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The Jackson County Chronicles

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January Meeting: The January meeting of the Jackson County Historical Association will be held on Sunday, January 25th at 2pm at the Scottsboro Depot Museum. This month's meeting will feature the JCHA's own Patrick Stewart. Patrick is a member of the Scottsboro City Council and an active member and director of the JCHA. His love of the Civil War and relic hunting is legendary. Patrick will speak about using his metal detector to search sites that he has identified in mid-nineteenth century maps and letters, patiently examining battlefields and camps by walking the grid in inch-by-inch increments. Many of these finds are from the area around the historic freight depot where our meeting takes place.

Patrick's metal detection skills have been featured in *American Digger*, *Western and Eastern Treasure*, and *Jackson* magazines, and on *Relic Round-Up*, *American Digger*'s podcast. One of his biggest finds featured in these publications was a button cast to commemorate the inauguration of President George Washington discovered on a dig hosted by the South Carolina Dirt Diggers at a site known for Revolutionary War encampments and engagements in Shappells, SC. He last spoke at a JCHA meeting in 2015.

Guest Writers: This issue features the work of three guest writers: James Sentell, J.P. Parsons, and Dr. James Reed, all of whom have contributed to this publication in the past. James Sentell brings us a story of the Matlock family, early settlers of the Big Coon. J.P has written an interesting story of lost silver mines in Jackson County. And James Reed was presenter at the JCHA's 50th birthday party in October. Thank you all for your commitment to sharing Jackson County history.

Board Position: The JCHA board needs a secretary. If you would like to be involved, contact Nat Cisco, revivescottsboro@gmail.com.

Passing of a Long-Time Member: Betty Bouldin Knight, age 84, died January 1. She graduated from JCHS in 1959 after working as a teacher and librarian in Atlanta. She and husband Bill returned to live on her family's Century Farm in Roach's Cove in 2002. She helped Fackler recover McGuffey's Store for use as a community center.

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Founders' Awards at the October 2025 Meeting

Four individuals were recognized with lifetime history achievement awards at the October 2025 birthday celebration: video wizard Sam Hall, lifetime historian and JCHA co-founder Christine Sumner, and *Chronicles* editors Annette and David Bradford. Here is the text of the award citations.



Sam Hall has given our county so much joy over the last few years by rescuing 1940s 16mm movies of Jackson County, 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 2023, 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 smelled of 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 bachelor's degree 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 myriad ways he has preserved Chattanooga history. In May 2021, Sam 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. Most recently, Sam was our speaker at the Isabella Theater in Stevenson in January 2024.

It was a good day in 2018 when Sam contacted the JCHA looking for high-resolution photos of the Bailey Hotel to create a gift for his father. We are proud to present the JCHA's highest recognition for incredible services rendered to Sam Hall.



Christine Paradise Sumner: The 1974 invitation to organize the Jackson County Historical Association came from two outstanding women whom we are proud to call our founders: Ann Chambless and Christine Sumner. We are proud today to recognize our organization's co-founder.

Christine Sumner began writing her weekly history column "They Passed This Way" for the *Sentinel* and the *Jackson County Advertiser* in 1969 with two small children at home. She continued to write it for 10 years. At the same time, she was writing news and history features for these newspapers and for the *Birmingham News*, and at the same time serving as lineage chairman for the DAR.

She has always been an involved citizen, making her county better. She had been chairman of the Jackson County Easter Seal Drive in 1960 and continued to be active with this organization, serving a three-year

term with the Alabama TB Association starting in 1966. She was elected president of the Business and Professional Woman in 1961, all while working for Liberty Mutual Life Insurance.
Christine has done phenomenal work for the cause of Jackson County history. In the 1970s, her Bellefonte research led to having Bellefonte placed on the National Register of Historic Places. She was the first person in the state to be given the Award of Merit from the Alabama Department of Archives and History. She was named to Who's Who in Alabama in 1971. And she was also an involved parent, serving as president of the Caldwell Elementary PTA in 1971.

Christine borrowed the Annie Coleman Proctor genealogy collection from Annie's family, copied it, indexed it, bound it, and presented it to the Scottsboro Public Library. She was named coordinator for the Genealogy and Local History Department at the Scottsboro Public Library and was later president of Friends of the Library, coordinating the first pilgrimage to historic homes in 1970 and contributing the first materials to the genealogy room the year Miss Daisy Caldwell funded the room.

She was a member of the DAR for more than 50 years, and of the Daughters of 1812 for as long as the organization existed. In 1974, she was research coordinator for the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Government (TARCOG) under the direction of historian Dr. Francis Roberts at UAH and architect Harvie Jones. In 1975, she was nominated to the Advisory Board of the Alabama Historical Commission representing Jackson County.

In 1985, she opened a ladies' store called Cricket's Closet on the west side of the square. In 1988, this business became Ann's, and Christine operated this business many years and served as a bridal consultant. But history was never far from her mind. She set up a Civil War grave ceremony in Pleasant Gap in 1993 and wrote guest history editorials for the *Sentinel* in 1998. She used her business to hold benefits for Habitat for Humanity.

For five years beginning in 2005, she operated the House of Ruth, an organization helping women coming out of jail to rebuild their lives. She wrote a women's health column for the *Clarion*. In 2023 at age 91, Christine published her *Old Bellefonte: Historical and Genealogical* book, an excellent volume sold locally at the library and various other locations. She is currently at work on a book about drug addiction.

We are proud to recognize Christine for her role in the founding of the Jackson County Historical Association and in researching and documenting Jackson County history.



David and Annette Bradford Annette Bradford is an Auburn, Alabama native. She pursued her early education in Auburn and graduated from Auburn High School in 1970. She received her BA and MA in English from Auburn University and her PhD in rhetoric and communication from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. She taught for seven years before starting work for IBM in 1983, where she worked in Kingston, New York; Vienna, Austria; and Raleigh, North Carolina as an information designer, programmer, and writer.

David Bradford was born in Scottsboro, where he graduated high school in 1969. He attended Auburn University, where he received BA and MA degrees in English, and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute where he received a PhD in communication and rhetoric. He taught composition, literature, and journalism at Auburn, Northeast Alabama Community College, and Rensselaer before joining IBM as a technical writer in 1983. David managed organizations specializing in publications and user experience in Kingston, New York, Vienna, Austria; and Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

David and Annette both retired from IBM and came home to Scottsboro, where they have both been exceptionally productive in documenting the history of Jackson County through the Jackson County Chronicles, a quarterly newsletter, and one of the very best publications of its kind. Using every source available, David and Annette have relentlessly sought interesting and insightful stories of Jackson County history, many of which were little known before. Annette could also be found digging through records in the courthouse, the Jackson County Heritage Center, and even in the state archives in Montgomery. Many times she has bravely fought off the undergrowth of forgotten cemeteries to record those buried there.

Relying on their experience with IBM, David and Annette were quick to design and develop a website that incorporates vast historical content. In 2020 the Jackson County Historical Association (JCHA) website, jchaweb.org, was honored by winning the Alabama Historical Association (AHA) Digital History Award for the state's best online historical offering.

Through her research with Ancestry.com, Annette gained an interest in scanning and digitizing all the available newspapers of Jackson County, a massive undertaking. In the beginning, the primary focus of the digitizing project was to preserve legal notices, but these papers also portray everyday life in Scottsboro and Jackson County. Those newspapers which were already on microfilm were the first to be digitized, but numerous, heavy volumes had to be manually placed on the scanner, page by page, a process that took months to complete.

The Jackson County Historical Association was instrumental in preserving and restoring the historic Scottsboro Freight Depot and making it a museum. The Bradfords took an interest in the museum, recruiting volunteers to man the depot so it could be open to visitors and managing the exhibits inside.

In another scanning project, Annette scanned and digitized all available high school yearbooks from Jackson County, another daunting project. Numerous yearbooks going back to the early part of the twentieth century were solicited from a number of individuals all over the county, providing a unique record of students over the decades.

Through their passionate efforts David and Annette have blessed Jackson County with a vast store of knowledge and insight which will benefit our citizens for generations into the future. They richly deserve recognition for their dedication and tireless efforts.

About the Founders' Award Medal: The medal was designed by noted Jackson County artist Sonya Clemons, with assistance from John Graham and others. It features distinctive Jackson County and Alabama elements: The historic 1912 Jackson County Courthouse crowns the medal's obverse, the Tennessee River flows alongside blooming Queen Anne's lace, framed by both Cumberland and Sand Mountains. On the reverse is a classic laurel wreath of wild turkey feathers, surrounding a map outline of Alabama. The medal is bronzed zinc cast in Germany, with the assistance of Maxwell Medals and Awards of Traverse City, Michigan.



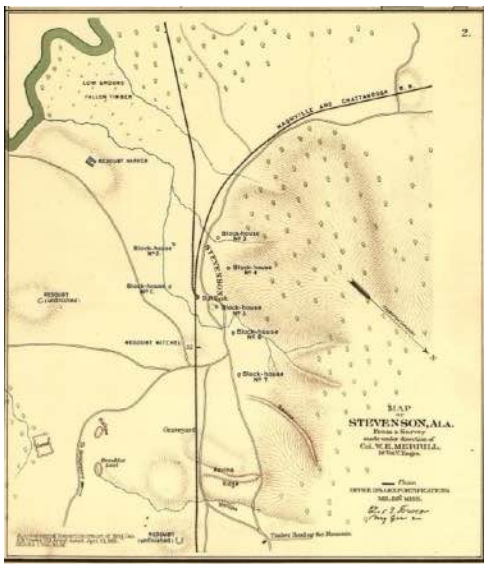
The Cowan House



The Cowan House at 310 West Main Street in Stevenson is a classic Greek Revival farmhouse constructed about 1850 by Thomas A. Nance. In 1855, it was purchased by William A. Austin (1812-1875), an Alabama state senator, Reconstruction-era commissioner of oaths, former merchant, and staunch Unionist. Family tradition says the house was used as a Civil War hospital during the brief Confederate occupation of Stevenson. It later became a headquarters for Union Brevet Brigadier General Wladimir Krzynowski and his staff while the Union forces occupied Stevenson, 1863-1864.

Wartime maps and other documents sometimes referred to it as "Fort Stevenson," one of eight blockhouses built to protect Stevenson's vital rail lines during the Federal Army occupation. Three springs on the property provided fresh water to the multitude of troops, war refugees, and others that passed nearby during the War. Period photographs and drawings depict soldiers at the house, and four rifle loopholes bored into the back wall attest to its role in the War.

The colored etching displayed here that shows the Civil War map of Stevenson commissioned by W. E. Merrill with the positions of Union blockhouses marked. The Cowen house was Block House 3. During the Reconstruction period, the house continued to serve as the headquarters for General Kryznowski.



Long-time county historian Ann Chambless put together this chronology of the Cowan house in 2014.

November 1850 – Thomas J. Nance's (a native of Tennessee) first marriage was to Louisiana Holden on November 21, 1850, in Maury County, Tennessee.

Late 1850 or early 1851, Thomas J. Nance moved to Stevenson, Alabama, and built a house (now known as the Cowan House) for his new bride. He established a general mercantile store in Stevenson where he sold groceries, clothing, furniture, tools, mules, horses, saddles, cotton seed, and grains such as wheat and rye. In the 1980s, James H. Caperton of Shelbyville, Tennessee, was the owner of the original Thomas J. Nance

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store account book that contains the names of those who had accounts with Nance in 1855.

1854 – Stevenson was first incorporated and the Louisville and Nashville freight depot was built in Stevenson.

1854 - Thomas J. Nance's first child, Sarah Malinda, was born in Alabama according to census records. It appears that his first wife died either in childbirth or shortly thereafter.

1855 – Tennessee marriage records lead one to believe that Thomas J. Nance sold his Stevenson mercantile store and residence and moved back to his home State of Tennessee in late 1855, as he married his second wife, Elizabeth J. Bell on September 5, 1855, in Sumner County, Tennessee. At the time of the 1860 census, Thomas J. and Elizabeth Nance were living in Bedford County, Tennessee, and Thomas Nance's occupation was recorded as Druggist. Census records show that Thomas J. Nance's second child, Virginia (called Jennie), was born in 1859 in Tennessee.

1855 - Thomas J. Nance sold his house in Stevenson to William A. Austin. It is possible that Nance also sold his mercantile inventory to William A. Austin. In late 1855, William A. and Crockett Austin, John R. Coffey, and Lorenzo Russell opened a mercantile store in Stevenson. NOTE: Newspaper ads show that William A. Austin was back in business in Stevenson in late 1865.

1862 – The Civil War came to Stevenson, Alabama

1863 - In August 1863, Major General W. S. Rosecrans chose Stevenson, Alabama, as his major base to prepare for the capture of Chattanooga and to plan his tactics against CSA General Braxton Bragg. A second telegraph wire was run to Stevenson in August 1863. Brigadier General J. A. Garfield was also based in Stevenson in 1863.

1863 - The battles in Chattanooga and Chickamauga provided reasons for Stevenson to remain a Federal military supply base. More than one house was used as a field hospital. Battlefield casualties with less serious wounds were transported by hospital trains to Stevenson because this area was relatively free of major skirmishes. Also, CSA prisoners and refugees were housed in Stevenson. Civil War maps sometimes referred to the Cowan House as Fort Stevenson. An extant photograph of the Cowan House made during the Civil War shows soldiers sitting on the front porch. The photo also shows a telegraph pole near the porch front steps.

1864 – In March 1864, Colonel Wladimir B. Krzyzanowski was appointed to command Post Stevenson. The ORs show that in December 1864 there were 7 officers and 33 men at Post Stevenson as well as an infantry division consisting of 32 officers and 703 men. In addition, there were 73 officers and 1425 men under Col. Krzyzanowski's command who guarded the railroad between Bridgeport and the Elk River.

1865 – In March 1865, Col. Krzyzanowski was commissioned a Brevet-Brigadier General. He served as the area Provost Marshal during the first months of the Reconstruction Period after the Civil War.



L to R, the historic photo of the Cowan House showing Brigadier General Wladimir Krzynowski and his staff, the general (Wikipedia), and details of the general and his staff.

April 19, 1865 - According to the records of Wilmer Walton, a Quaker teacher at Averyville School in Stevenson, the town of Stevenson was draped in mourning, and the places of businesses closed by order of Brevet-Brig. General Krzyzanowski due to the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. During the afternoon of April 19, 1865, Wilmer Walton led his fellow teachers and their black students and their relatives, plus a contingent of white citizens, through the town and halted at General Krzyzanowski's headquarters (the Cowan House). On the front lawn of the Cowan House, Robert Caver, a black minister, delivered a solemn and appropriate discourse, listened to by all parties who also lamented the death of their President.

May 1865 - General Krzyzanowski issued a license to Robert Caver, an industrious black man, authorizing him to legally perform marriage ceremonies among the "colored population" in this vicinity. The first marriage was that of Robert Caver and his wife and was performed at the General's headquarters at the Cowan House. It is said that the Cavers were the first African Americans legally married in the State of Alabama, and that wedding took place at the Cowan House.

1875 – William A. Austin died. Judge John Graham has a book that belonged to William A. Austin dated "Stevenson, Alabama, May 2, 1860, that he purchased on eBay. The title is *The People's Home Book: an instructive and interesting collection of illustrated miscellany, designed for popular reading : embracing historical events, geographical descriptions, scientific discoveries, personal narratives, instructive biographies.* It is an almanac-type book and has the longest title ever!

1878 – Sally (Austin) Rucker, daughter of William A. Austin, sold the house to William Mitchell Cowan.

1900s - Extant newspaper accounts and family stories show "there always seemed to be a party going on at the Cowan House." There were festive dances, ladies' teas, weddings, and even funerals, according to the stories told to current owners, Judge John H. and Angela Graham.

September 15, 1978 – Cowan House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

October 1992 – John H. and Angela Graham purchased the house from the Cowan heirs and began a historically correct renovation of the original structure and added additional living space to make the house family-living friendly for their young family.



Photo from Tennessee Valley Authority, Stevenson, Alabama: A Plan for Historical Development, December 1976.

2014 - The parties and social gatherings hosted by Judge and Mrs. Graham continue to make an invitation to the Cowan House a prized and treasured social occasion. In April 2014, Judge and Mrs. Graham opened the Cowan House to Alabama Historical Association members who attend the AHA annual Spring Conference.

Former county historian Ann Chambless stated that "the Cowan House is THE most important historic house in Jackson County. Its owners continue to preserve Stevenson's rich cultural history. All the citizens of Stevenson should feel a sense of pride in the Cowan House and its many contributions to society. The Cowan House is better than any museum house I have ever visited in the entire United States."

In 2002, Judge John Graham shared this story of his family's 33 years living in this historic home.

The 1850 Cowan House became the Graham House in 1992. To say that it was in bad shape when we moved in is an understatement—my mother reckoned some of the holes in the walls were "big enough to throw a cat through"! And on Christmas Eve 1992, my father-in-law observed that it was "so cold in here that we could pour water on the floor and be ice skating in 20 minutes!"

The $28,000 we paid for the house (and three acres to boot) indicates its condition, but not its true value. We spent the first night here December 11, 1992—setting-up camp in the front room, sleeping on the floor, using a 220-electric heater, a dorm room-sized refrigerator, a microwave oven, a little Christmas tree, a partial bathroom, and a 3-month-old baby! Things moved quickly, however, and we had the first of many events here just a month later, Redmon's baptism.

Since then, we Grahams have hosted more than five thousand people in our home at events as wide-ranging as summertime mint julep parties, open houses, and holiday celebrations, to a wedding reception for 500, to Civil War reenactments, local history tours, to the 2014 statewide meeting of the Alabama Historical Association to much more somber events, including a two-day visit from reporter Jamie Gangel and a full crew from NBC's TODAY Show on the first anniversary of the tragic TWA Flight 800 crash, in which my sister, nephew, and three friends were lost.

Our kids, Rachael and Redmon, may not have fully appreciated living in a museum when they were young, but I think they've come to love the quirky character and rich history of this house, their home. Our daughter was about 8 or 9 when I heard her telling another kid at the beach, "I live in a hospital, I sleep on the porch, and we have ghosts." To be fair, Rachael heard all her young life about a "Civil War hospital," her bedroom in those days was a converted porch, and her bed sat exactly where Angela and I first heard one of the ghosts talking to us!

We have worked diligently to make a modern, comfortable home for ourselves and our family here, while respecting the historic importance and integrity of the house. In 2007, we built a 2,000-square foot addition that respects the historic character of the main house (and Rachael got to move off the porch). I have collected many artifacts relating to the history of the house and of Stevenson, including bullets and other objects found in the yard, letters and telegrams written to-and-from the house during the Civil War, books and other accounts in which it is mentioned, photographs of it over the years, and stories of people who called this place home since about 1850. And, of course, there are the ghosts who share it with us—I guess, truthfully, it's really their home, and we're just the present caretakers for them!

Ann Chambless, Annette Bradford, and John Graham







L to R, a drawing of the Cowan House by H. Thorne, a photo of the Graham yard and side of the house from 2024 by Rachel Graham, and photo of the National Register plaque at the Cowan House by Rachel Graham.

The Beginnings of Men's and Women's Clubs in Jackson County



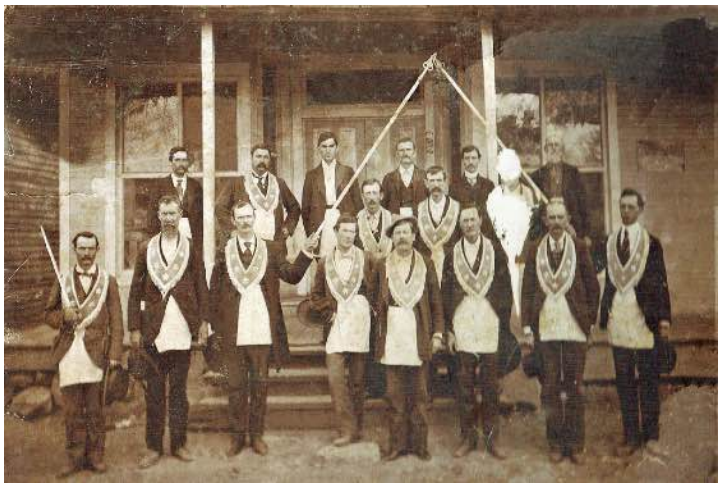
Scottsboro Mason Meeting Hall in Dr. Boyd's building, later the Locker Plant. Photo from the AL Dept of Archives and History.

Club meetings have been reported in Jackson County newspapers since at least 1879, and men's and women's clubs have been an active part of the county's social and civic agenda from that early date until this day. Clubs that enjoy reading and discussing a literary work. Clubs that beautify the environment. Clubs that perform public services and meet the needs of the county's less fortunate. Clubs that support the arts. All types of clubs have been woven into the fabric of county life and enrich the lives of their participants and county residents.

Religious "Clubs"

If you use the dictionary definition of "club" as "an association or organization dedicated to a particular interest or activity," then certainly a discussion of "clubs" in the county should start with the Masons and the Odd Fellows.

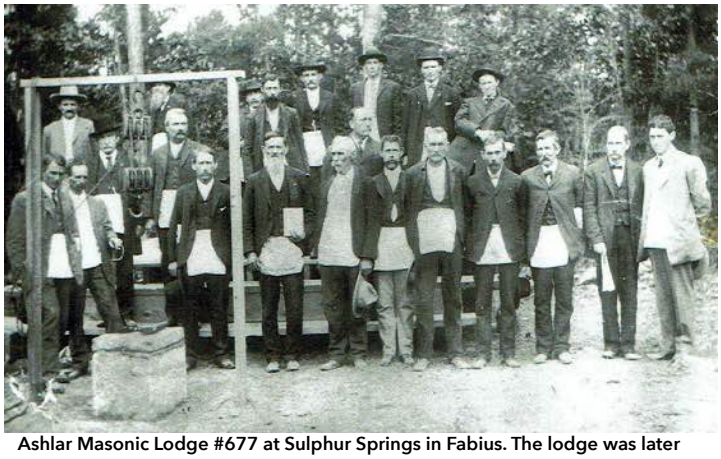
John Kennamer's history of the county (1) says that the Masons organized before the Civil War. "In 1868, there were five Lodges in the county as follows: Bellefonte No. 82; Bolivar No. 127; Paint Rock Lodge No. 274; Larkinsville Lodge No. 277; and Holly Grove Lodge No. 274." (p. 92) All the lodges held a big meeting in Bolivar in 1868 and later another large gathering at Big Spring halfway between Paint Rock and Woodville the next year.



Langston Masonic Lodge about 1920. The man on the front row first on the left is Jesse Jenkins Campbell, David Campbell's grandfather. Photo from Lynn Baker.

Scottsboro Masons Lodge No. 359 was organized in 1869 and hosted the organization's big meeting in 1870. "A new hall was erected in Scottsboro, to be occupied by the three orders of Masons, Odd Fellows, and Pale Faces," Kennamer explains. These groups met in the basement of what has to be the old opera house on the corner of Laurel and Caldwell, since the article goes on to explain that school was held there and that Saturdays and Sundays were reserved for church services. They later met on the 2nd floor of the building that today houses Safety First at 122 East Peachtree. The building was constructed in 1916 by Dr. Hugh Boyd to house his medical practice. Dr. Boyd was a Mason and supported the lodge by allowing them to meet in his building, which still has a large Masonic emblem on its front. Later this room was used by the Fraternal Order of Police, and the Masons built a new building on Willow Street.

There were also Masonic lodges in Langston and Sulphur Springs. The picture, lent to the JCHA by



Ashlar Masonic Lodge #677 at Sulphur Springs in Fabius. The lodge was later moved to Ider. This picture shows the laying of the cornerstone was Oct 17, 1907.

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Lynn Baker, is about 1920; the Sulphur Spring picture was taken in 1907 when the Masons laid the cornerstone for Union Church, built as a Baptist and Methodist meeting hall.

There were also black Masonic lodges. The *Scottsboro Citizen* noted on the July 18, 1879 that there were 22 "colored Masonic lodges in the state." Black Masons were known as the Prince Hall Masons; they organized in Boston in 1775. The *Encyclopedia of Alabama* states that "By 1902, there were 104 Prince Hall lodges in Alabama representing approximately 2,830 members and more than 11,000 members in 414 lodges by 1910." This group of Alabama lodges built a Grand Temple in Birmingham in 1924, which is still standing today. The lodge held a benefit for the Scottsboro Boys in 1932, though the Masons required their members to be apolitical. (2)



Black Masonic Building in Scottsboro, 2020.

There was a very early Black masonic lodge in Scottsboro near the freight depot that burned in 1911. A new lodge building was built on the corner of North Houston and Orange Street which also served as a gathering place and social hall, but the building had fallen into disuse and was torn down in 2020. The lodge here is no longer active. Black Masons in Scottsboro now attend meetings at the Gurley lodge.

The *Encyclopedia of Alabama* notes that just as influential White men were Masons, Black Masons found that "fraternity membership was considered very beneficial because better educated members, who may have been teachers, lawyers, pastors or businessmen, tutored new members, who were often farmers, miners, mill workers or laborers, to develop their organizational and public-speaking skills." (http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3942) (3))



Odd Fellows at Beechgrove Church. Standing: Brent Green, William Kilpatrick, Joe Rich, Ira Green, John Green, Eaphriam Green, Bill Green, Billy Graham, Ace Hill. Kneeling: Zeak Sanders, Jim Sanders, Ike Erwin, Henry Koger, John (Pig) Riddle, Treat Gattis.

Like the Masons, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows were organized before the Civil War. "In June 1869, the Odd Fellows Lodge No. 69, at Bellefonte, was reorganized It was called Barcelona Independent Order. Officers were: John F. Patterson, John Snodgrass, G. W. Story, and W. H. Robinson.



Woodville in 1914. Two-story building is Woodmen of the World Lodge, No. 88. Photo from Jason Hodges.

There were lodges at Paint Rock Valley (organized May 1872); Big Coon Lodge No. 75, organized in September 1873 by S. G. Grimmett with G. W. Allen, J. L. Gentry, J. F. Potts, D. N. Patterson, J. D. Patterson, David Tate, William Matthews, and Wiley Matthews;

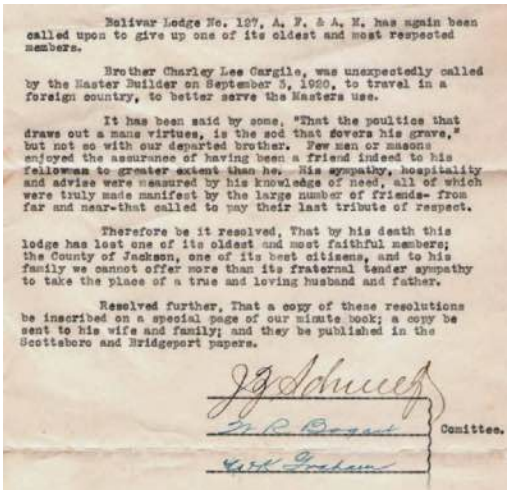
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Fackler Lodge No. 76 organized in September 1874 with members Jessie L. Potts, Lewis T. Webb, A. M. Holland, and James M. Bryant; Stevenson Lodge No. 77 in September 1874 organized by S. G. Grimmett with members George W. Thornton, John G. Matthews, F. M. McMahan, and Leroy Rash. A lodge was organized in Pisgah in 1910. (4)

Kennamer in his Woodville book(5) discussed the Woodville Odd Fellows lodge, noting that it was organized about but only lasted a few years. It met in the same hall in the old hotel, in the same location that the Woodmen of the World first used. " This Lodge flourished a short time, having thirty members or more and then disbanded. " James R, Gayle was a leader in this lodge. The photo at the left is the Woodville Woodmen of the World Lodge No. 88 in 1914, from Jason Hodges. Jason notes, "In 1925 W.E. Gayle was the lodge's consul commander. R.E. Jones was the clerk. The W.O.W lodge was the only secret society with a public presence in Woodville at the time. The strength of the Primitive Baptist in the community, who frowned upon secret orders, kept others like the Masons and Odd Fellows from organizing. (JCHA Facebook page, Dec. 6, 2021)

To summarize the importance of these early groups, Kennamer noted, "Most prominent men of the county joined either the Masons or the Odd Fellows, or both." (*History of JC*, p. 92)

There is additional information on members of the Masons by location in Kennamer's Jackson County and Woodville books and in Eliza Woodall's *The Stevenson Story*. There is information on the Sulphur Springs lodge in the *Not Forgotten* book by Peggy Hampton and Karen Crowell. The Woodville book and the Not Forgotten book are available in the Downloads section of the JCHA web page, www.jchaweb.org/downloads. Check the *Encyclopedia of Alabama* online for information about Black Masons.



Bolivar Lodge No. 127, A. F. & A. M. has again been called upon to give up one of its oldest and most respected members.

Brother Charley Lee Cargile, was unexpectedly called by the Master Builder on September 3, 1920, to travel in a foreign country, to better serve the Masters use.

It has been said by some, "That the poultice that draws out a mans virtues, is the sod that covers his grave," but not so with our departed brother. Few men or masons enjoyed the assurance of having been a friend indeed to his fellowman to greater extent than he. His sympathy, hospitality and advise were measured by his knowledge of need, all of which were truly made manifest by the large number of friends from far and near-that called to pay their last tribute of respect.

Therefore be it resolved, That by his death this lodge has lost one of its oldest and most faithful members; the County of Jackson, one of its best citizens, and to his family we cannot offer more than its fraternal tender sympathy to take the place of a true and loving husband and father.

Resolved further, That a copy of these resolutions be inscribed on a special page of our minute book; a copy be sent to his wife and family; and they be published in the Scottsboro and Bridgeport papers.

Committee.

Bolivar Masonic Lodge, 1920 obit for member Charley Cargile.

Men's Book Clubs

The oldest book club in the county was originally a men's club, operating by 1879. Women's clubs became prevalent during the Progressive Era; men's clubs are older than women's clubs. The *Scottsboro Citizen* noted in March 1879, "The Reading Society met at the residence of R. C. Hunt, Esq. last Monday night, owning to the crowded condition of Phillips House. The members enjoyed the meeting very much. Mr. Hunt has a fine cottage, an excellent wife, and he ought to enjoy life."

In 1879, men in early Alabama were joining together into groups with shared interests all over the state. The Citizen noted in March that "a farmers' club has been organized in Cullman." Two weeks later, the Citizen announced that "Dadeville is to have a literary club and a reading society." The April 5 *Citizen* noted that "Marion has an archery club." And on April 28, the Citizen reported that "Springville, St. Clair county, has a bachelor's club." In June that year, the Citizen announced the organization of a debating club in Jasper. All this proliferation of men's clubs led the Citizen to quip in its Wit and Humor Club, "A rifle club—a gang of burglars." "Club men" were regarded as time wasters. The September 5, 1879 paper characterized "Northern Women" as those who "board at hotels and have nothing to do but to kill time... These idle women have a great many visitors, mostly men about town, club men, and other with money to spend and nothing to do."

During the Progressive Era (1890–1920), the status of Alabama in society was transforming dramatically. As Emily Blejwas wrote in *The History of Alabama in Fourteen Foods*, "Women were increasingly claiming roles outside the home, which began to dissolve the division between the public sphere of business (belonging to men) and the private sphere of home (belonging to women) that had dominated the

nineteenth century." (6) The analysis of why this happened which follows is from Emily, and is used with her permission.

The Progressive Era and the Rise of Women's Clubs

In Alabama, the Civil War had disrupted conventional gender roles by giving southern women the opportunity to perform traditionally male work. Many had managed family farms while their husbands were away at the front. Others began working outside the home for the first time at steel mills and defense centers. Post–Civil War economic conditions extended the trend, drawing many young women to work in the textile mills to help support their families.

Technological advances of the 1890s—including central heating, electricity, indoor plumbing, cooking stoves, electric refrigerators and appliances, ready-to-wear clothing, commercially baked bread, canned goods, and baking powder—further untethered women from the home by freeing them from some of the hardest work associated with housekeeping. Public education emerged, releasing mothers from their roles as teachers and allowing some to hold respected positions as educators. And finally, women had an average of 3.5 children in 1900, which was half the 1800 average.

Taken together, these trends enabled women to be far more active outside the home, resulting in a proliferation of women's organizations in the late nineteenth century. Though art and literary clubs were founded first, women soon moved beyond goals of self-improvement to societal improvement....In the 1890s, women created a large number of organizations to address a range of problems, many of which stemmed from rapid industrialization.

