

Kate De Paris

A
PEN PICTURE
Of
PELL CITY
And
SUMTER COGSWELL
The Builder

By
CLYDE W. ENNIS

Reprinted from The St. Clair Times, in June A.D. One-Nine-Three-Six

ALA VERT
FILE



Sumter Cogswell

PRELUDE

This sketch of a charming gentleman, who obeyed the Biblical injunction to build upon a rock, was written for newspaper purposes, and is necessarily brief and sketchy.

Nonetheless, it is to be hoped that this story carries at least a meager glimpse, of the vision turned into reality, by a distinguished citizen, who as the years roll onward rightfully enjoys the contemplation of his handiwork, as he does the chaste love and abiding affection of a pleased peoples.

CLYDE W. ENNIS,

(June, 1936).

HON. SUMTER COGSWELL AND HIS SERVICE AS FOUNDER OF PELL CITY, ALABAMA

ON a blustery March day in 1890 a young man about 29 years of age chanced to be en route to Talladega and was to change trains at a place known as Pell City. The name Pell is one of great honor and distinction coming from the widely known and distinguished Pell family of New York City. The young man was a guest at the Cornett House operated at that time by J. C. Cornett, the father of Pat and Hardy. Looking out of his window the next morning the young man was so impressed with the natural beauty of the countryside and it reminded him so much of the "Blue Grass" country of Kentucky, that he was interested. The young man, who is still young after a fashion, was Sumter Cogswell. From that first morning impression was born the idea of building a town which has been nurtured for over 46 years and which has become increasingly interesting and dear to the builder of this city from its swaddling clothes to its present place of importance and value to St. Clair County.

When the youthful traveling man first gazed upon Pell City it was scarcely more than a wide space in the road. For his vision in dreaming a city and for his subsequent devotion to all things designed to advance the welfare of this community let all praise be accorded the founder of the town.

Three railroads met in Pell City during that period. They were the Georgia Pacific, now the Southern Railway System; the E. & W., now the Seaboard Air Line, and a line called the Coosa Valley Railroad, with a line between Pell City and Talladega, Ala. Young Cogswell was standing in the mud waiting for his train which was to carry him to Talladega to call on A. J. Savery. He was unable to dismiss from his mind the place called Pell City so when he reached Talladega he called on Thomas S. Plowman, president of the First National Bank, who seemed to be in knowledge of the facts about the place. Plowman refused the eager youngster an option on the property which he was informed could be bought for \$70,000, and which consisted in the original survey of 400 acres of the choice land. Mr. Plowman was interested in disposing of the property but this matter of an option to anyone was something else again.

Enlists Chattanooga Friends

Dreamily recalling the first days of his interests here Mr. Cogswell leaned back in his favorite chair in the Union State Bank and related that he went to Chattanooga and consulted a famous auctioneer—

T. A. Frierson—who was noted for his uncanny sales ability and promotional genius.

"Frierson told me to get a two weeks' option on the property and 'we can sell it,'" said Mr. Cogswell. "And I again wired Mr. Plowman, who reluctantly gave us two weeks. Within ten days we brought to Pell City a group of prospective buyers among them being Melford W. Howard who afterwards was a member of Congress, General W. H. Wilder, and others, including bankers and leaders from Chattanooga. The place was a forlorn picture I must admit. But in those days we had youth, enthusiasm, courage and faith—all priceless things when it comes to construction. The home of the Probate Judge was located on the present court house site and he was Judge Abner Lacey. The home of Col. M. B. Spears, a distinguished citizen, was a log house. There were no streets, no alleys, in fact little of anything to impress visitors, but eventually we sold to Col. Howard and General Wilder, the Pell City Land Company, owners of the 400 acres of land for \$50,000. And Mr. Plowman seemed to be delighted with his bargain. At that time we also sold many individual lots and tracts proving the ability of my friend Frierson."

North Alabama Booms

As Mr. Cogswell now points out, at the time this first definite step was taken towards building a town all of North Alabama was booming. The active sections were Birmingham, Anniston and Oxanna, the two latter cities now being one. It was a matter of comparative ease to interest investors in Alabama properties and soon the buyers of the first 400 acres organized the Pell City Iron and Land Company. This concern built the first soil pipe plant in the southeast. The plant sprawled all over what is now the principal business area of Pell City. It built houses and started manufacturing but the panic of 1897 came along and it was not a great while until the little community was in the throes of a desperate battle for its very life.

Cogswell in Louisville

"In 1892 I was a special agent for the Insurance Company of North America and Pennsylvania Fire in charge of Kentucky and Tennessee," Mr. Cogswell continued. "And I had no occasion to hear from Pell City. I saw no one from here but I still had a lingering affection and interest in this garden spot. For three years I remained there and was somewhat tired of traveling. When it is recalled that traveling in those days was a real job and without comforts as compared to the present, one will understand that after so many years anyone would tire of that work. So I opened an office in Memphis with five states under my direction. Having then reached into the thirties I thought it was timely to marry so on February 27, 1900 I was happy to be married to Mrs. Lydia Elizabeth DeGaris of Memphis. At that time my earnings were very high but I moved to Atlanta where I be-

came the general agent for Manhattan Fire Insurance Company with jurisdiction over 13 southern states. This was in the spring of 1900. The company was officered by distinguished and honorable men, including William Rockefeller, among others, but the insurance business then was not what it is now so in 1902 the company liquidated."

Pell City Recalled

Following the liquidation of the company Mr. Cogswell decided once and for all that he would give up the insurance game and devote the remainder of his days, perhaps, to building an alert community on the ruins of Pell City. During the interlude nearly all buildings had burned. Many individuals owned the properties including the Hercules Iron Company for which a young lawyer named Louis J. Brandies of Boston was trustee. He is now an Associate Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court. The Pell City Land Company had been sold for \$850. Later on Mrs. Cogswell purchased from Justice Brandies 50 acres of the Hercules holdings which has proved a very wise investment.

\$3,000 Buys a City

After negotiating with Mr. Plowman again the Pell City Land Co. holdings were acquired by Mr. Cogswell for \$3,000 which consisted of the principal acreage on which Pell City has been built. With his bride and her two children the budding city builder reached his future home, Pell City, on September 7, 1901, practically ten years to the day from the time he first gazed out the window from the Cornett House on what has become a community of delight to its population. The new owners stayed at the Cornett House No. 2, the first hotel having been burned, which was located near the intersection of the three railroads. That second hotel is now the premises occupied by Lee's Grocery Store and the temporary offices of the county officials. There was one grocery store in Pell City but Mr. and Mrs. Cogswell, taking no chances, brought with them perhaps a greater amount of groceries than the entire stock of the small store. At that time there was no highway, the principal artery of travel being the road from Eden to Cropwell to Talladega and Anniston. Subsequently the leg was straightened out and the highway now provides motorists with a straight line from Eden to Pell City to Anniston.

Court House Built

Losing no time Mr. Cogswell started out to put something over. The Constitutional Convention provided for the establishment of a court house on the south side of the mountain in order to accommodate citizens of this section and eliminate the long trip to Ashville. Pell City, through the efforts of its residents and others, won the location by 600 votes. Mr. Cogswell donated to the county Block 26 of the city for the court house and it was built in 1902 remaining as originally constructed until a Federal grant coupled with funds from St. Clair County resulted in the complete rebuilding and moderniza-

tion of that structure. At that time the population of Pell City was precisely 42 persons of whom seven left. Mr. Cogswell and his family made five so the net loss was only two persons making the census figure definitely 40 persons.

Labor Conditions

The man who toils today is far better off, naturally, than his fellow of that era, Mr. Cogswell says:

"A day's work could be had for a gallon of sorghum. And it is true that many were eager to work for this trifle and apparently they got along after a fashion. In those days there seemed to be greater self-reliance and determination to make one's own way without any aid from governmental agencies. Naturally everyone helped his unfortunate neighbor just as we have done lately and will continue to do as the occasion arises.

"As the court house was being built we also started the Pell City Manufacturing Company. George W. Pratt came here and he was in touch with the Draper and Howard Bulloch interests in New England. Pratt was a man of great sales ability and after some months of negotiations he succeeded in getting the Draper auto-loom interests and the Howard Bullochs together. And there was begun the construction of the first saw tooth cotton mill in the South. This was in August, 1902. Mr. Pratt was in charge and I was one of the directors. In the interests of the town I donated a site of 150 acres to the company containing a spring with a flow of over 2,000,000 gallons of fine water per day and that supply is still being used.

Something of the Mill

"The mill brought the first substantial influx of new residents. The company built homes and started off well. The mill was then and continues to be a big asset to Pell City and is truly appreciated as a good citizen and neighbor. The mill was quite successful for in 1917 we paid approximately \$750,000 in excess profit taxes; in 1918 we paid \$1,000,000 in excess profit taxes and in 1919 \$1,125,000 was paid in excess profit taxes which may be considered a very substantial tax donation to Uncle Sam. The plant was capitalized for \$500,000 but its earnings were far far in excess of its capital but in the fall of 1919 the property was sold to the Avondale Mills which are the owners at this time. In 1907, to revert a bit, it was found expedient to secure the services of a man skilled in the manufacturing business for while Mr. Pratt was in many respects a genius his greatest ability was that of a salesman.

"The man selected was Thomas Henry Rennie, who came here in 1907 and remained here until March, 1936, during which term of office he made an outstanding success of the Pell City mill as testified to by the best textile experts in this country and by the earnings cited in the foregoing paragraph. The reputation of denims made here was

soon nation wide and little trouble was subsequently encountered in selling the local products."

Forms Local Bank

Realizing the vital part banking facilities play in a growing town Mr. Cogswell was interested in founding a bank and it came to pass that the Bank of St. Clair County was organized with Mr. Cogswell as president. The bank was the first successful bank founded in St. Clair County and was located where Fowlers Store is at this time. The first directors aside from Mr. Cogswell were: McLane Tilton, E. J. Moutz, Arthur Draper, J. Fall Roberson, J. H. Moore of Coal City, Frank Holland Lathrop of Riverside, and L. Cook. In 1912 Mr. Cogswell was succeeded by McLane Tilton during which year the present building was begun and completed. Tilton was president when the name was changed to the First National and later due to the disinclination of local officials to obey resented instructions from John Skelton Williams, comptroller of currency, the name was changed to the Union State Bank of which Pat Roberson is now president with Mr. Cogswell remaining as chairman. This bank has weathered every financial storm that has developed during its more than 35 years of existence. Not one penny has ever been lost by a depositor. No run has ever been experienced and the bank has always met every obligation and is naturally a source of consuming pride to Mr. Cogswell and his younger associates.

Public Duties

In addition to looking after his own wide interests and promoting in every way the progress of Pell City, rendering aid to all worthy causes, Mr. Cogswell has not denied his services, his courage and conservatism to official places. He was elected a commissioner in 1904 and served for eight years. He devoted his every possible energy to building adequate roads into Pell City. He succeeded in providing the so-called Pell City short line which was in effect straightening out the road which led from Eden to Cropwell and into Talladega and Anniston. Now the highway makes a direct route to Pell City and Anniston. Mr. Cogswell is state director for the Bankhead Highway and is a life member of the United States Good Roads Association and with other officials of that potent organization has served with distinction in promoting the construction to permanent highways into every corner of Alabama and into other states. He is at this time as devoted to that high service as ever and never permits anything to keep him away from the meeting of that organization.

Through his instrumentality and hard work Pell City was selected as one of the principal points on the Bankhead Highway which was built through Pell City and is credited with being one of the finest super-highways in Alabama if not the South. Just now is being con-

structed a new road from Vincent to Pell City and to Odenville which will add to the network materially and is another item encouraged by Mayor Cogswell.

Services as Mayor

Col. N. B. Spears was the first mayor but the chief municipal betterments have taken place under the administration of Mr. Cogswell. He has always been a member of the city council and has served twice as mayor. The first time in 1903 and subsequently he was named mayor in 1926 and has served since that time. During his administration a water system was constructed by the city costing \$56,000. The supply comes from Dunlap Spring and has rated 100 per cent in purity by the state health department every time examined and that is three or four times every year. The water rates to domestic and manufacturing consumers is very low, yet the city has been able to liquidate all of its bonds when due and the water system is held to be in excellent financial shape. The water system was built in 1927.

As a Churchman

During all the years Mr. Cogswell has labored for Pell City he has never lost sight of need for cultural advantages. He is a communicant of the Episcopal Church and has encouraged the organization and development of every church constructed here, having donated a site for all local churches and contributing in every helpful way towards their growth and development. The same is true of schools for under his administration the Pell City grammar school was built and has earned a reputation of being one of the best schools in St. Clair County. Mr. Cogswell also was helpful in locating the high school here and perfecting its highly efficient original construction.

Late Developments

Late developments in which Mr. Cogswell has taken his usual leading part was the construction of a modern sewerage system which was built during the Spring of 1936 and was accepted by the Mayor at a meeting of the city council Monday night, June 1st. This modern system which provides sewerage facilities for the entire city north of the railroad was built with a Federal grant and part financed by the city. It is expected that the debt will be liquidated over a short period of time from funds secured from a small service fee which is apparently agreeable to every citizen of Pell City.

Family History

Mr. Cogswell is No. 2442 of the Cogswell in America. The paternal ancestor of the family came to America in August 301 years ago from Bristol, England. He settled and later died in Ipswich, Mass., in November, 1669. This man—John Cogswell—was the father of eight children. The boys established homes of their own and the immediate ancestors of Sumter Cogswell settled in Charleston, S. C., where the father of Pell City's mayor was an honored and distinguished citizen.

During the War Between the States it was his firm of publishers—Evans & Cogswell, who printed the bonds and the money for the Confederate States. This plant was moved to Columbia, S. C., in fear of Sherman's advance, but it turned out that Columbia was the objective of Sherman so the plant was burned. It was re-established later as Walker, Evans and Cogswell, and Mr. Cogswell's father continued in that work until his death in 1902 or one year after the younger man came to Pell City to begin the construction of what will always be his monument—Pell City. The famous publishing plant continues to render distinguished service.

Pell City Now

Pell City today is continuing its conservative march towards greater achievements lying 37 miles east of Birmingham and 28 miles from Anniston. It is traversed by the main line of the Southern Railway System which operates eight passenger trains daily east and west through the city with connecting service over the Seaboard Air Line. The city is near the main 22 inch transmission line of the Southern Natural Gas Company which carries natural gas from Monroe, La., to Atlanta. This fuel is available for use in Pell City for manufacturing purposes when and if needed. The city has also transmission lines of the Alabama Power Co., which reach out in every direction from Pell City with rural lines with an abundance of cheap electric energy. There is nearby the Roberson landing field for airplanes, while hunting and fishing is close by in abundance. Recreational advantages are numerous and extensive while the city is surrounded with agricultural interests which feed into Pell City an increasingly large volume of farm income.

Over 10,000 bales of cotton are produced annually within ten miles of Pell City, while the county's coal, iron, wood and farm products serve to protect Pell City from any serious effects of depression years which has proved so devastating to other less fortunately situated communities. Situated on a river, which is rare in Alabama for an industrial city, this community possesses that among natural advantages and it is confidently believed with the coming of inevitable river improvements that the proximity of the Coosa River will be of special value to this city.

This Envisioned

It is more than likely that some of these advantages and developments were visioned by this young insurance salesman when he looked over the countryside that epochal morning when he was en route to Talladega. At any rate Sumter Cogswell as he notes with increasing pride and gratification the onward march of Pell City, may feel that all the while it was destined that he was to come here and lend his hand in a task which has proved of bountiful success and which has drawn him and his works close to the hearts of the people of this city

and countryside. Years ago, Mr. Cogswell said "Pell City with invigorating and health giving climate, with her competing railroads, with electric energy, with iron, coal, lumber, cotton, and natural gas, and paved highways, presents the ideal place for the building and operation of almost any industry. Its untapped labor basin present abundant labor at fair prices and of high efficiency."

This then is the story of a young insurance salesman and the dream which he made come true. The story of the building from the grass roots of a sizeable and important city. The work of one person who is so inseparably linked with a city as to make his name synonymous with that of the city. A man whose name is always called when one speaks of Pell City—Sumter Cogswell.

McLane Tilton's Tribute

McLane Tilton, who was for so long associated with Mr. Cogswell in the operation of the Union State Bank, recently authored an article about Mr. Cogswell. After paying him high praise and tributes the eloquent, dashing and debonair Tilton said that were he accorded the distinction and privilege to write an epitah for the distinguished founder of Pell City it would be:

*"His Life all good,
No Deed for show; no deed to hide,
He never caused a tear to flow
Save when he died."*

CITY OF PELL CITY

1905 FIRST AVENUE, NORTH

PELL CITY, ALABAMA

OTIS H. PERRY
Mayor
EDWIN HOLLADAY
City Attorney
BETTIE SCOTT
Clerk

ALDERMEN
DR. R. F. COX
DR. H. C. CLAYTON
JAMES S. SMITH
JOE W. KILGROE
A. E. NIXON

June 24, 1969

Mr. Tatum Bedsole
Kinston, Alabama

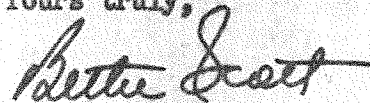
Dear Mr. Bedsole:

I did not see a copy of the newsletter sent out by Congressman W. L. Dickinson but it must have been quite interesting and I would like a copy of it.

I am enclosing excerpts from a little book entitled "A Pen Picture of Pell City and Sumter Cogswell, The Builder" which tells that Mr. Cogswell paying \$3,000 for the holdings of Pell City Land Co. which consisted of the principal acreage on which Pell City has been built. I am sure that this is the information referred to in the newsletter. We do not have the little book but have been able to borrow one and copy it for our records and for the local library.

We trust this information will be helpful to you.

Yours truly,



Bettie Scott, Clerk
City of Pell City

Dear Madam:

I thank you for sending the booklet on your City last June 24th. Death in my family kept me from giving you the information you desired. The newsletter congressman Dickinson sent me is enclosed for your information as I do not need it now but would like to have it after you finish with it as I will probably need to use it in connection with a future story.

Very truly yours,



Tatum Bedsole

1921
Kinston, Alabama 36453

An Appreciation of Mr. Cogswell

From Pell City Progress, Aug. 10, 1916.

