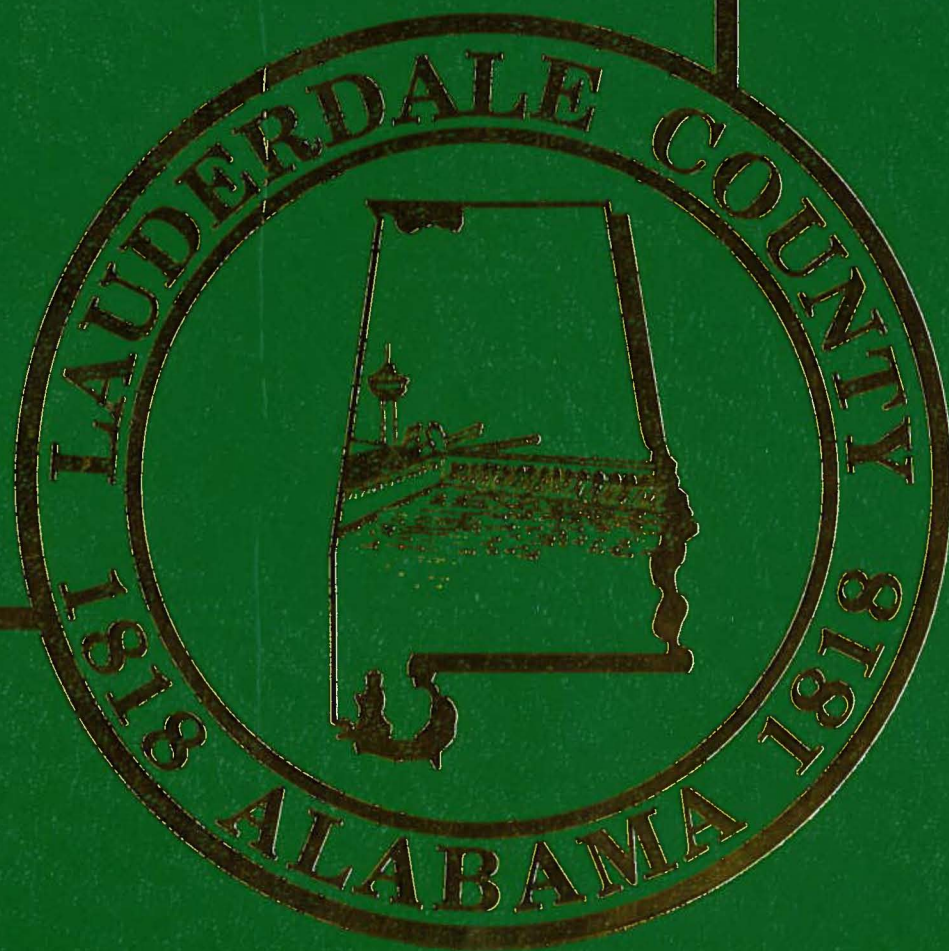
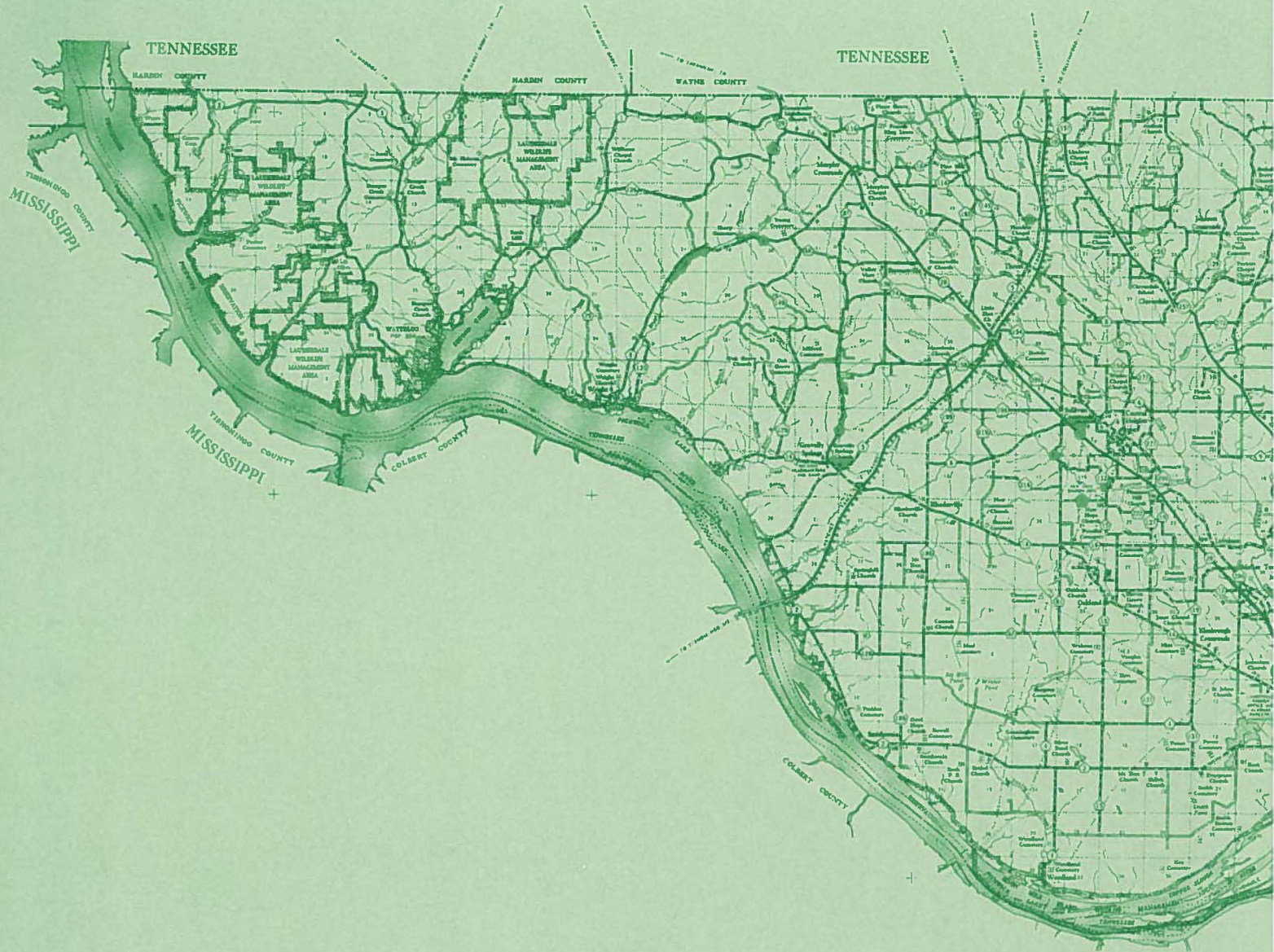


**The Heritage of
Lauderdale
County, Alabama**



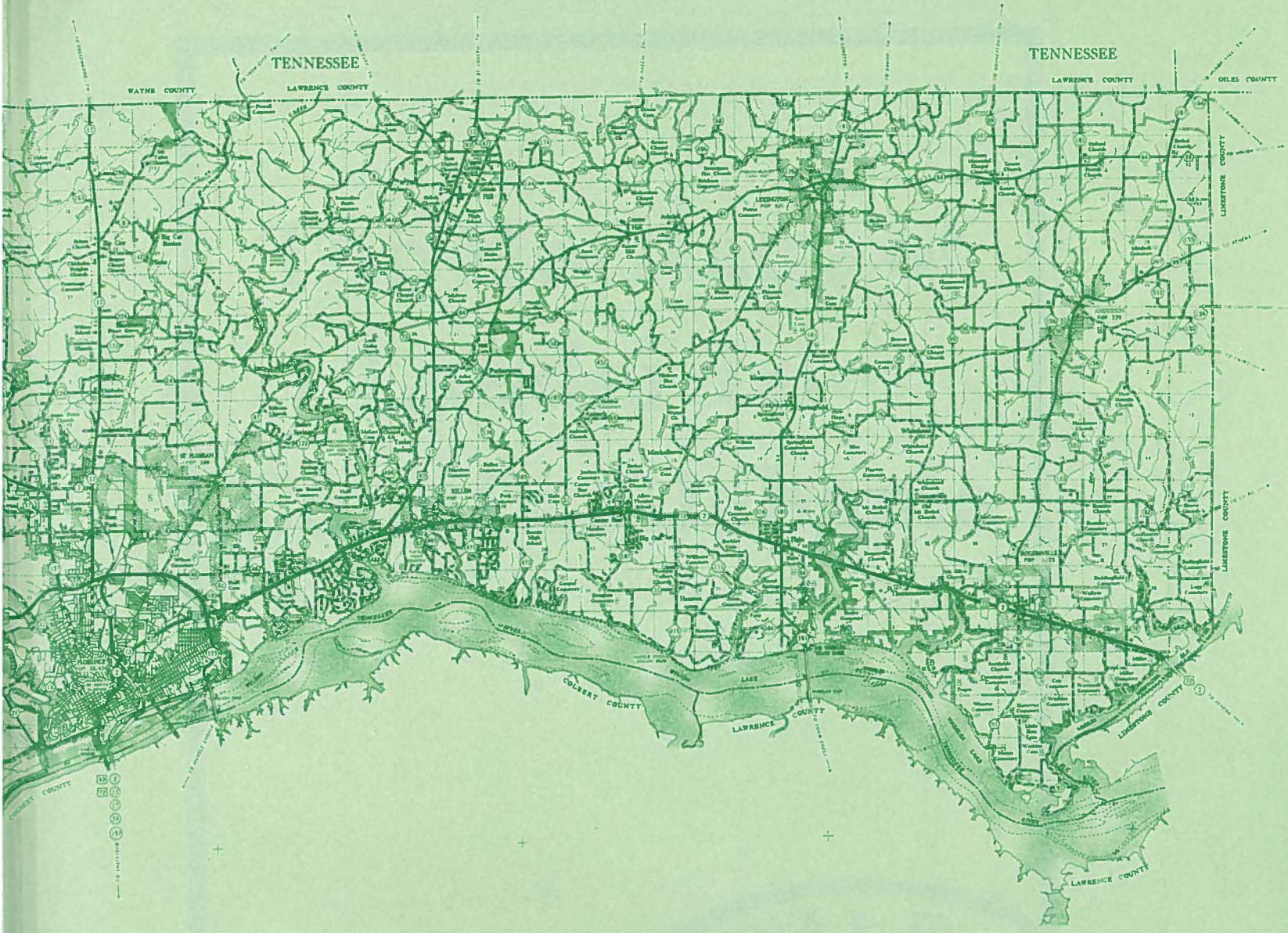


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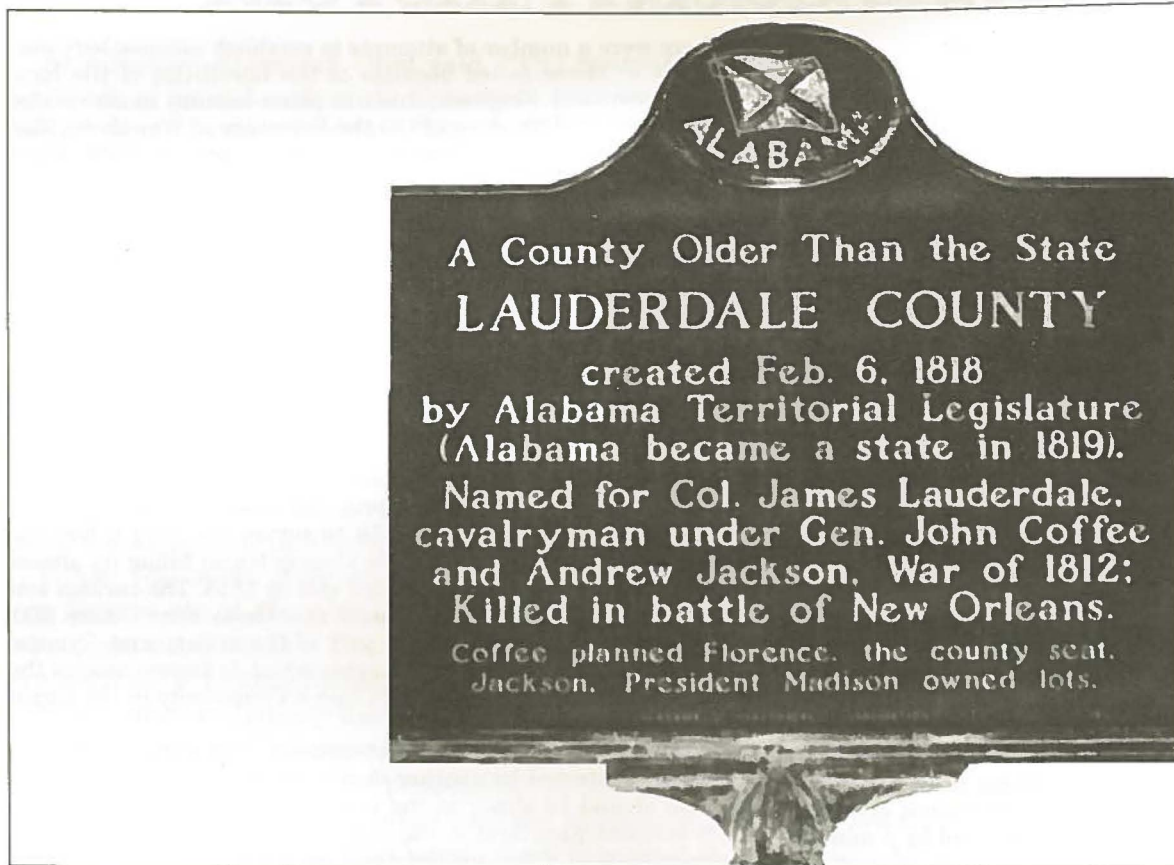


LAUDERDALE COUNTY, ALABAMA

**The Heritage of
Lauderdale
County, Alabama**



Historical Markers Of Lauderdale County



A special thank you goes to Marjorie and E.B. Norton Jr. for undertaking the task of documenting every historical marker in Lauderdale County. They visited each site and transcribed the text as listed on the markers. Marjorie compiled the text and her husband E.B. did the locator maps. We praise them for such a worthwhile endeavor. This is an invaluable addition to our heritage.

1. Indian Mound - Located across from the Museum at the Indian Mound, South Court Street.

Indian Mound

This is the highest domiciliary mound in the Tennessee Valley. It was built about 1200 to 1500 A.D. by Indians of the Mississippian Culture. Such mounds served as bases for ceremonial temples or chiefs' houses. This one was originally encircled by an eastern wall and there were villages and cultivated fields nearby. Height: 242 feet, width at base: 180 feet.

2. John McKinley's Home Site - Located at the intersection of Seminary Street and Veterans Drive.

John McKinley

John McKinley (1780-1852), native of Virginia, prominent attorney, member of Cypress Land Company, built a large three story mansion near this site in 1820s which later burned. McKinley served in Alabama legislature, U.S. Senate (1829-31) U.S. House (1833-1839) was appointed Associate Justice United States Supreme Court by President Van Buren. Served 1839-52. Died in Louisville, Ky.

3. Dr. Hicks Boulevard - Located at the intersection of Dr. Hicks Boulevard and South Wood Avenue.

Dr. Hicks Boulevard

This boulevard was named in honor of Dr. Leonard Jerry Hicks by the City of Florence in 1981. Dr. Hicks was a prominent black leader of the community and was recognized for his skills as a physician across the State of Alabama. He was born September 20, 1899, at Plant City, Florida, and died September 27, 1973, at Florence. Dr. Hicks' medical office was located near this site.

4. Lauderdale County Marker - Located at the intersection of South Court Street and West Alabama.

Lauderdale County

A County Older than the State
Lauderdale County
Created Feb. 6, 1818
by Alabama Territorial Legislature
(Alabama became a state in 1819)
Named for Col. James Lauderdale, cavalry man
under Gen. John Coffee and Andrew Jackson,

War of 1812; Killed in Battle of New Orleans.
Coffee planned Florence, the county seat.
Jackson, President Madison owned lots.

5. Greater Saint Paul African Methodist Church - Located 141 South Cherokee.

Saint Paul African Methodist Church

(Organized 1879 from earlier 1840 Congregation)

In early 1840's about 14 African-American members from First Methodist formed own congregation "Church Springs" near South Court Street. In 1857, a nearby brick cow shed was converted to its use under Rev. Robin Lightfoot who became a martyr during the Civil War. Site of American Missionary School after Emancipation. Organized as St. Paul AME in 1879. Relocated to Court Alabama Streets in 1895. Charles B. Handy was early pastor William W. Handy was early leader (father and grandfather to C. Handy.) St. Paul relocated again in 1968 to present site.

6. First Presbyterian Church - Located at 224 East Mobile Street.

First Presbyterian Church

(1818)

The Presbyterians organized the first church in Florence purchased this property from the Cypress Land Company in 1818. A sanctuary was erected here in 1824 and James A. Sloss, an Alabama Territory missionary, was installed as the church's permanent minister in 1830. Although the church buildings have undergone several major expansions and renovations (in 1898, following a fire in 1927, in 1957 and in 1968), the present sanctuary occupies the site of the 1824 building — the "mother church" of Florence. In deciding to remain an urban church, this congregation continues its historical presence in the heart of Florence.

7. City of Florence - Located corner of East Mobile and North Court Streets.

City Of Florence

Florence was surveyed for the Cypress Land Company in 1826 by Ferdinand Sannoner and named for the famous capital of Virginia. The county seat of Lauderdale County, it was first incorporated in 1826. Located at the foot of Muscle Shoals, it became

thriving agriculture and commercial center with light industry and significant religious, educational, and medical institutions. During the Civil War, Florence was occupied by both armies at various times. The Tennessee Valley Authority with Wilson and Wheeler Dams contributed to further economic development.

8. Southall Drugs -Located at the intersection of North Court Street and West Mobile Street.

Southall Drugs

Charles Morton Southall (1864-1952) constructed this Commercial Italianate building in 1900 of the finest materials for his wholesale/retail drug business. The elegant interior by Charles Hester, New York City, contained the area's first rubber tile floor. In addition to health wares, window glass, paints, seeds, musical instruments and other sundries were dispensed. The building remained a pharmacy until 1979. In 1982 it was renovated by the Southall family and Byron Bower for combined commercial/residential use with John Mott, AIA, Fort Smith, Arkansas, architect. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

9. Trinity Episcopal Church -Located at the intersection of West Tuscaloosa and North Pine Street.

Trinity Episcopal Church

1894

Trinity was organized in 1836 by the Rev. Thomas Armstrong Cook at Southwest corner of College and Cedar Streets. Church was consecrated February 23, 1845 by the Rt. Rev. Nicholas Hamner Cobbs. After fire damage in 1893, Trinity was relocated to present site in 1894. First worship service held at this place was on Easter 1895. Church was consecrated June 12, 1898 by the Rt. Rev. Richard Hooker Wilmer. The bell is from the original church. Parish House added in 1929; Mullen Hall, and Educational Building erected in 1967.

10. First Methodist Church -Located on East Tuscaloosa Street in front of the Church.

First Methodist Church

1822

Established September 8, 1822 in a log house on the West side of town by Revs. John Cox and John Kerr. Cox and wife Frances Langley had been affiliated with the Wesleys in England. Second meeting place was in Farmer's Cobbler Shop on West Mobile Street. The third house of worship was built at present site in 1827. It was replaced in 1835, and again in 1904 with a brick structure that burned in 1920. Present church was built in 1924 and renovated in 1968.

11. Sannoner Historic District- Located on Court Street just north of Hermitage Drive.

Sannoner Historic District

Named for Ferdinand Sannoner, who surveyed the town of Florence for the Cypress Land Company in 1818, the district contains twenty-five structures on North Court and North Pine Streets. Wealthy planters, lawyers and merchants occupied the six fine antebellum homes. Courtview (1855), Gov. Edward Asbury O'Neal (1850's), Irvine Place (1843), Conner Place (1854), Wakefield (1820's) and Hickory Place (James Irvine's House 1832.) Other structures date from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

12. Medical Arts Building -Located in front of the Medical Arts Building on Court Street just north of intersection of Court Street and Tuscaloosa Street.

Sannoner Historic District

Medical Arts Building

Built in 1926 in the Spanish Revival Architectural style, this is the first structure in Florence erected with a steel skeleton supporting the floors, walls, and roof. The framework is strong enough to support two more stories than were actually built. The building was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

13. Edward O'Neal Home -Located on North Court Street near the entrance to the University of North Alabama campus.

Home of the Father-Son Governors

Built in 1840s, acquired 1857 by Edward Asbury O'Neal. Occupied various times during Civil War by Federals and Confederates. Edward O'Neal (1818-1890) attended LaGrange College; lawyer, Colonel of the 26th Alabama Regiment C.S.A.; appointed brigadier general, Governor 1882-1886. Emmet O'Neal (1853-1922) lawyer, Governor 1911-1915, lived in nearby Courtview.

14. Courtview, Rogers Hall -Located in front of Rogers Hall on University of North Alabama campus.

Courtview, Rogers Hall

1855

George Washington Foster, planter, built this Greek Revival mansion. An act of the legislature was required to close Court Street. In fall of 1864 it was headquarters of Nathan B. Forrest, General, CSA. Foster's daughter, Sarah Independence McDonald and her family, lived here until 1900 when it became the home of Governor Emmet O'Neal. In 1922 it was acquired by Thomas M. Rogers, Sr., and in 1948 by the University of North Alabama.

Listed: Historic American Buildings Survey National Register of Historic Places.

15. Locust Dell Academy -Located on the campus of University of North Alabama in front of Willingham Hall.

Locust Dell Academy

1834-1843

On this site Nicholas Marcellus Hentz conducted a girls' school. Native of Metz, France, Hentz was a painter, entomologist, author, and was once a professor at University of North Carolina. Experimenting with silkworms, he planted groves of mulberry trees around this section of town. His wife, Caroline Lee Whiting Hentz, native of Massachusetts, assisted in the academy. She also wrote plays, poems, stories, popular novels, and a significant diary of her years in Florence.

16. Florence State Teacher College -Located in front of Wesleyan Hall on the University of North Alabama.

Florence State Teacher College

Oldest state-supported teacher college south of Ohio R. 1830-opened as LaGrange College (Methodist) at nearby Leighton. 1855 moved here and renamed Florence Wesleyan University. Flourished until closed by war in 1865. 1872 deeded to State by Church. Became Florence State Normal School 1929- Present name adopted-1974.

17. Wesleyan Hall -Located in front of Wesleyan Hall on the University of North Alabama.

Wesleyan Hall

1855

Chartered 1856 as Florence Wesleyan University, R.H. Rivers, President. Regarded as North Alabama's most eminent landmark, this Gothic Revival structure was designed by Adolphus Heiman, Nashville, and built by Zebulon Pike Morrison, Florence, as new home for LaGrange College (organized 1830 by Methodists. Used by both armies at various times during Civil War. Deeded to State of Alabama, 1872, as first co-educational teacher training institution south of Ohio River. School expanded to become University of North Alabama in 1974. Listed: National Register of Historic Places.

18. Jackson's Military Road -Located at the intersection of North Seminary Street and Hermitage Drive in front of Pope's Tavern.

Jackson's Military Road

Shortened by 200 miles the route from Nashville to New Orleans for movement of supply wagons and artillery. Built with U.S. funds and troops. Followed in part Doublehead's Road from Columbia, Tenn. to Muscle Shoals. After 1819 mail route was transferred from Natchez Trace to pass through Florence via Military Road. A portion of Hood's Army followed this road to Franklin and Nashville in 1864. In later years called Jackson Highway.

19. Wood Avenue Historic District (2) Located at the intersection of North Wood Avenue and East Tuscaloosa Street and at the intersection of North Wood Ave. and West Hawthorne Street.

Wood Avenue Historic District

A residential neighborhood primarily developed between 1880 and 1930. The District contains elaborate Queen Anne, classic Georgian Revival and the more modest Bungalow styles of architecture as well as two homes of the Plantation Cottage style dating back from the 1820's. Notable residents of Wood Avenue. formerly Market Street, were Tom Stribling, Pulitzer Prize winning author, George Goethals, Chief Engineer of the Panama Canal and Helen Keller, who resided on Wood Avenue while attending public school. The neighborhood has experienced very little change since the early 1900's.

20. Wood Avenue Church of Christ - Located at the intersection of East Tuscaloosa Street and North Wood Avenue.

Wood Avenue Church Of Christ
1886

The oldest Church of Christ in the central Florence area, this congregation began meeting in the home of Susan Thrasher, NE corner of Court and Tuscaloosa Street in 1886. Met at various rented places until September 1890, when building was completed at SW corner of Poplar and Tombigbee Streets. Moved to present location at NE corner of Wood Avenue and Tuscaloosa Street March 1, 1970 upon completion of new building. This congregation has played a significant role in the expansion of the Church of Christ throughout many parts of the world.

21. Walnut Street Historic District -2- Located at the intersection of North Walnut Street and Hermitage Drive and at North Walnut and East Tuscaloosa Streets.

Walnut Street Historic District

Walnut Street began as a residential area in the national boom of the 1880s and 1890s and continued its development through the 1920s. Industries and businesses grew in Florence, the population of the city increased, and business and professional people built their homes in this typical residential neighborhood. The street remains intact and reflects the changes in architectural styles from 1890s. Victorian to the 1920s bungalow. The district was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.

22. The Grave of "Mountain" Tom Clark - Located adjacent to Florence Cemetery on East Tennessee Street.

The Grave Of "Mountain" Tom Clark

Near the center of Tennessee Street lies the remains of Tom Clark, a notorious leader of one of a number of outlaw gangs who terrorized helpless citizens during the Civil War. Clark and two companions were removed from the local jail and hanged by outraged townspeople. He confessed to having murdered 18 people and a child. Graves were dug in a nearby field, but someone remembered hearing Clark boast that "nobody will ever run over Tom Clark." Therefore, they buried him here so that all who passed by would run over Tom Clark.

23. Florence Cemetery - Located at the main entrance to the cemetery from Dr. Hicks Boulevard.

Florence Cemetery
1818

When the city was surveyed this land described as "outside the city limits" was designated as the burying grounds for the new town. It contains the graves of early settlers, including a son and brother of Ferdinand Sannoner, Surveyor of Florence, and served as the principal cemetery for over 130 years. Two former Governors in the O'Neal family, as well as many prominent community leaders and families, are interred here. "Soldier's Rest", a Confederate Cemetery, is located near the south property line.

24. Sweetwater - Located at the corner of Florence Boulevard and Hough Road. Home of John Brahan

Sweetwater
1828

Home of Major John Brahan, veteran of War of 1812, Major General, Alabama Militia, who owned 4,000 acres here. Built of brick made on this place, marble mantels imported from Italy. Boxwood hedge from London. Named for spring nearby. Federal and Confederates quartered here during Civil War. Home of Brahan's son-in-law, Governor Robert M. Patton 1865-1867.

25. Soldier's Rest - Located in the rear of South Section of the Florence Cemetery.

Soldier's Rest
1862

This area is the military cemetery for Confederate Soldiers. After an 1862 skirmish in the streets of Florence, it was used to bury casualties until the end of the Civil War. Many unknown Confederates and a few unknown Union Soldiers rest here. After the war it was reserved for Confederate veterans and their families. In 1977 this historic plot was deeded by United Daughters of the Confederacy to insure its preservation and perpetual care.

26. East Florence Historic District - Located on Royal Avenue north of the East Florence business district.

East Florence Historic District

The East Florence business area began in the industrial boom of the 1880s and 1890s and continued its development through the

1920s. The small locally owned firms, some in the third generation of ownership, were established to serve the growing population employed in the industries of the area. The district contains twelve buildings of historical and architectural significance, including a home, drug store, grocery, bank, cafe, fire station, and railroad depot.

27. Maud Lindsay - Located at Maud Lindsay Kindergarten near Brandon Elementary School in East Florence.

Maud McKnight Lindsay

(Erected by the Maud Lindsay Kindergarten Club.)

Maud McKnight Lindsay

May 13, 1874-May 30, 1941

Born in Tuscumbia, Lived in Sheffield Daughter of Robert Burns Lindsay, Governor of Alabama 1870-72. Teacher of Alabama first kindergarten-1898 Ranks as one of the greatest kindergarten teachers in the world. Author of 14 books for children. Maud Lindsay was close friend of Helen Keller.

The Florence Free Kindergarten

Established September 3, 1898

Founded through the efforts of

Miss Loulie Jones

Mrs. John R. Price

Mr. Frank Jackson

Mr. Thomas Phillips

Teacher-Miss Maud McKnight Lindsay

Teacher, Writer, Philanthropist

28. Florence Wagon Works - Located on the corner of Richards Street and Veterans Drive.

Florence Wagon Works

Moved here from Atlanta in 1889, this industry made Florence a household word throughout the South. It was the largest wagon factory in the South, reportedly second largest in U.S., with 175 employees and annual production of 15,000 wagons. World War I army wagons were made here and sent all over U.S. and to France. The automobile caused gradual reduction in activity. The firm was liquidated in 1930s.

29. Muscle Shoals Canal - Located in downtown Killen at the intersection of U.S. Highway 72 East and Lock Six Road.

Muscle Shoals Canal
1836-1918

Lock Six, headquarters of Muscle Shoals Canal, was located 1.3 miles south of here. An 1836 attempt to bypass the shoals proved unsuccessful. On Nov. 10, 1890, the canal from Rogersville to Florence was successfully completed. The river fell 85 feet in 14½ miles requiring nine locks. Canal was closed in 1918, and later covered by backwaters from Wilson and Wheeler Dams. Jesse James robbed the U.S. payroll near lock six in 1881.

Erected by

Brooks High School Classes 1992-1993

30. Kennedy Gun Factory - Located on US Hwy 43 near old Jackson Road at Green Hill.

Kennedy Gun Factory
(1823-1837)

The famous Kennedy Long Rifle was introduced at Philadelphia during the Revolutionary War by Alexander Kennedy who fled to Moore County, N.C., when the British invaded. About 1823 his son David moved the factory to Green Hill, Alabama, locating 400 yards east of the Tabernacle Cemetery. Green Hill became an early gun manufacturing center with the advent of other gunsmiths: McDonalds, Garners, Stutts, Keys, Higgins, Richardsons, Davidsons, and Myricks. Property willed to the City of Florence by Hiram Kennedy Douglass, a Kennedy descendant, became the Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts. Marker erected 1992 by the Florence Historical Board and the Kennedy-Douglass Trust.

31. Lone Cedar Church of Christ located between Green Hill and Shoals Creek on Highway 47 North.

Lone Cedar Church Of Christ
1898

Christians first met here in a log building which also served as a schoolhouse. In 1909 a frame building was constructed. Because of a single cedar tree in prominent view, it was given the name Lone Cedar by Wilbert M. (Will) Behel, an early dedicated gospel preacher. In 1938 a more modern stone building was completed by these diligent Christians. A larger auditorium was added in 1977. The early Christian meeting place soon became a landmark and a vital part of the Greenhill Community.

32. Center Star Methodist Church -Located on US Highway 72 East at Center Star Community.

Center Star Methodist Church
1818

Earliest Methodist Church congregation in Lauderdale County, AL. Organized June, 1818 near mouth of Bluewater Creek by circuit riders and became part of Richland Circuit of Giles County, TN. Church later move to Center Star (Originally known as Masonville) and named Driskel's Chapel until circa 1893, then relocated one mile east and renamed Center Star Methodist. Six locations have been used by congregation since organized. (Alabama Historical Association 1974)

33. Gabriel Butler -Located on County Road (first road west of Bluewater Creek Bridge on US Highway 72 East).

Gabriel Butler Cemetery
Circa 1809

Gabriel Butler was one of the earliest settlers in Lauderdale County (shown in 1809 Chief Doublehead's reserve tenant list). Born 1779 in South Carolina died 1856 and buried with 11 of his descendants within these walls hewn by slaves from nearby cliffs. Believed to be earliest cemetery in County. His pioneer home located on hill across from Cemetery. (Erected 1984)

34. French-Glover Farm- Located north of the intersection of County Road 48 and 136.

French-Glover Farm

Revolutionary War Veteran Benjamin French (1764-1847), a native of Virginia, is buried at this site. Arriving in Limestone County, Alabama, about 1808, French acquired this farm in 1837. The nearby spring is site of prehistoric Indian village and Civil War encampments. The two-story log house, originally located three miles southwest of this place, is believed to have been constructed as early as 1829. It was moved here by the Glover family prior to 1913. This road was part of the early Pulaski Pike, a major stage coach and supply route that connected the river at Florence with Pulaski, Tennessee. (Marker erected by Darrell and Kimberley Glover)

35. Gov. Hugh McVay -Located on Cox Creek Parkway in front of Mars Hill Brookstore.

Gov. Hugh McVay
Home Site and Cemetery

McVay (1766-1851), South Carolina native, built a three room log house at head of Cox Creek about 1818. Community later called Mars Hill. He was member of Mississippi Territorial Legislature, delegate to convention of 1819 which framed Alabama's first constitution. For many years member of Alabama House and Senate. Briefly Governor in 1837. Buried near his home.

36. Larimore House -Located on Mars Hill Road off Cox Creek Parkway.

Larimore Home 1870

Built by Theophilus Brown Larimore and his wife Esther Gresham Larimore, as a home and educational center. Near site of foundry and arsenal of War Between the States, it served as a school, 1871-1877, to train ministers and Christian workers of the Church of Christ. Used 1947-1968 for classes by Mars Hill School. Restored in 1971 by Associated Women Association. Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

37. Gen. John Coffee- Located on Cloverdale Road 300 feet from the intersection at Cox Creek Parkway.

General John Coffee
Home Site and Grave

Cavalry Commander under Andrew Jackson through War of 1812: (Creek War, Pensacola, New Orleans) Negotiated many treaties ceding Indians' lands to U.S. Made original survey of Tennessee Valley. (Alabama Historical Association 1953)

38. New Hope Church of Christ -Located on County Road 14, two miles off Savannah Highway, Southwest of Central Community.

New Hope Church Of Christ
1875

Originally the Concordia Church of Christ, this congregation was established in 1875 as W.B. Young traveled from Bethel-Berry to preach at the old Burcham Valley School House. Name later changed to New Hope Church of Christ. First building constructed in 1903 on land donated by William Brown Parrish and other early members. Building was rebuilt in 1913 following storm damage. Men and women who have made outstanding contributions to churches and communities throughout the world had their roots in this congregation.

39. Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church and Cemetery- Located 1064 Highway 15 in Central Community.

Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church And Cemetery

Church organized in 1819; First Cemetery Burial in 1819-One of earliest Methodist Congregations in area, this Church was organized by local preacher, Rev. Alexander Faires, in a log school built in 1816. Land donated in 1818 for Church and Cemetery by Henry Kirkpatrick. Additional lands donated in 1841 by Hiram and Eva Rhodes, and in 1911 and 1914 by John and Amanda Wesson and L.D. Simmons. First and second log structures were destroyed by fires. A frame building was erected in 1885. First service in present sanctuary was February 6, 1966. Cemetery listed on Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

40. Macedonia Church of Christ - Located near County Road 5 and near the intersection of Natchez Trace Parkway and Alabama Highway 20.

Macedonia Church Of Christ

Tracing its roots to the early 1800s, the Macedonia Baptist Church originally met in homes with Joseph Fanning, visiting evangelist. In 1834, J.W. Smith supervised a building on this site. In 1880 T.B. Larimore, an evangelist among Churches of Christ, was asked to preach. The group then changed its name to Macedonia Church of Christ. This Church has made a powerful local and world-wide impact. Its adjoining cemetery is the resting place for many of the county's beloved sons and daughters.

41. Wilson Headquarters and Camp -Located on County Road 14 at Gravelly Springs between Florence and Waterloo.

Wilson's Headquarters And Camp
Winter, 1865

Maj. Gen. James Harrison Wilson, U.S. Army, assembled the largest cavalry force ever amassed in the Western Hemisphere at this site from mid-January to March 22, 1865. Wilson's headquarters was at the Houston Plantation about 200 yards south of here. Five divisions totaling 22,000 men were camped from Gravelly Springs to Waterloo. After intensive training Wilson's Cavalry crossed the river on March 22, 1865, to invade South Alabama and Georgia. This operation included the burning of the University of Alabama and the capture of President Jefferson Davis at Irwinville, Georgia on May 10, 1865.

42. Town of Waterloo -Located on County Road 14 at the entrance to the town.

Waterloo

Settled in 1819, established in 1824, and incorporated in 1832. One of Alabama's oldest incorporated towns, Waterloo was an important river port during the steamboat era. Large boats from Louisville, Cincinnati, and other places would unload here; smaller crafts were used to transport goods and passengers up river to Florence during low water seasons. Following a disastrous flood in 1847, the town was relocated to its present site. It was shelled by Union gunboats in July 1862. On November 1, 1863, General William T. Sherman crossed the river here and made his temporary headquarters in the home of Dr. O.B. Sullivan. These markers were erected after the maps were completed.

43. Trail of Tears-Located in the Town of Waterloo.

Thousands of Cherokee Indians passed through Waterloo in the 1830's when they were forced by the U.S. Government to move west on the "Trail of Tears". Most came by boat from Tuscumbia and camped here to await transfer to larger steamboats. During the encampment, several births, deaths and escapes occurred.

One party of 1070 Cherokees traveled over land from Ross' Landing in Tennessee due to low water in the upper river. Following the general route of U.S. Hwy #72 to Florence, they arrived here on July 10, 1838, in miserable condition after a 23-day journey.

About 17,000 Cherokees were driven from their homeland in the Southern Appalachian Mtns. Most traveled by land through Tennessee and on to Oklahoma. Great suffering and about 4000 deaths occurred along the trail, especially during the Winter of 1838-39.

44. Edith Newman Culver Museum- Located in the town of Waterloo.

1872-1995

The Newman House was restored in 1995 and presented to the citizens of Waterloo by Ezra Lee Culver. Built in 1872 by Hiram L. and Julia Ann Young Richardson, this house was purchased in 1918 by Joseph Newman, a native of Ohio and U.S. veteran of the Civil War. His son, Clark Lytle Newman with his wife, Eunice Lindsey Newman, became the next owners. Their daughter, Edith

was reared here from her childhood until her marriage. The house remained in the Newman family until its dedication as a museum on October 14, 1995.