In Alabama, church organizations, teachers' associations, and temperance groups comprised the bulk of clubs formed by women in the nineteenth century. The Alabama Women's Christian Temperance Union, founded in 1884, addressed a range of social issues including alcoholism, women's education, poverty, child labor, prison reform, and homes for abandoned women and children. In 1895, the literary clubs of major Alabama cities merged to form the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs. The initial 130 members soon shifted the federation's focus to civic affairs, tackling a wide variety of issues including illiteracy, public education reform, juvenile delinquency, and treatment of juvenile offenders. It would eventually become the largest women's organization in Alabama.(7)....

Alabama "club women" managed to skirt gender debates by defining their public activities as family centered. All of their work, like promoting temperance and education, was purposed to improve home life. Entering the public sphere as homemakers, club women brought their domestic ideals, values, and concerns to the political arena to benefit Alabama families.(8) As one woman explained, the Alabama club woman was "a homemaker in the broadest sense, her labors not confined to brightening merely her own fireside circle, but reaching Statewide to countless homes where wretchedness and poverty sit side by side with ignorance and crime." (9)

Because they accessed the public sphere in the name of home and family, Alabama club women believed they operated within traditional gender constructs and were in fact "fearful of being identified with the objectionable 'new woman'" of the Progressive Era, notes Alabama historian Mary Martha Thomas.(10)

Writing in Selma in 1895, Mary LaFayette Robbins, the first president of the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs, rejected the notion of the new woman and urged fellow women to pursue activities that fit within traditional gender boundaries: "The idea, that greater privileges, and graver responsibilities have evolved a new woman, radically different from the original one, is altogether a mistake. An error, which has tempted woman into paths, for which she is by nature unfitted. . . . The one, wholesome truth, embodied in the so-called woman problem, is the fact that idleness is subversive of the well-being of every individual. Out of this truth arises a query worthy of every thoughtful woman's consideration. The question, what may she do without stepping outside of her proper environment."(11)

Significantly, Alabama women's clubs did not belong only to white women. From the inception of the club movement, African American women formed their own clubs for the betterment of society. The earliest of these included the Ten Times One Is Ten Club (1888) and the Anna M. Duncan Club (1897) of Montgomery and the Tuskegee Women's Club (1895). In 1899, several of the early clubs united to create the Alabama Federation of Colored Women's Club. By 1904, more than twenty-six African American women's clubs existed throughout Alabama and worked on a range of issues, with a focus on juvenile justice and prison reform.

© The Jackson County Historical Association



20th Century Book Club in 1959 at the home of Edward "Miss Ed" Flippen Robinson. Front L to R, Evelyn McClure Clopton, Lena Erwin McCutchen, Mrs. J. E. Carter, Mrs. Ben Anderson, Maude Payne Austill, Maude McCutchen and Eva Luella Bellomy Bradford. Back. Edward "Miss Ed" Flippen Robinson, Mary Hunt Henshaw, Elma Kirby Benson, Joy Airheart, Teresa Adams Thompson, Callie Stanfield Benson, Flora Kirk, Kate Johnson Bradford, Maude Crabtree Smith, Margaret Broadway Michaels, and Mollie Owensby Kennamer.

Women's rights and women's suffrage were not part of the typical club woman's agenda. As Thomas writes, "such overt political participation was incompatible with their more cautious approach to obtaining influence through the invocation of women's traditional domestic qualities."(12) Though a state- wide suffrage organization had formed in Alabama in 1893, the movement floundered for nearly two decades because early advocates urged women to reject traditional gender divisions to obtain equality with men. But many Alabama women found their power and identity in the home, they took pride in it, and most had no interest in reconstructing their identity and relinquishing their power...

Beginning in 1910, however, "a new generation of leaders" revitalized the Alabama suffrage movement by touting the vote as a venue for enhancing family health and prosperity.(13) Support for the movement swelled, gaining endorsements from two major Alabama women's clubs in 1914 and 1918. By this time, Alabama women had already developed speaking and writing skills, expertise, connections, confidence, and a bond of sisterhood through club membership. As Thomas notes, by 1910, Alabama club women "had learned how to organize, how to lobby the legislature, how to hold conventions, and how to achieve their goals," skills they now used to advocate for the right to vote.(14) In this way, women's clubs proved vital to the suffrage movement in Alabama and throughout the nation. Longone calls the club movement "one of the most important sociological phenomena of the century" and "the foundation of feminism."(15)

Women's Book Clubs

With the beginning of the Progressive Era, women also found time to organize clubs. The May 14, 1896 *Citizen* noted that "The Alabama Federation of Women's Literary clubs assembled in Montgomery,"

representing about 20 clubs from across the state. There is no evidence that Jackson County had literary clubs or book clubs for women this early.

Reference to a women's book club in Jackson County cannot be found until May 1904, when the *Progressive Age* announced that "Miss Mal Dee Jones delightfully entertained the Book Club Wednesday afternoon." A month later, the Citizen noted, "Some of our town ladies speak of organizing a book club. A club of this kind would prove both interesting and beneficial." The club continued to meet, and the September 27, 1904 *Progressive Age* reported that "the book club was delightfully entertained Friday afternoon at the home of Mrs. L. C. Alston." The same phrase was used in the November 17 P*rogressive Age* to describe the book club gathering in Bridgeport at the home of Mrs. Edward Schmaizried and in the December 22, 1904 paper to describe the bookclub meeting in Stevenson at the home of Miss Ann Graham.

References to the book clubs in Stevenson and Bridgeport continued, with new clubs referenced in 1906 in Bridgeport and in 1912 in Stevenson. As the programs persisted, they become more complex and drifted away from simply reading and discussing books. "Mrs. Bunn Hackworth entertained the Stevenson book club on Thursday afternoon," the November 21, 1912 *Progressive Age* explained, "with a Japanese tea party....After the discussion of the books Miss Bessie Sanders and little Nancy Hackworth, who were robed in Japanese costumes, served dainty refreshment. Mrs. Chas. Heath, the guest of honor, was presented with a Japanese scroll."

The Scottsboro club continued as well, meeting either biweekly or monthly at the homes of Mrs. Viola Claybrooke and Mrs. C. S. Brewton. The meeting at the end of December 1916 was the first time the designation "Twentieth Century Book Club" was used in the newspapers. The year 1922 seems to be when they began meeting with greater frequency at the homes of such women as Mrs. Claybrooke, Mrs. Grady Jacobs, Mrs. J. W. Gay, Mrs. Ben Davis, and Mrs. W. R. Bogart.

In 1927, this group of older women sponsored a group of eight young women who met in the basement of the Baptist church. They were Dorothy Gold, Eliza Hackworth, Ida Moody, Edith Money, Bernice Jarnagin, Kate Chandler, Lucille Chandler, and Stella Devers. Sue Mae Freeman was absent for the first meeting because she had a date with Ralph Powell. The group quickly added members. Their goals were "to improve themselves in cultural ways," to provide civic service, and "to grow through study and comradeship." They were known as "The Young Women's Book Club." They limited their membership to 20 because they met in each other's houses. When the young women were no longer quite so young, they changed the name of the book club to the Fortnightly Book Club in 1950.

This group was instrumental in organizing the Scottsboro Public Library. Their complete story is told in the book that Marilyn Morris Reed wrote to commemorate the anniversary of the library, *The Story of the Young Women's Book Club and the Birth of the Scottsboro Public Library.* This book is available for download on the JCHA web site: www.jchaweb.org/downloads.

Book clubs continue to be active in Scottsboro today. There are still men's book clubs and women's book clubs. If you are a reader and looking for someone to discuss your ideas with, locate one of these clubs and join.

The Civic League and the Garden Club

About the same time that the first women's book clubs were being organized, the women of north Alabama began to organize Civic Leagues.

The news column of the March 6, 1913 *Progressive Age* noted that a civic league was being organized in Jasper, the state association of motorcyclists was formed in Birmingham, and the Walker County teachers association was meeting. Guntersville had a Civic League in 1914, In writing about the progressive nature of clubs in Virginia, the Oct 29, 1914 *Progressive Age* explained that a civil league is "a social club, school betterment association."In Huntsville in 1915, you find the organization bringing school issues before the

county commissioners. Mattie Beeson wrote in her "Letter from Florida" column that "The women's clubs have done a vast deal of good for the town [Wauchula, FL]. Two weeks ago the Civic League paid out 90 dollars in prizes for the three yards that had made the most improvement within the past 12 months." (*SC* Apr 1, 1915)

The Huntsville Civic League had a similar mission and launched "as movement...asking every household and business firm to clean up their premises and paint their buildings." (*SC*, 29 Apr 1915) The June 3, 1915 SC asked in a headline that the CL was "For Grown-Ups Interested in Civic Work." "Cast away the possible suspicion that someone is going to 'get something' out of the civic league idea, and get in behind with counsel, encouragement, and advice."

Scottsboro finally got their Civic League off the ground. Mrs. Boyd Cantrell wrote an article titled "Scottsboro, A City Beautiful" for the January 9, 1917 *Progressive Age*. "A Civic League for Scottsboro was organized February 23, at the courthouse with seventeen active members. Mrs. Gregory was elected president and Mrs. Evie Robinson was made secretary. The other offers were Mrs. Virgil Bouldin vice president and Mrs. Thornton treasurer. With these splendid women at the head, the Civic League is wisely launched, but the success of the movement depends on the co-operation of the entire citizenship of the town. The aim of Civic League is to make Scottsboro healthful and beautiful, and to do this it is absolutely necessary for every man, woman, and child to enlist in this crusade again dirt and disease. It will take wise planning and judicious warfare against germs that lurk in all unsanitary places. This is a movement that is of vital interest to every one and nobody who loves his home town will refuse to help to make conditions better."

These ladies did not sip tea and eat finger sandwiches. One of their projects was to weed Laurel and Willow Streets. They cleaned Cedar Hill Cemetery.

The final mention of the Civic League was February 26, 1931. It seems to have evolved into the Garden Club. The Garden Club seems to have started its existence as a children's auxiliary of the Civic League. An article in the June 7, 1928 *Progressive Age*, the ladies of the Civic League collected plants to be given to a "Garden Club organized for this children," in the hopes that every child receives a small plot on the grounds of the courthouse "to tend and beautify. The *Progressive Age* reported on February 7, 1929 "Plans for the organization of a Garden Club are being made and all who are interested in joining are requested to meet at the opera house Friday afternoon, February 8th at 2:00 o'clock." Stevenson had a Garden Club first mentioned March 7, 1929, with the first documented program presented by Mrs. D. G. Smith, Mrs. J. L. Armstrong, and Mrs. E. O. Mann. The Stevenson group met every two weeks.

On October 31, 1929, the Twentieth Century Book Club meeting at the home of Mrs. J. W. Woodall where "a garden club to be organized was planned." The November 7 paper announced that "A Garden Club for Scottsboro was organized last Friday afternoon at the home of Mrs. M. A. Brewster" where offices Mrs. Brewster, president; Mrs. R. A. Coffey, vice-president; Mrs. Ben Davis, treasurer; and Prentiss Snodgrass, corresponding secretary. Prentiss was the only man in this women's club, but was probably in attendance because he was a florist. Both groups continued to meet at regular intervals, and are still in existence.

The School Improvement Association and the PTA

Long before there was a Parent Teacher Association (PTA), there were anxious parents who wanted to have a role in their children's education. Mention of this organization can be found elsewhere in the state in 1905, and the Alabama School Improvement Association was formed in August 1905.

In the July 2, 1908 *Progressive Age*, Scottsboro organized School Improvement Associations for the county and city districts. Because the group met "in the afternoon at the opera house" for the first time in 1908, the meeting was largely attended by women. Miss Sara Clark, a member of the State Board of Examiners and a representative to the department of education, addressed the gathering. "She emphasized by many

illustrations and forceful arguments the effect of comfortable and pleasing environment on child life, the importance of well kept school grounds, neat, well-furnished school houses, school libraries, and other features that awaken the interest of patron and child in the common school."

But as the group coalesced, other groups took an interest in the support that this group could provide. This group was discussed at the 1908 Jackson County teachers' institute, Miss Virginia Brown read a paper on the subject and several teachers and visitors spoke about the growing movement. After school started, the association met at 3 p.m. the second Wednesday of each month on the public school grounds and continued to meet every month in 1908 with Mrs. J. W. Gay presiding and both men and women in attendance. This early group identified four committees: the committee on Grounds (Professors J. H. Ward and C. S. Brewton and Mrs. J. H. Gregory); the committee on equipment (Mrs. Robert Skelton, Mrs. C. Q. Beech, and Mrs. Virgil Bouldin); the committee on the library and art (Miss Melton, Mrs. Jesse E. Brown, and Mrs. Hugh Boyd); and the membership committee (the entire organization). (*PA*, November 12, 1908). In December, the organization set out to improve the school library, and the committee appealed to the public for donations.

Very quickly, the *Scottsboro Citizen* got behind this effort, but, like the *Progressive Age*, did not see the goal of the organization having any impact on instruction. "The ladies in every school district of Jackson county ought to get together and form a "School Improvement Association," the object being to hay off and beautify the school grounds and improve the school buildings." (*SC*, March 11, 1909)

At the April 1909 teachers' institute, Mrs. Gay spoke about the new organization. Her words, perhaps, carried more weigh because she was herself a former teacher. Her paper to the teachers was titled "The relation of the Women's School Improvement Association to Public Schools," and the assembly found it "both interesting and instructive." (*SC*, May 5, 1909).

By June of 1908, the Madison county group had discovered that to make significant improvements, they needs to raise funds, so on July 3, the held—no, not a bake sale—a barbecue in Gurley. (*PA*, June 24, 1909) In October of 1909, the Jackson County group held a spelling bee: "The School Improvement Association will give a spelling bee at the High School Chapel Friday evening, Oct. 22nd, at 7:30 p.m., for the benefit of the city schools. Prizes will be given and molasses candy and gingerbread sold. All spellers, good or bad, invited to participate. Webster's blue back speller used." By the start of the next school year, the Congressional Institute [which seemed to be an early state-wide teachers' organization] endorsed School Improvement Association as and urged "that each teacher joint the county organization and lend a helping hand." (*PA*, July 28, 1910)

More articles were written about the School Improvement Association, but this term was applied more and more to the state organization. The local organization is mentioned in the October 1915 *Citizen* as the group that arranged decorations and entertainment for the Halloween party in the High School auditorium. (*PA*, Nov. 4, 1915) In December 1915, this group was making "some badly needed improvements on the school building," and the current officers were Mrs. Ed Moody, president; F. D. Webb, vice-president; and Miss Rosa Wilhelm, secretary-treasurer. In February 11, this group gave a Valentine's Party.. The September 8, 1916 *Progressive Age* reported on all the good work the School Improvement Association had done to get the school building ready for the new year. "The spic and span appearance of the whole interior of the building was brought about by the efforts of the local School Improvement Association under the efficient management Mrs. J. H. Gregory at an expenditure of only $124.05." In February 1917, the group sponsored the Valentine's Party, as in previous years. But this is the last mention of this organization.

Just as School Improvement Associations are getting off the ground, a new organization name with much the same mission finds its way into usage—the Parent-Teacher Association. Anniston started a school support group by this name in May 1913 (*PA*, May 22, 1913). In 1916, a meeting of the Mothers and Parent Teacher Associate met in Birmingham.

By 1922, this term is being used locally. "The Parent-Teachers Association met Wednesday afternoon and a very large crowd was present," the *Progressive Age* reported on January 12. "Miss Mary Woodruff, State Parent-Teacher Association organizer, was present and made a good talk." All parents were encouraged to attend the next meeting of the organization. In February, the new PTA hosted the Valentine's party traditionally hosted by the School Improvement Association.

It seems that the narrow focus of the School Improvement Associated was subsumed under the greater scope of the Parent-Teacher Association, and that the broader association is that one that survives, even today.

Annette Bradford

Footnotes

Reference from newspapers are cited inline with attribution. Some photos and identifications were posted on the JCHA Facebook page and are cited by name of the person posting.

1. *J. R. R. Kennamer, The History of Jackson County, Alabama.*
2. *Encyclopedia of Alabama, http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3942.*
3. *Encyclopedia of Alabama. op. cit.*
4. *Kennamer, op. cite.*
5. *John R. Kennamer, Sr. The Story of Woodville (East Alabama Publishing, Inc., Lanett AL and West Point, GA), pp. 147-149.*
6. *Emily Blejwas in The Story of Alabama in Fourteen Foods (University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa, AL), 2017. Her information about the progressive era is used with permission.*
7. *Alabama club women history drawn from Mary Martha Thomas, Stepping Out of the Shadows : Alabama Women, 1819-1990 (University of Alabama Press, 1992, 1995).*
8. *Thomas, 1992, p. 2.*
9. *Thomas, 1992, pp. 84-85.*
10. *Thomas, 1992, pp. 84-85.*
11. *Robbins 1895 Introduction.*
12. *Thomas, 1992, p. 219.*
13. *Wayne Flynt, Dixie's Forgotten People: The South's Poor Whites (Indiana University Press, 2004), p. 258.*
14. *Thomas, 1992, p. 135.*
15. *Janice Bluestein Longone The Second Biennial Symposium: A to Z: An Alphabet of Regional and Ethnic Culinary Traditions.*



Order of Odd Fellows Minutes 1875-1879 and Knights of Honor Minutes 1979, housed in the Little Courthouse at the Heritage Center

Matlock Family of Jackson County



Zachariah Matlock and his wife Mary Thorn Matlock left and daughter Sarah, right 1870s. From Walter Brownfield.

One of the founding families of the Big Coon area of Jackson County is the Zachariah Metlock/Matlock family. Zachariah was born in South Carolina in 1791 and died in 1879 in Big Coon Valley at the home of his daughter, Emily Medlock Allison. He is buried with his wife Mary Thorn (1790-1877) in the Allison Cemetery. Today, there is an area still known as Matlock Springs, though the family left Jackson County in 1870.

This couple's roots in South Carolina have not been discovered, but based on names and locations, they are believed to be from the Edgefield, Laurens County area. The spelling of the name as Medlock is prevalent in the Edgefield records of the late 1700s and early 1800s along with a Thorn family. The family photo shown here is from Brent Brownfield, a descendant, was carried west in December 1879 to central Texas and discovered in a box a few years ago inside an old home of Christopher Columbus Brownfield and his wife Martha Catherine Matlock Brownfield. The photo identifies Mary as "Mary Hopkins Matlock". The middle name of Hopkins has not been determined if this is a maiden name or her middle name. Her daughter Jennie stated in 1907 that her mother was the daughter of John Thorn.

Zachariah and Mary left South Carolina sometime in the early 1800s, most likely around 1820-1822 and moved to what at the time was the very western edge of the American frontier, as they are listed in the 1830 census of Lincoln County, Tennessee. Jennie's 1907 affidavit says she was born in Lincoln County Tennessee in November of 1824. Her tombstone in the Longacre Cemetery has a date of 1822 on the tombstone. A review of census data over her life indicates she was born in 1824 and has an older sister Nancy born in 1822. The 1830 census indicated another young couple is also living in the home with Zachariah and Mary and six houses away a "John Thorn" is listed, being about the age of Mary, which could be a brother who may have accompanied this family as they moved west in the early 1800s.

The family moved to Jackson County in the 1830s. They are found in Jackson in the 1840 census and Zachariah has saved up $50 to purchase land from the government. He received land patent number 11,996 on October 10, 1840 for 40 acres, being the Northeast quarter of the Southwest quarter of Section 2, Township 3 South, Range 5 East. This family would be one of the very first families to move to the top of the Cumberland Plateau in Jackson County. This property is located about 3 miles east of the current day town of Skyline, Alabama on what is identified as the Cornelison Point on the local maps, with the current road being Jackson County Highway Number 241. This point is south of the head of Mud Creek and north of Maynor Cove for the lands in the valley.

The only other family that is found in the patent data for neighbors on Cornelison Point is the family of John A. Wear, who received patent 11,971 for 40 acres on the same Oct. 1840 date for the end of the point, being the east neighbor to the Medlock family. No other patents are issued in the area until 1859, long after the Medlock family had moved.

The family is also living on this property in the 1850 census, based on a review of known locations of various neighbors. The deeds per civil war in Jackson County are missing some books and some books have missing pages. Their move from the Cumberland Plateau to the head of Little Coon Valley to the

Medlock springs cannot be traced in the deed books due to missing data, but is believed to have taken place around 1850-1853.

Zachariah and Mary were the parents of one son and five daughters. The census of 1840 indicates all of the children were living on Cornelison Point in the summer of 1840. Some time in the 1840s, daughter Elizabeth married John Roberts.

The 1850 census finds John and Elizabeth Roberts living in the Tate's Cove area of the headwaters of Big Coon Valley. Their oldest child, Berry R, is listed as 8 years old and three additional children are also found, indicated that Elizabeth married around 1841. As young settlers in the frontier, Robert and Elizabeth had a difficult life. Some time between 1850 and 1860, husband John Roberts and child Angorany passed away in Tate's Cove. (Probably two of the numerous rock headstones in the Haddon Cemetery in Devers Cove). Elizabeth Roberts and three children are found in 1860, living at Medlock Springs in Little Coon Valley. The surviving children of this marriage are James A B Roberts (born 1842), Zachariah R Roberts (born 1846), and Mary A Roberts (born 1848).

The 1850 census has Zachariah and Mary and their remaining five children are living in the home on the Cornelison Plateau. This is the last documentation found for the oldest daughter Nancy Medlock, where she is listed as age 26. Another confusing census fact is that all the children are listed as born in Alabama but Zack and Mary were born in North Carolina. Son Zachariah, age 26, is in the home. He married in the early 1850s in Jackson County; two children were born to son Zack and his wife. The mortality index for Jackson County appears to document the death of Zack, as we find the death of "Arch A Matlock age 29, born in Tennessee in 1831, died July 1859" in this document.

In the 1860 census, at the Medlock Springs in Little Coon, the two grandchildren are living in the home of Zack and Mary, those being Martha Catherine Matlock at age 9 and Milton Meredith Matlock age 7. Arch A is listed on line 25. Listed above on line 24 is the author's relative Larkin Carlton, known to have lived and died in Jackson County and is buried in the upper end of Little Coon Valley, which provides a clue that son Zachariah and wife were living near Medlock Springs in the 1850s. Daughter Jennie Christian Medlock married John Steel in Franklin County, Tennessee on April 2, 1854.

Jennie is listed as "Jane" in the marriage records. John was the son of Eli Steele from the Sinking Cove and the Anderson area of Franklin County. This information might provide a clue as to why the Metlock family relocated to Little Coon Valley in the early years of the 1850s. Jennie's affidavit that she provided in 1907 provides insight into the genealogy of Mary Thorn Medlock.

The missing deeds from the 1850s have prevented documentation on the Medlock family's time of arrival at Medlock Springs and the dates of ownership. The 40-acre parcel of land that contains the springs was patented to George Washington Davis on Aug. 1, 1839 (number 10,538). No additional data on this person has been located by this author. It is believed that Zack Medlock purchased this land some time in the early 1850s. In 1860, paying the required $100, Zack purchased 80 acres from the government, patent number 32,460, for the west half of the southwest quarter of section 5, Township 1 South, Range 6 East. This parcel is on the east side of the Medlock Springs 40 acres, lying on the lower slopes of Step Point. Zack is now listed on this patent as Zachariah Matlock.



Graves of Zachariah and Mary Matlock in Allison Cemetery in Big Coon. Photo by Beth Presley.

The 1870 Agricultural census list Zack as owning 160 acres, 25 in cultivation and the remaining 135 acres as the timberland around the Medlock Springs. This area is the last "flat" valley land in Little Coon Valley, being located less than ¾ mile from the Tennessee and Alabama state line. Zack has a pair of horses, a yoke of

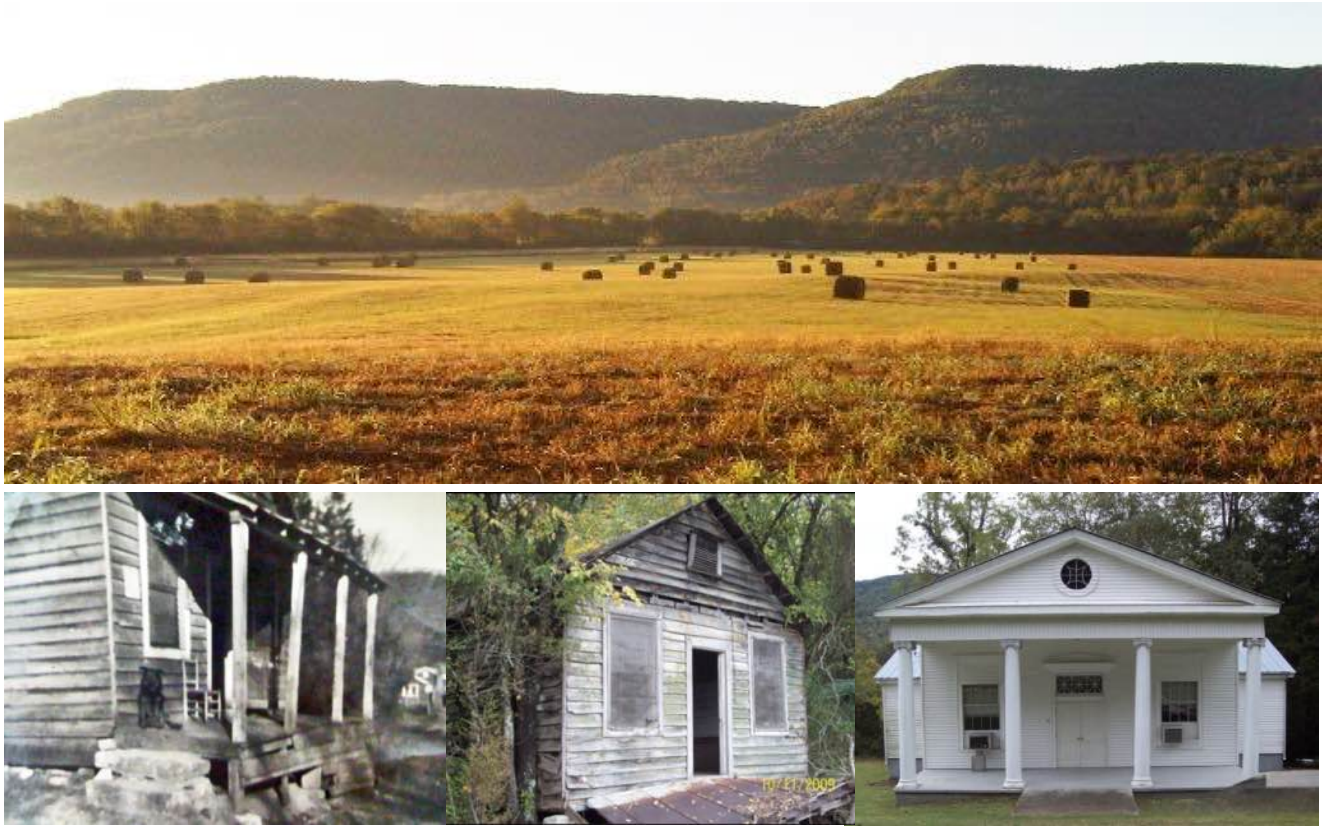
oxen, and two head of cattle. He is growing corn and tobacco on his 25 acres of cleared land. In the regular census data of 1870, Zack and Mary are now Matlocks, with youngest daughter Sarah in the home along with the two grandchildren, Martha and Meredith. Daughter Emily had married William Burch in 1866 and then in 1873, she became the third wife of James Lowery Allison. Zack and Mary are buried beside each other in the Allison Cemetery in Big Coon Valley.

It is not known when the family moved away from the Medlock Springs area, or if they ever did, but late in life, they may have moved to Big Coon with daughter Emily Allison. Daughter Sarah married Robert Allen, becoming his second wife, on August 7, 1870. Their only child, Celia F. Allen, born in July 1874.

The 1900 census has Robert Allen and Sarah Allen (listed as born April 1835) living near the Allison group in Big Coon in House 49. Also in the home are daughter Celia Moore and her husband Arthur Moore. By 1910, Arthur and Celia Moore have moved to Stevenson where Arthur is listed as owning a livery stable. The Allen couple could not be found in the 1910 census. A record for Robert Allen shows that he died in September of 1906. It is possible that Robert and Sarah Allen are also buried in the Allison Cemetery near others of the Medlock/Matlock family.

Granddaughter Martha Matlock married Christopher Columbus Brownfield of Devers Cove, and they, along with brother Meredith, relocated to Texas in 1879. Thanks to this couple for carrying the wonderful photo of this family to Texas, an action that prompted the research and documentation of one of the founding families of Jackson County.

James Sentell



From the Big Coon Valley, Alabama Facebook Page. Top: Big Coon Valley. Bottom: Bell's Store built in 1919 in 1950 and 2009; New Hope Church.

Thoughts on the Fourth Paint Rock River Bridge Skirmish



Paint Rock River Bridge.

The Paint Rock River Bridge undoubtedly bore its share of conflict during the Civil War. Why was this? It was normally a humble little country bridge in an isolated location. To answer this question, we must consider that railroad-control was a huge requirement for winning the War. Realization came early that the Memphis and Charleston Railroad was key to east-west troop and supply movement in the Western Theater. For that reason it was a frequent target for disruption by either side—depending upon which one felt most need of it or felt most threatened by it at the time. Guerrilla raids were frequent along its tracks. In North Alabama the Paint Rock River Bridge was an inviting objective for purposes of interrupting the railroad's essential continuity. Besides that, rebuilding a bridge is much more demanding than replacing tracks. Simply stated, the Paint Rock River Bridge stood out as the weak-link for a very long stretch of critical railroad.

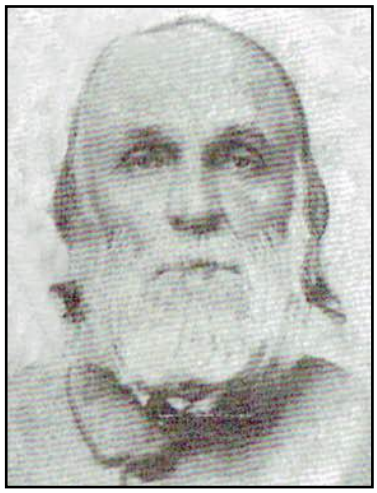


Lemuel Green Mead.

There were four important skirmishes at the critical point of the Paint Rock River Bridge. Which of the four might be considered the most influential? The fourth has the reputation as being best known. Plus it did in fact result in total destruction of the bridge and it apparently neutralized a cannon. Here is the account of that skirmish:

December 31, 1864: Lemuel Mead's Partisans with less than 40 men surprised and captured Company G, 13th Wisconsin's Volunteer Infantry. They burned down the bridge and rolled a cannon into the river. (Rice, History 2; Michael 65) A more detailed account by Ann B. Chambless in the *Jackson County Chronicles* (July, 1984) as extracted from *War of the Rebellion Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* is quoted as follows:

> *"The Confederate Forces of Whitecotton, Mead, and Johnson attacked Lt. Wagoner's Company at 4:00 a.m. The lieutenant, 37 men of Company G, and one artilleryman were captured. Nineteen of Co. G, the cavalry, and Captain John B. Kennamer's home scouts escaped. The Confederates burned and cut the bridge 'so that it fell into the river' and left the gun unspiked but 'mutilated the carriage.'"*



Bushwhacker Johnson, cover photo from *The Sword of Bushwhacker Johnson.*

Interestingly, the Confederate "Johnson" mentioned above was none other than our Bushwhacker Johnston of guerrilla fame. He in his book, *The Sword of Bushwhacker Johnston*, refers to engagement against the "home-made Yankees" in the skirmish. (Those would have been the 30 Unionist scouts of Capt. John B. Kennamer's mentioned company.) Bushwhacker Johnston goes on to give further, more vivid insight about the skirmish. He describes it as being in three inches of snow, and the attack as occurring at daybreak by his 35 member contingent. It apparently caught the Union men by surprise, and by Johnston's account captured 44 prisoners, but killed very few. He does not mention any

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Confederate casualties. He does confirm that the partisans spiked a Union gun and rolled it into the river then burned the bridge (Johnston 153-154).

