched or swept several yards in different directions, in a few cases up to 50 yards.

As the tornado continued its path, it intensified further on approach to Flat Rock and Higdon, where it produced damage of high end EF-4 intensity with peak winds up to 190 mph. The tornado killed three from the same family at a residence southwest of Flat Rock. One well-built block foundation home literally exploded as the tornado struck. It lifted and swept all its structure and contents downwind, in some cases several hundred yards. Miraculously, a mother and 3 children taking refuge in a hallway were completely unharmed. The tornado killed up to 5 people in the area. A senior citizen van was lofted and dropped into a field nearly 400 yards away.

The tornado path was 46.98 miles long. The tornado weakened and produced EF-2 and EF-3 damage in Georgia, where 2 more people were killed and 50 people were injured.

April 27, 2011 (Jackson) 4:05pm
Damage Scale – F4
Path Length (miles) – 30.24
Max Path Width (yards) – 1320
Fatalities – 1
Injuries – 0
Location: Fackler to Long Island

The day's fourth tornado, an EF4 with winds up to 180 mph, touched down in Fackler and tracked to Stevenson where 24 metal high-tension truss towers were twisted and flattened. It continued its northwest path to Bridgeport where it crossed the Tennessee River and crossed Nickajack Lake, by this time reduced to an EF2 storm. Miraculously, only one person in Jackson County died. About 6:19 on that

same evening, a violent multiple-vortex wedge tornado, rated EF5, touched down in Geraldine. tracking northwestward generally parallel to and east of Highway 75 through Fyffe, Rainsville and Sylvania into Georgia, killing 25 people.

November 30, 2016 (Jackson-Dekalb) 2:11am
Damage Scale – F3
Path Length (miles) – 13.48
Max Path Width (yards) – 206
Fatalities – 4
Injuries – 9
Location: Pisgah to Ider

There were 39 tornadoes spawned during a two-day outbreak. Significant damage was observed from the tornado along CR-117 and CR-159, the area where the four fatalities occurred. A one-story day care center was completely destroyed and blown off its foundation causing seven injuries. Physical evidence led to a preliminary assessment that the tornado was an EF-3 with winds of approximately 145 mph.

David Bradford

Editor's note: *Many thanks to Scottsboro's Cooperative Weather Observer Program representative, Greg Bell, for distilling these statistics from the program database.*

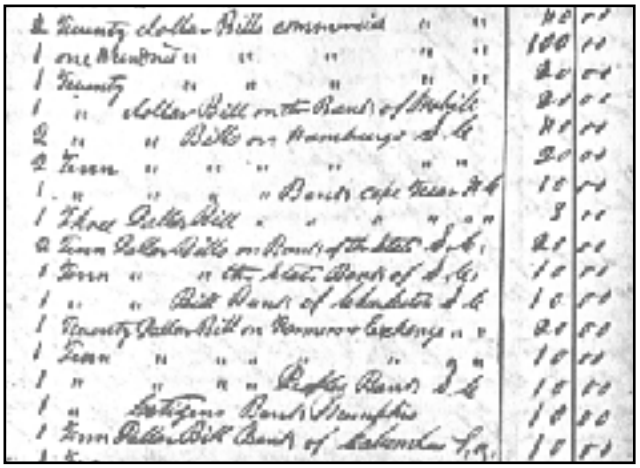
Reporting weather extremes is fraught with complications. There are frequently discrepancies between newspaper accounts and the official records. For instance, the Thursday, February 6, 1936 *Jackson County Sentinel*, in an article entitled "Scottsboro Has Its Wildest Week of Weather in History," stated that eight to nine inches of snow fell between Wednesday January 29 and Thursday January 30. The article also reported that the temperature on Friday evening the 31st fell to four degrees below zero (see note below). Neither of those conditions is reflected in the National Weather Program statistics that were used to compile the data in our April edition. Similarly, the February 16, 1905 edition of the *Progressive Age* stated that temperatures the previous Monday had plunged to 16 degrees below zero, but official records do not bear out that claim. In the absence of solid evidence to the contrary, the coldest temperature recorded for the county occurred on February 12, 1899, at 13 degrees below zero.