Progress has not had much to say on the race for Probate Judge and does not propose to say much. What we do say will come from the heart and deal with facts known to all who know the man and his record.

Sumpter Cogswell's work and example have been of far greater value to St. Clair than that of any other man since the days of reconstruction. He has not only done things himself but has inspired others to go and do likewise.

Before Cogswell came to St. Clair there was no bank, no manufacturing enterprises, no improved roads, no community spirit. He brought the first bank here and as a direct result of this one institution the other five were started. He brought the first large manufacturing concern here and by so doing encouraged others to seek foreign capital. He was the original directing figure in the good roads movement and has been the guiding force behind every worth while effort in and about Pell City.

His efforts in behalf of education and religion are typical of the man and his motives and character. He gave the first property used for school purposes at Pell City. He then traded this property for the present site. It was while he was serving as mayor that the school improvement plans were adopted and put into execution, plans that took ten years to complete and which were only recently completed with the finishing of the auditorium giving Pell City the best school building for a town of its size in Alabama.

Not satisfied with this, Mr. Cogswell then presented to the Protestant Episcopal Church of Alabama the old school site, after making the necessary alterations suitable for its use for the worship and praise of God. Services have been regularly held in this church by preachers coming from either Anniston or Birmingham. Out of his own pocket Mr. Cogswell has paid more than half of the expense of maintaining this church and has served continuously as Superintendent of the Sunday School.

In addition to this he gives liberally to many other schools and churches for never has his kind heart and generosity been confined to things in which he has a personal interest.

Years before coming to St. Clair Mr. Cogswell was a man accustomed to handle large affairs and it is out of this experience that he is now so abundantly able to serve our county and its people.

We challenge anyone to charge a mean, deceitful, unkind thing to Mr. Cogswell, or to point out the hour when he was not sober, intelligent, conscientious and working for the benefit of his community, if such a charge is made ask for proof before believing it and the proof will not be forthcoming.

St. Clair needs Sumpter Cogswell for Probate Judge if it wishes to grow a greater and better county. The coming election will not be a test of Mr. Cogswell's character and fitness for the place as much as it will be a test of the character and fitness of the voters to make a wise decision as to the one office in which they are most deeply and vitally concerned.

(Editors Note: Owing to the laws of Alabama it must be said that the above article was written and paid for by a friend of Mr. Cogswell without the latter's knowledge or consent.)

Cogswell Deed Clears Way For Water Tank

Condemnation proceedings against the estate of the late Lydia E. Cogswell, for the purpose of securing property on Water Tank Hill for the addition of a second city water tank, were dropped by the City of Pell City this week, after it was learned that the property would be given to the city.

The action by Elizabeth C. Starnes, executrix of the Cogswell estate, came in response to moves stemming from last week's city council meeting in which the council voted unanimously to direct City Attorney Billy Church to launch condemnation proceedings against the estate.

In a deed signed by Mrs. Starnes and delivered this week to the City of Pell City, all rights to a 100-foot square piece of property adjoining Water Tank Hill were relinquished to the city "in memory of Lydia E. and Sumter Cogswell" both deceased. The following statement is extracted from the deed.

"Now therefore, in consideration of the premises and in consideration of and concern for the welfare and progress of the City of Pell City, Alabama, and its citizens and in memory of Lydia E. and Sumter Cogswell, the undersigned pursuant to the power and authority in her vested by the terms of said Will, does by these presents hereby give, grant and convey...the following described property.."

The deed was executed effective the 28th day of May, 1976.

Date on back
Nov. 8, 1932



BOARD OF
St. Clair County,
Nov. 8, 1932

VOL. XII.

Who's Who In Pell City

By Edmund Blair

THE HON. SUMTER COGSWELL MAYOR OF PELL CITY

Sumter Cogswell was born in Charleston, South Carolina, on September 1, 1861, the son of Harvey and Mary Cogswell, descendants of an old and distinguished family.

As a boy Mr. Cogswell was educated in private schools of Charleston and later attended Charleston College. Following this Mr. Cogswell served an apprenticeship in the Walker, Evans and Cogswell Lithographing and Binding Co., his father being one of the firm. Incidentally this company was established in 1820 and is still in operation.

At the age of 23 Mr. Cogswell decided to go into business for himself, starting as special agent and fire loss adjuster for the Insurance Company of North America, with headquarters at Louisville Kentucky, later going to Memphis, Tennessee, as general agent for the Globe Fire Insurance Company.

In the regular course of his business Mr. Cogswell was on his way to Talladega to establish an agency there for his Company, and passing through Pell City he missed railroad connections for Talladega and was forced to spend the night here. Continuing on to Talladega the next day he met Mr. Tom Plowman and inquired who the town

of Pell City belonged to and was informed that the Pell City Land Company owned it and was anxious to sell. Mr. Cogswell secured a two weeks option and later sold to Mr. Milford W. Howard, G. N. Henderson and others, who had the town site re-surveyed, several houses built and among other things the first soil pipe plant in the South.

During the panic of 1903-04-05 the Pell City Land Company was forced into receivership as was also the Hercules Pipe Company. This plant was removed to Anniston and was the first soil pipe plant erected in that town, and now Anniston enjoys the reputation of manufacturing more soil pipe than any other city in the world.

In 1901 Mr. Cogswell moved from Memphis to Atlanta and again passing through Pell City he looked from the window of the train to see what progress had been made since his experience here and there appeared nothing from the train toward building a city. Mr. Cogswell decided to move to Pell City and bought the town from the receivers with the exception of the Hercules Pipe Company, which he bought from the Hon. Louis D. Brandeis now a Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

About this time an agitation was started to have a court house on the South side of the mountain, which is the geographical divide of the County, and surrounding towns, Eden, Cropwell and several other places were bidding for the site. Mr. Cogswell threw in his influence and in an election held November 6, 1901, Pell City was selected as the site for the new court house and jail. Mr. Cogswell then donated Block No. 26, the present site of the court house and jail.

Mr. Cogswell also donated the land for and promoted and built
(continued on page 2)

THE PELL CITY NEWS, THU

Who's Who In Pell City

(continued from page 1)

the Pell City Manufacturing Company and served as one of its directors until it was sold to the Avondale Mills Company in 1919.

Mr. Cogswell was elected Mayor of Pell City in 1903 and has served several terms, holding that office at present, and is a candidate for reelection on the 19th of this month, without opposition. During his administrations many public improvements have been made, among them being the hard surfacing of the Bankhead Highway through Pell City and the erection of a modern water works system.

Mr. Cogswell was president of the Bank of St. Clair County from 1903 to 1913 and since that time has been Chairman of the Board of the Union State Bank.

In February 1900, Mr. Cogswell was married to Mrs. Lydia Elizabeth DeGaris, in Memphis, and this union has been blessed with three children, Isabell, Elizabeth and Mary. J. A. and J. E. DeGaris being Mr. Cogswell's step-sons.

Mrs Lydia Elizabeth De Garis is Johnnie De Garis' grandmother & Annesley, Sumter and Lydia De Garis' great grandmother

The Pell City

ALABAMA'S BIG WEEKLY NEWSPAPER, ESTABLISHED 1908

PELL CITY, ALABAMA, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1946

VOLUME 38

Week After Week

Freedom Of The Individual Will
Perish The Day That Freedom
Of The Press Dies

By Edmund Blair

WAS YOU DERE, SHARLIE??
And if you wasn't at the Sunday
opening of the Black and White
you missed a real event, the kind
of thing that can't possibly hap-
pen again in our county for many
many moons. There was a lot of
your good friends that you per-
haps naun't seen in a long time.
There was soft lights and music
made by Ye Ole Music-Master
Frank Miller and Lewis Simpkins
and the glorious voice of Mrs.
Lucy Starnes. There was the
really s'wetelegant building that
Jack Cling has labored so long to
get ready for that big day. There
was 'ole Jack in person, grinning
from year to yonder' and back
again. There was his fine wife
Polly, but best of all there was a
complete corps of good cooks in
the kitchen who served up food
fit for a king, yeah, any king.
The food was the best of all and
that's what most folks came
there for.

AN INCIDENT of the Black
and White opening was Walter
Phillips. His wife being out of
town, Walt went down, a loner,
to have his dinner. He ran a
kitchen in the army, plans a cafe
right here in Pell City just as
soon as the new Wilkins build-
ings near Wasson's telephone
company is finished. Waiting to
be served Walt's experienced eye
told him that Jack needed help in
the kitchen and without waiting
to eat he volunteered his services
and worked until nearly closing
time helping to keep the orders
straight and going out in a hurry.

AND ANOTHE Thing. Most
of you have heard Mrs. Lucy
Starnes sing by now and I'll bet
you are like me, wondering why
that lady don't get on the air and
make money with her wonderful
voice. I don't lay any claim what-
ever to being an expert on voices
singing, but I think you will
agree with me that she was 'it'.
She sings any type of music—
and dog-gone good.

HELLO THERE all you bachel-
or girls. Is you 'all ready for'
Sadie Hawkins Day, come next
Saturday, November 9? It's a con-
stant ask. You'll bachelor gals
just has to ketch yo' a man to
give him for keeps when the
gals are let down on Sadie Haw-
kins Day. This is THE one day
of the year that yo' gals can do

ore Early In
m Oxford H
o Play At
allo Friday

their chief touchdown threat
sweated out the entire game
an injured leg. His place was
taken care of by Bob Adams.
turned in a fine, triple-threat
performance. Although playing
a broken hand, Captain Joe
Turner turned in a fine game
work including a block punt
in the fourth period. It is
like the Panthers would score
the Oxford line led by Bl
moore, a 220 pound guard
fended, and the attack he
down. Norman Smith, Re
zier, Ed Walker and Jack
led a hard charging line, ke
the fast Oxford backs und
tried except for one or two
stions when for one or two
lucals 35 yard line. The li
had plenty of help from Don
mas, Mancha' Whitten, H
Kinburley, Wardsworth and
Whitten.

The second pass was se
when Vaughn intercepted an
ford pass and was stopped o
visitors 45 yard line. Pood
liams who got another fine
out of his system, picked
first down with a 12 yard
through the line. Bob Adam
for better than 20 yards and
passed to Williams for the
ouchdown. Smith's att
kick for the extra point
cross-bar and the scoring
over for the night.

Williams, Hughes and
vick in the Oxford back
Blakemoore, Grizz
Joodman in the line and
an, and stood out for the
although team.

The game at Montevalle
uled to start at 7:30
ight.



MAYOR SUMTER COGSWELL DIES AFTER LONG ILLNESS

Funeral Services To Be Held Friday 10:30 A. M.

Pell City and the entire community was saddened early Thursday morning by news of the death of Mayor Sumter Cogswell at his home in Pell City. Mr. Cogswell had been ill and confined to his home for more than two years when death came at 2:25 a. m., Thursday. He was 35 years old.

He served as mayor of Pell City for more than 14 years, did not offer for the office at the last city election because of advanced age. He also served several terms on the city council, was a member of the St. Clair County Court of County Commissioners for two terms and while in this office was instrumental in building some of the first roads in this county, was at one time the Republican candidate for Lt-Governor of Alabama.

He was a native of Charleston, South Carolina, a member of one of the oldest families in the nation. Born just after the outbreak of the Civil War, he lived as a youth during the terrible re-construction days in the hot bed of the Confederate States.

Known as the 'Father of Pell City,' Mr. Cogswell first visited this town in 1890 and secured a short option on what is now Pell City and brought a group of people here and sold the property at auction. He went back to his insurance business in Chattanooga, was back here in 1901 and found the city 'dead' after the expiration of a short 'boom.' He rebought from a Boston firm controlled by the late Louis D. Brandies, a former Justice of the United States Supreme Court. He established residence here in that year.

Setting out to build a city, he organized the Pell City Manufacturing Company, now the Avondale Mills, established the Bank of St. Clair County, now the Union State Bank and induced business men to settle here. He was the first elected Mayor

Vets To Give Away New Automobile At Monday Drawing

The Pell City Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars have assembled the biggest list of valuable prizes ever to be given away in this county for their big Armistice Day drawing to be held on the courthouse square Monday afternoon from 3 until 4 p. m.

A new almost-impossible-to-get 1946 Ford car heads the list of prizes. Next is a brand new Fridgidaire electric refrigerator and a Frigidaire electric range, both equally as scarce as the new car. Some lucky people are going to win.

To swell the pot, Pell City merchants and business men have donated 43 other worthwhile pieces of merchandise that includes of all things, nylon hose and lard, another pair of items that have been almost history for the past few years.

Veterans of the local Post of VFW have been working hard selling tickets for this event for many weeks. Their work has been voluntary in their deserved efforts to build a new home and meeting place here in Pell City.

The Armistice Day program will consist of band music and possibly public speaking in addition to drawing for the big prizes.

Among the prizes to be given away are tubes, thermos jugs, smoking stand, pillow cases, several cash prizes in amounts ranging from \$1 to \$5, Reynolds Rocket pen, minnow pail, framed pictures, flour, pocket knife, light bulbs, anti-freeze, coffee, cigarette lighters, gas, oil, an electric heater and many others.

There is a limit to the supply of tickets and if you don't have any, better get a supply before they are all gone.

Capt. Sol Willingham Received Decoration For War Work

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Lydia E. Cogswell, two sons, Righter Cogswell, Chattanooga, and Jack DeGaris, Pell City, and three daughters, Mrs. H. O. Starnes, Pell City, Mrs. Dean Davis, Charleston, S. C., and Mrs. Charles Balof, Scottsboro, Ala., and one brother, Col. Julius E. Cogswell, Charleston, S. C.

Dig Down Deep No For Our Cou Annual USO Drive

Let's dig down deeper again and get St. Clair's \$1,300 quota for the United Service Organization's drive to give our boys the service the comforts of home.

The war is over and victory ours—but we have more than million soldiers serving overseas making the victory secure. Let's help the USO to make them 'home away from home' by driving to our small quota in a hurry.

Joe W. Kilgroe of Pell City who headed the most of our county's war bond drives, has been appointed county chairman of the USO. The drive starts Monday and lasts one week. The service men and women in foreign lands needs our help now—the same as they did before the firing ceased.

Mr. Kilgroe said the county organization had been formed with the following appointed to serve as community chairman; J. D. Abbott Jr., Easonville, R. C. McLain, Acmar, James A. Bukacek, Riverside, F. W. Jackson, Watts-ville, J. T. Newton, Branchville, Rev. Oscar Mitchell, Chandler Mountain, W. D. Buckner, Moody, Miss Amanda Funderburg, Cropwells, Miss Sara Polk, Cook Springs, Miss Ruby Beason, Ferguson, B. J. Gambrell, Pisgah and London, D. J. Bartlett, Odenville, J. A. Byars, Avondale Mills, R. A. Sansing, Margaret and L. C. Smith Jr., and Heflin Smith, Pell City.

College Enrollment In State Reached New High Record

Enrollment in Alabama colleges has reached a record figure of 23,632, of whom more than half, or 15,402 are veterans, according to figures from the Emergency Committee on Higher Education. Of the total number enrolled, 23,332 are white and

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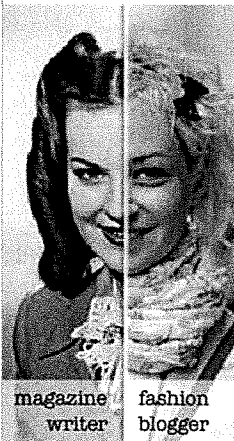
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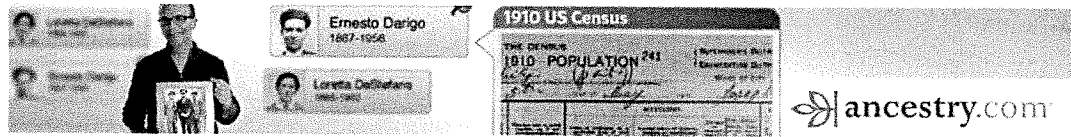
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Sumter Cogswell

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Birth: Sep. 1, 1861
Death: Nov. 7, 1946

Family links:
Spouse:
Lydia *McBain* Cogswell (1867 - 1951)

Burial:
[Valley Hill Cemetery](#)
Pell City
St. Clair County
Alabama, USA

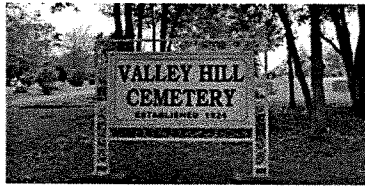
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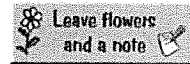


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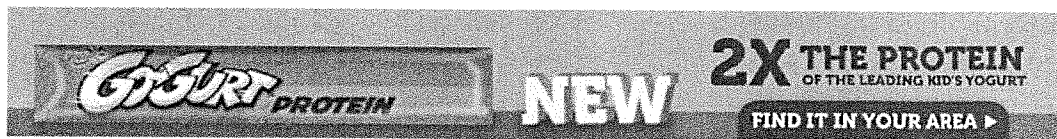
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- Where they lived
- And how it all led to you



magazine writer fashion blogger

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Lydia McBain Cogswell

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Birth: Dec. 5, 1867
Death: Dec. 28, 1951

Family links:
Parents:
John Gordon McBain (____ - 1880)
Isabella McKibben Arnold McBain (1846 - 1906)

Spouses:
Charles Frances DeGaris (1850 - 1898)*
Sumter Cogswell (1861 - 1946)*

Children:
Charles Robert DeGaris (____ - 1887)*
Charles Frances DeGaris*
John Annesley Degaris (1891 - 1952)*
Julian Sinclair DeGaris (1893 - 1946)*

*Calculated relationship

Burial:
[Valley Hill Cemetery](#)
Pell City
St. Clair County
Alabama, USA

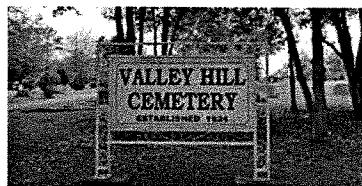
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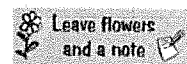
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- [Mary and Kent](#)
Added: Jun. 11, 2013



Advertisement

Cogswell buys a town...twice

By MARIE WEST CROMER

PELL CITY — The Bard of the Avon is often quoted, primarily because the succulence of his writings have left little to be said on any subject.

Take for instance, "A rose would smell as sweet by any other name," which, by the way, is a good lead-in to this story on Pell City.