45. Andrew Lee Phillips- Located in the town of Lexington.

Descended from early Lauderdale County pioneers, Andrew Lee Phillips established a general merchandise store here in 1888. Later, he operated a gin and grist mill and was a co-owner of the flour mill. In 1917, he was responsible for the city's first bank and served as its first president. A member of the County Board of Education, he gave the land, manufactured and donated the bricks, and provided one-fourth of funds to build the local school. He also donated the land for the Lexington United Methodist Church.

46. Seminary -O'Neal Historic District- Located on North Seminary Street behind Pope's Tavern.

Named for the O'Neal family which produced two Alabama governors and for Seminary the street on which Synodical Female College was located, the Seminary -O'Neal Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. Built between 1908 and 1943, the houses in the district reflect the variety of architectural styles of those years. Two Sears-Roebuck houses called "American Four Squares", add interest and distinction. The district opens onto the impressive campus of the University of North Alabama.

47. College Place Historic District -(2) Located at the corner of Willingham Road and Sherrod Avenue and the corner of Willingham Road and Lelia Street.

The land on which this district rests was part of the 1818 sale by the Cypress Land Company which established the City of Florence. During the Civil War Confederate soldiers constructed breastworks here for the defense of Florence. House construction began in 1907 and thirty-three were built before 1929. This lovely neighborhood contains fine examples of Prairie, Mission, and English Tudor architecture but the Bungalow style dominates. A tour of the district reveals the excellent condition of the homes, the tree-lined streets, and the comfortable life available here. The neighborhood was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.

48. Major General George Washington Goethal's Home- Located at 629 North Wood Avenue.

1888-1907

The great engineering genius of the Panama Canal lived at this site from 1888 until 1907. As a young lieutenant, Goethal was sent to Florence to speed up the work on the Muscle Shoals Canal Project which effectively by-passed the serious river impediment known as the Muscle Shoals. His successful accomplishments here were considered as an apprenticeship that led to his renowned work in the building of the Panama Canal (1908-1914). Goethals later remarked that his work on the Muscle Shoals loomed far larger in his memory than the canal in Panama.

49. First Baptist Church- Located on Tombigbee Street near the intersection at Wood Avenue.

1888

On May 27, 1888, this church was established at the Courthouse after a sermon at the State Normal College. Its initial name was First Missionary Baptist, but in 1910 it became First Baptist. The Florence Land Company gave property, and a building was erected and occupied in 1890. That building burned in 1909; only the piano, the pulpit Bible, a pulpit chair and the communion service survived. Dedication for the next building occurred in September 1910. A new building was constructed in 1963.

50. The Greater Mount Moriah Primitive Baptist Church - Located at 821 West Irvine Ave.

1896

The congregation first met in home of Mrs. Betsy Key. Organized as "Fairgrounds Church" in 1896 at nearby site of early Florence Racetrack and Fairgrounds, with Andy Sloss as pastor. Later, the church was moved to Irvine Avenue (formerly Fish-Trap Road.) Mrs. Mary Ola Key was given honor of naming the church "Mount Moriah." The adjoining lot was purchased and church rebuilt in 1924, with C.A. Crump as pastor. In 1924, the building was remodeled and another addition erected under David Tolbert as pastor. The Family Life Center was completed in 1997 with Leroy Sawyer, pastor, and Wayne Stanley, Chairman.

51. Prehistoric Native Americans- Located in McFarland Park near the boat harbor.

(Circa 8,000 B.C. - 1500 A.D.)

(Side 1)

This area near the mouth of Cypress Creek was inhabited by Archaic People as early as 8,000 B.C. Their main food consisted of freshwater mollusks from the river. (These mussels were the origin of the name Muscle Shoals.) The Woodland and Copena Cultures, associated with the nearby large Florence Mound, arrived around 2,000 B.C. and remained almost 3,000 years. About 800 A.D. The Mississippian Civilization established villages here and on adjoining islands. Many of the Indian mounds in the Tennessee Valley were built by them.

(Marker sponsored by the Tennessee Valley Authority, Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, the City of Florence.)

(Side 2)

Historic Native Americans

(Circa 1500-A.D.- 1816 A.D.)

For almost 300 years this area was the home of people known as the Historic Indians. The first were the Euchees from the Great Lakes area. They were soon ousted by the Shawnees from the Ohio River. The Shawnees were evicted in 1715 A.D. by the Cherokees and Chickasaws. The Cherokees signed away their rights to this area in 1806. The Chickasaws held their claim until the Treaty of 1816. In the summer of 1778, a skirmish occurred nearby between a party of Creeks and a company of militia from Nashville. The Chief Bigfoot was killed.

(Marker sponsored by the Tennessee Valley Authority, Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, the City of Florence.)

52. Downtown Florence Historic District- Located at the corner of Court Street and Tennessee Street.

From the time Florence was established in 1818, a slow but steady growth occurred. In the late 1880s the town's population increased by 500 percent as an industrial boom began. This area became the core of the business district. Most of the structures within this district were constructed between 1880 and 1920. This district was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.

53. Wood Avenue Historic District Expansion- Located on the corner of Hawthorne Street and Meridian Street.

1850-1943

Joining the Wood Avenue Historic District, this residential area is composed of 51 structures dating from 1850 to 1943. The architectural styles in this expansion area range from late-Victorian to bungalow, with an unusually fine collection of bungalows. Union General Don Carlos Buell occupied Florence in July 1862. His troops were camped on the grounds surrounding the home of Benjamin Foster, a local industrialist, once located between Hawthorne Street and North Wood Avenue. Nearby Civil War defense earthworks survived the war for a number of years. The Malone Home on Hawthorne Street was used as a military hospital during the Civil War.

54. Cherry Street Historic District- Located on Cherry Street near the corner of Cherry Street and Hermitage Drive.

(early 20th Century)

Placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997, this district contains 52 structures, most were built after 1900. Cherry Street was laid out in 1818 near the east boundary of Florence. Pulitzer Prize winner, Thomas Sigismund Stribling portrayed Cherry Street in his novel, *The Store*. Angel's Corner, at Cherry and Tuscaloosa Streets was named for the James H. Angel Grocery Store which was established about 1905. This was a popular streetcar stop during the era of the streetcars.

55. Church Spring Church And School- Located on Spring Street between Pine Street and Court Street.

(Circa 1840- 1895)

About 1849, African-Americans began holding religious services in a brick cow shed overlooking the town spring near this site. It was purchased in 1857 by the local Methodists for this congregation, with Robin Lightfoot, a slave as its pastor. In 1879 it was organized as St. Paul's African-American Methodist Episcopal Church. Children of slaves and free men were taught here in early years. In 1866, the Freedmen's Bureau established a school for the children of African-Americans, probably at this location.

56. St. Joseph Catholic Church- Located at the Church on Plum Street.

1898

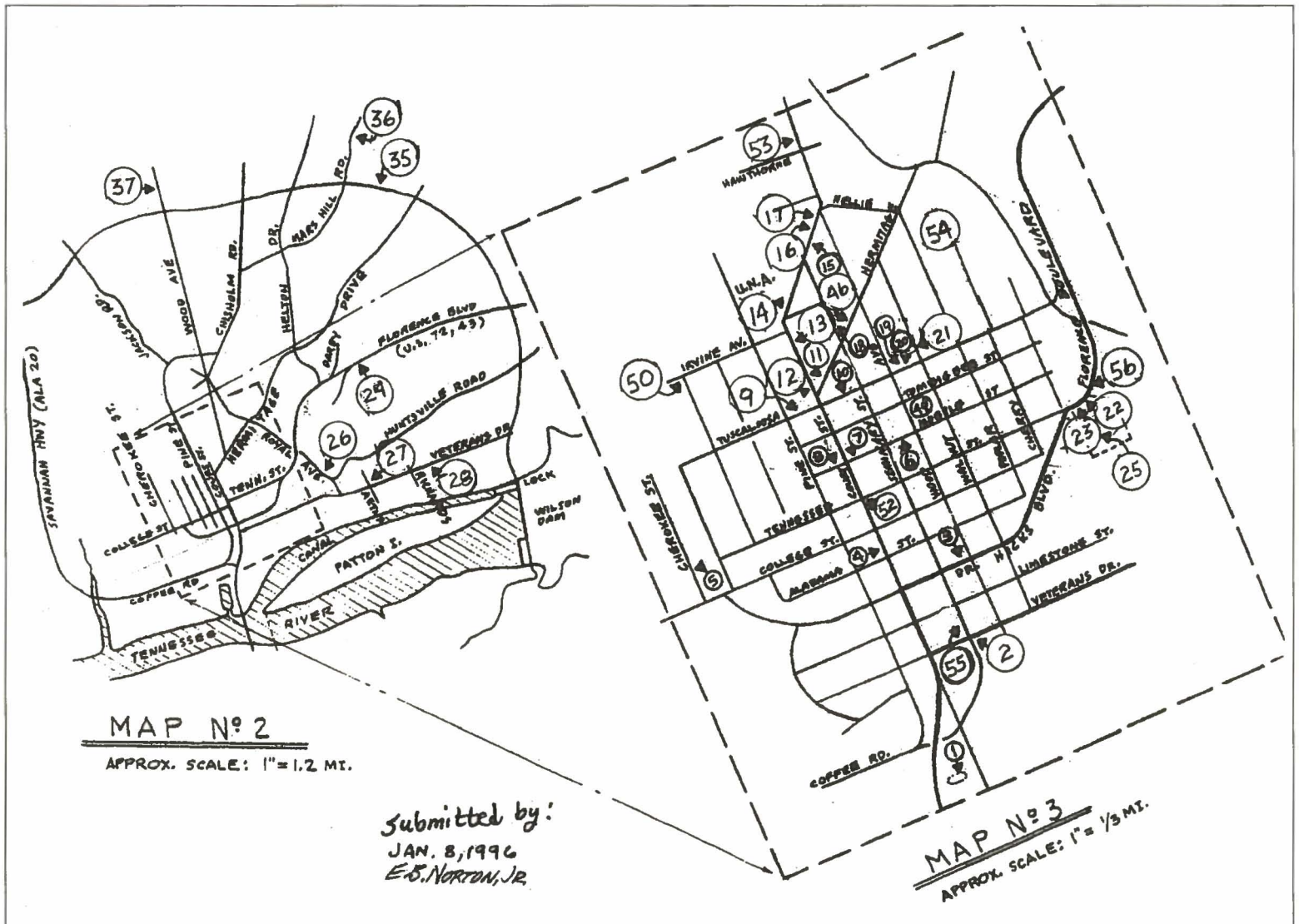
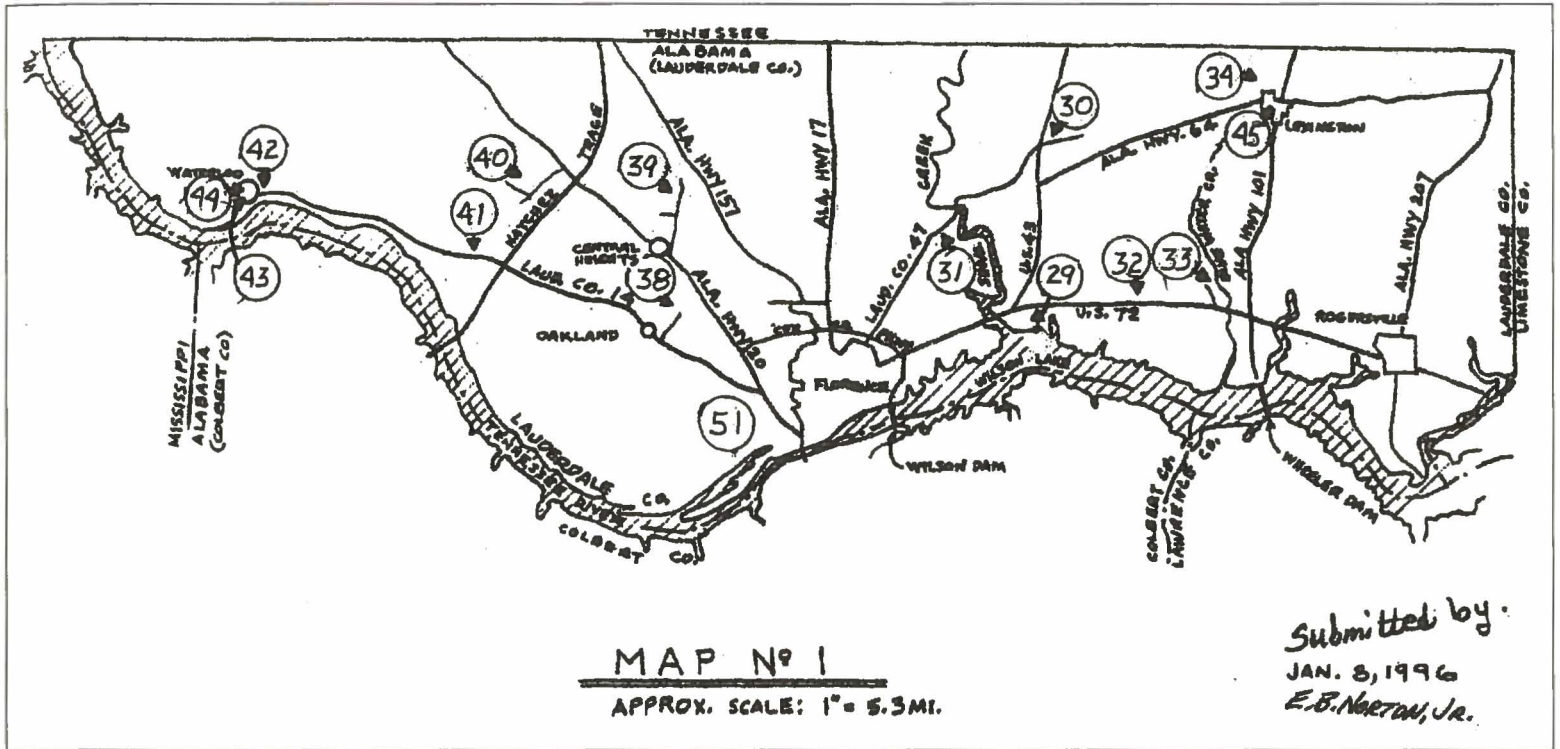
Florence Roman Catholics established their first church here in 1898 with Gammelbert Brunner, OSB, as pastor. They earlier met in private homes attended by visiting priests. Churches in Tusculumbia and St. Florian served the Shoals at large. The ordinal wooden church and its school were the center of the surrounding Catholic Hill neighborhood for seventy-five years. A brick church replaced the wooden building in 1974. When founded, St. Joseph

Church and school mainly served the working class areas of East Florence. In time, it became the chief religious and educational center for area Catholics.

Florence Historical Board Members will place in the near future three new historical markers. First, a site near the Agri Center in

East Florence marks where confederate fortifications for defense of the city stood. Second, the Water Tower on Seymore Street. Third, the site of General Hood's crossing of the Tennessee River after the Battle of Franklin.

Submitted by: Majorie Norton



Alabama Governors From Lauderdale County

Hugh McVay

Lauderdale County has been the home of five of Alabama's governors. The first of these was Hugh McVay. Born in South Carolina, he came to Alabama in 1807, settling in what was to become Madison County. He represented Madison County in the Territorial Legislature of Mississippi before moving to Lauderdale County. He established his home at the head of Cox Creek at Mars Hill. In 1820, McVay was elected to the lower house of the state legislature and in 1825 to the Senate. From 1836 until 1844 he was president of the Senate. It was during this period that he served as the state's chief executive. When Governor Clement C. Clay resigned, in June 1837, to become a United States Senator, McVay, because of his position as president of the Senate, performed the duties of the office of governor until Governor Bagby was inaugurated in December.

McVay was a planter and a Democrat. He was married first to Polly Hawks, with whom he had nine children. After her death, he moved to Lauderdale County. His second marriage was to Sophia Davidson, from whom he was later divorced. He died in 1851 in Lauderdale County and was buried near his home at Mars Hill in the family cemetery.

Robert Miller Patton

The 20th governor of Alabama was Robert Miller Patton. Patton was born July 10, 1809 in Russell County, Virginia. His father, William Patton, came to America from Londonderry, Ireland to Virginia and then on to Huntsville Alabama, where he helped found the first cotton mill there at Bell Factory. Robert Patton attended Green Academy in Huntsville and then worked in a commercial house to learn the business. He moved to Florence in 1829, where he started a mercantile business. He was also a planter, he owned more than 4,000 acres. He was very active in the First Presbyterian Church of Florence; he served for many years in several capacities there, including elder.

A Whig, he was first elected to public office in 1832. He served in the state legislature while the Capitol was in Tuscaloosa and continuously thereafter until the beginning of the Civil War. A member of the national convention which met in Charleston, South Carolina and of the state convention which voted to secede from the Union, Patton was opposed to secession, believing it would cause war. Once the decision was made, however, he was a staunch supporter of the Southern cause. In 1865 Patton was Lauderdale County's representative to the Constitutional Convention. That same year he was elected Governor of Alabama, a post he served very well and with considerable difficulty, until he was displaced under the Reconstruction Acts of Congress in 1868. He then became a railroad executive but remained active in public affairs. He aided in rebuilding the University of Alabama, which had been burned by Union troops. He served as trustee for several schools, including the University of Alabama, Missouri State University, Florence Synodical College, and Florence State Normal (later to become the University of North Alabama).

Robert Patton married Jane Locke Brahan, daughter of General John Brahan of Huntsville. They became the parents of nine children. Two sons served in the Confederate army: one was killed in the Battle of Shiloh. One daughter married Colonel John D. Weeden, member of a locally prominent family. Patton died at Sweetwater Plantation, which his father-in-law had started and he had completed, and was buried in Huntsville.

George Smith Houston

George Smith Houston became the third Alabama governor from Lauderdale County. Born in Williamson County, Tennessee January 17, 1811, he was the son of David and Hannah Pugh Houston, who came to Lauderdale County in 1821. They settled and built a large home near the Natchez Trace, two miles east of Gravelly Springs. Houston first married Mary Beaty and after her death, married Ellen Irvine, whose mother was first cousin to Ulysses S. Grant.

Houston studied law in Florence and in Kentucky before being admitted to the bar in Florence. He practiced law here and spent time in the state legislature, then was elected as circuit solicitor twice. In 1835 he moved to Athens, Alabama where he was elected to the United States Congress in 1841. He served in the capacity of Congressman until the beginning of the Civil War in 1861. He was governor of the state from 1874 until 1878. Twice elected United

States Senator, he never served in that office. The first time he was elected was during Reconstruction, when he was not allowed to take his seat because of Alabama's stance during the Civil War. He was elected the second time to the seat, but died on December 31, 1879 before assuming the office.

Edward A. O'Neal

The first of the two O'Neals to serve as Alabama governor was Edward Asbury O'Neal. Born September 20, 1818 in Madison County, O'Neal attended LaGrange College, graduating in 1836 with honors. He then studied law in Huntsville and was admitted to the bar in 1840 and set up a practice in Florence. A Methodist and a Mason, he was married to Olivia Moore and the father of nine children.

With a lucrative law practice, Edward O'Neal was elected to the legislature in 1841 to fill a vacancy made when George S. Houston left the post to become a U.S. Congressman. In 1845 he was defeated in his bid for a seat in the 31st Congress. O'Neal joined the Confederate Army as a captain in 1861. He fought in many battles, including Richmond, Yorktown, Williamsburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg, Franklin and Nashville and was wounded several times. He eventually became a brigadier general before returning to Florence after four years in the CSA Army. He returned to the practice of law and in 1874 fought to restore the Democratic party in Alabama. In 1875 he was elected to the Constitutional Convention. He was elected governor in 1882 and reelected in 1886. During his two terms great strides were made for education in the state. Normal schools were begun at Jacksonville and Livingston. The State Department of Agriculture was created and the law passed providing for a geological survey of the state.

He died November 7, 1890 and is buried in Florence Cemetery.

Emmet O'Neal

Emmet O'Neal was the fourth governor to serve the state of Alabama from Lauderdale County. Born September 23, 1853 in Florence, he was the son of Edward Asbury O'Neal and Olivia Moore O'Neal. He was a graduate of Florence Wesleyan University, University of Mississippi and the University of Alabama. He began studying law in his father's law office shortly after his graduation from the University of Alabama and became a partner with his father in 1876. On July 2, 1881 he married Lizzie Kirkman. They had three children.

Emmet O'Neal became noted for his oratory during the 1884 elections, canvassing the state for the Democratic Party. He was chosen a presidential elector in that election, representing the 8th district. In the 1892, he was elected presidential elector from the state at large. President Grover Cleveland appointed him United States Attorney General, a position he held for several years. A leader in the movement for a constitutional convention in 1899-1900, he was a delegate for the 8th district when it met in 1901. In the 1908 presidential election, he traveled extensively, speaking on behalf of William Jennings Bryant. He also served as president of the Alabama Bar Association, a position his father had also held.

Emmet O'Neal was elected to the state's highest office in 1910. He and his family were the first to occupy the governor's mansion. During his term he worked for improvements in the educational system, increasing appropriations for all branches of the public schools. Mining safety laws were passed and child labor laws improved, as well as measures to improve agriculture. He was constantly in demand as a speaker all over Alabama, as well other parts of the United States. After completing his term as governor, he and his family moved to Birmingham, where he was referee in bankruptcy court. He ran for office again in 1920, losing to J.T. Heflin in his bid to assume the U.S. Senate seat left open when John Bankhead died in office. Emmet O'Neal died on September 7, 1922 and was laid to rest in the Florence Cemetery. *Submitted by: Lauderdale County Heritage Book Committee and Written by: Mary Danley Riley*

Lauderdale County Courthouses

The first judge in Lauderdale County, after its organization was William J. Fulton. He also was the first postmaster and later was Territorial Governor in Arkansas and then US Senator for the new state of Arkansas. The first court was held near Cypress Creek at "Col. Puler's place". Very early in Lauderdale County history, a commission was appointed to have a court house built. Nathan Vaught, who is said to have built the court house, reported that James Pursell went to the new town of Florence where he was contracted to build a "cort" house. Upon the death of Mr. Pursell, Vaught saw to the completion of the building. This building was

two stories high with thick walls. The total cost was \$5,700. Of ante-bellum style, this first court house had a wide portico with ten columns and a tall steeple with a cupola containing a clock.

On July 2, 1823, a young Kentucky man, Ralph Hughes, wrote a letter to his brother in Maysville, Kentucky. In the letter, he describes some of his work on the first Lauderdale County Court House. The following are excerpts from this letter. The spelling and grammar are his own:

"I am a working on the court house yet for George I have had a chance of working on all the best work eaver since you left here I mad two of the court house doors and helped to make the other two The four shutters come to one hundred dollars I made two of the clock faces and got out a good part of the circular cornice and hope to frame all the steeple The steeple will be finished in a few weeks It is three story and a half high and every storey sixteen feet high from the ground to the top is upwards of a hundred feet it is given up to be the best frame in the countrey all don by the square rule there is one Mr. Phemester in Mountsterling Ky that is to make the clock in seven months time for which he got one thousand dollars we have a very good shop to work in up sars in the court house"

Later on in the letter, young Hughes gives his account of an adventure he and others had while he was in Florence. "I have exposed myself mor in this county than I eaver did myself before myself and George and several others brought a raft of plank through the muscle shoals for the first that eaver was brought through We went up the river thirty five or forty miles to elk river where we built a raft in the mouth of a small stream that put into elk river which was five miles to tennessee river we finished our raft late in the evening and started we intended as soon as we got to the mouth of the river to stop and camp on the ground but it being dark and the river full of ilands that we could not see and got into the shoals of the river before we new where we was and had no pilot nor stears man Our situation then was very bad a runing through the bushes and ilands that I espectett to slave every minute in the night as it was we got to a little iland and fastened to the bushes and lay on the wet plank all night but we got through the next day safle The shoals is thirty five miles long and part of the way very swift an dangerous."

This first building stood until 1899 when it was demolished and replaced by a new court house. According to tradition, the same foundation was used in the newer, red brick court house, as were all of the columns, four on the Tennessee Street side and six on the Court Street side. A clock also occupied a tower above this building. This second building stood until 1965, when the present court house was constructed one block south of the original one. *Submitted by: Lauderdale County Heritage Book Committee and Written by: Mary Danley Riley, with contributions by Lois Henderson*



Lauderdale County Court House 1822-1899



Lauderdale County Court House 1901-1965

The Military Road

The "Old Military Road", called "Jackson Military Road" by many, was laid out by General Andrew Jackson in 1817 and was built by the US Army with federal funds. It branched out from the Natchez Trace near Columbia, Tennessee and ran in a southwesterly direction. It entered Lauderdale County in the northern part of the county near Green Hill. It continued on through the county coming close to, what was to become, Bailey Springs, through present-day St. Florian, and

on into Florence, past the location of the old Coffee High School and Appleby School and on to Court Street. The road crossed the Tennessee River at the mouth of Cypress Creek.

From the river, the road continued through Tuscomb, Russellville, Pikeville, and Sulligent to Columbus, Mississippi where it continued on a straight course to Madisonville on Lake Ponchartrain, across from New Orleans. It was constructed mainly for military purposes, but was of great benefit to new settlers coming into the area. It was also used by horseback riders carrying the mail. Due to disrepair, by 1824, some sections of the road were abandoned and travelers instead used the Natchez Trace, a few miles west. In Lauderdale County, however, a great deal of land was settled along the route of the road and it continued to be used. During the Civil War, General Hook's army followed the route of the Military Road from Muscle Shoals to Nashville.

In 1916, United States Highway 43, which follows the general route of the Military Road, was named "Jackson Highway". Today, the Military Road is "Hermitage Drive" inside Florence and County Road 47 as it goes through Lauderdale County. It was an important aid in the settlement, growth, and development of the county. *Submitted by: Lauderdale County Heritage Book Committee and Written by: Mary Danley Riley*

Trail Of Tears

President Andrew Jackson passed the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which called for the voluntary removal of all Indians from the eastern United States. Most of the Indians wanted to stay in their homeland here in the south. May of 1838, marked the deadline for voluntary removal. The military was prepared to use force and did so under the command of General Winfield Scott. General Scott ordered the removal of more than 17,000 Cherokees who refused to leave. The process was swift and brutal. Detachments of soldiers arrived at every Cherokee home and drove men, women and children out of their homes with only the clothes on their backs. Many were forced from their cabins at bayonet point. They were placed in concentration camps where conditions were horrendous. Food and supplies were limited and disease was rampant. A great number perished, possibly more than four thousand.

In the end, members of Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole Nations suffered the same fate as the Cherokees. On 17 June 1838, the U.S. Government hired wagon master J.C.S. Hood to transport around 1,070 Native Americans by foot, from Ross Landing in Chattanooga Tennessee, via Jackson County Alabama to Waterloo in Lauderdale County, Alabama. They were marched over land, through North Alabama on a trail that follows closely what is now U.S. Highway 72. So began the Cherokee "Trail of Tears," one of the darkest episodes of relations between the United States and Native Americans.

Upon reaching Waterloo, Alabama, the survivors were in poor condition. They were to be transported by steamboat to west of the Mississippi River, and then over land to Oklahoma. Removal had to be suspended until the river was high enough for navigation. Many died in Waterloo, but others escaped into the surrounding hills. Many residents of North Alabama and Waterloo can trace their Native American ancestry back to those who fled.

The Trail of Teras Motorcycle Ride, held in September, begins at Ross Landing in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The riders travel U.S. Highway 72, closely following the original trail. Over 15,000 motorcycles participated in the 1998 ride. Stops are made in Scottsboro, Jackson County Alabama; Madison, Madison County Alabama; and Florence, Lauderdale County Alabama before ending in Waterloo, Lauderdale County Alabama. Commemoration ceremonies are held in Waterloo to honor the Native Americans who passed through. *Submitted by: Lauderdale County Heritage Book Committee*

A Brief History Of Florence, Alabama

Florence, the seat of Lauderdale County, Alabama, is the largest city at the Muscle Shoals. Its origin goes back to March 12, 1818, when seven trustees of the newly organized Cypress Land Company were issued their charter to establish a town on the 5,515.77 acres of land they had purchased for some \$15.45 per acre. There were two land sales, the first in July, 1818, and the second in 1823. One hundred and eighty people, including General Andrew Jackson, purchased lots during these first five years.

However, the site of a town at Florence is much older. An aboriginal mound on the north bank of the Tennessee River below the city indicates that an advanced civilization lived here some 2000 years ago or earlier.

Florence was laid out by General John Coffee, hero of the War of 1812, and his Italian engineer, Ferdinand Sannoner. The founding fathers were so pleased with the new town that they gave young Sannoner the honor of selecting its name. Remembering the ancient city of Florence, Italy, which was built around the River Arno, he named the new town overlooking the Tennessee River, Florence, Alabama.

The lay-out of the early town indicates that its planners knew what they were doing. The geology of the site shows that Florence is almost surrounded by a palisade of ancient rocks from elevation of about 450 to 500 feet. Parts of this outcropping can be seen in a number of places. The high plateau of the city is mindful of the ancient fortified towns of the Old World. This tableland offered an almost level area for the business district and its elevation helped insure against some of the diseases which normally occur in lower areas along the river bottom. Florence's planners laid out the streets somewhat askew. Its lines vary about 26 degrees running north to south and east to west. One can readily see that planners were guided by the presence of the river below the town. Another unusual feature, when compared to most other cities, is the almost total disjointment in the roads from one section of town to the other. This was not a problem in the earliest days since the city planner provided a circular road around its perimeter- as though guided by an ancient military handbook.

Two major factors in the development of Florence were its strategic location at the foot of the Muscle Shoals and at the river crossing for the Jackson Military Road, constructed between 1817 and 1822. Three hundred workmen improved earlier Indian roads as they made their way through what would become the heart of downtown Florence.

The city was one of the first textile centers of this part of the country. The earliest advertisements made by the Cypress Land Company in 1818 boasted the location of a cotton factory on a nearby creek. Florence, as well as all of this part of the state, suffered greatly during the terrible Civil War. The town repeatedly changed hands time and again. Part of the city was burned and almost all of the industry was destroyed.

The industrialization of East Florence in the late part of the last century brought more industry than at all other times in its history, before or after. This 1887 boom jumped the population by 500 percent, from 1,600 to 6,000 people in a three-year span.

Florence became the headquarters for one of the earliest federal works projects. In 1831, work began on the construction of a canal to by-pass the barrier in the river called the Muscle Shoals. For a number of reasons, this first attempt failed. Following the Civil War, a new and more serious effort began in 1875. On November 10, 1890, a steamboat passed through these series of completed locks from St. Louis to Chattanooga. This canal was used until the completion of Wilson Dam in 1925.

The removal of La Grange College, from what is now Colbert County to Florence, in 1885 was, perhaps, one of the most important events for the economic development of the town. Through a series of growth and name changes, it is now the thriving University of North Alabama.

Florence has provided four Alabama governors: Edward A. O'Neal, Emmett O'Neal, Robert M. Patton, and Hugh McVay. A fifth local governor, George S. Houston, was reared about sixteen miles west of Florence on his father's Wildwood Plantation.

Florence is proud of its outstanding African-American heritage. Every scholar knows about Dred Scott and his part in the eventual freedom for all Americans. However, few remember that Dred Scott took care of the horses at the Peter Blow Tavern on northeast corner of Tennessee and Pine Streets from 1825 until he moved to St. Louis in 1831. Florence was the birthplace of Oscar DePriest in 1871. In 1928 DePriest was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Chicago to become the first African-American elected from a northern state. Florence's James Thomas Rapier, an African-American, was elected in 1873 to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives from Montgomery, Alabama. Also, the world knows that W.C. Handy, the famed Father of the Blues, was born at Florence, Alabama, in 1873.

Florence was provided by its founders with wide streets conveniently equipped to handle the automobiles of the twenty-first century. It is noted for its stately trees and its surrounding streams and springs of clear running water. The town is proud of its rich culture and heritage of noble people and its gentle and peaceful ways in much the same way as its early planners were careful to name its streets and avenues for rivers and trees- and not for battles and warriors. *Submitted by: Col. William L. McDonald, City Historian, 2207 Berry Avenue, Florence, AL 35630-1659*

The Bedingfield Community Charles Bedingfield

Charles Bedingfield, one of two sons identified as children of Charles Henry Bedingfield, Jr. and wife, Jane Ashley Bedingfield, bought 160 acres from Charles Henry as did his brother James Ashley Bedingfield



Bedingfield Home Place

in 1828. Located in Section 11, Township 3, Range 7W in the Oliver area of Lauderdale County, the NE and NW quarters respectively; it bordered on the Elk River to the southeast. The Huntsville Road traveled through their property.

A ferry named "Bedingfield Ferry" was sold with 158 and 81/100 acres of land by Charles Bed-

ingfield October 26, 1850 for \$3,176.20 to Addison D. Binford and Charles then purchased land on January 20, 1852, again on January 27, 1852 in Sections 25 and 36 to the northeast of his previous property and located in SE and SW quarters of Section 25, and in NE and NW quarters of Section 36, Township 2, Range 7W. A purchase on January 1, 1862 for 120 acres in SW quarter of Section 25 completed the purchase by Charles and he then owned 800 acres in Lauderdale and 91 acres in Limestone Counties. Maybe More. A photo included was the home of Charles and later deeded to son John D. Bedingfield November 17, 1877 with 571 acres of the land mentioned above to care for invalid mother for rest of her natural life. The home remained in the family of John D. Bedingfield until the death of his widow Frances Gertrude (Fannie) Bedingfield March 19, 1935. *Submitted by: Bobby L. Romine, Grandson of John D. Bedingfield.*

Finnish Colony At Cloverdale - I

The Finnish settlers first came to Calumet, Michigan where they found work in the copper mines. There was quite an influx of Finns to Cloverdale between the years 1885 and 1912. This was due to three Finnish land agents, J.P. Hendrixson, Adolph Korvonen and Matti Lappi from Michigan and Illinois who wished to establish a Finnish settlement in the South. Through Finnish newspapers in the north, they advertised good farm land in the South, at Cloverdale, Al. First to purchase land were William and Louise Keranen from Ironwood, Michigan. Her mother, Nina Symons came with them about 1885. They ran a store in Fairview until his death in 1916. Mrs. Keranen later married Isaac Heikkinen but they divorced in 1917. She later married Andrew Leskinen and both died in 1930's. William Isaac Abramson and family came from Michigan in 1884. He highly recommended Cloverdale to other Finns. In 1897, Joseph Ilves and wife Katarine left Finland seeking a better place to live. He purchased a farm. In 1890, Stepanus Hakola of Ilmajoki, Finland left Finnish army and came to U.S. first going to Chicago. He purchased land in Cloverdale in 1896 and later joined U.S. Army where he became ill and lost his farm. His brother, Jacob Hakola, a carpenter in Helsinki, Finland brought his wife and two sons to redeem the farm. Later they had one daughter, Hilda Hakola who married Meadows Gray.

Matt Haataja born in Oula, Finland came to America in 1906 to find a better place to live. In 1911, he moved to Cloverdale. The same year came Olli Seppanen family from Calumet. They also bought a farm and remained. Other families came but stayed only briefly. It seems that all the Finns who settled in Cloverdale came between 1880 and 1906 when Finland was under Russian domination. Years between 1910 and 1925 were the growing years of "Little Finland" in Cloverdale. About eight families with population of about 50 became almost as one family and continued the Finnish language for sometime. They were remembered because of their "sauna" steam baths and their "Sisu". Hard to explain, they felt it was their "sisu" that sustained them. Their meaning of this word was "an unexplainable kind of inner fire or superhuman nerve force that comes miraculously in time of stress and helps one to do the most impossible."

In 1998, the only land still owned by Finnish descendants belongs to Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Duke (Millie Seppanen) whose both parents were Finnish.

From Paper by late Mrs. Hilda Hakola Submitted by: Mrs. Henry B. Abramson

Finnish Colony At Cloverdale - II

Cloverdale's Finnish community was established by immigrants from Finland who wanted a better life and freedom from oppression. Finland had been under Swedish rule in the years 1155 - 1809, then Russian rule from 1809 - 1917 when Finland obtained their freedom.

During the years 1880 - 1900 there was a Russian military leader who was very harsh and wanted to make Russians out of the Finns. Times were very hard, especially for the farmers. Finns had always had to serve in the Swedish army and then in the Russian armed forces. Many young men were tired of serving the Russians and did not want to continue being oppressed. The Finns always dreaded the times when the Russians came to their farms and confiscated their food and animals.

In addition to harsh treatment by Russia, there were the long dark cold winters when living was very difficult. Summers were short, the weather was cold and rainy, making it difficult to raise food for family and livestock. They heard living was easier in the United States and work was available. Most of the Finns at Cloverdale came from the north central area of Finland not very far from the Arctic Circle. A few more acquainted with each other in Finland, but most were not.

The immigrants obtained passage on ships bound for North America and entered North America at Halifax, Nova Scotia; Saulte St. Marie on the Canadian-Michigan border at the mouth of Lake Superior; others through Ellis Island. Most of the Finns who came to Cloverdale first lived on Michigan's Upper Peninsula and Wisconsin where they worked in the iron and copper mines, on the railroad, in the woods cutting timber, or on boats plying the Great Lakes.

There were land agents advertising the good farm lands for sale at Cloverdale, Alabama. Thus began an influx of Finns moving to Cloverdale around 1885 and continuing until 1912. Most of the Finns settled on a road currently known as Renegar Road. The road is the first road to the right just past the post office and exits at Cloverdale School.

There were about 8-10 families with names such as Hakola, Ilves, Haataja, Seppanen, Keranen, Ahonen, Symons, Leskinen, and Marjetta whose family name was changed to Abramson. The total population was about 60 persons. Some came but did not stay long, possibly due to the hot summers.

Finns have a word which cannot be translated - "sisu". Sisu is a key word for a Finn's success. It's an inner fire or superhuman force that comes in times of stress and helps a person to overcome obstacles which seem unattainable.

The Finns who came to Cloverdale showed their "sisu" by overcoming the burdens of learning a new language which was entirely different to their native tongue; also facing a different culture, weather, livelihood.

