

PELL CITY

Pell City is situated in the southeastern part of St. Clair County among the beautiful mountains and the fertile Coosa Valley. The present town of Pell City is due to the building of three railroads that met in the center of what is now the business section of the town; and the vision of foresight of one man, Sumter Cogswell, who upon seeing the location for the first time, was so impressed with the beauty of it and the natural advantages possessed by the location that he immediately began using his talents and his energy toward the promotion of a modern city.

The May 4, 1887, issue of the Southern Aegis carried an item in the local news--"Pell City is the name of the new town east of Eden." The June 4, issue of the same paper reported that "on June 1st, Articles of Incorporation for the Pell City Land Company were filed in the office of the probate judge." "A History of Pell City" states that the first town charter of Pell City was granted The Pell City Land Company on the 28th day of October, 1887, its incorporators being John B. Knox, T. S. Plowman, D. M. Rogers, J. A. Savery, John Postell and Judge John W. Inzer. The town site was surveyed, streets were laid out and a few houses built. During the year 1887 three railroads, The East and West, the Coosa Valley Railroad and the Southern Railroad built a joint depot, a two story structure located in Block 43. The East and West Railroad later sold to the famous New York family of Pells. This is where Pell City derives its name. Later this railroad became the Seaboard Air Line Railway. This Seaboard line to Pell City from Coal is in existence no longer. The Talladega and Coosa Valley Railroad Company was extended from Renfro to Pell City in 1887 making the length 26.9 miles. The first 8 miles of road were built by Rogers and Franks, lumber dealers and it was managed by D. M. Rogers for years.

On October 1, 1890, it was merged into the Birmingham and Atlantic Railroad Company. Between 1886 and 1899 many short branches were built to ore beds. The short road was built primarily for the hauling of lumber, but when the Talladega Furnace was erected, it became the road most used for hauling iron ore.

The late Mr. John Fant of Cropwell would often enjoy telling about the train falling in the Coosa River. The railroad crossed the river at Stemley on a wooden bridge, which at one time collapsed under a loaded train, and would have proved a horrible tragedy if a colored porter, Jordan Cranford, and the conductor, Mr. Harry Fleetwood had not saved the lives of the passengers. Jordan Cranford dived under the water and pulled out every passenger, handing them to Mr. Fleetwood and his brother, Julian, who stood on the top of the car, which was not submerged.

The bridge was repaired, but not considered safe for some time. For months, the engineer, Henry Sims, put on only enough steam to transport the train across the bridge; he and the passengers would walk across the bridge, and the fireman would start the engine, jump off, and the engineer would catch it as it reached the other side. On one occasion, the engineer failed to catch the engine and it proceeded for some miles on its own. A new bridge was built and transportation became safe again.

After the lumber mills at Renfroe and the furnaces in Talladega ceased operations, the road was no longer needed, and the right of way was sold in individuals.

This little road was the most convenient mode of travel from Talladega to Birmingham and Atlanta, since it made connection with the A.G.S. at Pell City.

General John B. Gordon was made President of a prospective railroad, The Georgia Pacific, which was to extend from Atlanta, Ga. to Texarkanna, Ark. in 1881. It was finally built from Atlanta with a terminus at Greenville, Miss. The road was thrown into bankruptcy and was purchased August 18, 1884, at foreclosure, by the Southern Railway Company. This is the only railway that touches Pell City at the present time (1972).

Mr. Leroy Truitt was often told that the first freight this railroad brought out from Birmingham was his Mother's and Father's wedding furniture. It was bought from M. H. B. Guy who had a large department store located at Eden. Mr. Leroy's parents were Elijah and Lula Hindsman Truitt.

At the time the railroad station was built in Pell City, the only other building in town was the Cornett Hotel, located where the old home of R. C. Gravette now

stands. The hotel was operated by Mr. J. C. Cornett, father of Hardy, Pat, Dill and G. P. Cornett. This hotel later burned.

All of the first incorporators of Pell City lived in Talladega at the time of the first charter except John Postell and Judge John W. Inzer.

JOHN B. KNOX was born in Talladega on February 16th, 1857. He studied law in the office of Judge John T. Heflin, and was admitted to the Bar in Talladega in 1878. He first practiced law in partnership with Frank W. Bowden, but moved to Anniston in December, 1888. However, he continued his legal connection in Talladega until he died.

THOMAS S. PLOWMAN was the son of George Paris Plowman who was born on July 8th, 1808 in Brunscome Co., N. C. and moved to Talladega in 1833, where he served as Judge of Probate two terms. He had two sons who became prominently connected with civic affairs of Talladega. George H. Plowman, served as mayor, at some time during the war, but later moved to Texas. Thomas S. Plowman lived in Talladega all of his life. In 1889 he was Sales Agent for the Loan and Improvement Co. of Talladega. At one time he was president of the Bank of Talladega and served the district one term in the United States House of Representatives, 1897-99.

D. M. ROGERS was manager of the Coosa Valley Railroad Company.

A. J. SAVARY. In 1886, Mr. Savary established a new wagon-yard in Talladega. This was the most commodious and convenient wagon-yard which had been established in Talladega. He built a handsome home in Talladega in 1886. In 1888, The First National Bank of Talladega was established and Mr. Savary was on the Board of Directors along with T. S. Plowman and John B. Knox. Mr. Savary was the gentleman Mr. Cogswell was going to call on when he made his first trip through Pell City.

JUDGE JOHN WASHINGTON INZER, who along with John Postell is credited with having named Pell City after George H. Pell. He was attorney for the East and West Railroad and was one of the most outstanding men that St. Clair County has ever known. He will be discussed in other parts of this book.

JOHN POSTELL was a Captain in the Confederate Army and a very close friend of Judge John W. Inzer. He was a railroad builder and was chief engineer who built a large part of the Flager Railroad system of Florida. He was general manager for the East and West railroad when it was built in Pell City in 1887. He was married to the former Lucinda Katherine Hudson who was very talented and distinguished person. She traveled extensively in this county and in Europe and was presented at the Court of St. James. Thirty-six years after Pell City was named -- Katie Hudson Postell's name sake came to reside in Pell City. In January, 1923, Katie Hudson Miller Eatman, with her two daughters, joined her husband, Thomas N. Eatman, who was cotton grader and buyer for Avondale Mills. Mrs. Eatman was kindergarten teacher for Avondale Mills for fourteen years and was active in school, church and welfare work in Pell City.

In March, 1890, Mr. Sumter Cogswell, at the age of 29, chanced to be en route to Talladega and was to change trains in Pell City. He was a guest at the Cornett House for the night. Looking out of his window the next morning he was so impressed with the natural beauty of the countryside, which reminded him so much of the "Blue Grass" country of Kentucky, that he was interested in the place. At this time, Mr. Cogswell was in the employment of the Home Life Insurance Company as General Agent, and was on his way to Talladega to call on A. J. Savery and establish an agency for the company there.

Being so impressed with the location of Pell City, for a town site, he asked who the town belonged to and was told that he was to see Mr. Tom Plowman in Talladega. Mr. Plowman informed him that the town belonged to Pell City Land Company, of which he, Mr. Plowman, was president. Mr. Cogswell secured the property and sold the Pell City Land Company to the Pell City Iron and Land Company of which Milford W. Howard, J. H. Barr, T. S. Plowman, G. N. Henderson and General Wilder incorporated. They paid \$50,000 for 400 acres of land. The Pell City Iron and Land Company had the town re-surveyed, streets laid out and several houses built.

The earliest records that can be found to date are the Probate Minutes that begin in 1884, which indicate that the Town of Pell City was officially incorporated

on May 6, 1891. A year earlier, in 1890, Sumter Cogswell had been instrumental in The Pell City Land and Iron Company acquiring the holdings of the Pell City Land Company. Also from the "Report of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of Alabama during the November Term, 1908-1909" by Lawrence H. Lee, Supreme Court Reporter, Vol, 157, printed in Montgomery, Alabama by The Brown Printing Co., Printers and Binders, 1909. It states "The town was organized on the 6th day of May, 1891, under title 14, c.1 of the Code of 1886...

The Pell City Iron and Land Company was instrumental in bringing to Pell City, the Hercules Pipe Company, the first soil pipe plant to be erected in the South.

W. L. Singleton, early citizen of Pell City, worked for this pipe shop soon after it was removed to Anniston. Mr. Singleton was a carpenter on the Pell City Manufacturing Co. when it was being built in 1902. He was married to the former Lucy Hindsman. Three of their daughters, Eva Singleton Harvey, Arvilla S. Mungall and Savannah S. Williams are life long residents of the town.

At this time, the young city seemed to be on a prosperity basis. W. G. Evans was elected the first mayor. A store was being operated by a Mr. Lindsey on the corner of 20th Street and First Avenue South. Later when Pell City was quite young, Jesse Williamson ran a blacksmith shop on this same spot. Mr. Williamson was married to the former Elsie Sides of Cropwell. Their daughter Jesse Williamson Armstrong related when she was a little girl she would ride the B & A train to Cropwell to spend the weekend with her Grandmother and Grandfather Sides. The fare to Cropwell cost her a "nickel". The Post Office was located at the rear of where the Pell City Drug Company now stands. A Mr. Flanders was the proprietor of a saloon.

On February 27, 1900, Sumter Cogswell married Mrs. Lydia Elizabeth DeGaris of Memphis, Tenn. She had two small sons, Jack and Julian, by her former husband. In the spring of 1900, the Cogswells moved to Atlanta, Ga.

Over the past ten years, Mr. Cogswell had heard of the growth of Pell City but did not know how disastrously the panic had affects its fortunes. In passing through Pell City in 1901, Mr. Cogswell naturally looked from the window of the train to see what progress had been made in the place had had sold ten years before.