And, the moral of the story (given here at the beginning) is that neither towns nor babies should be named after a "living person. Wait until death has laid its hands upon the individual to be honored, and the grave has closed his mortal career. This is insurance that the final chapter of a person's life ends as nobly as it began.

Pell City was surveyed and established by charter on Oct. 28, 1887, after three railroads built a joint depot at the location. George H. Pell, president of the East and West Railroad; Judge John W. Inzer, attorney and director; and John Postell, general manager, named the town "Pell City."

George H. Pell came from a family known and distinguished in New York City. His flamboyant ways and mesmeristic powers had reached into the pocketbooks of Wall Street. At one time he was a power in this land.

How the illustrious developer and financial Napoleon fell from such a lofty position is unclear, but as reported in a Birmingham newspaper on June 5, 1904, "George H. Pell served two terms in the New York penitentiary after Pell City was established and named."

Pell's reported chicanery and manipulations had overtaken him before the grave closed the book on his life, and, further reported back in 1904, "For this part of its early beginning the Pell City of today is not to blame and there is not a taint, nor a stain upon this goodly and progressive

of the countryside which reminded him of the "Blue Grass" country of Kentucky. From that first impression, Cogswell's dream of building a town was born.

At the time of young Cogswell's visit, Pell City was still a wide place in the road where three railroads met. They were the Georgia Pacific, East and West and the Coosa Valley, which ran between Pell City and Talladega.

Unable to dismiss from his mind his impression of the site, Cogswell called upon Thomas S. Plowman, president of the First National Bank, when he reached Talladega. Plowman was also president of the Pell City Land Company which owned the town of Pell City, consisting of 400 acres.

Plowman was interested in selling; Cogswell asked for an option. Plowman refused. To sell was one thing, but the matter of an option to anyone was something else again.

Undaunted, Cogswell sought the advice and service of an out-of-state auctioneer, secured his two weeks option, and the Pell City Land Company was sold to the Pell City Iron and Land Co. for \$50,000. Cogswell and his associates set about having the site re-surveyed, streets laid out and several houses built.

Cogswell would later build his home at 1801 2nd Avenue North. They then brought in the town's first industry, the Hercules Pipe Co., the first soil pipe plant to be erected in the South. The town took off. Soon there was a general store, a blacksmith shop, a Post Office and a saloon.

Then came the panic of 1893-95. The Pell City Iron and Land and the Hercules Pipe companies were forced into receivership. Cogswell moved to Anniston, along with the pipe company. Hercules would later enjoy the reputation of being the largest center for soil pipe manufacturing in the

instrumental in the promotion of several sub-divisions, and was one of the town's most public spirited and leading citizens.

In 1901 an election was held to locate a courthouse on the south side of Backbone Mountain, which is the geographical divide of the county. Pell City, Eden, Coal City and Riversid entered into competition to have the courthouse located in their respective towns. After a heated campaign, Pell City won by a majority of 600.

The courthouse was completed in 1904, but due to opposition from the northern section of the county, court sessions were abolished in Pell City. They were re-established in 1907.

Cogswell, Martin, Kilgroe, Starnes, Robertson, DeGaris, Moore, Mays and many others were instrumental in the town's early development and growth. Many were honored by having street and sub-divisions named for them.

Back when Pell was sitting on his pinnacle of wealth and success, the town was formed. But had the old adage (moral of this story) been adhered to, Pell City would more than likely be Cogswell, Alabama, today.

Pell City was surveyed and

CITY OF PELL CITY

1905 FIRST AVENUE, NORTH

PELL CITY, ALABAMA

OTIS H. PERRY
Mayor
EDWIN HOLLADAY
City Attorney
BETTIE SCOTT
Clerk

ALDERMEN
DR. R. F. COX
DR. H. C. CLAYTON
JAMES S. SMITH
JOE W. KILGROE
A. E. NIXON

June 24, 1969

Mr. Tatum Bedsole
Kinston, Alabama

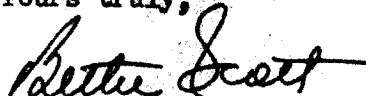
Dear Mr. Bedsole:

I did not see a copy of the newsletter sent out by Congressman W. L. Dickinson but it must have been quite interesting and I would like a copy of it.

I am enclosing excerpts from a little book entitled "A Pen Picture of Pell City and Sumter Cogswell, The Builder" which tells that Mr. Cogswell paying \$3,000 for the holdings of Pell City Land Co. which consisted of the principal acreage on which Pell City has been built. I am sure that this is the information referred to in the newsletter. We do not have the little book but have been able to borrow one and copy it for our records and for the local library.

We trust this information will be helpful to you.

Yours truly,



Bettie Scott, Clerk
City of Pell City

Dear Madam:

I thank you for sending the booklet on your City last June 24th. Death in my family kept me from giving you the information you desired. The newsletter congressman Dickinson sent me is enclosed for your information as I do not need it now but would like to have it after you finish with it as I will probably need to use it in connection with a future story.

Very truly yours,



Tatum Bedsole

421
Kinston, Alabama 36453

SUMTER COGSWELL IS CITY BUILDER

Paper Commends Native of
Charleston.

DEVELOPS PELL CITY

Moving Spirit of Industrial Cen-
tre in Alabama—Sketch of
Career.

Sumter Cogswell, native of Charleston but now a resident of Pell City, Ala., is featured this week in the Birmingham Ledger as the builder of Pell City, a thriving industrial center of Alabama. Mr Cogswell's first enterprise was the location there of a cotton mill plant, costing \$1,000,000. He is also president of the Pell City Realty company and closely allied with many other business enterprises. The Cogswell family in Charleston is well known. The subject of the sketch was taught first by private tutors and later attended the College of Charleston. He has been a resident of Pell City since 1900. The Ledger says.

"Pell City, Ala., owes its existence practically to one man, Sumter Cogswell, a South Carolinian by birth. Mr. Cogswell was born in beautiful Charleston-by-the-Sea on September 1, 1861, the year that the South's tragic struggle of four years was inaugurated. Mr. Cogswell, who is from one of South Carolina's most prominent families, felt the call of the builder within himself, and in 1900 he purchased what is now known as Pell City, Ala. That was Pell City's real beginning. Mr. Cogswell, with a keen and comprehensive vision, began to construct.

"First, he located in that town a \$1,000,000 cotton mill. But he didn't stop there—in fact, he never has stopped since the day he first started Pell City. By good business judgment and liberal treatment he has obtained, from time to time, a number of other successful manufacturing enterprises, which have accomplished wonderful things in the way of building up and developing St. Clair county.

"Mr. Cogswell is now president of the Pell City Realty company, is chairman of the board of directors of the First National bank of Pell City and is a director of the Pell City Manufacturing company. Mr. Cogswell has been honored in many ways by his fellow townsmen, as he has been mayor of the city and president of the school board. In the latter work he gave freely of his time and services and did much to promote good government and education in Pell City.

"Mr. Cogswell is also prominent in fraternal circles. He is a member of the Masonic lodge of Pell City, of the Elks lodge of Memphis, is honorary member of the 1100-1100, No. 33, of Memphis and a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, St. Clair county, Coal City, Ala. He was educated at Charleston, S. C., under private tutors and also attended the College of Charleston, one of the oldest and most highly rated colleges in the South.

"Since 1900 he has devoted himself to the upbuilding of Pell City and St. Clair county with great success. He has given liberally, sold at reasonable prices and discharged the present gain, all for the purpose of laying the foundation for the structure that he is now engaged in completing.

"It may be truthfully said that for character and ability, honesty and intelligence, sobriety and industry, fairness and energy, enthusiasm and confidence, charity and kindness, achievement and determination, Mr. Cogswell's record is unparalleled in

*State
Columbia SC
7/10/1916*

MRS. COGSWELL DONATES GROUND FOR SCHOOL BLDG.

Mr. John R. Dyke Calls on Citizens of South St. Clair for Their Aid Toward Erecting a Stone Building.

The heavier the burden the greater the reward.

To the people of South St. Clair County, Greeting:

We, the Board of Education, of St. Clair County have located the ground upon which to build the High School for South St. Clair County. Now to get this school your representative had to pledge that we would furnish the ground on which to erect the building and play ground to the amount of five acres, which is the amount the State requires for accredited high schools.

Mrs. Sumter Cogswell has come to our relief and donated a beautiful plot of land containing the required five acres. Now it is up to the citizens of South St. Clair County to erect the building which is to be of stone.

Now it will cost 50 or 65 thousand dollars to complete this building. We have to get up half of this money and I will be to see you in a few days to solicit your donations to be used in the erection of this high school building.

We are going to try to erect a building that will be a credit to the people of South St. Clair County, and that will show to the world at large that we believe in an educated people and one that future generations can point to with pride and feel proud that their ancestors erected this building to which they can come and seek knowledge that they cannot be robbed of.

We hope and trust that the teachers in this institution will take pride in teaching all children put in their care. Honesty and Efficiency, Honest of heart, honest of purpose, honest of words and honest of action with the wisdom of industry will produce an intelligent and an efficient people.

Now we hope to see this little plant bring forth good fruit in every nook and corner of South St. Clair County.

Now we aim to visit every home in the southern part of the county and give each and every one an equal opportunity to help on this school building. It is our intention, and our right for future generations to know who gave them this building and grounds. Consequently, each person's name and the amount he donates will be registered on a book and when the building is completed it will be published in The Pell City News showing who donated to this great cause.

Now, hoping that one and all will join in and say, "I will help," and when everyone pulls together it makes the wagon go. Look for me, I will be there.

Your humble servant,

John R. Dyke.

The present
Pell City High School
Today - March 1989

HON. SUMTER COGSWELL AND HIS SERVICE AS FOUNDER OF PELL CITY, ALABAMA

ON a blustery March day in 1890 a young man about 25 years of age chanced to be en route to Talladega and was to change trains at a place known as Pell City. The name Pell is one of great honor and distinction coming from the widely known and distinguished Pell family of New York City. The young man was a guest at the Cornett House operated at that time by J. C. Cornett, the father of Pat and Hardy. Looking out of his window the next morning the young man was so impressed with the natural beauty of the countryside and it reminded him so much of the "Blue Grass" country of Kentucky, that he was interested. The young man, who is still young after a fashion, was Sumter Cogswell. From that first morning impression was born the idea of building a town which has been nurtured for over 46 years and which has become increasingly interesting and dear to the builder of this city from its swaddling clothes to its present place of importance and value to St. Clair County.

When the youthful wayward man first gazed upon Pell City it was scarcely more than a wide space in the road. For his vision in dreaming a city and for his subsequent devotion to all things designed to advance the welfare of this community let all praise be accorded the founder of the town.

Three railroads met in Pell City during that period. They were the Georgia Pacific, now the Southern Railway System, the E. & W., now the Seaboard Air Line, and a line called the Coosa Valley Railroad, with a line between Pell City and Talladega, Ala. Young Cogswell was standing in the mud waiting for his train which was to carry him to Talladega to call on A. J. Savery. He was unable to dismiss from his mind the place called Pell City so when he reached Talladega he called on Thomas S. Plowman, president of the First National Bank, who seemed to be in knowledge of the facts about the place. Plowman refused the eager youngster an option on the property which he was informed could be bought for \$70,000, and which consisted in the original survey of 400 acres of the choice land. Mr. Plowman was interested in disposing of the property but this matter of an option to anyone was something else again.

Enlists Chattanooga Friends

Dreamily recalling the first days of his interests here Mr. Cogswell leaned back in his favorite chair in the Union State Bank and related that he went to Chattanooga and consulted a famous auctioneer--

T. A. Frierson--who was noted for his uncanny sales ability and promotional genius.

"Frierson told me to get a two weeks' option on the property and 'we can sell it,'" said Mr. Cogswell. "And I again wired Mr. Plowman, who reluctantly gave us two weeks. Within ten days we brought to Pell City a group of prospective buyers among them being Melford W. Howard who afterwards was a member of Congress, General W. H. Wilder, and others, including bankers and leaders from Chattanooga. The place was a forlorn picture I must admit. But in those days we had youth, enthusiasm, courage and faith--all priceless things when it comes to construction. The home of the Probate Judge was located on the present court house site and he was Judge Abner Lacey. The home of Col. M. B. Spears, a distinguished citizen, was a log house. There were no streets, no alleys, in fact little of anything to impress visitors, but eventually we sold to Col. Howard and General Wilder, the Pell City Land Company, owners of the 400 acres of land for \$50,000. And Mr. Plowman seemed to be delighted with his bargain. At that time we also sold many individual lots and tracts proving the ability of my friend Frierson."

North Alabama Booms

As Mr. Cogswell now points out, at the time this first definite step was taken towards building a town all of North Alabama was booming. The active sections were Birmingham, Anniston and Oxanna, the two latter cities now being one. It was a matter of comparative ease to interest investors in Alabama properties and soon the buyers of the first 400 acres organized the Pell City Iron and Land Company. This concern built the first soil pipe plant in the southeast. The plant sprawled all over what is now the principal business area of Pell City. It built houses and started manufacturing but the panic of 1897 came along and it was not a great while until the little community was in the throes of a desperate battle for its very life.

Cogswell in Louisville

"In 1892 I was a special agent for the Insurance Company of North America and Pennsylvania Fire in charge of Kentucky and Tennessee," Mr. Cogswell continued. "And I had no occasion to hear from Pell City. I saw no one from here but I still had a lingering affection and interest in this garden spot. For three years I remained there and was somewhat tired of traveling. When it is recalled that traveling in those days was a real job and without comforts as compared to the present, one will understand that after so many years anyone would tire of that work. So I opened an office in Memphis with five states under my direction. Having then reached into the thirties I thought it was timely to marry so on February 27, 1890 I was happy to be married to Mrs. Lydia Elizabeth DeGaris of Memphis. At that time my earnings were very high but I moved to Atlanta where I be

came the general agent for Manhattan Fire Insurance Company with jurisdiction over 11 southern states. This was in the spring of 1899. The company was officered by distinguished and honorable men, including William Rockefeller, among others, but the insurance business then was not what it is now so in 1903 the company liquidated."

Fell City Recalled

Following the liquidation of the company Mr Cogswell decided once and for all that he would give up the insurance game and devote the remainder of his days, perhaps, to building an alert community on the ruins of Fell City. During the interlude nearly all buildings had burned. Many individuals owned the properties including the Hercules Iron Company for which a young lawyer named Louis J. Brandies of Boston was trustee. He is now an Associate Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court. The Fell City Land Company had been sold for \$250. Later Mr Cogswell purchased from Justice Brandies 50 acres of the Hercules buildings which has proved a very wise investment.

\$1,000 Buys a City

After negotiating with Mr. Piowman again the Fell City Land Co. holdings were acquired by Mr. Cogswell for \$3,000 which consisted of the principal acreage on which Fell City has been built. With his bride and her two children the budding city builder reached his future home, Fell City, on September 1, 1901, practically ten years to the day from the time he first gazed out the window from the Cornett House on what has become a community of delight to its population. The new owners stayed at the Cornett House No. 2, the first hotel having been burned, which was located near the intersection of the three railroads. That second hotel is now the premises occupied by Lee's Grocery Store and the temporary offices of the county officials. There was one grocery store in Fell City but Mr. and Mrs. Cogswell, taking no chances, brought with them perhaps a greater amount of groceries than the entire stock of the small store. At that time there was no highway the principal artery of travel being the road from Eden to Drexel to Talladega and Andalusia. Subsequently the log was straightened out and the highway now provides motorists with a straight line from Eden to Fell City to Andalusia.

County Power Built

Leading no time Mr. Cogswell started out to get something over. The Confederate Government provided for the establishment of a water power on the south side of the mountain in order to develop the water power of this section and ultimately the log was to be hauled to Fell City. Through the efforts of its residents and others, over the location of 500 acres, Mr. Cogswell secured in the county block of of the city for the county house and it was built in 1902 remaining as originally constructed until a Federal grant coupled with funds from St. Clair County resulted in the complete rebuilding and modernization.

tion of that structure. At that time the population of Pell City was precisely 42 persons of whom seven left. Mr. Cogswell and his family made five so the net loss was only two persons making the census figure definitely 40 persons.

Labor Conditions

The man who toils today is far better off, naturally, than his fellow of that era, Mr. Cogswell says:

"A day's work could be had for a gallon of sorghum. And it is true that many were eager to work for this trifle and apparently they got along after a fashion. In those days there seemed to be greater self-reliance and determination to make one's own way without any aid from governmental agencies. Naturally everyone helped his unfortunate neighbor just as we have done lately and will continue to do as the occasion arises.

"As the court house was being built we also started the Pell City Manufacturing Company. George W. Pratt came here and he was in touch with the Draper and Howard Bulloch interests in New England. Pratt was a man of great sales ability and after some months of negotiations he succeeded in getting the Draper auto-loom interests and the Howard Bullochs together. And there was begun the construction of the first saw tooth cotton mill in the South. This was in August, 1902. Mr. Pratt was in charge and I was one of the directors. In the interests of the town I donated a site of 150 acres to the company containing a spring with a flow of over 2,000,000 gallons of fine water per day and that supply is still being used.

Something of the Mill

"The mill brought the first substantial influx of new residents. The company built homes and started off well. The mill was then and continues to be a big asset to Pell City and is truly appreciated as a good citizen and neighbor. The mill was quite successful for in 1917 we paid approximately \$750,000 in excess profit taxes; in 1918 we paid \$1,000,000 in excess profit taxes and in 1919 \$1,125,000 was paid in excess profit taxes which may be considered a very substantial tax donation to Uncle Sam. The plant was capitalized for \$500,000 but its earnings were far far in excess of its capital but in the fall of 1919 the property was sold to the Avondale Mills which are the owners at this time. In 1907, to revert a bit, it was found expedient to secure the services of a man skilled in the manufacturing business for while Mr. Pratt was in many respects a genius his greatest ability was that of a salesman.

"The man selected was Thomas Henry Ronnie, who came here in 1907 and remained here until March, 1926, during which term of office he made an outstanding success of the Pell City mill as testified to by the best textile experts in this country and by the earnings cited in the foregoing paragraph. The reputation of denims made here was

soon nation wide and little trouble was subsequently encountered in selling the local products."