The families that stayed all farmed, learning to raise crops such as cotton, plus foods needed for families and livestock. Everyone had large gardens for vegetables, orchards for different types of fruit trees, and very important, a spring and fall crop of potatoes. There were a few cows, lots of chickens and some hogs on each farm. Dairy products were VERY IMPORTANT since butter was much used for seasoning and milk for drinking. One popular dairy product called "vili" was similar to our present day unflavored whole-milk yogurt. Homemade bread was baked with flour made from wheat raised on the farm.

In November or December the arrival of a large wooden bucket of salted herring from Finland was eagerly awaited. Delicious dishes were made with this salted herring and potatoes. It was important to have the fish and potatoes for Christmas dinner. This was a traditional Finnish dish.

Coffee breads seasoned with cardamom were very popular and, of course, coffee was always ready. Most everyone drank milk at meal time and adults had coffee at mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Even when the adults were working in the field, the coffee was taken to them.

The Finns enjoyed a simple farm life, since they enjoyed the quiet beauty and solitude of nature. They realized it was a special privilege to be an American and to be able to own their own farms. The older immigrants had much difficulty learning English, so Finnish was

spoken at home. However, it was very important that the children learn English, many learning when they started school. Parents stressed the fact that being an American was a special privilege. Thus, several men served in both World Wars and one immigrant served with General Joe Wheeler in Cuba and the Philippines.

The Finnish community at Cloverdale has now disintegrated. However, it could be said that this community truly was a "melting pot" as the first generation Finns have mostly married spouses with non-Finnish backgrounds. The descendants became a part of the community and the USA by being teachers, farmers, writers, nurses, bankers - to name a few of the occupations pursued by them. All have benefited from the courage displayed by the early immigrants who were willing to face an unknown life in a new country. Submitted by: Milka "Millie" Seppanen Duke, a first generation Finn who grew up in the Cloverdale Finnish community.

Gravelly Springs

Gravelly Springs is located on County Road 14, fifteen miles west of Florence. A couple of hundred yards from the old Natchez Trace, a large spring gushes out of the hills. The spring was an early stopping point for travelers along the Natchez Trace. "They sometimes camped there or soaked their trail-weary feet in the cool water as they rested a while." Stage coach drivers would make regular stops there for rest periods, also. People have used this spring for years for picnics, family gatherings, washing cars, getting water to haul to their homes for family use during dry spells, and numerous other things. A large amount of gravel that settled in the water at the spring is probably where it got the name Gravelly Springs.

Some of the early settlers in the area were Cannons, Chandlers, Carrolls, Waits, Perkins, Wesson's, Hines, Garners, Popes, Neals, Houston's and many others. Many of the pioneers were farmers, but some performed services for which the people in the community were in need of. The Chandlers and the Carrolls had stores there. The Chandlers and Carrolls are among several families listed as building nice antebellum homes in the area. Some of these were still standing over 100 years later.

David and Hannah Houston from Ireland came to Lauderdale County, Alabama around 1825, and settled on a huge plantation. It was called Wildwood Plantation and was located near the spring. They built a huge mansion made of brick in Georgian style. There was an unusual thing about this house, it had a large water tank on the roof that caught rain water. This furnished the kitchen with running water. The Houston's had thirteen children. One of them, George Smith Houston, was the 25th governor of Alabama.

In Mr. William McDonald's book, *A Walk through the Past*, he says that one of the earliest plantations near Gravelly Springs was owned by Rachel Thomas in 1822. He says that two of the earliest settlers were William Baston and Francis Willet that entered land in 1818.

There was a Federal Camp at the spring during the Civil War, according to Jill Garrett in her book, *A History of Lauderdale County*. She stated that it was the headquarters of General James D. Wilson, and an assembly point for his famous raid into South Alabama. Wilson made his headquarters in the Houston home and one of his officers, General Hatch, made his headquarters in the Cannon house. The Federal Camp extended from Gravelly Springs to Eastpoint, Mississippi. Mrs. Garrett gave a description of how this camp looked from the diary of James Pugh Cannon, a local resident and a member of the Confederate Army. He had been away for a while and came back to a totally different view. The following is the description from his diary as entered on January 1865 given by Garrett:

"We reached the top of the hill overlooking the little village of Gravelly Springs. I surveyed the scene with fear and trembling. The hills which a few weeks before had been covered with forest trees were now bare, every vestige of timber had been removed, even the leaves swept off, and the hills and valleys were dotted with white tents as far as the eye could reach."

In his writings, Mr. McDonald states that Liberty Church of Christ was established at Gravelly Springs. Poplar Springs Methodist was there, also. He states that most all of the church buildings were demolished, including Liberty, to provide lumber for barracks and stables for troops of Wilson's command.

General Wilson moved his command to South Alabama and captured Montgomery, the Alabama state capital, and the Confederate arsenal at Selma, Alabama.

A large cave near the springs served as a place for food to be stored in the old days. People would stop there and have a picnic on their

journey to and from Florence, Alabama, or any trip that took them by there. It is thought that notorious outlaws, who traveled along the Natchez Trace and robbed people may have had a hideout here.

Gravelly Springs first post office was opened in 1842, with Ross Houston, Jr. as the first postmaster, according to Mr. McDonald. It closed in 1906.

Many of the descendants of the early pioneers still live in the community today. The hard work done by the early residents can truly be appreciated by those who live there and by those who pass through. *Submitted by: The Lauderdale County Heritage Book Committee and Written by: Millie Mason*

Sources: 1. *History and Folk-lore of West Lauderdale* by Eva Dendy; 2. *A Walk Through the Past* by William Lindsey McDonald; 3. *A History of Lauderdale County* by Jill Garrett

Green Hill, Alabama

In north central Lauderdale County is the peaceful community of Green Hill. It was named Cornish in 1830, Cherry Grove in 1841, and finally Green Hill in 1850 to honor Green Berry Hill, a captain in the Mexican War. The first post office was in the John W. LeMaster home, which in later years was the Felix Monceret home. In 1906 the post office was discontinued and the mail came through St. Joseph, Tennessee.

Green Hill extends from the Tennessee state line southward for about nine miles. It's bordered by Shoal Creek and Blue Water Creek. A bus driver once designated the community as "anywhere between Happy Hollow and the Tennessee line". U.S. Highway 43 and County Road 47 run through the center of the community.

Green Hill is one of the older communities in the county. It seems that settlers from Moore and Cumberland Counties in North Carolina were in the area by 1810. After the Chickasaw Indians ceded the land, many settlers came from Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

Travel to the area was difficult until Andrew Jackson's Military Road was completed around 1820. With that road came the need for stage coach stops and inns. Green Hill had Lane's Inn, Craig's Inn, and Holland's Inn.

Green Hill was a center for gun manufacturing. The Kennedy Gun Factory, just east of Tabernacle Church, was established by Hiram Kennedy after 1823. David Kennedy was also instrumental in the success of the company. Others soon joined them in the manufacturing of guns - Jacob Stutts, Archibald and Ephraim McDonald, James Calvin Myrick, Asa, David, and William Richardson, Calvin Key, William Davidson, and Thomas White.

Another factory in the early days was the Milner-Kennedy Woolen Factory on Cowpen Creek. It was built about 1850 and burned by Union soldiers in 1863.

Water powered grist mills, for grinding wheat and corn, were located along Cowpen, Wolf, Richardson, "Possum", Blue Water, and Hurricane Creeks. Early merchants are believed to be James Hill (1836), Duncan Smith (1840), William Stutts (1846 - had a license to sell wine/hard spirits), John Davis, Newton Wilcoxson, and Daniel Wilcoxson.

During the second half of the 1800's, Green Hill had a couple of distilleries. Residents grew grapes and apples to supply the distilleries. One was located about ¼ mile from the Tennessee line and the other half way between Tabernacle Church and Richardson Creek. Around 1900-1902 state and federal taxes forced the distilleries to close.

During the earlier years there were several men practicing medicine in the area. Dr. George Wiley Richardson (1832-1846), Dr. William C. Gist, Dr. Hiram Raleigh Kennedy (until death in 1913), Dr. Wiley Richardson (1881-1902), Dr. Noah Danley, and the community's most noted doctor, Henry Lee Stutts.

Dr. Stutts served the community for over 65 years. Many of the older people here were probably delivered by him. He carried his own drug store in medical bags and mixed his own medicines. He built Crystal Springs in 1904 and his office seemed to be the kitchen or the porch of this home. He started his practice in 1900 traveling in a horse drawn buggy. Around 1915 he purchased a car in which to make house calls. He is also remembered for starting the Green Hill Fair in 1914, his beautiful flowers, animals, and especially the peacocks.

Green Hill has had numerous schools: Tickville (1870-1898), Stutts (1860-1880), North Carolina (1826-), and the Green Hill Academy (1869-). Other schools around Green Hill before 1930 were: Alabama, Comer, Arkdale, Olive Hill, Myrick, Palestine, Ebernezer/Center Hill, McGee, Sweet Gum Flat, Allen Chapel, Atlas, Cauhorn, and Green Hill.

Early settlers are buried at Tabernacle Methodist Church (1842), Old Baptist or Pleasant Grove Church (1824), Milners Chapel (1852), and North Carolina (1926). Other old cemeteries are Allen, Cauhorn, Kennedy, Fisher, Gist, and Wright.

Until after WWII Green Hill was a farming community of hard-working people. They worked the fields during the week and spent the weekends attending church, box suppers, candy pullings, picnics, and even corn shuckings. Children grew up in two parent homes, wore feed sack clothes, ate home grown food, but most never doubted that they were loved.

Today Green Hill is a fast growing, unincorporated community. Most residents work in local industries and businesses. Rogers High School serves all the children and its campus is the athletic center of the community. There are churches, supermarkets, restaurants, gifts shops, and friendly people - all of which make Green Hill a great place to live. *Submitted by: Nancy Brown*

A Brief History Of Lexington Alabama

No one is sure how Lexington got its name. The name may have been borrowed from Lexington Massachusetts of Revolutionary fame. There were four veterans of that war in the area. They were Thomas Gresham, John Gresham, Edward Poteet, and Benjamin French. Benjamin is buried on the present day French-Glover Farm.

Other early settlers were the Belew, Callahan, Mitchell, Master-son, Finoler, McDaniel, Brown, Johnson, Westmoreland, Miller, Pettus, Hardin, Jones, Shelton, Collier, Hagood, Allen, Hammond, and Marshall families.

Lexington's first business district was established around 1853. Early merchants were J.T. Westmoreland and William Taylor. The War Between the States had a great impact on the small community of Lexington. The armed invaders from the north burned all the school buildings and two of the local churches. Local citizens were robbed, tortured, and killed. Families lost many loved ones to the "Just Cause of States Rights". No family was untouched by the

cruel monster of the blue wave that swept through the area. A sacred homeland and way of life had been engulfed. When the war was finally over, many returned home to nothing. As the standing army of Reconstruction was removed in the late 1870's, the economy started to improve.



Phillips Family & Friends at the Andrew Lee Phillips dedication

Mr. Andrew Lee Phillips was born Feb. 13, 1855 and came to Lexington in

the early 1870's to help his half brother operate his store.

As he learned his trade, he decided he wanted a store of his own and in 1888 that store became a reality. Around the turn of the century he ran a rolling mill in Lexington. He also gave property for a new school. By 1907 the community pitched in with a two room school that grew to four rooms. Mr. Phillips helped establish the first bank and was the first president. He was also a Lexington Postmaster.

By 1918 the little school was busting at the seams and local patrons sprang into action to make a new, more modern building. Mr. Phillips now gave money, and helped organize, and even went to the trouble of testing local clay for brick making. In 1922 the cornerstone was set in our old two story building. Mr. Phillips donated the land for the Methodist Church and served 10 years on the Board of Education.

Mr. Phillips gave so much to our community. He helped by supplying a 1) Financial Base, 2) An Educational Base, and 3) A Religious Base. He succeeded in restoring all the things the Yankees had destroyed during his childhood. I am sure we can never repay the kind services Mr. Phillips has left for generations to come.

Other citizens have continued this spirit with an outstanding rescue squad and volunteer fire department. The town has a library, swimming pool, picnic area, tennis court, softball field, and two baseball fields. Lexington has a strong Lions Club and Lt. W.W. Pettus, Sons of Confederate Veterans Camp. Each year the

Louisa Terry Order of Confederate Rose presents an outstanding community service award. The town of Lexington has progressed a long way from its humble beginnings. *Submitted by: Darrell Glover, Rt. 1 Box 40, Lexington, AL 35648*
Sources: "I'm From Lexington" by Fred Johnson 1989; Information from Grady Glover; Information from Isabel Phillips White; East Lauderdale News "History of Lexington" 1976

Native Americans Of Lexington Alabama

Archaeological finds and radiocarbon dating have given us a rough date of early inhabitants in our area at about 10,000 B.C. I speculate that given time this date will be pushed even farther back toward the dawning of man. These early Americans were known as "Late Paleo". They were mainly nomadic hunters who also gathered nuts and fruits. Paleo Indians usually traveled in bands or family units of 15 to 30 individuals. The Lexington area made a good stopping point for camps due to the many springs in the area. Good water and good game potential were present from early times.

The next group of inhabitants in Lexington were known as "Archaic". These people lived here from about 7000 to 1000 B.C. They lived under cliffs, in caves, and even made crude wooden shelters. Their "throwing stick" helped in all aspects of hunting. Their diet consisted of shellfish and deer, as well as other wild staples.

The "Woodland" period followed the Archaic. These people were our first real farmers. They also hunted and gathered food. The Woodland culture saw the raise of the bow and arrow and the use of pottery. Their time covers from about 1000 to 300 B.C.

The "Mississippian" culture developed in Lexington around 300 B.C. and lasted till about 1400 A.D. These inhabitants created permanent settlements and advanced a more modern culture. Sometime before the Europeans arrived in America the large Mississippian culture broke up and our Creek, Chickasaw, and Cherokee tribes were formed.

For longer than any one can remember Lexington was the ancestral hunting grounds of the Chickasaw and Cherokee Nations. By the late 1700's many white settlers from Virginia, the Carolinas, Tennessee, and Georgia moved on to Indian properties. Only one great warrior still stood in their way. Cherokee Chief Doublehead lead raids against the white settlers from the very beginnings. Doublehead was a blood-thirsty, scalp raising, cannibalistic defender of his homeland. After pressure from the whites was mounting in Tennessee, Doublehead moved to the Tennessee Valley area. To help buy off Chickasaw claims to this area, he gave two of his daughters to George Colbert. Colbert was the chief of the Chickasaw Nation. Doublehead stayed on the warpath until 1794. Then as his name might imply, his two-pronged, schizophrenic behavior changed. He ended his evil ways.

Doublehead had become rich. No one knows exactly how this happened. I have heard of Doublehead's treasure all my life. The old legend says the treasure was found and buried in a cave on Blue Water Creek. The cave entrance was sealed. The cave was located in such a manner that the morning sun rays struck it. (This would imply that the cave faced east.) One theory set forth is that Doublehead discovered DeSoto's silver coins that had been hidden during his exploration of the south.

In 1794, Doublehead lead a group of Cherokees to Philadelphia to meet to the President. When he returned home he was so impressed by his trip he took on the new idea of "if you can't beat'um, join'um." In 1806 Doublehead and the other chiefs of the Cherokee Nation signed a treaty with the U.S. government. This treaty gave up Cherokee lands. The problem was Doublehead negotiated a secret agreement to keep thousands of acres for himself. Doublehead then started leasing his new properties to white men. Several months later at an Indian ball game, Doublehead was killed by another Cherokee Chief, Bone Polisher.

In 1816 the Chickasaw Nation gave up their claims north of the Tennessee River. The white man's grip had finally taken hold. Lexington had its early beginnings. *Submitted by: Darrell Glover, Rt. 1 Box 40, Lexington, AL 35648*
Sources: Old Shoals Magazine "Doublehead the Cherokee Cannibal" No. 25; Lore of the River ... The Shoals of long ago. by: William Lindsey McDonald c. 1989; Legend told to me by my father: Grady Glover.

McGee Town

Edgar McGee developed McGee Town along the ½ mile stretch of Lauderdale County Highway 200 West. Edgar and wife, Vera Bevis, made their home and raised their family of five children there.

A small store building was built on the lot beside their home. The store business grew rapidly so an addition soon followed. Edgar purchased a store building from Jess Whitten in 1930, using the materials to enlarge the store and build living quarters in the rear. The McGee family moved into the back of the store and rented their house to Will Whitten and later, Elmer Lawson.

Edgar owned two dump trucks, which were used to haul sandstone blocks from the rock quarry owned by W.A. Sewell in Spring Valley in Colbert County. These were used in the construction of many sandstone houses that Edgar built. Elmer Lawson and Ed Lindsey drove these trucks. Edgar hired a crew of men to dig or dynamite the rocks from the quarry, paying twenty-five cents per ton for the blocks.

Aladdin lamps were first used to provide lighting for the store. Later, a Delco Power Plant was used to provide power for lighting. The batteries for the Delco plant were lined against the wall of the garage behind the store. A small motor was used to charge the batteries.

Edgar bought the first radio in the community. He mounted a speaker on top of the store building. On Saturday nights, many of the neighbors sat on their porches, listening to the Grand Ole Opry, being broadcast from atop the McGee Store.

In 1937, as the store business grew, Edgar saw the need for a larger building. Across the road from the original store, he built the sandstone store that still stands today. Using lumber that had once been a part of the old Panther Creek and Shaw Holler Schools and sandstone blocks, the new store was built for \$500.00.

Edgar operated two peddler trucks, which ran routes five days a week to Waterloo, Cloverdale, Bend of the River, Oakland, and other communities in western Lauderdale County. Robert Earl DeVaney and A.J. Wallace operated the peddler trucks. During the summers, Edgar's sons, Lloyd and Floyd, still young boys, rode with the drivers on their routes.

Edgar allowed his customers to buy on credit. Many attribute his generosity with the survival of their family during hard times.

Several sandstone houses were built on properties surrounding McGee's store and home. Lumber from the Panther Creek and Shaw Holler School buildings were used in the construction of these houses. Edgar's brother, Andrew, and Vera's brother, Emmitt, were among the building crew members. The rental houses ranged in cost from \$50.00 to \$75.00 to build. He received rent of \$5.00 to \$10.00 a month.

In the 1950's, Edgar bought a warehouse from T.V.A. for \$300.00. He and crew tore down the warehouse, selling the 12 x 12 floor timbers for the price he paid for the building. The remaining lumber was used in the construction of homes for two of his children, Edward and Aileen.

Edgar retired from the store business in 1939. Levi Seaton bought his interest in the store, although Edgar retained ownership of the building. After Levi's death in 1943, Chalmer Seaton, followed by Shaler O'Bryant ran the store. In 1945, Edgar's son, Floyd, and Robert Earl DeVaney operated the store. When Floyd's brother, Lloyd, returned from the army, he bought his brother's interest. He acquired sole interest in 1948 and operated the McGee Store until his retirement in 1983.

The McGee Store was the center of activity in the community. Neighbors gathered to play checker, cards, or sit by the fire and swap "yarns." On winter days, one could find a goat or other type of stew cooking on the coal stove. Friends sitting together on the store porch and children laughing and playing filled summer days.

Lining the top of the store wall were the mounted fish caught by Edgar and Lloyd. One large mouth bass had a set of false teeth glued in its mouth. This oddity brought about puzzled looks from first time visitors.

In the early 1950's, Edgar built a baseball field in the pasture to the rear of the store for his sons and their friends to play summer ball. Stands were constructed for spectators to watch the Sunday afternoon game. A love of family, a community, and its history was installed during those days. *Submitted by: Janice Smith, granddaughter of Edgar and Vera McGee.*

Mitchelltown

Granddaddy James (Jim) Mason Mitchell was born to John and Caroline Phillips Mitchell June 15, 1875 and died February 3, 1951. He built a grist mill and it was known as Mitchell's Mill. The power came from a dam that was made across Mill Creek. People would bring corn that was shelled by hand or with a corn sheller from places far away. The corn was put in a large sack, thrown across a horse's back or in a wagon and brought to Mitchell's Mill.

The corn was ground into meal, which was used to make bread. A small portion or toll was kept for the grinding. Corn was fed to hogs, cows, chickens, horses and mules. People raised what they had to eat. Hogs provided meat. They kept cows for milk and butter; chickens for eggs and meat.

Later, granddaddy or "Papa Mitchell" as we said, built a store, blacksmith shop, sawmill and a cotton gin. After this, the place was called Mitchelltown.

Jim Mitchell's first wife, Emma Butler was born November 17, 1877, married September 10, 1895 and died October 18, 1913. She was the daughter of Gabe and Nancy Herston Butler.

When Papa Mitchell worked in the store and it came time to eat, he would invite the "drummer" or traveling salesman, if one was in the store, to go home with him for lunch. "Mama Mitchell" had a large family of eight children to cook for plus visitors.

A blacksmith shop was needed because horses and mules had to be shod; plow tools needed to be repaired or sharpened. There were no tractors, then.

After Papa Mitchell married the second time he sold the sawmill and gin to Will Herston and moved to Florence in 1916.



Mitchelltown Gin - About 1910.

Later, Clarence Herston was the operator of the sawmill. We cut cedar and red cherry trees from the farm; then carried the logs to the sawmill to be sawed into lumber. I still have the cedar bedroom suit made by the Williams Brothers at Mt. Pleasant, near Lexington.

Most people raised cotton for a living throughout the country. Farm jobs were about all a person could get to do. When I was growing up and in the field picking cotton, I could hear the Mitchelltown gin. It could be heard for miles around, especially early in the morning and late in the evening -putt-putt-putt.

It was really a treat to go to the gin and ride on the cotton. How we would work to get a bale, about 1200 pounds, so we could go to the gin! Daddy would give us a handful of cotton if we beat him to the end of the row in which he was picking. We might even get a candy bar when the peddler ran, which was once a week, if we worked hard. Those were ways daddy used to get us to work.

The buildings are all gone, now. There remains many pleasant memories and it is still called Mitchelltown. Submitted by: Paul Wilson, 389 Co. Rd. 71, Killen, AL 35645

Sources: Mother - Late Dessie Wilson; Granddaddy - Late Jim Mitchell

A Brief History Of Oakland

The Community of Oakland is located ten miles west of Florence on Waterloo Road. It was named Oakland because of the numerous Oak trees found there.

Native Americans lived along Sinking Creek, on the south side of Oakland, long before the settlers began to arrive.

Mr. Turner Watson acquired his first acreage from Chief George Colbert. Mr. Walston built the first home and store at Oakland in the 1800's. He and his sons became large planters. The sons became Methodist preachers.

Early white settlers were: Walston's, Vaughan's, Armistead's, Peerson's, Hewitt's, Lindsey's, Olives, Smiths, Rices, and Halls.

Early African - American settlers were: Barnett's, Johnson's, Gilberts', Thompson's, Clemon's, and Martin's. After the Civil War, these settlers built their churches. The original Galilee and Eleven Grove churches were built by former slaves. These two congregations are still found in Oakland.

The Methodist Church was Oakland's first church. It was burned during the Civil War. It was rebuilt and moved three times. It now is the brick Church at the corner of Prides Ferry Road and Waterloo Road. Oakland Church of Christ is located on the south side of Waterloo Road.

Four cotton gins were built in Oakland during the past years. James and John Vaughan were the first ginners. Their gin was steam powered. So was Mr. Robert C. Smith's gin. He built his home across the road from his gin. In 1909 he replaced that home with the large Victorian-styled home that is still standing.

Mr. Hugh L. Rice built a home, store, and a diesel-powered gin. He was a very successful farmer and ginner. After retirement he sold his gin and store stock to Alfred Buffer. Neither store nor gin stand today.

Mr. Arthur Smith owned the Smith gin and store until the mid-forties. He sold the gin and store stock to Lawrence H. Rickard. That gin burned in 1947. Mr. Rickard rebuilt with an engine powered with electricity. The Oakland Gin Co. came into being. Today it is the last working cotton gin in Lauderdale County.

The F.P. Hall home, located on Canaan Road, is the oldest original home remaining. It was built in the fall of 1900 and was finished in the spring of 1901. Five generations of the Hall family have lived there. Three generations continue to live there. One of the Hall daughters, Annie, married Lawrence H. Rickard. After the Hall's deaths, Mr. Rickard bought the Hall farm.

Oakland's oldest resident is a beloved African-American lady, Mrs. Celia Baugh. She remembers the history of Oakland quite well. She loves to tell this history. She is 101.

Mr. Ed Jones is 97. He is a son of an early settler, Mr. Dave Jones. Mr. Ed Jones can tell of the 1800's and 1900's history of Oakland.

Four businesses remain in Oakland; Oakland Gin Co: Oakland Tractor Co., Oakland Metal Buildings and Peddler's One Stop General Store.

Oakland is very proud of their Fire Department. The men who work there are volunteers. They deserve the greatest appreciation.

The Residents of Oakland hope to see the business area once again flourish. Submitted by: Ruby Rickard Haddock

Pine Ridge

My parents Charlie and Laura Duckett came to Florence from Tennessee during WWI. They liked it, so they stayed. My daddy was employed by "Martin Stove and Range Co." until his death. There were two girls Mildred (Henson) and Marjorie (Wallace) We attended Maude Lindsay Kindergarten, Brandon and the old Coffee High School.

Pine Ridge is a section of Florence that I see nothing being written about. It was a village built during the building of Wilson Dam for workers at the dam.

The village was between Cole Street on the North, Veterans Drive on the South, Kirkman Street on the West, and Blair Street on the East. These houses were frame covered with a black tar



Laura Duckett, Mildred Henson, Marjorie D. Wallace with an original Pine Ridge house in the background. Used with my permission. February 28, 1998

paper with strips up and down. Most lots had two houses - one faced a street and the other was on an alley. They had their own sewer system with water in the house and a commode. A common bath house was used when the government owned them. In Jones Hollow were two concrete tanks that held the waste. When they filled up they were dumped into the creek and made it to the canal.

If we were playing in the creek, (as kids did) we knew to "beat it" for a while.

We did not live there during the construction of the dam. My daddy bought a house when the government began to sell them. He paid \$150.00 for the house and bought the lot for \$50.00. Some of the houses are still there and have been remodeled, others were moved to other parts of East Florence. The one we moved into was built around 1928-29 and is still there at 421 S. Kirkman Street.

This was a good neighborhood. Some of the people I remember were Bryants, Fritts, Turners, Rhodes, Newtons, Johnsons and there were more. There were lots of children. We had vacant lots to play ball and other games on, lots of woods around, we were free to play without being molested (great days to some extent).

There was a colored school below Veterans Drive - between Kirkman and Connor Streets. I think the grades were 1-4. We had a good neighborhood store. It had a big porch and it was enjoyed by getting together and drinking a Coke (small one) and bringing

everyone up to date on the news - this was the older people. After I married and went back to visit, I joined them and enjoyed it very much. *Submitted by: Mildred Duckett Henson, 600 Firestone Ave., Apt. 602, Muscle Shoals, AL 35661*

The Town Of Rogersville

In the early 1800s, settlers from the Carolinas and Virginia began arriving in the Tennessee Valley. They came by flatboats, wagons, horseback and even on foot. Here they found what they were searching for: fertile land, plenty of water and forests full of game.

The town was originally spelled Rodgersville but the 'd' was dropped in the late 1800s. One of the first settlers to purchase land in Rogersville was Andrew Rodgers on March 3, 1818, the first day land went on sale from the Federal Government. Andrew Rodgers built his home a few hundred yards south of what is now downtown Rogersville. It is believed this was the first Rodgers family to settle here, therefore giving the town its name. Andrew Rodgers died at his home before 1830. Other early families were: Fuqua, Cunningham, Burney, Porter, Nance, Foley, Simmons and others. The old Fuqua home is still standing.

About 1820, merchants were getting established. On the northwest corner of Lee and Wheeler Street, were merchants George Simmons and W.G.L. Foley; next door was a very small building in which was located the first Rogersville Post Office with Thomas Cunningham as Postmaster. Across the street was the first tavern which was also a stage coach stop.

The Alabama Legislature passed a bill in 1907, which provided that each County in the state should have at least one high school. Rogersville was selected as the site for the county high school. The community raised \$17,000 which went toward the construction of a two-story building. This building burned in 1926 and money was again raised for a new building.

The first place of worship was a bush arbor at the site of the Old Liberty Cemetery, with all faiths attending. When the settlers died they were buried around the church (bush arbor). This later became known as the Liberty Cemetery. The bush arbor remained the only place of worship until 1842 when the first church was built.

Today the town has many retail businesses, including a shopping center, churches, three doctors and a Senior Citizen Center. The city hall was built in 1957 and houses the police department and water department. Currently there are three banks, a natural gas company and a television cable company. A volunteer fire department and volunteer emergency unit also support the community. The library was built in 1969, funded by a federal grant plus local monies. The community has a recreation area containing baseball and softball fields. The town is run by a Mayor and five Councilmen.

About four miles southwest of Rogersville is located Joe Wheeler State Park Lodge and Marina with campgrounds and picnic area. Rogersville is nestled in the curve of the Tennessee and Elk Rivers. Here is found water recreational facilities for boating, fishing, swimming or just loafing.

From very meager beginnings, Rogersville has grown into the prosperous and friendly community it is today. *Submitted by: Muriel H. Barnett, P.O. Box 26, Rogersville, AL 35652*
Sources: 1. *Old Land Records of Lauderdale County, Alabama* by Margaret M. Cowart. 2. *Lauderdale County Alabama Deed Book 5*, pages 37-38. 3. A collection of newspaper articles written about Rogersville.

Saint Florian

The community of Saint Florian and subsequently St. Michael's Parish began as colony of German Catholic farmers founded in 1873 by D.H.J. Heuser, from Innsbruck in the Tyrole, who became director of the Homestead Society of Cincinnati, Ohio; Archabbot Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B., from Bavaria, established St. Vincent Abbey at Latrobe, Pennsylvania included settlers and immigrants from a German-speaking area extending from New York to Iowa.

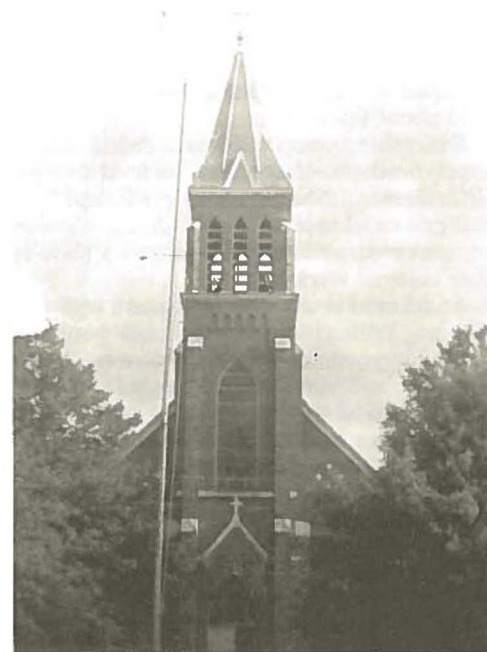
By 1872, Fr. Heuser had established four parishes in Tn. and had purchased the Wilson Plantation in Al. Looking for a more favorable climate and new opportunities, the farm families arrived. Among them were the Rasches from Michigan, Kasmeiers from Iowa, Lockers from Ohio, Meckes from New York, Bufflers from Illinois. Eckls from Pennsylvania, and Stumpes from Wisconsin. Craftsmen and merchants also arrived. Zulauf, who operated the first store was followed by Schaut. The Schaut family operated a store and their home served as a post office and inn. In their home was also an art gallery. A bachelor by the

name of Peter Stenz followed. He was a cobbler. Aigner operated a brickyard.

Grossheim and Hollander, followed by Peters, were "iron workers" or blacksmiths. Beumer, who also operated the funeral home, was the first carpenter, followed by George Locker, Henry Stumpe and John Ultch in the woodworking trade.

The community was named for Florian Rasch who donated the first church bell. Most likely, the Church and Parish were named for their first permanent pastor, Father Michael Mertz. Early in 1876, a small pox epidemic affected almost every family and claimed the life of their pastor, Father Michael.

Father Heuser, was not a shrewd business man. He was unable to pay a \$3,000 mortgage on the Wilson Plantation. By the end of April, 1876, the mortgage would foreclose. Lawrence Specker, Florian Rasch and Joseph Buffler wrote Archabbot Wimmer imploring him to take over the parish and assume the debt. Father Heuser had already written making the same request. Archabbot Wimmer was touched by the appeal. Archabbot Wimmer sent the first Benedictine monks in April, 1876. They were given the church, rectory, and 800 acres of land in lieu of the mortgage. St. Michael, served by the Benedictines, was an established parish.



St. Michael's Church, St. Florian, AL

The settlers first community effort was building a modest 50 by 24 foot frame church. Around the turn of the century, they needed and wished for a larger and more beautiful church. In 1908, they were financially able to go ahead with building plans.

The corner stone of the church was laid on a Sunday afternoon in the spring of 1916.

In the early 1920's the parish felt financially able to ask for bids on the windows. The windows were paid for by families; The small windows around \$150 and the large \$300. When they arrived at the Florence Depot, a virtual caravan of wagons went to bring them out. The windows were packed in sections, each section was packed in a pine box made of 3/4" boards. It took four men to handle each box. It took three wagons to bring out the St. Gregory window. They arrived at the church in perfect condition. They were placed around the church beneath the openings where they would be installed. Almost a year passed before Mr. Kirch, the company representative, came to install them. One of the parishioners, Rudolph Langer was called in from the fields to help him.

There has been a school of some variety in St. Florian since its beginning in 1873 with the coming of the first priest, Father Merz. His orphaned niece, Annie Merz, became the first teacher in a school that was opened in the church building. Only two grades were taught at this time. That school outgrew the little church and a school building was built. The school was considered to be parochial but, because there was no public school in the area, Protestant children were admitted and the local school board paid the teachers from \$15 to \$30 per month. In 1968 the school was closed completely.

In the 125 years of growing, there are now around 350 families, whose occupations and trades range from the original farmers to craftsmen, engineers, lawyers, and doctors. These years have seen many changes, most of them for the benefit of the people; and all of them due to the faith, sacrifice and independence of the people themselves.

Saint Florian still has a July 4th and Labor Day picnic. This tradition has been going on for the last 122 years. *Submitted by: Maryalice Meyer, 4030 County Rd 30, St. Florian Road, Florence AL 35634*

Smith Town

Smith Town was a small community just northeast of Killen, Alabama in Lauderdale County. When I was growing up, this was where my grandfather, Charlie E. Smith raised his family. He was the son of J. F. Smith. I am told that, in September 1908, he was the second person buried in the Antioch Cemetery, which is one mile east of Smith Town.

Charlie was born October 6, 1877. He married Mary Edna Couch on October 6, 1898, on his twenty-first birthday. They had a large family, seven sons and five daughters. Charlie was a farmer, and he also ran a country store.

I have lots of memories of that store. He had a cellar under it with sawdust in it. Because there was no electricity at that time, that was where he kept ice for his customers. Mr. Coleman Howard was the iceman; he delivered ice about twice a week. Another thing that I remember was the hand gas pump. The first thing he would do, after opening up, was to pump it up. The pump held about ten gallons.

Everything was not as convenient back then like it is in today's super markets. If a person wanted five pounds of sugar or beans, Charlie would have to weigh it up. You could also buy sliced bologna or cheese in nickel or dime's worth. This store also had some over-the-counter drugs and a shoe repair shop. My grandfather enjoyed working in it.

An annual event that took place in Smith Town was the community hog killing. All the neighbors would get together and kill their hogs. They would have from one to five hogs to kill. This was an all day job. When the first hog was cleaned and the liver removed, it was carried straight to the kitchen. This hog was for dinner, as the meal was called in those days. There were also volunteers that would come and help. They would receive for their work some spareribs and a piece of backbone. My grandfather would pick the coldest day of the winter for this event; he would like to have a big snow.

After my grandfather retired from his store, his hobby was his garden. He took great pride in this and he enjoyed it very much. He had his own way of doing things. He believed in the signs. He would never plant his beans after twelve o'clock noon. He didn't believe in planting his corn in the light of the moon; he would say that it would just grow tall. I wonder what he would say if he could only come back and see all the changes that have taken place since he died. He died September 10, 1957. He just lacked twenty-six days being eighty years old. He was buried in the Antioch Cemetery with his father and mother, three brothers, two sisters, his wife and three sons and three daughters. *Submitted by: Charlie M. Glover, 1104 County Road 73, Killen, AL 35645*

Threet's Crossroads

Threet's Crossroads is a community located about 20 miles northwest of Florence, just north of Cloverdale, on the Old Natchez Trace and County Road 8. The community was formerly known as Russell's Crossroads for Alexander Russell, an early settler of western Lauderdale County, who was listed on the 1830 census. Russell bought 120 acres here in 1836 and 1856.

But perhaps it was the predominance of Threet landowners which gave the area its current name. John Threet, also listed on one of the areas earliest census records in 1830, purchased land in 1831. John was married to Sarah Shelby, daughter of Reese Shelby of South Carolina. Reese Shelby purchased hundreds of acres of land in this area beginning in June 1818, shortly after the county was opened to settlers. John and Sarah Shelby Threet's sons, John Perry, Shelby, and Joseph Jefferson, then purchased land here in the 1850s. John Perry Threet, the eldest son, married Mary Waldrop, daughter of William Waldrop, another of the county's pioneers. John and Mary's son, James, followed in his father's and grandfather's footsteps, buying land here in the 1870's and 1880s. The Austin homestead is still located at Threet's Crossroads. John Austin originally purchased land in this area in 1831. His son, Robert Austin, married John Threet's daughter and John Perry Threet's sister, Eliza (Louisa). Robert Austin also became a landowner, and entered the family farm with the government in 1854. Austins still live on the property in Threet's Crossroads today.

In this immediate area is Austin Cemetery, where a majority of the Threets and Austins were laid to rest. There are also Segos, Paulks, and Perkins. Many of these families were also charter members of Liberty Baptist Church, which was formed at Threet's

Crossroads at the Liberty Meeting house on the "fourth Lord's Day" of May in 1852. Other members of the church were the Reeves, Rogers, Whittens, Dowdys and McCorkles.