He was surprised to see the town, for in the panic of 1893-94-95, the Pell City Iron and Land Company was forced into receivership as was the Hercules Pipe Co. The pipe shop was removed to Anniston, Alabama, which city now enjoys the reputation of being the largest center for soil pipe manufacturing in the world.

Upon arrival in Atlanta, he communicated with Mr. Plowman and asked what was the matter with the town. Mr. Plowman replied telling him of the towns misfortune and its ups and downs, and also said the town was for sale. Mr. Cogswell decided to buy. The price being arranged upon, \$3,000, the deeds were sent to the Atlanta National Bank for examination to title. Before payment, M. M. Smith and Judge Herring of Ashville, Alabama, examined the deeds and pronounced them good. Mr. Cogswell then paid for, and secured the title to the town site, with the exception of holdings of the Hercules Pipe Company which included 50 acres of land, for which a young lawyer named Louis J. Brandies of Boston was trustee. Mr. Brandies later became an Associate Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court. Later in 1902, Mr. Cogswell purchased from Justice Brandies the 50 acres of the Hercules holdings.

Quotes from "Memories of Pell City Early Days" by a Pioneer Citizen:

Reading the PEN PICTURES OF PELL CITY brings to ^{me,} memories of years gone by. I went to Pell City in March 1901 as night operator, my first job, to say I was scared and nervous don't explain my feelings at all. I got \$40.00 per month for 30 and 31 nights. I got board at the Cornett and Hazelwood Hotel for \$10.00 per month and it was good grub and a fine room in the northwest corner of what was known as the Maxwell Building.

Mrs. Cameron ran a boarding house in same building up stairs. At that time, Mrs. Spears had the Post Office in a room down stairs. Mr. W. W. Zellner had a small grocery store in building now known as Pell City Grocery Co. operated by James Ingram. That was the entire business of Pell City when I went there in 1901. I will now give the population of Pell City in 1901:

Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Cornett
Mr. and Mrs. J. Z. Hazelwood
Mrs. Cameron and daughter Lizzie
Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Zellner
Col. and Mrs. Spears, three daughters, Misses Hortense, Ellen and Pratt. They were the only young ladies of the city.
Mr. S. D. Kilgroe, Agent Southern, E & W, and B & A Railroads and his family,

(Including Randall who was a small but smart kid. He could telegraph when just tall enough to stand at table and reach the key.)
Joe H. Willingham, Clerk for the 3 railroads, and one of my best friends.

In those days, salesmen could come to Pell City with large trunks and work the county in hacks. Cornett and Hazelwood operated a livery stable. Lawsey Stuart and Austin Hazelwood were their drivers. Now I will give you the list of colored that I knew.

Sam Hamby was employed as porter at depot
Bibb Castleberry was flunky at hotel
Allen _____ can't remember his name was cook at hotel.

I think that is all of our colored that was at Pell City when I went there.

I think I am correct as to names of people there in 1901. If not, just lay it to my memory or to an old man 71; as you will learn as years go by, you forget. I shall never forget the day Mr. Cogswell moved to Pell City. Life was very dull to me as I worked and slept days, would get up about 2:00 P.M., no place to go, only to depot, and hand out until supper time. All we got to see was the E & W and B & A come in with their passengers, then the Southern trains. The day Mr. Cogswell unloaded his household goods, it was a sight to me. They unloaded one bay horse, one surry, which amused me very much as it was the first buggy I had ever seen with fringe around the top and the first one to come to this country, one bird dog, white and brown, named Jack or Dan, I can't recall which, and several loads of household goods. Jack and Julian were small boys, I remember, a boy Slator(sic) (Mr. Cogswell's son was named Righter).....

There are many things happened in Pell while I worked there that comes to me at times though think I have stated enough.

This is for Elizabeth Cogswell Starnes, of my past days while working at Pell City. I hope she will enjoy reading when her mature days come.

Tom S. Coleman, Sept. 8th, 1950.

Mr. Colemans' home was at Riverside. He and Mrs. Coleman were parents of Charles, Mildred, Thomas and W. A. (Bill) Coleman.

After the Cogswells moved to Pell City they had three daughters, Isabelle, who married Dean Davis of Lincoln, Ala., Elizabeth, who married Orr Starnes, and Mary, who married Charles Balor.

Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Wooster Zellner had a daughter, Dorothy, who died in her teens. After Mr. Zellner's death, "Aunt Edie" ran a boarding house, and if you had never eaten at Aunt Edie's you had missed a treat for she served sumptuous meals. She was a second mother to her many nieces and nephews.

Soloman Davis Kilgroe, 1861-1931, was a charter member of the First Baptist Church, a Democrat and a leader in business and political affairs, a city councilman, farmer, school teacher, railroad agent, bank director, cotton buyer and general merchandise merchant, specializing in furnishing farmers there supplies to enable them to make a crop. At the time of his death he owned and operated 19 small farms. He was a leader in this area in encouraging people to own their own homes. His strong feeling in this prompted him to build each of his daughters (6) a home and give each of his sons (3) business property. His son, J. W. Kilgroe and grand sons, S. E. Kilgroe and Sol Mongold are present citizens of Pell City.

Joe Willingham was a brother of Mrs. Kilgroe and lived in the Kilgroe home at this time (1901). He was married to the former Cannelia Johnson and their children were Joseph H., William R., Wasson S., Martha C. and Kathryn A.

287 N. E. 96th Street
Miami Shores, Florida
February 16, 1972

Dear Mrs. Gray:

Your letter of February 9th, asking for information about my father, to include in Mrs. Crow's chapter on Pell City, has been received. I am happy to furnish the following information as your requested:

COLONEL NAPOLEON BONAPARTE SPEARS

Born at Pickville, Tennessee, December 6, 1848. Son of General James Gallant Spears. Educated at Emory and Henry College at Emory, Virginia. Admitted to the bar in Tennessee at the age of 21 and at the same age was elected to the Tennessee legislature. Moved in Alabama in 1889 (approx.) Practiced law in Alabama until several years before his death on June 29, 1928. Member of the Alabama Legislature for several terms and was a member of the Constitutional Convention which adopted Alabama's present constitution. During his service in the Alabama legislature

he introduced the legislation which provided for the establishment of a county courthouse in Pell City.

Colonel Spears' father, James Gallant Spears, was a General in the United States Army and a lawyer. Colonel Spears married Florence Eugenia Mitchell.

I know nothing about a log cabin. I, myself, was born in the house where the Cogswells lived. We moved from that house to the south part of town.

Colonel Spears also served as Mayor of Pell City but I don't remember the dates. I am sure this information is available in the records.

You mention that your father-in-law was Mr. C. D. Gray. My father held him in the highest regard and we all thought so much of all of the Grays.

Sincerely yours,
(Miss) Pratt Spears
(Sister of the late
Hortense Spears)

Mr. Clyde W. Ennis, in his "A Pen Picture of Pell City and Sumter Cogswell", (June 1936) states that when Mr. Cogswell moved his family to Pell City on September 7, 1901, the population of Pell City was 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. At that time the town had grown up in weeds and shrubbery. There was not a county road leading into or out of the town in any direction. There was nothing for the new owner to do, except promote some industry, which was the Pell City Manufacturing Company. (Mr. Ennis was the publisher of the St. Clair Times in the 1930s)

The Pell City News published an article in their January 25, 1951 issue which the following is quoted from:

EARLY LIFE OF PELL CITY AS TOLD BY A PIONEER by Bays D. Cather, Sr. (Editor's Explanation .. the following is a fine description and historical sketch of the early life of Pell City. It was written by Bays D. Cather, Sr., a real pioneer of our town. Mr. Cather is at present publisher of the Dania Press, Dania, Florida. He married here during the early part of the century, his entire family was born here and most of them lived out their early lives here. He was for many years

publisher of The Pell City News, (also known by the names of the Coosa Valleyan and The Pell City Progress) was postmaster for two terms, was in the mercantile business and at one time owned and operated the local theatre.)

Anything that has to do with Pell City interests me very much even if I have no further financial interests in the fine community. Mrs. Gather (the former Daisy Kilgroe of Sedden) and I moved to Pell City about the same time -- January 1902, and in January Pell City was the remains of the old boom of the early 1890s.

The first newspaper in Pell City was the Pell City Echo, started by W. S. Griffith. I think the old Pell City Land Company must have had some interest in the Echo because it ran a few page advertisements in which it referred to Pell City as the "Hub of the South." The three railroads were here then and they must have gotten that idea of the "Hub" from that fact...

1902 was a dry year ... Farmers were very much worried. Some of them sold out and moved to Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma. The Pell City Court House and the Cotton Mill were built during that year.

Spending nearly a million dollars for labor and material such a dry time as 1902 seemed like manna falling from heaven to many people. The main stockholders in the mill originally built were C. E. Riley & Co., of Boston and the Drapers of Boston and Pawtucket. Draper looms were installed in the weave room. C. E. Riley & Company were Boston brokers and shippers of cotton goods to most all parts of the world.

But in the late summer of 1902 the Seaboard Air Line Railroad, having purchased the East & West Railroad, tied it into Atlanta and Coal City and Ragland it was extended to Birmingham. It pierced the Black Creek Coal fields near Margaret and Acmar, and somewhere between Coal City and Odenville a tunnel was being drilled through the mountain that made two court houses necessary in St. Clair County in those days.

There were many contractors in charge of different sections of the new railroad, but the John Blair Macafee Company of Philadelphia, had the contract for the tunnel. They shipped much of their material to Cook Springs and had it hauled in

wagons across the Bald Rock Mountain and other hills to the site of the tunnel. I remember watching them move several "dinkey" engines across those mountains. There were also some drag lines. All these were too heavy for the roads of that day, so the dinkeys and other heavy rolling machinery were tracked over. That is, small sections of 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. Thus this slow method was being used on several engines and shovels.

Some of the high explosives used in blasting were shipped to Pell City Southern depot and transferred in wagons to the new railroad right-of-way. Those were busy days. Building a cotton mill, a new court house and a new railroad all the same year.