Yes, it did produce many casualties, not only at the time of the battle, but also in the weeks to come through follow-up efforts to rebuild the bridge in the cold winter conditions. Interestingly, Frank Wilkeson in his Recollections of a Private Soldier tried to travel from Stevenson to Huntsville on the Memphis & Charleston the winter of 64 shortly after the Paint Rock River Bridge was destroyed. He gives the following disturbing account:

> *About midnight the train halted at Paint Rock River (the railroad bridge which spanned that stream had been burned by guerrillas the previous night, and some scores of army bridge-builders were at work to replace it) and the soldiers clambered off of the cars. They built fires on the bank of the rapid, swollen stream, and then, without an instant's hesitation, began to build a raft, on which to cross the river. I was greatly impressed by the self-reliant manhood of these enlisted men. When the raft was finished a number of men crowded on it and poled across the river. Fires with which to see were built [sic] on the other side. The raft was poled to and fro and the troops were slowly ferried across. Eager to cross, to get near to their regiments, they frequently overloaded the raft, and it sank deeply in the water. Then the soldiers would spring ashore or fall into the river, out of which they swam, or were pulled by their comrades. The result was inevitable. On the sixth trip the raft was loaded so heavily that the water was over the shoes of the soldiers. It was safely poled to the middle of the stream. There it tilted and with a howl the soldiers slid into the water. Most of them swam ashore, rifle in hand, or clambered back on the raft. But I saw five men, who were heavily laden with cartridges or could not swim sink into the cold water to be seen no more. The men who had clambered on the raft poled it back to shore and called for another cargo, and other men swarmed on the perilous craft. No one paid the slightest attention to the drowned men.* (Wilkeson 116-117)

Oh yes Indeed ... I think we can say the fourth skirmish and its aftermath stood out among the others. That innocent looking little bridge was the last human-built structure several men ever saw.

Now let's consider further reflection the fourth event invites: It gives us a composite image of Northeast Alabama Civil War in focused stark relief. Considering the area's operative forces, we find them all here, declaring their presence in a singular event.

This glimpse of the several forces in one complete package lets us parse out their identity and complex interaction. Thus advantaged; while resorting to a bit of semantic license, we come up with the elements of the following list:

1. Confederate guerrilla factions, i.e., Lemuel Mead's Partisan Rangers, and "Bushwhacker" Johnston's Battalion, by considering them based on how they really waged war.
2. Formal Confederate organizations, i.e., Lemuel Mead's Partisan Rangers, taking on alternate formal identity through the Confederate Partisan Ranger Act of April 1862. It follows then that Milus ("Bushwhacker") Johnston's subordinate battalion also thereby became, more formally, the 25th Alabama Cavalry.
3. A Unionist guerrilla faction, i.e., John B. Kennamer's forces (there was an eventual effort to formalize this one also, as we'll see later).
4. A formal company of Union regulars, i.e., the 13th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, Company G.


Capt. John B. Kennamer (1st)

Perhaps most thought-provoking of the list is the Unionist guerrilla faction led by John B. Kennamer. The fourth Paint Rock River Skirmish, at least for me, served to draw this entity out of obscurity and declare its otherwise easily missed existence. Plus, we can't help noting, as much as anything else, it's a story of Unionist rout and retreat. One reference declares, "The success of the raid was all the more sweet for the Rebels because some of the Union soldiers were 'turncoats' from Marshall

County" (Rohr 245).

John B. Kennamer had every reason to be in the PRRB proximity to play his important role in this interesting story. His Kennamer family were prominent landowners in the area south of Woodville. So it's no accident that the area's identity was, and still is, Kennamer's Cove. It's relevant that Kennamer's Cove was initially part of Jackson County, but after the Trail of Tears in 1838 this Cherokee-relinquished land was acceded to Marshall County (Page, W. 1). It may be recalled that a prominent member of the family, John R. Kennamer, was a respected Jackson County (not Marshall County) historian, having authored books about both Jackson County and Woodville. It would be easy to confuse the identity of John B. and John R., but we can confidently say they were distinctly different souls. John R. Kennamer was born well after the Civil War in 1873. There's nothing in John R. Kennamer's writing to indicate he harbored any Unionist sympathy. It was quite likely the opposite. His Civil War chapter in *History of Jackson County* seems objective enough, but it may tip his hand, as it offers far more Confederate than Unionist narrative for our edification.

Pursuing Kennamer loyalties further, it does seem that Cousin John B. Kennamer's Unionist war sentiments strongly differed from those held by most of his family. Fair to say, Kennamer family sentiments in those days were mostly Secessionist. So opposite feelings to such extreme—that of a Unionist guerrilla leader—made John B. Kennamer's contrary identity boldly stand out. We're challenged to accept that it was a Kennamer family member that encamped with the Federals near the Paint Rock River and violently opposed the Confederates as a Unionist leader. But John B. Kennamer's Unionist guard duty affiliation is well established, and the confrontation at the Bridge was not the only time he and his effectives engaged Confederate forces, as the following quote will vividly express:

> *John B. Kennamer had a company of Union Scouts. While they were on guard duty at Paint Rock River Bridge just west of Woodville, the men were anxious to see their wives and families so they rode back into Kennamer Cove, which is in close proximity to our subject. Kennamer's Scouts were in the house eating supper. Their pickets, Jacob L. and Tom Kennamer heard persons approaching the house where the company was. Picket Jacob L. Kennamer called to them, "Halt!" and fired on them—Lieutenant Millard with a squad of about twenty Confederate Scouts, being a part of M. E. Johnston's company—better known as "Bushwhacker" Johnston—who had organized at New Hope, Alabama, leading his men and firing on the house. It was dark. The Union Scouts scattered and returned the fire. Silas P. Woodall hid himself behind a large gate post. He fired and Lt. Millard fell mortally wounded. The Confederates turned back and the skirmish was over. Damerias (Aunt "Love" Kennamer), "as brave a woman as ever lived" gave the dying Lt. Millard a cup of water. (Page, C. 16)*

Note that the Unionist withdrawal from the PRRB site this time appears much more casual than the one provoked by the Confederates on December 31,1864. That should inherently mark the sorties as two separate events. The quoted confrontation is not precisely dated (only as sometime in December 1864), so it's hard to be sure of that distinction. But it does seem likely that John B. Kennamer and his Unionists returned home to Marshall County on at least two separate occasions—one that was casual, and the other under duress—presuming John B. Kennamer would naturally seek refuge via a well-worn path home.

I should mention that the home-return story captivated me for more than one reason. It follows that the turned-away Confederate Scouts escaped back to Madison County by crossing the Paint Rock River at the Butler Mill Bridge. Do we have a hint here that Marshall and Jackson County were far more Unionist oriented than Madison County?

That would be consistent with what we at least already know



Butler's Mill, from the Woodville Museum.

about Jackson County. But in another vein, I can't resist divulgence of another connection. Here we have yet another link with my own lifetime experience. "Butler's Mill" was a favorite picnic site for my mother's family in my preschool years. I caught my very first sunfish on a cane pole near Butler Mill Bridge under the careful watch of my mother and maternal aunt. (They even handled the worms and baited my hook.) I couldn't have been more than four years old. Also, my maternal grandfather and grandmother are both buried in Kennamer Cemetery on Butler Mill Road. What a gift it is to again blend personal memories with the area's robust history.

Robust history indeed ... enriched as it is with Unionist activity that shows up even when it's not expected. The John B. Kennamer Unionist story adds further dimension to Northeast Alabama Unionist activity we've previously visited. Then, as is so often the case, it exponentially generates a whole new round of questions. For instance, how did John B. Kennamer come to have Unionist sympathies in the first place? What made him turn away from what we know the family most often supported? Then there's: Who were the Unionists that John B. was leading? Their number was substantial, from what we know, at least 30. Some of them were—despite much family sympathy to the contrary—members of his own family, e.g., Jacob L. and Tom Kennamer, as noted above, to which we might also add Seaborn (a prominent Unionist legislator), David, and Levi. Those who were less family-related must have rounded out the ranks. Probably like my family members, they'd have come from Paint Rock Valley and other High Jackson locations. Yet it's doubtful we'll ever know the names of these others ... being guerrilla fighters they likely escaped the listing a formal regiment keeps, which precludes the identity advantage we enjoyed from the Skeltons. Yet there is evidence of some belated effort to formalize John B. Kennamer's Union service to underwrite Federal pension benefits for his widow. Those documents describe his Union enlistment date of July 1, 1864, into "Capt. John B. Kennamer Alabama Scouts and Guides" with a discharge date of May 17, 1865. John B. died well after the War from injuries when he accidentally fell at the age of 64 on May 1, 1885, at Kennamer's Cove. It appears his widow did ultimately receive his Union service pension.

From a broader viewpoint, there's a significant take-home message here, i.e., a Unionist story tends to pop up in Northeast Alabama Civil War history, no matter what direction one chooses to turn. No doubt, Unionist expression in Civil War Northeast Alabama was solidly present, comparing strongly with that of its more touted neighbor. Yes, in comparison ... *High Jackson* and *Paint Rock Valley* might even make The Free State of Winston seem slightly more Confederate.

Dr. James Reed

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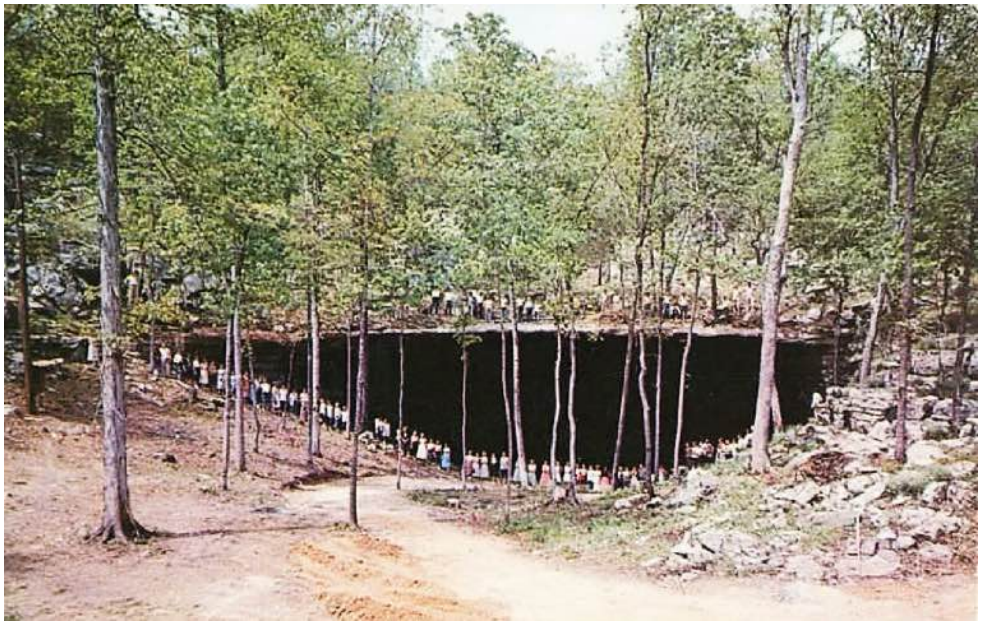
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Oscar Ridley and the Lost Silver Mine in Jackson County

In 1817, John Woods, a Cherokee Indian, built a stone house just northeast of the now-designated National Monument. He was granted 640 acres that included Russell Cave as payment for his Revolutionary War service to our new United States. James Doran moved into the house and acquired the land. Doran later sold the land to Thomas Russell (Russell Cave). The land remained in the Russell family until 1928, when Oscar Ridley bought the land.



Russell Cave National Monument, Bridgeport, Alabama ca. 1958 (Alabama Department of Archives and History).

Oscar Ridley owned Russell Cave from 1928 until 1958. The National Geographic Society recognized the significance of the site and purchased the site in 1958 and donated it to the American people. Russell Cave National Monument was established by presidential proclamation on May 11, 1961.

This article is an unedited interview with Oscar Ridley by a WPA Alabama writer's project interviewer in 1938 about a lost silver mine in the area.

Oscar Ridley and the Silver Mine in Doran's Cove, December 19, 1938

Oscar and Mary Ridley are the father and mother of thirteen children, nine of whom are living and four dead. They are all married and away from home except one boy who is finishing school at the time this was written.

Mr. Ridley's farm and home are one of the most picturesque and interesting places in Jackson County, having been an Indian reservation at an early date and belonging to Captain Woods an Indian chief, the original reservation contained 640 acres. This he gave to James Doran, an early white settler, to care for him the remaining part of his life.

Conflicting statements as to date: We have different statements as to the date when James Doran came to the cove, according to Kennamer's *History of Jackson County,* Doran arrived in 1815, but Mr. Ridley said he has always heard it was back in 1777 when the old store house was built and says that on one of the plastered walls in the house when he bought it was written. "Andrew Jackson, May 15, 1813. As Jackson was the Indian commissioner, it is generally known that he drew up the agreement between Woods and Doran and that this writing was the date the agreement was drawn up.

Walls two feet thick: Mr. Ridley says since he has been on the place, he found Woods' grave. The old stone house, according to George Cluck, an old settler 85 years old, was built by a stonemason by the name of Ballard. The house is built of limestone blocks and consists of five rooms and large basement.

The walls of this house are two feet thick and after more than one hundred years the house looks like it would be standing for many years.

This stone house was originally plastered throughout but Mr. Ridley has sealed it since he bought it. It has a large stone fireplace and one mantel in the house measures 5 ½ feet. The rooms are used for kitchen, dining room, bedroom, storage room and bath. The owners had not yet run water into the house. In addition to the storehouse, there are six rooms of the wooden structure, including living room and bedrooms. The entire house is furnished exceptionally nice for a country home.



Two story log spring house on the Ridley place in Jackson County, Alabama, ca. 1938 (WPA, Alabama Department of Archives and History)

Spring with fish comes out of the mountain: About 75 yards east of the house a big spring comes out of the mountain through a cave and sometimes when there is an extra heavy rain in that section, fish come out of the cave into the spring branch. Some of the fish are large enough to eat. No one has ever been able to tell where they come from.

Near the mouth of this spring is a large spring house two stories high built of round red cedar logs. The water from the spring passes through the lower story of the building and is used for milk, butter, eggs and any kind of vegetables they wish to keep cool. The upper story was originally a cider mill and press.



Two story log spring house on the Ridley place in Jackson County, Alabama, ca. 1938 (WPA, Alabama Department of Archives and History)

Old buildings and grist mill: Another very old building is a large log smokehouse with the meat block and salting troughs made from large logs hollowed out and placed around the side of the building. These have been in use far back as anyone can remember.

They have a grist mill on the place and grind meal for themselves and people in the cove. They also grow wheat and grind the wheat into flour. They own 600 acres of the original 640 acres of the Woods. The reservation part of this being in mountain land, he only has about 190 acres in cultivation. They raise more hay than anything else. The land is very poor from having been cultivated for so many years. He says he isn't allowed to grow cotton because there has not been any grown on it in so long a time. However, he did get a permit to grow ten acres, but he says that his back is too old to pick cotton and that it would cost too much to keep anyone to pick it.

He raises about 50 or 60 head of cattle, only has four or five hogs and they are not large enough to kill. They milk four cows and have their own chickens.

Taught school for twelve years: He laughingly says that for thirty-five years he went around and worked from place to place and he got afraid he would lose his wife because she was so young looking and he had lied and stole enough to buy this place and that he has never made any money since and that all he has is a good drink of water.

He taught school for twelve years. They have been on this place for ten years.

He grew 70 bushels of Irish potatoes from a 100-pound sack of Bourbon potatoes on a garden spot that he said had been used since the time of Adam and Eve.

Mountain is made of caves: On this place is located the Russell Cave, the odd, part of the cave being the water runs into the cave instead of out. The opening is 100 acres and twenty feet high at entrance to the cave. In the front part of the cave is found a large amount of small ferns which stay green the entire year. It is possible to go back into the cave three miles. The cave branches out in all directions.

The whole mountain you might say, is hollow and made up of caves. The soil in this cave includes a high percentage of lime content. Mr. Ridley has had it analyzed. In getting part of it out to go in his soil, he dug about four feet and found many bone needles with perfect eyes and pieces of Indian pottery of different kinds. He says he thinks he will use this cave to winter his cattle in.



Russell Cave National Monument is a U.S. National Monument near Bridgeport in northeastern Alabama 2010 (Carol Highsmith, Library of Congress.

Legends of a lost silver mine: For more than one hundred years there have been stories and legends told by both white men and Indians about a lost silver mine in the vicinity of Russell Cave. One thing added strength to their belief, was a man by the name of Freeman, who lived in that community about fifty years ago and who was an expert counterfeiter, it taking an expert to distinguish his counterfeit coins from those minted by the U. S. government. He was shrewd, close-mouthed and very mysterious in his transactions, never taking any of his neighbors into his confidence. It is believed by many of the old citizens that he procured his supply of silver somewhere in this vicinity. He disappeared very mysteriously and has never been heard of by any of his neighbors. Some said he went west but that was only neighbor's guess work.

In 1875 a Cherokee Indian chief by the name of Mooney came back here from an Indian reservation. He was aged and blind. He soon made the acquaintance of four or five of the leading landowners and business men of the community and asked that they assist him in locating the lost Indian silver mine, showing them some old yellowed by age, Indian weigh bills of maps with figures and marks that none of the white men could read. He promised them great riches when the treasure or ore mine was rediscovered.

Never heard from again: He could not get around without assistance. The citizens procured some kind of litter and placed a chair on it and carried him from place to place with his divining rod he was supposed to relocate the mine with. He spoke very little English and directed them by grunts and pointing out the places he wished to be carried. The search ended after ten or fifteen days and the old Indian chief departed and was never heard of again. But still, the natives firmly believe "*thar is silver in them thar hills*."

J. P. Parsons

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The Jackson County Chronicles

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In this issue:

- **Founders' Awards –** Jerry Gist to be honored for his work on the History of Scottsboro. Annette Bradford provides us with a great citation in honor of Mr. Gist.
- **Boro to Bowery: The Life of Scottsboro Poet Thomas Weatherly, Jr. –**David Bradford gives us a portrait into the life of Scottsboro's native poet.
- **The Making of an Historic Photo Trail –** Nat Cisco discusses creating a historic photo trail around the Square in Scottsboro and presents the photos and captions with a sneak peek at the upcoming south side photos.

Editor: Nat Cisco
Associate Editors: David and Annette Bradford

JCHA Officers
President: Nat Cisco
Vice-President: Bill Tally
Secretary:
Treasurer: Tammy Bradford
Directors: Hon. John Graham, Patrick Stewart, Betty Esslinger

April Meeting: Due to unforeseen circumstances with the weather and a visiting skunk, we had to postpone the January Meeting. The April meeting of the Jackson County Historical Association will be on **Sunday, April 26th at 2pm** at the Scottsboro Depot Museum. We will finally live up to our promise of having Patrick Stewart present on his masterful use of metal detecting, and how he uses Civil War era letters to find places most likely to hold treasures. Patrick is one of our JCHA Directors and is a member of the Scottsboro City Council. Many of his relics have been found around the historic Freight Depot where our meeting will take place.



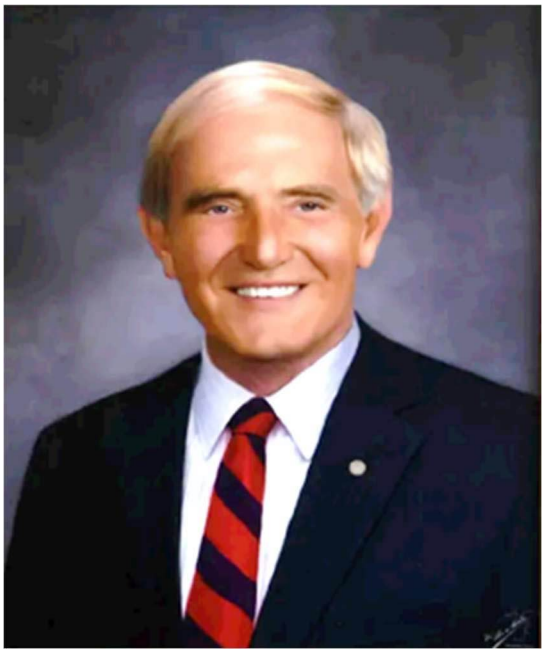
Secretary: We are thankful that esteemed retired educator Dr. Toni McGriff has volunteered to be our Treasurer. We would like to vote to approve her appointment during April's meeting.

Special Thanks: I extend special thanks to David and Annette Bradford as they continue to contribute their amazing writing for the *Chronicles*.

Note from the Editor: It is with much trepidation that I take on the role of editor of *The Jackson County Chronicles.* How could it not be intimidating to follow up the likes of Ann Chambless and Annette Bradford (with associate David Bradford) as the only two editors of this publication in its 50 years. I anticipate having help from Annette, as well as many of you as contributors. Please email me your stories and ideas to revivescottsboro@gmail.com.

Two More Old Friends Gone: We have lost two more of our links to the past. We received word that **Brigadier General Albert LaFayette "Fate" Melton** passed away January 9, 2024. A native son who distinguished himself in both Korea and Vietnam, General Melton was born in Woodville in 1928, and graduated from JCHS in 1947. Classmate Rev. James Thompson wrote about his distinguished classmate in the January 2007 *Chronicles*. He was 95. More recently, we lost **Joan Evans Harbin** March 24 of this year. Joan is a long-time friend of the JCHA. In 1981, Joan and *Chronicles* editor Ann Chambless created "The Colorful History of Jackson County" for children to color and learn history at the same time. She also rescued the Riley-Harbin cabin from Riley Cove behind Tater Knob Mountain and restored it in her yard on Commodore Street to use as a studio for teaching art in 1975. In 1981, she donated the cabin the Jackson County Heritage Center as a centerpiece for Sagetown, the village of old structures at the center. Born in Mobile, Joan was a valued artist and friend. She was 95.

Jerry Gist to be Honored with Founder's Award



It is usual for one man to be recognized as a treasured resource to not just one but two municipalities in two different states. But Jerry Gist is not just any man.

Jerry Gist, the youngest child of Roy Gist and Ola Jacobs, graduated from JCHS in 1960, playing basketball, football, and tennis, and serving as President of the Pep Club and on the staff of both the yearbook and the school newspaper. He was No. 33, a basketball star playing under Coach Dusty Carter. While in high school, he was already writing and taking pictures for the Jackson County Sentinel and the Progressive Age. He attended Jacksonville State but left the university at the end of his freshman year to work two years in the IBM data processing department at Redstone Arsenal.

In February 1964, he was drafted into the U. S. Army. After basic training at Fort Gordon in Augusta, GA, he was deployed to Stuttgart, Germany as part of the Seventh Army, associated with General Patton. In Germany, he served as a military policeman. Jerry's love of sports made him a standout in his new deployment. He represented his group in swimming and tennis, and was captain of the American Tennis Team that travelled all over Germany. He was also director of basketball games for the 385th Military Police Battalion. He made the most of his deployment, traveling extensively in continental Europe, the British Isles, and Scandinavia.

He was honorably discharged in 1966, and returned to Scottsboro to marry his high school sweetheart, Liz Barnes, who had completed four years at the University of Alabama while Jerry was in Germany. The couple moved to Jacksonville where Liz taught and Jerry completed his B.A., with a major in physical education and a minor in history. He returned to school a serious, straight-A student. He served as President of the Veterans' Association and Assistant Alumni Director, and he was on the university's tennis team.

During this time, Jerry performed the work for which we recognize him today: he wrote the History of Scottsboro. Researching and writing the book took three years. "I decided to write our Scottsboro story one time when I came home during the building of the courthouse addition and noticed the piles of old newspapers on the basement floor." He stumbled across a copy of the Bellefonte Currier, published by Robert T. Scott, and he was hooked. He travelled to Birmingham, Montgomery, and Washington D.C. to research his book. "My father was chairman of the of County Board of Revenue at that time so he sorted and collected the newspapers for me" and others to use. Wife Liz taught cake decorating to over a thousand students to keep the family solvent while Jerry was writing his book.

When his book was published in 1968, Jerry was invited to lecture in many locations. He signed books in the library. His book stands up today as a meticulous tracking of Scottsboro's growth

and development and a local retelling of the Scottsboro Boys history. It is a worthy successor to John Kennamer's 1935 county history. While working on his masters in one of the handful of schools with advanced studies in parks and recreation, Springfield College in Springfield, MA, he was surprised to find a copy of his Scottsboro book in the university library.

He received his master's degree in public administration from Springfield, with emphasis on physical education and recreation in 1969. While in Springfield, he also completed a public leadership program at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

In 1970, with their daughter Hannah on the way, Jerry accepted a position as Dean of Student Affairs at Massey College in Atlanta. It was his first public service job. As fate would have it, Massey went into receivership a month after Jerry started work. Jerry was characteristically upbeat and noted that at his next job, "It made me appreciative of the fact that I was finally getting paid."

A month after taking the ill-fated Massey job, Jerry was hired as Director of the Parks and Recreation Department in Gainesville, Georgia. He was designated an Outstanding Young Man of America in 1972 and was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Georgia Recreation and Parks Society. He was elected District Commissioner of this board in 1975.

In February 1977, Jerry left the job in Gainesville, GA to become "the youthful new executive director of Jackson Parks and Recreation" in Jackson, Tennessee. "He is a smooth-talking optimist and hustler," Jackson's Bill Cox wrote in February 1977. "He knows his business." Jerry's detailed plan reshaped Parks and Recreation in Jackson, and he did, by all reports, a stellar job in this role. He was later promoted to Director of Public Works.

After 25 years serving the City of Jackson, Jerry ran for and was elected mayor of Madison, TN in 2002. Though he had no city management experience, his supporters were confident of his abilities. "If he runs the city like he ran the Parks and Rec Department," Councilman Johnny Dodd said, "I think we're up for some great things."

In 2007, he was elected mayor of Jackson and served three terms, retiring from public service in 2019. During his 12-year tenure, he never forgot the people who elected him. "It's the little things that make a mayor successful—tree limbs in a yard, garbage pickup, and potholes." Looking after these small things is what kept him in office for 12 years. Things like bailing out Lambeth College by having the program taken over by Memphis College and building an animal shelter; "I'm convinced that we are a people judged by the care of our animals," he told the city when taking over the facility. He also honored local heroes by putting their names on local landmarks.

During the heyday of Gorham's Bluff, Jerry and Liz built a home in Jackson County and maintain this Alabama residence still.

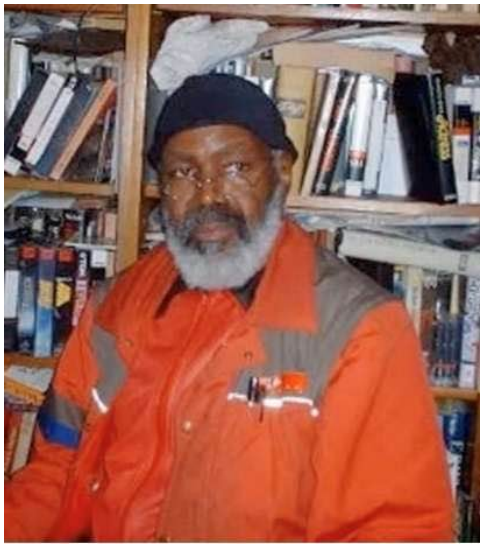
Jackson County, Alabama is grateful for the time we had this good man recording our history. As Jacksonville State said of Jerry in a 1978 feature, "Public service was in his blood."

Boro to Bowery: The Life of Scottsboro Poet Thomas Weatherly, Jr.

On the surface, the life of Thomas Elias Weatherly, Jr.—born in Scottsboro in 1942, resident of New York City for much of his adult life—reads like a tale of alienation and expatriation: He left Northeast Alabama and found his voice in the bohemian enclaves of the East Village of Manhattan. But viewed from the ground of Jackson County's own history, Weatherly's life forms something closer to a long arc, one whose ends remain anchored in Alabama soil. Weatherly returned—sometimes in body, more often in spirit—to his roots.

Thomas Weatherly, Jr. was born November 3, 1942, to Thomas Elias Weatherly, Sr. and Lucy Belle Golson Weatherly. Both were professional educators. His grandmother, Mary Hunter, is remembered locally as the first Black school principal in Jackson County—an accomplishment that, in 1940s and 1950's Alabama, required tenacity, diplomacy, and a fierce belief in the dignity of Black education.

His father, Thomas Weatherly, Sr. held a Master's degree from the University of Michigan, was a mathematics fellow at Western Reserve University, and was principal of Carver School, Scottsboro's K-12 school for Black children. Known there as "Prof Weatherly," he managed the difficult transition of his students from the segregated Carver school into the previously all-white Scottsboro school system. When Carver closed in the late 1960's, he joined the migration to the integrated Scottsboro High School, where he taught business math and business law.



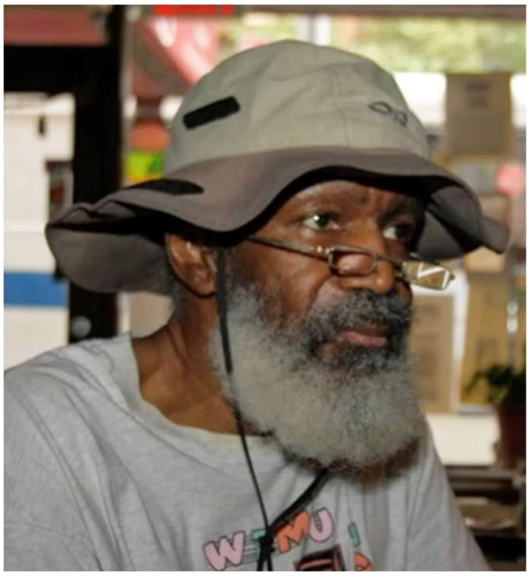
That family environment, steeped in books, community involvement, and public leadership, gave young Thomas an early sense of intellectual possibility. He grew up during the stifling years of Jim Crow, but he was nurtured in a household that stressed the importance of education as both personal and social assertion of liberation.

By fifteen, Weatherly's precocity was inescapable. "We used to call him 'superman' because of his intelligence," his childhood friend Allen Cothron recalls. "He was ten light years ahead of the rest of us. He was scary smart."

In 1958 he entered Morehouse College in Atlanta—a remarkable feat for any student, but especially for a Black teenager raised in a small North Alabama town not yet ten years removed from *Brown v. Board of Education*. He later attended Alabama A&M in Huntsville, where he also made his first mark as a writer: he was reportedly expelled for publishing an underground student paper titled *The Saint*, an episode he would recount in later life with a mixture of pride and mischief. The "saint" persona stayed with him for decades, resurfacing in the titles of his blogs and in playful signatures on letters to friends.

After leaving Alabama A&M, Weatherly enlisted in the Marine Corps—a formative experience whose details he shared sparingly. Friends recall that he spoke of being on the periphery of the Bay of Pigs events, though documentation remains unclear. What is certain is that the Marine

Corps exposed him to a world beyond the rural-to-urban South, and that military discipline sharpened the intellectual intensity already evident in his youth.



By the mid-1960s, Weatherly had arrived in New York City. He found his way to the East Village and, more specifically, to the Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church in the Bowery—one of the nation's most influential centers of avant-garde writing. At St. Mark's, he was not merely a participant; he became a teacher, workshop leader, and a distinctive presence among poets who defied traditional categories. Though sometimes grouped with the "Black Arts Movement," Weatherly resisted labels, describing himself later as "outside category," a phrase that suited him well.

In the North he worked in a succession of jobs—most famously at New York City's prestigious Strand Bookstore—and he taught at institutions including Bishop College, Morgan State, SUNY–Buffalo, and Rutgers–Newark. He published his first major collection, *Maumau American Cantos*, in 1970, followed soon after by *Thumbprint* (1971) and *Climate/Stream* (1972).

The Strand bookstore held a memorial service for Weatherly shortly after his death. Scottsboro native Clyde Broadway wrote a tribute that was delivered at the service. Clyde had met Weatherly in 1967. Broadway was working with an arts organization named Group Twoonetwo (212) in Woodstock, NY and mentioned to New York poet Joel Oppenheimer that he was from Scottsboro. Oppenheimer mentioned that he knew one other person from Scottsboro who worked at the Lion's Head Tavern in lower Manhattan. Some months later on a visit to Manhattan, Broadway met Weatherly at the Lion's Head. The two discovered that they had crossed paths before when Weatherly had visited Ken's Record Shop on the square in Scottsboro. The shop's owner, Ken Frazier, special ordered the *New York Times* for Weatherly. Weatherly and Broadway reestablished their acquaintance when Weatherly moved to Huntsville in the late 1990s to care for his aging mother.

Weatherly remained connected to his roots through frequent trips home, extended stays in Huntsville, and contact with his family. Later in life, he returned to Alabama more consistently, dividing his time between Huntsville and New York. His local involvement was not limited to family. Under the online pen names "Eclectic Git" and "Saint Satin Stain," he contributed essays to *Left in Alabama*, mixing political commentary with musings on poetry, faith, and daily life. These blog posts show a man who remained deeply invested in the concerns of his home state, even after years away.