In addition to its church, Threet's Crossroads boasted its own post office, which was established in 1893 and discontinued in 1908, and Threets School, which was closed in 1968. The school's two teachers, according to Board of Education records, were transferred to Central School and the property where the school stood is now the site of the relocated Liberty Baptist Church. *Submitted by: Patricia Hartley*

Waterloo

An Early River Town

It would be difficult to find a town site in North Alabama that is more ancient than Waterloo. Archaeological surveys of the Pickwick Basin were made in the late 1930s. These findings indicate that this place must have been as a metropolis for an advanced civilization called Copena Culture some 4,000 years ago.

These lands were sought after by eager land speculators and developers during the last decade of the eighteenth century. Permanent settlers from Tennessee, the Carolinas, and other states established the town of Waterloo as early as 1819. This was some four years following the famous Battle of Waterloo in Belgium. Perhaps this was why the founding fathers used the name Waterloo. Or they could have looked at the flowing waters of the Tennessee River and the nearby creeks, streams, and springs as a poetic source for its name.

Actually, the town was first located in the bottom land under which is now Pickwick Lake. Here it was incorporated in 1832, making it one of the oldest in the state. Waterloo was moved to the present location in 1847, following a raging flood that caused much damage in the Tennessee Valley.



Waterloo during Trail of Tears Remembrance

Waterloo was a flourishing and thriving river town during the great steamboat days on the Tennessee River. Situated at the lower end of a barrier in the river - called the Muscle Shoals-Waterloo was the nearest deep-water port to Florence. It became a gateway to places like New Orleans and St. Louis, as well as a receiving point for supplies from other parts of the country. During low water seasons, smaller transport boats and large wagon trains ran from Waterloo to Florence on a regular basis.

Waterloo played an important role on the water route to the tragic "Trail of Tears" when the federal government forced the Native Americans to leave their ancient homes to be relocated on reservations west of the Mississippi River. These people were transported by water, and some by land, to Waterloo. Here they were collected in camps until they could be placed aboard deep-water vessels and transported to their new lands. A number of them died and others escaped to the hills while waiting for their boats.

Because of the strategic position on the river, Waterloo became a key port for both the Union and Confederate Armies during the War Between the States. Union gunboats shelled the town in the summer of 1862 following an incident when older men of the community fired on one of their transport vessels. Union General William T. Sherman crossed the river at the site in October 1863 on his way to Chattanooga. During the winter of 1865, Union General James Harrison Wilson trained some 22,000 cavalrymen in the area stretching from Waterloo, up river to Gravelly Springs prior to his invasion of South Alabama and the burning of the University of Alabama.

Following the completion of Pickwick Dam in 1938, Waterloo became a fisherman's paradise. Its hills and forest are filled with game for the hunter. Its scenic shorelines and peaceful setting make this place one of the most beautiful in North Alabama. *Submitted by: William L. McDonald*

RELIGIOUS HERITAGE AND CEMETERIES

Lauderdale's Religious Heritage

Religion played an integral role in the lives of men and women as they moved westward to settle the new lands. As communities were beginning to be developed, churches were built by toil and sweat of the settlers of the area. From wherever they came, their church life intertwined with daily life. Sunday was a day of rest. There were Baptists, Catholics, Episcopalians, Methodist, Presbyterians and members of the Church of Christ. Some of the earliest churches still exist, but a larger number were founded in the last one hundred years.

Presbyterians were quick to establish churches and First Presbyterian on Mobile Street was founded in 1819. It is thought to be the first brick church in Alabama.

First United Methodist Church on the corner of Tuscaloosa and Seminary Streets was organized in 1822 and a building erected at the site in 1826 and used until it was replaced by a larger brick building about 1905. This building burned in 1920. The present building was erected at the same site and the cornerstone was laid in 1922. Other Methodist churches established before 1850 were: St. James Methodist, Pleasant Hill, Wesley Chapel, which dates back to 1818 and Waterloo Methodist Church.

Baptists began in the rural areas of the county, and now considered to be the largest denomination in northwest Alabama.

Stony Point Church of Christ was organized in 1823 and is considered the second oldest Church of Christ in the state. The first meeting place was on the banks of Cypress Creek. By mid 1830, the church became known as "Old Cypress Church". The name Stony Point was adopted in 1856.

Episcopalians trace their beginning back to 1824 when the first Episcopalian service was held in Florence. The services were held in schoolhouses, the hotel, and private homes. In 1845, a brick building was built on the corner of Cedar and College Streets. This building was used until 1892 when it was destroyed by fire. In 1893, the ground was broken at the site of the present building at the corner of Pine and Tuscaloosa Streets. This building now known as the Trinity Episcopal Church and houses many beautiful memorials.

Shortly after 1800, Catholic priests, many from Kentucky, began to visit the area to conduct mass. Catholic churches were not established here until the late 1800s.

The churches mentioned here are not the only ones established during the first hundred years of history of the county. From the very beginning and throughout the county's history, churches have continued to flourish and play an important role in the life of local residents. The church life of today is truly a healthy one and members can give thanks for this rich heritage. *Submitted by: Muriel H. Barnett*
Sources: *Times-Daily*, February 24, 1989, Pg. 12C.

Buried History

No names or places will be used. This is a story as told to me by a family member, from out of state, that came back to Lauderdale County at least once a year to help clean the cemetery. He would put flowers on the graves of his parents, both sets of grandparents and other relatives. At this point in time lots of tombstones were seen and unmarked graves.

A man asked to farm some land that was close to the cemetery. He was told that he could on the condition that he would stay a certain distance from the cemetery. The man agreed to the conditions and promised not to get close to the cemetery. After the passing of some time, the nice man that gave the permission got word that the man was plowing over graves. The nice man got in his buggy, went to the other man, and told him to get off the land, and not come back because he did not keep his promise. This made the "bad man" so angry. He was trying to get his mule out of the field when his mule fell in one of the graves he had plowed over. The "nice man" then told him to get his mule out of the grave and get off the land. The nice man did not stay to help; he got in his buggy and went on his way.

By the time he got his mule out of the grave he was so angry, so much so that he pulled the tombstones and rocks down, broke them, put them in the grave he got his mule out of, and covered them up. This part of land really holds lots of buried history. This is history that is lost forever. *Submitted by: Lorene F. Thigpen, 246 Cedar Lane, Killen, AL 34645*
Sources: Personal recollections

Antioch Church of Christ

Antioch is perhaps the 2nd oldest congregation in our area, being second to North Carolina. Antioch's history dates back to about 1902 when a very small group began to assemble in an old log house and brush arbor located somewhere between where Doyco Parker and James Faust now live.

Bill Williams was one of the first to help form the church. He came from the Pleasant Valley community and began teaching Bible classes.

When a disagreement arose in the North Carolina congregation over having a box supper to raise money, Matt LaFan left, because he believed it to be wrong, and came to Antioch. He traveled from his home to Antioch "carrying the basket" — in our day we say the Lord's supper.

Meetings were continued in the old house and under the brush arbor for approximately three years. During those years, others moved into the community who later played prominent roles in the congregation. Some of those were: Ed Hale, a Mr. Lawson, Cal White, Collins Williams, Richard Hamner, Holley Hamner, Arthur Glass, and Billy Parker.

As the community grew larger the need arose for a school house and a building for the church. At this time the government decided to sell a building which had been used as a government school. Richard Hamner bought the building for \$500. After crops were gathered that fall, the people of the community took their wagons, tore the building down, and hauled the lumber back to Antioch and built a building. After some time this building burned and another was built. When the school was closed the building was bought and torn down by Clarence Jones and the land was sold to Antioch. (The preacher's home is located on the site of the old school house).

The first church building was built in 1906, near where the present one stands, on land which was given by Richard Hamner. Most of the timber used in its construction was from the same land.

Perhaps one of the reasons why Antioch has always been noted for its good singing is that a number of talented men taught many singing schools here. Among that group of men were: Luther Thompson; Henry Quillen, who is thought to have taught the first one; Choss Quillen; John Smallwood; and Bro. Vaughn from Lawrenceburg.

Bro. Fred Hamner did his first song leading under the guidance of Luther Thompson about 1917. The tuning fork Bro. Fred is using now he traded for in 1927. In that 42 years he has lost it only once. He lost it at a tent meeting, and the next morning he went back and searched until he found it. He traded a \$2.50 watch for it in 1927. (I doubt if that watch has continued to run for these 42 years).

Bro. Will Behel preached at Antioch once a month beginning about 1908. He traveled by buggy or horseback. Often he preached, receiving no money in return.

During the first meeting at Antioch Richard Hamner, Sam Glass, Jim Smith and Holley Hamner were baptized — about 1907.

Some of the dates of baptisms we have been able to find are: Bro. Rufus Smith- 1908- by E.O. Coffman; Sis. Florence Glover- 1908- by Will Behel; Sis. Lizzie Jones- 1910- by Billy Harrison; Bro. Earl Glover- 1915- by E.O. Coffman; Bro. Eli Jones- 1917; Sis. Mamie Peck- 1919- by E.O. Coffman; Sis. Oma Jones- 1919; Bro. Fred Hamner- 1916- by E.O. Coffman; Sis. Belle Hamner- 1915- by Paul Kimbrell; and Sis. Lizzie Smith- about 1915- by E.O. Coffman.

Some recall two different occasions when a visiting preacher had to leave for other appointments without having time to baptize those who had responded. On both occasions Bro. Rufus Smith did the baptizing. The two baptized were Mrs. Ethyl McMurtrey, and Mrs. Elizabeth Smith Murphy.

On the list of preachers who preached at Antioch either for meetings, or monthly, or regularly we find these men: Billy Harrison, who preached his 1st sermon at Antioch, (also one near the end of his life); Petty Ezell; Bro. Holt who is believed to have been the first visiting preachers here; J.T. Harris; a blind preacher named Martindale; John Campbell; Bro. Gainer; Floyd Parker; Wilbur Quillen, — some believe his first sermon was preached here; Bro. John Cox — who preached his first sermon here; Melvin Campbell — who began preaching here in 1948 and worked here some 12 to 14 years; Bro. Lancaster; Aldon Hendrix; Gilbert Gibbs; Millard Gibbs; Bro. Hollis; Edward Harper; Royco Kretzer; Horace Stutts; Howard Blazer; Larry Gooch.

Some women who were of great influence for the church in its early days were: Susie Jones, Mary Thompson, and (Grandma) Hale; and perhaps others who should be mentioned.

The second building, which is now used for our classrooms, was built in the late 1930's or early 1940's. Bro. Will Smith was the man-in-charge of building it.

Others remember a time when Bro. Will Smith gave a beef, which was killed and prepared for eating at an all-day singing.

Antioch Preachers 1968 to 1998

Larry Harper	September 1968-August 1971
Paul Sain	September 1971-March 1973
Malcolm Glover	June 1973-July 1975
Larry Harper	June 1973-July 1975
Claudie Jones	August 1975-May 1983
Donnie D'Herde	June 1983-June 1984
Harry Smith	September 1984-January 1987
Doug Rogers	February 1984-February 1991
Frank Foust	March 1991-October 1996
Tim McCafferty	November 1996 to July 1998 (Present)

The congregation has been served well by the song leaders who have attended over the years. Possibly the best known of these was Buford Peck who was as enthusiastic about singing as anyone you will ever meet. He started leading singing when he was young and continued to lead until his death in 1992. He did many good things for the church, and one of the most important was the emphasis he gave to singing in spirit and truth.

The auditorium, built in 1962, was remodeled in the Spring of 1997. During this time the congregation met in the church annex. The remodeling work was supervised by Junior Smith with several of the men of the congregation assisting.

The first wedding in the refurbished auditorium was that of Kerry Peck and Suzanne Porter. It is interesting that the first wedding in the newly built auditorium in 1962 was that of Preston Porter and Ann Smith, Suzanne's mother and father.

The Antioch church has various local works including support for World Evangelist Newspaper, the UNA Student Center, and Christian Children's Homes. In addition to the work of the Antioch church in the community there are also works throughout the world, including The African Christian Hospital, Wayne Barrier (Asia), Bruce Tetreau (Canada), Jules Cseszko (Australia), and the Thailand Literature Program. *Submitted by: Eckard Walker, Written by: Larry Harper in 1969 and Contribution by: Tim McCafferty*

Bedingfield Community and Early Burial Ground

Charles Henry Bedingfield, Jr. and Jane Ashley Bedingfield were the early settlers in northwest Alabama Territory with the purchase of 91 acres of land on April 22, 1818 located section 30, township 2, range 6W in Limestone county. The federal census for that county listed "Charles Benningfield" and wife, three sons and two daughters under 21 years of age, in the household. I have been successful in identifying two of the sons, James Ashley and Charles Bedingfield that are featured in this history. The spelling of the name was incorrect on the census and on the land purchase it was Billingfield. I have on later documents identified this family correctly as Bedingfield.

After only eight years in Limestone County, Charles Henry was on the move and purchased 160 acres, NE quarter of section 11, township 3, range 7W, in neighboring Lauderdale County on January 20, 1826. The family moved to Lauderdale then, but they were not listed on the 1830 census in either county, an obvious oversight in one of the counties. James Ashley Bedingfield, the oldest son was listed in Lauderdale with his second wife, 2 sons, 1 daughter from first marriage and 1 daughter from second marriage in the household. All of the Bedingfields may have resided in the same home then as James Ashley did not marry his second wife until May 5, 1829 and Charles was unmarried at the time of that census. Charles Henry, Jr., wife Jane, and son Charles and possibly other family members in the community household were missed because James Ashley accounted only for his family members.

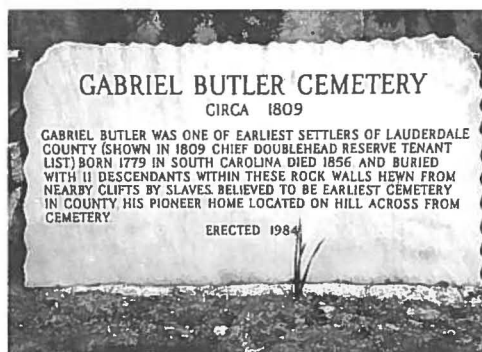
In 1828 there were two transactions by Charles Henry Bedingfield, on May 31, 1828 to James Ashley and on September 18, 1828 to Charles, his sons, for 160 acres each for the sum of \$400.00 each that transferred NW quarter of section 11, township 3, range 7W, and NE quarter of the same section was to son Charles giving them

the deeds to the property then. Charles Henry Bedingfield, Jr. and wife Jane were assured that they would have care and a home for the remainder of their natural lives. Son Charles and probably James Ashley Bedingfield, operated a Ferry service from the NE quarter across Elk River until October 26, 1850 when Charles sold 158 and 81/100 acres of land and the Ferry service to Addison D. Binford for \$3,176.20. There was 1 19/100 acres less than the original purchase and the transfer to Charles Bedingfield on September 18, 1828. That acreage was set aside for a Bedingfield Burial ground and not registered in land office nor given a name. There are Bedingfields buried in the same area now known as "Miller Cemetery", but Charles Henry Bedingfield, Jr. and Jane Ashley Bedingfield, and possibly a son, I have not identified, two children of James Ashley Bedingfield and Tabitha Stafford, his first wife. Both Charles Henry and wife Jane died between 1840 and 1850 censuses, Charles Henry was born ca 1773 and Jane about the same time. Their unidentified son was older than Charles and I believe he was on the 1840 federal census with Charles and died during the same time period as his father and mother. There is a walled enclosure there with 3 to 5 graves said to be Bedingfields, or Speegles, I believe that they are Bedingfields.

Susanna Rebecca Bedingfield married first James Shoemaker. After his death, about 1858, she married her second husband, Thomas P. Miller, in December 1860 and they had three children. A son born ca 1866, W. Daniel Miller and his father were the ones that carried the Bedingfield connection down to 1919. After the death of Thomas P. Miller the name "Miller" was given to the old Bedingfield burial ground. Susanna R. Bedingfield Shoemaker Miller died September 28, 1873. She was a daughter of James Ashley Bedingfield and Hannah E. Speegle and she is buried in this Cemetery. *Submitted by: Bobby L. Romine, Great Grandson of Charles Bedingfield.*

Butler Cemetery at Bluewater Creek

The Butler Cemetery at Bluewater Creek is located approximately 18 miles east of Florence, Alabama and one mile north of U.S. Highway 72 on County Road 421. The cemetery is located on land Gabriel "Gabe" Butler (1779-1856) originally purchased from



Monument at Butler Cemetery. Erected 1984.

the United States November 14, 1818. He later deeded, by exception, one acre for the old part of the cemetery. The size of the cemetery was expanded in 1920 by the purchase of one-half acre from A.R. and J.R. McGarry, and expanded again in 1971 by 2.3 acres purchased from C.R. and Ruth A. Gist Walton. Many of Gabe's descendants

are buried here including my father Oakley Wilson Butler, my grandfather Thomas David Butler, my great-grandfather Gabriel W. Butler, and my great-great-grandfather Chisholm Butler. In April 1984, Butler descendants initiated the placement of a large monument at the rock wall enclosure which is thought to contain Gabe's grave and the graves of other Butler descendants. Inscribed on the monument is a brief history of Gabe's early settlement in Lauderdale County.

Decoration Day is held the 1st Sunday of August. Although the bringing of rakes, brooms and mowers to clean the cemetery, and afterwards having lunch followed by preaching is no longer the tradition, many of Gabe's descendants still bring their chairs to sit under the old shade trees to enjoy the opportunity to visit and exchange family information and histories ... and to contribute their donations for the care of the place that they all love so much. *Submitted by: JoAnne Butler White, great-great-great granddaughter of Gabriel "Gabe" Butler, 112 Pat Street, Athens, AL 35611*

Gabriel Butler (Deed to the Baptist Church)

Know all men by these presents that I Gabriel Butler of the County of Lauderdale & State of Alabama for and in consideration of the natural love & good will which I bear towards the Religious worship of God by the Baptist Denomination as well as one dollar, to me in

hand paid the Receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged at or before the sealing of or delivering of these presents do give & Grant unto the said before named Religious Society the following described lot of ground to be laid off where the new Meeting House is now in building on the Southwest quarter of Section No. 17 of Township No. 2 of Range No. 8 west. Containing Two acres of ground to be laid off in the most Convenient way for the accommodation of the Meeting House but the length up and down the Bluff is to be double of width & I do for myself my heirs Executors Administrators or assigns quit claim unto the before and named society all Right & Title unto the before named parcel of land, so long as it shall be used as a place of worship. And



Gabriel Butler Baptist Church

I the said Gabriel Butler for myself and my heirs Executors Administrators or assigns against the claims of any person or persons whatever claiming through or by me & I do warrant and defend the Right and Title of said Lands unto the above named Society so long as it shall be occupied by them for religious worship. In witness whereof I have herunto set my hand & affixed my Seal this 16 of May 1840.

Test. Jas. R. Alexander

A. Askew

Gabriel Butler (Seal)

Submitted by: Elora Putman

Sources: Lauderdale County, Alabama, Deed Book 10, page 9.

Canaan United Methodist Church

Canaan United Methodist Church, located in the "Bend of the Tennessee River" area of western Lauderdale County, is said to be the oldest Methodist church building remaining in the county in which active services are still being held. The original deed has been lost, but the most accurate information indicates the church building was completed about 1844 — making it 154 years old.

The church has continued to stand for the past century and a half because of the care and quality of its original planners and builders and the loving care of its people. The Civil War and a very extensive vandalism have left their dents in her structures, but her spirit has remained unchanged. The ground on which it stands was Indian Land until 1818, when it became available for settlement. The rich bottomland sold and was settled very rapidly. Through these early pioneers Canaan came into existence.

A Mr. Monroe built the church on land donated by Edmund Noel. A slave gallery was located over the pulpit. In 1894, the pulpit was moved from the east side of the building to the west side, the slave gallery was removed, and the steeple was added. In 1961, three classrooms were added to the back of the original building, covering the door leading to the gallery. The original pews, marred with bullet holes from the Civil War, were replaced in 1968. An educational building was completed in 1973.



Historic Canaan Church

The church and cemetery suffered a very extensive vandalism January 5, 1980. Tombstones were broken and overturned; some being those of the early settlers. Help came in from many sources — both financial and as cleanup crews. The following Sunday morning found a people worshipping in the church with boarded-up windows but with a strong determination to start anew.

Its members built a new parsonage on the church grounds after much planning and hard work. The building was dedicated on

March 25, 1990. One of the most appreciated features of the parsonage is the beautiful oak stairway which was crafted from original church pews.

One of the largest crowds to gather at Canaan was Sunday, August 13, 1994, when many people came, in wagons, long dresses, bonnets and top hats, to join in the 150 years celebration in the church of their youth. Following the worship service, which included a history of the church, worshippers enjoyed an old-fashioned "dinner-on-the-ground" under the trees, wagon rides and reminiscing.

We as a church have a great heritage from a people who braved the wilds of a new frontier to settle the area and build their church; and we wonder if in naming it "Canaan" they, too, claimed the Scripture of the promised land from Genesis 17:8 — "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, and for everlasting possession; and I will be their God." *Submitted by: Mildred Wright Wells, Member; 500 County Road 208, Florence, AL 35633, and Cora Darby Bird, Member; 1705 County Road 213, Florence, AL 35633*
Sources: Joseph Buchannan Thompson (June 30, 1942) 1850 Census of Lauderdale County, Jerry Darby, Mildred Wells, Cora Bird

Center Hill Church of Christ

About 1920, a small group of men decided that, instead of traveling the distance to North Carolina Church or to Lexington, they would start a church near the Center Hill community. Ben and Dora Forsythe, Bill Forsythe, Henry and Rebecca Posey, the George Michael family, Arthur and Mary Wisdom, Claude and Dora Thigpen, Ben Michael, Duncan and Susie Killen, and the John Stuart family played important roles in establishing the congregation at Center Hill.

Church tradition says that the first sign that was put up on the building, Christian Church, was severely damaged by woodpeckers. Church leaders decided to replace it with a new one reading, Church of Christ. One brother was quoted as saying, "That's the way it should have been in the beginning".

Today, a large, modern brick building, with a full-time minister, has replaced the original, frame structure and the once-a-month visiting preacher. A modern baptistry replaces the creek. Center Hill Church of Christ plays an important part in the lives of many in the Center Hill community.



Singing School at Center Hill Church of Christ made circa 1924

The accompanying photograph is of a singing school held at Center Hill Church circa 1924. The teacher, Lewis Thompson, is on the back row with Charlie and Robert Thompson. Some other members of the group are: Lassie Beadle, Verlie Stuart, Cecelia Allen, Hester Hill, Levada Hill, Stella English, Lillie Michael, Esther Hill, Louise Posey, Tessie Black, Pauline Davis, Clayton Wright, Ethel Forsythe, Birdie Wisdom, Reeder Allen, Milton Hill, Duncan Stuart and Granville O. Allen (in the center of the front row). *Submitted by: Granville O. Allen*

Center Star Cumberland Presbyterian Church

The Center Star Cumberland Presbyterian Church purchased property at the present site from T.M. and A.C. Scott. The elders were Branston Jones, Andrew Jackson, B.B. Phillips, Andrew J. Williams and Presley Williams. There are no records from 1895-1909 due to a fire destroying all records.

In 1909 a new church was built with the pastor being William M. Nelly. History of the church is sketchy from 1909-1960.

In March 1960, the present church building was built and the elders at that time were W.B. McCormick, Homer L. Stutts, Archie B. Snody, Carnell Butler and Lawton Williams.

In 1970 a new manse was built with a new fellowship hall added in 1977. The pastors from 1970 to present have been Bro. Jimmy Johnston, Bro. E.C. Shepard, Bro. Carl Cook, Bro. J.E. Doyle, Bro.

Gene Sticher, Bro. Fred Polacek, Bro. Jerry Marlow and Bro. W.L. Wallace. Bro. Vic Brackin served as interim pastor for a short period. The church is now known as Center Star Church. This change took place in June 1986, when the local congregation withdrew from the Cumberland Presbyterian Church because of changes in doctrine. The local church was affiliated with the McGready Pres-

bytery until 1986. The relationship was finally dissolved in Lauderdale County Court in 1990 with the property being purchased by the local congregation. There are now seventy members in the church.

Known elders that served at sometime during the history of the church are as follows:

Herman Briggs, Tom Snoddy, Leonard Loveless, Will Loveless, Dr. J.M. Maples, Andrew Jackson, William Jackson, Tom White, Allison Greer, Press Simson Presley and Raymond Williams.



Center Star Church

The Center Star United Methodist Church

The Center Star United Methodist Church is the birthplace of Methodism in Lauderdale County. Its forerunner was the Methodist Society, organized in June 1818, by Circuit Riders sent from the Tennessee Conference of the Methodist Church. Alabama did not become a state until 1819.

The first services were held in the early settlers' cabins, located on land known as Cherokee Indian Chief Doublehead's Reserve. This tract of land lay between Cypress Creek to the West, Elk River on the east, the Tennessee State line to the north and the Tennessee River on the south.

The Reverend Isaac Lindsey was one of the early Circuit Riders sent to baptize prospective members in nearby Blue Water Creek. He was murdered soon after his arrival. A crude cabin with a dirt floor and two split-log benches was the first actual church building. It was located approximately three miles northeast of the mouth of Blue Water Creek, which flows into the Tennessee River. Rev. Robert Hooper was the first appointed minister. In 1830-31, the church was relocated two miles west, to Masonville (Center Star).

Economic times were good in the 1840's, cotton was king and water was an abundant transportation source. Time had come to build a suitable church house at Masonville (Center Star). The very able presiding Elder Ambrose F. Driskell was appointed to the task! In his honor the new church bore his name, Driskell Chapel Methodist Church.

The Civil War did not pass by Driskell Chapel's members. In May 1861, Captain Edward A. O'Neal, later to become Alabama governor, held a meeting in a beautiful grove beside the church to organize the Calhoun Guards. According to the Driskell Chapel Class Book, an invaluable record owned by the Harrison family of Killen, practically every male member enlisted, along with M.L. Whitten, pastor. He marched off to war a Confederate Chaplain.

The War came back to Driskell Chapel as The Battle of Center Star, fought in sight of the church on May 7, 1864. During this time, Susannah F. Taylor, a pretty, young Driskell Chapel member, refused to play the piano for the Union Army Colonel, who was camped with his men, on her father's large plantation at Center Star.

In the late 1880's the names Driskell Chapel along with Masonville, faded into the archives of time. Center Star Methodist was born and became the mother church of Harrison Chapel, Killen, Elgin and Mt. Bethel Churches.

The church was moved twice since then; in 1948 about one mile west toward Killen and then back to its present location in 1965, in Center Star, on US Hwy. 72 E, near where it was in 1830. It is now the Center Star United Methodist Church.

Center Star Church has seen many financial hurdles through the years. From 1818, she has seen the congregation's men go off to all the different Wars that took place, including the recent Persian Gulf conflict.

In the early years, bartering of goods donated by the members was the major source of church funds for any building, maintenance, and to "pay the preacher". By the Depression era, box suppers, ice cream suppers, and more bartering (gift of a hen was usually worth a dollar) was the practice. Homemade candy was always a seller!

Today, the annual Fall Festival, a couple of chicken stews and maybe a spaghetti supper or two usually provide the "extra" needed, over and above regular offerings.

The church, parsonage, and fellowship hall are located on a well landscaped lot. With her pretty steeple, sanctuary, bell tower (original bell from the 1800's) and J.C. Campbell, Jr. memorial Carillon given by his family and friends, she represents her congregation well.

There are 124 members on roll, with 75 active. The present pastor is Albert L. Helton, Jr. There is a very supportive United Methodist Women's group and a dedicated choir and Administrative Board.

Beside the church stands a marker from the Alabama Historical Association. Its



Center Star United Methodist Church

words takes one back to the presence of those early Circuit Riders, the sounds of their tired horses hoofbeats, and the sadness of the War years. Center Star United Methodist members must work very hard to carry on a great tradition of service and spiritual guidance to the community. Submitted by: Joyce Thornton, Church Historian Sources: 1. Much of the above information was researched by William Lindsey McDonald, a local Author and Florence City Historian. He is a former pastor of Center Star UMC. 2. The Driskell Chapel Class Book (Harrison Family) in Killen

Central Baptist Church of Florence

Starting as a mission of First Baptist Church of Florence, the history of this great church began in 1896 when Brother R.E. Paulk, a county missionary, recognized that factory workers in the booming east side of town needed a place to worship. Dr. A.D. Bellamy, president of Florence Wagon Works and J.T. and Cyrus Ashcraft of Ashcraft Mills were influential in initiating the building of the East Florence Baptist Mission at the corner of Central Avenue and Aetna Street. Ten men assumed the expense of building the one-room chapel with a basement. The basement had a "pool" (baptistry), but some people preferred to be baptized in the "running" water of the Tennessee River.

With fifty-three charter members, the mission was constituted the East Florence Baptist Church on March 4, 1900. In 1919 the name was changed to Central Baptist Church. Then in 1923 a new house of worship was constructed on the present site at the corner of Huntsville Road and Aetna Street. The practice of men sitting together on one side of the church and ladies on the other disappeared with the building of the new sanctuary as did the traditional "deacon's bench." This second church building burned while a new sanctuary was being constructed. The third and existing facility was completed and dedicated in 1957.



Central Baptist Church, Florence, Alabama

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The Lord had richly blessed His people at Central by providing outstanding leaders. Brother C.C. Winters was the first pastor, and Brother Deryl Alexander is the present and twenty-seventh pastor. Having existed for almost a century, we pray that Central Baptist Church will be lifting His name at the time of His return. *Submitted by: Judy Holcomb, History Committee Member, 746 B Sannoner Avenue, Florence, AL 35630*
Sources: Various church documents and interviews with members

Central Heights Baptist Church

The Central Heights Baptist Church actually began in 1952 when Associational Missionary Harold C. Marsh and Rev. L.E. Kelley, Pastor of Highland Baptist Church, took a count of the houses on the Savannah Highway.

Highland sponsored a VBS in July, 1953, in the basement of the Walker Johnson home. The first worship service was held in the Johnson basement on July 26, 1953. Rev. Harold C. Marsh served as pastor of the mission which was sponsored by Highland Baptist Church, Florence.

In October, 1953, Highland purchased 23 acres of land on Lauderdale 15 and gave it to the mission for the future building. The Groundbreaking Service for the educational building was March 7, 1954; the building was ready for occupancy by late summer.

The church was organized on October 27, 1957. The Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association accepted Central Heights into the association on November 19, 1957.

In 1959 the church voted to build a pastorium, which was completed in 1960.

Construction of an auditorium was begun in 1962 and completed in 1963. On April 28, 1963, the first service was held in the auditorium and it was dedicated that afternoon.

A multipurpose building was constructed in 1985; the dedication was held on October 6, 1985.

Full-time pastors who have served the church are: John Lazenby, F.L. Hacker, Frank A. Martin, Robert D. Moseley, William E. Poe,* Bob T. Jones,* and Robert E. Haney. Bro. Mike Colston presently serves the growing church as pastor.

*pastored two different times *Submitted by: Maragem Foshee Koonce*
Sources: Central Heights Baptist Church Special Bulletins — October 24, 1982, October 6, 1985

Central Heights United Methodist Church

As the Central Heights Community grew, plans were made for a Methodist Church near the school. In spite of a shortage of materials in 1945, the Central Heights Methodist church was erected. The brick church was built mainly with the labor of volunteers and charter members. The land was given by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Haddock, Sr., and Mr. and Mrs. Black Palmer. The following year a small parsonage was built next door to the church on land obtained from Mr. and Mrs. W.L. Davis.

In 1956 the trustees purchased a lot adjacent to the church property for a larger parsonage in the future. In 1960 a fund was established for this purpose with an endowment from a deceased charter member, John Henry Haddock, Sr. The church chimes were given by his family in his memory in 1968.

Membership of the church has always been small, but it has furnished leadership in the district and conference. Some outstanding ministers have served as pastor of this church and both pastors and members have provided strong leadership in that community and Lauderdale County.

Through the years the church has undergone many improvements. In 1995 the Central Heights United Methodist church celebrated its 50th anniversary with a week of special activities. The people of this church are proud of their past and envision a future of continued service to God and their community.

A more complete record can be found in the North Alabama Conference United Methodist Archives. *Submitted by: Violet Graben, 4410 County Road 6, Florence, AL 35633*

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - Day Saints in Laud. Co.

Prior to 1955 there had not been any organized meetings of the Church in Lauderdale County. A pair of Missionaries would come into the area and stay a day or two with some of the members. They would hold a cottage meeting in one of the homes. These visits would occur maybe twice a year or less frequent.

In early 1955 two Missionaries were assigned to the area and they began holding Sunday School in the American Legion Home in Florence. A short time later we were asked to move from the Legion Hall and rented a place in Sheffield.

On January 1, 1956 the first unit of the Church was organized in Lauderdale County. At this time there were 60 members in the area. In March of 1956 we rented the Knights of Pythias Hall in Florence, where we remained until March 1974 when our new building was completed on Broadway Blvd. Following church policy the building was paid for when it was completed.



James and Juanita Frye, Bishop 1974-1985

In 1970 we had grown to a Ward status. Ward being a congregation of about 300 members or more. A Ward is presided over by a Bishop. About 1990 an addition was made to the building, increasing the square footage to about 17,000. At present the membership is about 550. At present there are three young men (ages 19-21) serving two year missions teaching the Gospel. Two are serving in South America and one is serving in Nevada. *Submitted by: LeAnn Lash*

East Florence Church of Christ

The East Florence congregation began in 1897. Laura Ann Robinett and her sister, Sara Jane Robinett came from Lawrenceburg, Tn. to live and work in the Sweetwater Community of East Florence. They worked at the Cherry Cotton Mill. They walked to town to worship at the Poplar Street Church of Christ. The weather and the long walk persuaded the young ladies to "beg" the elders to help get a congregation in their area. C.E. Holt and J.T. Harris are responsible for the beginning of the East Florence congregation.

They also worshipped in the home of Hiram Brewer and his family and later in a building belonging to the Pump & Lumber Co. on Aetna Street.

It was published in the Florence Times that they were meeting in their new building "on the hill" December 26, 1899. The building on the corner of Ironside and Woodard St. The small one room white frame building faced Huntsville Rd. It had two large doors at the front entrance with about twenty-one steps leading to the doorway.

A small bell tower was located on the east side and used as an entrance from the alley. A large bell rang every Sunday for services. The first preacher was A.P. Holtsford (January



East Florence Church of Christ - "The church on the hill" late 1940s

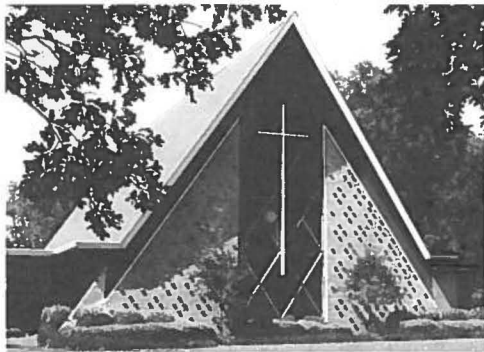
1900). The heat consisted of a potbellied stove that they huddled around for several years. Gas lights were the source of light until 1927 or 1928. There was a meter fed with quarters and the money was collected periodically for the gas service.

In the 1930s a baptistry was installed and a floor furnace. Sweetwater Creek, the river and the Poplar Street church were used for baptizing in the earlier years. The building was added onto and included classrooms with folding doors.

In 1948 lots were purchased on the corner of Huntsville Rd. & Industry St. for the second building. It was brick and had several steps at the front entrance and also had a basement. The little church on the hill was in sight of the new building. It was sold to A.H. Stults in 1950 and used for apartments, then later burned down. The present (3rd building) was completed in 1971 and is at the same location. *Submitted by: Jane Johnson Hamm, author of "East Florence Church of Christ History" book. References from Irma Matthews Plott, UNA and Florence Libraries, Florence Times and Florence Herald and members of the congregation and their families.*

Edgemont United Methodist Church

Edgemont United Methodist Church is a place where the word of God is preached and God's love experienced. The first worship service at Edgemont was held August 3, 1958. About two months later, on Charter Member Sunday, seventy five persons were enrolled as charter members. Eleven of these charter members are still active in a congregation that has grown to about 350 members. These members, "the Edgemont Family," are a close and caring group with a deep interest and concern for the spiritual and human needs of the community.



Edgemont United Methodist Church

Edgemont Church has grown not only in membership numbers but in programs and service to the members and the community. While worship is traditional, a strong education program offers to all age and interest groups the opportunity to study, learn, and enjoy Christian fellowship.

Numerous programs such as lay speaking, Early Arts, Mothers Morning Out, and many others reach out to the community.

Probably the most visible evidence of Edgemont's growth can be seen in the buildings and grounds. Starting with a renovated dwelling as a place of worship and eleven acres of land, a gift from the Florence United Methodist Church, Edgemont has constantly expanded its facilities in an effort to meet the needs of the congregation and community. Today the buildings consists of four major structures: the sanctuary, an educational building, a family life center, and the church parsonage.

Members of Edgemont are deeply sensitive to its mission of making disciples for Jesus by practicing the love of God and neighbor. *Submitted by: Kenneth R. Johnson*

Elgin United Methodist Church

Our church started as a union Sunday school, using different denominational literature for each quarter. We met in the school house and Lillie Creel, Hannah Tays, Dulus White, and Eva Pitts were our first teachers.



Elgin United Methodist Church

We were told that if we would make it a Methodist church, we could get financial help from the Conference. On March 3, 1935, we were organized into a Methodist church. Charter members were Jimmy and Fern Davis, J. Finis Davis, Betty Belew, Dulus White, Marie Williams, Gilbert and Mae White and Mattie Covington. Our first pastor was Rev. C.G. Aldridge.

Our first building was one of the old CCC Camp buildings, which Gilbert White tore down and moved from Wheeler Dam to the present site. Rev. McGee, a Presbyterian minister, put the building back together and preached the first sermon in it.

When we had raised enough funds, we decided to build a real church building. The women and children dug the trench for the footing and hauled the soil out in wheel barrows. Members, such as Rev. G.O. Newman, D.S. Belew, Farley and Celesta Butler, and John A. White, and others in the community helped construct the church building.