One day in November the depot had a large shipment of dynamite and several kegs of powder for the contractors on the railroad. That night the depot caught fire after midnight and then it happened! Many people did not know about the explosives until one of the railroad men yelled out that there were sixty cases of dynamite inside.

Jack Hall, who owned a "hop fack" stand in town didn't hear the warning. He was trying to move a new sewing machine out when the explosion followed. He was instantly killed.

Tom Whitefield, a black mason who was working on the walls of the new mill, was near the fire and was instantly killed. He was a resident of Cedartown, Georgia.

A railroad engine was on the track and had just moved some freight cars from near the fire. One of the crew was struck by a piece of timber end-wise, and it went nearly through his chest. I do not remember if he lived. The Railroad Company took him to their hospital in Birmingham. Col. N. B. Spears was struck by a piece of crockery and spent several weeks in a hospital. (Mr. Tom Coleman wrote "I shall never forget the remark Col. Spears made, he had one of his arms broken, said a jug of whiskey hit him. He said he had quit whiskey several years ago and now whiskey would not let him alone.")

Doc Crowley who was running a drug store at the time, was injured in the chest and came near dying. But he partly recovered but never regained full strength.

(Joe Willingham was asleep in his bed several blocks away. It knocked all of the plaster on the ceiling down on him and woke him up. All of the canned goods was knocked off the shelves in S. D. Kilgrove's store.)

The Cornett Hotel was partly wrecked.

Most of the glass windows in the old Maxwell brick building were blown out. The Old Maxwell Building was one of the relics of the first boom in the early nineties. There were several of these old buildings left and some of the others may still be standing. The two story building across from the Dycus home is the old Green Evans Home. (Said to be the oldest house in Pell City located at the corner of 21st Street and 2nd Avenue North. Is now owned by Mrs. Ann Riser, was also known as the Ragland and later the Eatman home.) It is said that part of town was once a part of a farm that Evans lived on. He was the father of Mrs. Ella Miller whose daughter is Mrs. Willie Mae Yarbrough now living in the old Miller home which was another left over building from the nineties. The Dycus home was also left over from the old boom. (Old residences of Pell City know this as the Aunt Jane Jordan house.)

There was a hole big enough to hid the court house in, on the depot site after this explosion. Flying burning timbers were falling all over the town and several houses caught fire on their roofs. These were quickly extinguished, however.

One of the railroad engines backed up to Seddon depot and the crew tried to get Dr. Crump to come down and treat the wounded. Dr. Crump was out on a case and could not be reached. However, Dr. J. T. Brown of Riverside, Dr. Turner of Cropwell, Dr. Laney of Eden and a few others whose names I cannot now recall, were soon on the grounds and later the railroad doctors came up from Birmingham to help out the wounded.

Dr. R. A. Martin came to Pell City in 1902 or 1903. He was the family doctor for each of my four children.

With regards and good wishes for you, the Pell City News and to all the people of St. Clair County, I am

Yours sincerely

Bays D. Cather, Sr.

COURT HOUSE

A branch county set was created in Pell City under Ordinance of the Constitutional Convention of Alabama held in Montgomery in the year 1901. The Ordinance No. 390 provided for the erection of a courthouse and jail. An election was held on January 6, 1902, to determine whether the courthouse should be located in Pell City, Eden, Coal City, or Riverside; and after a heated campaign, Pell City won by about 600 majority. The 1906 edition of "Maury's Manual of Geography" gives the census of these towns in 1900 as: Pell City 98, Eden 177, Coal City 509, and Riverside 300. On January 22, 1902 this site, Block 26, was secured from the Pell City Realty Company. The home of Probate Judge Abner Lacey was located on this present court house site. It is said was a log house. On February 13, 1902, the Court of County Commissioners voted to issue bonds in the amount of \$10,000. However, on August 13, 1902, this order was revoked and W. S. Forman, Judge of Probate at that time, was authorized to borrow money himself in the amount of \$9,000, the rate of interest to be 6%. Then on September 30, 1902, Judge Forman borrowed \$9,000.00 from the following individuals in the county: Mrs. Bert McLaughlin Forney \$2,200.00; Miss Bertie Lee McClendon (later Mrs. Pat Roberson) \$1,300.00; Mr. J. L. Herring \$2,500.00; and J. P. Phillips \$3,000.00.

The total cost of the old courthouse and jail was \$9,038.12 and W. S. Forman as Probate Judge filed a claim with the Commissioners Court for the \$38.12 which he paid out in excess of the original planned cost of the courthouse.

The architect was W. Chamberlain and Company and they were paid for their service a total of \$321.84. The contractor on the building was Robert P. Manley. The building was accepted by the County on the 13th day of March, 1903.

The first Grand Jury in the Southern Judicial Division of St. Clair County at Pell City, Alabama was organized shortly after the courthouse was finished. Names

of the Jurors were:

Thos. D. Courson
Wm. Murrick
W. J. Smith
Sumter Cogswell, foreman
John W. Moore
J. H. North
S. J. Hare
N. A. Butterworth
J. W. Abercrombie
J. R. Rowland
Jas. Frank Harmon
R. A. Greene
L. A. Bradford
D. R. Griffith
W. C. Alverson
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D. R. Griffith
W. C. Alverson
J. E. North, Baliff

Soon after the court house at Pell City was finished and sessions of court were in full swing, a certain Clique of citizens in the northern section of the county charged that it was unconstitutional to have two sets of court in one county. Some of the citizens of the northern section of the county went before the State Legislature and asked that the sessions of the county and circuit court at Pell City be discontinued. The Legislature abolished the court here and the State Supreme Court upheld their decision. The court was abolished in 1905 when Judge John Pelham was the Circuit Judge and J. L. North was sheriff. The abolishment of the court here was of course, a serious setback to the young town. Business felt a sharp decline. The pride of the citizens was hurt. Showing a spirit of their pioneering ancestors, the people of the southern section of the county set to work to have the sessions of the circuit and county court re-established at Pell City. The campaign waxed warm. The people of the northern section endeavored to prove that the re-establishment of the court here was too expensive to the people of the county, although the docket was so crowded that lawyers, witnesses, judges, peace officers, and anyone attending court from this side of the mountain was forced to make the trip to Ashville for several terms of court before their case finally came before the Judge and Jurors. In those days this was quite a trip. With the only means of travel going to Ashville one had to make the trip over the mountain (Backbone Mountain), or going by train, had to make the trip by the way of Birmingham and Whitney.

John W. Moore of Pell City announced himself as a candidate for the State Legislature from St. Clair County and pledged himself to vote to have the State Constitution amended so that the branch court at Pell City would be legal. Ed Hamner of Attalla, Alabama, announced himself as a candidate for the State Senate on the same platform. The election was held in November 1906, and John W. Moore and Ed Hamner were elected to the Legislature and Senate respectively. The Legislature and Senate of Alabama met in January 1907 and the Constitution of the State was amended, making branch courts legal. The municipal code of 1907 was enacted by this session of the State Senate and Legislature, and was adopted by the town council of Pell City in 1908. After the re-establishment of the court here, Pell City began its real development.

In the early 1950's, it became evident that the old court house at Pell City was inadequate and had deteriorated to such an extent that a new building became necessary. Martin J. Lide of Birmingham, Alabama, was the architect. He was permitted to use the best design and the finest materials obtainable. Bids were received in September, 1954, and R. P. Henderson and Son of Pell City, Alabama, were low bidders and the contract was awarded in December 1954.

The cost of the building together with the allied improvements was approximately \$625,000. The building was financed locally without any government or state aid and without increasing any existing taxes.

The courthouse was dedicated March 3, 1956. The Court of County Commissioners of St. Clair County at this time were:

M. W. Forman, Judge of Probate
E. N. Peace
W. H. Hess
W. A. Coleman
W. D. Wilkins
Virginia B. Luker, Clerk

Master of Ceremonies at the dedicatory program was Pat Roberson. Circuit Judge Frank B. Embry introduced the main speaker, Governor James E. Folsom.

In 1902, Mr. Cogswell donated 150 acres of land and a spring to the Pell City Manufacturing Company and with the assistance of George W. Pratt, who was in touch

with Draper auto-loom interests and Howard Bullock in New England, succeeded in getting them together. Construction of the first saw-tooth cotton mill in the South was begun with the cornerstone of the mill being laid in August, 1902. Upon its completion in 1903, about 1,500 more inhabitants moved to town.

The town was now coming into its own. The first school was taught in a building located in the block where the present city hall is located. It is said the school house was made of logs. Miss Dadie Griffith was the teacher. Col. N. B. Spears, Mayor of Pell City, re-organized the council by election of aldermen. He was followed in 1902 by W. J. Purdy, who served until 1903, and in turn, Mr. Purdy was followed by Sumter Cogswell who served in 1903-1904. Other mayors of Pell City were as follows: T. S. Milsap, George W. Pratt, W. A. Starnes, Charlie P. Pratt in that order until 1914. We then had the following:

E. A. Thompson	1914-1920
Frank B. Embry	1920-1922
Dr. J. O. Gray	1922-1924
Frank B. Embry	1924-1926
Sumter Cogswell	1926-1944
W. T. Starnes	1944-1952
Joe Kilgroe	1952-1960
Sam F. Burt	1960-1964
Otis Perry	1964-August 10, 1970
Joe W. Kilgroe	Aug. 10, 1970 - August 27, 1971
Raymond F. Cox	August 27, 1971

In 1903 Sumter Cogswell, E. J. Mautz and McLane Tilton realizing the vital part a bank plays in the development of a community were interested in the founding of a bank in Pell City. As a result, the Bank of St. Clair County was organized. It was the first bank to be established in St. Clair County. Sumter Cogswell, McLane Tilton, E. J. Mautz, Arthur Draper, J. Fall Roberson, Sr., J. H. Moore, Frank H. Lathrop and L. Cook were its original directors. The officers for the bank were: Sumter Cogswell, President; Frank H. Lathrop, Vice-President; McLane Tilton and J. Mautz, chasiers. In 1910, a charter was obtained and the bank became the First National Bank of Pell City. In 1918 the name of the bank was changed to the Union State Bank and has operated under that name until the present day.