Forms Local Bank

Realizing the vital part banking facilities play in a growing town Mr. Cogswell was interested in founding a bank and it came to pass that the Bank of St. Clair County was organized with Mr. Cogswell as president. The bank was the first successful bank founded in St. Clair County and was located where Fowler Store is at this time. The first directors aside from Mr. Cogswell were: McLane Tilton, E. J. Moutz, Arthur Draper, J. Fall Roberson, J. H. Moore of Coal City, Frank Holland Latbrop of Riverside, and L. Cook. In 1912 Mr. Cogswell was succeeded by McLane Tilton during which year the present building was begun and completed. Tilton was president when the name was changed to the First National and later due to the disqualification of local officials to obey resented instructions from John Skahan Williams, comptroller of currency, the name was changed to the Union State Bank of which Pat Roberson is now president with Mr. Cogswell remaining as chairman. This bank has weathered every financial storm that has developed during its more than 25 years of existence. Not one penny has ever been lost by a depositor. No run has ever been experienced and the bank has always met every obligation and is naturally a source of consuming pride to Mr. Cogswell and his younger associates.

Public Duties

In addition to looking after his own wide interests and promoting in every way the progress of Pell City, rendering aid to all worthy causes, Mr. Cogswell has not denied his services, his courage and conservatism to official places. He was elected a commissioner in 1904 and served for eight years. He devoted his every possible energy to building adequate roads into Pell City. He succeeded in providing the so-called Pell City short line which was in effect straightening out the road which led from Eden to Cropwell and into Talladega and Anniston. Now the highway makes a direct route to Pell City and Anniston. Mr. Cogswell is state director for the Bankhead Highway and is a life member of the United States Good Roads Association and with other officials of that potent organization has served with distinction in promoting the construction to permanent highways into every corner of Alabama and into other states. He is at this time as devoted to that high service as ever and never permits anything to keep him away from the meeting of that organization.

Through his instrumentality and hard work Pell City was selected as one of the principal points on the Bankhead Highway which was built through Pell City and is credited with being one of the finest super-highways in Alabama if not the South. Just now is being con-

structed a new road from Vincent to Pell City and to Odesville which will add to the network materially and is another item encouraged by Mayor Cogswell.

Services as Mayor

Col. N. E. Spears was the first mayor but the chief municipal betterments have taken place under the administration of Mr. Cogswell. He has always been a member of the city council and has served twice as mayor. The first time in 1903 and subsequently he was named mayor in 1926 and has served since that time. During his administration a water system was constructed by the city costing \$56,000. The supply comes from Dunlap Spring and has rated 100 per cent in purity by the state health department every time examined and that is three or four times every year. The water rates to domestic and manufacturing consumers is very low, yet the city has been able to liquidate all of its bonds when due and the water system is held to be in excellent financial shape. The water system was built in 1927.

As a Churchman

During all the years Mr. Cogswell has labored for Pell City he has never lost sight of need for cultural advantages. He is a communicant of the Episcopal Church and has encouraged the organization and development of every church constructed here, having donated a site for all local churches and contributing in every helpful way towards their growth and development. The same is true of schools for under his administration the Pell City grammar school was built and has earned a reputation of being one of the best schools in St. Clair County. Mr. Cogswell also was helpful in locating the high school here and perfecting its highly efficient original construction.

Late Developments

Late developments in which Mr. Cogswell has taken his usual leading part was the construction of a modern sewerage system which was built during the Spring of 1936 and was accepted by the Mayor at a meeting of the city council Monday night, June 1st. This modern system which provides sewerage facilities for the entire city north of the railroad was built with a Federal grant and part financed by the city. It is expected that the debt will be liquidated over a short period of time from funds secured from a small service fee which is apparently agreeable to every citizen of Pell City.

Family History

Mr. Cogswell is No. 2442 of the Cogswell in America. The paternal ancestor of the family came to America in August 301 years ago from Bristol, England. He settled and later died in Ipswich, Mass., in November, 1655. This man--John Cogswell--was the father of eight children. The boys established homes of their own and the immediate ancestors of Sumter Cogswell settled in Charleston, S. C., where the father of Pell City's mayor was an honored and distinguished citizen.

During the War Between the States it was his firm of publishers—Evans & Cogswell, who printed the bonds and the money for the Confederate States. This plant was moved to Columbia, S. C., in fear of Sherman's advance, but it turned out that Columbia was the objective of Sherman so the plant was burned. It was re-established later as Walker, Evans and Cogswell, and Mr. Cogswell's father continued in that work until his death in 1903 or one year after the younger man came to Pell City to begin the construction of what will always be his monument—Pell City. The famous publishing plant continues to render distinguished service.

Pell City Now

Pell City today is continuing its conservative march towards greater achievements lying 37 miles east of Birmingham and 38 miles from Anniston. It is traversed by the main line of the Southern Railway System which operates eight passenger trains daily east and west through the city with connecting service over the Seaboard Air Line. The city is near the main 22 inch transmission line of the Southern Natural Gas Company which carries natural gas from Monroe, La., to Atlanta. This fuel is available for use in Pell City for manufacturing purposes when and if needed. The city has also transmission lines of the Alabama Power Co., which reach out in every direction from Pell City with rural lines with an abundance of cheap electric energy. There is nearby the Roberson landing field for airplanes, while hunting and fishing is close by in abundance. Recreational advantages are numerous and extensive while the city is surrounded with agricultural interests which feed into Pell City an increasingly large volume of farm income.

Over 10,000 bales of cotton are produced annually within ten miles of Pell City, while the county's coal, iron, wood and farm products serve to protect Pell City from any serious effects of depression years which has proved so devastating to other less fortunately situated communities. Situated on a river, which is rare in Alabama for an industrial city, this community possesses that among natural advantages and it is confidently believed with the coming of inevitable river improvements that the proximity of the Coosa River will be of special value to this city.

This Envisioned

It is more than likely that some of these advantages and developments were visioned by this young insurance salesman when he looked over the countryside that epochal morning when he was en route to Talladega. At any rate Sumter Cogswell as he notes with increasing pride and gratification the onward march of Pell City, may feel that all the while it was destined that he was to come here and lend his hand in a task which has proved of hountiful success and which has drawn him and his works close to the hearts of the people of this city

and countryside. Years ago, Mr. Cogswell said: "Pell City with invigorating and health giving climate, with her competing railroads, with electric energy, with iron, coal, lumber, cotton, and natural gas, and paved highways, presents the ideal place for the building and operation of almost any industry. Its untapped labor basin present abundant labor at fair prices and of high efficiency."

This then is the story of a young insurance salesman and the dream which he made come true. The story of the building from the grass roots of a sizeable and important city. The work of one person who is so inseparably linked with a city as to make his name synonymous with that of the city. A man whose name is always called when one speaks of Pell City—Sumner Cogswell.

McLane Tilton's Tribute

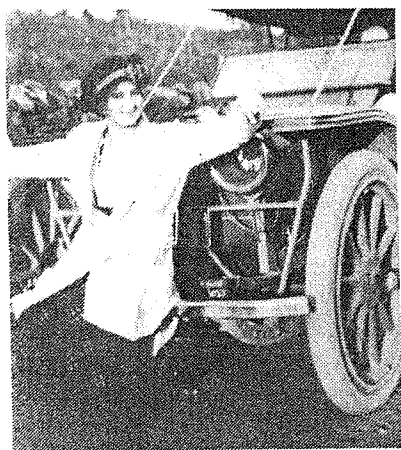
McLane Tilton, who was for so long associated with Mr. Cogswell in the operation of the Union State Bank, recently authored an article about Mr. Cogswell. After paying him high praise and tributes the eloquent, dashing and debonair Tilton said that were he accorded the distinction and privilege to write an epitaph for the distinguished founder of Pell City it would be:

*"His life all good,
No deed for show; no deed to hide,
He never caused a tear to flow
Save when he died."*

air news page
April 1, 1993



FOUNDING FAMILY—Sumter Cogswell and Lydia DeGaris Cogswell are credited as being the founding father and mother of Pell City. Sumter married Lydia, a widow with two sons in 1900. Sumter also had a son, Righter, from a previous marriage. The couple later had three daughters together. The Cogswells are pictured with their family (front row, l-r) Isbella Cogswell, Mary Cogswell, Sumter Cogswell, Lydia DeGaris Cogswell, Elisabeth Cogswell (standing in front) and Julian DeGaris. (Back row, l-r) John Annesley "Jack" DeGaris and Righter Cogswell.



YELLOW BIRD—The first car in Pell City belonged to Jack and Julian DeGaris. The car was affectionately nicknamed the "Yellow Bird" by its proud owners. Pictured with the car is an unidentified friend of the DeGaris boys.

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1704 Cogswell Ave. Pell City

Elizabeth Cogswell Starnes lov

By MARIE W. CROMER

PELL CITY — Lydia Elizabeth Cogswell Starnes can often be seen zipping around Pell City in a 1964 Corvette Stingray.



LYDIA ELIZABETH COGSWELL STARNES

Or, she may be driving a 1960 antique Pontiac in mint condition. In either vehicle, she is recognized by many.

"I try to get out early, so if anything happens, no one will say that an 81-year-old woman shouldn't be driving anyway," she said.

Elizabeth Starnes is the only surviving child of Sumpter Cogswell, founder of Pell City.

"I love this town. Why, no one could move me from Pell City. All my friends are here," she said.

Elizabeth was the only child of Lydia Elizabeth McBain and Sumpter Cogswell to be born in Pell City. She had three older brothers and sisters.

The Cogswells moved to Pell City in 1901 from Charleston, S.C. Sumpter Cogswell first visited the area in 1890 while a traveling insurance salesman.

"My father was born in Charleston in 1861, the year the Civil War broke out. He was named for Fort Sumpter. In 1825 the engraving and lithography firm of Walker, Evans and Cogswell was founded in Charleston.

They sold it last summer after

having been in business for more than 158 years. I gave my shares of stock in the company to a nephew. They were worth quite a nice sum after all those years," she stated.

"My mother was left a widow in her early 20s when her first husband Charles DeGaris, died. He was a civil engineer and a diabetic. When they had to amputate his leg, he died soon afterwards. Back then there was no medicine for diabetes," Elizabeth said.

Elizabeth married Orr Starnes and they had one son who died from Hodgkins Disease in his early 20s while a student in dental school at the University of Alabama.

Elizabeth first taught school at Ramsey High. When her husband died in the mid 1940s, she began again to teach at the Pell City High School, where she taught English and World History. "I told them I would teach a year, because there was a shortage of teachers after the war. I ended up teaching 19 years and retired after 25 years of teaching," she said.

"I first met Orr in the third grade, I

EDB ban could cost farmers millions

AUBURN (AP) — A plant pathologist said the federal ban on the use of EDB (ethylene dibromide) as a soil fumigant "could mean a complete change in the way we grow soybeans." Collins has been associated with the Talladega

Central Bank of North Alabama. In addition, Collins spent 10 years in service on the USS Battleship in Mobile.

He is a lifetime member of the Talladega Motor Sports Hall of Fame Commission.

In Albertville, he was a member of the Albertville Chamber of Commerce.

canker in Alabama soybean fields has only added to the problem, he said. Most soybean varieties that are resistant to nematodes also are highly susceptible to stem canker.



es town founded by her father

think, when he asked his teacher to pick him up by the hair of his head. He wanted to show how strong he was. And she did it. And I remember he came to school one day with his hair uncombed and the teacher told him if he didn't comb it the following day that she would . . . in front of the class. And she did. I don't think Orr liked school after that. He owned the old Pell City Supply Company where Gossett

Hardware now stands," she recalled. She and her son moved in with her mother at the Cogswell home at 1801 Second Ave. N. in Pell City in order that she could help care for her mother.

"I'm the only surviving member of Pell City's St. Mary's Episcopal Church, which once stood across the street from the Peoples Bank," she remembered. "Now I attend St. Simon

Peter's in Cropwell."

"I've just about dropped out of everything else these past ten years. I've found that we get mellow as we get older, and I just love people. I love to have them visit, and I just wish happiness for everyone."

A sign hangs on the front of her door which reads something like this: "This home is open to sunshine, God's love, and friends."

Vocational Education Week proclaimed in St. Clair County

ASHVILLE — St. Clair County Commission Chairman James "Shirley" Satterfield has proclaimed Feb. 12-18 as "Vocational Education Week in St. Clair County."

Following the proclamation signing ceremony, St. Clair County Vocational Director E.L. Bass said that "The cultural and economic welfare of the citizens of our county as well as the economic future of our businesses and industries, to a large extent, depend upon the opportunities offered through

public vocational education programs."

There are more than 2,000 students enrolled in vocational education programs offered by seven schools in the St. Clair County and Pell City School Systems.

Programs are offered in the high schools and the Area Vocational Center to youths and adults with courses designed to prepare these persons for more than 17 occupations.

The John Pope Eden Area Vocational Center will participate in

the special week with an open house Monday through Friday, Feb. 13-18, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Special programs will be presented Feb. 13 from 6-9 p.m. with students demonstrating occupational skills. Instructors will be available to discuss each of the school's 13 instructional programs, and a drawing for door prizes will be held at 8 p.m. that night.

Parents and other interested people are urged to visit the school during this special week.

Secretarial role challenged

NEW YORK (AP) — "The traditional role of the secretary as one who types and gets coffee is being challenged every day by the potential of the automated office," says a University

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the State of Alabama,
St. Clair County.

Witnesseth, whereas, the undersigned, J. D. Hall is justly indebted to Lydia E. Cogswell in the sum of One Hundred and Twenty Five dollars (\$125.00) for rent of certain houses situated in the town of Pell City, viz, one restaurant building known as the Hdp Jack building and one residence building in the town of Pell City occupied by the said J. D. Hall during the year 1903. Now, therefore, in order to pay off and discharge said indebtedness or as much thereof as the said Lydia E. Cogswell may realize therefrom, I hereby bargain, sell transfer and convey unto the said Lydia E. Cogswell, all my right, and claims in and to a certain claim and suit now in course of adjustment and growing out of a suit now pending in the United States Court at Birmingham and in the Circuit Court at Pell City wherein the undersigned J. D. Hall is plaintiff and the Southern Railway Company, Seaboard Air Line Railway Company, Northern Alabama Coal Iron & Railway Company, East & West Railroad Company and Birmingham & Atlantic Railroad Company are defendants, and the said Lydia E. Cogswell is hereby fully authorized to collect, receive and receipt for any and all money or amounts that is or may be due to the undersigned on said claim or suits on final settlement thereof.

witness my hand, this 19th day of January, 1904.

Attest.

M. M. Smith
Walter H. Smith

J. D. Hall

Your Congressman

BILL DICKINSON

REPORTS TO THE PEOPLE



HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20515

(Not Printed At Government Expense)

Vol. 4, No. 6

2d Session, 90th Congress

October 1968

Dear Folks:

Congress is now in session, but should be adjourned by the time you receive this newsletter. It was first announced that we would adjourn August 31st, then September 30th and now October 11th. It makes it tough on those who need to go home and campaign. Since the fate of some of the bills acted on is not yet certain, I will give a report on the legislation in my next letter.



Photo-The Washington Post

POLICEMEN AND FIREMEN are often the unsung heroes of our society. This was plainly brought out at recent hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee which was looking into the disorders of the Chicago Democratic Convention. Shown here is Yippie leader, Jerry Rubin, being ejected from the Congressional hearings in Washington, D.C.

REMINDER: Since I have been your Congressman, I have maintained two full-time offices in Alabama. One in the Post Office Building in Montgomery; telephone 263-7521, ext. 453; the other at 111 Hoyle Avenue, Bay Minette; telephone 937-8818. If you need to contact me while Congress is not in session, you can do so through either of these offices.

ONLY IN AMERICA could you find Marciszewski running against Anagnostopoulos for the second highest office in the land.

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CRIME everywhere is on the rise -- up 88% in the past eight years. What need more than new laws is an Attorney General who will enforce the laws we have, without fear or favoritism. Below is a telegram I sent Ramsey Clark, Chief Law Enforcement Official in the United States, on October 2d.

DOMESTIC SERVICE Check the type of service desired TELEGRAM DAY LETTER NIGHT LETTER REGISTERED		INTERNATIONAL SERVICE Check the class of service desired TELEGRAM DAY LETTER NIGHT LETTER REGISTERED	
TO: HON. W. L. DICKINSON MEMBER OF CONGRESS		FROM: R. CLARK ATTORNEY GENERAL	
DATE: OCT. 2, 1968		TIME: 10:52	

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAMSEY CLARK
 DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
 WASHINGTON, D. C.

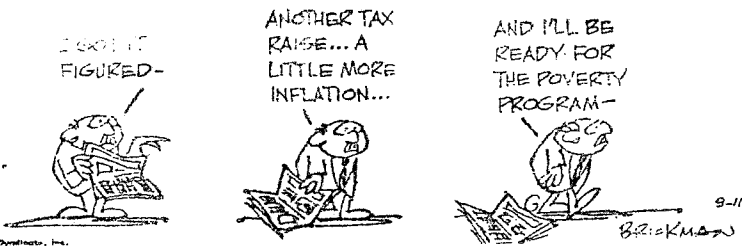
APPROXIMATELY 20 MONTHS AGO I FORWARDED TO YOU THE RECORDS AND FINDINGS OF THE SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE IN THE MATTER OF ADAM CLAYTON POWELL. LATER YOU WERE SENT ADDITIONAL FACTS BROUGHT OUT BY A SECOND SPECIAL COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER AND CHAIRED BY HONORABLE EMANUEL CELLER. THE FINDINGS OF BOTH COMMITTEES INDICATED MISUSE OF PUBLIC FUNDS AND OTHER ILLEGAL ACTS ON THE PART OF POWELL. APPROXIMATELY ONE YEAR AGO A FEDERAL GRAND JURY WAS IMPANELED TO HEAR THE EVIDENCE AGAINST POWELL. AS A FORMER JUDGE AND TRIAL LAWYER, I KNOW IT DOES NOT REQUIRE A YEAR TO VOTE ON AN INDICTMENT. IF HE IS NOT GUILTY, HE SHOULD BE EXONERATED. IF HE IS GUILTY, HE SHOULD BE TRIED AND PUNISHED. WHY HAS THE GRAND JURY NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO VOTE? WILL THE MATTER BE ACTED UPON BEFORE NOVEMBER 5? YOUR PROMPT REPLY WILL BE APPRECIATED.