In 1959, Rev. Lee Sanderson became our first full-time pastor. Our proudest day was when we dedicated our church, but long before that day, the altar had been dedicated with tears from broken hearts and tears of joy, too. *Submitted by: Mrs. Betty Belew, charter member, Rogersville, AL*

Finnish Worship in Cloverdale

The Finns brought the Lutheran faith with them from Finland. During the early years, Finnish Sunday School was held every Sunday — during bad weather in different homes and in a bush arbor during summer months. The Lutheran catechism and Bible history were taught. The primer class was taught the Finnish alphabet and reading from a Finnish first reader called the AAP-INEN. It contained the alphabet, Lord's Prayer, Apostles Creed, Ten Commandments, and many Bible stories.

About once a year a Finnish minister would come from the North to hold worship services and teach confirmation classes. Babies born during the year were baptized by one of the Finnish leaders as there was no full-time minister locally. The services were finally discontinued as the younger generation began attending Salem Methodist Church in Cloverdale.

Two favorite Finnish holidays were Christmas and Juhannus Paiva (St. John the Baptist day, which is June 24). On Christmas Eve, the community would gather for a Finnish Christmas program and delicious refreshments. June 24th was celebrated with a picnic and a program of Finnish poems, songs and speeches. *Submitted by: Milka "Millie" Seppanen Duke.*

First Baptist Church

of Center Star

On January 1, 1957 Center Star Baptist Church was organized with twelve members, who felt the need for a Baptist Church in this area. Although, seven of the charter members came from Killen Baptist Church, this was not a mission from that church. The twelve charter members were Mr. and Mrs. Arvell Stutts, Mr. Bennett Stutts, Miss Becky Curtis, Miss Irene Curtis, Mr. Earl Curtis, Mr. C.N. Phillips and Mr. Jack Hall. Our first building, which was located 1-1/2 blocks North of highway 72 in Center Star, was leased for a period of one year from Mr. C.N. Phillips for \$40.00 per month and was purchased on October 6, 1957 for \$2,400.00. The Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association donated \$900.00 toward the purchase. The Association furnished the first pastor, Brother Harold Marsh, who served for nine months, just until the church found a pastor. In September 1957 Brother Richard Inman was called to be our first pastor. After about two years our church was declared by the Association a "Church".



First Baptist Church, Center Star

On November 23, 1964 this building was moved to the present site with 20 active members. At this time two acres of land was purchased for \$3,000.00 and an additional acre was given by Mr. Slim Aldridge. This information is recorded in the office of Probate Judge of Lauderdale County. The first building consisted of an auditorium, four finished Sunday School rooms and four unfinished Sunday School rooms. Brother Earl Stutts was called as pastor at the new location and Brother Homer Stevenson as assistant pastor. Serving the church as pastor have been the following: Tommy Davis, James Doss, Bill Davidson, W.B. Calvert, Lewis Screws, Alton Smith, Michael Beck, Virgil Chisolm, Earl Flannigan, Clayton Taylor, Lloyd Love, Rick Patterson, Frank Stone, Marion Young, George Stewart, Walter Brooks, and Billy Cagle. As of May 1998 our pastor is Brother Ronnie Jones.

Currently our membership is approximately 600 and plans are being made for building expansion. *Submitted by: Edgar Griggs - Minister of Education and Music*
Sources: Church history, Pages 859 & 280 Lauderdale County land record book.

First Baptist Church of Florence

The first Baptist Church in Florence was organized 27 May 1888 in the Lauderdale County Courthouse. It had seven members: Rev. and Mrs. J.C. Hudson, Dr. and Mrs. Levi F. Duckett, Miss Florence Rooke, Dr. L.C. Allen, and Julian Field.

Earlier Baptists had reached Florence. In 1880 W.B. Crumpton, Alabama Baptist Convention, "found two Baptists,, a woman who was uninterested and a shoemaker who had no idea of the strength of Baptists in the state." Some were in the Presbyterian church whose pastor said he "would be glad to see them go, for they make the poorest of Presbyterians".

The church was soon a leader; especially in missions. It helped form the Florence Baptist Association in December 1889. It helped form at least four churches: Central 1900; Highland 1924; Woodward Avenue 1944; Woodmont 1961. At least nine others came through these. Gifts to missions is one of the highest in the Association; in 1992 it gave 32% to the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptist Convention compared to 18% for all churches.

Missions commitment is illustrated by long time Deacon Givens Gallant, known for walking to local missions. A stranger stopped and asked him for directions. After giving directions, Gallant invited him to a revival saying "We expect a great evangelist." The stranger replied "I hope so; I am the evangelist."

Members have spread Christianity throughout the world. At least 15 were missionaries including now retired and present members Philip and Martha Brandon Anderson in the Philippines. The church sends Volunteer Missionaries to help new churches or missions in other states.

The church added land and buildings many times to its original site on Tombigbee Street. It celebrated 75 years in 1963 by dedicating its third sanctuary and a multipurpose room. It is listed on the Register of Historic Sites.

The Church's steeple shows love of Christ to the community. This spiritual witness stands between the library and Wilson Park. Unique responses to its location include special music and other community programs, Dial a Devotion, and luncheon programs for downtown workers led by Pastor Larry Wright. *Submitted by: Former member Al Henderson.*

Sources: Mrs. George H. Maness, *The First Baptist Church 1888-1963*, 1962. Mrs. Thomas A. Hurt, Mrs. Jack Bull, and Miss Gladys Shephard, *Extended History 1963-1988*, 1988. Richard G. Crowe, *The First Fifty Years, Colbert Lauderdale Baptist Association*, 1983.

First Baptist Church of Green Hill

The First Baptist Church of Green Hill, Alabama, formerly Union Grove Missionary Baptist Church, was organized in May 1859. The first church building was in the North Carolina community. About 1904, a new church was built near Richardson Creek. Then in 1921, the church moved near Stutts Cemetery on Bridge Road. It was here that a Sunday School was organized in May 1924. A borrowed truck was used to transport people in the Green Hill community to the church.



First Baptist Church Florence AL, Wood Avenue and Tombigbee Street, About 1995.

In August 1942 land was purchased from James White for \$150 and a new church was built in the Green Hill community. In 1947 six classrooms were added and the name was changed from Union Grove Baptist Church to First Baptist Church of Green Hill. In March 1956 additional land and a house were purchased from Homer Green. Bro. Kyle Scates, the first full-time, on the field, pastor moved into the pastorium in 1960.

In 1967 the old sanctuary was torn down and a new sanctuary erected in its place. In 1979 a new educational building and Family Life Center were constructed to replace the original building that burned in December 1978. In the spring of 1998 the sanctuary was completely renovated.

From the original ten members the church has grown to 375 members and has a variety of programs designed to minister to all age groups. Bro. David Price has been pastor since February 1995. *Submitted by: Nancy Brown, church member*



First Baptist Church of Green Hill

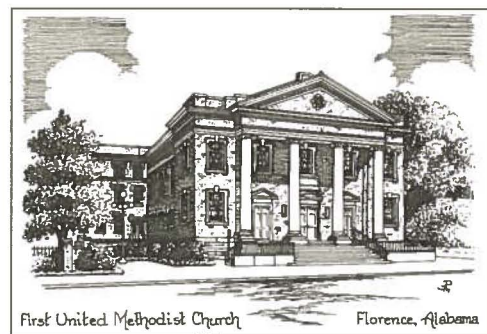
First United Methodist Church

The First United Methodist Church is located on Seminary Street in Florence. It was organized in 1822 by John Cox and John Kerr. Cox and his wife, Frances, were born in England and had been associated with the Wesley's there. Both Cox and Kerr were local ministers, but had no place to have services. The first service was held in Cox's newly built log house.

A later meeting place for the Methodists was at Thomas Farmer's cobbler shop on West Mobile Street. In 1818 the Cypress Land Company set aside land for the Methodist to build a church. The Presbyterians built the first church building in Florence and the Methodist the second building. The first Methodist building was completed in 1835. It would seat 500 people.

It seems that this church had a long series of problems with fires. They started a new church in 1903 and were meeting in a tent. A flash fire destroyed everything in the tent except the pulpit Bible. Before the new building was completed they had a fire in the unfinished building. Firefighters saved most of it. Then in 1920 they had a fire that almost destroyed the building. The church was replaced with the Renaissance style building the Methodist use today.

A memorial garden in memory of Charles Mullins was added in 1977. The bricks were from the 1900 Courthouse, the lamp posts once used in Wilson Park, and the columns from a historic building next to the church. *Submitted by: The Lauderdale County Heritage Book Committee and Written by: Millie Mason*
Sources: Information taken from the Florence Historical Marker at the church and from material furnished by the church from William Lindsey McDonald's book on the church.



The First United Methodist Church of Florence, Alabama

First Presbyterian Church

Florence Alabama

Presbyterians have had a significant presence in Florence since 1818, when the township was formed by the Cypress Land Company. First Presbyterian Church remains on its original plot #84 located at 224 East Mobile Street. This church's first permanent meeting house (see photo) was erected on this property in 1824



First Presbyterian Church First Meeting House 1890

and the outer walls of the original building are contained within the sanctuary of the present church (see photo). Although most of the early records of the church have been lost or destroyed, the age of the first meeting house is indicated by a bill of sale for lumber for the Florence Presbyterian Church signed by John Coffee, who was an early Presbyterian settler in Florence, a founder of the Cypress Land Company, Surveyor General of the Alabama Territory, and Aide to General Andrew Jackson in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend.

These new churches in the territory and early townships

were served by missionaries, itinerants, and stated supply pastors sent out by the West Tennessee Presbytery, the most notable missionary being Gideon Blackburn, who concentrated his travels, 1818-1824, in North Alabama from his base of operation in Franklin, Tennessee. Blackburn is credited with founding the first Presbyterian church in Huntsville and in Tuscumbia and is the probable founder of the Florence Church (circa 1820).

The struggling church in Florence installed its first permanent minister, James L. Sloss, in 1830. Sloss served as pastor and schoolmaster in Florence until his death in 1840.



First Presbyterian Church - 1998

An event of historical interest about the First Presbyterian Church of Florence occurred during the pastorate of Dr. W.H. Mitchell, who was the minister from 1851 to 1871 as well as founder and president of the Florence Synodical College (1855-1872), a school for females which was located on property now occupied by the U.S. Post Office on Seminary Street.

On Sunday morning, July 27, 1862, immediately after leading his congregation in a prayer for Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy, Dr. Mitchell was arrested from the pulpit by Union Officers and was marched to the railroad station in Tuscumbia where he was transported to Illinois and imprisoned for several months. Through intervention of friends in the Federal lines, he was allowed to return home October 1862. Dr. Mitchell was henceforth revered by the congregation and the community as their beloved "prison pastor."

This historical church built and colonized Westminster Presbyterian Church in 1957 and has been a leader in the development of Florence and its institutions. For example, Dr. D.W. Hollingsworth, minister here 1918-1953, organized the first Boy Scout Troop in North Alabama in 1918 and played a leading role in the opening of Eliza Coffee Memorial Hospital in 1920.

In most recent years, this landmark church, with its greatly expanded facilities, has continued to serve the community it has loved and has helped to build. Submitted by: Doris Kelso, Church Historian Sources: A more detailed account of the story of First Presbyterian Church may be found in three volumes of history by Doris Kelso: *A History of First Presbyterian Church, Florence, Alabama, 1818-1968*. Published in 1969; *Blessings in Stained Glass*, Published in 1993; and *Christian Witness, 1962-1995*, Published in 1995.

The Florence Cemetery 1818

The Florence Cemetery is as old as the city of Florence. "When the city was surveyed the cemetery was described as "outside the city limits". The land was designated as the burying grounds for the new town. It contains the graves of early settlers, including a son and brother of



Florence City Cemetery. Tomb on right is former Gov. of Alabama, Emmet O'Neal

Ferinand Sannoner, surveyor of Florence, and served as the principal cemetery for over 130 years. Two Governors in the O'Neal family, as well as many prominent community leaders and their families are interred there.

Soldiers Rest, a Confederate Cemetery, is located near the south property line. This area is the Military Cemetery for Confederate Soldiers. After an 1862 skirmish in the streets of Florence, it was used to bury casualties until the end of the Civil War. Many unknown Confederate and a few unknown Union soldiers rest there. After the war it was reserved for Confederate veterans and their families. In 1977, the historic plot was deeded by the United Daughters of the Confederacy to insure its preservation and perpetual care."

An interesting story about the cemetery is about "Mountain" Tom Clark, who terrorized the citizens of Lauderdale County. He was hanged and buried under Tennessee Street so that people run over him each day. He had bragged that no one would ever run over him. Submitted by: *The Lauderdale County Heritage Book Committee*. Sources: All information taken from plaques that the Florence Historical Society placed in the graveyard.

Goodsprings Cumberland Presbyterian Church

Goodsprings Cumberland Presbyterian Church was established in 1885. It stood on a hill by Second Creek in east Lauderdale County near Elgin Crossroads. In those days, the churches were where people gathered not only to worship, but to fellowship and be



Old Goodsprings Cumberland Presbyterian Church building at Second Creek

together. They would have revivals that would last sometimes for two weeks with preaching at both morning and evening services. They would have special Sunday preaching, homecoming with "dinner on the grounds," and in the later years, ice cream suppers.

Some of the families who attended Goodsprings Cumberland Presbyterian Church in the early days had the surnames of Barringer, Belew, Covington, Creel, Dean, Downs, Gautney, Green, Greer, Grigsby, Grisham, Haraway, Harvey, Hollingsworth, Kennedy, Littrell, Phillips, Thornton, Walker and Yocum. My grandparents, Tom and Danie Kennedy, and their children were one of those families.

It was very sad when the church had to be moved in 1937 because of the backwaters from Joe Wheeler Dam. The water completely surrounded the site on the east, west and south sides. The

church was moved east about one mile to the Thorntontown community on Lee Highway (Highway 72).

The site where the old church building stood is visible from the causeway that crosses Second Creek. *Submitted by: Dott White Grisham, 715 County Road 51, Rogersville, AL 35652*

A History Of Green Chapel Church

Green Chapel Church is located five miles from Lexington, Alabama. The Church is in a valley with two creeks. On the North side of the Church is Keathy Branch and on the South side of the Church is Hurricane Creek.

There has been Church service on the three acres of land since 1872, after the Confederate war. Many memories are still being related. One minister told of a time when he was a child, and there had been a severe drought in the area. The creeks were all powder dry and the wells were dry. The crops were scorched. The members of the Church decided to meet and pray for rain. The Pastor was seen by a neighbor going to the Church with a coat across his arm. The neighbor remarked about him carrying a coat on a hot day. The Pastor told his neighbor we are meeting at the Church to pray for rain, and when the rain starts I will need my coat. The congregation assembled and began to pray for rain. There was a bolt of lightning and a crack of thunder and the rain began to fall. The two creeks were overflowed and the people had to wait until the water got low enough to cross the creek. The photos of the church were taken by Louise Murks Turpen. *Submitted by: Eythel V. Scott*



Green Chapel Church

Helton Drive Church of Christ

On November 6, 1976, about sixty-five people assembled for worship in an aluminum window factory on Patton Street. All had come from the East Florence Church of Christ except two families who came from College View.

The beginning of this new congregation, later known as The Helton Drive Church of Christ, stemmed largely from overcrowded conditions at East Florence. The facilities, especially parking areas, were overtaxed. Also, a number of young men with potential ability for leadership had limited opportunities for development. This situation generated an interest in establishing a new congregation somewhere in the immediate metropolitan area.

Immediately after the first service a search began for property on which to erect a meeting house and a preacher to work full time with the congregation. In discussions on a practical location for the building, Joe Weddington, a member of the group, offered to sell the church a piece of land on Helton Drive. The offer was immediately accepted as it was an excellent location and the price was below market value. Plans were drawn, a contractor hired, and construction began on the building.

Steve Patton, the first preacher, began work here March 6, 1977. The first service in the new building was on May 7, 1978. Attendance is now around 225 people.

The Helton Drive congregation strives to be a first century church of Christ. It carefully follows the writings of the inspired apostles and prophets found only in the New Testament. *Written by: Lindsey Allen, Florence, AL. Edited for this publication by: Mildred Gean Mason, 1624 Bridlewood Drive, Florence, AL 35630.*



Helton Drive Church of Christ, Florence, Alabama

Highland Baptist Church

The institution of Highland Baptist Church, 219 Simpson Street, Florence, Alabama began when a band of devoted Christians organized a Sunday School and held classes in Gilbert School located in North Florence. (Gilbert School has since burned).

A survey of the surrounding area was made, and a committee of five met with the pastors of First Baptist and Central Baptist Churches to decide on plans for the beginning of a church to serve the area.

By October 12, 1924 the church had been constituted with seventy-two charter members (many members coming from the two sister churches to assist the new congregation).

Five deacons were ordained, a lot purchased and a temporary tabernacle was built in a week's time. Furniture was purchased and Sunday services were held in the new tabernacle.

The first pastor, Rev. J.L. Ivey, began his ministry January 1, 1925. The membership soon doubled, and the Sunday School was a fully graded Sunday School. Mission organizations were formed through Women's Missionary Union (now WMU) and two Baptist Young People's Union (now called Church Training or Discipleship Training).

Rev. C.E. Calvert led the church during the depression years with faith and prayer. A committee was appointed to solicit gifts for a building fund. The tabernacle was immediately torn down and work begun on a new structure. During this time the church met in a vacant North Florence Store building for a year until the basement of the new building was ready for worship services on June 1, 1930. During the summer of 1933, worship services were moved to the auditorium. Members worshipped for two years in the auditorium until the building was finally completed and formally dedicated in September 1936.

The mission at Pine Ridge in the East Florence area, now called Grace Baptist, was one of the results of the evangelistic efforts of Rev. F.L. Hacker who became pastor in 1935. An Educational Building was begun in 1940, and completed in September of the same year. Soon a church library was added, with books purchased from the Sunday School Board.

The church members and Rev. Hacker, who labored at Highland during the terrible World War II years, were saddened when one week following the attack on Pearl Harbor, (on December 14, 1941) a fire broke out just before the Sunday School hour and completely destroyed the building and furnishings.

Highland held a special service that afternoon. More than 500 members heard Bro. Hackers brief message, and made plans to immediately solicit funds, and appointed a planning committee. Highland again turned to Gilbert School for a meeting place. Rebuilding began on June 4, 1942, and the dedication of the building was held on January 10, 1943. The building debt was paid in full, which made possible the burning of the mortgage.

Bro. L.E. Kelley began his service on May 2, 1945, and increased the church's involvement in missions. Heeding the command in John 4:35: "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest," a mission was established at Weeden Heights. This mission now called Broadway Baptist, was organized on August 24, 1948 with fifty-two charter members. Two other missions begun under the leadership of Bro. Kelley were organized into the Central Heights Baptist Church and the Forest Hills Baptist Church.

By 1954, membership had outgrown the sanctuary, and plans were made for a new sanctuary and additional educational space. This new structure was completed in February, 1956 and dedicated to the Lord's service.

Rev. Jerry Helms became Highland's pastor in 1963. During his strong leadership a three story education building was dedicated, a kindergarten program established, and a radio program of both morning and evening worship services begun.

During Rev. Helms' ministry, he and his wife suffered a great tragedy when their young son, Luke, was killed in a traffic accident.

Rev. Helms was not only a gifted speaker, he also had a remarkable singing voice, and gave great emphasis on worship through music.

In 1972, Rev. O. Wyndell Jones became pastor, and during this time the church staff grew to include an assistant pastor, minister of music, church hostess, and four full-time secretaries. A T.V. ministry was begun, thus enabling the preaching of the gospel to reach residents in sections of Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama.

Dr. Donovan Davidson became Highland's pastor in 1981 and led the church in expanding in many areas — evangelism, education, stewardship, ministry and missions. A Deaf Ministry, an Intercessory Prayer Ministry, and a Weekday Early Education (WEE) Ministry were begun.

Stewardship was promoted, and a doubling of total gifts was recognized.

In September 1985, Dr. Sammy Gilbreath began his ministry at Highland. Church programs already established continued to be strengthened, and new avenues of witnessing and service started. Many members participated in overseas mission trips, and home mission trips. A beautiful Christian Life Center was built adjoining the church building.

At the present time, Dr. Gil McKee is pastor of Highland Baptist Church. He began his ministry in June of 1997. Plans are presently underway for a complete renovation of the existing sanctuary and much of the older educational space.

Beginning in September of 1998, a second Sunday morning worship service was added enabling Highland to minister more effectively to a broader segment of our community. One service is geared to a contemporary style of worship with ensembles and worship leaders while those who are more comfortable with a traditional approach to worship may choose that service.

As we approach the new millennium, Highland is making every effort to reach more people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. *Submitted by: Bettie Williams, Pastor's secretary, Highland Baptist Church, 219 Simpson Street, Florence, AL 35630*

Sources: Historical Sketch from the 60th Anniversary Booklet prepared for the 60th Anniversary Celebration of Highland Baptist Church on October 7, 1984.

Kennedy - Stutts Cemetery

The Kennedy-Stutts Cemetery, located in Green Hill in Lauderdale County, is one of the oldest in the county. Begun in the 1830s, it is not certain when this name was employed. At one time, there was a Baptist church on the site, perhaps the predecessor of Sweetgum Flat Primitive Baptist Church.

This cemetery underwent a massive restoration in 1994, which took over a year to complete. Local volunteers cut trees, installed a fence, cleaned tombstones, and marked almost a hundred graves with concrete crosses. The county built a road to the cemetery and a sign was put up.

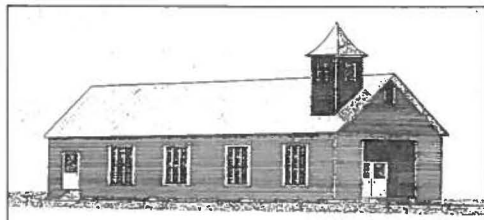
Over 300 people attended the rededication ceremony, planned by the James W. Stewart Chapter, UDC. Col. William McDonald spoke on local history and the people buried in the cemetery. Eight Confederate soldiers were honored with new military markers and the 16th Alabama Infantry provided an honor guard. A family member of each veteran was called forward to place a wreath on his grave. The service was part of the annual reunion of the Stutts family.

Veterans include James Henry Stutts, Elias Kennedy, Enoch Riley Kennedy, James Newton Clemmons, Hugh Hannah, Hiram Holtsford, and James Curtis Clemmons. A memorial stands for Captain Orlando S. Palmer, CSA.

Trustees, Harold Stutts, H.R. Kennedy, Lambert Behel, Bertie Kennedy, and Vickie Rumble, work hard to maintain the cemetery. Harold Stutts and Vickie Rumble serve on the Stutts Family Association board as Special Projects Coordinators for this cemetery. *Submitted by: Vickie Rumble*

Killen church of Christ

In the early 1900's, Jane Comer gave the Church of Christ land located just across the road from Brush Creek. This lot was about three miles from Killen. On this lot was built the one room frame building known as Beech Grove.



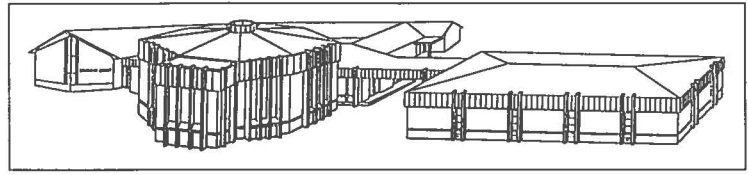
First Killen Church of Christ Building 1924-1961

The Beech Grove Church moved into Killen and became known as the Killen Church of Christ.

Because of Church growth, the small building was impractical to remodel so the Church purchased three acres on the corner of Highway 72 and Lock Six Road. In 1961, a new building was completed which would seat about 400.

Since 1924, The Killen Church of Christ has grown from an attendance in teens to averaging over 325 a Sunday. Its

contribution began at less than \$10 a Sunday and has increased to over \$6,000 weekly. The building that was built in 1961 has had three additions. Now, the complex includes a 1,000 seat auditorium, 27 classrooms, a library, offices, workrooms, baptistry and an annex for fellowship activities.



Killen Church of Christ 1961 - present

The emphasis of Killen Church of Christ is to teach and live by the Bible. It continues in its efforts to restore Christianity to exactly what the early Church experienced as the Bible describes it. Worship is an uplifting, spiritual experience and ALL are welcome to participate. The Church of Christ at Killen has been greatly blessed. *Submitted by: Killen Church of Christ, PO Box 76, Killen, AL 35645, Contact Mailon Wilson*

Lexington United Methodist Church

For 145 years, a people called Methodist have been busy being a Family of Faith in the community of Lexington, Alabama. In 1853, the church consisted of a log building, destroyed during the Civil War. After the war, an old dwelling was used. This house was destroyed by a tornado, after which they met at Asbury, two miles north in Tennessee.

In September of 1902, Reverend G.M. Randle, pastor of the Rogersville Circuit, held a meeting at Lexington to organize a church. They began with 18 members. It is said that Mattie D. Phillips was the first to sign the charter. The presiding elder Rev. S.L. Dobbs.

A lot was deeded by A.L. Phillips for a new church to be built. The building was completed two years later when the Masonic Fraternity built a hall over the church. On the 4th Sunday in May, 1916, this building was destroyed by fire.

Under the pastorate of S.E. Maples, the congregation held services in the school house. During this time, a new church building was completed. It was a one-story white framed building, and had an organ and chairs instead of pews.

In 1949, the present brick structure was completed. The bell from the old building is still in use. In 1959, the first part of the educational building was completed. The present parsonage was built in 1965. The fellowship hall, other additional classrooms, and the church office were built in 1978. In 1994, a new Family Life Center was dedicated. It houses a new pastor's study, gymnasium, and Child Development Center. *Submitted by: Lauderdale County Heritage Book Committee*

The Early History of Methodism in Lauderdale County

Among the earliest Methodist preachers to enter what is now Lauderdale County was the eccentric Lorenzo Dow. In his journal he tells of crossing the Tennessee River here on October 26, 1804. Several years later another Methodist evangelist, Jacob Young, was warned by Chickasaw Chief George Colbert that "we don't want any preaching in the county ..."

The first Methodist congregation to be organized in Lauderdale County occurred in June, 1818. Three circuit riders arrived that month at a settlement near the mouth of Blue Water Creek. This congregation eventually became the Center Star United Methodist Church, the oldest organized congregation of this faith in Lauderdale County. However, as early as 1816, two Faires brothers, Alexander and Richard, began holding religious services in a log schoolhouse in the vicinity of their homes near the banks of Cypress Creek in the northwest part of the county. In the summer of 1818, the Reverend Alexander Faires was charged by the Presiding Elder of the Nashville District to organize a mission here. This became Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church, the second oldest organized congregation in the county.

In that same year the Tennessee Conference of the Methodist Church established the Tennessee River District to oversee its appointment in the Alabama Territory. Two of its earliest circuits were the Shoals and Cypress. At one time the Shoals Circuit was

made up of more than twenty preaching appointments. In 1824, the Cypress circuit had a membership of 127 whites and 31 blacks. Within four years it had grown to 598 whites and 76 blacks. Consisting of some eighteen preaching places, the Cypress Circuit covered an area from Mount Pleasant, Tennessee, to Bear Creek, Alabama, and from Summerville near Decatur to Savannah, Tennessee. The popular Cypress Campground was located on the Waterloo Road west of Florence. Here in the summer of 1828, one hundred people professed their faith.

The Florence First United Methodist Church was organized in a log cabin on West Tuscaloosa Street on Sunday, September 8, 1822. A local preacher, John Cox, was the first minister. Religious services were soon being held in the front room of Thomas Farmer's shoe shop on West Mobile Street. In 1826, a small sanctuary, measuring 24 by 30 feet, was erected on the southwest corner of Tuscaloosa and Locust Streets. It was moved to the corner of Tuscaloosa and Seminary Streets in 1827. Over the years there have been three church structures at this site. The present sanctuary was completed in 1924.

The spread of Methodism throughout the county continued at a steady rate. The Canaan United Methodist Church, erected prior to 1840, is perhaps one of the few remaining antebellum plantation churches in Alabama. The congregation at Waterloo is one of the oldest in the state. The present sanctuary was built in 1892. From 1835 until 1847, Florence served as headquarters for Methodism in this part of North Alabama and nearby Tennessee counties. In 1856, it was again designated as the headquarters for the Florence district. In 1998, as the Florence district prepares to enter a new century, it is made up of more than fifty congregations in Northwest Alabama. *Submitted by: William Lindsey McDonald*

Mt. Olive Church

Around the early 1900's some property was donated to the black community for the creation of a church.

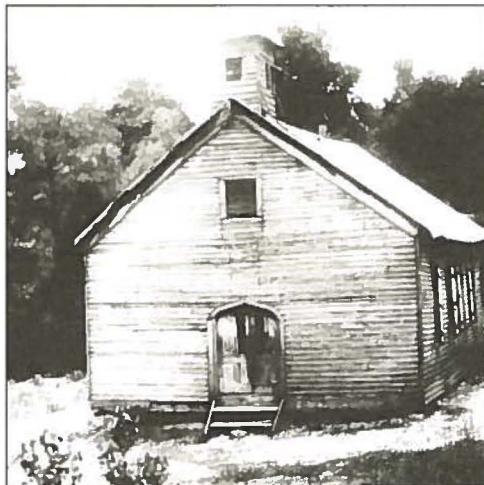
Mrs. Emma Oliver became the gracious property owner to donate the land. Mrs. Oliver is the grandmother to the Buford Bedingfield family of Rogersville, Alabama.

The church would be named in honor of her — Mt. Olive Church. The church would start with a one room building. Over the years, Mt. Olive would grow in membership and actual building size. The last church building is the third church building. This church site was moved up from the spring to the front of the present property.

As the years would come and go, members would join, move

away and pass away. Some members would eventually move their memberships to other black churches in the area.

Today, the church is known as Mt. Olive Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The membership is small, but the Lord's spirit is bigger and strong as the beginning of this church. *Submitted by: Amanda I. Page*



Mount Olive Church - 1946

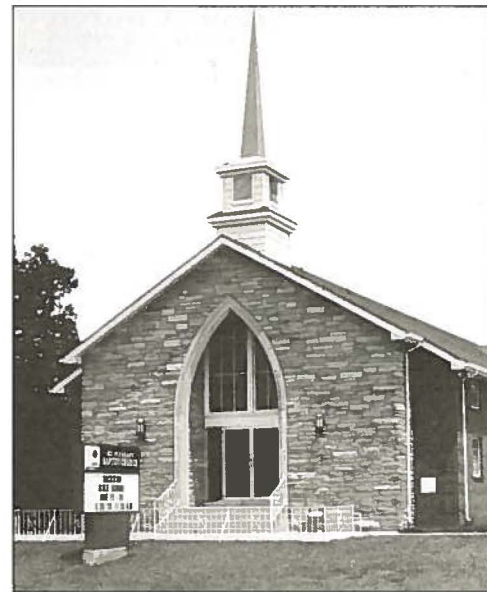
Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church

On November 30, 1854 a group of people who had been meeting for worship and fellowship, trusted God and founded the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. This was to become the first of a lasting Southern Baptist influence in Eastern Lauderdale County and the second oldest Southern Baptist Church in the county. The church began in the home of its first pastor, Reverend Murrel Askew. At this time the church provided no formal provision nor salary. He served for four years and gave it a sound beginning.

In 1875, the membership decided to move the church to an area near McClure's Spring, about three miles south of Lexington. In 1894, with their new pastor, Bro. B.N. Martin, the church established a Sunday School, based on Baptist Doctrine. A first for this area.

In 1904, Pastor R.E. Paulk led the church to have a tent revival on a busy stretch of road between Lexington and Killen, (county road 71). The members voted to relocate to the sight of the revival to a piece of land donated by the Williams family, adjacent to their family cemetery.

Through the years God has continued to bless our church. We are a member of the Colbert-Lauderdale Association and since 1960 the church began calling full-time pastors, constructed the present worship center, provided housing for the pastor, saw tremendous growth in church membership and Sunday School attendance, and in 1987 constructed over 6,000 square feet of new Sunday School and fellowship facilities. *Submitted by: Martha Barnett - Church Librarian*
Sources: Church records.



Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church

Murphy's Chapel Freewill Baptist Church

Murphy's Chapel Church is located on County road eight just off Alabama Highway 20. The date of the establishment of this church is not known.

It seems that at one time the church was owned by the Methodist and the Freewill Baptist. A deed was found at the Lauderdale County Court House showing where W.W. Murphy and his wife Susan, deeded six acres of land to the Methodist and Freewill Baptist churches on October 11, 1898.

However, we are told that there are Methodist records back as early as 1894 on this church. Their records before that time burned, so they do not know the original date of establishment. As the Methodist had churches here before other churches at the beginning of the settlement of Lauderdale Count, they may have owned the church originally. Their records show Murphy's chapel in their Cypress, Tennessee Charge and then was transferred to the Cloverdale Alabama Charge.

Sometime later, some of the Methodists moved away and some lost interest. They decided to deed their part of the property to the Baptist. The church has twelve acres now.

There is a large cemetery at Murphy's Chapel with people born as far back as 1792 buried here. As there are over 100 unmarked graves, there may have been people born earlier than that buried in the cemetery. The earliest date of burial on a stone is 1880. There probably was a building here at that time. *Submitted by: The Lauderdale County Heritage Book Committee and Written by: Millie Mason*

Nebo Cumberland Presbyterian Church

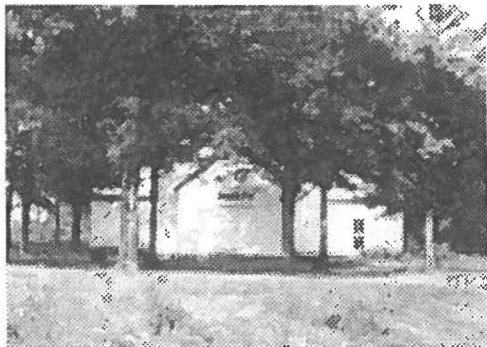
The Cumberland Presbyterian Church was started on February 4, 1810 as an outgrowth of the Revival of 1800. The church was founded by the Reverends Finis Ewing, Samuel King, and Samuel McAdow at McAdow's home in Dickson County, Tennessee.

In 1869, William (Billy) White donated the land for a Cumberland Presbyterian Church in the Lexington Community. It had approximately 52 members, and was named Thyray Cumberland Presbyterian Church. On September 1, 1883, the name was changed to Lexington Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The name was changed to Nebo Cumberland Presbyterian Church on August 14, 1890.

Nebo has lasted through five different buildings, four Presbyteries, 31 pastors, and a near collapse of the Cumberland Presbyterian Denomination in the past 129 years. It has grown to a membership of approximately 200 and is still growing. *Submitted by: Tracy Williams, 437 Second Creek Road, Five Points, TN 38457*

New Hope Church of Christ

As early as 1850, Church of Christ preachers came to Burcham Valley to preach, often in the Burcham Valley School. In 1875, George Young traveled from Bethabara (now Bethel-Berry) to preach. As a result of his preaching, Concordia Church of Christ was formed with eight members. This congregation formed the nucleus in the establishment of New Hope Church of Christ in 1883. They continued to meet in various locations, including brush arbors, homes and yards until 1902, when a committee met to plan



New Hope Church of Christ, circa 1950s

existing building was accomplished with many hours of donated worktime by members and friends.

T.B. Larimore was one of the earliest preachers at New Hope. The latest is Carl Seigenthaler, who has served nearly 30 years. New Hope has produced four college presidents from its ranks, E.H. Ijams at David Lipscomb College, Howard White at Pepperdine College, Milton Sewell at Freed-Hardiman, and George Young, at his own college, Orange College in Stark, Florida. Church leaders have included Fulmers, Parishes, Bevises, Whitens, Haddocks, Lovelaces, Ijams, Englands, McIntyres, and Underwoods.

New Hope Church of Christ continues its strong presence in Burcham Valley. *Submitted by: Betty Gresham McIntyre*
Source: Lois Henderson

New Mt. Bethel United Methodist Church

According to research and documentation by William Lindsey McDonald, former pastor of New Mt. Bethel and noted local historian, the congregation is one of the oldest in East Lauderdale County.



New Mount Bethel United Methodist Church

a permanent home for the congregation. The building that was constructed was blown down in a 1913 storm. Salvaging what materials they could, and by borrowing \$400, a new building was erected that stood until replaced by the present brick structure in 1960. The 1995 addition of a 340 seat auditorium and renovation of the

Its first location of record was near Whitehead, northwest of Rogersville, and was a community church attended by the Methodists and the Cumberland Presbyterians. In 1885, the Methodists decided to build a place of their own. Thus, the Cumberland Presbyterians who remained were called Old Mt. Bethel, and the Methodists who built a new house of worship became New Mt. Bethel.

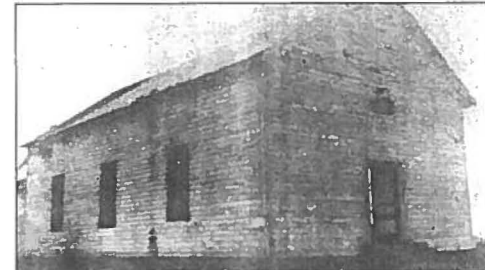
The earliest Methodists at Mt. Bethel probably were meeting as a congregation as a part of the old Shoal Circuit prior to the Civil war and the existing records on New Mt. Bethel go back to 1877. When the new church was erected in 1885, its trustees were members of Driskell Chapel Methodist Church. Driskell Chapel was the first Methodist congregation in Lauderdale County and later became Center Star United Methodist Church.

The first house of worship on this site was made of logs. The second structure was erected west of the earlier log church about 1906 or 1907. This frame building served the congregation until the beginning of World War II.

Construction of the present beautiful rock church began in 1943 and was completed the next year. It now includes a fellowship hall and Sunday School building and continues to provide sanctuary for a thriving congregation. *Submitted by: The New Mount Bethel Historical Committee*

North Carolina Church of Christ

North Carolina Church of Christ was first known as Union Grove. The church and its adjoining cemetery are located near Green Hill. There are records for the church written as early as January 14, 1882, but the congregation is known to have existed prior to that time. Trustees, L.M. Fitzpatrick, William H. Wood, Ben Thompson, and G.C. Thigpen, were appointed on that date for five year terms.



Old North Carolina Church of Christ

Many early pioneer preachers held revivals at North Carolina. Some of those were E.O. Coffman, John Campbell, and Will Behel. They had 47 responses in meetings in 1914 and 1915.