The Union StateBank has weathered every financial storm that has developed

since its beginning including the disastrous financial collapse of 1929 to 1932.

In 1910, Mr. R. L. Cook built the Pell City Bank and Trust Building, located on the southwest corner of Cogswell Avenue and 19th Street, and established the Pell City Bank and Trust. This bank was not as lucky as the Union State Bank for when the financial collapse came the bank had to close its doors.

In 1903, Dr. R. A. Martin, a young physician, came to Pell City to make his home and begin the general practice of medicine. Dr. Martin was instrumental in the promotion of several sub-divisions and was one of Pell City's most public spirited and leading citizens, contributing much to the welfare and the upbuilding of the town. He established the Pell City Infirmary and the Pell City Drug Company. The drug store is now being operated by his daughter, Mrs. Ben Kincaid. Dr. R. A. and "Miss Mary" were the parents of two children John and Mary Ruth.

Soon after Dr. R. A. Martin came to Pell City his younger brother, Claude, finished dental school and joined him here. Dr. Claude was also a public spirited citizen and contributed much to the growth of the town; for many years he was on the city council and an active Mason. Dr. Claude and "Miss Prezzie" had two daughters Madeline and Louise.

The June 5, 1904 issue of the Birmingham Age-Herald states these facts about Pell City:

"The city government consists of T. S. Milsap, mayor, and Councilmen A. T. LeFils, H. A. Cornett, Sumter Cogswell, S. D. Kilgroe and W. A. Starnes.

"The town enjoys an excellent school system, free nine months in the year. Prof. R. E. Cooley is the superintendent and the trustees are T. S. Milsap, president; George W. Pratt, Van Walker, McClain Tilton and Junius L. North. Besides this public school the cotton mill company furnish and sustain a splendid school on the hill near the mill.

"George W. Pratt, president of the mill, is deeply interested, not only in the industrial development of the state, but in the political affairs of the nation. A South Carolinian by birth and educated, he is thorough democrat, and has just been

elected as a delegate from the Seventh Congressional District to the national democratic convention. He is a man of conviction and of experience in politics, and henceforth must be regarded a factor in all affairs of this state.

"Only two churches grace Pell City at this time -- Methodist and Baptist, but more will come to meet the growing demand.

"The trustees are soon to begin the erection of a handsome new brick school house.

"Two hotels care for the transients -- The Cornett house, by that prince of good fellow H. A. Cornett, who has been here since the town began, and the Brick hotel."

Mr. Bays D. Cather, Sr. gave the following information to Mrs. Ella Miller who wrote to him asking for information about the First Methodist Church of Pell City:

"If you remember correctly, my printing establishment was at first located in a building that stood back of the present Pell City Drug Company building.

"The first Sunday School was a Union Sunday School and was organized by Mrs. Carol Alverson, and myself, and we had help from Mr. W. H. Miller, Mr. Fred Miller and from many others of the population of Pell City at that time. We arranged nail kegs and boxes for seats. Afterwards we started holding church services in the same building on Sunday night.

"Later we organized a Methodist Sunday School with the help of the Presiding Elder who was then stationed at Gadsden. I believe his name was Robinson, but I am not so sure now. Later the people of Pell City with the help of Sumter Cogswell, W. H. Miller and many others, built a little school house, the little building which in later years became the Episopal Church (the Church of St. Mary theVirgin) is the name the congregation gave it when they took the building over and Bishop Beckwith of the Alabama Diocese would come there and hold services. Dr. Blacklock of Anniston was chosen Rector of that church.

"In the meantime the Methodist congregation was organized by the Millers, the Alversons, and myself, and a Methodist church building was erected where the present

new church building stands. I was church clerk, a steward and secretary of the Sunday School, then appointed by the quarterly conference. We chose A. E. Ledyard as our choice for superintendent of the Methodist Sunday School and later I was appointed superintendent. I think my name is among the first names on the old Church register of members.

"E. E. Emerson was our first pastor sent by the North Alabama Conference. He was a pioneer and Pell City was in the Eden Circuit at first, being pastor at Eden as well as Pell City. He also had at that time the old Fishing Creek Church at Seddon, and I believe he held services at Riverside"(On December 1, 1902, Rev. E. E. Emerson became the first pastor; the membership consisted of 14 members. Among the first members were Bays D. Cather and Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Miller. In the fall of 1903, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Walker and five other members were added. (Mr. and Mrs. Walker were the parents of Henry, Newman, J. B., Mary Frances and Martha Walker.) It is noted that the first marriage in the church was performed by Rev. Emerson, May 3, 1903, at which time Mr. J. F. Miller married Miss Eddie Rowland. They were the parents of Mary and Frank Miller.

Later the Baptist organized a Pell City congregation and built their building where the new beautiful church building now stands. (The first church building was built 1904. Charter members were Mrs. John Cameron, Mrs. B. A. Fite, Mrs. Martha Camerson, Miss Nell Fite, H. A. Cornett, S. D. Kilgroe, Mrs. L. C. Kilgroe, Mrs. H. A. Cornett, Miss Dixie Kilgroe, M. M. Smith, Mrs. M. M. S mith, Charles Nunnelley, Mrs. Charles Nunnelley, Mr. Sank Miller, Mrs. Sank Miller, Miss Jessie Miller, Mrs. T. J. Kilgroe and Miss Daisy Kilgroe. The Trustees were M. J. Smith, a Mr. Mitchell and J. H. Phillips. The first pastor was Rev. Burns.)

Prominent lawyers came to Pell City to make their hom. W. A. Starnes, who was married to the former Selma Eaton, and was among the first and one of the best. His oldest son, Thurston, attended law school and returned to Pell City to practice. Mr. and Mrs. Starnes other children were Orr, C. W. (Whitson) Gaston and Catherine.

Among the first lawyers was M. M. S mith who moved his family from Ashville to Pell City in 1903. He had a son, Victor, who practiced law also. Another young

lawyer who came from Ashville was Frank B. Embry. Charlie P. Pratt finished college, returned to Pell City and opened a law office. Captain Gardner Green, who later led Company C in World War I was among these first attorneys. Also McLane Tilton.

In 1904, the Pell City Hardware Company was organized. Its officers being John W. Moore, president; R. M. Alverson, Claude B. Alverson and Hardie A. Cornett. C. O. Lacey bought the business in 1966. Mr. Lacey is the great-great grandson of Judge Abner W. Lacey who was one of Pell City's pioneers who lived in "Lacey Hill" in a log house where the courthouse now stands.

The old brick school house, where the city hall now stands, was built in 1905. Professor P. M. Matthews was the first principal and at one time Mr. Matthews practiced law in Bessemer. Judge Handy Ellis was principal of this school in 1907 and 1908.

Around 1905 James L. Garrett and his wife Sally Hindsman Garrett and their children moved to Pell City. He was a great politician -- he became a Populist, and when the Populist party died he did not return to the Democratic party but became a Republican. He served three terms, 18 years, as the Circuit Clerk of St. Clair County. Mr. Garrett was also a great Baptist lay leader. He loved all day singings and singing conventions -- especially the sacred harp singings. He also went around the county and conducted singing schools. His daughter Eula Garrett Vincent would go along and play the piano for him. Mrs. Vincent is now 86 and makes her home in Pell City.

Mr. Garrett's son, James Lloyd and wife Myrtie Ragland Garrett, have been life long residents of the town. She is the daughter of Pell City's Uncle Jim Ragland, who is probably Pell City's oldest citizen. Mr. Ragland like Mr. Garrett loves to sing. I'm sure he is the "singinest" person that has ever lived in Pell City. In years gone by, Jim Ragland, Leroy Truitt, Austin Hazelwood and Lester Smith sang together as a quartet. They were known for miles around for their beautiful singing of sacred music.

In 1907, 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 until March, 1936, during which term of office he made an

outstanding success of the Pell City mill. Mr. Rennie was a great Rotarian -- every Wednesday, he would have George Simpkins, and later Archie Pemberton, drive him into Birmingham for the Rotary Club meetings.

Mr. E. A. Thompson was superintendent of the Mill at this time.

Thomas J. (Uncle Tom) Abbott was best known in Pell City for operating a taxi and a leader of the First Baptist Church. In 1908, he started what is now known as the Kilgroe Funeral Home. The only requirement, at this time to direct funerals, was a stock of caskets, a horse drawn hearse, a bier and a pair of hand straps to lower the casket into the grave. Uncle Tom was most enthusiastic about this new venture; however, after directing his first funeral at Eden, Alabama, he came to the conclusion that this was not for him. He paced the floor, washed his hands about a dozen times and finally said to his brother-in-law, J. H. Willingham and to his wife, Aunt Matt Abbott (they were already doing business as a partnership), "If you want this undertaking business, you can have it." They accepted and operated the funeral home as a partnership until the death of J. H. Willingham in 1937. Aunt Matt sold her half interest to a nephew, Joe W. Kilgroe, in 1938. He and the widow of J. H. Willingham, Cornellia Johnson Willingham, operated as a partnership until 1941 as Kilgroe and Willingham. Joe Kilgroe bought the interest of Mrs. Willingham and operated the Kilgroe Funeral Home until 1968. His son, S. E. (Sonny) Kilgroe came into the business as a full partner. Joe W. Kilgroe's wife is the former Josephine Bukacek of Riverside. Her parents were Eugene and Kate Liggon Bukacek.