Note: The *Sentinel's* "Scottsboro Has Its Wildest Week of Weather in History" ran as a sidebar to a story recounting one of the most horrendous and underreported incidents in county history. On Friday morning, January 31, 1936, 20 inmates burned to death while being transported to a work detail on the Old Larkinsville Road west of Scottsboro. In near zero temperatures, the work detail was being held in an open cage on the back of a flatbed truck and the inmates were attempting to warm themselves with a gasoline stove. When the truck swerved on the icy road, gasoline spilled into the truck bed, ignited, and killed the men in the ensuring explosion and fire. Those who arrived on the scene in the wake of the accident threw snow on the victims in a futile attempt to save them. Two survivors were rolled in the snow to extinguish their flames. Temperatures on the evening of the accident fell another eight degrees from the previous evening to reach minus four, according to the *Sentinel*.

A Five Dollar Bill Issued by First National Bank

Thank you, John Tally, for calling this five dollar bill issued by First National Bank to my attention.

Allowing banks to issue currency was a common practice during the Civil War. In fact, the estate inventory for Robert T. Scott, recorded in probate records on December 28, 1865, showed that his cash assets were tied up in bills issued by various Southern banks—the Bank of Mobile, the Bank of Hamburgs, SC, etc. All of these Confederate bills were worthless at the end of the war, and is the reason that Elizabeth Scott was forced to sell 58 shares of Memphis and Charleston railroad stock (valued at $17.50 a share) on July 30, 1866, in order to settle her husband's debts.



Excerpt from Jackson County Probate Records, December 28, 1865.

It is interesting to note that the practice of allowing banks to issue their own notes was in force from 1863 to 1935. It ended when the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) was put in place after the bank failures of the 1929 Depression. Research on the government Bureau of Engraving and Printing website yielded this information about the practice.

Prior to the issuance of currency notes by the government, private banks issued their own paper currency. The holders of these private bank notes were generally charged exchange rates when spending or redeeming the notes in much the same manner as notes of various countries are exchanged today. The exchange rates varied widely from bank to bank across the U.S., and banks and businesses did not even have to accept this privately printed money. As a result, people could never be sure that the money they received would be accepted for deposit or as payment for goods or debts.

As part of the financing measures aimed at paying the costs of the Civil War, Congress instituted legislation that reformed the nation's banking system. Consequently, banks were required to purchase and place U.S. government

securities on deposit with the government in order to be chartered as National Banks by the Comptroller of the Currency. Additionally, the National Banks could then issue new, standardized notes that would be accepted and recognized by National Banks across the country.

National Bank Notes were first authorized by the National Bank Act of February 25, 1863, and were issued between 1863 and 1935. Their design was the same regardless of place of issue, differing only in the name, location, and charter number of the bank. A National Bank Note was good at any National Bank or the Treasury. Therefore, anyone holding or taking such a note in payment could be sure of getting his or her money's worth.

National Bank Note issuances are usually grouped into three Charter Periods (1863- 1882, 1882-1902, and 1902-1935). These periods refer to the organizational life of a National Bank. The National Bank Acts of 1863 and 1864 limited the corporate existence of a National Bank, represented by its charter, to 20 years. Thus the first 20-year life span or First Charter Period ran until 1882 (presumably to cover banks that had formed in anticipation of the passage of the 1863 act). In 1882, Congress renewed these charters for another 20 years or until 1902, creating the Second Charter Period. The Third Charter Period began with another 20-year renewal of charters set to expire in 1922. Finally, in 1922, Congress basically eliminated the deadline on corporate existence, extending the Third Charter Period to 99 years. Charter Periods are important for National Bank Note series designations because the renewal of a bank's charter required that it start a new series of notes. National Bank Notes were issued under a total of seven different series until 1935 when the bonds used as security for issuance were retired by the Treasury and note issuance ended. (https://www.bep.gov/media/1046/download?inline#:~.)

The $5 bill shown above is from the last series. This last series of National Bank Notes were these small-sized notes. Available in $5, $10, $20, $50, and $100 denominations, the notes were last issued in May 1935.

Annette Bradford

Sample reproductions of Confederate currency, orderable from amazon.com.