W. L. DICKINSON
 MEMBER OF CONGRESS

* * * * *

INCIDENTALLY, I told you what a run-around I got trying to find out who the order denying administrative leave to federal employees for the funeral our late beloved Governor, Lurleen Wallace, but granted it for the funeral the Reverend Martin Luther King. I believe I can get the truth in January the new Administration.

* * * * *



* * * * *

ANYTHING MAY HAPPEN AT THE POLLS -- AND USUALLY DOES. In one election citizen who wasn't running for anything won at the polls. Carl Bovender o Booneville, North Carolina, was just standing around minding his own busin when first thing he knew he was mayor! Since no one had filed for the off and Carl happened to be a familiar figure around town, he polled seventy-t write-in votes -- and rode into office.

pg 2

AS I GO ABOUT THE DISTRICT AND TALK TO PEOPLE, I realize that many people have little idea of what their Congressman does in his job, except vote on legislation in Congress. As I look back over the past two years, it seems I spend most of my time travelling and writing letters.

I have sent out over one million pieces of mail.

I have made a minimum of four visits to each county.
(Our district is about 150 miles long and 100 miles wide.)

I have made two trips to Vietnam and Korea, and six trips to military bases in the U.S., as a member of the Armed Services Committee.

I have attended 171 Armed Service Committee meetings.

I have testified in behalf of appropriations for the Alabama-Coosa River, Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, and Perdido Pass.

Because of the Vietnam trips and other trips on official business, my attendance percentage fell to only 88.3% in 1967, but my attendance was back up to 92% as of September 1, 1968.

It has been a busy two years!

* * * * *

THE SMALL BUSINESSMAN IS BEING HELD UP BY CRIME. Two stories appeared in the Washington papers. One told of a pharmacist who closed his drugstore after a hold up, all by Negroes, 4 of them in August, one dead, "he said. The 24 story told of a store he reopened 3 weeks after April rioting. These incidents are more than Small Business Administration, the federal agency designed to encourage people to set up their own businesses, can succeed until an all-out war on crime brings lawbreakers to their knees.



* * * * *

At left, Senator Strom Thurmond and Abe Fortas pictured during my TV show discussing why Abe Fortas should not be the next Chief Justice.

As you know, Abe Fortas was not confirmed as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. He needed 67 votes in the Senate, but only received 45 votes. The President, seeing it was hopeless, withdrew the nomination. However, this still leaves Abe Fortas on the Court as an Associate Justice.

Ever hear of Lick Skillet? Goose Pond? New Philadelphia? Turkeytown? Zebulon? Twickenham? High Pine? Corey? They're all towns in Alabama, now known as Oxford, Clanton, Montgomery, Gadsden, Troy, Huntsville, Roanoke and Fairfield.

Ever hear of the town in Alabama that was sold lock, stock and barrel for \$3,000 to a single buyer? Or the town that stole its county's seat in the dark of night? It happened in Alabama; in Pell City and Brewton.



The most advanced technology of the aerospace age was on display recently at an Air Force Association meeting. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I was most interested in some of the displays which were explained to me by Mr. Arthur Ousley who is the President of the Alabama AFA. It is possible the U.S. will have to come up with an alternative to the F-111, formerly known as the TFX, quite soon.

This newsletter is partially paid from donations.

Thank you.

Rice

Wendy Dickinson

M.C.

1168 / 4-3

68

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Historical Towns of Alabama

POSTAL PATRON - LOCAL
2ND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

ALABAMA

PS 4

PRELUDE

This sketch of a charming gentleman, who obeyed the Biblical injunction to build upon a rock, was written for newspaper purposes, and is necessarily brief and sketchy.

Nonetheless, it is to be hoped that this story carries at least a meager glimpse, of the vision turned into reality, by a distinguished citizen, who as the years roll onward rightfully enjoys the contemplation of his handiwork, as he does the chaste love and abiding affection of a pleased peoples.

CLYDE W. ENNIS,

(June, 1936).

HON. SUMTER COGSWELL AND HIS SERVICE AS FOUNDER OF PELL CITY, ALABAMA

ON a blustery March day in 1890 a young man about 29 years of age chanced to be en route to Talladega and was to change trains at a place known as Pell City. The name Pell is one of great honor and distinction coming from the widely known and distinguished Pell family of New York City. The young man was a guest at the Cornett House operated at that time by J. C. Cornett, the father of Pat and Hardy. Looking out of his window the next morning the young man was so impressed with the natural beauty of the countryside and it reminded him so much of the "Blue Grass" country of Kentucky, that he was interested. The young man, who is still young after a fashion, was Sumter Cogswell. From that first morning impression was born the idea of building a town which has been nurtured for over 46 years and which has become increasingly interesting and dear to the builder of this city from its swaddling clothes to its present place of importance and value to St. Clair County.

When the youthful traveling man first gazed upon Pell City it was scarcely more than a wide space in the road. For his vision in dreaming a city and for his subsequent devotion to all things designed to advance the welfare of this community let all praise be accorded the founder of the town.

Three railroads met in Pell City during that period. They were the Georgia Pacific, now the Southern Railway System; the E. & W., now the Seaboard Air Line, and a line called the Coosa Valley Railroad, with a line between Pell City and Talladega, Ala. Young Cogswell was standing in the mud waiting for his train which was to carry him to Talladega to call on A. J. Savery. He was unable to dismiss from his mind the place called Pell City so when he reached Talladega he called on Thomas S. Plowman, president of the First National Bank, who seemed to be in knowledge of the facts about the place. Plowman refused the eager youngster an option on the property which he was informed could be bought for \$70,000, and which consisted in the original survey of 400 acres of the choice land. Mr. Plowman was interested in disposing of the property but this matter of an option to anyone was something else again.

Enlists Chattanooga Friends

Dreamily recalling the first days of his interests here Mr. Cogswell leaned back in his favorite chair in the Union State Bank and related that he went to Chattanooga and consulted a famous auctioneer—

T. A. Frierson—who was noted for his uncanny sales ability and promotional genius.

"Frierson told me to get a two weeks' option on the property and 'we can sell it,'" said Mr. Cogswell. "And I again wired Mr. Plowman, who reluctantly gave us two weeks. Within ten days we brought to Pell City a group of prospective buyers among them being Melford W. Howard who afterwards was a member of Congress, General W. H. Wilder, and others, including bankers and leaders from Chattanooga. The place was a forlorn picture I must admit. But in those days we had youth, enthusiasm, courage and faith—all priceless things when it comes to construction. The home of the Probate Judge was located on the present court house site and he was Judge Abner Lacey. The home of Col. M. B. Spears, a distinguished citizen, was a log house. There were no streets, no alleys, in fact little of anything to impress visitors, but eventually we sold to Col. Howard and General Wilder, the Pell City Land Company, owners of the 400 acres of land for \$50,000. And Mr. Plowman seemed to be delighted with his bargain. At that time we also sold many individual lots and tracts proving the ability of my friend Frierson."

North Alabama Booms

As Mr. Cogswell now points out, at the time this first definite step was taken towards building a town all of North Alabama was booming. The active sections were Birmingham, Anniston and Oxanna, the two latter cities now being one. It was a matter of comparative ease to interest investors in Alabama properties and soon the buyers of the first 400 acres organized the Pell City Iron and Land Company. This concern built the first soil pipe plant in the southeast. The plant sprawled all over what is now the principal business area of Pell City. It built houses and started manufacturing but the panic of 1897 came along and it was not a great while until the little community was in the throes of a desperate battle for its very life.

Cogswell in Louisville

"In 1892 I was a special agent for the Insurance Company of North America and Pennsylvania Fire in charge of Kentucky and Tennessee," Mr. Cogswell continued. "And I had no occasion to hear from Pell City. I saw no one from here but I still had a lingering affection and interest in this garden spot. For three years I remained there and was somewhat tired of traveling. When it is recalled that traveling in those days was a real job and without comforts as compared to the present, one will understand that after so many years anyone would tire of that work. So I opened an office in Memphis with five states under my direction. Having then reached into the thirties I thought it was timely to marry so on February 27, 1900 I was happy to be married to Mrs. Lydia Elizabeth DeGaris of Memphis. At that time my earnings were very high but I moved to Atlanta where I be-

came the general agent for Manhattan Fire Insurance Company with jurisdiction over 13 southern states. This was in the spring of 1900. The company was officered by distinguished and honorable men, including William Rockefeller, among others, but the insurance business then was not what it is now so in 1902 the company liquidated."

Pell City Recalled

Following the liquidation of the company Mr. Cogswell decided once and for all that he would give up the insurance game and devote the remainder of his days, perhaps, to building an alert community on the ruins of Pell City. During the interlude nearly all buildings had burned. Many individuals owned the properties including the Hercules Iron Company for which a young lawyer named Louis J. Brandies of Boston was trustee. He is now an Associate Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court. The Pell City Land Company had been sold for \$850. Later on Mrs. Cogswell purchased from Justice Brandies 50 acres of the Hercules holdings which has proved a very wise investment.

\$3,000 Buys a City

After negotiating with Mr. Plowman again the Pell City Land Co. holdings were acquired by Mr. Cogswell for \$3,000 which consisted of the principal acreage on which Pell City has been built. With his bride and her two children the budding city builder reached his future home, Pell City, on September 7, 1901, practically ten years to the day from the time he first gazed out the window from the Cornett House on what has become a community of delight to its population. The new owners stayed at the Cornett House No. 2, the first hotel having been burned, which was located near the intersection of the three railroads. That second hotel is now the premises occupied by Lee's Grocery Store and the temporary offices of the county officials. There was one grocery store in Pell City but Mr. and Mrs. Cogswell, taking no chances, brought with them perhaps a greater amount of groceries than the entire stock of the small store. At that time there was no highway, the principal artery of travel being the road from Eden to Cropwell to Talladega and Anniston. Subsequently the leg was straightened out and the highway now provides motorists with a straight line from Eden to Pell City to Anniston.

Court House Built

Losing no time Mr. Cogswell started out to put something over. The Constitutional Convention provided for the establishment of a court house on the south side of the mountain in order to accommodate citizens of this section and eliminate the long trip to Ashville. Pell City, through the efforts of its residents and others, won the location by 600 votes. Mr. Cogswell donated to the county Block 26 of the city for the court house and it was built in 1902 remaining as originally constructed until a Federal grant coupled with funds from St. Clair County resulted in the complete rebuilding and moderniza-

tion of that structure. At that time the population of Pell City was precisely 42 persons of whom seven left. Mr. Cogswell and his family made five so the net loss was only two persons making the census figure definitely 40 persons.

Labor Conditions

The man who toils today is far better off, naturally, than his fellow of that era, Mr. Cogswell says:

"A day's work could be had for a gallon of sorghum. And it is true that many were eager to work for this trifle and apparently they got along after a fashion. In those days there seemed to be greater self-reliance and determination to make one's own way without any aid from governmental agencies. Naturally everyone helped his unfortunate neighbor just as we have done lately and will continue to do as the occasion arises.

"As the court house was being built we also started the Pell City Manufacturing Company. George W. Pratt came here and he was in touch with the Draper and Howard Bulloch interests in New England. Pratt was a man of great sales ability and after some months of negotiations he succeeded in getting the Draper auto-loom interests and the Howard Bullochs together. And there was begun the construction of the first saw tooth cotton mill in the South. This was in August, 1902. Mr. Pratt was in charge and I was one of the directors. In the interests of the town I donated a site of 150 acres to the company containing a spring with a flow of over 2,000,000 gallons of fine water per day and that supply is still being used.

Something of the Mill

"The mill brought the first substantial influx of new residents. The company built homes and started off well. The mill was then and continues to be a big asset to Pell City and is truly appreciated as a good citizen and neighbor. The mill was quite successful for in 1917 we paid approximately \$750,000 in excess profit taxes; in 1918 we paid \$1,000,000 in excess profit taxes and in 1919 \$1,125,000 was paid in excess profit taxes which may be considered a very substantial tax donation to Uncle Sam. The plant was capitalized for \$500,000 but its earnings were far far in excess of its capital but in the fall of 1913 the property was sold to the Avondale Mills which are the owners at this time. In 1907, to revert a bit, it was found expedient to secure the services of a man skilled in the manufacturing business for while Mr. Pratt was in many respects a genius his greatest ability was that of a salesman.

"The man selected was Thomas Henry Rennie, who came here in 1907 and remained here until March, 1936, during which term of office he made an outstanding success of the Pell City mill as testified to by the best textile experts in this country and by the earnings cited in the foregoing paragraph. The reputation of denims made here was

soon nation wide and little trouble was subsequently encountered in selling the local products."

Forms Local Bank

Realizing the vital part banking facilities play in a growing town Mr. Cogswell was interested in founding a bank and it came to pass that the Bank of St. Clair County was organized with Mr. Cogswell as president. The bank was the first successful bank founded in St. Clair County and was located where Fowlers Store is at this time. The first directors aside from Mr. Cogswell were: McLane Tilton, E. J. Moutz, Arthur Draper, J. Fall Roberson, J. H. Moore of Coal City, Frank Holland Lathrop of Riverside, and L. Cook. In 1912 Mr. Cogswell was succeeded by McLane Tilton during which year the present building was begun and completed. Tilton was president when the name was changed to the First National and later due to the disinclination of local officials to obey resented instructions from John Skelton Williams, comptroller of currency, the name was changed to the Union State Bank of which Pat Roberson is now president with Mr. Cogswell remaining as chairman. This bank has weathered every financial storm that has developed during its more than 35 years of existence. Not one penny has ever been lost by a depositor. No run has ever been experienced and the bank has always met every obligation and is naturally a source of consuming pride to Mr. Cogswell and his younger associates.

Public Duties

In addition to looking after his own wide interests and promoting in every way the progress of Pell City, rendering aid to all worthy causes, Mr. Cogswell has not denied his services, his courage and conservatism to official places. He was elected a commissioner in 1904 and served for eight years. He devoted his every possible energy to building adequate roads into Pell City. He succeeded in providing the so-called Pell City short line which was in effect straightening out the road which led from Eden to Cropwell and into Talladega and Anniston. Now the highway makes a direct route to Pell City and Anniston. Mr. Cogswell is state director for the Bankhead Highway and is a life member of the United States Good Roads Association and with other officials of that potent organization has served with distinction in promoting the construction to permanent highways into every corner of Alabama and into other states. He is at this time as devoted to that high service as ever and never permits anything to keep him away from the meeting of that organization.

Through his instrumentality and hard work Pell City was selected as one of the principal points on the Bankhead Highway which was built through Pell City and is credited with being one of the finest super-highways in Alabama if not the South. Just now is being con-

structed a new road from Vincert to Pell City and to Odenville which will add to the network materially and is another item encouraged by Mayor Cogswell.

Services as Mayor

Col. N. B. Spears was the first mayor but the chief municipal betterments have taken place under the administration of Mr. Cogswell. He has always been a member of the city council and has served twice as mayor. The first time in 1903 and subsequently he was named mayor in 1926 and has served since that time. During his administration a water system was constructed by the city costing \$56,000. The supply comes from Dunlap Spring and has rated 100 per cent in purity by the state health department every time examined and that is three or four times every year. The water rates to domestic and manufacturing consumers is very low, yet the city has been able to liquidate all of its bonds when due and the water system is held to be in excellent financial shape. The water system was built in 1927.

As a Churchman

During all the years Mr. Cogswell has labored for Pell City he has never lost sight of need for cultural advantages. He is a communicant of the Episcopal Church and has encouraged the organization and development of every church constructed here, having donated a site for all local churches and contributing in every helpful way towards their growth and development. The same is true of schools for under his administration the Pell City grammar school was built and has earned a reputation of being one of the best schools in St. Clair County. Mr. Cogswell also was helpful in locating the high school here and perfecting its highly efficient original construction.

Late Developments

Late developments in which Mr. Cogswell has taken his usual leading part was the construction of a modern sewerage system which was built during the Spring of 1936 and was accepted by the Mayor at a meeting of the city council Monday night, June 1st. This modern system which provides sewerage facilities for the entire city north of the railroad was built with a Federal grant and part financed by the city. It is expected that the debt will be liquidated over a short period of time from funds secured from a small service fee which is apparently agreeable to every citizen of Pell City.

Family History

Mr. Cogswell is No. 2442 of the Cogswell in America. The paternal ancestor of the family came to America in August 301 years ago from Bristol, England. He settled and later died in Ipswich, Mass., in November, 1669. This man—John Cogswell—was the father of eight children. The boys established homes of their own and the immediate ancestors of Sumter Cogswell settled in Charleston, S. C., where the father of Pell City's mayor was an honored and distinguished citizen.

During the War Between the States it was his firm of publishers—Evans & Cogswell, who printed the bonds and the money for the Confederate States. This plant was moved to Columbia, S. C., in fear of Sherman's advance, but it turned out that Columbia was the objective of Sherman so the plant was burned. It was re-established later as Walker, Evans and Cogswell, and Mr. Cogswell's father continued in that work until his death in 1902 or one year after the younger man came to Pell City to begin the construction of what will always be his monument—Pell City. The famous publishing plant continues to render distinguished service.

Pell City Now

Pell City today is continuing its conservative march towards greater achievements lying 37 miles east of Birmingham and 28 miles from Anniston. It is traversed by the main line of the Southern Railway System which operates eight passenger trains daily east and west through the city with connecting service over the Seaboard Air Line. The city is near the main 22 inch transmission line of the Southern Natural Gas Company which carries natural gas from Monroe, La., to Atlanta. This fuel is available for use in Pell City for manufacturing purposes when and if needed. The city has also transmission lines of the Alabama Power Co., which reach out in every direction from Pell City with rural lines with an abundance of cheap electric energy. There is nearby the Roberson landing field for airplanes, while hunting and fishing is close by in abundance. Recreational advantages are numerous and extensive while the city is surrounded with agricultural interests which feed into Pell City an increasingly large volume of farm income.

Over 10,000 bales of cotton are produced annually within ten miles of Pell City, while the county's coal, iron, wood and farm products serve to protect Pell City from any serious effects of depression years which has proved so devastating to other less fortunately situated communities. Situated on a river, which is rare in Alabama for an industrial city, this community possesses that among natural advantages and it is confidently believed with the coming of inevitable river improvements that the proximity of the Coosa River will be of special value to this city.