On August 20, 1927, Frank Thigpen, Clinton Thigpen, Sam Thompson, and Lewis Thompson were appointed elders at North Carolina.

A modern brick building, with all the conveniences, has replaced the frame building, which, no doubt, had replaced an original log structure. The adjoining cemetery has graves dating back to the mid 1800s. Some marked only with field stones, are probably earlier. *Submitted by: Granville O. Allen*

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, 630 N. Poplar St., Florence is one of many congregations of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS) - one of the largest groups of Lutherans in the United States. The first mission field of the LCMS was in Tusculumbia in 1880. Small groups of Lutherans were later served in the Center Star, Cloverdale, Killen and Sheffield areas at various times with services being held in homes or at local schools. The groups were usually served by ministers from St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Decatur while some were new graduates from Lutheran seminaries.



Our Redeemer Lutheran Church 630 N. Poplar St., Florence

Candidate Richard Hasz came to Florence in 1936 and located Lutheran families in the towns and rural areas. After Hasz left for mission work in Brazil, candidate Edmund Lammert came and Our Redeemer was organized January 9, 1938. Services were held in Florence City Hall until construction of the present church, which was dedicated December 8, 1940. Lammert was the first pastor, serving March 1938 to September 1945. Reverend Emil T.

Tonn, who preached the festival sermon at the dedication, later became pastor of Our Redeemer, serving from September 1946, until his death October 29, 1954.

Charter communicant members were Albert J. Bohnstedt, Erwin Hoeman, Ernest Huffman, Carl E. Larson, Mrs. Carl E. Larson, Ida Hartwig, Paul Barringer, Mrs. Paul Barringer and Roscoe Barringer. Mr. Bohnstedt was treasurer of the church almost 50 years - until the time of his death in 1985. At the time of this writing (1998) his widow, a daughter and grandchildren are still active members.

Other pastors in addition to those mentioned have included Henry C. Dequin 1955-58; Martin A. Buerger 1958-61; George L. Miller 1962-64; Joel W. Kettner 1965-70; Carl J. Stapf 1972-75; Charles Pipelow interim minister Dec. 1975-Feb. 1976; Leonard C. Neumann 1976-78; David A. Doroh August 1979 to present.

The congregation reaches out into the community in numerous ways including contributions in time and financial support to the Help Center, Habitat for Humanity houses, Safeplace, Salvation Army, Human Resource Department, Attention Homes, Cooperative Campus Ministry at the University of North Alabama; as well as various outreach programs to the national and international levels.

The congregation always strives to seek and provide the necessary educational materials, classes, and facilities for all age levels. From the beginning, the congregation has provided a Sunday School, youth confirmation instruction, Vacation Bible School plus various activities for the different groups. *Submitted by: Milka Duke* Obtained from church records.

Phillips Cemetery

The Phillips Cemetery is located on Phillips Cemetery Road in Center Star, Alabama and is one fourth mile north of Highway 72 on County Road 33.

Paternal Phillips Line

My great grandmother was Louezer (Allen) Phillips. Her death certificate stated she was buried there and it is likely that William Carroll Phillips, my great grandfather, is also buried there. Neither has a headstone.

Louezer's mother, Susannah (Allen) Phillips, is buried there beside her son, Benjamin H. Allen, both names are marked on small rocks.

Note 1: Some researchers claim that Susannah Allen, widow of William C. Allen, was Susannah Whitehead who married William C. Allen in 1829 who also drowned in 1829. This is questionable as Louezer was born in 1823 and here two brothers were born by 1829.

William C. and Louezer Phillips' son, William Allen Phillips and wife, Kate Mitchell are buried there. William has a confederate marker.

Maternal Phillips Line

My great-great-great grandfather was Jack Phillips who died October 6, 1868. Curiously Susannah, his second wife, was buried beside her son instead of Jack Phillips.

One survey showed 17 headstones. However several burial sites were missed because brush and tall weeds that had taken the cemetery.¹

Note 2: It is my opinion that there are a number of unmarked graves. Also one must wonder if William C. Allen is buried there which could mean the cemetery started in 1829.

Alexander, Allen, Faulkner, McPeters, Mitchell, Phillips, and Stutts families are buried there.

Price Alexander (and his descendants) who married Jack Phillips' daughter Susan Phillips is buried there.

Elizabeth (McPeters) Sharp a granddaughter of Jack Phillips is buried there.

Captain John Robert Mitchell (and his descendants) who married Jack Phillips' daughter, Edna Caroline Philips, is buried there with Edna.

In 1988 the cemetery was being abused by trespassers who pulled the old barb wire fence down and made road which crossed. In addition dumping had started. In 1992 a new fence was erected and a family reunion marked the occasion.

A Decoration Day to honor these early Alabama pioneers is a goal. Such a day used to mean bringing tools and a picnic lunch and possibly preaching and singing. Now we would like to set a

date and for all to bring chairs, lunch, and just enjoy sitting in the shade and visiting ... Contributions would also be appreciated to help with the upkeep of this old historic cemetery.² *Submitted by: Thelma Phillips Pugh, great granddaughter of John Reeves and Anna Hough, 111 Harris, Decatur, AL and Written by: H. Shannon Phillips, Sr. great-great grandson, 785 Sunset Beach, Florence, AL 35633* Sources: 'History of Greenhill, William Q. Hill, December 1978 'H. Shannon Phillips, Sr., Notes cover other information also input by JoAnne White.

i Granville Hough, author of Hough Books, Volume V, Southern Hough Families, South Carolina Archives ii Research by H. Shannon Phillips, Sr. a great-great grandson iii Information provide to H. Shannon Phillips, Sr. by Pat Mahon, Lauderdale Co., AL Genealogist iv Florence Times Article in magazine during Sesquicentennial of Florence, Alabama v William McDonald's Article in the *Times Daily* dated January 5, 1995 vi History of Florence, Alabama and 1850 Lauderdale County Census by Jill K. Knight vii *ibid* viii *The Booger Saga, The Civil War Story of Guerrilla and Bushwhacker Warfare in Lauderdale County, AL and Southern Middle, Tennessee*, by Wade Pruitt, Pea Vine Press, Columbia, TN

Pleasant Valley Church

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ had its first worship services in a one-room log school building located on property now owned by Joel Alexander. It is remembered by older people as being located "down in the swamp". It was near this building the name "Frog Pond" had its beginning. A visiting young lady not impressed with the young men of the congregation made this statement, "there's nothing here but a frog pond", as she listened to the frogs croaking in the nearby swamp. Frog Pond is still used today by some to refer to this locality.

The church was to meet in the different school houses built in that area until 1936, when a permanent church building was erected.

During this time Collins Comer worked hard to keep things going, and it was a common sight to see him walking from his home to the church meeting with the basket containing the Lord's Supper on his arm.

A meeting had been held in 1932 with Gilbert Gibbs from Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. July 31, began a 12-day meeting under the cedar trees near the school-house. When that meeting was finished a total of fifty-one people had been baptized.

No church is complete without dedicated elders and deacons. In 1936 after careful consideration and prayer, the first elders Alton Tays, Henry Williams and Grady Yancey were appointed and Claude Dean, George Henry Tays and Luther Tays were selected as deacons. Luther Tays was to serve as deacon and treasurer for over forty years. Others who have served as elders in years past were John Tays and Emerson Stone. Our present elders are Almon Watson, Don Tays, Leon Alexander and Joel Alexander. Others who have served as deacons in years past are Hiram Holden and Leon Alexander. Our present deacons are Jim Campbell, Milton Yancey, Hoyt McCafferty, Derrick Springer, Glen Walton and Brad Pointer.

Our two ministers who serve us and God so well are James Bridges and Horace Stutts.

Many changes have been made to the original church building. As the number and need grew, classrooms and other facilities were added.

In 1973, the auditorium was expanded for additional seating. This served the church well until 1981, when we moved into a new auditorium, with elevated baptistery, storage and other added conveniences.

The present church building still sits on its one acre land where our ancestors met so many years ago in a little one-room school-house. That acre was deeded to the church by the Houston heirs in 1935 and a one-half acre was acquired in 1946 for a cemetery and in 1970 another acre was deeded to the church making a total of two and one-half acres. *Submitted by: Almon Watson and Written by: Ruth Alexander, 2860 Co Rd 33, Killen, AL 35645*, Sources: Church records of Luke Tays and Almon Watson and family knowledge



Pleasant Valley Church of Christ

Old Rogersville Presbyterian Church

The earliest place of worship in Rogersville was a brush arbor located in what is now the Old Liberty Cemetery. At an unknown date a building was constructed on the site where all faiths worshiped.

This property was part of the 158 acres purchased from the U.S. Government by Hugh Porter, assignee, on 6 March 1819. Hugh Porter and wife, Sarah, sold part of this land to George Simmons on 21 December 1842. After this property changed owners a few more times, on 10 October 1848, two acres was deeded to Methodist Episcopal Church South, Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Continental Presbyterian Church, Sons of Temperance and the Free Masons with Trustees Thomas Davenport, Anderson P. Neely, Daniel W. Haraway, Jonathan M. Cunningham and Peter F. Partrick.



Old Rogersville Presyberian Church

The trustees constructed a meeting house on the lot, either starting or completing in 1855, when a trust agreement was made with the creditors. This building has been described as two stories high. It was used as a community school, a meeting place for Sons of Temperance and Free Masons, as well as a place where all faiths worshiped. At an unknown date this building burned, and the present one was erected in 1889.

This property, with church building, was deeded to the Town of Rogersville on 20 September 1975, and it was used as the Senior Citizen Center until a new center was built.

The entire year of 1997 was spent restoring the old building as it was originally, and it is now used for community activities. *Submitted by: Muriel Barnett*

Sources: Lauderdale County Tract Book, p. 33, Certificate #3064, Lauderdale County Deed Book 13, p. 204, Lauderdale County Deed Book 1093, p. 191-194.

Rogersville United Methodist Church

In 1813 there was a settlement of Methodist in Giles County, Tennessee. It was from this settlement that Methodism spread to Eastern Lauderdale County, Alabama. In 1818 a Rev. Wesley Smith lived in a log cabin near Blue Water Creek. In a letter he tells of Rev. Isaac Lindsey, Circuit Rider Preacher from Giles County, holding services at the Smith Cabin. From this early start Methodism spread throughout the area.



Rogersville United Methodist Church

A Methodist Society was meeting in Rogersville prior to 1848, when property was deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church South, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Continental Presbyterian Church, the Benevolent Division Number Seven, Sons of Temperance, and the Free Masons for a meeting house. The Methodist used this Community Meeting House until 1905 when Sarah Ann Elizabeth Williams provided land for a new Methodist Church Building. The first church erected on this property, a white wood frame building, was used by the Methodist until 1931, when it was replaced by a more modern brick building which served the congregation until 1978.

In 1978 the Methodist Church in Rogersville moved into a new Church Complex. The Church Building is located at 701 Turner Lindsay Road. Memorial windows for John D. Williams and Albert M. and Elizabeth Oliver, the Church Bell and a Cross were moved from the old Church to the new Church. The Parsonage next door is located on West Rose Street. The Church Complex also includes a two story Fellowship Hall, an outside Pavilion and a Children's playground. Land for this Complex was given by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Bedingfield of Rogersville. The Methodist Church has been, and is, an important part of the Religious and Social life of Rogersville and Eastern Lauderdale County. A more complete history of the Rogersville United Methodist Church is available at the Church and the Rogersville Town Library *Submitted by: Jarvis L. Brewer. P.O. Box 237, Rogersville, AL 35652*
Sources: History of Rogersville United Methodist Church, Rogersville, Alabama

St. Joseph Catholic Church

In 1998, when parishioners of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Florence celebrated the 100th anniversary of the church's founding, it was a time to mark a century of hard work and prayer.

It was a time, too, to look at St. Joseph's past and future - from a handful of Catholics meeting in homes on "Catholic Hill," to an active parish of more than 400 families with a modern new church and school. Some, remembering the heroic efforts required to raise money for the little church, said it was a parish built on "barbecue and chicken stew."

At first, the fledgling congregation was a "mission" served by visiting priests. Catholics met in the home of Joe Beckman until a



Old St. Joseph Catholic Church built in 1902

Tuscumbia Missioner, Father Polycarp Scherer, O.S.B., (1883-89) guided the little flock in the construction of a small church. St. Joseph's remained a mission until 1898 when Rev. Gammelbert Brunner, O.S.B., was appointed the first resident pastor.

Fr. Brunner served until 1906. One of his first tasks was to build a rectory and a two-room frame building which became the parish's first parochial school. His main project, however, was the building of a large white frame church, which became the center of parish worship until it was torn down in 1973.

It was Father Paul Koehler, O.S.B. who spearheaded the drive for the modern new church which stands today. During his administration (1958-1977), there was yet another expansion to the school and a convent wing was added.

The new Parish Center which houses meeting rooms, offices and the gymnasium was completed during the pastorate of Father James O'Reilly, who served 1986-1995. *Submitted by: Cheri Shipper*

History of Saint Mark Missionary Baptist Church

In 1859, the Saint Mark M.B. Church congregation held worship services in a brush arbor on the corner of Alabama Street and Wood Avenue (formerly Market Street), Florence, Lauderdale County, Alabama. The property was purchased for the sum of \$15.00.

The first minister of Saint Mark was The Reverend Cordy White. Under his leadership, the first building was erected which was a frame structure.

After the death of Reverend White, The Reverend L.J. Green accepted the pastorate. Under his administration, the present structure was built in August 1901 at 220 East Alabama Street, Florence, Alabama. Reverend Green served dutifully until God called him home. Various ministers filled the pulpit each Sunday until The Reverend Judge Johnson accepted the pastorate.

Saint Mark was incorporated on October 7, 1950. In December, 1950, The Reverend George E. Nelson was led to Saint Mark and was officially installed as pastor in March of 1951. Under his leadership,

Saint Mark continued to press forward. In 1954, the renovation of the church included a pastor's study, choir room, balcony, inside baptismal pool and indoor restroom facilities, and a basement with kitchen and dining area. In 1974, a two level educational facility was completed which included a new pastor's study, classrooms, ladies lounge and assembly room. A transportation ministry was started in 1979. In 1982, the kitchen and dining area was renovated. In the fall of 1995, Saint Mark received a new roof and roof structure.

After the retirement of Reverend G.E. Nelson in March of 1996, Reverend Rufus Slack, Jr. accepted the pastorate in May of 1996. He was officially installed as pastor in August

1996. Under his leadership, the Brotherhood Union was organized, two new choirs; the Inspirational Choir and the Men's Choir, and he also organized a nursery and Children's Church. Reverend Slack preached his last sermon at Saint Mark on June 29, 1997. Reverend James E. Coleman of Huntsville, Alabama was called to Saint Mark and preached his first sermon as pastor on February 1, 1998. *Submitted by: Gwen Robinson Woods, Member, Saint Mark Church*



St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church

History Of St. Michael's Church

St. Florian, Alabama

The first settlers, when they arrived in 1872 in what became St. Florian, found no church awaiting them and no regular services. The first church and a parsonage were built in 1872. The parsonage was a two-story house and the church, of two-story height, was 50 feet long by 24 feet wide. This building, situated across the road from the location of the present church, was moved in the 1870s and expanded in 1878 and 1879.

The first priest to serve St. Michael's Parish was a secular priest of German extraction, Father Michael Merz, who came in 1873.

The Benedictine Order was invited to take over St. Michael's parish and, on April 23, 1876, Father Gabriel Guerster became pastor and two Benedictine brothers, Majolus and Fridolin, came to take over the parish.

Father Alphonse Klug, O.S.B., was a "builder" pastor. It was during his pastorate that the existing church building was planned and built. In 1914, the foundation was excavated and built. There was a lull until 1916 when the cornerstone was laid, and the walls, roof, and tower were completed in the rough.

It was not until 1924 that the stained glass windows (considered to be the most beautiful in Alabama) were installed and the interior completed. Much of the work was done by the parishioners.

Additional sacrifices were made by many of the parishioners to attain the comfortable and inviting edifice that now exists. *Submitted by: W.S. Dixon*

St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church In Retrospection

St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church, one of the oldest churches in North West Alabama was organized in 1879. Its first location was about six or eight blocks south of the heart of the town of Florence, Alabama.

Almost all of the work during slavery was done by Negroes some of whom were very skillful. Plantations had become so large it was necessary for owners to employ overseers to supervise the work.

Negroes generally were not permitted to congregate themselves, for slave owners were afraid the Negroes would discuss freedom, exchange ideas, become wiser and harder to keep in bondage. Hence they were not permitted to have churches of their own. In Florence, Alabama this restriction was not enforced. The Negroes were permitted to have a church of their own. This briefly, was the beginning of the church which later became St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church of Florence, Alabama.

About the year 1860 one tall man of mixed blood, Robin Lightfoot, a slave-preacher who could read a little together with the following

named men: LaFayette Simpson, Sr., Edward Poole, Sr., Charles Grey, Jerry Simpson, John Rapier, Cain Leach, Harvey Weakley, Sr., Anthony Simpson, Charles Handy, Harrison Woods secured a lot which is now intersected by the highway leading to O'Neal Bridge. On this lot was a brick cowhouse which the men converted into a church. Then, with Lightfoot as their leader organized the first known Negro church south of the Mason Dixon line. The slave owners did not interfere with the assembly of slaves in this church nor did they permit patroler to intimidate them.

During the year 1862, Robin Lightfoot held revival in this church and Y.A. Wallace and his brother Beverly Wallace were mourners. Y.A. Wallace left Florence with a general in the Union Army which passed through the town. He went seeking an education and after completing his course at Fisk University, returned to Florence and taught school for many years. Mr. Wallace was given credit by William Handy for starting the first chorus in Negro churches in Florence. St. Paul was one of these churches.

Lightfoot preached continually to his congregation that freedom would come for the Negro slaves. A Confederate Army, passing through Florence heard of Lightfoot's preaching, captured him in his master's yard — the Northeast corner of Wood Avenue and Tuscaloosa Street — carried him to that part of Florence known as Stewart Spring and there he was hanged until dead.

The church continued to function and after freedom the first American Missionary School to be opened in Florence was held in this church and taught by one Mr. Myers and his wife.

Indications are that the church may have been rebuilt several times. The year 1895 it was moved north to Court and Alabama Streets and about that time Jacob Wytch came to Florence from North Carolina. His master was a District Superintendent. Wytch as his master's valet travelled with him over his district thereby gained much information concerning the church which was transferred to the A. M. E. Church making Wytch an asset to St. Paul the remainder of his active life.

The following men and their wives brought about the affiliation with the African Methodist Episcopal Church: William Wise Handy, Robert Jordan, Reuben Patterson, Mansfield E. Bryant, Allen McVey, Edward Poole and Harrison Woods. In October 1895 under the pastorate of Rev. N.L. Edmonson a corner stone was laid. Hand made bricks from a previous structure hand cleaned and scrubbed by both men and women were used in the foundation of the building. Contributing in this manner were ancestors of members — Shipley, Key, Nails, Haney and others.

As years passed various improvements and additions were made such as enlargement of parsonage — concrete walks — inside plumbing — redecoration of sanctuary several different times — replacement of organ with piano and many other extensive accomplishments. All of this necessitated additional finance. Sisters Victoria Perkins, Nannie Nails, Parthenia Portlock Jones, Minnie Andrews and many others proved to be inspirational leaders as Captains, co-captains and such.

Some of the leading members of the distant past — Stewards — Trustees — Class Leaders — Stewardess — Missionaries were Brothers and Sisters Alex and Mary Anderson, Crockett Phillips, Benjamin Thomas, George Williams, Joseph Rapier, Erastus Jones, James Kemper, Polk Germany, Hugh Simpson, William Bates, Alex Dewberry, Joseph Pearson, Rudolph Nails, Richard Simpson, Robert Simpson, Celia Bates, Amanda Simpson, Mattie Powers, Mary Williams, Florence Pinkston, Emma Germany, Ellen Williams, Jane Walston, Anna Taylor Warren, Hettie Parker, Betty Cole, Mary Beasley Woods, Jane Jones, Mollie Reeder, Rachel Abernathy, Josiephine Handy Terry, Annie Moore Thomas, Dr. & Mrs. J.A. Simpson, Dr. H.A. Clarke, Willie P. Bates, John Leach, Sr., Odie Caldwell. All of these and many others served faithfully and well. Many who left the church when the membership became divided served well during their tenure.



St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church

As pastor succeeded pastor each contributed to spiritual, moral and physical growth of the church in his own special way. Because of one very outstanding accomplishment — the lifting of a mortgage which freed St. Paul of debt for the first time in an unknown number of years, we will personate Rev. T.B. Scott. He held a big mortgage burning and Thanksgiving during the year 1942.

We credit the installation of Memorial Windows to Rev. O. J. Hayman. These we brought with us to our new edifice. More extensive renovation we, credit to Rev. Shiver.

The actual bringing into existence; that which had been attempted before, we credit to the present administration that is the successful relocation of St. Paul A. M. E. Church from Alabama and Court to the present location. Praise God in his sanctuary, Praise him for his mighty acts, Praise him all people, Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. *Submitted by: Mrs. Charlotte B. Johnson.*

Springfield First Baptist Church

This church began with a series of prayer services being held in the homes of some of the families in the Springfield community, south of Lexington. A tent revival was held on the property of Mr. and Mrs. Collins P. Joiner. The tent was erected on highway 101 directly in front of the current church building. The revival was held July 12-22, 1959. The first vacation Bible school began July 20-24, 1959. Teachers were from the community. They were assisted by members of Anderson, Rogersville and Lexington Baptist Churches.

It began as a Mission known as Springfield Baptist Mission. Services were held in a three room house on county road 50, across from Woodrow P. Richardson, until the church building was built in 1960.



Springfield First Baptist Church '1960'

Sunday School was organized July 19, 1959. Meetings began by having morning worship service at 10:00 am and Sunday School at 11:00 am. This was done in order for pastors from churches to assist in preaching. Reverend Earle Trent served as interim pastor until Reverend R.P. Payne was called as pastor on November 15, 1959.

Construction began on the new church building on April 14, 1960. The Springfield Baptist Mission became Springfield First Baptist Church on Sunday afternoon May 1, 1960 at 2:00 pm. The first services were held in the new building on June 26, 1960 at 1:30 pm with Reverend Earle Trent in charge of the program. During the program deep appreciation was expressed to Mrs. Era Davis for her financial help and to Mr. Joiner for donating the property for the church.

First Deacons — Ordained July 24, 1960: Buford H. Butler, Arvin Ray, Floyd Mcgee, Coy Michael, Carl King. Charter Members: Emmet and Era Davis, Buford H. and Pearlina Butler, Brenda Butler, Arvin and Willie Mae Ray, John Carl and Marjorie King, Emmett and Charity Richardson, Coy and Frances Michael, Dwight Michael, Floyd and Doris Mcgee. *Submitted by: Wanda Hurn daughter of charter members Buford and Pearlina Butler, 4071 hwy. 101, Rogersville, AL 35652*
Sources: Church Records

Stony Point Church Of Christ

Often noted as the "oldest Church of Christ congregation in Lauderdale County", the roots of the Stony Point family trace back to the early 19th century. The congregation met in those early days in a community known as Brandon Mills, now White's Lake. The year was about 1824. Two early names used by this group of Christians were "Republican" and "Old Cypress". They used several meeting places, including homes of members, the Methodist Church, and a schoolhouse.

In 1885, the congregation moved from their meeting place on the side of a hill near Chisholm Creek to the top of the hill and constructed a meeting place near where the present building stands. They became Stony Point at this time. This first building was used until 1948 when a new brick building was constructed.

Expansion has since increased the capacity of the building with added classrooms, a larger auditorium, and modern facilities.

Dr. Edward Gabriel Bumpass, founder of Waterloo, General Leroy Pope Walker (who became the first Secretary of War for the Confederacy), Dr. Pugh Houston (of Houston Plantation and brother



Stony Point Church of Christ

to Alabama Governor, George S. Houston), and John Chisholm, Jr. were members of Stony Point during the early years. Alexander Campbell, T.B. Larimore, Syrgley, Underwood, Sewell and Grisham are but a few of those who spoke from the pulpit. More recent years have seen

James Beck, Derrell Davis, Claude Lewis, and Lawrence Williams as ministers to the congregation.

Missions have been an important part of the work at Stony Point both at home and abroad. The congregation strives to be a shining light in the community as they continually work to preach the Gospel in its purity and simplicity, and to live what they teach. *Submitted by: Gladys Marie Wallace Sharp, daughter of James William Wallace and Ida Dean Gooch Wallace. Members of Stony Point. Written by: Mary Danley Riley.*

Tabernacle Cemetery

About 1842, George and Polly Kennedy deeded approximately five acres of land for a church building and cemetery next to the Jackson Military Road near Greenhill. Tabernacle Methodist Church was constructed on the site. During the construction of the



Marker of David Richardson, the 1st person buried in Tabernacle Cemetery.

building David Richardson, father of Hiram Richardson, became ill while working on the church and later died. His was the first burial in Tabernacle Cemetery. The inscription on his tombstone reads, "David Richardson, Born In Moore County, NC, May 2, 1809. Died in Lauderdale Co. Ala. Mar. 11, 1844. John LeMaster, his wife Nancy Almond, and daughter Sophronia were interred there. Others, prominent in the early history of Lauderdale County, are buried at Tabernacle — names such as Chisholm, Hill, Richardson, Butler, Kennedy, McDonald, Liles, Haygood, and Bretherick.

The wish of William Haygood and his wife, Mattie Chisholm to be buried where they had met, at Tabernacle, was honored.

New interments are still going on at Tabernacle up to the present time. The grounds are maintained regularly. The first Sunday of June has been designated as Decoration Day each year. *Submitted by: H.R. Kennedy*

Tabernacle Church

The land for the first church on this site was thought to have come from the Indians in 1818. It was used as a campground with preaching. In 1842, George Kennedy gave the land for the

Methodist-Episcopal Church and Cemetery. Later, in 1869, he deeded five acres of land where the present building stands. Located 15 miles north of Florence, on the Old Jackson Highway, this building was the central meeting place for all denominations for many years.

The first two buildings were built of logs, with a fireplace for heat. The first burned in 1849 by a woods fire caused by campers. The second burned when a fire was left in the fireplace and a log rolled onto the floor. The third building, a frame structure with tin roof was constructed in 1869. The windows had shutters and a wood-burning stove was placed in the center of the building.

The present building was constructed about 1900. Some of the charter members of the church were the Chisholm, Haygood, Richardson, Hill, Killen, Liles, and Burgess families.

This was the only Methodist Church in the district, and preachers were scarce. This caused people to have to wait some time for a funeral to be preached. Weddings were often performed on the same day as funerals.

The Tabernacle Church still stands, but is used only for memorial services. The annual decoration day with dinner on the ground is held on the first Sunday in June. *Submitted by: H.R. Kennedy*



Tabernacle Church

Trinity Episcopal Church

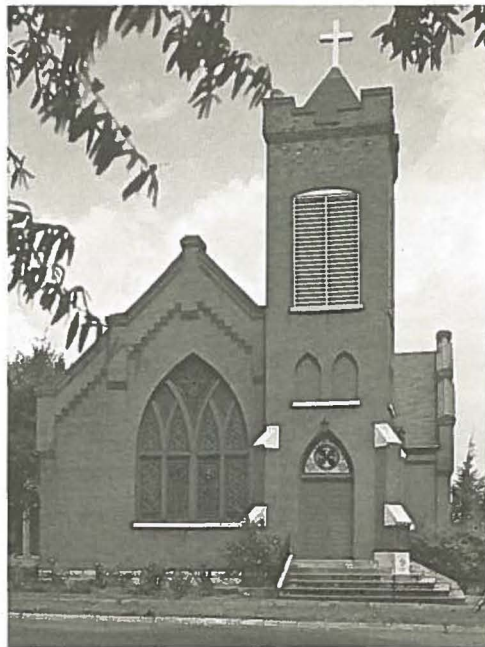
Trinity Episcopal Church was one of the first churches to be established in the city of Florence. During the early 1800's Episcopalians and Protestants had no buildings to meet in and met in private homes and schools. Spencer Wall, an Episcopal minister, organized the first Episcopalian parish in 1824. He taught school and had church services in the school.

A missionary, Thomas A. Cook, came to Florence and organized the first vestry in 1836. He remained as the parish rector for one year.

A brick building was built in 1845. It burned in 1893. That building was on the corner of Cedar and College streets. The congregation met in the old city hall, while a new building was being built. They had to start a completely new building as nothing was saved except the bell. The new building was built at the present site, on the corner of Pine and Tuscaloosa streets. It was a beautiful Gothic building.

In the 1920's Protestant churches became more involved in the social welfare of those in need. Trinity needed more room and enlarged the Parish House in 1954. This provided space for Sunday School. Two more buildings were built for education, a library and offices, and Mullin Hall. The church provides a place for many service oriented groups to meet in.

Trinity Church started with about 35 families in 1818. In 1956 it had grown until the members divided and started another



The Trinity Episcopal Church

congregation, St, Bartholomew's Episcopal Church on Darby Drive. *Submitted by: The Lauderdale County Heritage book committee and Written by: Millie Mason*

Sources: Research in the Florence Library and the National Registry Marker on the church grounds.

Trinity Independent Baptist Church

The first service for Trinity Independent Baptist Church was February 14, 1982 with 11 present. The church was organized on May 16, 1982 and held services in the old flea market building currently located beside Walton's Garage on Hwy 27 in Killen. The pastor was Bro. James F. Brown. Charter members were James F. Brown, Thelma Brown, Mark Brown, Arlis Hurn, Valeria Hurn and David Gulley.

Bor. Gary Marks was pastor from June 1983 until May 1994. About four acres was purchased and in 1986 a new church building was built south of Hwy 72 and West of Brooks High School.

Currently, the church has two ordained deacons. They are Arlis Hurn and Wendell White. Ordained February

5, 1995. There are 40 members on the roll. The church is in process of building a new auditorium. *Submitted by: Tammy Hurn Brown, 1392 County Rd 92, Rogersville, AL 35652*



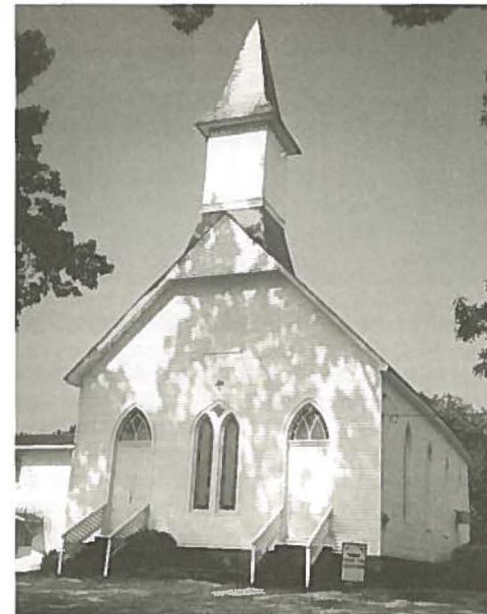
James F. Brown and Thelma Brown

Waterloo United Methodist Church

The Methodist of Waterloo had a Board of Trustees twenty three years before the present church building was built in 1892. The Trustees serving between 1869 and 1892 were; Hiram Richardson, J.H. Witherspoon, R.W. Wesson, Wesley Williams. E.G. Grissom, Ephram Reid, J.H. Potts, James Whitsett, Benton Pickens, and W.E. Shelby. The church has had services for one hundred twenty-nine years. At one time it was the largest congregation in Lauderdale County.

The pews, stained glass windows, hand carved pulpit, and communion railing are still used today.

Two marble plaques in the pulpit pay tribute to Hiram Richardson (1830-1891) the patron who founded the church and Rev. James H. Witherspoon (1808-1883). He was a Presbyterian minister who held the first pastorate. After him came circuit rider preachers. The church was originally called Richardson Chapel Methodist Church. *Submitted by: Elizabeth Haygood, 1675 Co. Rd. 23, Florence, AL 35633*



Waterloo United Methodist Church

Wesley Chapel Cemetery

Wesley Chapel Cemetery, Lauderdale County, was begun in early 1800's. The first recorded grave for which we have record was for Richard Faires April 2, 1819. Older people have told us that they feel sure there were graves prior to this date, but the Parsonage for Cloverdale Charge burned in the early 1900's and all records were destroyed. The first graves were marked with huge rocks and there

were few markers placed until later years. Land for the cemetery was donated at different times by Hiram and Eve Rhodes, John and Amanda Wesson and L.D. Simmons. Plots for burial were free to any in Wesley Chapel area and subsequent plots have always been free. Funds for maintenance and upkeep is generated by annual letters to



Wesley Chapel Cemetery

by: Mrs. Henry B. Abramson, Secretary 11756, County Road 15, Florence, AL 35633 History Committee
Sources: Deeds in our possession.

Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church

In the early 1800's Henry Kirkpatrick leased 160 acres from United States Government. In 1821 he assigned this certificate for this land to John G. Pickens. In early 1800's a log schoolhouse was built on location near where the church stands today. It was the only schoolhouse in this area. During this time, religious services were held for people of varied beliefs. Beginning in 1816, a preacher was sent from Nashville Conference Methodist Episcopal Church once a quarter to hold services and visit.

On December 22, 1829, this land was purchased from the U.S. Government by Sam Savage "with the exception of two acres in NW corner reserved for meeting house Methodist Episcopal Church." This deed was granted by President Andrew Jackson and seal of General Land Office affixed. In 1835, Mr. Savage sold this land to James T. Boroughs. Records in Nashville reveal that services were held in this log building in 1816.



Wesley Chapel United Methodist, built 1965

In 1818, Alexander purchased 158.4 acres from The U.S. Government. This land joined the church property. The Faires family were devout members of Methodist Episcopal Church and many were registered teachers and lay preachers. Alexander Faires became a teacher in the school and also a lay preacher. He began Church School classes for children, youth and adults. People of all faiths were invited to be a part of this work.

In 1818, Thomas L. Douglas, Presiding Elder of Nashville District Conference came to North Alabama for a survey of Methodists. As a result, Alexander and Richard Faires were ordained as lay ministers of Wesley Chapel. This church remained in Nashville Conference until 1895 as a part of Cypress Charge. In 1870 North Alabama Conference was formed and Cypress Circuit became a part of Alabama Conference as Cloverdale Circuit. Other members of this Circuit were Salem, Pisgah Bethel Grove and later Parsonage Chapel and Mt. Tabor were added.

In 1885, the log church building burned and the men of the area began work on a frame building under direction of R.T. and Jacob Porterfield. Pegs and homemade square headed nails were used in construction. In 1940 two wings were added and the front reconstructed and a Bell Tower added for the bell given to church in 1820's. This bell can still be seen from the bell tower of the present building. In 1965 a new brick building was begun and on Christmas

all families who have family members buried in this cemetery. Two trustees of Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church serve as trustees for the Cemetery. Two ladies in the church serve as secretary and treasurer. These four people receive no pay for these services. All plots in this cemetery are filled, or reserved. Submitted

Sunday, 1965, the first service was held in the basement. On February 6, 1966, first service was held in the sanctuary. In 1990, Wesley Chapel became a One-Church charge. Homecoming and Decoration Day is held each first Sunday in June. Submitted by: Mrs. Henry Abramson, History Committee

William's Chapel Presbyterian Church

William's Chapel Church is located north of Waterloo, Alabama on Second Creek Road. It was organized in 1908 or 1909 by Dr. John Lee of Waterloo, in the Sego School. After the Sego School closed, services were held in the Weston School.

Organizing members of this church were George and Leona Perkins, John and Linnie Whitaker, Green and Mattie Weston, and Robert and Jane Hinton. The first session was composed of George Perkins, Robert Hinton, and John Whitaker.

Prior to this time some of the people in the area were Methodist, attending church at Palestine, which is no longer a church. Some were Primitive Baptists attending church in Tennessee just north of the Alabama state line.

The men who did most of the work on the wooden building, which was erected in 1914, were George Perkins, John Whitaker, George



Dennis Sego, Sharon Gean, Mamie Strange by 1914 building.

Fielder, and Will Nolan. Bob Williams had a saw mill and sawed the lumber free of charge. The land had been given by Mary Williams, and the church was called William's Chapel in her honor.

In May 1961 at the Mother's-Day Homecoming Program, Alton Scott offered to do the bulldozing necessary, and donate some money toward a new church. A brick building was erected.

Many of the founders of this church are buried in the graveyard on the church grounds. On the second Sunday in May each year, people gather for homecoming and placing flowers on the graves in remembrance of their loved ones. Submitted by: Mildred Gean Mason, 1624 Bridlewood Drive, Florence, AL 35630 and Compiled by: Ruby Boatman and Eva Dendy.