Aunt Matt Abbott was best known for her work and devotion to the Baptist Church. Upon her death in 1939, she willed her property to the Coosa Valley Baptist Church. She was Sunday School teacher for many years of the young married couples class of the First Baptist Church. One of the most impressive services ever held at the church in Pell City was the presentation by this class of a loving cup to Aunt Matt, in appreciation for her devotion and leadership to the church.

At the time of Uncle Tom's and Aunt Matt's marriage, they farmed in the Easonville community. In 1902, Uncle Tom drove a cow to Birmingham, sold her, and with part of the proceeds bought Aunt Matt a small colorful mug with her name and date painted on it.

One of Pell City's set-backs came in 1908 when the "State, ex rel. Roberson v. The Town of Pell City." Their complaint was that the town of Pell City had not been properly incorporated. It seemed as if Sam Roberson wanted to desolve the municipal corporation of Pell City. Victor H. Smith and Charles P. Pratt were lawyers for the appellant. M. M. Smith and McLane Tilton, Jr. were the lawyers for the appellee. The case was first heard before the St. Clair County Circuit Court. Judge John W. Inzer ruled in favor of the Town of Pell City. His ruling was appealed and the case was taken to the Supreme Court of Alabama. They ruled -- It was the opinion of the court, "As the people of Pell City organized themselves under color of law, at least, into a municipal corporation more than 16 years before the filing of this information, and have gone on, year after year, during that time, exercising the usual franchise, and as the corporation has been distinctly and unequivocally recognized by the legislative department of the State, no inquiry should be permitted, looking to the undoing of their corporate existence Let the judgement of the Circuit Court, denying relief to the petitioners, be affirmed--Affirmed." So Sam Roberson lost his case.

Smith and Tilton contended that it was shown by the record that the State has, by legislative enactment, recognized Pell City as a municipal corporation by an act entitled, "An Act to establish, maintain, and regulate a dispensary in the town of Pell City," Act., approved February 28, 1903. This act may have helped Smith and Tilton win their case, but by having a dispensary in Pell City, it may have cost the town the county high school. It has been said that when a system of county high schools were established by the Alabama Legislature in 1907, the act provided for a state supported high school in each county. Governor B. B. Comer came to Pell City, thinking he would establish a High School for St. Clair County here, but he found a dispensary in the middle of town and he decided to erect the high school at Odenville.

After the joint depot station was destroyed, the Southern Railroad and the Seaboard Railroad built separate stations before 1913; during this time, Mr. O. L. Eckwurzel moved his family to Pell City and was agent for the Southern Railway, until

his death in the 1940s. Mr. Eckwurzle had a colored man working as porter for the depot by the name of Bud Hamby. Could this have been the son of Sam Hamby who was porter for the joint depot in 1901? Mr. and Mrs. Eckwurzle were the parents of Elouise, Sarah, Otto and Anna.

In early 1914, Mr. W. F. (Seaborad) Smith moved his wife and two small children, Sarah and James W. (J.W .) to Pell City, They stayed in the Old Brick Hotel (Cameron House) when they first arrived. Mr. Smith came to Pell City to be agent for the Seaboard Railroad and held this position until the railroad was discontinued in the early 1940x. Mr. Smith was also City Clerk for the Town of Pell City for many years, Children born to Mr. and Mrs. Smith after they moved to Pell City were Watkins, Grafton, Frances and Kitty Jean.

The Post Office was moved to brick building in the center of the business section of town on the north side of Cogswell Avenue around 1913. The Post Masters of Pell City, that we have any record on have been:

Mrs. M. B. Spears	1897-1905
Miss Hortense Spears	1905-1913
W. L. Millner	1913-1917
Bays D. Cather	1917-1923
J. L. Ragland	1923-1936
C. B. Alverson	Acting Postmaster 3 months
Mrs. Blair Jones	Acting Postmaster 10 months
N. R. Shockley	1937-1952
T. C. Alexander	Acting Postmaster 1952-53
E. L. Love, Sr.	Acting Postmaster 1953 - 3 months
L. C. Smith, Sr.	Acting Postmaster 1954-1957
Roy Banks	1957 -

In the Spring of 1914, there was a smallpox epidemic in Pell City and vicinity. The Mt. Pisgah Church did not hold services that Spring as a result of the epidemic. Several old residences remember this epidemic very clearly. When Reuben Roe was asked about it, he stated that he had never been as sick in his life, but he only had three "pox"-- two in the palm of one hand and one in the palm of the other.

There was an earthquake in the Pell City area in 1916 -- On October 18, 1916 "This shock was felt most strongly in northeastern Alabama, apparently most strongly in Easonville, Near the epicenter frame buildings were badly shaken, windows were broken and chimneys thrown down. Fairly hard shock at Birmingham and Montgomery."

During World War I, only one other town in the United States furnished more soldiers and subscribed for more Liberty Bonds, in proportion to population, than Pell City. It was from St. Clair County that Captain Gardner Green and fifty men went forth with "Company C" of Alabama's famous 167th Infantry Regiment as a unit of the Rainbow Division in France. Of the 263 men in "Company C", only 51 returned. Captain Green did not return nor did many another of St. Clair's citizen soldiers.

There was another war too, in which the men of St. Clair fought and died as part of a "Company C". That was the War Between the States in which they formed a "Company C" of the 58th Alabama Regiment which their own Col. John W. Inzer commanded. They carried a company flag sewed for them by Mrs. E. E. Willingham, and it is a matter tēder statistics to note that the "Company C" of 1917 included twenty-nine direct descendants of this same Mrs. Willingham whose patriotic needle served the "Company C" of 1861.

Eliza E. Hardwick Willingham was a typical Southern lady held in deep respect by her family as well as other citizens of the area. She was married to Randal D. Willingham, November 10, 1861. He was a farmer. Their farm was located near the present Coosa Valley Baptist Church in the southern section of Pell City in the Lake area. Randal Willingham was a member of "Company C". He was wounded in Virginia during the Civil War and never fully recuperated from his wound.

Mrs. Willingham presented the flag she had made for "Company C" at Cropwell, Alabama, prior to their leaving for the War. Ladies of this period in our history rarely participated in public gatherings. She was so nervous about this public appearance, that a rider was sent to Talladega to get her a bottle of Nerve Tonic.

She was one of the leaders in woman suffrage. The first time that she voted she sent word to the voting officials at the courthouse that due to her age, she would be unable to get to the voting place at the time set to open the poll and requested them not to allow anyone to vote until she arrived to cast the first vote ---her request was granted.

Mr. and Mrs. Willingham were the parents of ten children. Among the early

citizens of Pell City were these children: Lelah Carrie and Lurie Bell Willingham, wives of S. D. Kilgroe, Mary Francies (Aunt Matt) Willingham Abbott, Joseph H. Willingham, and R. Wasson Willingham.

On July 4, 1937, Pell City held their second "Good Neighbor Day." The feature of the day was the unveiling of a granite monument to the memory of those St. Clair County soldiers who lost their lives in the World War I and Spanish-American Wars. Miss Mary Ashley Greene, the only daughter of Capt. Gardner Greene, who recruited the Pell City war unit, lifted the veil which disclosed the memorial. The monument is adorned by a bas relief in bronze of an American doughboy and along the front panel the following names are engraved:

Capt. Gradner Greene
Lieut. A. G. Teague
Lieut. Joseph Cornett
Sergt. Jessie Scoggins
Corp. Austin Patterson
Russell Bowlin
Fred Chambers
H. L. Elliott
James I. Ragland
James C. Farley
Grady Graham
Berry Higgenbotham
Claud W. Jones
Ewing Jones
Oscar Jones
Guernsey McLaughlin
Austin Myers
Theo E. Sims
Harrison C. Wade
William Mize
William T. Braden
Fred S. Moncrief.

The two latter of the Spanish-American War.

When Pell City's new city hall was completed in 1957, this monument was moved to the front lawn on First Avenue North. The city government in 1957 consisted of J. W. Kilgroe, Mayor, Council E. L. Love, Jr., J. H. Stokes, A. E. Nixon, Earl Bowman and Bettie Scott, Clerk.

The Pell City Manufacturing Company was sold to Avondale Mills in the fall of 1919. (Avondale Mills was established in 1897 in Birmingham with the late Governor B. B. Comer as its founder and first president.) The Pell City plant was the sixth Avondale Mill to be bought or built. Arrangements for buying its facility were

culminated in 1919. Avondale's management, remembering Governor Comer's keen interest in the Pell City plant, spent a million dollars in 1938-39 in order to make this plant a thoroughly modern denim mill. On October 21, 1954, Pell City observed "Denim Day." The next year they had "Denim Week." The last yard of denim was run at Avondale Mills at 3:45 P.M. on January 12, 1962. The Pell City plant now makes a material called greige.

Pell City's first hospital was the Gertrude Comer Hospital and was sustained by Avondale Mills. It began operation soon after the mill was bought by the Comers. There were 25 beds in the hospital. Dr. R. A. Martin was its doctor and Miss Elsie Dunn was head nurse. Miss Ruby Zachie, long time St. Clair County Health Nurse, received her training from this first hospital. The building that was made into a hospital was once the boarding house of James and Cameliias Francis Sullivan Turner. They moved to Pell City around the time the mill was being built and opened the boarding house. In addition to this large building, they rented three other houses to sleep their boarders. They later moved out of the village and into a house in town. Mr. Turner was killed by a freight train September 9, 1918. After his death, "Brandma" Turner continued to keep boarders for many years. They had seven children. Two of their sons, Ernest (Sissors) and Aubrey were on Pell City's famous baseball team which included such players as Vester Garrett, Douglas (Blue) Mungall, A. T. Winkler, "Iron" Rowe, Wheeler Harris and Ab Crow.