This Envisioned

It is more than likely that some of these advantages and developments were visioned by this young insurance salesman when he looked over the countryside that epochal morning when he was en route to Talladega. At any rate Sumter Cogswell as he notes with increasing pride and gratification the onward march of Pell City, may feel that all the while it was destined that he was to come here and lend his hand in a task which has proved of bountiful success and which has drawn him and his works close to the hearts of the people of this city

and countryside. Years ago, Mr. Cogswell said "Pell City with invigorating and health giving climate, with her competing railroads, with electric energy, with iron, coal, lumber, cotton, and natural gas, and paved highways, presents the ideal place for the building and operation of almost any industry. Its untapped labor basin present abundant labor at fair prices and of high efficiency."

This then is the story of a young insurance salesman and the dream which he made come true. The story of the building from the grass roots of a sizeable and important city. The work of one person who is so inseparably linked with a city as to make his name synonymous with that of the city. A man whose name is always called when one speaks of Pell City—Sumter Cogswell.

McLane Tilton's Tribute

McLane Tilton, who was for so long associated with Mr. Cogswell in the operation of the Union State Bank, recently authored an article about Mr. Cogswell. After paying him high praise and tributes the eloquent, dashing and debonair Tilton said that were he accorded the distinction and privilege to write an epitah for the distinguished founder of Pell City it would be:

*"His Life all good,
No Deed for show; no deed to hide,
He never caused a tear to flow
Save when he died."*

The State of Alabama,
St. Clair County.

Witnesseth, whereas, the undersigned, J. D. Hall is justly indebted to Lydia E. Cogswell in the sum of One Hundred and Twenty Five Dollars (\$125.00) for rent of certain houses situated in the town of Pell City, viz, one restaurant building known as the Hop Jack building and one residence building in the town of Pell City occupied by the said J. D. Hall during the year 1903. Now, therefore, in order to pay off and discharge said indebtedness or as much thereof as the said Lydia E. Cogswell may realize therefrom, I hereby bargain, sell transfer and convey unto the said Lydia E. Cogswell, all my right, and claims in and to a certain claim and suit now in course of adjustment and growing out of a suit now pending in the United States Court at Birmingham and in the Circuit Court at Pell City wherein the undersigned J. D. Hall is plaintiff and the Southern Railway Company, Seaboard Air Line Railway Company, Northern Alabama Coal Iron & Railway Company, East & West Railroad Company and Birmingham & Atlantic Railroad Company are defendants, and the said Lydia ^{E.} Cogswell is hereby fully authorized to collect, receive and receipt for any and all money on

amounts that is or may be due to the undersigned on said claim or suits
on final settlement thereof.

witness my hand, this 19th day of January, 1904.

Attest.

M. M. Smith
Factor Smith

J. D. Hall

February 1867). Each of these sons reared their families in St. Clair County, where many descendants live today. Submitted by: Cobb Smith, 11975 US Hwy 411, Odenville, AL 35120
 Sources: "The Cobbs of Tennessee", by Dr. Cully A. Cobb, 1324-1968, my Kin The Cobbs", by Ruth Oliver Cobb. Wills, deeds, birth, marriage, death, Bibles, Church and census records, grave and historians in Alabama, Georgia, Virginia and South Carolina.

Lydia Elizabeth McBain DeGaris Cogswell

Lydia Elizabeth McBain DeGaris Cogswell was born December 8, 1867 in Memphis, Tennessee and died December 28, 1951. She was buried at Valley Hill Cemetery. Her parents were Isabella McMillan and John Gordan McBain of Memphis, Tennessee. Her maternal grandparents, Captain George Arnold (05-12-1812) and Eliza McKibbin Arnold, both born in Belfast, Ireland, came to Memphis, Tennessee from St. Louis in 1860. They owned Arnold Wholesale Grocery Store in Memphis and passed it down to their sons, George Arnold, Jr. and Annesley Arnold. A young man, Charles Francis DeGaris purchased a large share of stock in the Arnold Grocery. It was through Lydia's uncles and Charles DeGaris' business dealing and socializing that Lydia met Charles Francis DeGaris when she was 18 years old.

Charles was 34 years old. When Charles DeGaris met Lydia, it was something of a shock to her widowed mother who thought that Charles DeGaris was interested in her instead of her daughter. The Memphis, Tennessee wedding was a social event in 1885. Lydia later voted best dressed in Memphis.

Charles Francis DeGaris (09-18-1850 - 01-03-1898), born in Hannibal, Missouri and buried in Elmwood Cemetery in Memphis, attended one of the League schools and became a civil engineer building river levees and railroads. Lydia and Charles had three sons. The first, Charles, Jr., died in infancy and was buried by his father in Elmwood Cemetery in Memphis. Later came John Annesley ("Jack") in 1891 and Julian Sinclair in 1893.

When Charles died in 1898, plans were being completed for their new home by McGrath & Goodrich in Memphis. Lydia paid for the plans and saved them - this was their dream house. Today most of the family's old home and businesses have been torn down, but one still remains on 1116 Poplar Avenue. It is the George Arnold Mansion built in 1890, now Greenstone Apartments. The family were entertainers and it was here at one of Lydia's Uncle George's parties that she met an insurance salesman, Sumter Cogswell. Sumter was the man who bought Pell City in 1890 and sold it later the same year. But, while Sumter was gone, his wife Minnie decided she had married the wrong man. She realized she should have had Sumter's best friend. So, she did after first divorcing Sumter. Sumter left Chattanooga after the turn of events for Memphis. Sumter Cogswell, son of the prominent Cogswell family of Charleston, South Carolina had established an office in Memphis in 1895 with five states under his jurisdiction.

At the time Lydia met Sumter she was engaged to Robert Taylor in Memphis. She broke the engagement to Mr. Taylor and on February 27, 1900, Lydia DeGaris married Sumter Cogswell in Memphis. He later moved to Atlanta where Sumter took over the handling of Charles Francis DeGaris' estate. Lydia's mother wrote telling Sumter not to let Sumter talk her into buying that backward town, Pell City. She said, "I fear for your life, it is very dangerous." The rest is



Lydia McBain DeGaris Cogswell

gave Block No. 20 for the Courthouse, 100 acres for the school, homes and a school, 600 front feet down on 19th Street for a recreational park, land for VFW and Masonic Lodge, land for the first Pell City School where the City Hall is today, 5 acres for Pell City High School where it is today, land for 6 early churches and helped establish the first bank in St. Clair County (today it is the Union State Bank). Submitted by: Lydia DeGaris, 713 Carr Avenue, Birmingham, AL 35209

Sources: Memphis Tennessee Courthouse Records and Notes; Memphis Architectural Guide, Peabody Library - Memphis Archives; Private Collection of Lydia DeGaris Cogswell's Records; Pell City and Ashville Courthouse Records.

Sumter Cogswell

Sumter Cogswell, the second son of Harvey and Mary Keller Cogswell, was born in Charleston, South Carolina on September 1, 1861 and died in Pell City on November 7, 1946. He was buried at Valley Hill Cemetery along side his second wife, Lydia McBain DeGaris Cogswell. Sumter attended school in his native hometown and graduated from Charleston College, the oldest municipality owned college in America. After college he went into the family firm of Walker, Evans & Cogswell, a lithographing and printing firm in Charleston. Years later, he left Charleston and went to Chattanooga and established a fire insurance agency. Later he became a fire insurance adjuster and representative of a large New York company headed by Rockefeller. It was a trip to Talladega, Alabama as a representative of this company that Sumter first came to Pell City in March of 1890. Sumter stepped down from the train in the small St. Clair County Village, owned by the Pell City Land Company, only to find that he had missed his train connection to Talladega. He was forced to spend the night at the Cornett Hotel. This single event started a chain of events that would create the Town of Pell City, a thriving, bustling city in the 1990's. During the evening at the Cornett Hotel, Cogswell learned the town could be purchased. He also learned that the President of Pell City Land Company,

Thomas S. Plowman, resided in Talladega. After arriving in Talladega and discussing the opening of an insurance agency with A.J. Savery, Cogswell went to see Mr. Plowman. Cogswell secured a two week option and purchased the 400 acres for \$50,000. He later sold most of the property. The property was sold to Pell City Iron and Land Company owned by Howard, Barr, Plowman, Henderson and General Wilder. The company resurveyed the town, built several houses and brought the Hercules Pipe Company to Pell City, the first soil pipe company in the South. The pipe company later moved to the Anniston area, Pell City failed again.

In the meantime, Sumter married Minnie Righter of Chattanooga, Tennessee. There was only one child of the first marriage, Righter Aldage Cogswell (02-06-1891 - 05-17-1962), who would become an attorney in Chattanooga. When this marriage ended, Cogswell went to Memphis, Tennessee. In 1895 he opened a fire insurance agency with five states under his direction.

On February 27, 1900, Sumter married Lydia Elizabeth McBain DeGaris, a wealthy widow of Charles Francis DeGaris. She had two small sons, John Annesley and Julian DeGaris. Shortly after the marriage, the Cogswells moved to Atlanta, Georgia.



Sumter Cogswell

In 1901 on an insurance trip, Sumter returned to Pell City and found the town practically "dead". He learned that most of the property was controlled by a firm in Boston. He went to Boston, then back to Atlanta where he talked his wife into buying a large portion of the present town from the Honorable Louis D. Brandies, a Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and the Hercules Iron Company. Again returning to Talladega, Cogswell went to see Mr. Plowman and again acquired the acreage owned by Pell City Land Company. The men who owned the Pell City Land Company, in addition to Mr. Plowman, were D.L. Rogers, J.A. Savage, John Postell, Judge John W. Inzer and John B. Knox. Together Lydia and Sumter had acquired 99% of old Pell City. Losing no time, they began adding an addition on one of the homes built in 1888 and located on Block #2. It has been lived in continuously since 1901 by the family for almost 100 years. Today Annesley and Ashley DeGaris, the fourth generation, live in the Victoria home and soon there will be the fifth generation (Oct. 1998).

When the Cogswell-DeGaris family arrived in Pell City on September 7, 1901, the house remodeling was not complete. They added to the 2-story house, 3 rooms, a pantry, 4 porches, a servant's house, a carriage house and a large barn. Thus, they stayed a short time at the #2 Cornett Hotel (the first Cornett Hotel burned) until the house was completed. Mr. Tom Coleman wrote the arrival down. "The day the Cogswells and DeGaris' arrived, they unloaded their household goods it was a sight for me, they unloaded one Bey horse, one Surry (a buggy with fringe), a brown and white bird dog - they had more groceries than the entire little grocery store in Pell City. I remember 2 little boys, John Annesley ("Jack") and Julian. The Cogswell and DeGaris' made the population 40. Sumter Cogswell's children of his second marriage to Lydia DeGaris were three girls, Isabella Arnold Cogswell Davis (02-16-1901 - 06-03-1964), Lydia Elizabeth Cogswell Starnes ("Litz") (01-12-1903 - 05-06-1990) and Mary Keller Cogswell Balof (12-02-1905 - 01-16-1963).

Soon it was on to business for the Cogswells. Sumter and Lydia donated Block #26 to the county for the present day Pell City Courthouse. Originally on this block was a log house, the home of Judge Abner Lacey. In 1902 as the courthouse was being built, Sumter and Lydia donated 150 acres and a spring with a flow of over 2,000,000 gallons of fine water per day to the Pell City Manufacturing Company (cotton mill and village), today it is Avondale Mill. Mr. Cogswell put George W. Pratt over the construction of the cotton mill. Mr. Pratt succeeded in getting a McDrapier and Howard Bullock together and there was begun the construction of the first saw tooth cotton mill in the South. The new mill brought many new residents and soon many new problems. Thomas Henry Rennie of New England was hired and proved to be a good move. Soon stock went from less than \$50 to more than \$400 per share.

Next in 1903, the Cogswells interests were in founding a bank and it came to pass that the Bank of St. Clair County was organized, the first successful bank in the county. With Sumter Cogswell as President, the first directors were McLane Tilton, E.J. Moutz, Arthur Draper, J. Fall Roberson, J.H. Moore of Coal City, Frank Holland Lothrop of Riverside and L. Cook. Today the bank is known as Union State Bank.

Sumter and Lydia gave the land for the early schools, first school is where City Hall is today and the land where the present day Pell City High School sits. They gave the land for the early churches, First Baptist Church, First United Methodist Church, the first Episcopal Church (in fact, they built it themselves), the Wesley Methodist Church and colored Baptist Church. In addition, Sumter and Lydia gave land for St. Clair County Post of the American Legion, Ben M. Jacob Masonic Lodge (of which Mr. Cogswell was a lifetime member), 600 feet down 19th Street for Pell City Park and Recreation and also for the construction of streets and roads. In 1903 when liquor was legal, Pell City had a saloon. From those revenues came a \$35,000 grammar school, the City Hall and additional roads and streets were opened. Mr. Cogswell was the first elected Mayor of Pell City in 1903, an office he held for 14 years. While not serving as Mayor, Mr. Cogswell served on the council every year from 1903. He was a member of the St. Clair County Court of County Commissioners for two terms. During his terms in office, he was instrumental in getting the first roads in this section of the county constructed. Sumter Cogswell and Lydia DeGaris Cogswell are known as the "Father" and "Mother" of Pell City. Sumter was 81 years old when he died. *Submitted by: Sumter DeGaris, 2018 Third Avenue North, Pell City, AL 35125*

Sources: 100 years of Cogswell, Charleston, S.C.; Pen Picture of Pell City and Sumter Cogswell, the Builder by Clyde W. Ennis; Peabody

Martin Coker

Martin Coker was born November 23, 1832, near Ohatchee Alabama. Martin's parents were William Larkin Coker and Susan Appling Coker. Susan's father was Joel Appling who had fought in the American Revolution.

Martin Coker joined the Confederate army, but after some time he was sent home because of illness. The remainder of the war he worked at Janie Furnace near Ohatchee Alabama. At Janie Furnace he did all sorts of iron work and practiced his trade of blacksmithing, shoeing horses and mules for the Confederacy.

After the war Martin stayed at Ohatchee, working as a blacksmith. In 1877, Martin moved his family to Beaver Valley near what is now the Rock Dollar Stores.

The road through Beaver Valley was the Montevallo Road, which was the main cotton road from parts of Georgia to the River near Montevallo. The amount of travel on the road made Beaver Valley a good place for a blacksmith and this was the reason Martin moved there.

Martin Coker married Martha C. Martin. Martha was an avid reader especially of religious works. She named her oldest daughter for John Wesley's wife and she named her youngest son John Wesley Coker. Martha, however, may have been a Presbyterian, as was Martin, until they joined Evergreen Methodist Church in the early 1880's.

Martin and Martha Coker had seven children. The oldest was Suzanna (Sue) who married Jim Beasley. The second child was George Washington Coker who married Ann Virginia (Jenny) Teague. The third child was Martha (Molly) who married John Hamilton. The fourth child was Fredonna (Donna) who married Jeff Autry. The fifth child was Pnina (Penny) who married Marshall Strange. The sixth child Minnie died at an early age. The youngest son was John Wesley Coker.

John Wesley Coker married twice. His first wife was Rosa Pearson. They had one child Mildred Coker. Rosa Pearson Coker died when Mildred was just an infant. John Wesley Coker later married Mary Caroline (Carrie) Rankin. John and Carrie Coker had two children, George David Coker and John Martin Coker.

Mildred Coker married Kermit McCullough. Mildred and Kermit did not have any children. George David Coker married Ora Lucille Gilchrist. George and Ora had one son, George David Coker Jr. John Martin Coker married Mary Sue Bowen. They had two children John Franklin Coker and Martin Wesley Coker.

George David Coker Jr. Married Peggy Lee Patty. They had two children, George David Coker III, who married Leigh Steapleton and Joshua Lee Coker.

John Franklin Coker married Marie Brooks. They had one child Meri Leann Coker, who married John Charles Park. John Franklin Coker died when Leann was a baby. Martin Wesley Coker married Edith Annette (Edie) McHugh. They had two children John Wesley Coker and James Martin Coker.

Many of Martin Coker's descendants still live in Beaver Valley. *Submitted by: George D. Coker, III and Prepared by: George D. Coker, Jr.*

Captain (Cap) Henry Cobb Cole

Captain Henry Cobb (C.C. or Cap) Cole, was the sixth child of John Franklin and Mary (Polly) Ann Cash Cole. He was born on September 1892 at the family home at the "Coon Rock", Lookout Mountain, DeKalb County, Alabama. Cap attended Teagues and Loveless schools on Lookout Mountain and St. Augustine School in Comanche, Texas in 1903.

Cap went to work for the Alabama Great Southern Railroad in 1912 at the age of 20. He married Harriet Augusta Jackson on 15 June 1914 in her parent's home. Augusta was the daughter of William Joshua and Ida Louise Jennings Jackson. She was born on 20 October 1894 in the Loveless Community, DeKalb County, Alabama.

After their marriage Cap and Augusta moved to Tuscaloosa, Alabama where Cap worked as a signal maintainer for the railroad. After a year or so they were transferred to Springville, Alabama and lived in the house behind Brantley's Bar B Que for two years.

By 1917 the railroad had moved the Coles to Collinsville, and the first child, Colin Jackson "Jack", was born. From Collinsville Cap moved his family to Lookout Mountain near McNutt Memorial Church (Liberty Methodist) where he farmed cotton and corn. In 1924 Cap and Augusta had a daughter, Virginia Fairland, and were living in Collinsville. Cap also owned a store in Collbran and sold general merchandise.

Later, Cap and Augusta and their two children moved to Portersville, Alabama (in DeKalb County). At this time, Cap became a cotton buyer in Et. Payne and had an office in the bar

An Appreciation of Mr. Cogswell

From Pell City Progress, Aug. 10, 1916.

Progress has not had much to say on the race for Probate Judge and does not propose to say much. What we do say will come from the heart and deal with facts known to all who know the man and his record.

Sumpter Cogswell's work and example have been of far greater value to St. Clair than that of any other man since the days of reconstruction. He has not only done things himself but has inspired others to go and do likewise.

Before Cogswell came to St. Clair there was no bank, no manufacturing enterprises, no improved roads, no community spirit. He brought the first bank here and as a direct result of this one institution the other five were started. He brought the first large manufacturing concern here and by so doing encouraged others to seek foreign capital. He was the original directing figure in the good roads movement and has been the guiding force behind every worth while effort in and about Pell City.