Woodmont Baptist Church

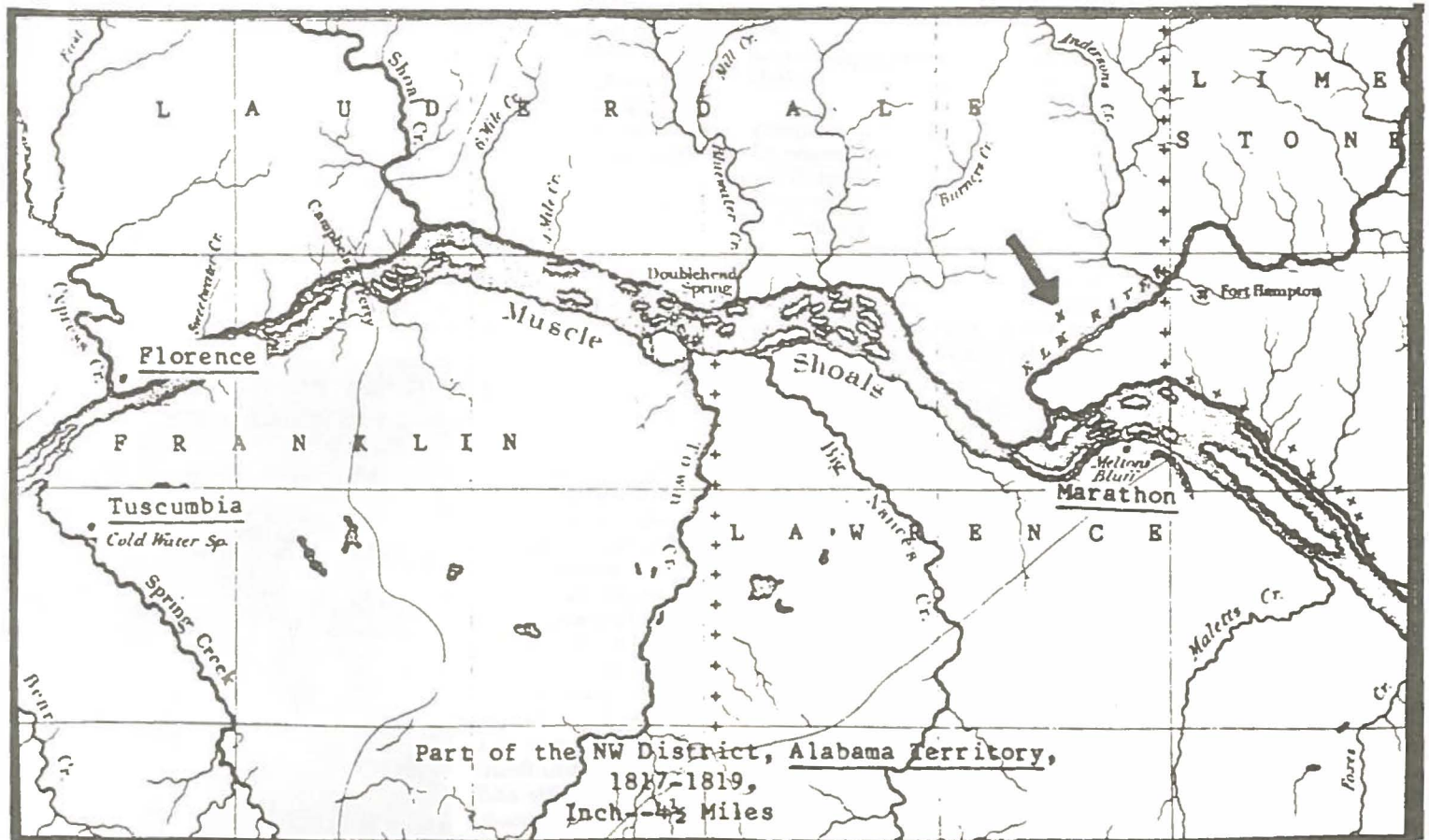
Woodmont Baptist Church began as a vision when 32 people met at the home of Doug and Virginia Lambert on February 25, 1961. Nine days later, a residence at 1501 Cullman Street was leased. Rev. Earle Trent, association missionary, was called as interim pastor. On November 19, 1961, ground was broken for the church building on Darby Drive. Rev. Richard Waggener came as pastor that same month.

From the very beginning, a spirit of fellowship has been an important part of Woodmont's success. Many of the additions and renovations over the years have been possible because of volunteers. Missions has become a vital ministry of this church. Men, women and children have participated in many domestic and foreign mission trips that included building churches, backyard Bible studies, medical services, choir tours and evangelism.

Dr. William (Bill) Trapp and his family came to Woodmont in January of 1987 and the church has seen tremendous growth. Several years ago, a preschool day care ministry was started and in 1995, Woodmont Christian School began. In the fall of 1997, Woodmont Christian and Northwest Christian Academy merged and formed Shoals Christian School with grades K-10th.

The vision of Woodmont became a reality for those 32 faithful people who met almost 38 years ago. The prayers and hard work of many and God's faithfulness have brought this church where it is today. With church membership over 1400, Woodmont Baptist Church has been and continues to be a "family of faith on mission." Submitted by: Jania Harp, Woodmont Baptist Church, 2001 Darby Drive, Florence, AL 35630

NEITHER RAIN, NOR SNOW, — — — —



Arrow shows approximate location of Archibald Fuqua's land, "Lauderdale County, Alabama Territory"

Elk River Territorial Letter

Because there are no recorded territorial covers from the Northwestern part of Alabama, the appearance of any example or relevant postal document is important to the local collector and may be of interest to the postal historian.

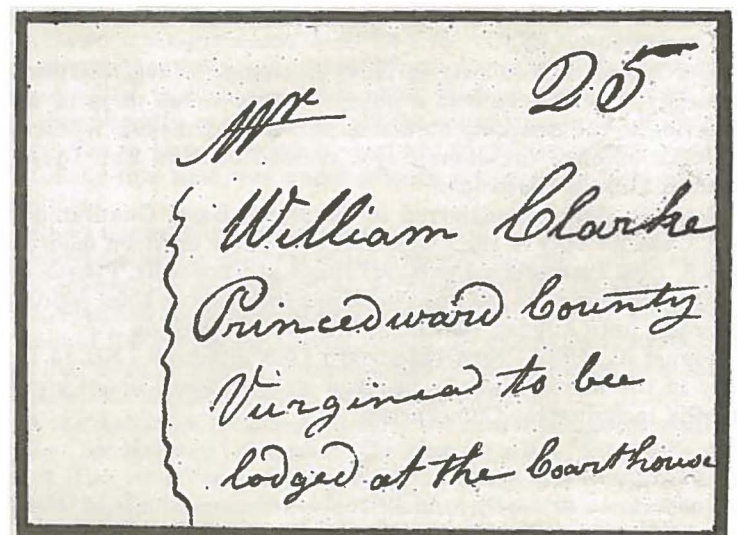
On June 21, 1819, Archibald Fuqua, formerly of Huntsville, had settled his family in the howling wilderness of the eastern section of Lauderdale County, Alabama Territory, one mile from Elk River and three miles from the Tennessee River, and wrote the folks back home at Prince Edward County, Virginia:

"Dear Sur I once more make use of the opportunity of wrighting to you to in form you that I and all my family are well and hope these fiew lines may find you and your family in good health. we have had the misfortune to loos our youngest son Joel he was taken sick the last of February and died the 8th of March. Fred (?) Archer was killed by the fall of an oak tree the 3th of March it was an oak tree that was a fire and burnt down and feell on him and kild him dead. I have remoaved from Madderson (Madison) County ever since the last of March and am now living in lauderdale County 45 miles below huntsville on the land i purchased at the sails. I feel my self settled for life. I have got good land and good water. You have no idea of my situation unless you could see it. I live 1 mile from elk river and 3 miles from tennesse both good navigable Rivers. Boats of Considerable burthen Desend them all winter and spring and Ceal Boats of 20 ton assend them at Common water.

I have a fine crop of cotton groaing and a small crop of corn which is tolerable likely corn is selling very high in this country it is 1 1/4 Dolar per Bushel and generally Cotton has taken a very rapid fall it is worth from 12 to \$14 per hundred only i soaled my last years crop a part for 22 1/2 and the Balance for \$23 per hundred Cash others Soaled for moar on a credit. Your sister Sally wishes to bee remembered to you and your wife and her mother and all her brothers and

sisters ... I must conclude But still remain your sinsear friend.

Archibald Fuqua Lauderdale County
Alabama Territory."



Postal cover of folded letter from Archibald Fuqua, June 21, 1819, Postage 25¢ No Post-Mark, only recorded NW Alabama Territorial Cover.

This folded letter bears a ms "25" for postage in the upper right corner, but no postmark, hence the vexing question: where did it enter the postal system?

The Elk River played an important role in the early settlement of the southern part of Tennessee and later in the settlement of the North Alabama counties. Settlers came down the Tennessee from the east in boats to the mouth of Elk River and then up the

river to the interior. Later, some entered the newly opened territory by ascending the Elk River to the Tennessee by boat.

The nearest settlement to Fuqua was Fort Hampton on the Elk River, 4 miles from its mouth, now in Limestone County, but until 1821 part of Lauderdale County. The post was also the northern terminal of Gaines Trace. The War Department established the post in 1810 to drive squatters off the Indian land. But there was no post office there.

Another possibility was the post office at Florence - the only one in the county - but this was at a considerable distance to the west and the wrong direction for mail to Virginia. (Nevertheless a possibility, Northward via the Natchez Trace.)

Lauderdale County was established by the Alabama Territorial Legislature, February 6, 1818, and carved out of lands purchased from the Cherokees and Chickasaws in 1816. With 100 miles of water front on the Tennessee River, it has retained its original size except for the fork between the Elk and Tennessee Rivers, which was given to Limestone County in 1821. Lauderdale lies in the Northwestern quarter of the state, bounded on the north by the State of Tennessee, east by Limestone County, south by Franklin (now Colbert and Franklin) and Lawrence Counties, and west by the State of Mississippi. The Tennessee River is the southern line of both Lauderdale and Limestone. All of these counties were created in 1818.

Lauderdale was named after Col. James Lauderdale of Tennessee, who fought the Creeks under Andrew Jackson and died in 1814 from wounds received at the Battle of Talledega.

Florence, the largest town in the district, on the northern bank of the river, two miles from Cypress Creek, was a projection of the Cypress Land Company, organized at Huntsville, March 12, 1818. The company purchased some 5,500 acres on the river at Lauderdale's southern boundary, including all the choice tracts on the northern bank of the river between Campbell's Ferry and the mouth of Cypress Creek. The land sales in Huntsville in 1818, when all the lands west of Madison County on both sides of the river were put up on the market, attracted wide-spread attention. The company's shareholders visualized a great commercial city at the foot of the Muscle Shoals. Sale of town lots commenced July 22, 1818. (Andrew Jackson purchased six times. No one would bid against him.) The town's name was chosen by the Italian surveyor.

A post office was established at Florence, October 10, 1818.

All the records of the Cypress Land Co. were destroyed by fire, but General John Coffee, territorial surveyor, a close friend and business partner of Andrew Jackson, and one of the original trustees, made a private record of the original land sales, indicating the early buyers, lot numbers, and prices paid. His list shows that Archibald Fuqua purchased four different lots in Lauderdale County in 1818. So, he could have had business in Florence and his letter dispatched there.

South of Florence in the County of Franklin (now Colbert) was the Indian town of Coldwater, at the mouth of Coldwater Creek, established by renegade Indians about 1786. Originally it was a base from which to pillage and harass the Cumberland settlements. Later it was called Big Spring, and finally Tuscumbia for a nearby Chickasaw chief. Big Spring post office was established May 10, 1819, a few weeks prior to Fuqua's letter. That his letter entered the mails here seems exceedingly remote.

Another territorial post office was established at Athens, to the East in Limestone County, May 8, 1819, but at this early date there were no connecting East-West roads to Elk River and a posting of the letter at Athens would have been out of the way. It could have been carried out of the mails to the Huntsville post office, still further east in Madison County, but that postmaster certainly would have placed a postmark on the cover.

Actually, the most accessible and logical receiving post office for the letter in this article was at Melton's Bluff (Marathon) at the head of the Elk River shoals, on the south bank of the Tennessee River, in Lawrence County. Melton's Bluff was selected as the seat of this territorial county government. At the time it was the largest settlement in the county and the first town to be founded. It was named after John Melton who, some say, was a half-breed Indian. Others say he was an Irishman who married a Cherokee woman and raised a family. Early accounts tell of how Melton acquired a great fortune and many slaves by robbing early pioneers on the flatboats that travelled on the river below the high bluff. Andrew Jackson bought the Melton plantation and tavern after his death in 1815.

Later, Jackson and his partner, John Coffee, had the bluff

surveyed and divided into town lots. A post office, Marathon, was established there, February 3, 1819. However, the county seat was removed to the center of the county at Moulton in 1820, and Marathon quickly expired. Today the town site is not only extinct - it lies at the bottom of the Tennessee River! *Submitted by: Charles O. McMurry, (great great great grandson of Archibald Fuqua), 7714 FoxFire Drive, Huntsville, AL 35802 and Written by: M. Clinton McGee, deceased*

Source: The Dixie Philatelist, Spring 1980 edition, pages 13-16. Reprinted by permission from Mrs. M. Clinton McGee and Mr. Donald F. Garrett, Secretary-Treasurer of the Southern Philatelist Federation, former publisher of the now discontinued Dixie Philatelist Magazine.

Post Offices of Lauderdale County

The first post office established in Lauderdale County, Alabama was at Florence, December 18, 1827. In the early 1800s the mail was being delivered by stage coach from Nashville, Tennessee once a month and left at Pope's Tavern. It required from five to seven days to make the delivery from Nashville, depending on the weather and the condition of General Andrew Jackson's Military Road. In 1901, Lauderdale had 37 post offices; currently, there are six. The following are a listing of post offices that exist or at one time operated in the county, as compiled by William Q. Hill. Mr. Hill credited Vernon Freeman with providing information found in this listing.

Anderson Creek-Opened in 1860 with Archibald Ray as Postmaster. The name was changed to Anderson in 1896. Service was transferred to Rogersville for a few years in the early 1900s before being restored in 1920. There is still a post office at Anderson.

Arnot-This post office operated only a short time from 1902 till 1905. It was located about four miles south of Green Hill, near the Lone Cedar community.

Atlas-Existing for 16 years, this post office closed in 1906. It was about half way between Green Hill and Killen.

Arthur-Opened in 1886, it was discontinued in 1907 and the mail sent to Lexington.

Arkdale-Closed in 1907 after six years of service, mail was sent to Loretto, TN. Arkdale was on the east side of Blue Water Creek, east of Green Hill.

Bailey's Springs-With Jonathan Bailey as first Postmaster, this post office opened in 1854. It was discontinued at least three times before being closed permanently in 1901 with the mail then being sent to St. Florian.

Belew-A post office was operated here from 1889 until 1905. Mail then went to Loretto, TN. Belew was an early community on Blue Water Creek near the Tennessee line.

Birchum-Operated for about a year in 1880-1881.

Burcham Mills-Located near what is now Central Heights, this post office was established in late 1890 and closed in 1903.

Canal-Open for just over a year in 1883-84, mail was then sent to Florence.

Center Star-First opened in 1850 with William Tapp as Postmaster, this station operated off and on until being closed for good in 1914. The original spelling was "Centre Star". Mail was then sent to Killen.

Cherry Grove-Service under this name continued for nine years, 1841-1850. This station was originally called "Cornishis" and later Green Hill.

Cloverdale-Previously known as "Waveland", then "Rawhide", operations under this name lasted from 1889 until close after World War II.

Comer-From 1880 till 1895, mail was delivered from this station. After closing, mail was sent to Arkdale. The area is near Lexington. Robert T. Lanier was the first Postmaster.

Cornishis-George Kennedy served as Postmaster from 1830 till 1834. The name was changed to "Cherry Grove" in 1841, then later to "Green Hill".

Cotton Gin-This station existed for about five years, before being discontinued. It is thought to have been in the upper Blue Water Creek area.

Covington-Covingtons, Crittendens, and Thorntons served as Postmaster here. After 22 years of operation, the station was closed in 1897, with the mail being then sent to Rogersville.

Dart-This was a community located on the Savannah Highway near the Tennessee line. The post office there opened in 1899 and closed in 1908.

East Florence-Located in Sullivan's Drug Store, the station was closed in 1900, after operating for only six years.

Eastep-Solomon Eastep opened this post office as Postmaster in 1890. It was closed in 1902 and the mail sent to Rogersville. Eastep was located a few miles north of Rogersville.

Elgin-Now called Elgin Crossroads, a post office existed here from 1901 until 1905. It was originally called Marmion, then Ingrams Crossroads.

Florence-The first postmaster in Lauderdale County, John Craig, was appointed December 14, 1818 to operate the post office in Florence. In 1827, he was replaced by James H. Weakley. It has been in continuous operation since it was first opened and now has additional branches in the city.

Franklin-William J. Stutts and Wiley W. Richardson (also a medical doctor) were the only two postmasters in the three year life of this station. Franklin was near where Cow Pen Creek enters Shoal Creek.

Gravelly Springs-Son of an early Lauderdale County pioneer and brother to Alabama governor, George S. Houston, Ross Houston was the first Postmaster, beginning in 1842. It was closed in 1907, the mail being sent to Florence.

Green Hill-Originally called Cornishis, then Cherry Grove, the community of Green Hill was named for a hero of the Mexican War, Green B. Hill. His brother-in-law, Charles McCluskey was the first Postmaster there in 1850. Except for a brief time during the Reconstruction era, it continued to operate until 1906, when the mail began to be sent to Saint Joseph, Tennessee. Daniel F. Killen was the last Postmaster.

Haddock-From 1890 to 1906 there was a post office here. Afterwards, mail was sent to Waterloo. It was located west of Waterloo.

Hines-Originally known as Webster, the name was changed in 1892. It closed in 1931 with the mail going to Florence. It was located near Indian Camp Creek and the old L&N Railroad in the North-central part of Lauderdale County.

Hope-Hope was a community north of Florence on the Jim Olive Road about one mile south of the Tennessee state line, near Bethel Church. Opened in 1893, Hope Post Office closed in 1905. The mail was then sent to Hines.

Ingrams Cross Roads-George Ingram was Postmaster at Marmion when the name was changed to Ingrams Crossroads. This post office remained open until 1857.

Jacksonburg-This post office was closed at least twice and re-opened before closing for good in 1924. It was first opened in 1889. The mail was sent to Hines each time service was discontinued here. Jacksonburg is located just off Chisholm Road, north of Florence.

Kendell-Located about half-way between Threets Cross Roads and Cloverdale, Kendell had a post office from 1890 till 1908, when mail began to be sent to Cloverdale.

Killen-The first Postmaster was James S. Killen, for whom the town was named. He assumed his post in 1896. This post office is still in operation today.

Kingman-A post office was opened here in 1899 and operated five years before being closed for three years. It was re-opened in 1907 and continued until 1913, when it was permanently closed. Mail then went to Florence. It was located near present-day Killen.

Lauderdale Factory-For one year there was a postal station here.

Lexington-Felix A. Westmoreland was appointed as the first Postmaster at Lexington in 1832. The post office was located in a store belonging to Edwin B. Westmoreland, who became the second Postmaster. It was closed for some time, twice, following the Civil War. After the service was restored in 1874, the operation has been continuous until the present time.

Little Cypress-With Samuel O. Johnson as Postmaster, the postal service only operated here from February until May of 1856.

Marmion-James M. Boston, James Williams, and George M. Ingram were the three postmasters to serve at Marmion. Its name was changed to Ingrams Cross Roads in 1849.

Masonville-Only four postmasters served at Masonville during its forty-year existence. It opened in 1826 and closed in 1866 and was located at the intersection of Highway 72 and Old Lexington road.

Mecca-From 1898 until 1902, a post office operated here. After it was closed, the mail was sent to Green Hill. Mecca was very near Green Hill and Cow Pen Creek.

Oakland-Samuel Vaughn was the first Postmaster at the Oakland Post Office. Except for being closed for a time after the Civil War, it operated until being discontinued in 1905. The mail

was then sent to Florence. Oakland is located about eight miles west of Florence.

Oliver-Oliver had its own post office from 1894 until 1909 when the mail was sent to Rogersville, Oliver is between Rogersville and the Elk River.

Posey-A post office was operated here for about one year, beginning in February 1894. Posey was located south of Center Hill.

Pruittton-This was a community near Butler Creek about thirteen miles north of Florence. The postal service operated there from 1883 until 1923, except for a brief time in 1920-21.

Rawhide-The community of Rawhide was changed from Waveland in 1874. In 1889 it became Cloverdale. The post office operated under this name for fifteen years.

Rhodesville-A post office existed here for about eighteen years, closing in 1907. Columbus Rhodes was Postmaster most of those years. Rhodesville is on Waterloo Road, about fifteen miles west of Florence.

Rogersville-Opening in 1830, this post office has existed continuously for 168 years to date. Postmasters have included several Haraways and Fuquas. Rogersville has the second oldest postal service in Lauderdale County. Only the Florence Post Office has provided service longer.

Saint Florian-From 1879 till 1904 there was a post office at St. Florian.

Slossburg-Two postmasters served during the seven year period of time when a post office was here. It closed in 1857.

Smithsonia-Columbus Smith became the first Postmaster when this office was opened in 1886. Mail was sent to Florence after it closed in 1927. The name is applied to what was formerly "Cave Spring" and "Cheatham's Ferry" and is located in the "Bend of the River".

Stutts-Opened in 1899, mail was delivered from here until 1906. Located a few miles from Green Hill, the mail was later sent to Killen.

Sugar-Located north of Anderson, in the northeastern part of the county, Sugar had a post office from 1882 until 1905, at which time the mail was sent to Mt. Roszel in Limestone County.

Threet-For the ten years that this post office operated, there was a Bevis as Postmaster, first, James C. and then John W. When it closed in 1908, the mail was sent to Cloverdale. Now called Threet's Cross Roads, the community is north of the Savannah Highway, just west of the Natchez Trace.

Waveland-A post office operated for two years under this name, before being changed to "Rawhide" in 1874. It later became Cloverdale.

Waterloo-There has been a post office at Waterloo for 166 years, since 1832. Lewis D. Collins was the first Postmaster. It is the third oldest in the county, behind Florence and Rogersville.

Webster-A post office operated here for two years, 1890-1892, before the name was changed to Hines. Joab G. Hines was the Postmaster and continued on in the position after the name change.

Westmorelandville-Alfred A. Westmoreland was appointed the first Postmaster here in 1849. This post office was discontinued in 1867.

Whitehead-A post office existed here from 1891 until 1906. Mail was then routed through Rogersville. The community is west of Rogersville in the eastern end of the county.

Young's Cross Roads-From 1830 until 1845, a post office was located here, where the Natchez Trace crossed the Savannah Highway. *Submitted by: Lauderdale County Heritage Book Committee*

Sources: William G. Hill, *A Walk Through the Past* by William L. McDonald

The United States Post Office and Court House at Florence

The architectural plans for the Florence Post Office Building, both the interior and the exterior, were designed by John Robie Kennedy, Jr., whose ancestors were natives of Lauderdale County. He was a second cousin to the Reverend Hiram Kennedy Douglass, who willed his home to the city of Florence as the Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts. The Reverend Douglass often spoke of his cousin Robie staying at the Douglass home while the federal building was under construction. While sitting on the front porch with the Douglass family, Robie would look across the way at the

construction site and remark that because of his love for his ancestral city that he had designed a building for the ages. "It will never be outdated in its design," he would say, "... and it will fit well into the modern architecture of the future."

John Robie Kennedy, Jr., was the son of John Robie and Joanna McLester Kennedy of Tuscaloosa. John Robie Kennedy, Sr. was a son of John Spinks Kennedy of Lauderdale County. John Spinks Kennedy, in partnership with Richard Baugh, built the Lauderdale Factory, a cotton mill, prior to the Civil War. This mill was located about nine miles east of Florence on Shoal Creek and the Jackson Military Road. In 1860, this industry was valued at \$80,000 with 50 men and 100 women employees. Approximately 1,163 bales of cotton a year were processed to produce 812,500 yards of osnaburg and 110,000 dozen cotton yarns. At that time, the mill boasted 70 looms and 2,200 spindles. This factory was destroyed by the Union Army in 1863. Following this loss, Kennedy and Baugh moved to Tuscaloosa and purchased half-interest in a cotton factory there.



Florence Post Office and Federal Building

The designer of the Florence Post Office was descended from David Kennedy who moved to Lauderdale County from Upper Moore County, North Carolina in 1823. David Kennedy was the son of John Alexander Kennedy who first introduced the famous Kennedy Rifle at Philadelphia during the American Revolution. His Kennedy Gun Factory was moved to Upper Moore County, North Carolina following the British invasion of Pennsylvania. John Alexander Kennedy's son, David Kennedy, moved the factory

to Green Hill in Lauderdale County, Alabama in 1823 and operated it until his death in 1837. The Kennedy Rifle is considered to be one of the best long rifles made during the days of the frontier. David Kennedy's son, Hiram Kennedy, was a great-grandfather to the architect, John Robie Kennedy, Jr.

The Florence Post Office was built on the site of the old Florence Synodical College between 1906 and 1913. The supervising architect was James Knox Taylor. Taylor was a close associate of Robie Kennedy, and, as a result of their friendship was entertained as a guest at the Douglass home on Tuscaloosa Street.

The architecture of the post office is Mediterranean in character. The original building remained unchanged until 1946, when an addition was made to the rear of the building. Then in 1965 two wings were added to the sides. The lobby of the post office is floored with light, Cherokee, Georgia marble laid out in twelve-inch squares. The borders are verde antique. The surface has a honed finish. The stairs to the second and third floors are of Alabama marble with a honed finish. The oak stair rails rest on wrought iron balusters. Above the second floor is the frieze of an entablature so large that it constitutes the walls of the third floor. The windows of the third floor are six-paned casement windows.

The wainscot of the interior is of polished verde antique. The elaborate lobby ceilings are of ornamental plaster bordered with egg and dart design and dentils. These motifs are repeated throughout the building. Other ornaments are the acanthus leaf, open flowers, fruits, and vegetables. The walls are of Georgian paneling and ornamental framing plasters.

The Florence Post Office and the Kennedy-Douglas Center for the Arts are located on opposite sides of the Wilson Park in Florence. Both are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Both of these historic buildings are connected with the early Kennedy Family of Florence and Lauderdale County. One was a home of the Douglass family and related by marriage to the Kennedys of Green Hill. The other, the Florence Post Office, through its architectural design by John Robie Kennedy, was likewise connected with the Kennedy family of Green Hill. Submitted by: William Lindsey McDonald, Historian for the City of Florence

SITES AND SCENES

Bailey Springs - Valley's First Spa

Bailey Springs was settled by one Jonathan Bailey and his family about 1810 who came overland by covered wagon from near Pulaski, Tenn. Satisfied with the site and the seven large clear springs he found there, Bailey built a large log cabin to serve as a dining room and five smaller cabins for living quarters.

Word of the beneficial effects of the waters from the springs quickly spread and the settlement grew and Bailey prospered. By 1844 people were coming from far and wide and accommodations were enlarged to take care of the increase. It is said that the dining room had sixteen tables and on weekends there would be as many as 100 to 150 guests.

Jonathan Bailey acquired some 200 acres of land from the government in 1832 and later bought additional land near the springs. Visitors came from as far away as St. Louis, Cincinnati, Nashville, and Louisville and the spa was visited by many famous people including members of congress. Bailey's charges were up to \$10 a day with permission given the guests "to drink all the water they pleased." Bailey also began to ship the water to various localities.

Bailey continued to manage his growing business until his death in 1857, the springs and surrounding acreage being purchased from his heirs by A.G. Ellis and Company. Ellis built larger buildings that included a spacious ballroom and cottages. An Italian orchestra added to the elegance of the spa, now well advertised. It flourished especially during the ten years before the Civil War and was somewhat successful until the 1870's when Mrs. Ellis, the remaining member of the company died. There being an indebtedness against the place, it was sold and operated again for a time as a hotel and resort.

By the turn of the century, succeeding owners had let the place run down and in the early 1900's it was operated as a girls' school, but this was not a successful venture and once again a sporadic attempt was made to operate the resort by Fred Thomas, whose advertisement appeared in the Florence Centennial edition in 1918.

A few years later the old buildings burned to the ground and thus ended an era remembered as one of both romance and turbulence, but nevertheless depicting the elegance of the old South.

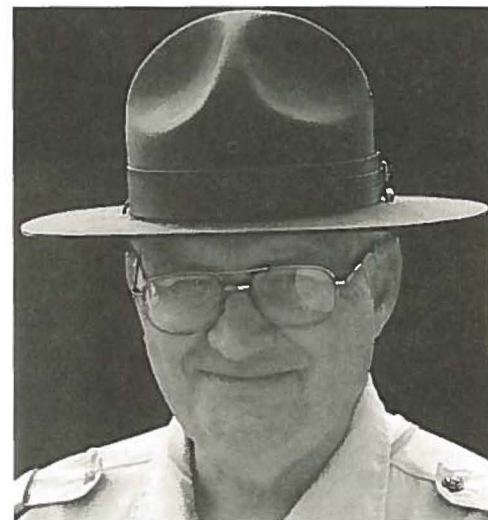
Bailey and his wife had two daughters and three sons, all of whom died young except Richard Absalom who lived until 1869. Richard was survived by his widow, three sons and a daughter, one of the sons being the late Richard James Bailey, well known in Florence for many years. He was survived by three sons, Julian, Walter, and Luther. Submitted by: Lauderdale County Heritage Book Committee

Camp Westmoreland

Westmoreland Reservation, located on County Road 30, Florence, was donated to The Tennessee Valley Boy Scout Council in 1934 by Mr.

J.E.F. Westmoreland and his wife, Alice C. Westmoreland. It was their intentions to donate 285 acres of their land to be used as a campsite by the Boy Scouts of Lauderdale and other counties in Alabama. Boy Scout Troops from all over North Alabama have camped at Westmoreland and received the necessary training in survival and some military skills.

Camp Westmoreland has a ranger who is on duty. His



Ranger Ed Rogers (1998)

A drama, *Determined: Celebrating the Life of W.C. Handy*, written by Mrs. Dolores Swoopes, is presented each year. Old, young, and middle-aged are given the opportunity to act in front of an audience, people who would not ordinarily be involved in drama. As well as being entertaining, the play is also educational as it tells so much of the life of W.C. Handy.

The finale of each year's Festival is a concert by a nationally known blues or jazz artist on Saturday night at Norton Auditorium. Such people as Freddy Cole, Roberta Flack, Nancy Wilson, Ramsey Lewis Trio, Dianne Schuur, Hank Crawford and Jemay McGriff, Diane Reeves and Carrie Smith have appeared.

The W.C. Handy Music Festival just keeps growing. There is something for everyone. With the help of many, many volunteers and corporate participation, the Music Preservation Society will continue to present a premier event in the Shoals for years to come. *Submitted by: Gwen Woods, Member, Board of Directors Music Preservation Society*

W.C. Handy Museum

The most complete collection of W.C. Handy's personal papers and artifacts in the world are housed here. It includes his famous trumpet, personal piano, handwritten sheet music, library, citations from famous people, photographs, household furnishings



W.C. Handy Birthday, Museum, And Library

and a wealth of memorabilia. Hand hewn logs in the cabin are original and furnishings are as they might have been at Handy's birth. The library is a valuable study resource center for Black history and culture. A room of the library is devoted to interpreting cabin life during the time Handy lived there. The grounds and gardens were dedicated by Handy's brother, Charles, as a living memorial to their parents, The Reverend and Mrs. Charles B. Handy, Sr.

The W.C. Handy Music Festival is held each year in Florence during the first week in August. Each November 16, Handy's birthday is celebrated with free music, a birthday cake and free admission to the museum. *Submitted by: W.C. Handy Museum*

Indian Mound And Museum

Ancient, authentic, historic - the Florence Indian Mound is the Tennessee Valley's largest domiciliary mound. It is typical of the work of those who lived in this area before the Cherokees, Chickasaws and Creeks. They occupied the land from the Tennessee River to the Gulf of Mexico.

The quadrilateral mound is 42 feet high and has a base diameter of 310 feet by 230 feet. The summit is 145 feet by 94 feet. Early settlers found steps on the east side and discovered that it had been enclosed by an earthen wall. This mound may predate Columbus by a thousand years.



Indian Mound And Museum

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The museum houses artifacts dating back 10,000 years. They are displayed in chronological order Paleo, Transitional, Archaic, Woodland and Mississippian Native American ages.

The Festival of the Singing River is held each September to honor and celebrate the traditions of the Native Americans along the scenic banks of the Tennessee River at McFarland Park. *Submitted by: Florence Indian Mound And Museum*

Kennedy - Douglass

The Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts is the Arts Cultural Center for Florence, Alabama. It is the administrative office for coordinating and promoting of cultural activities and is the home base and meeting place for cultural groups. It houses showcases and classrooms for all arts disciplines, including workshops for adults and children. It houses genealogical files and personal memorabilia of Hiram K. Douglass.



Kennedy-Douglass Center For The Arts

Arts Alive is the annual juried Arts & Crafts Festival sponsored by the Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts. It is held in Wilson Park in downtown Florence, Alabama. Festival proceeds fund the Art-In-Education Program in local schools.

Arts Alive sponsors a children's art competition in the local schools. Winning pieces are displayed. More than 100 artists and craftspersons from across the country exhibit, sell, demonstrate and compete for \$3,000 in awards. Classifications of original artwork entered includes: Paintings, Drawings, Sculpture and Crafts handmade from Fiber, Clay, Glass, Wood, Metal and Mixed Media. Many well known folk artists and 'outsider' artists return every year to this popular Festival. *Submitted by: Kennedy-Douglass, Florence, AL*

Larimore Home

Julia Esther Gresham was the wife of Theophilus Brown Larimore. Esther, as she was called by her husband, inherited 28 acres of land from her father. It was a beautiful wooded area about four miles from Florence. T.B. was first to call it "Mars Hill." He had no money, but with his wife's inheritance, he conceived the idea of establishing a school for boys and girls. They never doubted their plan.

T.B. spoke of Esther as being "bright and beautiful, and as good as she could be." She was an incessant worker, not a meddler in other people's matters and never a gadabout.

When the couple heard that several hundred acres of land around the Mars Hill area was being considered a place to build a brewery, they were upset. Risking Esther's inheritance, the Larimores purchased the 700 acres. They lived and worked hard, practiced self-denial and strict economy until the land was cleared of debt.

Together they built the Larimore home that stands on the campus of Mars Hill Bible School. The house was completed in 1870. The Larimores used the house as a home and educational center. The two-story frame structure survives in relatively unaltered condition, and as an example of domestic architecture of the post civil war period.

The years following the war were years of economic uncertainty and privation in the south. Few rural structures as unique as this house were built in the farming areas at that time.

Having been built in 1870, it reflects a slight romantic influence in its window design, chimney arrangement and some interior aspects. The beautiful hand made ornamentation trim reflects the conservativeness of the builders. The hand-hewn timber framing, of high density and design, reflects lasting quality.

This couple opened Mars Hill Academy in 1871, as a combination home and school to train ministers and Christian workers in the Church of Christ. The school was called Mars Hill College and operated until 1887.

T.B. and his wife reared 15 children in the Larimore home, and many young men attended college under the instruction, guardianship and discipline of the Larimores. The men were fed, housed, and cared for as they attended classes. They had chores

and routines that helped with the work of the house. These included cleaning their rooms, building fires, and studying.

After 1887, Mr. Larimore entered a full time preaching career. The house was then converted into rental apartments. In 1947, Mars Hill Bible School was established. After sixty years the house was again devoted to educational use until 1968. Other buildings were added to the school.

In 1981 a women's group, known as the Associated Women's Organization (A.W.O.) restored the house and refurbished it in keeping with its original state.

Through special arrangements, the home is available for group meetings. The A.W.O. group prepares luncheons, appropriate decorating, and hospitality for civic and social organizations. They prepare Holiday Open House for friends who wish to tour the home. This beautiful, well-loved house, is truly an asset to the Mars Hill area. For photo, see *Mars Hill Bible School*.

T.B. Larimore died at 85 years of age. He is buried in California, beside his second wife. Julia Esther Gresham Larimore was born July 11, 1845 and died March 4, 1909. She is buried in the Gresham family cemetery across the road from Mars Hill Bible School. She has a tall oblique stone with an inscription of love and honor. Submitted by: *Lois E. Henderson, a descendant of the Gresham family*

A Mitchelltown Landmark

This house was the home of Captain John Mitchell. Shortly after the turn of the century, my grandparents, Tom and Lula Mitchell Butler, became owners of this house. Lula was John Mitchell's daughter. Tom was the son of Gabe Butler.

Their children, Vona, Floyd, Tommy, Oakley, O'Neal, Elizabeth and Fred, shared many good times there, according to my mother, Vona. The house was centrally located in Mitchelltown, a bustling community then. People came from surrounding farms to the general store, cotton gin, sawmill, church and school. The house, perched upon a knoll, had a viewing vantage for community activities and to Mill Creek that gurgled through the valley.



James Mason and Emma (Butler) Mitchell family with Susan Stutts and Edna Caroline (Phillips) Mitchell, c. 1911

The house fell into a state of disrepair after Tom and Lula died in the 1960's, and was finally torn down in 1996. Soon there will be few who remember the community, much less the house. For now though, we who do remember, travel the Mitchelltown road amidst haunting images and ancestral spirits lingering in the lonely, green valley. I perceive it as it was then and I'm carried back to a warm summer day when, much to our delight, we get to go to Mitchelltown to visit our grandparents. In my childhood, the 1940's and 50's, Mitchelltown had diminished in business. There was only the gin, church and general store.

Oh, but there was the house with its massive rooms, porches and secrets! And there were the surrounding cotton and corn fields, the truck patches, garden and orchard. But most important of all, there were my grandparents. Granddad called grandsons, George - Big or Little George, according to size; granddaughters were Pud, also big or little. And Grandma he called Honeybunch. Between them and the house, there was enough room, food, entertainment and love to accommodate all who came to visit.

If we came for Sunday dinner, it was indeed a treat; for Honeybunch would have dressed a chicken and have it ready to fry. Fresh vegetables would be shelled, peeled and simmering. If we were lucky, a peach or apple cobbler would be bubbling in the oven.

When the table was finally set and the food was served, Granddad invariably called for little green pepper pods. He would bribe, beg or shame us to have one with him. We wised up to the tricks he pulled at a young age, though.

After we were full and quiet, we'd wander to the front porch where we'd sprawl in wicker chairs and porch swings. You'd think Granddad would have dozed off now with the lulling sounds of bumble bees, birds and Mill Creek. No, not him. At last he had an audience and he'd lapse into his stories. Stories were of his youth, baseball games, neighbors, or religion. He would mimic characters, sing little ditties or go through motions that enhanced the stories, so that over and over we watched and listened enthralled.

Then we'd play awhile and explore the yard - never the house because no prowling was allowed. By and by, Granddad would stretch his legs and he'd say he wondered how one of those cool watermelons might taste. He'd tell Honeybunch if she'd get that big ole knife and some salt, we might try one. Then we'd troop behind him to the dining room. (He kept the melons there because of the coolness.) Then he'd ceremoniously select and thump until he had just the right ones. Next, we'd be led to the back porch and hungrily wait while he split, tasted and sliced the juicy treasures. Then we ate and ate until we were all full and sticky and then we'd be allowed to go down to the creek to wash, wade and cool off.