On April 23, 1956, two neighboring towns, Eden and Oak Ridge, merged with Pell City. Eden was an old municipality which flourished in the 1880's when it was the "railhead" for track workers along the Southern Railroad and Oak Ridge was a new town incorporated in 1947 through the efforts of E. J. Doby. This merger made the population of the town 3,644. A third area, the Avondale Mill Village, also became a part of the municipality in September 1956. From the beginning of the town, the mill village was never within the Pell City city limits, although the mill has always been situated in Pell City. Chestnut Street, which is now 4th Avenue North, divided the mill village from Pell City. This street, up until the late 1920's, was also the Pell City-Seddon and Riverside public road. The 1960 census gave the population of Pell City as 4,165.

EDEN

The little village of Eden, which today is within the city limits of Pell City, was first called Manchester until the Eden postoffice was established on December 17, 1872. The postmasters, up through 1929, have been:

Richard G. Strickland	December 17, 1872
Isaac W. Lewis	November 15, 1880
Miss Dadie C. Griffith	May 18, 1889
Amos S. Griffith	January 10, 1893
William P. Cowan	May 5, 1893
George W. Kendrick	September 21, 1897
William B. Robertson	June 17, 1907
Rozelle Cowan	July 8, 1919
(name changed by married to Mrs. Rozelle Hardy on January 26, 1924)	
Mrs. Florence L. Butterworth	October 26, 1925
(acting)	
David R. Wyatt	April 7, 1926
	(successor appointed after 1929)

For many years, the girls who attended Camp Winnataska, some seven miles distance, were delighted to have their letters postmarked "Eden".

Elias Patterson and Noah Sweat were among the first to make their home in Eden. Others were the Lanyes, Cowans, Cates, Truitts, Lewis, Robertsons, Stevens, Hindsman and Ginns. Dr. J. O. Gray practiced medicine in Eden before he moved his family to Pell City.

The Benjamin H. Windsman family moved to Eden from Georgia around the Civil War period. They settled on a farm at the old Hindman's Spring, now called Dunlap Springs, where Pell City gets its water supply. Mr. Hindsman fought in the Civil War. He was married to the former Ann Stevens.

The earliest settler of the Eden community, that we have any record on, is Jesse Ginn, Revolutionary Soldier. Jesse Ginn married twice and had nine children by each wife. In 1824, he married Tabith Brewer who was 24 years old when she married. She was Jesse Ginn's second wife. His first wife having died many years before. All of his children by his first wife were grown when he married his second wife. The tradition is, that he divided his property among his first wife's children, keeping a child's part for himself, before he married Tabitha Brewer. She was born in 1800 in South Carolina and the daughter of William Benjamin Brewer.

Jesse and Tabitha Brewer Ginn lived in South Carolina for some time after they

were married, later moving to Tennessee on the Duck River for awhile, then between 1830 and 1833 went back up into Virginia for two or three years, where they had lived once before. In 1836, Jesse Ginn and a grand son-in-law, Joe Noah or Noe (Joe Noah had married a grand daughter by Jesse Ginn's first wife) came down into Alabama in St. Clair County near Eden, and bought some land. This land is about two miles below Eden on Wolf Creek.

Family tradition about Jesse Ginn's Revolutionary war record is this: he was a drummer boy, a petty officer, a minute man, was in service of his country the seven years of the war, or the entire time, was under General Francis Marion for some time, and was in the Battle of Kings Mountain.

Another interesting thing about Jesse Ginn was or is, an old blue military Surtout coat, that has come down in the family. It is now at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, in Montgomery, Alabama. This coat is hand-made and the material it is made from is beautiful blue broadcloth.

On November 14, 1971, the Broken Arrow Chapter of the D.A.R. of Pell City marked Jesse Ginn's grave with a bronze marker.

An article from the September 5, 1963, issue of the St. Clair News-Aegis, by Ed Blair, editor of the Pell City News and later the St. Clair News Aegis, tells us about the early school at Eden-- The building stood about where they have the New Hope Baptist Church's pastors home at present. The school never used the upper story, but long before I started to school there, I think, was a Masonic Lodge that held their meetings on the second floor, and it seems to me, I believe the Odd Fellows held meetings there also--- It was a two teacher school. Mr. Holloday was the principal of the first school I entered. His wife was the other teacher.

I remember lots of things about the school. Two that stand out are the light earthquake we had. I don't remember the year, but it shook the school building for a few short seconds and I do remember teacher was scared. I remember the two part holiday we got at the end of World War I. There was a false report of an armistice on November 7, 1918. They turned the pupils out to rejoice. But the report proved false. We went back to school the next day with sad hearts. Four days later, on November 11,

another report of an armistice. But the teachers refused to believe it and would not budge. I remember that Mr. Sam Robertson, an Eden merchant, was a school trustee. Mr. Robertson came to the school house and verified the new report and on his word, the principal turned us out again to whoop and rejoice with everyone else. It was one of the very happiest occasions of my life. "

In 1965, Pell City extended their city limits to include Cropwell. In 1969, parts of old Seddon were incorporated in Pell City, The town population is now 5,602.

SEDDON

Seddon Shores is the part of old Seddon that was annexed by Pell City. This includes the old West's residence; the grounds where the old Fishing Creek Methodist Church once stood, overlooking the cræek; the old cemetery, and the old home place of Dr. John Roberson, who succeeded Dr. Crump as doctor for the Seddon community for over fifth years.

Seddon was settled in 1880 when the Georgia Pacific Railroad was built. It was incorporated that year with a population of five hundred. It is located three miles west of Pell City and twentytwo miles south of Ashville, It was at first a lumber community and the mills were owned by Empire Lumber Company. The first citizens came from Truss's Ferry (Ferryville) one mile below on the Coosa River. The town was named for Thomas Seddon who was Secretary of War for the Confederal States under Jefferson Davis. The first merchant was J.K.P. Lacy. Dr. Henry Green Crump was the first doctor. Other pioneer settler were Jake Maddox, W. H. and W. N. Roberson and Harvey Bell. When the timber supply was exhausted, the mills moved away. Today part of the tiny village stands dismally amid dreams of the past.

CROPWELL

In the year of 1815, a group of relatives in South Carolina banded together and started out for St. Clair County, Alabama to settle and make new homes there. They were the John Roberson, Williamson, Truss, Coleman, and Jeremiah Collins families. All of them except the Collins family had a covered wagon in which to travel. Mr. Collins could not afford a wagon so he made a crude "slide" on which to transport a

few belongs and his family rode in the wagons with the relatives. The Collins family was from Virginia but had come on down to South Carolina to join in the trek to Alabama. This group of kins-people settled in the vicinity of what is now Cropwell and they were the first white people to settle there.

Later on another family came and settled at Cropwell. This was the Walkers. Mr. Walker was traveling through the state with Andrew Jackson and liked the country so well that he decided to move here.

Other later families were the Buchanan, Jones, Fennel, Castleberry, Bowden, Allen, Brewster, Alexander, Turner, Laney, Roland, Heaslett, Coley, M~~o~~ncrief, Murchisen, Mays, Scotts, Hardwicks, Sides and Funderburgs.

One of Cropwell's outstanding citizens was J. Fall Roberson, Sr. He was the son of James R. and Addie Jones Roberson. He graduated from Cropwell High School in 1891, and attended Howard College for three years. While he was there, he was a member of the Franklin Society, Sigma Nu and on the baseball team. He was a State Representative of St. Clair County in 1911, and a delegate to the Democratic Convention for Underwood, and above all he was a friend to the farmers of the community. He was married to the former Nellie Drew Thompson. Mr. "Fall" had a younger brother, Pat Roberson, who has been a leader in church and civic work in the community. He is a former president of the Union State Bank of Pell City.

Cropwell was named after the Cropwell family who were early settlers.

On July 24, 1833, a postoffice was established at Coosa at Cropwell. It was located about a mile from Truss' Ferry. On November 15, 1834, the name was changed to Diana. The name was changed from Diana to Cropwell on October 29, 1837. The Cropwell postoffice was discontinued on July 25, 1866, but was re-established on June 10, 1867. The present location of the postoffice is 2.08 miles Southwest of the Southern Railroad tracks at Pell City. The names of the postmasters and the dates of their appointments are as follows:

James Roberson	November 24, 1833
R. H. Castleberry	February 19, 1835
John D. Fennel	October 20, 1837
Russel I. Allen	November 6, 1840
John Collins	September 29, 1843

John W. Jones	January 7, 1854
Amasa L. Bowden	April 10, 1860
T. I. Fowler	June 10, 1867
Mattison Hendricks	August 5, 1867
James R. Roberson	January 23, 1873
W.L. Dollar	January 20, 1898
William G. Sides	February 14, 1899
Hardie Jones	October 25, 1901
James P. Turner	March 20, 1907
Albert R. Jones	August 15, 1914
John B. Shurbet	October 20, 1915
Amanda C. Funderburg	December 13, 1928

Another little postoffice on what is now Cropwell, Route, was established on September 26, 1900, and discontinued in 1908. It was Fountainrun and was located in the Harmon settlement two miles west of the Coosa River and five miles north of Kelly Creek. Mr. James O. M. Hardwick was the only postmaster to serve this little postoffice.

Most of the early people of Cropwell were Baptist. They attended the Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church which was established in 1828. The Coosa Valley Baptist Church was established in 1840 and the Seddon Baptist Church was organized before the Civil War. Later, in 1888, the Cropwell Baptist Church was organized. Long before the Cropwell Baptist Church was organized and built, the community had its own Sunday School which was held in the Masonic building.