His efforts in behalf of education and religion are typical of the man and his motives and character. He gave the first property used for school purposes at Pell City. He then traded this property for the present site. It was while he was serving as mayor that the school improvement plans were adopted and put into execution, plans that took ten years to complete and which were only recently completed with the finishing of the auditorium giving Pell City the best school building for a town of its size in Alabama.

Not satisfied with this, Mr. Cogswell then presented to the Protestant Episcopal Church of Alabama the old school site, after making the necessary alterations suitable for its use for the worship and praise of God. Services have been regularly held in this church by preachers coming from either Anniston or Birmingham. Out of his own pocket Mr. Cogswell has paid more than half of the expense of maintaining this church and has served continuously as Superintendent of the Sunday School.

In addition to this he gives liberally to many other schools and churches for never has his kind heart and generosity been confined to things in which he has a personal interest.

Years before coming to St. Clair Mr. Cogswell was a man accustomed to handle large affairs and it is out of this experience that he is now so abundantly able to serve our county and its people.

We challenge anyone to charge a mean, deceitful, unkind thing to Mr. Cogswell, or to point out the hour when he was not sober, intelligent, conscientious and working for the benefit of his community. If such a charge is made ask for proof before believing it and the proof will not be forthcoming.

St. Clair needs Sumter Cogswell for Probate Judge if it wishes to grow a greater and better county. The coming election will not be a test of Mr. Cogswell's character and fitness for the place as much as it will be a test of the character and fitness of the voters to make a wise decision as to the one office in which they are most deeply and vitally concerned.

(Editors Note: Owing to the laws of Alabama it must be said that the above article was written and paid for by a friend of Mr. Cogswell without the latter's knowledge or consent.)

SUMNER COGSWELL, PRESIDENT
W. N. MADDOX, VICE-PRESIDENT

J. FALL ROBERSON, VICE-PRESIDENT
PICKENS PEARSON, ASS'T. CASHIER.

MCLANE TILTON, JR., CASHIER

THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF PELL CITY

STATE DEPOSITARY

PELL CITY, ALABAMA.

Mr. W. F. Lane
Pell City, Ala.
July 2/12

Dear Sir,
I will enclose you my intention
the property Realty which amounts to
75% of the stock + all of the L.E.
Copies holdings in the town of Pell
City (realty) for \$50,000.00 The cash
remains in 1st 2nd priority
secured on 7-10-12 unencumbered
all of the property claim whatever
+ free from any
except taxes full 1912 - I will
If any try to be done I will
know by 10 AM of July 1912
as other arrangements depend upon
them are placed
Very truly
Yours
John W. Cogswell

MCLANE TILTON, JR., PRESIDENT
J. FALL ROBERSON, VICE-PRESIDENT
W. N. MADDOX, VICE-PRESIDENT

SUMTER COGSWELL, CHAIRMAN OF BOARD
PICKENS PEARSON, CASHIER

UNION STATE BANK OF PELL CITY, ALA.
(Successor to The First National Bank)

~~227~~
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576
50

1626

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900

1900

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1000
900

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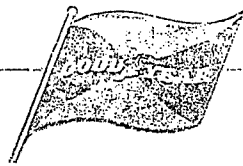
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LOVE - DRIVE - IN - STATION

Goodyear Tires & Tubes - Auto Accessories
Vulcanizing - Pan-Am Gas and Oil

PELL CITY, ALABAMA

1-1-33

Mr Sumpter Cogwell,

Brought you Love Drive-In-Station
gas, oil, labor, parts, tires, etc, to the
amount of \$149.91, for year 1933.

Jan- 5-1.00	May- 5-90	Aug- 8-1.68
10-2.00	5-40	5-1.75
9-1.80	8-1.44	10-2.00
5-1.05	10-2.10	10-2.20
10-2.00	June- 4-72	10-2.20
10-2.00	5-1.25	Apr- 4-1.00
Feb- 10-2.00	5-1.05	5-1.00
10-2.00	5-1.00	10-2.00
7-1.40	9-1.89	12-2.40
10-2.00	10-2.10	
Mar- 10-2.00	5-1.00	Oct- 10-2.00
10-2.00	July 8-1.76	7-1.40
5-1.00	9-2.17	10-2.15
5-1.00	10-2.20	10-2.05
10-2.00	10-2.20	Nov- 5-1.13
8-1.00	10-2.20	5-1.13
Apr- 5-1.00		5-1.13
5-1.00		Dec- 10-2.25
5-1.00		5-1.13
5-1.00		

415 gal gas = 86.03



Sumter Cogswell
President

D. W. Waite
Vice President

E. J. Mautz
Cashier

M...

DIRECTORS.

- George W. Pratt, Pell City, Ala.
- Frank H. Lathrop, Riverside, Ala.
- Sam W. Torman, Ashville, Ala.
- D. W. Waite, Cassonville, Ala.
- A. W. Moore, Coalt City, Ala.
- Sumter Cogswell, Pell City, Ala.
- Joe L. Herring, Ashville, Ala.
- Sam W. T. Brown, Ragland, Ala.
- A. J. Le Fils, Pell City, Ala.
- McLane Tilton, Jr., Pell City, Ala.
- E. J. Mautz, Pell City, Ala.



Pell City, Ala. 5--20--103

Sumter Cogswell, party of the first part, and E. J. Mautz and McLane Tilton, Jr., composing the firm of Mautz & Tilton, parties of the second part, have this day agreed as follows:

For and in consideration of the party of the first part transferring to the parties of the second part his share in the Agency, and recommending to the Hartford & Rochester German Fire Insurance Companies that they appoint the parties of the second part the agents in his stead, the parties of the second part agree to allow to the party of the first part the full amount of all commissions received by them, as long as he, the party of the first part may desire it, on all policies written for Sumter Cogswell, Mrs. Lydia A. Cogswell and the Pell City Realty Co. It is hereby agreed this is to apply to all policies now in the above mentioned companies for the parties specified, and also to any business placed for them at his request, in the future, whether new business or renewals, and whether placed in the above mentioned or any other companies. It is hereby understood that if at any time the party of the second part engages in the insurance business on his own account, this agreement is void and of no effect.

Sumter Cogswell
E. J. Mautz
McLane Tilton, Jr.

FARMERS INVESTMENT COMPANY

PELL CITY, LINCOLN AND MCFALL, ALA.

McLANE TILTON, JR., President
C. D. SIMPSON, Superintendent

COTTON GINS
OIL MILLS
WAREHOUSES

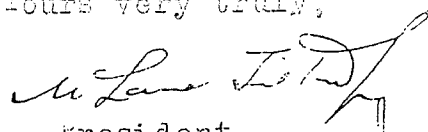
Pell City, Ala. Nov. 9, 1914.

Mr. Sumter Cogswell,
City,

Dear Mr. Cogswell:

I hand you herewith stock certificate for seventy
fives shares of stock in the Farmers Investment Company.
I have issued the certificate to you, personally, so that
you may be an officer in the company and if you desire, you
may ^{Endorse} ~~transfer~~ it to the Pell City Realty Company.

Yours very truly,


resident.

[Handwritten notes and scribbles in the bottom right corner, including a box containing the number 6 and other illegible markings.]

M'LANE TILTON TO SPEAK FOR MOOSE CANDIDATE

OCT 7 1912



SUMTER COGSWELL.

Bull moose candidate for congress in Pell City banker in Seventh district.



M'LANE TILTON.

Peil City banker, who will stump for Cogswell.

Peil City Banker and Wilson Supporter Who Announces He Will Take the Stump For His Friend and Business Associate.

M'lane Tilton, of Peil City, says he intends to take the stump in the Seventh district for Sumter Cogswell, candidate for congress on the bull moose ticket, and Mr. Cogswell will also make an active fight for the place.

Mr. Cogswell is manager of the Southern States Fire and Casualty company, of Birmingham, and is in Peil City, which town he founded something

more than ten years ago. Mr. Tilton is associated in the banking business with the candidate against Representative Burnett.

The funny thing about it is that Mr. Tilton, while advocating the bull moose candidate for congress, is a Wilson supporter in the national election, according to his declaration in his paper, the Peil City Progress.

COTTON THIRD OFF, NEARLY. IS REPORT

U. S. SHIP BUILDING MAKES BIG GAINS.

SHAEFER SPEECH

Weekly Lunch Will Be Best

Tuesday will be Birmingham Ad ch In the afternoon luncheon of the Turn Verein, with Schaefer Manufacturer the chief speaker; business session is day night at the merce.

"Advertising Business" will be Schaefer's talk. peculiarities of business, when are applied to forms of advertise effect of publicity be the first one to far subject at the the club, and his with interest.

Good attendance at the Turn Verein urged to attend by regular business club Tuesday night Commerce. The will make a detail merchants who at vited.

TALKING TO IN CHURCH

Special to The DECATUR AD. W. West and Sec of the Morgan co opinion that it is young man to in church.

On the charge of ship Clifford Day court here. The ex the fact of...

LARED EALTHY

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Oct. 7. "The th records in" says H. W. commissioner, of the depart- issued. "Im- nently the vic- y, careless in es of this race areulosis and so far in 1912, e deaths from -ry, forty-five ygreen. Twen- is from pneu- mbers of the

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death rate of first eight y, preventable th seventy- year is 588. eriod in 1911. r Brussell, in ions, with his ore receiving

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Cogswell buys a town...twice

By MARIE WEST CROMER

PELL CITY — The Bard of the Avon is often quoted, primarily because the succulence of his writings have left little to be said on any subject.

Take for instance, "A rose would smell as sweet by any other name," which, by the way, is a good lead-in to this story on Pell City.

And, the moral of the story (given here at the beginning) is that neither towns nor babies should be named after a "living person. Wait until death has laid its hands upon the individual to be honored, and the grave has closed his mortal career. This is insurance that the final chapter of a person's life ends as nobly as it began.

Pell City was surveyed and established by charter on Oct. 28, 1887, after three railroads built a joint depot at the location. George H. Pell, president of the East and West Railroad; Judge John W. Inzer, attorney and director; and John Postell, general manager, named the town "Pell City."

George H. Pell came from a family known and distinguished in New York City. His flamboyant ways and mesmeristic powers had reached into the pocketbooks of Wall Street. At one time he was a power in this land.

How the illustrious developer and financial Napoleon fell from such a lofty position is unclear, but as reported in a Birmingham newspaper on June 5, 1904, "George H. Pell served two terms in the New York penitentiary after Pell City was established and named."

Pell's reported chicanery and manipulations had overtaken him before the grave closed the book on his life, and, further reported back in 1904, "For this part of its early beginning the Pell City of today is not to blame and there is not a taint, nor a stain upon this goodly and progressive

of the countryside which reminded him of the "Blue Grass" country of Kentucky. From that first impression, Cogswell's dream of building a town was born.

At the time of young Cogswell's visit, Pell City was still a wide place in the road where three railroads met. They were the Georgia Pacific, East and West and the Coosa Valley, which ran between Pell City and Talladega.

Unable to dismiss from his mind his impression of the site, Cogswell called upon Thomas S. Plowman, president of the First National Bank, when he reached Talladega. Plowman was also president of the Pell City Land Company which owned the town of Pell City, consisting of 400 acres.

Plowman was interested in selling; Cogswell asked for an option. Plowman refused. To sell was one thing, but the matter of an option to anyone was something else again.

Undaunted, Cogswell sought the advice and service of an out-of-state auctioneer, secured his two weeks option, and the Pell City Land Company was sold to the Pell City Iron and Land Co. for \$50,000. Cogswell and his associates set about having the site resurveyed, streets laid out and several houses built.

Cogswell would later build his home at 1801 2nd Avenue North. They then brought in the town's first industry, the Hercules Pipe Co., the first soil pipe plant to be erected in the South. The town took off. Soon there was a general store, a blacksmith shop, a Post Office and a saloon.

Then came the panic of 1893-95. The Pell City Iron and Land and the Hercules Pipe companies were forced into receivership. Cogswell moved to Anniston, along with the pipe company. Hercules would later enjoy the reputation of being the largest center for soil pipe manufacturing in the

instrumental in the promotion of several sub-divisions, and was one of the town's most public spirited and leading citizens.

In 1901 an election was held to locate a courthouse on the south side of Backbone Mountain, which is the geographical divide of the county. Pell City, Eden, Coal City and Riverside entered into competition to have the courthouse located in their respective towns. After a heated campaign, Pell City won by a majority of 600.

The courthouse was completed in 1904, but due to opposition from the northern section of the county, court sessions were abolished in Pell City. They were re-established in 1907.

Cogswell, Martin, Kilgroe, Starnes, Robertson, DeGaris, Moore, Mays and many others were instrumental in the town's early development and growth. Many were honored by having streets and sub-divisions named for them.

Back when Pell was sitting on his pinnacle of wealth and success, the town was formed. But had the old adage (moral of this story) been adhered to, Pell City would more than likely be Cogswell, Alabama, today.

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It was really through the influence and efforts of Sumter Cogswell, president of the Pell City Realty Company, and his associates, that the town was first brought to the attention of the investing public. They had labored incessantly for several years for the town's building and development.

It all began, as the story goes, on a blustery March day in 1890, when a young man of 29 years of age, enroute to Talladega, was to change trains at a place known as Pell City. As a guest in the home of J.C. Cornett, he looked out of his window the next morning and was impressed with the natural beauty

Plowman was interested in selling; Cogswell asked for an option. Plowman refused. To sell was one thing, but the matter of an option to anyone was something else again.

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He promptly contacted Mr. Plowman and inquired as to the problem of the once promising town. Mr. Plowman relayed to him the town's misfortunes and ups and downs, and also told him the town was for sale.

Cogswell decided to buy — again. At this time only 45 people lived within the limits of Pell City. In September of 1901 Cogswell brought his family of five to live in Pell City.

There was not a road leading into or out of the town, which had become overgrown in weeds. His first order of business was the promotion of industry. Cogswell went to Boston in 1902 and bought all the holdings of the Hercules Pipe Co. in Pell City, from the company's trustee, the Hon. Louis D. Brandeis, Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

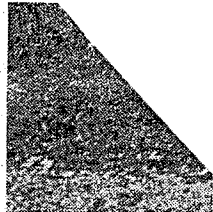
Cogswell then incorporated the Pell City Realty Co., donating to it 150 acres of land and the mill spring which is the present site of Avondale Mills. The factory, known as the Pell City Manufacturing Co., laid its cornerstone in August, 1902, and upon its completion in 1903, drew 1500 more inhabitants to the town.

The factory was built by Howard-Bullock Manufacturing Co. and the Draper Co. of Hopewell, Mass. It was sold to Avondale Mills in the fall of 1919. A new era of economic growth swept over the South, utilizing the region's natural resource of iron and coal.

In 1903 a young physician by the name of R.A. Martin moved to Pell City and began his practice of medicine. Dr. Martin was in-

Robertson, DeGaris, Moore, Mays and many others were instrumental in the town's early development and growth. Many were honored by having streets and sub-divisions named for them.

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The Cogswell Home
at 1801 2nd Avenue North in Pell City
1897. The important



The Cogswell House at 1801 2nd Avenue North in Pell City was built in 1897. The importance of the Cogswell

House lies not only in its architectural uniqueness, but also its significance to Pell City's founder, Sumter Cogswell.

The house is now owned and occupied by Elizabeth Cogswell Starnes, last surviving child of Sumter Cogswell.

Story Of A House A Man, A Town

BY MATTIE LOU
TEAGUE CROW

This is not so much a story of a house as it is the story of a man and town. Houses never quite give up the people who live within their walls and seem to hold on the hardest to those who give the greatest service to mankind. This lovely old Victorian house is the home of a very lovely modern-day lady, Lydia Elizabeth Cogswell Starnes.

The house was built about 1888. It began life as a two-story traditional house with typical Victorian trimmings. The bowed-effect, with four matching windows inside their framing of dark green, the small central window, and the one above of tinted diamond-shaped glass--so beloved of the late Victorians--are intriguing to passers-by.

It is difficult to determine just how much belongs to the original structure and how much has been added down through the years. The place is known today as the Sumter Cogswell home.

The first town charter was granted The Pell City Land Company on Oct. 28, 1887, with the following men as incorporators: T.S. Plowman, John B. Knox, D.M. Rogers, J.A. Savage, John Postell, and Judge John W. Inser. During that year three railroads, The Coosa Valley, The Georgia Pacific, and The East and West, built jointly a depot here.

The East and West was owned by the wealthy Pell family of New York and this is the source of the town's name. The town site was surveyed, the streets were laid out, and a few houses were built. Mr. Green Evans was the mayor.

The village was a mere infant when, on a March day in 1890, young Mr. Sumter Cogswell, on his way to Talladega, was forced to make connections in Pell City and, of necessity, spent the night here. He was greatly impressed with the natural beauty of this location

company had the town site re-surveyed, streets opened up, and several houses were built. Soon the Hercules Pipe Company, the very first soil pipe plant in the South, was located at Pell City. The town grew, with a store, a hotel, a blacksmith shop, a saloon, a post office, and a few new homes. But the panic of 1893-94 forced the Pell City Iron and Land Company, along with the Hercules Pipe Company, into receivership. The pipe shops were moved to Anniston.

In 1901, Sumter Cogswell who had not kept in touch with the little town, again passed through and, upon looking from the train window, was surprised to see a deserted village. The streets were grown up, the houses were empty, and the place had the appearance of a ghost town. When he reached his destination in Atlanta, Mr. Cogswell telephoned Mr. Plowman and learned the sad story of failure.

He also learned that the town was again for sale. This time Mr. Cogswell purchased the principal acreage which is today Pell City for the sum of \$3,000. He had recently been married to a Mrs. DeGaris, formerly Miss Lydia Elizabeth

McBain of Memphis, Tenn.

On Sept. 7, 1901, ten years from the time he had first discovered Pell City, he brought his bride and her two small sons, Jack and Julian DeGaris, here to live in the house which occupies block Number Two and which is pictured above.