There was, in nearly every aspect of Weatherly's life, a productive tension. Raised in the African Methodist Episcopal Church—and at one time ordained as an AME pastor—he eventually converted to Orthodox Judaism and adopted the Hebrew name Eliyahu Ben Avraham. Politically, he delighted in taunting others: he sometimes identified as a "conservative Republican," even as his poetry explored anti-imperialist themes and celebrated figures of Black resistance.

Formally, too, he was an experimenter. His later book, *Short History of the Saxophone* (2006), is often cited by scholars as the innovative culmination of his complex jazz-inflected poetics.

Thomas Weatherly died on July 15, 2014. He was buried with Jewish rites in Valhalla Memory Gardens, Huntsville, closing a life that had traveled far but remained anchored in Alabama memory. In the years since, scholars and poets have begun to reexamine his body of work, with a growing number of tributes establishing him as a major, if under recognized, innovator in late 20th-century American poetry.

For Jackson County, his life offers a locally grounded story with national reach: a child raised in a Black family of educators in Scottsboro who became a fixture of the New York literary avant-garde; a Marine who turned to mysticism; a man who moved between churches and synagogues, county lines and continental ones, always drawing from the deep well of language first dug here.

Thomas Weatherly, Jr. is not yet as widely known in Alabama as he deserves to be. But his story belongs to this place. Weatherly's journey from Jackson County to the Bowery and back again is a reminder: our local history reaches farther than our county lines, and our voices travel farther still.

David Benson Bradford

References:

Wikipedia " –Thomas E. Weatherly Jr."
One-page overview: family background in Scottsboro, early college years (Morehouse at 15; Alabama A&M), Marines service, move to New York, work at St. Mark's Poetry Project, publications, and later life splitting time between NYC and Huntsville. Includes note on his formal poetic innovation "double glory" and his Jewish burial in Huntsville in 2014.

Alabama Authors (UA Libraries)
Short biographical notice focusing on Weatherly as an Alabama writer: Confirming birth in Scottsboro on 3 November 1942, parents 'names, his marriage to Carolyn Samuels, two children, teaching posts (Rutgers, Bishop College, Morgan State, St. Mark's), and a basic works list including *Maumau American Cantos*, *Thumbprint*, *Climate*, and his co-edited anthology *Natural Process: An Anthology of New Black Poetry.*

Poets & Writers Directory
Brief listing identifying Weatherly as a poet based in Huntsville, Alabama, with contact info and a link to his political/blog writing at "Left in Alabama."

FindaGrave.com
Compiles four obituaries for Weatherly under his listing in Valhalla Memory Gardens, Huntsville.

YouTube Video: Thomas Weatherly Memorial Service (November 3, 2014, 2:26:25)
A tribute held at The Strand Bookstore on Sheridan Square, Manhattan on what would have been Thomas Weatherly's 72nd birthday. Includes tributes submitted by Weatherly's daughter, Regina Nicholson, and Scottsboro artist Clyde Broadway. The YouTube video also links to a slideshow of Weatherly photos, from which the graphics used here were excerpted.

Note: *This article was proofread by the artificial intelligence (AI) tool ChatGPT. ChatGPT also supplied some of the details of Weatherly's life not revealed in the Chronicle's review of the stated sources. Some of ChatGPT's wording was occasionally transcribed verbatim.*

The Making of an Historic Photo Trail

Several years ago, while serving on the Main Street Scottsboro Board of Directors, my friend and cofounder of the organization, Richi Reynolds, came back from a trip where she had seen some nice historic photos attached to buildings around an historic downtown area. We decided we wanted to try to do something like this in Scottsboro because there are so many beautiful and interesting historic photos of the Square. We knew we didn't want to attach them to the historic buildings, so we decided to come up with some ideas of attaching them to the street lights along the sidewalks. We found a great local sign printer, Sign-1-1, who also helped us find the appropriate metal signs. The first sign created actually was attached to the side of a building, right next to the beautiful John Warr mural titled "The Man on the Bike" on the southwest side of the Square facing City Hall. The sign shows the original photo the mural is based from, as well as information about it. The Scottsboro Boys mural also received this type of sign. Once we made the decision to attach the photos to the light poles, and we knew we wanted pictures on both sides, it gave us a number: we needed ten signs for each of the four sides of the Square.

The first signs we tackled were for the easiest sides, Broad, Market, and Laurel. Peachtree photos were few and far between. Laurel Street and the north ends of Market and Broad are the most historic portions of the Square due to their proximity to the old Main Street along the railroad, the depot, and later the traffic of Highway 72 on Willow. Peachtree Street was another story. It was a struggle to find 10 decent photos at all, while we had to whittle through dozens of photos of the other sides of the square, Peachtree proved to be a real challenge. I found the photos and the history, while Richi helped edit the captions and choose the perfect photos to use.

Then there was research required to provide history or context to each photo. Thanks to Annette Bradford's amazing work on the "Take a Walk Around the Square" page on the JCHA website (see https://jchaweb.org/square/squarebasepage.html), I could easily find the vast majority of the information I needed to get started on the signs. Other signs required extra research, discussion on the Facebook page, and questions of people far and wide. After several versions, revisions, proofs, and reviews from Richi, Annette and David, and even Ann Chambless early on, the Laurel Street photos went up in mid-2020, with Broad and Market going up in 2021. The technically-unfinished photo trail won an award from Main Street Alabama in 2022.

One of the most interesting signs to write was a movie still of the Ritz Theatre you will find below from Broad Street. This was the first of several screenshots I was able to use from the Hollywood Tour of Scottsboro commissioned by Robert Word in 1941. I wanted to know more about the film for the sign. After some searching, I found that Lloyd Royal of Meridian, Mississippi, was the creator of this film, along with dozens of others across the southeast. He, like Mr. Word, had owned theaters, and he also started a short-lived theme park. After searching his name, I learned that he had two sons that were active on Facebook. I was able to discuss this film with them and even get some photos of Lloyd Royal.

The Peachtree signs have just recently been completed and have not even been printed. After searching and searching to find ten good photos, I put it on the backburner, and that is where it stayed for some time. After talking to Sam Hall, who amazingly restored the 1941 film frame by frame, I was able to obtain some additional photos that could be used from a brief shot of this side

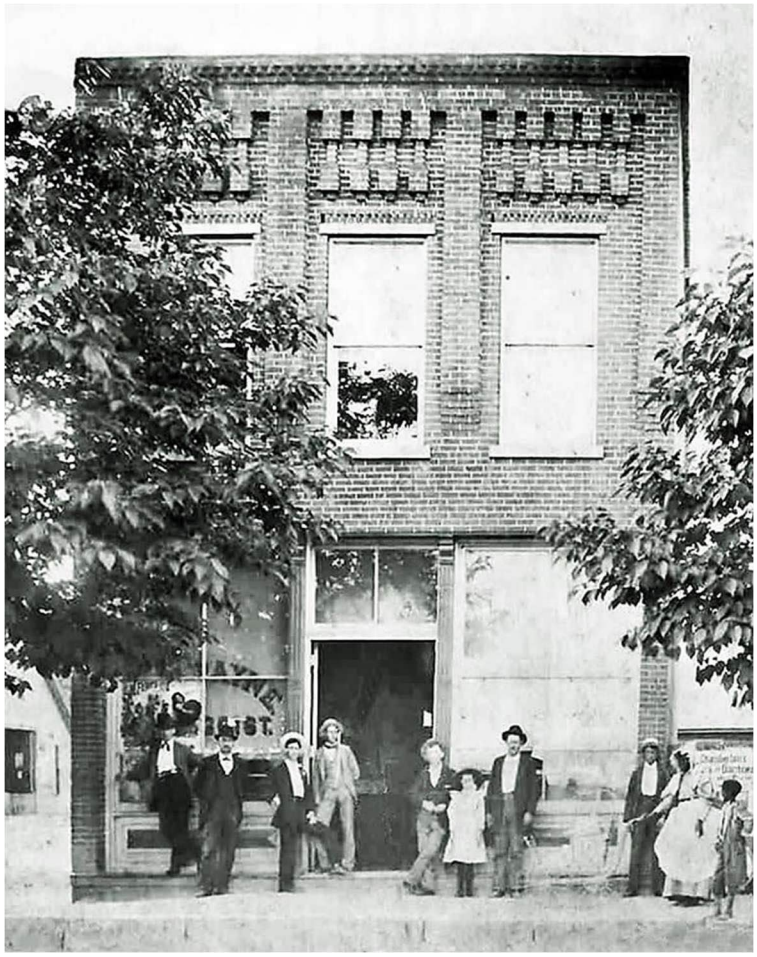
of the Square. These, along with an ad found with Newspapers.com of a car dealership where the Two Sisters Square is now, finally gave me enough photos to finish. You JCHA members and Chronicle readers are getting an exclusive sneak peek (a membership benefit!) in this quarter's issue. Below are the 40 photos that are (or will be) around the Square, as well as the captions for them. It would be impossible for me to site all of the references used in these signs, but please know that I have done my very best to gather accurate and credible information that will be shared with the public walking the Square for many years to come.

Some of these photos are likely ones you have seen over and over. I wanted to use these iconic photos, and in some cases, there was not enough space to use all the photos that I love. Hopefully some of these photos will be new and interesting to you. It is even more fun to walk around the Square and see these places as they sit today.

Laurel Street (North Side) – These were actually our first round of signs. These probably have the most mistakes as we were learning. They also have some of the shortest descriptions.



This postcard photo of Scottsboro's Main Street has been dated to around 1908. Now known as Laurel Street, this was the main east to west route through town before Willow Street was widened for Lee Highway in the 1930's. A 1953 newspaper article states that the wagon closest to the photographer is thought to be a delivery wagon for local grocer C.B. Beard. Likely taken during the fall, cotton wagons can also be seen lining the street.



This circa 1892 photograph shows Payne's Drug Store about a year after completion. W.H. Payne (5th from left) built the original Payne's just south of the railroad tracks in 1869. The picture has been attributed to W.S. Lively, an innovator of photography in the late 19th century, who was traveling through Scottsboro between 1878 and 1882, and continued to visit through the 1890s. He became friends with Payne and used space in the upper floor of the original Payne's Drug Store. In 1904, Lively, whose works have been featured by the Smithsonian Institute, founded the Southern School of Photography in his hometown, McMinville, Tennessee.



Looking northwest from Broad Street, this photo shows a 1930s First Monday gathering.



This 1938 image, by renowned German-born photographer, Alfred Eisenstaedt, entitled "Melon Salesman and Fiddler," prominently features the 1914 Snodgrass Theatre and Bynum buildings when they housed Word Furniture and Undertaking and Lays 5 and 10. Eisenstaedt is well known for his photographs for Life Magazine.



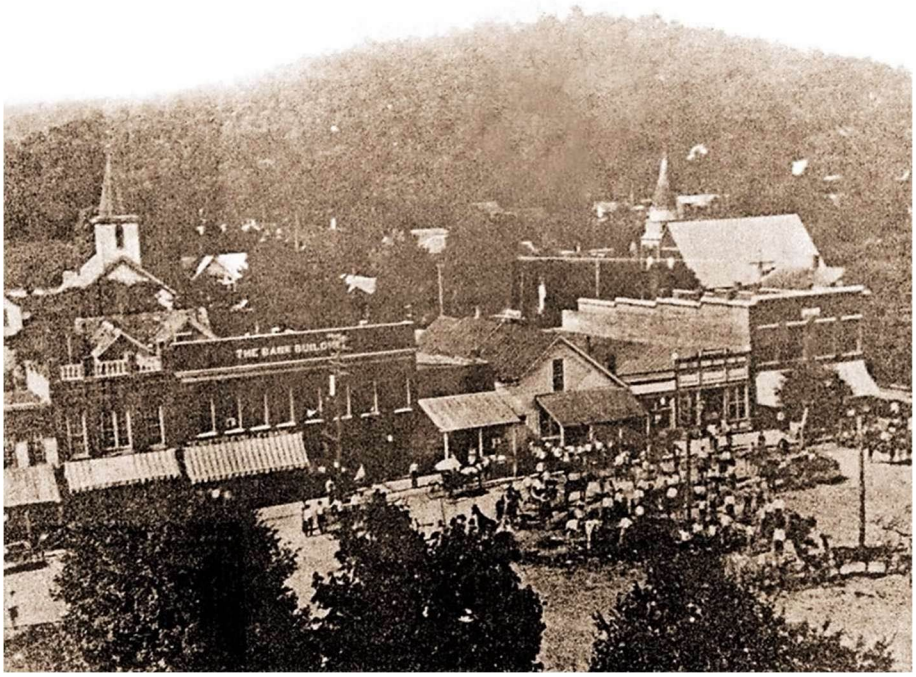
Taken in the Winter of 1917-1918, this photograph shows the north side of the square and the area north to the Tater Knob. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church, used from 1883 to1954, can be seen a block north on Willow Street. Also shown just right of center, with what looks like a wraparound porch, is the 1891 Scottsboro Passenger Depot.



This 1959 photo by Jackson County Farmer editor Browny Stephens shows Gov. John M. Patterson giving a speech after his successful campaign to be the 44th governor of Alabama. This was likely a First Monday crowd and is notable as one of the best-known photographs of the Bocanita Theatre (arched stone facade).



Shot during the winter of 1917-1918, this is a closeup of the Garland and Bank Buildings. The Garland building was completed in 1878, and is the oldest extant building on the square. The 1899 Bank Building is shown with its original tenant, Tennessee Valley Bank. The one-story building to the right was at this time the home of the First National Bank, which started here as the Bank of Scottsboro in 1901 and was in this location until moving to Broad Street in 1919.



Taken from the courthouse clock tower, this c.1915 photo shows a gathering on Laurel Street. Notable in this photo are the steeples of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church (1883-1954) and First Methodist Church (at the current post office site, 1870s-1937). The photo also shows some of the original frame buildings that existed on this side of the square.



An early 1960s homecoming parade is shown making its way around the square. Looking northwest, several businesses are visible, including State National Bank, Hodge's Drug Store and the Quality Store.



Children can be seen on East Laurel Street in this c. 1910 photograph. Featured prominently on the right is the 1870 Brown Building, the first business built on the Square. Scottsboro's first hospital was in this building from 1923-1925. It was torn down in the 1960s, but the concrete "Brown" name plaque (not visible in photo) was saved and used in the current building.

Market Street (East Side)



This circa 1908 photograph shows the Claybrook building built on the southeast corner of Market and Laurel Streets in 1888. This building, likely named for its builder and early tenant, has two storefronts and housed many early stores. The right side of the building housed Woods Grocery from 1912 until 1953. This photo shows Jacobs & Padgett, a general store that later became Jacobs & McClendon. The story goes that J.C. Jacobs, seated with a black hat, began banking operations in 1909 at a desk just inside the side entrance facing Laurel Street. He later moved J.C Jacobs Banking Company to the corner of Broad and Willow streets. This same side entrance was the entry for the Dreamland Theater, a silent movie house on the second floor. It was in operation here from 1924 until 1930, when owner Claude Bobo opened the Bocanita Theater on Laurel Street.



The Claybrook Building, along well as several buildings on Laurel Street, as well the Shell station located on the corner lot across from the square, are shown in the background of this WWII War Bond Rally photo. The Shell building seems to have been built around 1900 based on photographs. It was home to a Shell gas station for at least the last 20-30 years of its existence. It was torn down in the 1970s to meet the ever-increasing need for additional parking downtown.

The Goat Man, Charles "Ches" McCartney, stands with his goats in front of Word Chevy in the late 1930's. McCartney became such a legend, he once appeared on the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson. The Iowa native wandered the country with his goats for 40 years beginning around 1930, making several appearances in Scottsboro. He passed away in 1998 and is buried in Macon, Georgia. He was believed to be 97 at the time of his death.



This 1940s view of the Word Motor Company building, now referred to as the Word Arcade, shows signs on the Chevrolet dealership boasting TRUCKS, PARTS, GAS, TIRES, and RADIOS, as well as NEW and USED CARS. The building was first built for Hal Word's Chevrolet and Oldsmobile dealership in 1923. By 1960, all operations had been moved a block east, with this building converted to storefront and office space.





This photo was taken in April 1931 during the first trials of Scottsboro Boys. Of note are the old sulphur well on the courthouse lawn and the original Courthouse Bandstand financed by Sheriff D.O. Austin in 1915. The current bandstand was rebuilt in 2008. The Proctor Building, second building from left on Market Street, is also shown in this photo. Built in 1923, the post office was one of its original tenants. In 1930, a year before this photo, it was the site of the infamous murder of Harry Cunningham. In what appears to be a horrible misunderstanding, Cunningham was stabbed in the entrance to Drug Sundries Company during an altercation with two young women.

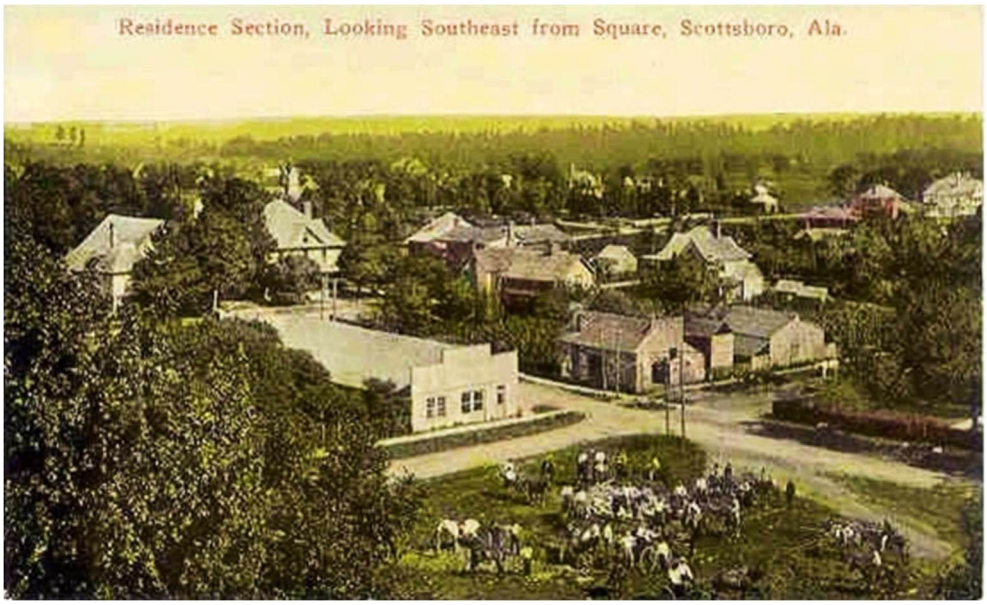
© The Jackson County Historical Association



This 1938 advertisement for Pat's Place, or the Blue Wagon Café, from the Progressive-Age newspaper shows this early diner or food truck on the East side of the Square. Based on the Progressive Age sign seen at the top of the photograph, this restaurant was located in a lot just south of this plaque. No one remembers much about the establishment, except that the nickel hamburgers were delicious.



This photo is from a group of photos captioned "Winter 1917- 1918." Taken from the Courthouse clocktower looking southeast toward the corner of Market and Peachtree Streets, several of the older building on this street are visible, including residences. Also notable in this photo is the beautiful original First Baptist Church with its bell tower. Consecrated in October 1878, it was destroyed by fire on November 16, 1949 and replaced with the current structure. The house beside the church that would now be in the middle of Martin Street. Facing these buildings across Martin St is the two-story Staley Boarding House. Also, faintly visible in the background is the original school building built in 1888 for Scott College and Normal School. This building was remodeled after becoming Jackson County High School and eventually replaced by the current building in 1939.



This colorized postcard from around 1912 was based on a photograph from the same time period. This view is nearly identical to the photo on the reverse of this plaque. The caption reads "Residence Section, Looking Southeast from Square, Scottsboro, Ala." There appears to be a gathering on the southeast lawn of the courthouse, and one must wonder if this was an early "Horse Swapper's Day," which had begun in 1902, and would eventually become known as First Monday Trade Days. This gathering, which is still held on the weekend before the First Monday of the month, continues to be the oldest tradition is Jackson County.

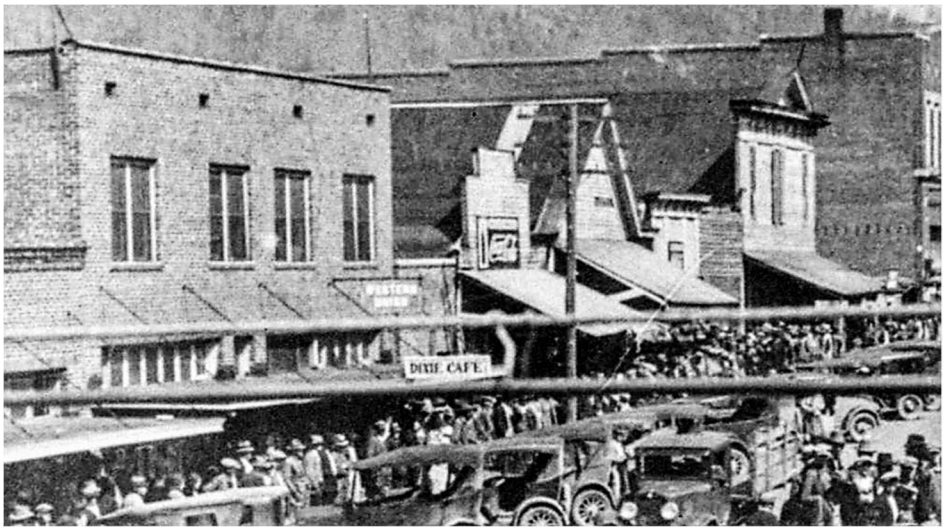


This 1927 photo shows Benson and Padgett in the Ford Dealership building just after it was completed. John Benson purchased the Ford dealership from W.J. Webb in 1923. Mr. Webb had been in the automobile business for several years at that time. In 1924, it was announced that Mr. Benson had partnered Annis Padgett to sell Ford and Lincoln vehicles. It is said that a ramp was built in the building that allowed cars to driven to the second floor. The building replaced earlier brick and frame buildings that likely dated from the late 19th century.



This circa 1948 photograph shows the Ford dealership after it was purchased by Hoyt Harbin, Sr. in 1939. There is an advertisement that for 1949 Fords on the left side of the photo. Early film footage shows this building as a full-service automobile dealership with new car sales, service and gasoline. Harbin later moved the dealership to Willow Street before building a new dealership on John T. Reid Parkway around 2000. In 2008, Harbin purchased Word Chevrolet, which also began on the square, and they continue to sell both Ford and Chevrolet vehicles today.

Broad Street (West Side)



This 1931 photo was taken at the southeast corner of Broad and Peachtree from Scottsboro's new City Hall that had been built the year before. The two-story building in the left of the photograph would later house Hammer's. A Western Union sign can be seen as well as a sign for Dixie Café. According to the 1931 Jackson County High School Yearbook, G.M Waller and Hugh Swaim were the proprietors of the Dixie Café, and their ad message was "We like to feed." Other businesses shown include Harvey Henshaw Grocery in the first frame building, and Caldwell City Meat Market in frame building with the gabled end. The largest frame building to the right is Jones Dry Goods Store. The 1919 brick First National Bank Building is seen to the far right. All of the buildings between Caldwell's Market and the First National Bank would be torn down over the next year and replaced by a one-story block of brick buildings.



Taken by the late Bill Bradford, this photo depicts the 1958 Homecoming Parade. Businesses to note are the Mill Ends Store and Peggy's Shoppe. The Mill Ends Store was a fabric store owned by Lawrence Kennamer and his family. Located in this spot from the 1950s through 1980s, the shop eventually expanded into both sides of the building. Peggy's Shoppe, a lady's clothing store, was located here as early as 1949. Earlier occupants in this location included Owens Grocery and Jimmie's Tailor Shop. This is also a good color shot of the 1922 two-story building that has housed Hammer's since 1948.

During the time period shown, upstairs tenants ranged from "red light" apartments to the first place of worship for the local Catholic congregation. In the 1960s, it would also be an early location for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.



Shown is an ordinary day on Broad Street in the mid-1960s. The smoke seen in the distance is believed to be coming from Shook's Laundry. Businesses seen in this photo include Hammer's, City Shoe Shop, and Scottsboro Produce Company, all sharing the first floor of what is now the main Hammer's building. Further down, the Blue Moon Café can be seen, as well as Harvey Henshaw Grocery. These two businesses pre-dated the 1940s brick buildings seen here. The small rock Coffee Shop is seen in the location that previously housed the Caldwell City Meat Market. Next is a one-story row of buildings known as the Word Block, followed by First National Bank of Scottsboro and Scottsboro Hardware. Payne's can also be seen on the right side of the photo. The shot was taken by well-known local photographer Leroy Gist, Jr., who also had a jewelry store and photography studio in this block. Both Mr. Gist and his father were known for taking great photographs of Scottsboro that are prized today.



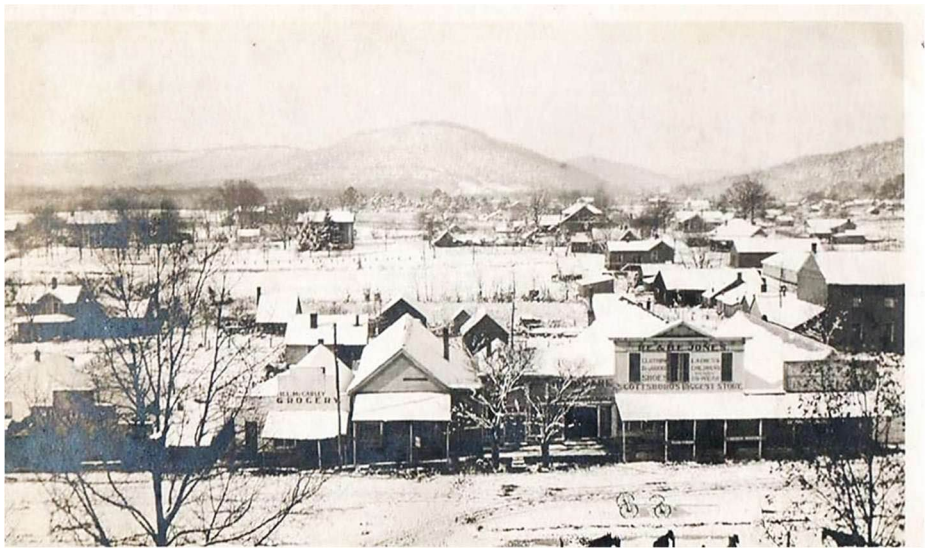
Photographed in 1938 by famed photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt, this photo shows the Blue Moon Café and Harvey Henshaw Grocery in their original buildings. Caldwell's and Henshaw Grocery were the last two frame structures on Broad Street. Caldwell's was replaced by a small rock building that would house the Rock House Market and later the Coffee Shop. Prior to this location, Caldwell's was located on the southeast corner of Broad and Willow Streets in the Snodgrass Building. The Word Block of buildings, shown at the right, was built in 1931-32 and replaced earlier frame structures in these locations. A variety of businesses were located in this strip throughout the years including Reid's Sundries, the Ritz Theatre and V.J. Elmore 5 and 10, a staple in this location from the 1930s through 1970s.



Captured from a 1941 promotional film entitled "A Hollywood Tour of Scottsboro," the Ritz Theatre entrance is shown with a variety of advertisements. The film, created for Ritz owner Robert Word to be shown in the theater, was produced by Lloyd Royal, a Mississippian who owned several indoor and outdoor movie theaters throughout Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama. He went on to produce larger commercial films after doing several in the area for Word-owned theaters. Royal was an entrepreneur who also owned a baseball stadium and a short-lived theme park in Meridian called Royal Land. Robert Word, son of local lumberman W.J. Word opened the Ritz in 1936. His first theater, the Aerodome, was an outdoor venue located 2 blocks off the square. Later, Word opened Word Popcorn, the Tawasentha Drive-in, and the Holiday Twin Cinema. The film advertised in the photo, "No No Nanette," was released in late 1940, based on a 1919 play and 1930 film by the same name. Other films advertised here include Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse in "Mr. Mouse Takes a Trip" (1940) and detective mystery "The Saint of Palm Springs" (1941).



"Stand Up and Fight," a 1939 western about two men teaming up against an illegal slave runner, is shown advertised at the Ritz. Note the wooden stairs for access to the elevated sidewalk. Concrete steps along this whole portion of the street were added in the early 1940s. Broad Street has since been leveled and built up. This shot shows the Ritz just three years after opening, before its large faux façade was added. It is also interesting to see the Ritz truck sitting in front with loudspeakers and advertising for the current movie. The license plate indicates '39 as the year of this photo. This truck can be seen in the 1941 film "A Hollywood Tour of Scottsboro" promoting "See Yourself in the Movies." Word Dry Goods is found next door, a predecessor in this location to Hollis' Dry Goods and Chambers Clothing Store, among others.



In the winter of 1917-1918 we can see "Scottsboro's Biggest Store" owned by R.E. and B.B. Jones, which advertises shoes, dry goods and more. Near the center of the photo, and two blocks behind the Broad Street businesses, sits the Brown-Proctor home with cedar trees in front. This 1880s house is now the Scottsboro-Jackson County Heritage Center and is possibly the only building seen in this photo that still stands today. To the left of the Heritage Center, its twin can be seen, the home originally built by Dr. W.H. Payne, founder of Payne's Drug Store. At far right in this photo, the tall gable ended building is believed to be the back of the old Brick Church, which sat at the corner of Caldwell and Laurel. Built around 1868, the building served as a school and union church for several denominations before they completed their own buildings. Later it served as a theater and is often referred to as the Opera House. The building, which sat empty for many years, was torn down by I.T. Derrick in 1939 to make room for his Rough and Tumble Furniture Store, later known as Mr. D's. Derrick left three rows of brick from the early structure which can still be seen at the bottom of the current building.



Marching through the streets in the early 1950s, this is most likely the Alabama National Guard Co B, 151st Engineering Battalion from Scottsboro heading to Korea. To the left is the Coffee Shop in a small rock building that was later torn down. Reid Sundries, owned by longtime Scottsboro mayor John T. Reid, has a bright red sign. Other photos of the store show the faded sign of a prior tenant in this location, T.D. Thomas Café. Here, the Ritz is shown with its front marquee and raised letter Ritz sign surrounded by a faux façade lined with neon. The actual auditorium still exists in the building on the backside, complete with stage, curtains and balcony. Next, we see Hollis' Dry Goods beside Keeble General Merchandise with its bright blue location advertising Admiral Appliances. H.B. Keeble sold his store to his brother Hugh in 1954, and it was converted to a grocery store advertising fresh fruits and vegetables.



Looking north across Laurel Street, this c. 1940 photo shows several buildings located in the block of Broad Street just north of Laurel Street. On the corner is Gay Hardware. Housed in this 1905 building, Gay Hardware opened about 1925 and sold to W.W. Coplin of Guntersville in 1943. Coplin Hardware was in business here through the late 1970s. This building was also home for many years to Ann's Gift Shop. Caldwell's and Skelton Furniture can both be seen. Brown and Bergman Furniture (later known as Cash and Bergman) would eventually be in this location, with Sterchi's Furniture in the building next door. At the end of this block was the first permanent location of J.C. Jacobs Banking Company, as well as an early gas station on the corner.