The very early settlers of Cropwell provided a school of some kind for their children. At first, the schools were taught in dwellings. The parents paid the teacher's salary and provided firewood for fuel. After Coosa Valley Church was built, it served as a schoolhouse. Mr. Owen Hardwick was one of the early teachers in that church. He taught in the late 1840's. A Mr. Brickhouse was teaching in the Coosa Valley Church during the Civil War when the Wilson Raiders came galloping up the valley road. One of the Yankees who rode ahead of the main band of raiders, pulled on his reins and stopped long enough to warn Mr. Brickhouse and to have him to dismiss school and hurry the children off home. In 1889, Cropwell built their own school. It was a two-story building located about a half mile from the middle of Cropwell. It was to this school that Mr. Roy Gibson came as principal in 1915. In 1918, a new school was built at Cropwell. Mr. Gibson remained in Cropwell until 1926. He had a well disciplined and orderly high school and was the most beloved principal that Cropwell ever had.

Cropwell has always been an agricultural community. Cotton has always been the principal crop. The Colemans, as early as the Civil War years, owned a steam gin. Part of Cropwell's cotton was ginned there. Part of it was ginned at Drake's Mill at Easonville and part of it was ginned at the old Laney horse-drawn gin. The Robersons began to operate a steam gin at Cropwell in 1888.

In 1840, John W. Jones, who came from Petersburg, Va. began to operate a business at Cropwell. This store later operated under the name of James R. Roberson Sons. Another successful business of Cropwell was a store operated before the Civil War by William T. Smith. It fell into decline after he left to fight in the Confederate army where he became a Colonel.

During the Civil War some of the Cropwell men served with distinction in the Confederate Army. In 1861, the Company of 10th Alabama Infantry Regiment was organized at Cropwell with Major J. O. Truss as it's captain. William T. Smith, a member of the outfit, won many promotions and rose to the rank of Colonel of the 10th Alabama Infantry Regiment. This regiment was engaged in about twenty-four battles during the Civil War.

The first United Daughters of the Confederacy Chapter in St. Clair County was organized at Cropwell on July 20, 1914. It was called the John W. Jones Chapter.

One would be negligent in writing a history of Pell City and vicinity if the pioneer, Ira Harmon was left out. Ira Harmon was born among the western foothills of the Great Smokey Mountains in Green County, Tennessee in 1826. When a child of six years, his parents, Lucinda Gann and Jacob Harmon moved to Talladega County, Alabama. Pioneer methods of travel are illustrated by a description of the move. The elder Harmons placed their family on a flat boat on the Nolichucky River, floated down this stream to the Holston River, and continued from the Holston to the Tennessee River. The latter stream was followed to a point near Chattanooga. From this point, the family was carried overland across the "divide" to the headwaters of the Oostanaula River. Another boat was built here and they floated down to Rome, Georgia, and thence down the Coosa River to Talladega County, where the Harmons settled and where Ira Harmon was reared. When quite a young man, he moved across the Coosa River into South St. Clair County, bought land, married Samira A. Payne and raised a family.

The Coosa Valley was rich in agricultural products before the days of railroads in this section. Ira Harmon gained his experience as a river pilot while floating these products down the Coosa River to market. When asked the date of his first trip, he could not remember but stated that on this trip when his boat was twelve miles north of Wetumpka at the "Devil's Stair Case" Miller's comet made its appearance, causing alarm among the crew, and on reaching Wetumpka the next day, the town was in commotion and excitement caused by the appearance of the comet. To those who have seen the Coosa River above Wetumpka, it is evident that no small degree of courage and judgment were required to conduct loaded boats with safety over these shoals. There are jutting cliffs projecting into the channel at many of the abrupt bends in the river, and if the boats were not steered clear of these menacing rocks, it meant destruction to craft and freight and perhaps the crew. These same projecting rocks produced giant whirlpools whose circling vortexes swallowed up everything that entered them. What was most dangerous of all were the hidden rocks in the channel of the stream whose location must be known to be avoided.

During the War of Session, coal from mines in St. Clair County was supplied to the

Confederate Arsenal at Selma. Most of this coal was mined by Ragland and Sims at a place now called Ragland, two miles west of the Coosa River. Part of it was mined by Crandle and Anderson at a place one mile west of Ragland. From these mines the coal was hauled to the river on wagons and there loaded on flat boats. Some of these boats were floated down the river to Yellow Leaf, now Wilsonville, and there the coal was transferred to railroad cars and shipped over the Selma, Dalton and Rome railroad to Selma. The greater number of the boats were floated down the Coosa River to the Alabama River and thence by Montgomery to Selma. Ira Harmon acted as pilot for these boats. It was in the face of difficulties that he supplied coal to the Confederate arsenal at Selma.

The mine operated by Ragland and Sims from 1861 to 1865 was not under the control of the Confederate government but their coal was sold at Montgomery and Selma. During the latter part of the war, Crandle and Anderson operated their mine under the supervision and control of the Confederate government. The labor at both mines was done chiefly by negro slaves, many of whom had been recently brought to that section as refugees from Kentucky and Tennessee. Negroes also constituted the crews for the boats which were made of sawed lumber and were fifty feet long, eighteen feet wide and thirty inches in depth. The amount of coal carried on each boat was from twenty to fifty-two tons. The trip down the river could be made only when the stream was swollen. On a trip down the river from two to eight boats were carried at the same time -- usually about five. Five men were required for each boat. Under favorable conditions, the trip from Ragland to Montgomery could be made in three days. Mr. Harmon stated that he had made the trip from Ragland to Wetumpka in a day and night. Sometimes it would require two weeks for the same trip. If weather conditions were unfavorable, the boats were tied up to the bank at night, and if there was wind or fog on the river, it was sometimes necessary to remain tied up several days. Winds gave much trouble especially if the boats were loaded with cotton. The time to go from Montgomery to Selma was two days and nights. On delivering the coal, the boats were sold and the return trip made from Selma back to the Coosa River by railroad. If the coal was sold in Montgomery,

the crews went on down the river to Selma to return from there by railroad. The price received for coal in Montgomery from 1861 to 1865 was one hundred to one hundred twenty-five dollars per ton. The price paid a pilot for his services on each trip during the war was one hundred dollars in Confederate money. The price paid before and after the war was as much as fifty dollars.

Ira Harmon's old home was at Fountainrun. Some of his direct descendants living in Pell City at the present time (1972) are J. N. Harmon, Wasson Harmon, Kenneth Tucker, Cecil P. Gray, Jr., Harmon Gray, James V. Gray, Elaine Gray Goodgame, Mary Gray Litty, and Martha Smith Lonergan.

This is just a chapter on the history of Pell City. Due to time for research, and space, so many things about the early citizens and history of our town have been left out. I apologize for this. We are obligated to Joe W. Kilgroe and Bettie Scott for their cooperation and help in compiling and writing this chapter.

History of Pell City and the surrounding area compiled by Mrs. James V. Gray in 1972 for the use of Mrs. Mattie Lou Crowe who is writing a history of St. Clair County.

PELL CITY VIES WITH ASHVILLE AS ST. CLAIR COUNTY'S CHIEF CENTER

Avondale Mill School Has a Fine Building and Football Team

by Frank Willis Barnett

Pell City was first incorporated under the general laws in 1890 by the Pell City Land and Iron Co. and in 1901 the town site was acquired by the Pell City Manufacturing Co. and a charter under the general laws obtained in 1902. The town was named for George H. Pell, the original promoter.

It is in the southeastern part of St. Clair County, 25 miles east of Birmingham. It was established as an industrial town on account of the coal and iron mines in the district. It is on the Southern Railway, the Seaboard Airline Railway, and was on the Birmingham and Alabama Railroad which connected Pell City and Talladega and was abandoned. It is also on the Bankhead Highway.

St. Clair County has two divisions, Ashville being in the northern division and Pell City in the southern, with court houses in both places. The topography of the county and almost impassable roads made it exceedingly difficult for those living on opposite sides of the mountain ranges to get to one another, nearly all train lines being routed by Birmingham.

County Officers Split

For this reason some of the county officers live at Pell City and some at Ashville. The sheriff and the circuit clerk, however are required to keep offices in both towns. The tax collector and the tax assessor, however only keep offices at Ashville. The county superintendent of education also resides at Ashville while the county farm agent lives at Pell City. The judge of probate makes his home in Ashville while the circuit clerk lives in Pell City as does the sheriff. It's quite a mix up when it comes to the town in which the county officers have their residences.

The county officers are: C. G. Atkins, judge of probate, his chief clerk, James M. Garrett, the former an Ashvillian, the latter a Pell Citian or whatever you call a man who lives in the city of that name. Mack Davis, circuit clerk has a chief deputy at Ashville, Sheriff J. A. Honnicutt is on the job at Pell City;

while T. R. Waverly, chief deputy, has charge in Ashville; M. W. McKinney, tax collector lives at Ashville; and F. M. Morris, tax assessor, resides at Ragland; R. M. Reeves, county agent, lives at Pell City; while Carl Q. Baxter, county superintendent of education, resides at Ashville.

Commissioners Scattered

The Board of Commissioners are also scattered. Ed Love lives at Pell City; M. L. Baggett at Whitney; A. L. Box at Ragland and R. T. Ashley at Ragland. The Judge of the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit, C. A. Steele and Woodson J. Martin both make Gadsden their home. A. T. Cox, president of the farm bureau lives at Ashville while W. Z. Smith, vice president, resides at Cropwell.

As we said before, it is a mix up and we are not sure that we haven't mixed them up a little more, but as a final say we say that if we lived in St. Clair County, we would have to have a date with any of the county officers without first having our man tied definitely at Ashville or Pell City. Finding a county officer in St. Clair is like play the old game "Thimble, thimble, who's got the thimble?"

The court house at Pell City is built on the site once occupied by an old pioneer, Abner W. Lacy, grandfather of Lieut. Governor Davis, now seeking that high office, governor of Alabama. Among the other early settlers at Pell City were Green G. Evans, John Truitt, and Marion Hazelwood, while the early history of the towns industrial and business life was connected with the Pell City Manufacturing Co. established in 1902 with a capital of \$750,000 having 23,000 ring spindles, 118 cards, 720 narrow looms, four boilers dye finish making denims. It continued for years to be the chief industry of Pell City. A few years back it was taken over by the Avondale Mills and is today furnishing by far the largest payroll in the town.