By now, the sun would be heading westward and Mama would gather us to head back home. Most times we walked the two miles home, sometimes taking the road by the cemetery. Mostly we were quiet going home, mellow from the food, stories and peace that had filled our day.

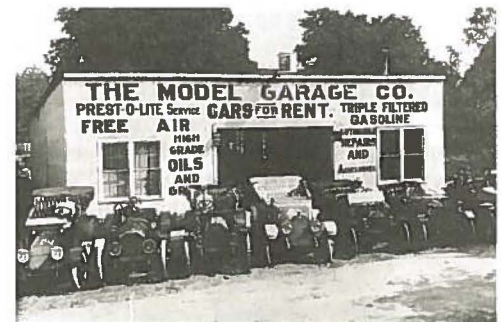
Never did we question the history of the house nor the ancestors who built it. Back then we were caught up in the present, the enjoyment of the living.

Years later I learned the location of Captain John Mitchell's grave. I go by there sometimes and I try to pass on to his spirit my appreciation of his legacy. Submitted by: *Shirley Tate Pugh, granddaughter of Lula and Tom Butler*

The Model Garage Company - I

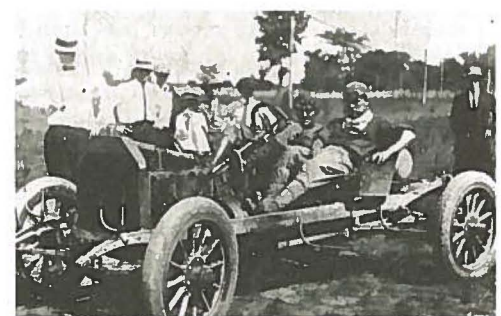
The Model Garage Company was perhaps the earliest Car Rental Agency in Florence. It was owned and operated by Chester L. Lewellen about 1913. Members of the Huntsville Antique Car Club have provided the following tentative automobile identifications (L to R): 1. 1913 Locomotive, LH drive. Orig. Cost: \$4300; 2. 1909 or 1910 Peerless, RH drive, Orig. Cost: \$6000; 3. 1906 or 1907 Peerless, RH drive, Orig. Cost: \$4000; 4. 1913 Locomotive, LH drive, similar to #1; 5. 1913 Ford Model-T, LH drive, Orig. Cost: \$690; 6. 1912 or 1913 Hupmobile, RH drive, runabout or roadster, Orig. Cost: \$975 (Chester L. Lewellen is seated in this car); 7. 1912 Stutz, RH drive, possibly roadster or Bearcat, Orig. Cost: \$2000; 8. Possibly Overland 1910, RH drive, partial picture makes it hard to identify. If 1910 Overland Roadster, Orig. Cost: \$1000.

Chester L. Lewellen closed The Model Garage Company and moved to Detroit, MI in 1914. Submitted by: *Lyla Lewellen Smith, 125 Westbury Drive, Huntsville, AL 35802*



The Model Garage Company - II

Pictured is Chester Lewellen in his racing car, believed to be a 1909 Buick from which the body has been removed. The picture, taken at the Tuscumbia Fair Grounds, was used as a picture postcard which was mailed by his sister, Hazel, to



their brother, Azel, in Detroit. She wrote: "Paul Porch drove and their car broke down with them, so of course they didn't win the race." Submitted by: *Lyla Lewellen Smith, 125 Westbury Drive, Huntsville, AL 35802*

Mount Reeder Nichols

Who ever would believe that a mountain in Australia would be named for, and in honor of, a man born in East Florence? No one in Florence knew about this mountain until the Australian son of Reeder Nichols came here to learn something about his father and his ancestors.

Reeder Nichols was the son of John Martin Nichols and his first wife, Zether Murphy. John's father was Thomas Murphy, born in South Carolina in 1832. It was Thomas who moved the family west, settling in Lawrence Co., AL. Reeder's mother's family, the Murphys, trace back to a J.D. Murphy, born 1809 in North Carolina. He arrived in Alabama at least by 1834. Reeder had two sisters, Oleta and Eulaila, and two half-sisters, Ruby and Edith. John Martin Nichols died in Florence in 1938. Zether Murphy Nichols died in Florence in 1974, just a year before Reeder died in Australia.

The Nichols family worked in the East Florence cotton mills and accumulated practically no wealth. For a boy born in the early nineteen hundreds (1 Feb 1904), the future must have looked rather bleak. To add to the bleakness, Reeder Nichols' father divorced and married again when Reeder was about seven years old. Reeder, himself, married about 1930 and had a son, Jack. These were depression years and jobs were scarce. He joined the marines and learned about aviation and communications. He learned so well that he was the navigator for Roscoe Turner in the air race from England to Australia. Turner was a Mississippian who frequently brought his plane to Florence and offered rides to those bold enough to fly with him.

At the outbreak of World War II, Reeder was the head of the Radio and Electrical Section of the Civil Aviation Administration. Entering the war as a colonel, he helped coordinate the island-hopping campaign against the Japanese. He was with McArthur when the general returned to the Philippines. Reeder ended his military career as a brigadier general.

In 1950, he took up permanent residence in Australia and started a new family. He was the director of several telecommunication companies. In his later years, he was heavily involved in setting up microwave systems for mining companies in Western Australia. At his demise, the Premier of Western Australia wrote to Reeder's wife, expressing his condolences. He wrote that he had a tremendous admiration for the man because he not only was technically capable, but also had a tremendous vision for the development of Western Australia when few people had any faith in such development. The following letter, written on 1 October 1976 by the Premier, explains why a mountain was named for a native of Florence.

"Dear Mrs. Nichols,

"I refer to your 23rd August 1976 letter and to the matter of naming a mountain in the Pilbara after your late husband, as a tribute to the tremendous contribution he made to the development of the area.

"It was our original intention, as you are aware, to rename Mt. Nameless which lies near Tom Price. However, after due consideration, it is now felt that the name of this feature should not be altered. It is unique and unduplicated in the State, and is well established in the minds of the local community.

"We have studied the alternatives carefully and have decided to name in Reeder's honor, a previously unnamed peak close to Mt. Nameless. This mountain stands 1,111 meters high, only 15 meters less than Mt. Nameless. It is a readily recognizable landmark and is to be known as Mount Reeder Nichols.

"This imposing feature will, I am sure, become quickly associated in the minds of the local people with the man whose name it bears, and will be a lasting memorial to his outstanding endeavors, for which we in Western Australia will always be grateful."

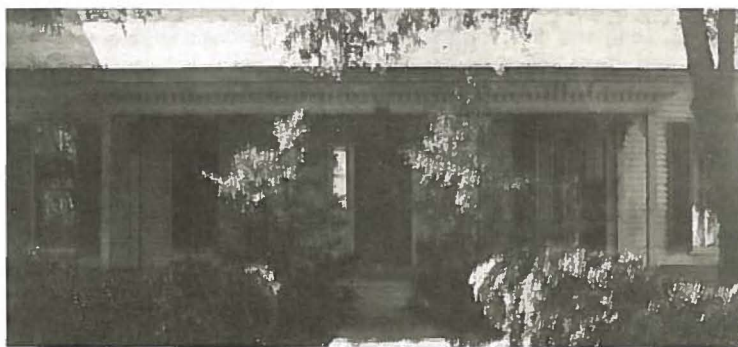
Yours sincerely
/s/ Charles Court
Premier

Reeder's son, Martin Nichols, brought his wife, Sandra, and two children to Florence in early 1997 to visit with cousins and view the area in which Reeder was reared. Submitted by: *Darrell A. Russel, Natchez Trace Genealogical Society and Martin Nichols, 3 Naomi Street, Epping North, New South Wales 2121, Australia*

Norvell - Rice Home

The Norvell-Rice Home is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It is incorrectly listed as the Norvell-Lester Home.

Jackson VanBuren Rice married Elizabeth Ann Lester, December 21, 1858. They lived until 1869 in a "compound" consisting of three log houses located on the northwest corner of what is now known as Cedar and Tuscaloosa Streets. All four of their children were born there, the youngest being Turner Rice, born December 31, 1868. This period included the time of the War Between the States also known as the Civil War.



Norvell-Rice Home

On the 7th day of December 1869, Jackson V. Rice purchased from Oliver S. Kennedy a parcel of land known as part of lot numbered 346 on the map of Florence. Boundaries of this lot will be given in deeds fronting the street running East and West by the Methodist Episcopal Church. (Later named Tuscaloosa Street).

Jackson V. Rice began construction of their house at this location which is now known as Locust Street at the west end of Tuscaloosa Street in 1870/71. The Home is a simple Victorian dwelling. A distinctive feature is the centered Victorian porch. Under the eaves of the porch roof is a decorative denticulation and the lathes on the supporting posts are supposedly hand-carved. There are four chimneys on the hip roof.

The house in its original state had a front porch with a large front door that opened into the living room. Straight back from the living room was the den or living area. To the right of the living room was the dining room with a fireplace. From the dining room you went into an eating and storage area. This area was adjacent to the big

kitchen that had a fireplace and cook stove. The back door from the kitchen led to the large cistern that was located in the back yard.

On entering the house, to the left was a guest bedroom that had a fireplace. From either the guest bedroom or the den area there was the middle bedroom with a fireplace. Behind this room was another bedroom and fireplace. A sleeping porch adjoined this bedroom which also led into the den area. A few years after building the house a bath was added on to the back, which did away with the outdoor facilities.



Lester Rice Norvell in 1914

Jackson V. Rice, Reuben Butler Norvell, Edmund Norvell, Elizabeth Lester Rice, "Lizzie" Rice Norvell, Lester Rice Norvell, and Helen Strudwick Norvell all lived in this house at the time of their deaths. *Submitted by: Samuel Strudwick Norvell M.D., 1926 Hickory Hills Road, Florence, AL*
Sources: Rice Family Journal.

Old Lauderdale County Jail

The Old Jail was located on Pine Street in the 100 block beside the present day Health Department building. It was demolished about 1948. *Submitted by: Margaret Lowe, Florence, AL*



The Old Railroad Bridge

In 1813, the town of South Port (later called South Florence), in Colbert County was east of the present-day river bridge. During this time period, South Port was the largest cotton shipping port east of the Mississippi River. River boats loaded below the great shoals of the Tennessee River and took their cargo down the Tennessee to the Ohio, to the Mississippi and on to New Orleans to be shipped to the northern mills or to Europe. By approximately 1817, the Florence Ferry had been established, connecting Florence to South Port, a crossing that lasted until 1839. It was at the site of the present O'Neal Bridge. The Florence Bridge



The Old Railroad Bridge in the 1930s

Company chartered the overseeing of the construction of a bridge, which opened to pedestrians, wagons and buggies in 1840. The fine stonework of this first bridge is still standing, with preservation efforts on-going. Unfortunately, in 1854 a tornado severely damaged the bridge. Afterwards, the Memphis and Charleston Railroad purchased the bridge site and ferry rights, and in 1858 rebuilt and strengthened the old bridge.

During the Civil War years, "Yankees" attempted to use the bridge, and as a consequence, Confederate troops burned portions of the bridge to prevent Union usage. Confederate soldiers used floating pontoon bridges to cross the Tennessee River. After the war, the Memphis and Charleston Railroad Company built the top deck of the bridge for a streetcar crossing and reopened the lower deck to passengers.

In 1872, a drawbridge was built to allow boat access to the upper portion of the river and in 1890 a turn spur was established. By 1905, streetcars passed along the top deck from Florence to Tuscumbia and automobiles began sharing the bottom deck with pedestrians, wagons and buggies. Then in 1939, the O'Neal Bridge was opened. Trains continued to use the old bridge until 1988, when the last train crossed the river at this site. At present, efforts are ongoing to preserve the stone piers and turn the old bridge into a pedestrian walkway. *Submitted by: Lois Henderson*

Pope's Tavern Museum

This one-time stagecoach stop, tavern, and inn is one of the oldest structures in Florence. Christopher Cheatham, a native of Scotland, came to the Alabama Territory from Virginia and is said to have built this tavern for LeRoy Pope and Thomas Bibb. In the early 19th century, taverns were the center of community life and served as meeting places for business, entertainment, and political activities. Pope's Tavern's convenient location on the vital Military Road, now called Hermitage Drive, made it an ideal center of commerce. Military Road was at that time part of the most direct route from Nashville to New Orleans. Local legend recounts that General Andrew Jackson stopped here in 1814 on his march to battle the British at New Orleans.



Pope's Tavern Museum

Recent studies have placed the construction date of the house in the 1830's, but physical evidence suggests that an earlier structure existed on this same site. Significant for its role in the early development and growth of Florence, the tavern is also architecturally significant because it reflects the simple style of early settlement (Southern Colonial vernacular).

The foundation of the house consists of 12" x 12" handmade brick and 3" x 10" blue poplar sills. The double outside walls have 4" hand-made bricks baked in a kiln near the site. Fashioned from some of the first glass made in this country, the unique windows have nine panes to the sash. The veranda stretches the full length of the front and is supported by poplar columns.

Pope's Tavern was first used as a hospital for both Union and Confederate wounded during the Civil War after a skirmish in the streets of Florence. Later, wounded soldiers from the Battles of Elk River and Franklin, Tennessee, were treated here by local doctors and women who gave unstintingly of their time.

Pope's Tavern is also known as the Lambeth House for its most recent owners. Felix Lambeth, Sr., acquired the house in 1874, and it remained in the Lambeth family until it was purchased by the City of Florence in 1965. *Submitted by: The Museum*

Richardson Mill

The Richardson Mill was supposedly built by Henry Richardson, the son of John David and Catherine Stutts Richardson.

Henry Richardson married Nancy McDougal and they had eleven children. Henry, Nancy and ten of their children migrated to Texas prior to the "War Between the States". James Cecil got as far as the Snake River and decided to turn back. James Cecil married Angeline Pettus and apparently operated the Mill until his death in 1873. James Cecil and Angeline had six children.

The first child of James Cecil and Angeline was Henry Pondexter, who married Sarah Ann Thomas. Henry Pondexter and his relatives operated the Mill for many years. In the picture you will see Henry Pondexter and many of his children and two of his grandchildren. His son, Henry Alexander, married Hettie Killen, Sally married Ingram Rose, Dora married Arthur Bedingfield, Ida married Edward Walker and Emma Lou married Andrew J. Killen. Emma and Andrew had four children but Andrew J. died in 1899. Emma Lou remarried and her oldest child Flora Dee Killen went to live with Doctor Duncan Killen.

Since it took so long to come from Florence to Waterloo by wagon, many people stayed in the hotel for the night after picking up or shipping out their merchandise from the boat docked there. The Sheriff spent the night after capturing Jessie James up on Bum-pas Creek.



The Waterloo Hotel

Bill and Sara

Haygood lived there with Big Jim Haynes who raised their son, Ollie Haygood, after they died when Ollie was very young. The House was sold at auction after Jim Haynes died. Ollie Haygood bought the house and passed it on to his three children, Lillian, Elizabeth and Bill. *Submitted by: Elizabeth Haygood, 1675 Co. Rd. 23, Florence, AL 35633*

Clearing Land for Wheeler Dam

When the Tennessee Valley Authority built Wheeler Dam, many acres of land had to be cleared of trees and bushes in areas that would be covered by water when the dam was completed. Construction of Wheeler Dam was begun in 1933. It was completed in 1936. These are some of the men who wielded saw and axe to make ready for Wheeler Lake. John J. McMurry and his brother-in-law, Kyle Pharus Goode, were among them. John McMurry is second from the right on the back row. 4th from the left on the third row is Goode, who married Lucille McMurry, sister of John McMurry. *Submitted by: Charles O. McMurry, 7714 Foxfire Drive, Huntsville, AL 35802*



Clearing Land for Wheeler Dam, 1930s

Wheeler Drive In Theatre

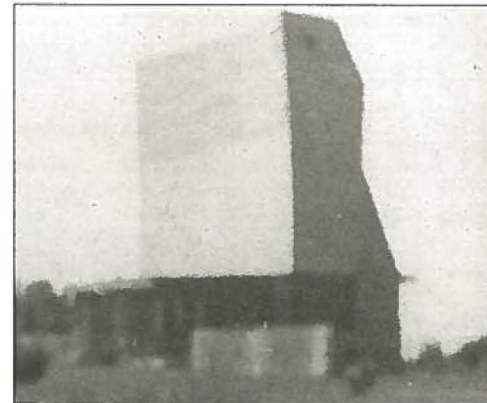
Walton and Jo Robinson owned and operated the Wheeler Drive-In movie theater in the Elgin Crossroads community from the mid fifties to the early seventies. It was located just east of the Highway 72 and Highway 101 intersection on the south side of the road. My grandparents, John A. and Nellie White, lived next door to it and my great-grandparents, Neely and Georgia White, lived next door to them.

As a child, it was captivating to visit my grandparents' home while a movie was being shown next door. From their front porch, we could see the theater screen although we usually could not hear the movie's sound. My brother and sisters and I were known to sneak through my grandparents' vegetable garden to get to a better vantage point. From this strategic position, we once witnessed some young men mysteriously appear from a car's trunk.

The Robinson's children, Robbie Jo, Walton Jr., Dale, Mary Jo, John Clay, and Jo Ann, were around the same ages as my brother and sisters and I, and we sometimes played together. On a few occasions, we visited them at their home, which was underneath the huge screen. It seemed a magical place, the screen towering above us fifty feet or so. We felt like privileged characters entering into a place otherwise off-limits to the usual theatre-goers.

My great-grandfather had an agreement with Mr. Robinson that he would maintain the grounds in exchange for a small salary and the leftover popcorn. He would feed the popcorn to his chickens.

In about 1968, people were claiming to have sighted "Unidentified Flying Objects" (UFOs) around Lexington. A rumor began circulating around the community that a UFO had also been sighted over a tree beside the barn in my grandparents' pasture. The tree had died, seemingly overnight. This increased business at the theater considerably, as people flocked to the drive-in to try to get a glimpse of another UFO. We joined in the fun and dragged the lawn chairs into the back yard to watch the night sky. Of course, we never saw a UFO and never really expected to. We knew that the tree had been struck by lightning.



Wheeler Drive-In Movie Theatre near Elgin

As years passed, the popularity of the drive-in theater dwindled and the business eventually closed. The theater screen burned in the late seventies. *Submitted by: Jeanene Grisham Daniels, 9208 Turtle Point Drive, Killen, AL 35645*

Joe Wheeler State Park

For the Colored

In the year of 1946, Mr. Samuel Harden Sr. met Miss Everlean Page at East End High School in Rogersville, Ala. Later, they would marry July 20, 1950 and they moved to Killen, Al. for a year. After a year, they would move to Florence, Al., Samuel would work at Killen Motors and Everlean became a housewife.

In the year of 1952, Mr. Howard Fuqua became the first black Park Ranger at Joe Wheeler State Park for the Colored. As the years would go by, Mr. Fuqua would resign as the Park Ranger, in 1956.

Mr. W.H. Cox was the Superintendent over both parks, the park for the Whites and the park for the Blacks. Mr. Cox would select from several applicants - Mr. Samuel Harden Sr. Mr. Harden would become the second Black Park Ranger for the state of Alabama.

On March 1, 1956, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Harden Sr. and their three children; Frances, Samuel Jr., and Ronald would move to the park area. During this time, this park would be for the Blacks, and located at Joe Wheeler Dam in Town Creek, Al. was the park for the Whites.

In the year of 1965 during the movement of Civil Rights, the park's name was changed to Joe Wheeler State Park. The park was open to all shades of people.

Also in February of 1965, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Harden Sr. would have their fourth child — Donna.

At the beginning of the year of 1972, the work would begin on Joe Wheeler Resort. The resort was completed in April, 1974. The park area would remain open another year and Mr. Harden transferred to Joe Wheeler Park in Lawrence County (Town Creek). During this time Mrs. Harden became the Executive Housekeeper at the Resort.

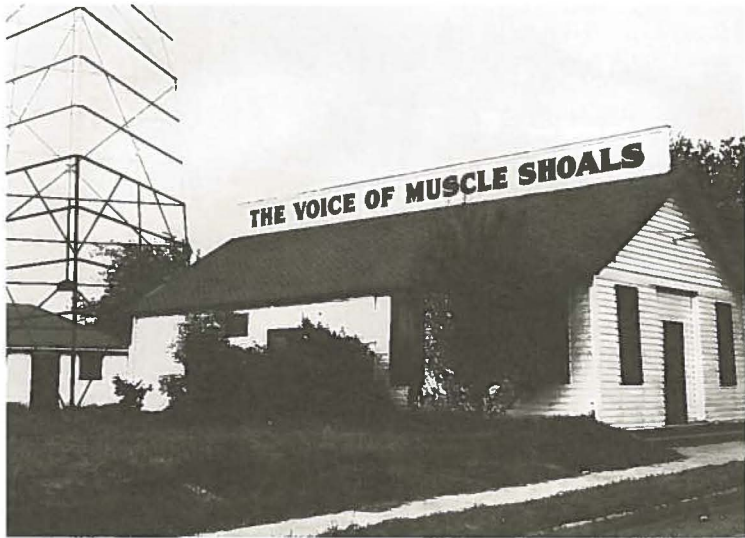
The children of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Harden Sr. would grow up with memorable moments as a part of history in Northern Alabama. They could say they spent hours and days in Alabama's only black state park during their young years.

As the years would pass on, Mr. Samuel Harden Sr. retired with 38 years as a Park Ranger on August 31, 1994. Mrs. Everlean Harden would retire in the month January 97 after working 23 years.

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Harden Sr. reside in Killen, Alabama. The couple's two sons are married and both have children. The two daughters are single — no children. The Harden Family home is often filled with laughter and joy from the parents, children, and the Grandchildren. *Submitted by: Donna Harden*

WNRA-First Radio Station In The Shoals

WNRA was the first radio station in the Shoals. Jerry Landrum obtained the license to operate in the spring of 1933. It began broadcasting in the fall of that year. *Submitted by: Jerry Landrum*



Woco Pep Service Station

Woco Pep Service Station on corner of Wood Ave. and Tennessee St. Author Olive and son, Billy are in the picture. Author owned and operated the station from the 30's till the 70's. Billy was mongoloid and was taught to pump gas and collect the money. *Submitted by: Bernard Olive Jr., 301 Gilbert Ct., Florence, AL 35630*



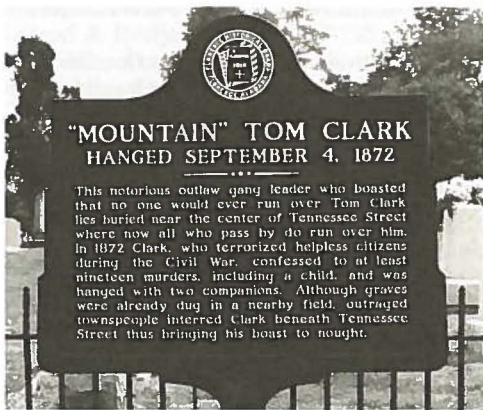
REMEMBER WHEN ---?

Big Bad Bully: "Mountain" Tom Clark

A friend told of Big Bad Bully Tom Clark. Tom lived in Florence, Alabama in the 1860's. Historian Mary Lancaster confirmed he was real and mean. She had a big file on him and liked to talk about him.

"I am so big and bad nobody runs over me", cried Tom to those he wanted to bully. Some called him "Mountain" for his size, hardness, and East Tennessee Mountain birth.

A real terror, some say he killed 30 people; claimed 19. No one liked him. His father "went West" to avoid him. He got his way; he saw to it.



"Mountain" Tom Clark

"Mountain" was the worst of many during the Civil War called "Buggers", "Bushwhackers", or "Scalwags". They evaded or deserted both sides and took what they wanted from local women and children left alone by the war. My ancestors wrote and told many accounts of them.

Things were worse here because it changed sides several times and loyalty was

divided. Neither side protected people from buggers. Tom was known as Bugger-In-Chief because he was the worst of the lot. [Pruitt, Wade, *The Bugger Saga*, The Civil War Story of Guerilla and Bushwacker Warfare in Lauderdale Co. AL, P-Vine Press, 1977.]

Tom and 2 buddies were finally captured in the Bend of the River for robbing an Athens store, and put in the Florence jail in 1872. He tried to break out — to freedom. Others broke in — to hang him! His distinction: the only Lauderdale County lynching.

What happened to his body? Friends wouldn't bury it. People remembered his boast "nobody will run over me". What they wouldn't do in life they do in death. They buried him in Tennessee Street in front of City Cemetery. The Historic marker shows the spot. Now, anyone passing the Cemetery "runs over" Big Bad Tom.

What happened to his soul? Jesus loves the meek. He calls everyone-even big bad bullies-to repent and follow him. Apostle John described the call: "And the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take of the water of life freely," Rev. 22:17.

Some who hung Tom did not want to let him repent. They said he didn't give others a chance. But, "his prayers were agonizing, and were heard by citizens living near and far" [Times Daily 10 Sept. 1872 quoted in Pruitt].

Jesus gives repenting sinners last chances. He told a repenting thief at his death "You will be with me in Paradise," Lk 23:43.

Do you think Tom repented, changed his heart, was forgiven, and went to Paradise with his victims? *Submitted by: Harold Alpheus Henderson*

Purchasing Farm and Home Supplies in Early Lauderdale County

John Clark Fuqua and his son Ingram, retained many records of purchases they made for their farms and families which record several retail store owner's names, goods purchased, and prices. Store owners often carried an account with farmers who usually paid up their accounts once a year after selling their crops. These accounts provide clues to the products available and the manner in which the purchaser's family lived. Frequent purchase dates probably indicate the store was nearby. Neighbors also shopped for each other if they went to Florence or other distant towns. All items listed on the accounts have not been transcribed. Location of businesses were probably in Rodgersville (now Rogersville), Athens, Courtland (there was a ferry at the foot of Lambs Ferry Road south of Rodgersville), and Florence. Items were transcribed as they were written, including word abbreviations, capitalization, and spelling.

John Fuqua 1849 Account at Jenkins Sturdivant and Company. Sept. 27 - 1 gr paper (25), 1 yd Calico (31) .56; Oct. 13 - 8 yds Flannel 4\$ 5-½ yds Linsey (206) 6.06, 1# Copperas .13; Nov. 13 - 1 Box Pills (25) 1-½ doz Flints (6) .31, Nov. 29 - 1 Pen knife .25; 50# Sugar 5.00. 21 Jany 1846, Rec Payment in full, \$12.30.

John Fuqua 1846 Account at Kirkman Andrews & Co, Florence. Purchases included: Jany 26 - 1 x Cut Saw 5.00; Mch 23 - 1 pr Trace Chains 1.00, 3 papers Seed .30, 39² Cotton Cloth (10¢) 3.95, 72 yds Cotton Cloth (15¢) 10.80, 4-¼ yds Linen Ch (31¢) 2.25, 1 pocket Knife .88; May 27 - 1 doz Marbles .25, 1 Buggy Whip 1.00. Account total 25.13. Int to date .67. May 6th 47 Rec Paymt 26.10.

In 1847, John Fuqua made purchases from William Oliver and Son on 37 days. Jany 5 - Fine comb \$.25; Jany 12 - 53# Feathers 13.25; Jany 18 - 2 Spelling Books .25; Feb 27 - 2# Beeswax .50; Mar 31 - 1 Cedar Pencil .06; Apr 6 - 20 Star candles 4.80; Apr 10 - 1 oz Puly Rubarb .20, 1 gross Pant Buttons .37; Aug 24 - 1# Powder .50; Sept 10 - 1 pr Cot Hose .25. March 4th 1848 Received Payment in full, \$68.87.

In 1848, John Fuqua made purchases from blacksmith Speegle & Bryan on 31 days. January 4 - Making 2 rake teeth .25, 2

gudgeons and 2 bands 1.25; January 27 - 13 ribits and pionchen strap .25; Feb 1 - 38 nails .37; Feb 2 - Mending Stilyards .50; Feb 10 - Sharpen 5 Bulltongs .30; March 29 - iron hames .50, Steaple .06; May 4 - 1 bolt and tap .25; May 5 - Sharpen 5 eagles .30; May 11 - New hoe .50; June 24 - laying eagle .62, pinten eagle .38; Nov 7th - 20 latches 2.00. Account total \$29.33.

In 1847-1848, John Fuqua made purchases from N.B. Sturdivant & Company on 36 days. Jan 25 - 18# coffee 2.00; Jan 29 - 5# 8 penny nails .50; Feby 11 - 1 almanac 1 Spelling Book .19; Feby 19 - 1 Fine Pitcher .75; March 2 - 1 Umbrella 3.50; May 17 - 9 yds Bedticking 2.81; May 25 - 1 Bottle sweet oil .38; June 10 - 1 oz Camphor .20; July 1 - 1 Chamber Pot .38; July 11 - 1# alum. 25; Sept 2 - 4 yds Linen diaper 3.00; Sept 18 - 49# nails 3.96; Sept 21 - 3 cakes Shaving Soap .25. 14th Feby 1849 Rec payment in full, \$54.89.

In 1850, John Fuqua made purchases from Kirkman & Rice in Florence. Feby 19 - 2 oven lids 35# 2.10, 1- $\frac{3}{4}$ # AB Steel .22; Feby 26 - 1 Bbl Molasses 48 Gals 16.80 - 1 Bbl Sugar 245# 17.53, 1 Sack Coffee 167# 26.72; Mar 5 - paid carriage in Trunk to Rodgersville .50; May 4 - 1 pr Earrings 2.50, 1 parosol 2.50; Oct 4 - 2 pr Kid Gloves 2.00, 1 Scissors .75; Oct 16 - 3- $\frac{1}{2}$ B Whalebones .44; Nov 4 - 1 Slate .38, 1 Primer .15. Received Payment in full \$199.91 Feby 22/1851.

In December 1849 and 1850, John Fuqua made purchases at F.J. Sanniner on 34 days. Decr 7 - 1 Grindstone 3.37; Jany 9 - 1 Geography and Atlas 1.25; Jany 23 - 2 Boxes Caps 25, Fine Shawl 2.00; March 26 - 1 Pair lady's Shoes 1.75; May 22 - 1# Powder .50, 5# Shot .63; June 26 - 15 yds Bleu Domestic 3.75, 1 bottle Caster Oil .75; Oct 21 - 3 Boxes Matches .30, 1 Doz Steel Buttons .25. Recd Payment in full \$105.77. February 24th 1851.

In December 1851 and 1852, John Fuqua made purchases from N.B. Sturdivant on 32 days. Jan 16 - 1 Bot Cologne (37) 1 Set Tumblers (100) 1.37; May 25 - 1 Match Guard .25, 1 Philosophy 1.00; July 12 - 1 Tooth Brush .12; Aug 5 - 10# Sugar 1.00; Aug 18 - 1 Copper pot .40; Oct 8 - 2 Geographys .75. Dec 27 1852 Rec payment in full \$91.25.

On June 29th 1852, John Fuqua paid William D. Hayes the following: To Board of Daughter 4 mos 1st Sep 1852 \$40.00; To Cash pd Portage .30; To Cash pd for Daguerotype 3.50; To Cash pd for Sunday School .10. Total \$43.90.

John Fuqua paid E.C. Spaulding, Florence, Alabama, \$6.00 on March 17/54 for the services listed. 1853, May 21st to Cleaning three teeth and filling one with gold foil \$3.50. May 28 - to filling one tooth with gold foil \$2.50. Account total \$6.00.

The following is John Fuqua Account in 1856 with the James Milner & Company in Florence. Mar 1 - 1 Cake Soap .30, 3 Boxes Matches .12; Mar 20 - Fish Hook and Lines .20; Apr 7 - Fishing Lines .10; Apr 28 - 1 Walking Cane .50; Apr 7 - Fishing Lines .10; Apr 28 - 1 Walking Cane .50; June 9 - 1 tooth Brush .37, Nov 28 - Hair Dye .30. Recd Payment Jas Milner & Co., \$3.67.

In 1856, John Fuqua made purchases on 41 days from M. Harkins & Company in Florence. They also delivered or arranged delivery. Feby 1 - 1 pr of Pants 1.50, $\frac{1}{4}$ # of powder .19, 1 Bar Lead .10, 1 Box Caps .13; Feby 2 - 1 Powder Flask .38; Feby 4 - 1 Star Candles .38; Feby 26 - 1 Greek Lexicon 5.00, 1 Latin Lexicon 6.00; Mar 1 - 1 Razor Strap 1.25; Apr 7 - 1 Italian C. Coat 8.00; Apr 8 - 1 Linen Vest 3.75, 1 Soft Fur Hat 3.25, 1 Silk Neck tie .60; Apr 12 - 1 vial Eye Lotion .25; Apr 28 - 3 Shirt Collars .90; May 2 - $\frac{1}{2}$ doz China Marbles .25; May 8 - 1 Fine Straw Bonnet 4.00, 4 yds Bonnet Ribbon 3.00, 1 Bonnet Box .40; Sept 24 - 1 pr Zebra Gloves .88, 1 Gray Cass Coat 10.50; Sept 26 - 1 Fancy Silk Vest 4.50; Oct 3 - 1 doz Steel Pens .25, 1 Pen Holder .20; Oct 9 - 3 Slate Pencils .05; Oct 17 - 1 Ink Stand .20. Rec Paymt Jany 5th 1857, 197.66.

In 1856, John Fuqua made purchases on 14 days from Kirkman and Rice, Florence, Alabama. Jan 7 - 1 SK Coffee, 161# @ 15¢ 24.15; Jan 17 - 1 Bbl Sugar, 250# @ 11¢ 27.87, 1 Bbl Molasses 40 gal @ 50¢ 20.00, 1 SK Coffee 164# @ 16¢ 26.24; Feby 26 - 4 Bbls Salt 1438# 17.25; Feby 29 - 4 Bbls Salt 1383# 16.59; March 10 - 36- $\frac{1}{2}$ Blu Domestic 7.30, 4 Factory Checks 3.52, 1 Silk Pocket HKF 1.00; Apl 29 - 1 Bbl $\frac{3}{4}$ sugar 260# 26.00; June 6 - 1 Pr White Buck Gloves .75; Oct 6 - 1 Bbl $\frac{3}{4}$ Sugar 243# 29.53, 23 yds Bell Factory Gingham 4.14. Received payment Jany 5th 1857, \$279.20.

Ingram Fuqua made purchases on 25 days from Dec 1860 through January 1862 at Oliver & Nance store in Rogersville. 1860, Dec 13 - 12 yds Blk Calico 2.25. 1861, Jan 3 - 1 pr Tobacco .06; Jan 17 - 1 yd Plaid Flannel .63, 3 yd Homespun .56; Jan 31 - $\frac{1}{2}$ # Buck Shot .06; Feby 21 - 1 Pad Lock .30; Apr 1 - 1 Plug Tobacco .30; May 8 - 1 Doz fancy Buttons .20; May 20 - 10 yds Calico 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ 1.88; June 20 - 2 pr Small Shoes 1/75-1/87, 1.62; Sept 11 - 1- $\frac{1}{2}$ yds I Linen 1.80; Sept 28 - 1 Co Comb .33; Oct 9 - 1 Linen Hdckf .50; Oct

28 - 1 pr Childs Shoes .75. 1862, Jany 3 - 1 Set Knives and Forks 3.00; Jany 8 - 3# Sulphur .20, coffee mill .75; Febr 1 - 1 Spice .25. Account total \$23.75. Submitted by: Marjorie Fuqua, great granddaughter of John C. Fuqua and granddaughter of Ingram Fuqua and Written and Compiled by: Charles O. McMurry, great great grandson of John C. Fuqua and great grandson of Ingram Fuqua. Sources: Purchase account records of John C. Fuqua. Purchase account record of Ingram Fuqua.

The Niter / Nitre Story

In R.O. Woodward research, and the Masonic records, he found the Worshipful Master directing a commendation for the Niter Collection Committee. NITER? A small quandary developed until Professor Richard C. Sheridan, University of North Alabama, came to the rescue and the role of the Nitre Beds in Confederate Alabama was found that niter collection was no small matter during the Civil War.

Charcoal, sulfur and saltpeter are the key ingredients required in the production of gun powder (the term's niter/nitre and saltpeter were used interchangeably during the Civil War.) The source of the niter was limestone caves and the material was decaying vegetable and animal matter, especially animal manure (bat guano from Chile has for years been a major source of KNO₃.) Sulphur was available from the sugar plantation in Louisiana. Charcoal was made from charring common wood.

During the American Civil War the Confederates had to resort to many sorts of devices for making gun powder. Enemy military activities threatened cutting off access to the limestone caves so the Confederacy had to turn to niter beds, or nitre plantations, where perhaps 150 to 200 beds were closely associated. A bed or heap was approximately 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ foot high, 6 feet wide and 15 feet long, and with a high roof above to keep out rain. This framework was filled with a well-blended mixture of wood ashes, rotten manure, leaves, straw, twigs and loam soil. It was watered every week with a liquid manure collected from below the farm yard, or the pumping from household privy cisterns. The bed had to be kept wet and enormous quantities of these liquids were used. "Honey Wagons" made almost daily trips in many neighborhoods gathering contents of chamber pots (found beneath beds every morning in almost every home in the south.) There was no doubt but that Florence Masonic Lodge #14 members rendered this service to the community from the above records. After some weeks of treatment the beds "ripen," and the KNO₃ rises to the surface and is collected. Alabama maintained five huge niter plantations across the center of the state, and they made an impressive contribution to the war effort. It seems the officer at Selma, Alabama, was particularly energetic and enthusiastic in his work and put the following advertisement in the Selma newspaper on 10-1-1863: "The ladies of Selma are respectfully requested to preserve the chamber lye collected about the premises for the purpose of making nitre. A barrel will be sent around daily to collect it. Signed: John Haralson, Agent, Nitre and Mining Bureau, C.S.A."

This attracted the attention of army poets and the first of the following two effusions resulted. It was copied and privately circulated over the Confederacy. Finally it crossed the line, and an unknown Federal poet added the "Yankees' view of it."

Confederate View

John Haralson, John Haralson — you
are a wretched creature;
you've added to this bloody
war a new and useful feature.
You'd have us think, while every
man is bound to be fighters
The Ladies, bless the pretty
dears, should save their
pee for nitre.

John Haralson, John Haralson, where
did you get the notion?

To send the barrel 'round to
gather up the lotion.
We thought the girls had work
enough in making shirts and
kissing,
but you have put the pretty
dears to Patriotic Urinating.