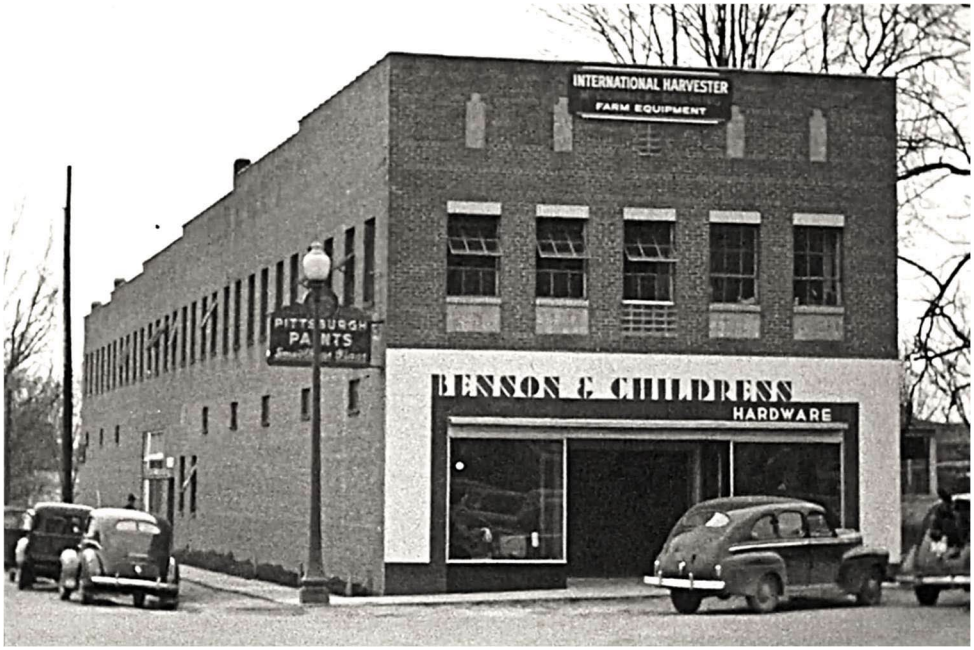


Taken in April 1931 during the first trials of the Scottsboro Boys, this photo shows the large crowd that gathered for the trials and had to be held back from the Courthouse by the National Guard. Some of the frame buildings along Broad that would be torn down later that year and replaced by the Word Block of buildings, including the large Jones Store, are shown here as well. The photo includes the 1919 First National Bank building near center, probably the most ornate building on the Square. The bank was designed by Richard H. Hunt who also designed the 1912 Courthouse that is the centerpiece of our Public Square. The 1917 Scottsboro Hardware building was originally built by David and Robert Scott Skelton as Skelton Brothers Hardware. Skelton Hardware was founded in the 1860s by James T. Skelton who married Charlotte Scott Skelton, daughter of town founder Robert T. Scott. This lot was purchased by Skelton in the initial sale of lots offered by the Robert Scott estate in 1868. Proceeds from the sale of every other lot were used to fund the building of the first Courthouse in Scottsboro completed in 1870.

Peachtree Street (South Side) – Here is your sneak peek of the signs that will be coming soon to Peachtree Street. One is of the block behind and others are not to the quality standards we tried to use elsewhere, but these were the best historic photos I could find of this side of the Square.

Benson & Childress Hardware Building was completed in 1940 on property purchased the year before. Many service industry businesses, including the County Health Department reported their move to the new building in March.

The lot has been purchased from Rosa Stuart whose home sat on an adjacent lot



facing the Square. The home was built by her father-in-law William G Stuart in 1879 and was the last residence on the square when it was removed in the 1950s

A large frame office building known as the Card Building was built somewhere around this southeast corner of the square and moved to the northside of the Square within a few years. This corner was also home to the W.I. Kirk blacksmith shop in 1891. The Judge Albert Henry Moody house stood in the parking lot area across from First Baptist, and a large pyramid-roofed barn stood in the corner space until the block was cleared for the automotive shop in the 1950s-60s.



Built in 1927, the brick building on the northeast corner of Market and Peachtree Streets replaced an earlier frame dealership owned by W.J. Webb Auto Company. Webb Auto was in business by 1918 and sold Ford and Lincoln automobiles, Fordson Tractors, Fisk Tires, Harley-Davidson motorcycles, and even Haynes Touring Cars in the 1920s. Wiliam J. Webb later died tragically when his vehicle was struck by a train west of Gurley in November 1931. This building may have replaced an earlier garage. The small brick addition was built in 1928 to house the farm implements department of then Benson and Padgett Ford dealership. The building served as the Harbin dealership until the completion of the Willow Street location in 1955.

On the far left, the photo also shows one of the three known residences on the Square, the Gordon E. Young house. It was built in the 1870s as a home and boarding house, with several owners before it was torn down in the 1930s. It was replaced by the GE Young Apartment building that now houses the law offices of his great grandson, Gerald Paulk.



From the 1941 Word film, this photo gives a good view of one of at least three residences that once existed on Peachtree and Market Street sides of the Square. This L-shaped residence has not been positively identified. The homes on Peachtree were in the location of the brick Lackey law firm building and adjacent parking lots. The roof and window of the William G. Stuart house can be seen just to the right of the large brick Benson and Childress building on the far left of the photo. A local merchant with a store on the Square, Stuart completed this residence in March 1879. The more visible residence was likely removed not long after this photo. There were no residences left on the square after 1960. (*Note-If anyone has more information about the home in the center of this photo, please share!)



Another great shot from the 1941 "Hollywood Tour of Scottsboro" shows First Baptist Church from almost this exact location. Consecrated in October 1878, a fire in the furnace room burned the beautiful frame church to the ground on November 16, 1949. It was replaced by the current structure in the same location. Prior to this building, the Baptists had worshipped in a shared space completed in about 1870 with the same brick masons who completed the first Scottsboro Courthouse that year. The brick church was located on the southeast corner of Laurel and Caldwell Streets. Several denominations met here before building their own churches. The building also housed the Masonic lodge and was used for a school. Later, it was an Opera House, owned for a time by pharmacist W.H. Payne. This photo shows an unidentified older gentleman walking down the sidewalk amongst cars and a horse drawn buggy. (*Note -If this man looks familiar, please share who he might be!)

© The Jackson County Historical Association

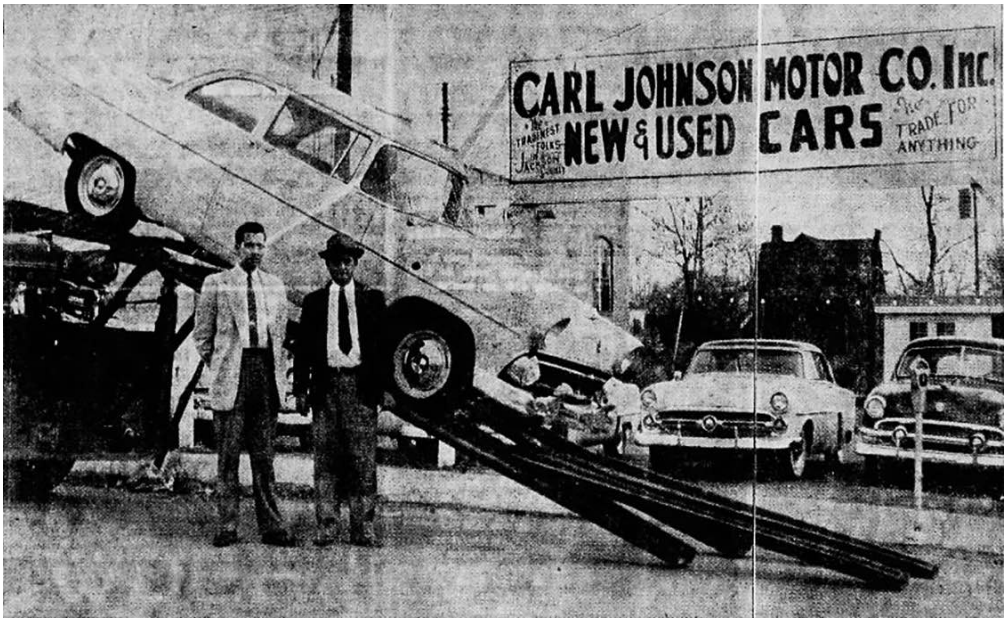


The building at 122 East Peachtree Street was built in 1922 to house the medical offices of Dr. Hugh Boyd (1880-1932) on the first floor and the local Masonic organization on the second floor. Dr. Boyd, himself a Mason, had graduated from Memphis Medical College in May 1899 and in November went into practice on the west side of the square with his brother, Dr. Andrew Boyd. After Dr. Hugh Boyd's death, Dr. Marvin Lynch practiced in this building for a time. The building was modified heavily to add an extensive refrigeration infrastructure before opening as The Locker Plant in 1944. In the late 1970s, the Locker Plant became Old Hickory Food and Chemicals under the ownership of Bill Bradford, providing restaurant and industrial supplies and pool chemicals. Around 1970, the Masonic Lodge relocated to a new building and their space was occupied by the Fraternal Order of Police. The stockyards behind the building were eliminated in the late 1960's having become a public health concern. The adjoining building housed women's clothing stores, notably The Lad and Lassie Shop, until the early 1960's, when it was annexed to The Locker Plant. Around 2000, the buildings sold to Safety First Services, and were meticulously renovated to their present state by Hank Moghani. (Credit for this caption goes to David Bradford)

When the Locker Plant opened at 122 East Peachtree in 1944, The Progressive Age called it "one of the largest and possibly the most modern in the entire country." The Locker Plant, co-owned by State Senator John B. Benson and his son-in-law Jewell Hall, shown in this c. 1950 photo with



other family members and employees, was based on a technology introduced in the early years of WWII that offered rental lockers to those who wanted to preserve large quantities of meats and vegetables by freezing them in bulk. By mid-century, small freezers were built into refrigerators, but they lacked the capacity to preserve a family's yearly provisions. At the Locker Plant, for a fee of $12 a year, a customer could rent drawer-type metal lockers of about 12 square feet in an area kept at five degrees below zero. The Locker Plant also offered off-the-truck meat processing services. Livestock was staged in the stockyards fronting Appletree Street and moved through a series of processing areas that culminated in various cuts being packaged and transferred to locker facilities for quick freeze. Many children of the era will remember that the left half of the building was given over to the "Dairy King," which dispensed soft- serve ice cream from a half-moon window to customers on Peachtree Street. The Dairy King closed around 1960. (credit for this caption goes to David Brandford)

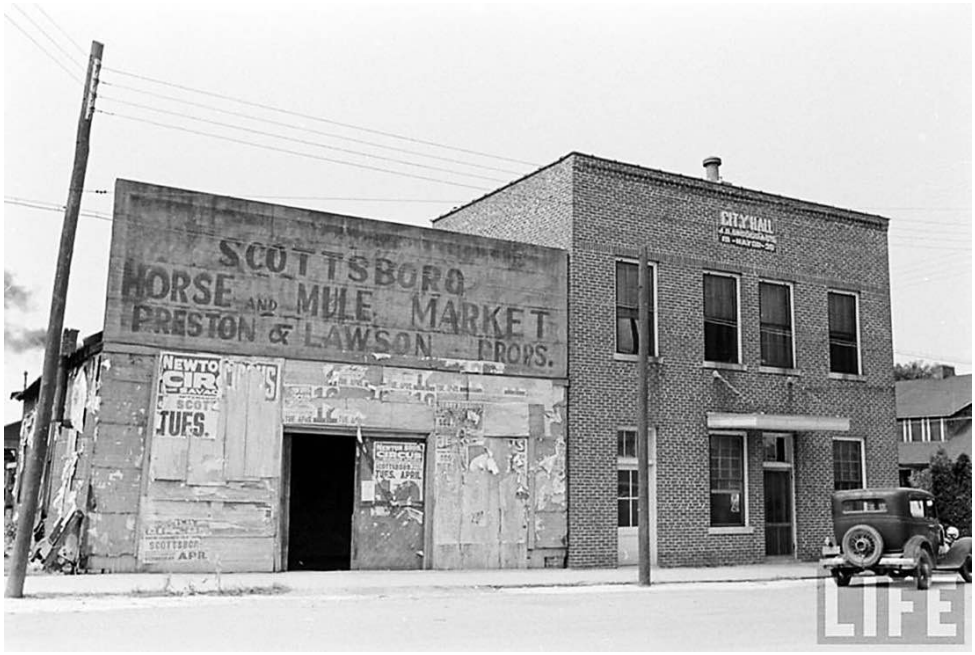


Opened in 1954, Carl Johnson Motors is the first documented business in the location that is now home to Two Sisters Square. Sometime by the 1930s, two small houses were built at back of the block. One of these, along with the tiny Carl Johnson office building, can be seen in this photo from the opening of the car dealership. Another small building was built on the west end of this lot in the 1960s which housed the Moonlight Café and Dolberry TV Service before being torn down by the 1980s.

As the furthest side from the Railroad and the original downtown section along the tracks, the south side was the last side of the square to be developed, housing many of the farming stores, butcheries and animal stockades early on. Along with two residences and this long-empty lot, this side of the square offered the only gaps in the continuous line of business buildings facing the square.

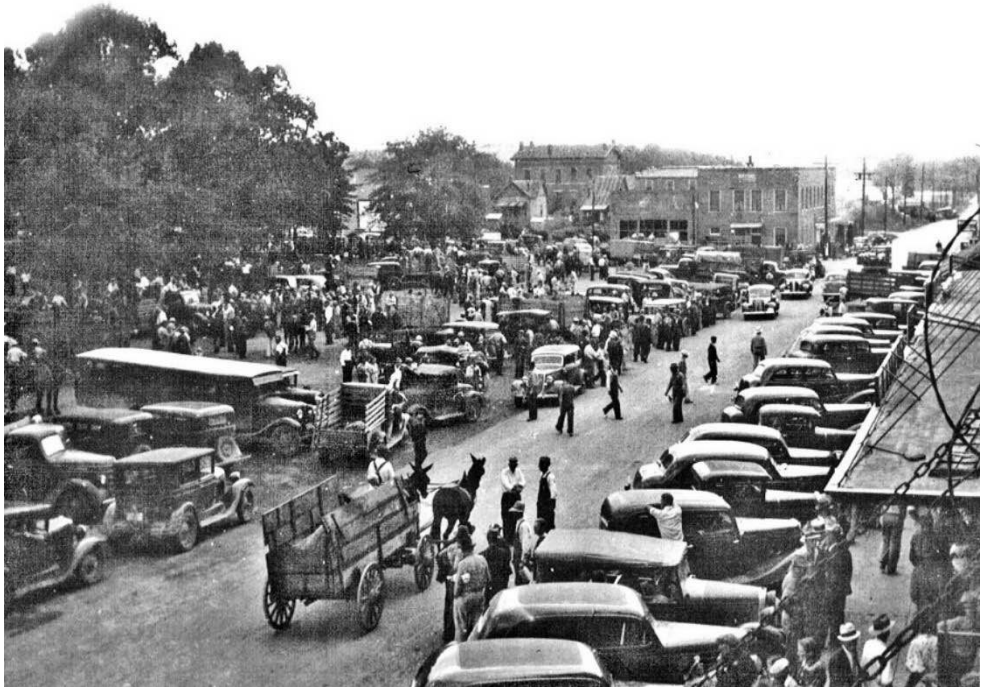


Another 1938 Eisenstaedt photo shows the ice wagon headed up the street one block back from the Square on Appletree Street. A frame jail was replaced in 1873 by the large brick jail seen partially on the left side of the photo. After problems with escaped inmates, a replacement jail was completed in 1931. The old jail was removed sometime in the 1950s and replaced in 1959 by the County social services building, now used by the Juvenile Court system. A plan was made to renovate the deteriorating 1931 jail during the 1990s, but the building was ultimately torn down. In its place, programs through the Jackson County Circuit Court have planted a "Garden of Hope" for several years. The garden is kept by defendants in programs like Drug Court, who are offered rehabilitation services, along with required community service and 12-step program attendance, in exchange for setting aside their pleas. The symbolism of the location for the garden is beautiful.



This Eisenstaedt photo shows the Preston and Lawson Mule Barn and City Hall completed in 1930. Within two years of this photo, the mule barn would be torn down and replaced by a line of one-story brick buildings that have housed dry cleaners, bowling alleys, clothing stores, and, since 1949, The Bake Shop. The old City Hall building was completed under the

direction of Mayor James David "JD" Snodgrass, still the longest serving Scottsboro mayor. Serving many terms as mayor, his gravestone is etched "Mayor of Scottsboro 42 Years." JD is also responsible for the building of the large 2-story Victorian home that has for decades as The Magnolia House on Willow Street. Now in the middle of downtown, JD and his wife Hattie Brown Snodgrass wanted a country home that was close enough to walk to town. Prior to this City Hall being built, city offices had been kept in the Courthouse since incorporation in 1870. The building originally housed the city offices, the volunteer fire station, and the first Public Library was opened upstairs. City Hall was moved further south on Broad Street in 1960, on land donated by Scottsboro native and Tyler, Texas oil magnate, David "King" Caldwell. That location is currently used as the Police Station. The beautiful, current City Hall across the street was completed in 2006. This original City Hall has since housed law offices, with the Legislative Delegation taking residence in 2004.



This 1930s photo by Thomas Shipp was donated to the Heritage Center by his family. Likely a scene from a First Monday Trade Day, Broad Street is shown busy and filled with cars and wagons. The 1930 City Hall, 1870s jail and small shanty houses on back side of the Two Sisters Square lot can also be seen in the photo.

First Monday Trade Days is a tradition, the modern version of which started in 1901 at the suggestion of newspaper editor James Armstrong. Begun as a time to swap horses during Circuit Court proceedings, the tradition grew into an enormous thrift and farm market with everything from antiques and clothes, to fresh produce and live hogs and dogs. Very large crowds gathered throughout the mid-20th century, slowing in the 1990s and 2000s. The tradition was revamped and reborn as Scottsboro Trade Days in 2020, with hopes of modernizing and continuing the century-old tradition.

I hope you have enjoyed your trip in photos around the Square. Please stop and take a stroll around the Square the view these in person when you can. This has been a true labor of love, and the best reward is seeing people stop and look at these on their visits to town.

Nat Cisco

50 Years Ago in Jackson County

Ruby Bates, one of two plaintiffs in the trials of the Scottsboro Boys, brought suit against NBC for slander, libel, and breach of peace in connection with the airing of the made-for-TV documentary "Judge Horton and the Scottsboro Boys." The network was working on information that she and co-plaintiff Victoria Price had died in 1961. She was in fact living in Washington state. Later that month (May), Victoria Price emerged from Fayetteville, TN to initiate her own suit against NBC in August. Joe W. Burleson, who was in charge of the national guard troops protecting the boys in Decatur, would file a third suit later in the year, saying the documentary portrayed his actions as cowardly. Bates died in 1976 before her case could be heard. Price settled out of court for an undisclosed amount. She died in 1982.

A bust of Andrew Jackson was unveiled on the Jackson County Court House square. The statue was frequently vandalized and was once reconstructed by dentist Ralph Sheppard, who used dental adhesive to repair the bust. Jackson has been suspected of sporting an asphalt toupee which was applied after one especially serious incident of vandalism.

Two workers were killed and six injured when a construction crane collapsed at Widow's Creek generating plant.

"Operation Townlift," a project to renovate the court house square, began in Scottsboro. During the renovation, elm trees planted in remembrance of WWI veterans but afflicted with Dutch elm disease were removed, radically changing the visual appeal of the courthouse facility. County Commissioners fretted over each tree removal, citing the name of the veteran in whose name the tree had been planted, so "cutting Charlie" or "cutting Ed" became agenda items on the Commission docket. Also on the docket were concerns about the "red fog," the persistent construction dust kicked up during square renovations.

Clarence Norris, one of the nine Scottsboro Boys, requested a pardon for his conviction. The state Pardons and Paroles Board said the request would not be granted as long as Norris remained a fugitive. Within weeks, the board reversed its decision, and Norris became the first man in the history of the state to be pardoned after being sentenced to death.

A bank robbery attempt at J.C. Jacobs 'Banking Company Branch in Hollywood was foiled when the would-be robber, Johnny Eugene Carroll, was killed at the front door by gunshots fired by FBI agents who had replaced the bank's tellers on a tip that the robbery was imminent. Carroll fired a shotgun at one of the agents. One pellet shattered the agent's glasses and two others hit the agent in the face without breaking the skin. Otherwise, the agents were unscathed.

MEMBERSHIP

This organization and publication can only keep going with your contributions. Your membership helps maintain the depot, print and mail the *Chronicles*, and provide for historical markers and other local restoration efforts. We made it easier to join or renew! Just click the Join button at the top right of the website or use this address https://jchaweb.org/join.html. Paper membership form can also be accessed at this web address or be picked up at the depot during opening hours from 10am to 2pm on the first Saturday of each month. Thank you for being a Member of the Jackson County Historical Association!

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The Jackson County Chronicles

Volume 38, Number 3

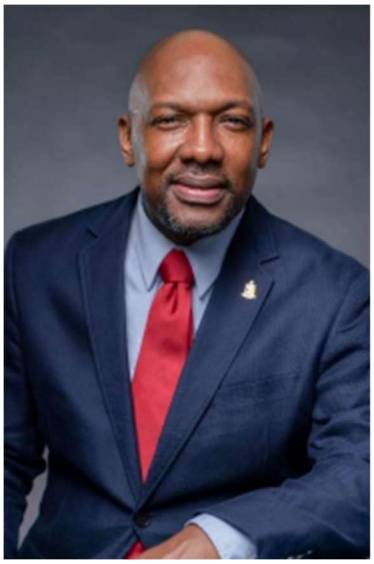
In this issue:

- **JCHA Donates Bound Copies –** Bound volumes of the Jackson County Chronicles are now available at the library and Heritage Center.
- **The Lions Club in Jackson County –** Annette Bradford explores the history of the service organization famous for their Annual Party with hot dog supper and bingo.
- **100 Years Ago: The Turbulent Decade of the 20s –** David Bradford takes us through Jackson County highlights from a century ago.
- **Thomas Kennedy, Hollywood Photographer –** an interesting history of yet another Jackson County photographer told by Annette Bradford

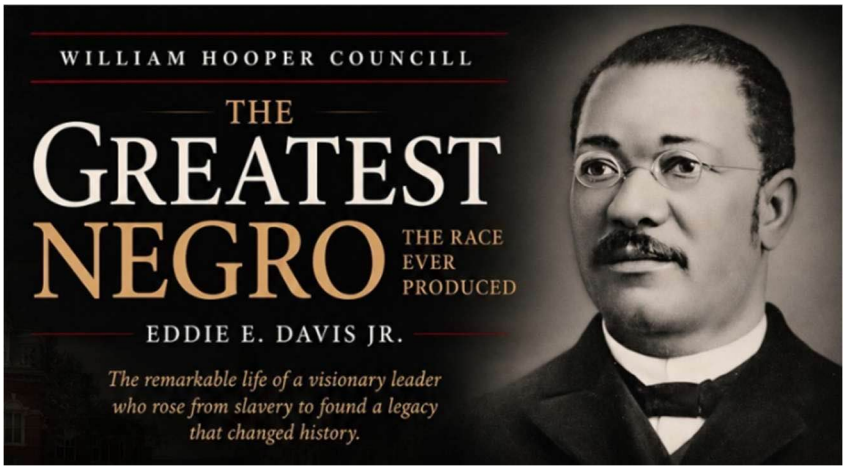
Editor: Nat Cisco
Associate Editors: David and Annette Bradford

JCHA Officers
President: Nat Cisco
Vice-President: Bill Tally
Secretary:
Treasurer: Tammy Bradford
Directors: Hon. John Graham, Patrick Stewart, Betty Esslinger

July Meeting: The July meeting will feature guest speaker Eddie Davis, author of *William Hooper Councill: The Greatest Negro the Race Ever Produced*. The meeting will be held at the **Center Star Missionary Baptist Church in Stevenson on Sunday, July 27th at 2pm**. Any necessary changes in plans will be communicated on the JCHA's Facebook page**.** The church is located at **210 Avery Ave.**, just a stone's throw away from the site of the historic Averyville School attended by Councill. Davis's book explores the life of Councill from the slave auction block to becoming a powerful voice for justice and equality. He was educated in Stevenson and extraordinarily returned to the very place where he was sold as a slave to found Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, becoming the first former slave to lead an institution of higher learning.



A native of Birmingham, Mr. Davis holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Alabama A&M University. After 25 years of federal service as a Soil Scientist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, he now serves as Senior Soil Scientist at Davis Soil & Environmental, LLC. Mr. Davis is a member of the Alabama Historic Commission's Black Heritage Council, whose mission is to preserve and advocate for the history of African Americans throughout Alabama, and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, the organization that founded Black History Month. He is a Life Member of the Alabama A&M University National Alumni Association, a former Alabama A&M University Alumni Board member, and an Arthur Pillard Award recipient for the written biography on A&M's founder, Dr. William Hooper Councill.



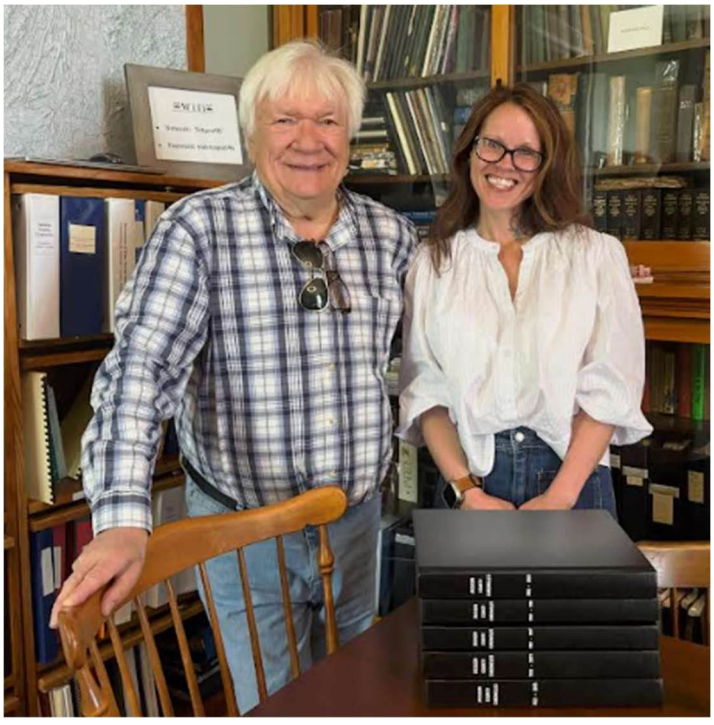
Special Thanks and Request: I want to give a big thank you to everyone for their kind words on my first edition of *The Chronicles* as editor. It means a lot coming from many of you who have worked hard to make this publication a success over its 51 years. I look forward to continuing this work for the continued presentation of Jackson County History to the next generations of north Alabama history lovers.

As we move forward, I continue to request your help. Your contributions are welcome at all times. I had a couple people reach out to me about submissions, and I truly look forward to receiving your articles. I am going to need your help to keep this going. As a busy father of twin teenage boys, husband to a loving wife who loves travel and entertainment, and an accountant with full-time job responsibilities, time for historical research can be extremely limited. Give me your ideas, your articles and your thoughts. If you want to write something and let me edit it for publication or send your finished work, this will mean so much. Please send your articles with research citations to revivescottsboro@gmail.com

Writers: A huge thank you to David and Annette Bradford as they continue to contribute so much to *The Chronicles*. This issue would not have been possible without their efforts. You will see that they have contributed all of this quarter's articles and greatly helped me get through a job transition and busy time. I have the utmost respect for all they have done and continue to do to bring Jackson County history to life for our many members and Facebook followers.

JCHA Donates Bound Volumes

Two locations in Jackson County offer history researchers bound volumes of all of the 204 quarterly issues of the *Jackson County Chronicles*: the Scottsboro Public Library and the Scottsboro-Jackson Heritage Center. In either of these locations, you can browse the entire 51 years of the *Chronicles*, thanks to the Jackson County Historical Association (JCHA).



The first 18 years of the *Chronicles* were small, blue indexed volumes bound and sold by Wendell Page as a fundraiser. These bound volumes are still available in the library, the Heritage Center, and the depot, and because they were sold, they crop up in estate sales occasionally. The remaining 33 years have been bound by the Scottsboro Library or the JCHA.

Jackson County has an archive of local history stories unparalleled in the state. Ann B. Chambless and David and Annette Bradford, as long-term editors, have written literally hundreds of stories about Jackson County citizens and issues. They have supplemented their regular contributions with the expertise of outside contributors, people like Dr. David Campbell for his expertise about the Scottsboro Freight Depot, Dr. James Reed for his Civil War expertise, James Sentell for his mapping and survey skills, humorist Reuben Miller for his time as a projectionist at the Airodome and the Bocanita, and Gettysburg battlefield guide Phillip Muskett who detailed for us the bravery of the Larkinsville Guards. And there are many, many more. Now the *Chronicles* is under the able leadership of its third editor, Nat Cisco.

The bound volumes all have tables of contents in front, and some have indexes, courtesy of Heritage Center volunteers like Cindy Swagler. Of course, indexing is no longer required since you can also search the *Chronicles* online or search the entire JCHA website using the site command from any google command line. To search on the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), for example, you could enter:

site:www.jchaweb.org WCTU or site:www.jchaweb.org "temperance union"

You could search just the *Chronicles* by specifying:

site:www.jchaweb.org/chronicles WCTU

The same can be said for /yearbooks, /schools, and /downloads. But it is easiest just to search the entire site. The result is a set of clickable links to the PDFs on the website. You can then search the PDF for the string you are looking for.

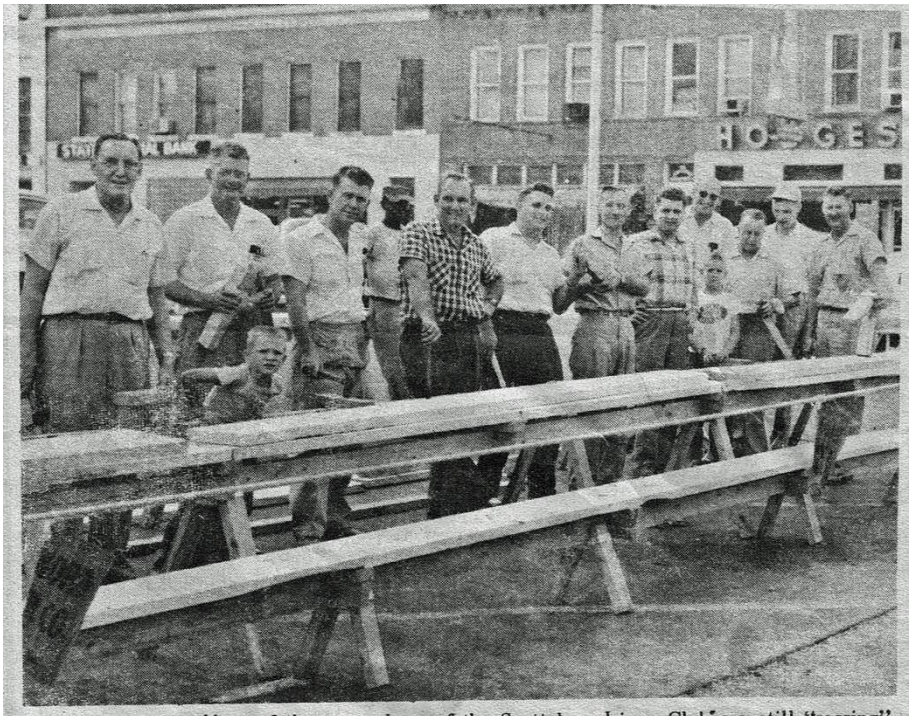
Earlier this year, website administrator David Bradford discovered that search engines and artificial intelligence (AI) bots were not looking inside the *Chronicles* PDFs for text matches. He used ChatGPT to solve this problem. By adding metadata that preceded the *Chronicles* links, AI bots had the map they needed to reach into the *Chronicles*. The search engine still has some difficulty with early editions of the *Chronicles*, but search capability has improved recently. Several text searches turned up results even when the source was typewriter text. To test, we asked the AI bot "tell me about Jeremiah Jaggers in Jackson County, Alabama." The third hit was inside the 1976 *Chronicles*. When we asked "Tell me about the WCTU chapter in Jackson County, Alabama," the first hit was Ann Chambless' long, well-researched article from the January 1999 *Chronicles*.

So now you have a choice. You can sit in the comfortable Scottsboro library or the beautiful Heritage Center and browse the bound volumes or you can search the JCHA website and download and print any year of the *Chronicles*.

Annette Bradford

The Lions Club in Jackson County

You only have to look at the buildings in the background to appreciate how long the Lions Club has been a force in Scottsboro life. There are or have been Lions Club chapters in Scottsboro, Stevenson, Bridgeport, and the Paint Rock Valley, as well as in South Pittsburgh, Rainsville, and Geraldine. They were added over time and evolved in parallel.



STILL ROARING—Most of these members of the Scottsboro Lions Club are still "roaring". They are from left: Bill Copeland, David Bradford (boy), Jess White (deceased), Roland Bolton, Peter Bates (honorary member), Dr. Jack Minks, Gene Airheart, Jack Broom, Norton and Hunter Arnold, Julian Hambrick, Herb Glass and Beto Bell(deceased). Photo taken in 1956.