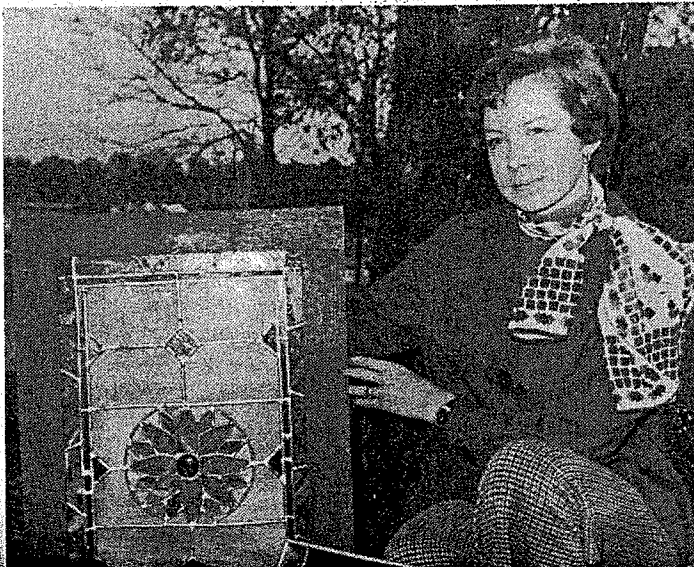
It is true that one man cannot build a town. When the complete history of Pell City is written there will be many names connected with its development. But always there, with the others will be the name of Sumter Cogswell, for he didn't indeed, have a very vital way all the good things which occurred to make Pell City a desirable place to live. The churches, the schools, the mill, the courthouse, the roads, the bank, all were part of his dream and all felt his stedying hand.

When the Cogswells came to Pell City in 1901, there were only 40 people living here: Mr. Tom S. Coleman, in 1950, dictated to Elizabeth Cogswell Starnes his memory of the day this family moved in. Mr. Coleman was a very young man at that time and was working as a night operator at the depot.

"The day Mr. Cogswell unloaded his household goods it was a sight to me. They

unloaded one bay surry, which amused much as it was the had ever seen around the top and come to this country bird dog, white named Jack or D recall which), and of household goods brought with them amount of grocery entire stock of the small store. Jack were small boys at Righter Cogswell stay at Pell City m

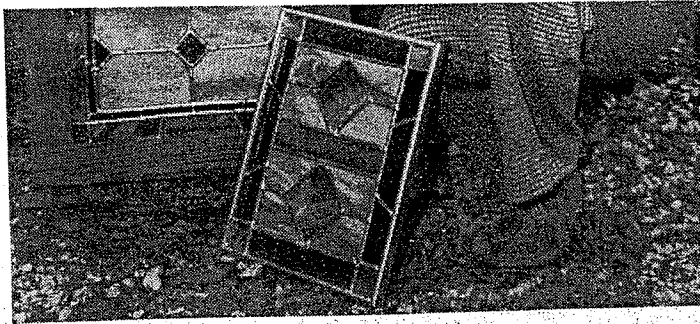
The house that oc Number Two, shaded by an o wisteria, its room furnished in the style, is still a se cordial hospitality one a all when Sumter Cogswell and where they family, the two be three daughters, Gertrude, and Mai



reatly impressed with the natural beauty of this location and his active imagination at once saw the possibility of a future city here.

It was near the river, had three railroads, was near enough to markets in Birmingham and Anniston, and was surrounded by fertile farm land. When Mr. Cogswell learned that Mr. Tom Plowman of Talladega was president of The Pell City Land Company, he paid that gentleman a visit and, learning that the land was for sale, he managed to secure a two week option.

Within this time limit the land—400 acres—was sold to the Pell City Iron and Land Company for \$50,000. This



Tuscaloosan Enters Fair

Mrs. Donna Bennight of Tuscaloosa displays her stained glass windows which she will exhibit this Saturday at the 'Pell City Armory in the First Annual Arts and Crafts Fair. Mrs. Bennight is one of the many artists and craftsmen who will be on hand this Saturday for the big event which kicks off Pell City Bicentennial Celebration.



10% OFF

To Any Shoppers In Our Store On Saturday, Oct. 25th Who Are Dressed In Old-Fashion Dress.

- Jonathon Logan for Juniors
- Turtle Bax Jeans & Tops
- Lori Lynn Sportswear
- Mr. Jack for the Taller Woman
- Lady Jack in Half Sizes
- Exquisite Form Bras & Girdles
- Hanes Hosiery (Men & Women)
- Manhattan Shirts & Sport Coats
- Mr. Dee Cee Shirts
- Rappers Pants by Mr. Dee Cee
- City Club & Endicott Johnson Shoes for men
- Personality Shoes for Women
- Red Goose & Mother Goose Shoes for Children

COMPARE US FOR

QUALITY — VALUE — SERVICE

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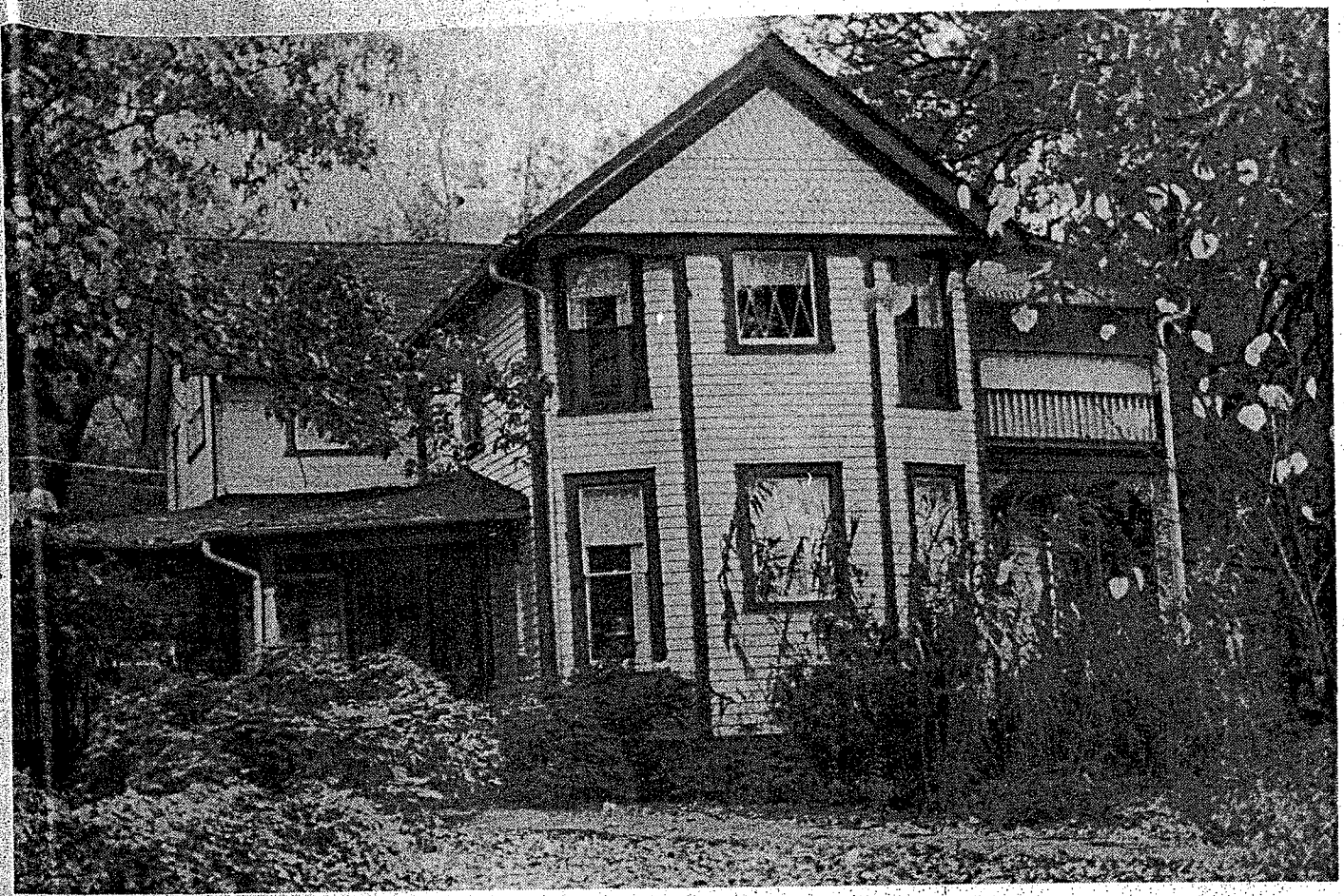
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The Cogswell House

BASIC COMPANY PHILOSOPHY

“... Our greatest asset is not reflected in our financial statements. In my opinion our greatest asset is the men and women who make up the company—if we lost all



Cogswells Early

Continued From Page 2

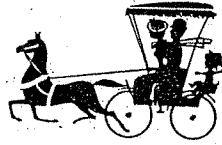
The day Mr. Cogswell unloaded his household goods it was a sight to see. They unloaded one bay horse, one surrey which amused me very much, as it was the first buggy I had ever seen with fringe around the top, and the first to come to this country town, one bird dog, white and brown, named Jack or Dan, and several loads of household goods. They brought with them a greater stock of groceries than the entire stock of the town's one small store. Jack and Julian were small boys, and there was Righter Cogswell who didn't stay in Pell City much.

The Cogswells moved into the house where Mrs. Starnes now lives, which occupies block number two of the original survey of Pell City. Here were born the three Cogswell daughters: Elizabeth (Mrs. Orr Starnes), Isabelle (Mrs. Dean Davis), and Mary (Mrs. Charles Balof). Mr. Cogswell had great plans for Pell City. He was an enthusiastic promoter and had the ability to instill into the hearts and minds of his fellow citizens the desire to see their town prosper.

Bays D. Cather, Sr., gives a vivid description of the coming mills and the courthouse. Mr. Cather came from Ashville in 1902. He was editor of *The Pell City News*, was postmaster for two terms, and was in the mercantile business. He also owned and operated the local theater. He was married to Daisy Kilgroe of Seddon. Mr. Cather wrote:

The year 1902 was an unusually dry year. Farmers were greatly worried. Some of them sold out and moved to Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. Two good things happened to the town: Pell City became a branch county seat and the courthouse was built, and the cotton mill came to town. The spending of a million dollars for labor and materials during such a bad crop year was like receiving manna from heaven.

An ordinance passed by the constitutional convention in Montgomery in 1901 provided for a branch county seat in St. Clair County. Travel was difficult since the county is cut in half by Backbone Mountain, and people living south of the



to Birmingham, from there to Whitney, the Southern station three miles from the courthouse at Ashville.

An election was held on January 6, 1902, to determine the site of the branch courthouse. Four towns were asking for it: Pell City, Eden, Coal City, and Riverside. After a heated campaign, Pell City won by a majority of 600. Block twenty-six was purchased from the Pell City Realty Company as a site for the building. This was known as Lacy Hill, as it had been the site of the two story log house of Abner Lacy. Probate Judge W.S. Forman was authorized to borrow \$9,000. The money was borrowed from Mrs. Bert McLaughlin Forney, Miss Bertie Lee McClendon (Mrs. Pat Roberson), James L. Herring, and J.P. Philips. The building was accepted by the county in March of 1903, and a spring term of court was held in the Southern Judicial Division.

In 1902, Mr. Cogswell gave 150 acres of land, which included a very fine spring, to Pell City manufacturing Company. Soon the construction of the first saw-tooth cotton mill in the South was begun. George W. Pratt, who was in touch with the Draper autoloom interests, and Howard Bullock of New England were instrumental in having the mill located at Pell City. The cornerstone of the building was laid in August of 1902, and by the close of 1903 there were about 1500 new inhabitants in the town. Pratt was president of the company.

Just as things were looking up for Pell City, two events of catastrophic nature occurred, and again the citizens were called upon to weather a storm. Late in the summer of 1902, the owners of the Seaboard Airline Railroad, having purchased the East and West, tied it to Atlanta. The Coal City and Ragland line was extended to Birmingham. It pierced the Black Creek Coal Fields near Margaret and Acmar. The owners decided it would be profitable to drill a tunnel through Backbone Mountain.

Springs and hauled in wagons across Bald Rock Mountain to the site of the tunnel. The heavy rolling machinery had to be tracked across the mountain. That is, small sections of the track with steel rails were laid, and when the machinery reached the end of the laid track, men were taking up the back end of the track and re-laying it in front of the moving machines. The method was slow but sure.

Some of the high explosives used in blasting were shipped to the Southern depot at Pell City and transferred from there in wagons to the tunnel site. Those were busy days--building a cotton mill, a new courthouse, and a new railroad all the same year.

One night in November, when there was a large shipment of dynamite and several kegs of powder at the station, the depot caught fire. It was some time after midnight, and few of the volunteer fire fighters knew of the explosives until the railroad men began to yell a warning. Jack Hall did not hear the warning. He was attempting to move a new sewing machine from the station. He was instantly killed. Tom Whitfield, a Negro man who was doing the masonry work for the new mill, went too near the fire and was killed. One of the crew, who was moving a freight engine away from the fire was struck by a piece of lumber which pierced his chest. Colonel N.B. Spears was struck by pieces of flying crockery and almost lost his life. Doc Crowley, who had the drugstore, was badly injured. Joe Willingham's house had the knocked from the walls, and the Cornett Hotel was partly wrecked. Windows were blown from the old Maxwell building. A number of homes caught fire from flying timbers. The next morning there was a hole where the depot had been that was big enough to put the courthouse in. One of the engines backed up to Seddon, and the crew tried to get Dr. Crump to come down and treat the wounded. But the doctor was on a case and could not be reached. However, Dr. J.T. Brown of Riverside, Dr. Turner of Cropwell, and Dr.

Although the disaster was a forceful blow to the people, they went back with a will to repair the damage. Soon, however, they were to face yet another disaster. Two years after the courthouse at Pell City was finished and sessions were in full swing citizens in the northern part of the county charged that the existing two sets of courts were unconstitutional. These people requested the legislature to have the circuit court abolished. The Alabama Supreme Court decided against the decision. The Judicial Division was



came from Ashville in
 He was editor of *The Pell*
y News, was postmaster for
 two terms, and was in the
 mercantile business. He also
 owned and operated the local
 theater. He was married to
 Daisy Kilgroe of Seddon. Mr.
 Cather wrote:

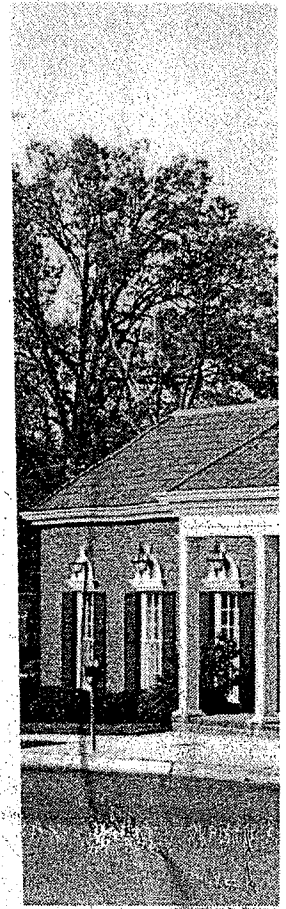
The year 1902 was an
 unusually dry year. Farmers
 were greatly worried. Some of
 them sold out and moved to
 Texas, Arkansas, and
 Oklahoma. Two good things
 happened to the town: Pell City
 became a branch county seat
 and the courthouse was built,
 and the cotton mill came to
 town. The spending of a million
 dollars for labor and materials
 during such a bad crop year was
 like receiving manna from
 heaven.

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 mountain and attending court at
 Ashville has to travel the
 treacherous mountain road—
 next to impossible in bad
 weather—or go by way of train

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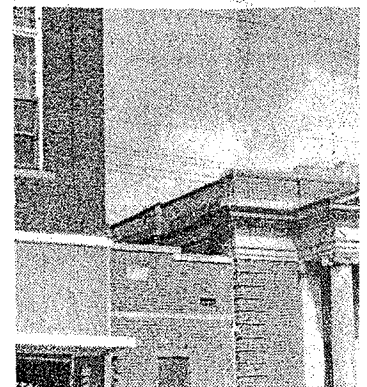
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 scene. Later the railroad
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 injured.



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ettlers Here



alt a in 1905 when John Pelham was
own, circuit judge and circuit court
work in Pell City abolished. The
the legislature did this, and the
they Alabama Supreme Court upheld
the the decision. The Southern
the Judicial Division was abolished
was in 1905 when John Pelham was
ourt circuit judge and James L.
tain North was sheriff. W.S. Forman
it was probate judge. Although
ave the pride of the citizens was
ny. the hurt, they went to work at once
ions to have the courts re-
in the established. They contended
the that the court dockets were so
helt crowded that lawyers,
ern witnesses, judges, peace
hed officers, and anyone else who
had to attend court were forced
to make the tiresome trip to
Ashville for several terms of

court before their cases finally
came before the judge and
jurors.

John W. Moore of Pell City
ran for the state legislature and
pledged himself to have the
constitution amended to allow a
county to have a branch court.
Ed Hamner of Attalla
announced himself as a
candidate for the state senate
on the same platform. These
two men were elected, and
when the legislature met in
1907, the constitution was
amended.

After the re-establishment of
the courts, Pell City began its
real development. The cotton
mill brought Thomas Henry
Rennie, a man skilled in the
manufacturing business, to take

charge of that enterprise. Mr.
Pratt, who was president of the
company, was in many respects
a genius, but his greatest ability
was that of a salesman. Mr.
Rennie came in 1907 and
remained until 1936, making an
outstanding success of the mill.
During this period E.A.
Thompson was superintendent.

The Pell City Manufacturing
Company was sold to Avondale
Mills in 1919. The company
spent a million dollars in 1938
and 1939 to make it a thoroughly
modern denim mill.

Pell City's first school was
taught in a little schoolhouse
built by Sumter Cosgwell, W.H.
Miller, and many others. Miss
Dadie Griffith was the teacher.
By 1905 the town had a school

system with nine months of free
schooling. A brick schoolhouse
was erected where the City Hall
stands today. Professor P.M.
Matthews, who was also a
lawyer, served as principal.
Handy Ellis—later Judge Ellis—
was principal from 1907-1908. In
addition to the public schools,
the cotton mill company
maintained a splendid school on
the hill near the mill. Many
years later Miss Iola Roberts
came to each in that school was
taken over by the County Board
of Education, and a new brick
building was erected, it was
named the Iola Roberts
Elementary School. Miss
Roberts has contributed much
to the civic, social, and religious
life of the town.

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