According to the internet, the Lions Club was founded in 1917 by Chicago businessman Melvin Jones. It is an International global service organization focused on community improvement, sight conservation, and humanitarian aid. The organization became international in 1920 (Canada) and famously adopted the "Knights of the Blind" mission in 1925 after a challenge from Helen Keller. Today, it is the world's largest service club organization.

Lions Clubs came to Alabama soon after the founding. There is mention of an Auburn club in our local paper in 1926 when that club was standing behind the building of a new post office. The next year, they were sponsoring local ballgames in Bessemer and a ladies' night banquet in Greenville in 1929.

Stevenson seems to have organized Jackson County's first Lions Club in 1930. The "Stevenson Correspondence" column in the September 25, 1930 *Jackson County Sentinel* welcomed the group enthusiastically with a story titled "Don't You Hear Those Lions Roar?"

The nearly organized Lions Club of Stevenson had its third regular weekly meeting last night in the basement of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, whose ladies served a delightful dinner. The

meeting was presided over by Lion Penny, first vice-president, in the absence of J. A. Dennison, president Lion, being out of the city. Dr. George L. Austin told of his 25 years in Stevenson pointing out that in all that time the city has never had an empty business house until now. He urged in a very earnest address the need of the man power coming together to stimulate business and break down barriers of gloom and discontent. Addresses were made by Lion Holder on beautification. Lion Henninger spoke on the need of a closer working basis with the farmers of our community. Secretary Borling reported that the treasury was in good shape. Regulations were passed to clean up the town, decorate all store windows, tear down the jail, erect welcome signs on all highways, discourage the parking of local cars in the business sections, leaving that space for the visitors….The Lions will endeavor to continue the City School nine months this year for the first time." Officers that first year were J. A. Dennison, president; Penny, John Wheeler, and Bragg Comer, vice-presidents; M. G. Borling, secretary; Rev. James Jones, Lion Tamer; Dr G. L. Austin, Tail Twister; and Barney Hale, W. C. Lindsay, and Rev. Beasley, board of directors.

South Pittsburg had a club in 1936 about which little is known. Early in its existence, the club supported such events as womanless weddings. The club still exists and is active in the town's Cornbread Festival. June Moss is the current president.

There was a new, active Lions Club in Scottsboro by 1938. The 14 members met at the Hotel Scottsboro on Wednesday night. The first president was Robert Word, with William J. Gibson, Paul Conley, and L. L. Body as the vice-presidents; Hoyt Bramblett as secretary and treasurer; J.D. Pete McCutchen as Lion Tamer; and John McCutchen as Tail Twister. Dr. S. P. Hall and John T. Reid completed the officers as the first members of the board of directors. "We note with pleasure the completion of organization of the Scottsboro Lions Club by the presentation of a charter Tuesday night," the *Progressive Age* wrote on August 25. "This thrifty young club composed of a fine set of you business and professional men of this city and that of Stevenson assures these towns of the hearty cooperation of business activities of the future."

The new Bridgeport Lions sponsored a Woman of the Year recognition event and sold Benson Fruit Cakes to raise money for charitable work. There was a Paint Rock Valley Lions' Club by 1978 and a Section Lions' Club by 1980.

Just as the Civitans had their chuck wagon dinners, the Lions are associated with several civic activities. They began by collecting eyeglasses that were recycled and given to those in need but went on to hold many fundraisers to benefit those who are sight-impaired. Many of their charitable activities center around blindness and sight impairment. They held a Halloween Dance in 1938. They sponsored benefit movies at the Bocanita to raise money for their charitable work.

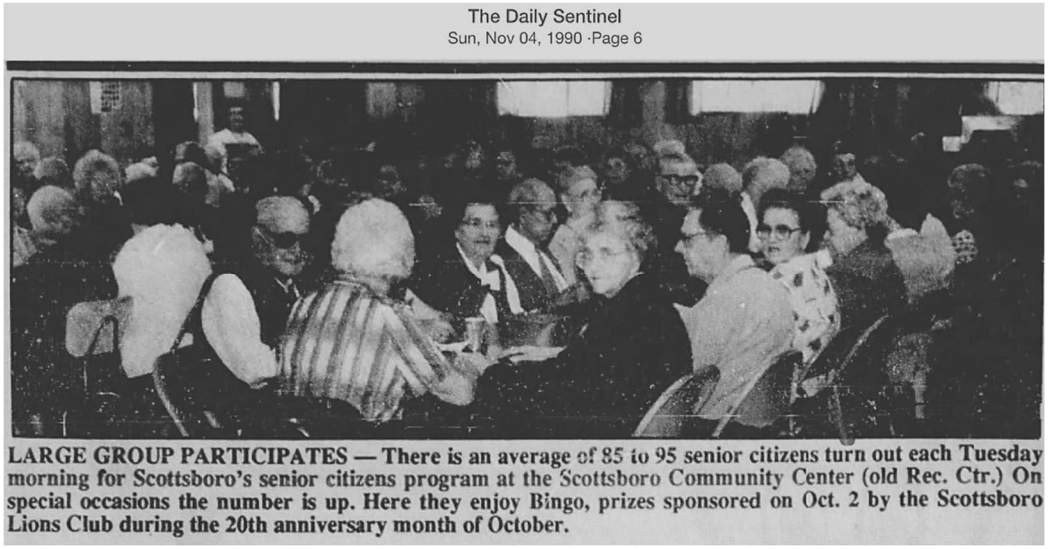
The Progressive Age
Thu, May 14, 1959 ·Page 1



LIONS REPORT EXCELLENT BROOM SALE—Lions Club President Jess White announced today that the organization has just completed one of the most successful Broom Sales in the history of the Club. Two groups competed in the sale and the one led by Robert Word was victorious. Sales exceeded $1600 in the one day "blitz". Shown above are, from left, W. A Murrah, James Grider, representative f for the Talladega School for the Blind, manufacturers of the brooms and mops; President White, C. A. Wilson, Robert Word and Louis Price.

They bought a seeing-eye dog for Sam Huskie and paid to train both the dog and man in California in the 1950s. They sponsored campaigns combatting drug and alcohol abuse and provided diabetes education and summer camp scholarships. We have all swept our floors with Lions Club brooms and enjoyed pecans and sweet treats that the Lions sell at Christmas.

One of the most enduring fund raisers held by the Scottsboro Lions is bingo. It began in 1947 in the community building. The proceeds of this event raised money to build a new gym for JCHS when the old gym burned in 1949 and supported the Boy Scouts. The game was a popular local event and was held outside on the square by 1955. The effort involved local merchants who contributed merchandise to be used as prizes. It was so popular that one night turned into three. Thank you's dotted the local papers for merchants who donated prizes valued in the thousands of dollars, like Scottsboro Concrete and Word Lumber in 1984. For years, the group also sponsored a special bingo party for seniors at the Recreation Center.

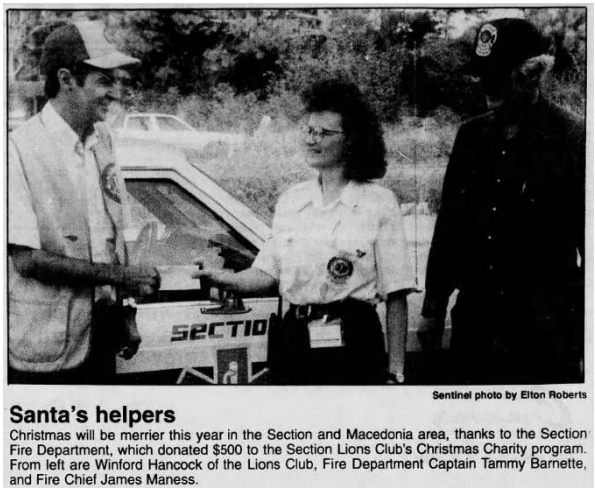


The Daily Sentinel
Sun, Nov 04, 1990 ·Page 6

LARGE GROUP PARTICIPATES — There is an average of 85 to 95 senior citizens turn out each Tuesday morning for Scottsboro's senior citizens program at the Scottsboro Community Center (old Rec. Ctr.) On special occasions the number is up. Here they enjoy Bingo, prizes sponsored on Oct. 2 by the Scottsboro Lions Club during the 20th anniversary month of October.

The Gunter Mountain Lions took up the bingo practice by 1982.

The Section Lions traditionally sponsored the Christmas parade and the Old Time Fiddlers' Convention. Their annual turkey shoot provided meat for many Thanksgiving tables, and their annual pancake breakfasts were enthusiastically attended.



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Sentinel photo by Elton Roberts

Santa's helpers

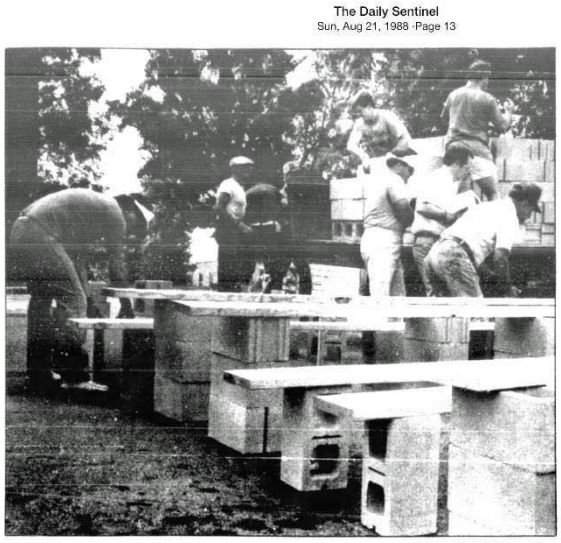
Christmas will be merrier this year in the Section and Macedonia area, thanks to the Section Fire Department, which donated $500 to the Section Lions Club's Christmas Charity program. From left are Winford Hancock of the Lions Club, Fire Department Captain Tammy Barnette, and Fire Chief James Maness.

Because of its popularity, the one night of bingo on the square stretched into three. In Scottsboro, it attracted several less able imitators by 1985, and the City Council questioned the legality of bingo for charity and banished

bingo from the square for a time. No lesser authority than the state Attorney General declared bingo illegal; violators received letters from the city police as late as 1988 when it was determined that reinstating bingo would require a county referendum. In August 1988, bingo was held on the square as usual, but the fund-raising benefit was lost: the Lions had to remove the element of gambling, that is, they could not charge participants to play. By this point, on-the-square bingo fundraising by the Lions was a 40-year tradition. The Lions moved the game to the Civic Center at Goosepond in 1991 and hold the event there still, paired with a hot dog supper and "free bingo," for which there is a minimal charge for the hot dogs to enable the event to still be a fundraiser.

In 1988, Lions all over the country celebrated the 50th birthday of the national organization. At this time, there were 1,375,000 Lions Club member in 39,000 communities. The international president of the Lions, Aubrey Green, and some 250 local Lions and their families, joined in the anniversary celebration.

Today there are Lions chapters all over the area. Geraldine has a Lions Club. Rainsville Lions sponsored a well-attended rodeo in 1993. The Paint Rock Valley has a chapter as well.



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Sun, Aug 21, 1988 -Page 13

Sentinel Photo By Carmen Wann

SETTING UP FOR BINGO -- Scottsboro Lions Club members shown Thursday afternoon as they were setting up for the club's Annual Bingo Party on the square Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Proceeds from donations made on the games go toward charitable projects of the club.



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Wed, Aug 19, 1998 -Page 1

Sentinel photo by Bayne Hughes

Chowing down
Tim Haston, Rodney Bone and Brian Yarbrough (left to right) get a head start on the Lions Club Hotdog Dinner and Free Bingo Night, which is scheduled for Aug. 29. All proceeds benefit Lions Club projects like buying glasses for children and the needy, Christmas charities and scholarships.

Lions are a diverse group of men and women, young and old, who welcome speakers on a wide range of subjects to their meetings. The Scottsboro chapter meets the second and fourth Tuesdays at the Highlands Hospital Education Center. The current president is Josh Sherlin, and broom sales are going on now. The annual Hot Dog Supper and Free Bingo party will be held Saturday, August 23 at 6 pm at the Civic Center.

Annette Bradford

100 Years Ago: The Turbulent Decade of the 1920s

1921:

Parts of the county were quarantined for two weeks because of a smallpox outbreak. All public meetings were cancelled. Similar quarantines had occurred in 1901 and 1902.

Deputy Marshal Ed Moody was killed when he tried to quell a noisy gathering near the Scottsboro passenger depot. His killer, Joe Stone, was finally sentenced to life in prison after initially being sentenced to hang.

Deputy Sheriff Ed Kirby was killed and his fellow deputy Jerde Owens was critically wounded during their attempts to disrupt a moonshining operation. Kirby was shot through the heart, but discharged his shotgun before dying, injuring his assailant, Effie Tally. Tally was operating a 30 gallon still at Sinclair Mill, seven miles from Scottsboro. Five others were arrested in connection with the bootlegging operation. Kirby left behind a wife and eight children. Tally was sentenced to 20 years for his crime.

Violence pervaded the county as the result of conflict between landowners and the opposing "Night Riders," also known as The Tenants' Union. The Tenants' Union's stated purpose was to "keep this land idle until landlords agree to give the tenants a 'fair deal' and allow them to raise their families under more favorable circumstances." In Stevenson, shots were exchanged between protesters and and townspeople on Kentucky Avenue. The only casualty reported was Stevenson citizen Bayne Mitchell who, mistakenly believing he'd felled a protester, "became sick and lost his dinner." The March 9 issue of The Chattanooga Times reported "Conditions in Jackson County are worse now than they were in the dark days of reconstruction. The better element of Jackson County [the landowners] is indignant, and determined that it shall not be ruled by terror. Unless there is an end to the fighting soon, we will have no crops at all this summer."

1922:

By a vote of five to four, the directors of the Lee Highway Association, meeting in Washington DC voted to construct a proposed New York to San Francisco highway through Jackson County. The southern route through Muscle Shoals and Scottsboro was chosen over an "all Tennessee" route.

James Wylie Reece, labeled by The Progressive Age as a "holy roller," died of a rattle snake bite on Sand Mountain only 75 yards from the spot where he was bitten. Reece had asked neighbors not to kill rattle snakes, but to call him so that he could capture them for use in church services.

Two men drown on Christmas Day when the Island Creek Ferry, just south of Bridgeport, broke loose from the shore and dumped an unmanned wagon and its team of two mules into the Tennessee River. Fayette King and Arthur Green of Fabius leapt into the river in an attempt to save the team and were overwhelmed by the flood waters.

1923:

A train carrying medical personnel was dispatched from Chattanooga to Scottsboro to treat those injured in a train derailment near Old Larkinsville Road in Scottsboro. There were no fatalities, and the train was used to transport and undisclosed number of injured passengers back to Chattanooga hospitals. Five months later, a second derailment only one mile west would result in one fatality and 25 injuries. The fatally injured man lived long enough to give responders his name and address. A mother who had climbed out a pullman car window was found sitting on the roadbed with her two children sleeping soundly beside her.

A case of sleeping sickness was reported in Limrock where the daughter of Jim McCormick slept for ten straight days. Dr. Rayford Hodges stated that sleeping sickness often followed attacks from the flu.

The May 24, 1923 Progressive Age reports that there is evidence that the Ku Klux Klan had become active in the county as evidenced by a cross burning on "mountainside north of town," saying "This organization seems to the spreading all over the country, [but] has not entered Jackson County in an organized form until the past few weeks." The newspaper ran a recruiting ad for the organization. The September 20 issue of the newspaper reported that the KKK staged a march through Scottsboro, "led by a fiery cross," and calling the parade "very quiet and impressive." In October, a crowd estimated at over 4,000 gathered for a Klan rally in Stevenson at which 50 new members were initiated. One minister who addressed the crowd, G.L. Griffin, told the audience that 82 percent of Baptist ministers and 78 percent of ministers of all faiths were Klan members. In June, the "largest crowd ever assembled in the town at night," watched the Klan parade around the courthouse square.

1924:

The House of Happiness was established in Sauta Bottom, dispensing "Soap, soup, and salvation" to disadvantaged county youth.

Novelist Bill Heath was born in Lake Village, Arkansas. He relocated to Scottsboro after the death of his mother when he was two months old. He grew up in the Maples house on Maple Avenue with an uncle, three aunts, and his grandmother. Heath published 8 novels and 28 short stories, and he scripted 3 television shows.

Ira Lonnie Loudermilk was born near Section High School. His brother, Charlie Elzer Loundermilk was born there three years later. Together, the brothers would form the Louvin Brothers duo. Whether the boys were natives of DeKalb or Jackson County was a matter of contention until Bryant-based historian Ed Carter meticulously documented their early lives for the April 2025 Jackson County Chronicles.

1925:

Hodges hospital opened on Laurel Street in Scottsboro, founded by Dr. Rayford Hodges and Dr. George Earl Nye. The hospital replaced an earlier clinic run jointly by the two doctors which had been located on the square.

A drought dried up the Tennessee River to the point that cars could be driven across with water only coming as high as the axles.

Scottsboro Mayor W.W. Gross halted an attempt to establish the first bus line in the county along a route from Scottsboro to Guntersville, citing the poor condition of the roads. Later that year, however, a line was established between Stevenson and Huntsville.

1926:

The Jackson County Health Office screened the students of the Scottsboro City School and declared 61 percent of the students to be physically "defective" in some aspect. 26 percent were underweight, 29.5 percent had defective teeth. 18 percent had defective tonsils.

Jackson County had its largest single snowfall of 27.5 inches on January 7. The second latest snowfall was less than half that: 12 inches on March 13, 1993.

1927:

Charles Lindbergh put on an aerial display in The Spirit of St. Louis for Scottsboro citizens on October 5, "circling and dipping over our town." Schools were dismissed for the occasion, and "Lindy gave them a special dip at the campus." He did not land, however.

A "nuisance tax" was levied on cigarettes and cigars by the state. The tax added one cent to the cost of cigars and two cents to the cost of a pack of cigarettes.

A boiler explosion at a Pisgah mill killed three employees. Bricks from the wall surrounding the boiler were blown over one mile from the site of the explosion.

An earthquake rocked downtown Scottsboro on Thursday, June 16. "It had the sound of a terrific explosion and shook buildings, rattled windows, and was very distinct to those out on the street…. In Scottsboro, the people rushed from the stores, thinking a heavy blast or explosion had occurred right in the center of town, and many thought the brick stores were collapsing when the quake arrived." However, there was no reported damage as a result of the tremor.

1928:

Two men drown at Widow's Bar Dam when their boat came too close to the spillways and the current carried them over the dam. One man was thrown from the boat and a second clung to the overturned craft before being washed downstream. The bodies were recovered five weeks later.

Contracts were signed for the construction of the B.B. Comer Bridge in the amount of $467,913.55.

1929:

The Scottsboro Hosiery Mill band was organized. It would be active until 1933, playing for family reunions, civic events, and dedications. The band was organized under the auspices of Claude Spivey, owner of the mill. The director was Dr. John Hays.

Ethel "Babs" Hodges Deal was born in Scottsboro. She would publish 12 novels, several of which

were set in a town similar to Scottsboro in which contemporary readers could identify townspeople and locales.

The Young Women's Book Club established the first public library in Scottsboro. It was temporarily quartered in Judge J.M. Money's courtroom. Membership fees were $1.00. In 1932, the library was moved to the second floor of the old city hall building, at the corner of Broad and Peachtree Streets. Under the direction of the Fortnightly Book Club (the successor to the Young Women's Book Club), the library remained in the city hall location until 1964. Notable librarians at the city hall location were Eliza Hackworth, Idita Blanks, and Peggy McCutchen.

David Benson Bradford

Thomas Kennedy, Hollywood Photographer

Local historians have speculated about the identity of the photographer who took the iconic Pikeville Pencil Mill photos around 1911-12.



Pikeville Pencil Cedar Mill. These are photographs of the workers at Pikeville Pencil Mill circa 1910-1912. The mill was located six miles north of Scottsboro. Pictured are, front row seated from left: Jim Gentry, Clines Boys, John Matthews, T.J. Davidson, Sam Harding, Arthur Harding, Dave Seabolt, John Tubbs, Fred Womack. Standing from left: Marion Carter, Bill Woods, Tom Hickman, Faye Sinclair, Virgie Sinclair, Jose Rodgers, Lee Womack, Burma Sinclair, Meg Tubbs, Clara Rodgers, Mae Woosley, Oscar Sinclair, tom Carter, McKinley Brandon, Will Reed, George O. Grady, Mr. Clines, Dump Harrison, Jesse Tubbs, Tom Chandler, and W.R. Womack





Recent research indicates that during the time when these photos were taken, Hollywood had its own resident photographer: Thomas H. Kennedy. Paul Machen brought me two photographs attributed to Kennedy, and newspaper research has placed him in Hollywood during the time when these three Pikeville photos were taken.

Kennedy was born in Guntersville, the youngest of at least six children of South Carolina-born Robert Jarrett Kennedy, a merchant, and his wife Martha Hill. His mother died the same year he was born. He grew up in Guntersville. In 1871, he married Nancy "Nannie" Insley in Marshall County, TN, where he was probably working as a itinerant photographer. The family lived in Fayetteville for a time because their first two children, daughter Sallie, born in 1875, and son Spratt, born in 1882, were both born in Tennessee. The other Kennedy children—Fannie, born December 1885, Adaline, born December 1888, and Thomas, born May 1893—were all born in Alabama. The 1900 census indicates that Thomas and Nancy had another child who died. He moved his family to Hollywood from Huntsville in 1899.



The Kennedys are mentioned in the 1895 *Progressive Age*, visiting their aunt, Mrs. W. F. Shelton, in Larkinsville. "Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy have many warm friends here who are always glad to see them." The family was living in Huntsville at the time. Kennedy is mentioned again in the November 3, 1898 *Progressive Age*, when he is a traveling photographer. "T. H. Kennedy will erect a tent at Hollywood for the accommodation of those desiring photographs taken. He will please you in pictures and style of work." The November 17 *Age* reported that Kennedy "Is now at Hollywood with his gallery and is doing a fine business. He is a good artist."

The 1900 census lists Kennedy as living in Hollywood with his five children and granddaughter. His oldest daughter, Sallie Kennedy Cowan married George Robert Cowan of Fayetteville on

August 6, 1897 in Madison County, Alabama. Their daughter, Rosie Estelle, was born in November 1897. Sallie and her daughter were living with her parents in the 1900 census.

Apparently, photography alone did not support Kennedy and his five children. The August 16, 1900 *Citizen* noted, "W. L. Moody has an electric fan in his store. Mr. T. H. Kennedy is the agent for them. They are great in this hot weather." I was mystified since electricity would not be available in Jackson County until 1916. What is being discussed here is probably a mechanical wind-up fan popular around the turn of the century. "In areas without electricity," a post on Instagram's DailyScience found by an AI search explained, "affluent citizens sometimes used portable, Swiss-engineered clockwork fans that provided a breeze for up to 30 minutes on a wound spring."

The Tupelo Stringer reported in the February 28, 1901 *Progressive Age* that "T. H. Kennedy, the jolly photographer, is with us again." He and his tent were probably set up near the site of the Pikeville Store.

Kennedy is mentioned again in September of that year, when six cases of smallpox were spread across two Black families. T. H. Kennedy was one of two citizens put on duty at the houses in Hollywood where the disease existed and four other houses that were under surveillance "to keep the inmates at home and prevent visitors from going to see them."

Kennedy moved his family into a new house in Hollywood in February 1903 (February 12, 1903 PA). For a time, the family took in a boarder they knew as John Young. Young became romantically involved with the Kennedy's oldest daughter, Sallie Cowan, and she and Young made plans to marry when her divorce from Cowan was finalized. But that was not to be. On May 21, 1903, Thomas Kennedy shot and killed John Young at the gate of his home. The May 21, 1903 *Citizen* told this story:

> John B. Young, a slat sawyer, working in the mill of Warren & Moody at Hollywood, was shot last Tuesday night about seven o'clock by T. H. Kennedy, a photographer of this place. The weapon used was a 38 Smith & Wesson revolver. The deed occurred in front of the Kennedy house.
>
> It seems that Young was paying attention to Mrs. Cowan, Kennedy's daughter, and Kennedy objected and had threatened Young's life several times; and he claims that Young had threatened his. Kennedy and his son, in company with another man, hunted for Young with guns in every store in town on Saturday night but failed to find him.
>
> Mutual friends had spoken to Kennedy about making friends with Young and he said he was willing, so Young and two friends proceeded to Kennedy's house. With Young leaning on the fence. Arnold called Kennedy out. Kennedy came out and the report is, before anyone else could say a word he stuck his pistol over the fence and shot Young in the breast, the bullet grazing his heart. As Young started to walk off, he shot him again under the right arm. Young ran about 40 yards and struck a plank which was leaning on a gate and fell into a ditch and expired.
>
> It is said that Kennedy ran into the house and got a double barrel shot gun and started to follow him. Kennedy's son and another man came up about that time and young Kennedy got the gun…. He then summoned a doctor, but it was too late, Young was dead. The body was carried to the depot and placed on a plank. A bouquet of pretty flowers was placed by some friendly hands upon his breast.

> There is no one who knows anything much about Young. He has two honorable discharges from the army. It is said he lived in Covington, KY. He had said on a previous occasion that his home was in Columbus, Ohio. Telegrams were sent to both places. The chief of police at Columbus said he did not know him, and to telegraph particulars. As yet they have not heard from Covington. Young had made a good many friends at Hollywood. He was a fine looking fellow and a good musician. Kennedy was arrested by deputy sheriff Darwin and brought here and lodged in jail.

The May 28, 1903 *Progressive Age* reported that a preliminary trial was held before Judge Cargile that lasted two days, and bail was set at $500. At the preliminary trial, this additional information was introduced about Young:



His name was actually John R. Yount and his father was a wounded Civil War veteran of the 187th Regiment of the Ohio Infantry who had died in a national home for disabled volunteer soldiers. His mother had remarried and was Mrs. W. McNairy of Dayton, Ohio. John belonged to a highly respected and well-to-do family. He "left home about the beginning of the Spanish-American war and after serving in the army began a roving life, never returning home or letting his people know where he was. His step-father came here Tuesday, and went to Hollywood, where the remains were disinterred, placed in a metallic casket and shipped to his home." John had been buried in a wooden box in Hollywood still wearing the bloody clothes in which he died. His family was historically Quaker. He lies today with other Yount family in the Woodlawn Cemetery and Arboretum in Dayton, OH.

Kennedy was out on bond until September 1903 when indicted by the grand jury for first degree murder and required to report to jail. This was one of two murder cases tried this term of court, the other being against Will Coffey. The trial took two days with District Attorney Proctor against defense attorney Virgil Bouldin. "A number of witnesses were examined," the Progressive Age said on September 17, "and considerable interest manifested." Kennedy was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to 10 years, with 30 days allowed for appeal.

The court heard the case in the November 1903 term. Kennedy was one of four prisoners still sitting in the county jail in March 1904 waiting for the Alabama Supreme Court to rule on his case. At the Supreme Court hearing, the state introduced two witnesses, James Arnold and Lee Grider, who described the confrontation between Kennedy and Yount. Kennedy testified in his own behalf, stating that when he left his house to talk with Young, he found him crouched and hiding with a gun. Sallie Kennedy Cowan reinforced her father's account and stated that when she had gone walking in the woods with Young, he had "assaulted her and had carnal knowledge of her" and that she had told her father about the incident the night before the killing. There were

witnesses who testified to Yount's good character. The court found that procedural errors had been made in the instructions to the jury. But the deciding factor was the carnal knowledge of Kennedy's daughter. The sentence "reserved and remanded."

By August 10, 1905, Kennedy was out of jail and advertising his photography business again. "I have fitted up a nice gallery at Hollywood, and am prepared to make good pictures—photographs, button and will enlarge pictures. All invited to call and inspect my work." (PA) I am sure that he needed money to support his family and pay his legal fees.

His offense was ultimately reduced to first degree manslaughter and he was sentenced to five years in the penitentiary. Kennedy reported to prison on April 12, 1906 but he was pardoned by Governor B. B. Comer on December 12, 1907. "This man was committed of an offense in defense of his home," Comer wrote. "Such offenses as them I think it right to overlook, and to pardon the offender so that he may return to the continued care and protection of his family." (*Progressive Age*, Dec 19, 1907)



Ironically, there are no known photographs of the photographer Thomas Kennedy, but we know from his convict records that he was 5' 7 ½" tall, with blue eyes and Auburn hair, with a mole on the right side of his face and one on his left shoulder and small scars on his left forefinger. The record also noted that he had bad teeth.

After Kennedy's pardon, the remainder of his life was less eventful. He died in 1915 at age 64. The *Progressive Age* called him one of Hollywood's best citizens in his obituary. Kennedy died suddenly with heart trouble after a normal day and was buried in Old Baptist Cemetery in Hollywood. His obituary noted he was a 16-year resident of Hollywood and had been in the photography business for a great many years.



His son Thomas Jr. died three years later in 1918 of pneumonia, only 23 years old. Unlucky in love the first time, his daughter Sallie married William Andrew Hembree and had six more children, living out her life in Fayetteville, TN and dying young at age 52. Fannie married Felix Grundy Mathes and lived in Davidson County, TN, the mother of six children. Adeline married Claude Erskin Davies, later divorcing him and caring for her mother at the end of her life. Nannie died in 1931, outliving her husband by 16 years. She is buried beside him and her son in Old Baptist Cemetery. All three graves are unmarked.

All the "artifacts" that we have to remember Mr. Kennedy, Hollywood's respected photographer, is this pair of photos that P. D. Machen got from the Hickman family. The photo on the top looks suspiciously post-mortem. The photo of the

little girl is interesting. She is posed holding a palm branch. Both are board photos, probably taken in the early 1900s in Hollywood. And it is a good bet that Kennedy, who was documented taking photograph is Pikeville in 1901, was the photographer who made and printed the Pikeville Pencil Mill photos.

Annette Bradford

The Jackson County Historical Association is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that counts on your support for the continued publication of this quarterly newsletter, as well as the upkeep and maintenance of the historic Scottsboro Depot Museum and other historical projects around Jackson County, Alabama. The 1861 freight depot building is the oldest known brick structure in the city of Scottsboro. The Depot Museum is typically open the first Saturday of each month from 10am-2pm. Please check our Facebook page prior to coming. To become a member or renew your membership, please visit https://jchaweb.org/join.html. From there you can pay online of print the paper form. We are proud of our large following on our Facebook page, and we post there before opening the depot. The page has countless historic information above and beyond what is presented in *The Jackson County Chronicles*. Find us at https://www.facebook.com/groups/117909751572159 and www.jchaweb.org.

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The Jackson County Chronicles

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In this issue:

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- **Don Hodges Donates H. H. Betts Portrait of his Father, "Mess Hodges":** The donation of a painting inspired Annette Bradford to write this history of the founder of Hodges Drug Store.
- **Early Baptist Churches in Pisgah:** First-time contributor Tom Allen brings us his years of research on Beeson Academy.
- **Top Stories from the 1930s:** David Bradford walks us through the headlines from the 1930s.
- **Kindergarten Programs in Alabama and Jackson County:** Annette introduces a new series about the beginnings of kindergartens in the state and Miss Allie's school in Pisgah.

Editor: Nat Cisco
Associate Editors: David and Annette Bradford

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Fall Meeting: The fall meeting of the Jackson County Historical Association will be held in the old part of Cedar Hill Cemetery on November 1 (All Saints' Day), 2026 at 2:00 p.m. Grave dowser Wayne Gregg from Crossville will talk about the practice of grave dowsing and demonstrate how it is done. The cemetery is located at 210 Cedar Hill Drive in Scottsboro. Use one of the two main entrances and park along the cemetery access roads inside the cemetery.



Photo from Boaz Genealogy

Grave dowsing (also known as grave witching or divining) is a traditional folk practice where people use forked sticks, bent wire rods, or coat hangers to locate unmarked or hidden graves.

Practitioners typically use a Y-shaped twig or a pair of L-shaped metal wires (often fashioned from coat hangers), sometimes slipping the handles into cut drinking straws to reduce friction. The user holds the rods loosely and walks slowly across a field or cemetery. Proponents claim the rods cross or swing inward when the person steps over a buried body or casket, and uncross when they step away.

Some practitioners claim the rods can indicate the gender of the deceased (such as a clockwise vs. counterclockwise circle or rotation over the remains) or estimate the relative size and age of the person based on how long the rods stay crossed.

Mr. Gregg recently demonstrated this practice for Boaz Genealogy and is an experienced practitioner. The meeting is open to both members and non-members. Water and a basket of snack crackers will be provided. Bring a chair since no seating is available in the cemetery. If you have a part of the main cemetery you are interested in, write jcha@scottsboro.org. Plans are to examine the Virginia Brown and Henry Clay Bradford plots and a defined area on the north side with no apparent burials.

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Guest Authors: The JCHA is happy to welcome guest author Tom Allen from Birmingham. Tom is a retired banking executive who grew up in Pisgah. His recollections of church schools from listening to his grandparents inspired his research. His historical research interests are economic, church, and political history. Mr. Allen offered the JCHA his research on Beeson Academy.

JCHA Cosponsors History Trivia Event: The JCHA, along with the Scottsboro Boys Museum, the Scottsboro Public Library, and the Scottsboro-Jackson Heritage Center, recently sponsored history trivia at Dominics's on the Square. Ren Carroll, Assistant Director of the Scottsboro Boys Museum, did an amazing job coordinating this event. We look forward to more events of this type in the future. No one will be surprised to learn that Judge John Graham's team won the competition. The Jeopardy-style event yielded the team a net score of zero. All other teams fell in the negative, but lots of history was learned and a great time was had by all.

Liberty's Unbroken Circle

My cell phone dinged with a text message from my son, Mark, last July. His message contained a YouTube story about a Northern Irish couple stopping to eat in Scottsboro. It must be noted that Scottsboro was just a waypoint on their itinerary populated with Southern U.S. key stops e.g., Atlanta, Chattanooga, and the Smokies. The World Cup Soccer games were what led to this by drawing the couple to the U.S. in the first place. So you see, for a Northern Irish couple to be in Scottsboro, Alabama, in July 2026 was a totally unplanned, random event. But such random occurrence of Celtic presence has not always been the case—it's been true only for this century—recalling such presence happened with strong intention and profound historic influence ... a long time ago.

That last thought shouldn't be left hanging. Let's entertain further explanation the subject fully deserves. It has to do with Southern ancestry. It's a complicated subject, but the following offers a simplified version for sake of brevity: The prominent heritage in the Southeastern U.S. among Caucasians is that of Scots-Irish descent. That stems from a huge migration out of North Ireland between 1717 and the American Revolutionary War. This migration found its way eventually into the Appalachians. Leading up to all this, the political climate had become less accommodating to the Ulster Scots (prior Lowland Scots), who had earlier been granted land in North Ireland by King James. Ultimately, after reaching the New World, and having extended into the Appalachians, the Scots-Irish restlessly migrated southward through the Cumberland Gap and eventually down through Tennessee into Alabama. Our Jackson County Cumberland Mountain extension of Appalachia, therefore, became well populated by Scots-Irish settlers.

My own ancestors, for example, had a sojourn in Antrim, North Ireland after leaving Lowland Scotland. (The more Scottish Reid name got changed to Reed there.) No doubt this Scots-Irish heritage is widely shared with my fellow Scottsboro natives.

Returning to July 2026. Now we have a North Ireland couple, two or more centuries after our common ancestors migrated, stepping into the congenial atmosphere of the Liberty Restaurant. Obviously, (and not unexpectedly) an immediate chemistry emerged. One expects, in spite of different accents, they could have completed each other's sentences. The poignant YouTube video brings out the family-like interaction that ensued when the restaurant staff and the diners came together. It was reminiscent of a long-delayed family reunion. It's no accident that the couple expressed several times they felt like they were at home. The lady from North Ireland became quite emotional during the experience and expressed a desire not to ever leave Scottsboro.

Then came what surprises me not one bit, knowing the people of Scottsboro as I do, and from what is known of the generosity of the Liberty Restaurant proprietor, Barry Nichols. The North Irish couple were not allowed to leave a tip, and what's more, their meal was furnished free of charge! Their order sounded quite delicious, and included fried catfish, which the gentleman of the couple especially enjoyed. The couple were treated to multiple desserts including banana pudding and chocolate cobbler. It sounds like their Scots-Irish genes made them, not surprisingly, enjoy the same foods we Southerners do. Anyway, through it all, what they'd just enjoyed was Scottsboro's version of Southern hospitality, and their casual, unscheduled stop had morphed into the highlight of their entire U.S. trip.

I should add that the Liberty Restaurant was no stranger to me or my son. Significantly, the story, on first principles, impressed Mark and moved him to send it to me without his recalling in his youth he had eaten there before. He sent the story to me based on its face value without having made the personal experience connection. But eventually, as might be expected, a discussion ensued that stirred treasured memories for us both. My son and I had eaten there many times in the past, often when we stayed in a nearby motel on duck hunting trips back in the 1980's. I recall the food being quite good then. I was glad at this time to hear the Liberty was still in operation.

Now permit me to disclose the event that prompted this writing. I was listening to a sermon by a very talented Hoover, Alabama, Methodist clergyman this morning in which he was making a plea for unity in our nation based on Paul's message in the fourth chapter of Ephesians. Imagine my stunned delight when he unexpectedly brought up the Northern Irish couple's poignant experience at the Liberty Restaurant in Scottsboro. He went over it in thorough detail and drew on it as an example of what this country and the world desperately need in these hostile and contentious times. The fact he'd randomly come upon the story emphasizes how it's gone viral, and perhaps how it is serving a widely felt need. Yes, the story has taken on a life of its own. It spotlights what I have always known about the gracious people of Scottsboro, and its message stands as one of which Scottsboro and the folks at Liberty Restaurant can be immensely proud.

Dr. James Reed

Don Hodges Donates H. H. Betts Portrait of his Father, "Mess" Hodges





The JCHA appreciates the generosity of Don Hodges for the recent donation of the portrait that artist Harold Harrington (H. H.) Betts painted of Don's father, Laudra Clifton "Mess" Hodges in 1945 shortly after Mess' death on August 6, 1945, the day the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. It was painted from the photo on this page. The painting is hanging in the Scottsboro Depot Museum.

Many longtime residents remember Mess' two little brothers—Charles and R. L.—better than the older brother who bought the drug store on the north side of the square from James Presley in 1937. The Hodges brothers kept the drug store on the square until 1970.

Presley's Drugs was open in the same location on the square from 1924 to 1937 in two buildings: the original frame building and the new brick Hackworth Building (built in 1927), a spot where drug stores had always been, with John B. Tally, the Hackworth brothers, and the Blakemores (father and son, doctor and druggist) also operating drug stores in this location.

Mess was born September 4, 1910, the son of Robert L. Hodges Sr. and Flora Ethel McCarrell. The couple married in 1909. Robert Leslie (always known as "R.L.") was born

in August 1914 and Charles in November 1917. Flora died just a week after Charles was born.



Mess and Elizabeth Thomas Hodges shortly after their marriage.

Left alone to farm with three little boys to raise, Robert married Callie Yarborough. Callie's young husband James Alva Thomas had died in 1919 with typhoid fever. Callie raised Flora's three boys and added two children to the family: her son James born in 1919, by her first husband; and Ralph Hodges, born in 1924. By 1924, Mess was boarding with the Pendergrass family in town so he could attend Jackson County High School. The two younger boys were in elementary school in Limrock and later attended JCHS.

It was during his teenage years that Mess acquired his unusual nickname. He had been a delivery person for Western Union when he was a teenager, and "Mess" was short for Messenger. In 1936, he married pretty Elizabeth Thomas and settled down to raise their two sons: Tommie born in 1937 and Don in 1945.

When Mess bought James Presley's drug store business in 1937, he generated this hand-written note to document the exchange: "Purchased from J. B. Presley on Nov 18th 1937 - Firm known as Presley's Drug Store - All Stock and fixtures for $7500.00 - $3000.00 in hand - $4500 in Notes & other valuable documents. L. C. Hodges"

Mess is prominent in the 1941 Word movie of Scottsboro, bringing fountain drinks to waiting cars and waiting on customers inside the store. In 1945, only eight years after purchasing the business, when Mess was 34 years old, he died in a motorcycle accident on the square. When Mess died, Charles had graduated from Howard College and married in 1937, served in the Navy during World War II, and had started a successful wholesale drug business in Tampa, FL. R.L. had worked at the drug store in 1940 and also enlisted in the Navy. He had planned to be Mess's partner at the drug store after the war. After some hand-wringing, Charles moved back to Scottsboro, and the brothers purchased the business from Mess's widow, Hodges Drugs sign in 1941, from the Word movie. Elizabeth, and the business was known informally as "Hodges Brothers Drug Store."

The best description of Mess Hodges, which reflects how much the town valued this young man, is found in his obituary.

Laudra Clifton Hodges, age 34 years, died in a Chattanooga hospital about seven o'clock on Monday morning, August 6th, 1945, of injuries received in an accident Tuesday night of last week. Mr. Hodges was riding around the public square when he was thrown from the machine to the pavement. His injuries were not considered very serious at first, but when he failed to come out of a semi-conscious state he was carried to Chattanooga where x-ray examinations disclosed he had received a skull fracture.

Several witnesses who saw the accident could not account for it. Mr. Hodges was riding along on a clear street when suddenly the machine threw him high into the air and he landed on his head. The most plausible explanation is that the machine "bucked" after hitting a sewer cover in that part of the street.

The untimely death of this popular and prominent druggist is a great shock to many friends in this county and elsewhere. The funeral will be held Wednesday morning at 10:30 at the First Methodist Church in Scottsboro by the pastor, Rev. Paul Cooke, assisted by other pastors, conducting and interment will be in Cedar Hill Cemetery in this city with Word Funeral Home in charge.

The deceased is survived by his young widow, Mrs. Elizabeth Thomas Hodges, daughter of former Sheriff M. C. Thomas, and two small sons, Tommie and James Donald. He also leaves two brothers, Charles Hodges of Tampa, Florida, R. L. Hodges Jr., of the Navy, his father R. L. Hodges Sr. of Limrock, his stepmother, a step-brother, Sgt. J. L. Thomas, of the Army, and a half brother, Ralph Hodges, of the Army. Many other relatives survive as the deceased was a member of one of the widest connected families of the county.

In the passing of this leading merchant and citizen Scottsboro loses a man whose life and career were hardly short of amazing. It reads almost like an Alger story of merited success of a deserving youth on the way up through life.

He came to Scottsboro when about fourteen or fifteen years of age and entered high school. Along with his schooling he took the job of messenger boy for local Western Union and worked at that job in all spare moments. It was while he was a Western Union messenger boy that he got the nickname "Mess" and it stayed with him through life, nearly every friend calling him by that title.

After graduation from high school and some special business course training he began working in stores and later as a traveling salesman, being highly successful in all his jobs as he was a hustler and quickly made and held friends.

Several years ago he did a thing which even some of his friends doubted his wisdom-he bought the drug store from J. B. Presley and began its operation as owner and manager. The first thing he did was surround himself with loyal and energetic help and stuck out a slogan saying: "Where Service Meets You At The Door."

Under his direction the Hodges Drug business has grown to one of the largest businesses of its kind in the state and was progressive at every turn. As his financial success grew, "Mess" shared his earnings liberally with every worthy public cause such as charities, public improvements, war drives, and Bond drives. He was always put down first for contributions and free work when a task was to be done.

Recently he joined Cecil Word as a committee directing the Jackson County Drive for the Crippled Children's Fund and got out and gave his full time to this cause. When the drive was over, Jackson County was, we believe, leading the state in the amount contributed according to population.

He was always in a good humor and appeared to get a tremendous "kick" out of living and enjoying the things that life can give. He was an ardent sportsman and owned a boat, a motorcycle, and an interest in an airplane. He was a licensed civilian airplane pilot and liked to get out and fly over his home country on every occasion possible.

It might be said that he was especially popular with school children and young people. They knew him as a true friend and knew he would not let them down on any call at any time.

Mr. Hodges was deeply devoted to his family and appeared happiest when he was with his wife and bright sons. He took them on numerous trips and short vacations and had made plans for his sons extending even through college with insurances and endowments.

The tragic death of Laudra Clifton Hodges brings Scottsboro a great loss. He will not be forgotten. It is hoped by many friends that other members of the family will carry on the big business under the same name and motto as a memorial to a most unusual young man of exceptional ability in reaching top success at an age when most men are only beginning. As we go to press the local florists report that the tribute of flowers by many friends will reach a record size for the funeral, which gives an idea of the esteem in which happy and friendly "Mess" Hodges was held by his fellow people.

The drug store remained a Scottsboro institution. In 1945, Hodges was not just a busy drug store but also a thriving sundry business with curbside service and the passenger station and ticket office for the Trailways Bus. The business stayed on the square more than 30 years.



Hodges Neon Sign, from the 1941 Lloyd Royal movie.

As Scottsboro grew, so did the reach and scope of the Hodges

The Hodges brothers opened a second location called H&H Pharmacy in the early 1960s on the corner of Houston and Laurel Streets, across from the offices of Doctors Julian Hodges and Carl Collins. In 1964-65, the Hodges brothers opened a third location, a modern scientific apothecary shop named Mortar and Pestle that specialized in compounding, located on Broad Street diagonally across from the library.

In 1970, all three locations were closed, and the Hodges brothers reopened

as H&H Pharmacy on Parks Avenue, taking advantage of the movement of doctors' offices to Parks Avenue locations. Even as most drug stores became "all business" and stopped operating luncheon counters, H&H on Parks kept the luncheon counter and made famous cheeseburgers.

The painter Harold Harrington Betts was a familiar figure in Scottsboro during this time. Betts and Mess had formed a fast friendship during the times that Betts was in town doing paintings of local places and people. Born in New York City in 1881, Betts and his three siblings (Grace, Louis and Edwin, Jr.) were all artists, whose first instruction came from their father, Edwin Daniel Betts, Sr., known as a portrait and landscape painter.

For most of his life, Harold Betts lived in Chicago, and his work was exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. In the early 1900s, Betts ventured west as did many artists of the era, ultimately becoming known for his paintings of the Grand Canyon and the surrounding Arizona landscape.

It is not known who first brought Betts to the Boro. The April 3, 1945 *Sentinel* included a front-page story announcing the completion of Betts' portrait of Robert Scott. "H. H. Betts, of Chicago, nationally known artist and portrait painter, who has painted some splendid portraits of Scottsboro people during the past several years, has just completed a remarkable portrait of Robert T. Scott, founder of Scottsboro. It was painted from an excellent Daguerrotype owned by granddaughter of Mr. Scott, Mrs. Pontiff J. Skelton, of the city. The original was so good that when Mr. Betts saw it some time ago he requested that he be allowed to make an oil painting from it for exhibition purposes. The painting is now hanging in the lobby of the First National Bank [now Huntington Bank] and the public is invited to see it. Mr. Betts intends to enter the portrait in national art shows in the near future after which it is said it will be purchased, if he will sell it, and placed on permanent exhibition in the Scottsboro City Hall....The work of Mr. Betts in this and other portraits is most exceptional. One of the latest is a large oil painting of the late Coach Guy O'Brien, which we are informed, will hang in the Jackson County High School as a memorial to this beloved departed leader."

Betts painted a number of people in Scottsboro during the early 1940s. He did an illustration for an article in the 1942 *Alabama Lumberman* magazine of Word Lumber Company, one of several paintings done for the Word family. He also did a life-size portrait of W. J. Word with a deer and also a more formal portrait. He painted two views of the Tennessee River from Section Bluff not long after Lake Guntersville was created in 1939. One of these paintings is in the front lobby of Huntington Bank. He painted the portraits of Robert E. Lee and George Washington, copies of other portraits, that hung at the front of the auditorium at JCHS. He painted Dayton Benham, Nancy Benham Steenhuis, Mayor James David Snodgrass and his wife Hattie Mae Brown, State Senator John B. Benson, John Clinton Jacobs and his son J.C. Jacobs II; and twins Jean and Dean Stanley. The Chronicles includes an extensive biography of Betts and prints of the known Scottsboro paintings in the July 2022 edition. The last ten years of Betts' life were spent in Biloxi, MS. His obituary in the *Biloxi Sun-Herald* mentions that he was survived by his two sisters.

Annette Bradford



VIEWS OF MESS HODGES AND HODGES DRUG STORE FROM THE 1941 LLOYD ROYAL MOVIE, COMMISSIONED BY ROBERT WORD.

Early Baptist Schools in Pisgah, Alabama

With the Cherokee land cessions of 1835, Sand Mountain was open to settlement. Between 1840 and 1850, immigrants from mostly Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia settled in a community located on the western side of Sand Mountain surrounded by steep bluffs overlooking the Tennessee River. The Pisgah Gorge, known for its picturesque zigzagging bluffs, culminates with a natural rock pillar known as the Pinnacle which provides a breathtaking view of the Tennessee River, the surrounding coves, and the Cumberland mountains. It is likely that this was the inspiration to name the area Pisgah which was the mountain in the Old Testament where God allowed Moses to look over into the Promised Land, though Moses died before he could set foot in it. (1) The biblical significance of this name would be a portent to the Christian conviction of the early settlers and their commitment to Christian education. Supported by a group of Baptist ministers mostly from Fackler and Bellefonte, and a local thriving Baptist church, Pisgah would become known as a destination for preparatory education throughout Jackson County beginning in 1874 and continuing for the next 46 years. One minister who stood out during this time was John Justice Beeson, whose role and reputation as both preacher and educator left an indelible mark on early Jackson County education and Baptist church growth long even after his death.

Formation of Pisgah Baptist Church

The earliest recorded existence of white settlement was a store owned by Samuel C. Estes evidenced by a recorded purchase in 1857 of supplies from the old Davenport store in Valley Head, AL. This date is generally considered to mark the use of "Pisgah" as the geographic reference.(2)

Critical to the early schools at Pisgah was the formation of the Pisgah Baptist Church. The date for the beginning of the church is 1851. It began as a mission of Friendship Baptist Church in Fackler as members of that church (notably Samuel Rorex, Isaac Derrick, and Jesse Starkey) were interested in establishing a church at Pisgah. The Tennessee River Baptist Association was organized at Friendship Church in October 1853. Among the churches at the organizational meeting was the Sand Mountain Church (the early name of Pisgah Church), represented by A.G. Hammock, J. W. Baker, and Joseph Smally, Sr. who were seated without voting privileges as the church was not considered a regularly constituted church but an arm of Friendship Church. The Sand Mountain church continued as an arm of Friendship Church until 1861. Worship service frequencies were irregular depending on the availability of missionaries from the Tennessee River Association as there was no formal pastor; however, some of the most notable Baptist preachers of the county preached at the church, particularly Charles L. Roach, Richard H. Taliaferro, Bailey Bruce, and A.C. Howell. The church formally organized as a regularly constituted church in 1861 with the name changing to Mount Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church of Christ. ("Mount" and "Church of Christ" were later dropped.) (3) Due to the hardships brought on by the Civil War and subsequent early Reconstruction, the church did not have a regular pastor until 1872 when Preston Brown became its first regular pastor.(4)

Early Years (1875 – 1879)

The precise date of the establishment of a school at Pisgah is uncertain. One newspaper article published in 1875 notes that the school had been operating for at least a year which would place the beginning of the school sometime in 1874 with William P. Derrick as the primary teacher. (5) One account has John Ambrester and his sister, Mary Ann, as teachers prior to Derrick which would indicate a beginning at an earlier date.6) Derrick was ordained as a Baptist minister in 1869 and subsequently was employed as a

missionary of the Tennessee River Baptist Association. He attended The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at a time when less than 10% of all Baptist ministers attended any four-year institution, much less a theological seminary. Because of health issues, he was unable to return to the seminary and relocated to Sand Mountain and began teaching in 1874. In 1876, Derrick became the pastor at Pisgah and continued to teach in the school. (7) Charles B. Roach, Sr. was another prominent pastor and educator in Jackson County who was educated at Union University, a Baptist university located in Tennessee. (8) Together, Derrick and Roach superintended the school which was meant to be a preparatory school for college.

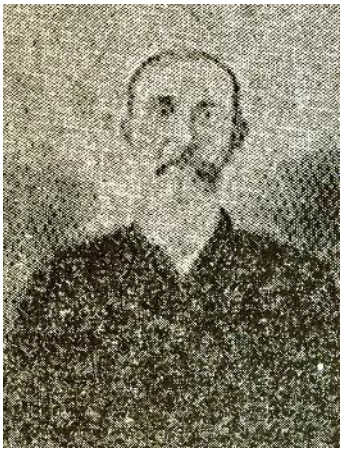
A lengthy article published in the *Alabama Herald*, September 1875 by B.H. Womack, who lived in Nashville and was likely a teacher himself, described the school in detail and heaped much praise on it. Womack noted that the school was a high school, and that organizers desired it to be a permanent institution. The close of the first section of the school year was on August 14, 1875, marked by "two days examination of several classes, an address on Education, and an exhibition at night, which consisted of original speeches, declamations, compositions, dialogues, etc. quite superior to anything I have ever witnessed in Jackson County." (9) Womack noted six classes in mathematics (including Algebra) and one course in Geometry all taught by Roach who also taught Latin. The texts used for grammar instruction were *Smith's Inductive System, Kerl's Analytical Grammar, and Fowler's Comprehensive Grammar.*

There were about 100 students in attendance with 50 of those being boarders. Boarding was available for $7 per month. Funding was through a "stock fund" raised by the trustees and patrons. The additions of Greek, Trigonometry, and Surveying were planned for future sessions. (10)

In 1878, Roach became Pastor of the church and Derrick left for a pastorate in Davidson County, TN. It is likely that Roach continued as teacher in the school. An article in the June 12, 1879 edition of the *Alabama Herald* lists Rev J.F. Parker as beginning the school year. The article noted him "as a thoroughly cultivated gentleman, and is religiously and intellectually fit to take charge of the children. " The article noted the need for a school building. (11)

The Beeson Years (1880-1897)

John Justice Beeson was born on July 17, 1835, in Jackson County. When Beeson was age six, his father died and at age 15, he moved to Mississippi to work on a farm. After working for two years and attending an academy in Okolona, MS, he went to Murfreesboro, TN to attend Union University. War broke out during his time at Union and Beeson left there to serve in the 4th Tennessee Cavalry (Confederate) where he was wounded in the Battle of Franklin and taken prisoner. His arm was so badly mangled that it was amputated. Returning to Jackson County after the War, he married Frances Elizabeth Allen on December 10, 1865. He was ordained as a Baptist minister in 1866. Beeson also farmed, "plowing with one arm" and held several political offices including Superintendent of Education and Treasurer. In 1880 John Justice Beeson became pastor of the church at Pisgah and concurrently the principal of the school. He held both positions until his untimely death in 1897. (12)



John Justice Beeson, from the First Baptist Church Centennial Booklet

Little is known about the academy between the years 1881 and 1886; however, later newspaper accounts and advertisements indicate a robust academy. A notice in the *Scottsboro Citizen* in 1887 listed that Beeson formed a "co-partnership" with L. L. Coulson who was a local teacher in the county; however, no mention of Coulson was made in subsequent years. Miss J.R. Starkey and Mr. Willie Gay were listed as assistants at the school. Tuition ranged from $1-$2 per month and board from $5-$8 per month.(13)

In 1884, James Beeson (son of John Justice Beeson) and C. T. Roach (son of Charles B. Roach) were employed as teachers. Board had been raised to $7-$10

per month but tuition remained the same. The *Trustees were* Dr. Arnold, S.C. Estes, W.D. Rorex, James Chambers, and N.H. McCurdy. (14) According to advertisements in the *Scottsboro Citizen* and *The Progressive Age*, over the next ten years tuition and board remained relatively unchanged as did the faculty and trustees. Hettie Beeson, a recent graduate of the Winchester Normal School, and daughter of John Justice Beeson, was added to the faculty in 1894. The enrollment at that time was 103 pupils.(15)

Beeson took the title of Superintendent and R. A. Williams is listed as Principal with C. T. Roach as assistant in 1896. The name of the school is listed in newspaper accounts as the Pisgah Academy. (16)

Tragically, Beeson collapsed at the home of his niece on October 31, 1897, while preparing a sermon for the next day.

The Intervening Years

With Beeson's death, J.W. Simpson, a graduate of Winchester Normal took the reins. A.H. Mathis temporarily replaced Beeson until Simpson's arrival. During Simpson's tenure, the Pisgah Academy continued as a leading preparatory school in the county, particularly with young men training for the ministry and preparation for college. At one time during the 1900 school year, the school was known as "The Male and Female Academy"; however, the following year the school went by the name of "Pisgah Preparatory Academy." (17) Twenty pupils were added to the school in 1901 and the *Progressive Age* noted that the school "far exceeds any school on Sand Mountain." (18) The following year (1901), 78 were enrolled with Mr. Burton added as the assistant principal. In a report from C.T. Starkey (then Pastor of Pisgah Baptist Church) to the 1903 meeting of the Tennessee River to the Association, Starkey noted that a number of graduates from the Academy were accepted into Howard College (now Samford University) and the Association recommended the Academy for ministerial training. (19)

The 1903 year opened with an advertisement in the *Progressive Age* highlighting spacious accommodations, good lighting, patent desks, surrounded by "picturesque scenery, permeated by a pure and healthy atmosphere, exempted from city disturbances and immorality, and cherished by a hospitable and public-spirited citizenship." Tuition ranged from $1 to $3 per month and board from $6 to $8 per month. (20)

The fall term started in 1906 with a new principal, J. J. Yarbrough. The school continued operating throughout 1906 and 1907 until the Home Mission Board acquisition. (21)

The Beeson Academy

In the early 1900s, the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention began to focus on creating and sponsoring preparatory schools in the Appalachian Mountains. Charles T. Starkey and Jessee Ambrester, both Baptist ministers living at Pisgah, lobbied the Home Mission to take over the school at Pisgah. (22) The Home Mission Board also established the Bridgeport Academy, later known as the Tennessee River Institute in 1907. The Beeson Academy was formally established in 1908 and named in honor of former pastor and principal John Justice Beeson. (23) The first session of the Academy was in 1909. (24) The first principal was Justice Beeson (son of J. J. Beeson), assisted by his sister, Daisy Beeson, who later studied at the University of Virginia. (25) The trustees were S.C. Richards, G.W. Ambrester, and J.F. Armstrong. (26)

The formal dedication for the Academy was held on June 5, 1910, by Dr. E. A. Brown, superintendent of the Mountain School Division of the Home Mission Board. (27) The new principal for the 1910 school year was Rev. Henry Camdem ("H.C.") Dunn and Daisy Beeson as a teacher. Dunn was a native of King and Queen County, VA, and was educated at the University of Richmond and Crozier Theological Seminary. (28) In addition to the position of principal at the Beeson Academy, Dunn was also a popular preacher. Various newspaper accounts detail his preaching activity throughout the county. In a report by

Dunn to the annual meeting of the Tennessee River Baptist Association in 1910, there was one main building with the construction of a girls' dormitory underway which would accommodate 24 girls and was scheduled for completion by January 1, 1911. Twenty-seven students were enrolled with 10 more applications. The faculty included Dunn and his wife Mattie Stapels who taught a mission study class. The Bible was taught in all grades beginning at sixth grade. Prayers from the Association were requested. (29)

During Dunn's tenure, a dispute arose between Dunn and the Home Mission Board over reimbursement for building materials and labor for the dormitory. The dispute escalated to a lawsuit and in 1911 the court awarded damages to Dunn in the amount of $350. (30) Whether this tension prompted Dunn's leaving the Academy is unknown as Dunn left after one year.

There are no known extant catalogues or circulars describing the curriculum at Beeson; however, the curriculum can be reasonably extrapolated from a surviving catalogue of the Bridgeport Academy (later known as the Tennessee River Institute) which was also superintended by the Home Mission Board. Classics were required all four years, including Caesar's Commentaries, Cicero's Orations, Virgil's Aeneid, all in Latin, as well as Xenophon's Anabasis in Greek. Math and science courses included Algebra, Geometry, and Physics. British and American literature were also required, and Bible and Theology studies were required all four years. (31)

Dunn was succeeded by J. H. Jarnigan in 1911. (32) Jarnigan was a popular educator and taught at many schools in the area. (33) Little information is available for the years 1911 through 1914 other than the school was active as acknowledged by the Tennessee River Baptist Association in their annual meetings. (34) An article in the *Progressive Age* noted that several pupils of the Academy were preparing to take state [presumably teacher] examinations. (35)

J.M. Langston was principal from 1914 to 1916. During this time, new dormitories were constructed which drew even more students to the Academy over the years. These years also marked the beginning of a basketball team which competed across the county and went undefeated for most of the season. (36) Tuition was $12 per month with an additional fee for music.

W.T. Howell of Jackson, TN was appointed principal in 1917. (37) Additional faculty were Bertha Norton and Ova Reagan. New courses in Music, Bookkeeping, Shorthand, and Typewriting were offered. (38) The report on the Academy to the 1917 associational meeting of the Tennessee River Baptist Association highlighted improvements to the facilities including completion of a building addition and single desks to use in the auditorium ($300 was still owed), but one dormitory was still under construction. The faculty was composed largely of college graduates and work was being done toward accreditation. (39)

Miss Osie Allison from Swannanoa, North Carolina, became principal in 1919. Additions to faculty included Bertha Norton, Ova Reagan, and Caddobelle Beeson (wife of John Justice Beeson, Jr.) The school year opened with 150 students. (40) During this time cultural events were part of the Beeson experience. A play, "Dot the Miner's Daughter," a drama in four acts was presented by the students with admission ranging from 10 to 20 cents. The proceeds went toward purchasing a library. (41)

J.H. Jernigan returned as principal in 1920. According to one source, enrollment was at 254; however, this seems somewhat unlikely since this would have been an increase of 104 over the previous year. Also, this same publication lists enrollment at the Tennessee River Institute in Bridgeport at 93 and Flat Rock High School at 91. (42) In any event, a fire destroyed the building in 1920 and classes were moved to the local church building and dormitory. (43) At the Tennessee River Baptist Association meeting in 1921 upon the recommendation from Pisgah Baptist Church, the Association lamented not only the destruction caused by the fire, but also the financial condition of the surrounding country as "being bad." They acknowledged that rebuilding was impractical. Also, the rise of better publicly funded high schools marked a move away from church-funded schools. With that in mind, the Association recommended to the Home Mission Board that they convey the property to the proper public authorities for building a public school, free to all. (44)

Similarly, several denominational schools established in the late 19th and early 20th century in Jackson County would close within the next few years—for example, The Tennessee River Institute (Baptist), the Flat Rock school (Methodist), and the Green Academy (Congregational.) All were impacted by the rapid rise of publicly funded education offering free tuition to all. This would mark an end of a golden era of Christian secondary education in the county.

Tom Allen

Notes

1 Richard L. Wheeler and Emmett B. Wheeler, *History of Pisgah Baptist Church: 1851-1973*, (Privately published), 8

2 ibid, 8

3 The term "Church of Christ" should not be confused with the denomination known as Church of Christ. Pisgah was clearly a Baptist church from its beginning.

4 Ibid, 9-10.

5 J. Nelson Varnell, *Early Baptists of Jackson County, 1821-1921, vol. 2* (Scottsboro: Privately bound, 1982), 210.

6 John Robert Kennamer, Sr., *History of Jackson County Alabama,* (1935; reprinted, Scottsboro: JacksonCounty Historical Association, 1993),183.

7 Varnell, vol. 2, 145, 310.

8 Varnell, vol.2, 125-127.

9 Varnell, vol. 2, 310.

10 Varnell, vol. 2, 311-312.

11 *The Alabama Herald*, June 12, 1879.

12 Varnell, vol. 2, 97-99

13 *Scottsboro Citizen*, November 17, 1887.

14 *Progressive Age*, December 8, 1893.

15 *Scottsboro Citizen*, September 13, 1894.

16 *Scottsboro Citizen*, August 27, 1896

17 *Progressive Age*, October 4, 1900.

18 *Progressive Age*, October 18, 1900.

19 *Minutes of the Tennessee River Baptist Association*, 1903 as quoted by J. Nelson Varnell, E*arly Baptists of Jackson County,* 1821-1921, vol. 1, 240.

20 *Progressive Age*, August 13, 1903.

21 *Progressive Age*, July 17, 1903; *Jackson Union News*, February 13, 1907.

22 Kennamer, 183

23 A.B. Cash, "Mountain Mission Schools", *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, vol. 2*, Nashville: Broadman,1958 and 1909, pp. 926-928.

24 The Wheelers' history of Pisgah Baptist Church states that classes did not begin until 1914 (p.15); however, newspaper accounts along with the above citation by Cash indicate 1908 as the establishment

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date and 1909 as the start date of classes. More likely the 1914 date refers to the completion of a new dormitory noted in Wheeler, 15.

25 *Progressive Age*, August 11, 1910; Progressive Age, October 21, 1909.

26 *Minutes of the Tennessee River Association, 1909* as quoted in Varnell, 274.

27 *Progressive Age*, June 16, 1910.

28 *The Greenville News* (Greenville, South Carolina), March 16, 1965.

29 *Minutes of the Tennessee River Baptist Association, 1910* as quoted in Varnell , 283

30 *Progressive Age*, November 9, 1911.

31 *Bridgeport Academy. 1909-1910 Catalogue of Bridgeport Academy* (Bridgeport: Bridgeport Academy, 1909),10.

32 *Progressive Age*, September 8, 1910.

33 *Jackson County Sentinel*, January 30, 1945.

34 *Minutes of the Tennessee River Baptist Association, 1911* as quoted by Varnell, 290.

35 *Progressive Age*, October 2, 1913.

36 *Scottsboro Citizen*, March 4, 1915.

37 *Progressive Age,* July 27, 1917.

38 *Progressive Age,* September 7, 1917.

39 *Associational Minutes, 1917* as quoted in Varnell, 324.

40 *Progressive Age*, August 14, 1919.

41 *Progressive Age*, August 14, 1919.

42 Olive Campbell, compiler. *Southern Highland Schools Maintained by Denominational and Independent Agencies*, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation , 1921), 3.

43 Kennamer, 183.

44 *Associational Minutes, 1921* as quoted in Varnell, 350-351.

Top Stories from the 1930s

1930: Claude "Curly" Putman was born near Princeton. He wrote over 800 songs, including "Green, Green Grass of Home," a song about the singer's finally rejoining family and community when he is brought home to be buried. Ironically, Putman was not buried in Princeton.

- Popular Tupelo resident Harry Cunningham was murdered by a stranger, Myrtle Berry Graham, in the Drug Sundries Company on Market Street on the square. The 17-year-old Graham was the first woman tried for first degree murder in Jackson County. Nuby Moates, 16, was convicted as an accomplice. Graham was serving a life term when she was released in 1942, 12 years into her term, to die at home of a chronic illness. Moates did not appear in any official records either in advance of the murder or following her release from prison, also in 1942.

- The B.B. Comer Bridge was completed. The 50-cent toll per car and $1.50 for a large truck was seen as exorbitant by many residents, and most ferries continued in operation. Bridge tolls were discontinued in 1936.
- The Bocanita Theater opened on the square. Theater manager Claude Bobo's vision of recreating Atlanta's Fox theater on a smaller scale proved too ambitious, and his financial backer, Aunt Tex Snodgrass, foreclosed. The theater was opened before completion and operated for a time with dirt floors. Bobo's earlier theater, The Dreamland, was located on the second floor of the Claybrook building at 203 Market Street before moving for a brief time to the south side of the square to be housed in a wood-frame building on the site where the Bocanita was eventually built.
- The Lone Star Bus Line was established to take advantage of the newly completed B.B. Comer Bridge. The line ran from Scottsboro to Ft. Payne. The trip took 2 hours and 15 minutes.
- Two of the hottest stretches in Scottsboro weather history occurred in July of 1930. The highest temperature ever recorded in Scottsboro, 109 degrees, occurred on July 13, 1930. Of the 31 days in July 1930, fifteen had high temperatures above 100 degrees. For eight days, between July 6-13 the high temperature was above 100 degrees. Resuming later in the month, for the seven days between July 25-31, the high temperature was again above 100 degrees. The average high temperature for the month was 100.3. Temperatures have reached 107 or higher on 11 occasions and 105 degrees or higher on 28 occasions (most recently on July 15, 2023 at 107 degrees) since records have been maintained.

1931: Nine black youths were pulled from a train in Paint Rock and accused of raping two white women, setting off years of litigation known as the "Scottsboro Boys" case.
• Southern Railroad reported that 147 people were killed and 179 injured while trespassing on the tracks and trains of the Southern Railway system. 141 had been killed the preceding year.

1932: 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.

- Jackson County Sheriff Matt Wann was murdered by a shotgun blast in Scottsboro. Speculation persists that he died as a result of his determination to protect the Scottsboro Boys from a lynch mob while they were held in the county jail in a scenario reminiscent of Atticus Finch's stand in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Running afoul of bootleggers was also cited as a motive.
- Thirty schools in Jackson County were forced to close on November 25 only one month into the term when the state ran a deficit of $115,000 in funding. Scottsboro schools remained open, supported by contributions from city and county residents.
- Scottsboro was recognized as a "city" when its population rose above 2,000.
- The *Jackson County Sentinel* newspaper was established by Parker Campbell who had split with his former publisher, Jim Benson, over politics. In 1938, Benson's newspaper, the *Progressive Age*, merged with the *Jackson County Sentinel* under Campbell's editorship. Campbell retired in 1958.

1933: The Third Reich's "Graf Zeppelin" passed over Jackson County on its way to the "Century of Progress" in Chicago. Among the passengers was a stowaway who, as a member of the ground crew, had held on to the tethering lines when the ship left its moorings and had climbed to the passenger gondola. One side of the tail of the zeppelin was painted with the Nazi swastika, and the obverse was painted with the German flag. The zeppelin could circle gatherings displaying one graphic or the other, depending on the local residents' sympathies with the Nazi regime.

- The Tennessee Valley Authority was created by the Roosevelt administration. TVA's land acquisitions for the Guntersville Lake impoundment reshaped the region geographically and socially.
- Physician Marvin H. Lynch, the assistant medical examiner who evaluated the two Scottsboro Boys accusers after their alleged rapes, met with Judge James Edwin Horton in the men's room in the Morgan County courthouse during retrials of the boys in Decatur. He told Horton that the two women showed no signs of assault and even laughed when he had questioned them about their alleged rapes. "My God, Doctor," Judge Horton is reported to have asked, "is this all a horrible mistake?" Following the meeting, Judge Horton set aside the jury's guilty verdict and ordered a new trial for the accused. One of the two accusers, Ruby Bates, later recanted her allegations, but much of her deposition was disallowed in a subsequent trial. The last of the Scottsboro Boys to be released from prison was Andy Wright in 1950. Wright had been paroled in 1944, but left the state illegally. After two years, he was lured back to the state believing he was to be granted leniency for his parole violation. Instead, he was jailed and made to serve four more years. The last surviving defendant, Clarence Norris, was pardoned in 1976 by Governor George Wallace.
- The Cumberland Mountain Road, linking the Tennessee Valley with the Cumberland Plateau, was dedicated on November 1. It was accomplished as the result of a grant applied for by Probate Judge James Money. Five thousand workers appeared on the first day of the project to work for $1 per 10-hour day. Many workers appeared without shoes and were bought work boots by Judge Money. They appeared without food and were fed sweet potatoes by Harry Cunningham, Sr. The road was completed in 7 months for under $13,000.
- The Tri-County Hospital for tuberculosis sufferers opened on Backbone Ridge across Highway 35 from the Scott Cemetery, but sat idle for three years due to lack of funding. It burned in 1937 after housing patients for 16 months. The "poor house" west of Scottsboro was repurposed as a TB hospital and opened on March 1, 1938.
- Two men, Boyd Derrick, 20, and Esmond Sherrill, 19, were killed near Scottsboro after they apparently fell asleep on the tracks.
- 43 of 67 Alabama counties voted to repeal the Eighteenth Amendment, which banned the sale of alcohol. Jackson County, however, voted "dry." With 3,000 county residents voting, the margin against repealing the amendment carried by 264 votes. Despite a lack of support from Jackson County, Alabama became the eighteenth state to ratify the Twenty-First amendment.
- A steel bridge across Crow Creek near Stevenson collapsed, pinning a truck that was hauling railroad ties to the bottom of the creek. One man was killed, and four were injured.
- Two Jackson County deputies, Fred Jackson and J. H. Holland, were killed near Flat Rock following their raid on a still. In 1935, Frank Gross would be acquitted of the murder of Jackson, but found guilty of first-degree murder in the shooting of J. H. Holland.

1934: Nolan Strong, lead singer for doowop group The Diablos, was born on January 22 on North Houston Street in Scottsboro. The Diablos' first popular recording was "The Wind." The song is listed in the top ten of the 100 Greatest Detroit Songs Ever by The Detroit Metro Times. Strong died in Detroit in 1977.

- The Skyline Farms Project, a cooperative farming community originally called Cumberland Farms, was established under FDR's Federal Emergency Relief Administration. The experiment lasted 10 years before the farm plots were sold to private investors.

1935: For the second time, the US Supreme Court set aside death sentences for the Scottsboro Boys, this time citing lack of adequate inclusion of Blacks in the jury process. The following week, Governor Bibb Graves ordered that counties "empty all jury boxes and refill them with names of Negroes qualified to serve as jurors." The following month, Victoria Price, one of two accusers, swore to nine warrants as the first step to indict the boys yet again and bring them back to trial in an effort to once again seek the death penalty. The second accuser, Ruby Bates, had previously renounced her charges. The subsequent indictments in Jackson County provided for December arraignments and January retrials for all nine defendants in Decatur. Previously, in 1932, the Supreme Court had set aside verdicts on the basis that the boys had been denied adequate defense counsel.

- A jury convicted Frank Gross of first degree murder in the death of county deputy J.H. Holland in 1933. Gross was previously acquitted of the murder of Fred Jackson, a second deputy killed in the same ambush. A second man charged with the murder of Holland was acquitted when the jury failed to reach a unanimous verdict.
- Citing poor attendance, "Aunt Tex" Snodgrass and Claude Bobo announced that the Bocanita Theater would be showing movies only two days a week: Saturday and Monday. Women over 50 were given free admission to the Monday showings.

1936: Twenty Black convicts on a work detail burned to death in the back of a truck deployed from Camp Scottsboro located on Highway 72. The truck skidded on icy roads and spilled gasoline from a drum placed near the prisoners' lockup in the bed of the truck. The gasoline was ignited by a makeshift stove, which had been lit to keep the caged prisoners warm in near-zero temperatures.

• Twelve-year-old Al Tipton was indicted for first degree murder after killing one man and injuring another. He was handed a gun by his father during an altercation between the father and two other men on the south side of the square during a First Monday gathering. The boy was eventually acquitted after tearful testimony in which he said he was protecting his father. Unfortunately, the man he killed was trying to intercede as a peacemaker.

- The Ritz Theater opened on the west side of the square. It closed in 1970 and was replaced by the Holiday Cinema on Willow Street.

1937: L. C. "Mess" (short for "Messenger," harkening back to his delivery boy days) Hodges bought James Presley's drug store business. In 1945, when Mess was 34 years old, he died as the result of a motorcycle accident on the square. His brothers R. L. and Charles purchased the business from Mess's widow, Elizabeth, and the business was known informally as "Hodges Brothers Drug Store," a fixture on the square for over 30 years.

- On May 12, a group of musicians and dancers from Skyline Farms Project performed for President and Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt at a garden party at the White House. Later that evening, they cruised on the presidential yacht.

1938: A Scottsboro youth was shot by a circus sharpshooter and admitted to Hodges Hospital with a chest wound. The boy was standing outside the circus tent when he was struck by the .22-calibre shell.

- The new Jackson County jail was opened April 18. It was built on Peachtree Street, adjacent to the previous jail, built in 1873.

- *Life* Magazine photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt visited Scottsboro as part of a ten-state driving tour with Jonathan Daniels, editor of Raleigh NC's News and Observer, to document the seeds of the civil rights movement in the South. Eisenstaedt took exceptional photos of the square (including his much-circulated photo The Melon Salesman), the Scottsboro passenger depot, the 1930 city hall, and the old jail on Appletree Street where the Scottsboro Boys were incarcerated.
- Governor Bibb Graves commuted the death sentence of Clarence Norris. Norris was the last of the Scottsboro Boys to have his sentence revoked. Norris was pardoned in 1976 by Governor George Wallace.

1939: The Scottsboro Electric Power Board was established as a public corporation following a bond referendum that passed by a popular vote of 301 to 42. After the city of Scottsboro purchased distribution equipment from the Alabama Power Company, the city began receiving TVA current.

- TVA closed the locks on the Guntersville dam, creating Guntersville Lake. The reservoir was filled and then drained twice to clear debris that could cause damage to the turbines and navigation locks before finally being filled.
- Widows Bar Dam was demolished in April, leaving only the 300-foot navigation lock intact for use by boats used in the TVA malaria-control efforts. The dam had been completed in 1925 at a cost of $1.1 million (over twice the cost of the B.B. Comer bridge). The dam, which had been inundated two months before by the rising waters of the newly constructed Guntersville Dam, was built to provide a six-foot-deep navigation channel from Widows Creek to the Hales Bar Dam. The TVA embayment provided a 15-foot channel for navigation on that stretch.

David Bradford

Kindergarten Programs in Alabama and Jackson County

A post on Facebook about kindergarten programs in Scottsboro during the 1950s and 1960s recently drew an unanticipated response and a number of great personal stories that led to my writing this article and researching the history of kindergartens in the county. We might all wonder how a German word that translates as "garden of children" became a private form of education before the 1980s, and a part of the public education system after that.

In 1840, German educator Friedrich Fröbel coined the term "kindergarten" based on his belief that children learned by manipulating specific educational toys—known as "Fröbel Gifts". These gifts included wooden blocks, geometric shapes, and spheres designed to help children intuitively grasp basic concepts of science, geometry, and architecture. (Michigan State University, "Why is Kindergarten called Kindergarten.")

The first American kindergarten opened in 1856 in Watertown, Wisconsin, where Margaret Meyer Schurz began teaching local children entirely in German using the theories of Fröbel. By 1860, Elizabeth Peabody opened an English-speaking kindergarten in Boston, believing so strongly in the concept that she travelled the U.S. promoting early childhood education. By 1873, the St. Louis School System added public school kindergarten to its curriculum. (Wikipedia)

By 1890 the word "kindergarten" in the U.S. defined a radical new concept for 3- to 6-year-olds. It was not an academic classroom. Instead, it functioned as a nurturing space where children learned entirely through guided, self-directed play, nature study, and creative crafts.

During the late 19th century, the purpose of a kindergarten differed significantly from the structured, academic preschools of today. The Alabama organized kindergarten story really starts at the turn of the century when industries like Avondale were discovering that working mothers needed a safe place to have their children too young for child labor to be cared for.



CHILDREN WORKING IN THE BROADUS COTTON MILL IN STEVENSON. NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION.

The best assessment of early 20th century kindergarten programs comes from a 1939 survey conducted by the Association for Childhood Education. The organization formed a subgroup called The Committee of Nineteen that took on the task of tracing the history of the kindergarten movement in the United States. The materials in the report were compiled by state supervisors, directors, or representative kindergarteners and detailed by state and city.

This wonderful history might have gathered dust in a university library had it not been digitized by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at the University of California, Berkeley. The person who compiled and wrote the information about Alabama kindergartens for this publication was Janice Rearden, an educator from Delaware.(cscce.berkeley.edu) This is the Alabama portion of the 1939 Association for Childhood Education document. Note that the terms "now" and "at present" in the analysis that follows refer to 1939.

The earliest kindergarten program in Alabama was initiated as a private enterprise. The first kindergarten in Alabama was opened in Tuscumbia in 1896 by Maude McKnight Lindsay. It was a private kindergarten.

Tuscumbia: The kindergarten movement in the State of Alabama, as in many other states, was initiated as a private enterprise. So far as can be determined, the earliest kindergarten was opened in the year 1896, by Maude McKnight Lindsay, in Tuscumbia, one of the Tri-cities (Florence-Sheffield-Tuscumbia). In Tuscumbia a kindergarten, run on a private basis, has been in existence for a number of years.

Florence: In September, 1898, The Florence Free Kindergarten, the first free kindergarten in Alabama, was begun with Miss Lindsay as its principal. Three months later a free kindergarten was opened in Anniston. The Florence Free Kindergarten, now in its fortieth year, is supported by subscription administered by The Florence Free Kindergarten Club. The club owns the kindergarten building and an adjoining lot which is used as a playground. It is situated in the mill district of Florence and seventy-five children are taken in each year. Three teachers and a nurse are on duty and the kindergarten holds its record of never having closed a day for lack of funds, even during the depression period.

Maude McKnight Lindsay was born in Tuscumbia in the year 1874 and received her kindergarten training under Jeanne P. Cooper of Tuscumbia. She has been principal of The Florence Free Kindergarten since its opening with the exception of two years leave of absence, one because of illness and one spent a resident at The Elizabeth Peabody House in Boston, Massachusetts. Aside from having given of herself and her efforts untiringly for the happiness and the guidance of the preschool child for nearly half a century, she has brought joy and pleasure to children and adults through her stories and books and her art as a story teller.

During the World War, government kindergartens were established at each of the nitrate plants at Florence, and there is now one in connection with the T. V. A. school at Plant One.

Birmingham: Shortly after the establishment of The Florence Free Kindergarten, kindergartens sponsored by a kindergarten association were established in a number of the public schools of Birmingham. This was during the superintendentship of J. H. Phillips. Mrs. Phillips, wife of the superintendent, was an active member of this group. These kindergartens were later taken over and supported by the Birmingham Board of Education. The teachers usually received their training at the Birmingham Training School for Teachers. On account of financial stringency these kindergartens were abandoned after a few years. Records of the kindergartens carried on in the Birmingham school system were destroyed when the Central High School burned in 1918.

Soon several private kindergartens of varied worth were opened. Some were conducted by well-trained teachers, others by self-appointed teachers with little training. In many cases the instruction was too formal and academic. At present Birmingham has ten preschool play centers for white children and five for Negros. The salaries of teachers arc paid by the W. P. A. and supplies are furnished by the mothers' clubs of Birmingham.

Mobile: The first kindergarten was opened in Mobile about 1900 by Jenny Harris and a Miss Fairbanks, in a public school building occupied by the Boy's Grammar School adjoining Barton Academy. These two teachers started a training school where several young women of Mobile received theory and practice in the methods of kindergarten teaching. Teachers completing this course were placed in charge of the kindergartens as they were opened in and around Mobile.

In 1905 Lovey McKinstrey and Elizabeth Johnston, graduates of the Louisville Free Kindergarten Association Training School, were placed in charge of the Leinkauf Kindergarten as principal and assistant principal. They took in three high school graduates who received method courses and practice teaching. The following year the three students entered the Louisville Free Kindergarten Association Training School and after graduation two returned to Mobile to teach in the public kindergartens. Later a Mobile Training School was opened with Elizabeth Johnston in charge. Five or six students were graduated.

ln 1908 Mobile had eight kindergartens , seven in the city and one in the county, each with a principal and an assistant principal. In 1917 Elizabeth Johnston was made the first kindergarten supervisor. She was succeeded two years later by Lucy Rosenguist, a graduate of the University of Chicago. Miss Rosenguist had the supervision of kindergartens and primary grades. She was succeeded two years later by Alace Porter from the Louisville Normal School. The annual play festival given each year in the city parks of Mobile was the greatest event participated in by all the kindergartens in this city.

In 1925 shortage of funds caused the discontinuance of Mobile's public kindergartens and about eight private classes were formed, some of great and some of lesser worth.

There is no association of private kindergartens in Alabama but a number of kindergartens which are conducted on a private basis function throughout the state. Some of these are taught by trained teachers and some are called kindergartens but the teachers have little educational background.

Some kindergartens are connected with the cotton mills in various places. These are supported by the mill owners and are a part of the mill school system. The shortage of school funds in the State of Alabama has prohibited the operation of kindergartens and nursery schools for all children of this age, and it is to be regretted that those who most need this instruction and happy environment are those who can ill afford to meet even a small tuition fee.

Chattahoochee Valley, Alabama, and West Point, Georgia: At the point where the Chattahoochee River divides Alabama and Georgia lies the city of West Point, Georgia. The offices of the West Point Manufacturing Company, of which George H. Lanier is president, are located here, but the five mills of

the company are located on the Alabama side of the river. Each mill is surrounded by its village. The villages are Lanett, Shawmut, Langdale, Fairfax, and Riverview.

It has been the policy of the company since it first built and supported a kindergarten in 1900, to add kindergartens to the old villages and to build a kindergarten in every mill village as soon as the new mill was built. The first kindergarten was built in Lanett. All the kindergartens are operated with emphasis on their standard of excellence rather than low cost of operation. The best architectural talent and professional advice available have been employed in the creation of the kindergarten buildings and their equipment. Buildings, upkeep, cost of operation, equipment, supplies, teachers' and assistants' salaries are paid by the mill. No fee is charged.

From the day the first kindergarten opened in the fall of 1900, when parents led eager little girls in starched ginghams and expectant little boys in jeans to the door, up to the present day, the kindergartens have been well attended.

The first of these five kindergartens was opened in Lanett in 1900. It was the brain child and pet of Inez McGaugh, the teacher, and Mrs. George Harris, wife of the superintendent of Lanett Mill. Thirty pupils were enrolled the first year. The kindergarten outgrew its first home and a new and larger building was erected about 1913. Attendance now is about 165.

For a time one room was used for a day nursery. The children came at 6:00 A. M. and were under the care of two nurses, one maid, and one cook. The fee was five cents a day. At 8:00 A. M. they joined the kindergarten children for three hours, then returned to the nursery until they were called for and carried home. However, the kindergarten grew rapidly and soon demanded the entire building.

Each kindergarten, with the exception of Lanett, which is larger, is housed in a bungalow type building with a porch across the front and around one-half of one side and consisting of one large room about 30 x 30 feet, one smaller room, a cloak room, two toilets and a lavatory with drinking fountain. Three sides of the large room are filled with windows with spacious window seats.

The kindergartens have standard equipment of tables, Mosher chairs, pianos, sand tables, slides, blocks (two have sets of Hill blocks), dolls, blackboards, display board. Some have doll houses, tricycles, doll carriages, etc. Any new equipment within reason, may be ordered by the teacher with the year's supplies. Each kindergarten has its own playground with swings, slides, sand piles, and seesaws.

The second kindergarten was established in Langdale in 1902. It, too, was held in a remodeled building originally used as a Masonic hall on what is known as Cemetery Hill.

The third kindergarten was established in Riverview in 1906. It was held in a small remodeled mill cottage near the Riverdale Mill. Twenty-five pupils attended this first kindergarten in a village of about 500 people. Fifty-seven were enrolled for the 1937 -38 term.

JANICE REARDEN.

A number of interesting facts emerge from this history.

1. Even in 1939 organizers understood the needs of both white and black children in creating public kindergarten programs.
2. TVA and textile mill owners recognized that women workers needed reliable childcare and provided it for their employees.
3. In the 1930s, private kindergartens were struggling to define their role and curriculum. As Janice Rearden noted, “Some were conducted by well-trained teachers, others by self-appointed teachers with little training. In many cases the instruction was too formal and academic.”
4. The need for universal public kindergarten was recognized but had not yet been met. Janice Rearden noted: “The shortage of school funds in the State of Alabama has prohibited the operation of

> kindergartens and nursery schools for all children of this age, and it is to be regretted that those who most need this instruction and happy environment are those who can ill afford to meet even a small tuition fee."

So what was to become of early childhood education, this child born of a German idealist and American necessity, that is, women who needed to work to support their families? By the mid 20th century, there was a thin philosophical line between child care and kindergarten. The former is an adaptation to working mothers, both inside the home and outside the home, who need help that extended families used to provide. It grew out of a recognition that mothers in the early 20th century needed help. Even mothers who did not work outside the home saw the value of a structured program that would prepare their children for elementary school.

Major universities in the state began supporting what would later be called early childhood education just 24 years after women were first admitted to Alabama Polytechnic Institute. API, with its active home economics movement, can trace its early childhood curriculum roots to 1916-1917. In 1926, API set up an early learning center, followed by a formal department with a major in Family Life and Nursery Education in 1950. (https://auburn.edu/academic/provost/academic-insight/assets/docs/2019/CHS_HumanDevelopmentandFamilyStudies_BS_2019.pdf) The University of Alabama was close behind, offering coursework in nursery school education in 1931, the year the university established its School of Home Economics. (http://history.ches.ua.edu/uploads/1/0/3/5/103569034/child_development_history.pdf)

While the state struggled to fill the needs of working mothers, compassionate women, many former teachers, stepped in to fill the need with private kindergartens. All kindergartens in Alabama were private until the late 1970s. Childcare classrooms were operated by churches, private academies, or community organizations. By 1982, public kindergartens were available in every state across the country, though they were not yet universal or mandatory.

In 2020, a state law (House Bill 423) was proposed that would have required kindergarten for Alabama five-year-olds entering first grade, but it did not pass. In 2024, the governor signed the Alabama First Grade Readiness Bill (HB 113) into law, providing for a readiness assessment for first graders who did not attend kindergarten, ensuring early educational intervention for children who need it. (www.governor.alabama.gov)

During the period between widespread working mothers who needed childcare and public kindergarten, the county had a number of women whom many of us in our 70s remember fondly who opened their homes to children and provided educational experiences, delivered with discipline and love.

Annette Bradford

This article is the introduction to a set of articles featuring county kindergarten teachers. The first of this series, the story of Pisgah's Miss Allie Roden, is included in this *Chronicles*. The second article focuses on Scottsboro programs run by Lina Holder Lovelady, Rubye Gilliam Boles, and Annie Joyce Benson. A final article discusses programs in Stevenson (Mrs. McGriff and McMahan) and in Bridgeport.

Miss Allie Roden's Kindergarten in Pisgah

1956-1967



What happens when you have taught little children all over the county for 50 years and then retire—but find that you miss your time with your students? You open a private kindergarten. That is exactly what Miss Allie Roden (1886-1967) did.

Allie Lutitia Roden was born in Honeycomb Valley in Marshall County in 1886, one of six children of Jeremiah Roden and Orpah Jane Ice. Her family moved to Pisgah the next year. She graduated from Pisgah Baptist Academy and took a job as an unpaid instructor at the school until the certification exam was offered. The *Scottsboro Citizen* reported on February 8, 1906 that Miss Allie was one of a group of young teachers from all over the county who had passed the county teachers' exam, held January 1-3. Later in her career, she completed extension and residence courses at Florence State College [now the University of North Alabama] and Jacksonville State College.

In the fall of 1906, Miss Allie secured her first paying job and taught at Walnut Grove School for $27 per month. Only 20 herself, she taught eight grades in one room. School started at eight a.m. and if classes in all subjects, including English, algebra, advanced arithmetic, and physiology, were completed by four p.m. then school was out, but if the classes were not finished, she stayed on until they were completed. (*JCS*, Apr 17, 1956)

By August of that year, the *Citizen* reported that Miss Allie was teaching the summer at Maxwell, and attended the teachers' institute in Fackler in September of that year. Though she taught summer sessions at other schools, she returned to Maxwell for several years thereafter. She taught the summer session at Walnut Grove in 1907, for example. In 1911, she was teaching at Olalee.

Her school was closed in 1914 on account of measles. She was teaching at Pisgah Elementary by 1943. In 1946, the news of Pisgah school openings states that Miss Allie was teaching the first grade, which must have been her favorite age because she taught first grade until her retirement in 1956.

A review of her teaching career at her retirement, published in the April 1956 *Sentinel*, gives a more accurate view of her career. "All of her teaching has been done in Jackson County except one year at Steele in St. Clair county," the *Sentinel* wrote. She served as principal at two- and three-teacher schools for about 15 years, at Subletts, Larkinsville, and Rash. She also taught at Union Grove, Cave Springs, Nat, New Harmon, Randall's Chapel, Overlook, Section, Trenton, Rosalie, and Cumberland Farms. She taught in the Pisgah school for about 20 years at various times."

In the 1956 *Sentinel* interview, Miss Allie stated that she had "more than 1500 different individuals pass through her classrooms, representing three generations in many cases." To her, she said in the interview, "each student has been an individual and not a statistic. Although many probably remember best my occasional application of a bit of wood to an appropriate spot on their anatomy more vividly than anything else, I believe that I loved every one of them. The greatest tribute that I have been paid is the general respect and affection my former students have shown me through the years."

In her fifty years, she said that she used all methods of transportation except airplane to get to school, recalling in a 1956 interview that "it was sometimes necessary to swim her horse across a creek or walk two miles upstream and cross a hewn log when heavy rain fell to reach the school from the McCrary home, where she boarded." (*JCS*, 1956)

April 15, 1956 was designated "Miss Allie Roden Day" and special services and celebrations were held all day. "Miss Roden has taught for 50 years in a number of the schools of Jackson County," the April 26, 1956 *Progressive Age* wrote, "but most of the time at Pisgah where she taught for the past 22 years. Her pupils are scattered from coast to coast as well as on foreign soil and include three generations. She is believed to have taught more Sand Mountain students than any other teacher." Her retirement was written up in the *Birmingham News* and the *Huntsville Times*. "It is people like Miss Allie who cause democracy to live and prosper in the United States," columnist Hershel Finney wrote in the April 10, 1956 *Sentinel*. The *Sand Mountain Reporter* carried news of her retirement and invited all former students and associates to attend the tea at Pisgah High. She wrote a gracious thank you for the *Progressive Age* on May 17, thanking all those who contributed to making "my day" a "happy day."

I can document that she had opened her kindergarten by 1959, but her students remember 1957. David A. Patterson reports that he attended her kindergarten in 1959. Will Holloway was in her kindergarten class



ALLIE RODEN WITH HER KINDERGARTEN. PHOTO INCLUDES RANDY SATTERFIELD, MYRA MEEKS, AND TOMMY TURNER

in 1965. "We met at her house, which was behind the current ambulance station in Pisgah. Not sure, but I think there were about 8-9 kids."

An Easter Egg hunt in the April 2, 1964 *Sentinel* listed the children attending Miss Allie's kindergarten: Kim House, Nancy Meeks, Kathy Gant, Steve Frost, Shelia Ray, Kathy Roden, Leabron Thomas, Dexter Roberts, Randy Foshee, Vicky Kilgore, and Randy Vaughn.

The kindergarten attracted a lot of press attention by 1966 when the *Sentinel* reported on Terry Starkey's birthday party, held in April 1966 at Allie Roden's kindergarten. In May, Misses Sonya Woods, Dawn McGriff, and Tammie Jo Manning also held their birthday parties at the kindergarten. On March 2, 1967, the *Sentinel* reported that Miss Sonya Gorham was "queen for a day" at a birthday party honoring her sixth birthday, with Miss Allie's 20 kindergarten pupils as her guests. Later that month, Terry and Chris Boyd attended an Easter party at the kindergarten.

Miss Allie died on June 20, 1967 at age 80, the day before her 81st birthday. The person who wrote her obituary could not have known her or appreciated the impact she had on so many lives. "A resident of Pisgah, she died Tuesday in the Jackson County Hospital. She was a school teacher." (*JCS*, June 25, 1967)

Many subscribers to the JCHA Facebook page remember Miss Allie fondly, having been part of her kindergarten program, and they provided details and memories. "I think all the children loved her and also, her sister, Miss Lizzie," Gail Satterfield explained and provided the picture of her and a group of children at the top of this page. "She taught them so many things other than just the ABC's. I remember Randy practicing his telephone etiquette at home, 'Satterfield residence, Randy speaking.' Times have truly changed. We desperately need more teachers like Miss Allie."



MISS ALLIE'S HOME IN PISGAH, WHERE SHE TAUGHT HER KINDERGARTEN.

David A. Patterson was one of her pupils in 1959 and remarked, "She was a great lady....She sure kept us on the straight and narrow." Pat Nichols Bergman called her "a person born to teach" and remarked "what a legacy." Myra Meeks Horton remembered walking to Miss Allie's class for two years: "The big thing was going by the dry cleaners and watching the steam being blown out....Miss Roden taught me to read but I missed the spelling class. She was a great teacher." Carole Fuller Edmonds said she learned everything she needed to know for kindergarten and first grade from "Aunt Allie." "Actually she became my aunt posthumously when I married her great nephew in 2002," Carole wrote. "I always wanted to call her 'Aunt' when half the class were her nieces and nephews. She was such a great teacher."

Janet Darwin attended when she was only three, younger than the rest of the class, while her mother worked. She remembers that Miss Allie held the kindergarten in a room at the back of her home, which is still standing in Pisgah. She said that she was reading by the end of the year. Amy S. Keith reported that her sister went to the kindergarten. "She was a credit to her profession," Amy wrote. "All the kids loved her!" Pam Day said that every child in Pisgah loved her and Miss Allie was "who I would like to be when I grow up." Kay Hicks remembered Miss Allie as her teacher, around 1957: "I can remember her really well; I loved her so much. She was more like a grandmother to me than a teacher."

Annette Bradford

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