The Avondale Mills of Pell City have, like the other mills of the same name located in Birmingham, Sylacauga, Sycamore, Alexander City along with the mills at Eufaula, furnished the employees with good homes, schools, playgrounds, hospitals, nurseries, and kindergardens. T. H. Rennie, vice president, lives at Pell City, as

does the superintendent, J. T. Edwards. The outdoor overseers are C. S. Deason, J. F. Adams, T. Mungall, L. R. Thornburg, J. C. Meehan, P. S. Spruiell and J. F. Harmon while the indoor overseers are V. M. Champion, W. A. Turner, and R. J. Carlisle. The mill at present has 25,000 spindles and 742 looms and uses annually between 13,000 and 14,000 bales of cotton in the manufacture of denims. The mill has 165 houses and about 500 employees.

The Avondale school is housed in an attractive building with a number of well lighted classrooms, offices and a large auditorium. We were delighted to find so many window boxes filled with flowers in bloom. In the front of the building is an athletic field, while in the rear is a playground which is well shaded with a most attractive outdoor pavillion. We thought we had seen every kind of play apparatus on the playgrounds of the town and city school grounds in the state, but at the Avondale Mill School we saw our first "jungle gym" which seems to offer great pleasure to the little ones. Superintendent J. T. Edmunds said that when Donald Comer sent it down to him it looked like a lot of pipe for a plumbing job but following the specifications, he was finally able to make a most curious looking structure out of the many pipe lengths.

Homelike Teacherage

The teacherage, kindergarden and nursery, a long one story building facing the park, for homelikeness can't be beat. We wish to commend Avondale Mills for making the teachers in the mill school comfortable. The dining room is most attractive and the living room handsomely furnished. The kindergarden room is large and airy, and the nursery with its cribs filled with babies is enough to warm any mother's heart.

Miss M. L. Gunter is in charge of the teacherage and Mrs. T. N. Earman and Mrs. J. B. Embry are the kindergarden teachers. Miss Odell Jones is in charge of the nursery.

The Gertrude Comer Hospital is well located on a hill. It has 25 beds, offices,

dining room and operating rooms. Dr. R. A. Martin is physician in charge, assisted by Dr. Stitt. The nurses being Misses Elsie L. Dunn, Ada Mae Tankersly, Lois Deason, Pauline Rogers and Margaret Carroll.

Miss Iola Roberts is principal of the Avondale Mills School and she is assisted by Misses Alma Robards, Vicie Heflin, Margaret Camp, Claudine Payne and Gladys Ingle. Up and through the seventh grade is taught while the enrollment is 267.

The Avondale Mills Band has about 50 members and it and the orchestra of eight pieces is directed by George Gunthrope.

Mrs. J. D. Locke is president of the Women's Club; Mrs. L. R. Thornburg is president of the Jolly Girls Club, while C. S. Deason is president of the Avondale Mill Athletic Club. The school goes in for basketball and baseball.

Hugh Black, Principal

Hugh Black is principal of the Pell City High and the grammar school, the two having around 400 enrolled. In the high school the teachers are Mrs. N. P. Shockley, Misses Ruth Mize and Myrtle Adams and the music director is Miss Smith. Edwin Young is coach, assisted by J. A. Baswell.

The football team is made up of the following players: Otis Golden, J. W. Smith, Charley Ragland, Homer Singleton, Emeris Sisson, Edgard Pepper, Forest Luker, Joe Bukacek, Thomas Coleman, Walter Layton and Lester Rowe, while substitutes are Sam Masters, George Stine, Ray Skelton, Robert Beavers, Buddy Love, Joe Kilgroe, Preston Wadsworth, Harmon Frain, Cecil Reeves, Otis Lonergan, Louie Hesterly, Dalton Vaughan and Osmer Sims. The Pell City High is the only school in the county having a football team.

Gertrude Smith is president of the Live Wire Club and Margaret Johnson is secretary. Otis Golden is president of the 4 H club. J. L. Ragland is president of the board of trustees and Mrs. U. C. Martin, secretary.

The Rev. Claude Rogers is pastor, Baptist church; the Rev. R. E. Ellis, Methodist church; the Rev. C. Hinkle, Episcopal church; the Rev. D. F. Funderburg, Arbor Baptist church; the Rev. Mr. Hodges, Freewill Baptist church; and the Rev. F. H. Parr, Wesleyan Church. L. R. Thornburg is worshipful master of the Ben M. Jacobs Lodge of

Masons No. 642, J. W. Truitt, secretary, and Dr. U. C. Martin, treasurer.

Mayor Cogswell

Sumter Cogswell is mayor of Pell City; W. F. Smith is clerk; the policemen are Jim Renegar and R. C. Gravett. The board of aldermen are N. R. Shockely, Dr. U. C. Martin, W. L. Bramlett, Frank B. Embry and T. J. Abbott. Frank B. Embry is city attorney. The city owns its water works and the Alabama Power Company furnished light and power.

Here are the leading industries beside the Avondale Mills. The Coal City Cooperage Co., W. B. Lawley, president; the Walker County Lumber Co., R. G. Wilkins, manager, operating a planing mill, and the St. Clair Ice and Coal Co. There are a number of mills nearby bringing the lumber such as J. M. Florida, Barber Brothers, William Dixon, Arnold & Barber, J. T. Blackerby, Pruitt Lumber Co., London Gin Co. and J. T. Hazelwood, J. M. Savage and others. The Avondale Mills operate a gin and there are gins at Cropwell and Easonville.

Pell City has a number of up to date merchants carrying good stocks in well built and arranged stores.

Capital of \$35,000

The Union State Bank has a capital of \$35,000; surplus \$10,000 and undivided profits, \$4,244. T. H. Rennie is president; Pat Roberson, vice president; J. Fall Roberson, vice president; H. Vandevander, cashier; Adell Hardwick, assistant cashier, and Sumter Cogswell, Chairman of the board made up of the officers mentioned with the exception of Adell Hardwick, and the following: Frank B. Embry, McLane Tilton, Jr. C. B. Alverson and J. W. Moore.

The Pell City Bank and Trust Company has capital surplus and profits amounting to \$34,250 and deposits, \$163,661.18. The officers are O. L. Ekwurzel, president, Frank B. Embry and W. A. Savage, vice presidents; H. V. Jones, cashier and James B. Embry and Willie Jones, assistant cashiers. The directors being O. L. Ekwurzel, Frank B. Embry, W. A. Savage, T. J. Harmon, W. D. Carreker, E. L. Love, T. Mungall, W. T. Starnes, H. V. Jones and J. F. Carreker.

In thinking of Pell City, one must think of the district for Eden, Cropwell and

Easonville are all near by. There is a fine airport between it and Cropwell.

In thinking of Pell City we always think of Tom Rennie, the Rotarian who for many years has come into Birmingham to attend the meetings of the Birmingham Rotary Club. Then in thinking of Pell City it is hard to think about it without McLane Tilton, the picturesque personality who was known all over the state, a man of rare culture and travel and a delightful companion who for some years has been living at Charlottesville, Virginia, being the treasurer of the Alumni Association, University of Virginia, is greatly missed in Alabama in banking, political, social and literary circles as he wielded a facile and graceful pen as an editor.

Missed Frank Embry

We greatly missed seeing our good friend, Frank B. Embry, who was out of town as we wanted to get from him the last pronouncement of the wise old birds who sit in cases at "Wisdom Corner" a corner set apart for them on the courthouse lawn beneath the trees where politics, religion and business are discussed when the weather is good.

We also missed meeting our friend J. W. Moore formerly of Coal City whose hospital homeplace have often found pleasure and comfort but we did get to see our old Baptist "buddy" James M. Garrett, a man who has attended as many Baptist associations in St. Clair as any other living man and has attended and taken part in more all day singings than anybody in the county, dead or alive. He helped us on this story for which we give thanks. We called at the office of the Progress and found the force busy. This weekly was established more than a score of years ago. The thing however which we most missed was the state fox hunters convention which was just over. We got to see Pat Robertson for must a minute when we would like to have "visited" with him for a season for no one has ever been guest in a Robertson home will ever forget it.

PELL CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY
PELL CITY, ALABAMA

HISTORY OF PELL CITY

Pell City, Alabama, is situated among the beautiful mountains and fertile valleys of East Central Alabama, at an elevation of about 700 feet, there is no more healthy spot anywhere, "where nature has assembled the interdependent materials, Corn, Cotton, Coal, Iron and other minerals, in the finest natural workshop known to man, the mountain country of the South, carrying with it the energetic climate of the North." Pell City is located 35 miles east of Birmingham on the Coosa River. The Southern Railroad gives through Pullman accommodations to Washington via Atlanta and to New York and the east; going west, Pullman accommodations to Birmingham, Memphis, Kansas City, Texas and California. The Seaboard Air Line Railroad, before its liquidation several years ago, gave excellent service to Birmingham, Gadsden, Atlanta, and Eastern and Northern points, both freight and passenger. Auto Bus lines operate on regular schedules, giving excellent passenger and freight service, East, West, North, and South.

Pell City has several miles of black topped streets and its streets are lighted by electricity with a whiteway ten blocks long.

Pell City has everything that is required to make her citizens prosperous, happy and contented. There cannot be found a more orderly law abiding and moral citizenship than Pell City possesses. Pell City is a delightful place of residence all the year round.

The climate is faultless. The temperature in mid-winter seldom falls to 20 above zero and in the summer time rarely above 95 degrees. Cases of prostration from heat are unknown. Owing to the heavily wooded mountains, there are nearly always refreshing breezes during the summer months, and the nights are generally cool enough to require covering.

The present town of Pell City is due to the vision of foresight of one man, Sumter Cogswell, who upon seeing the location for the first time, was so impressed with the beauty of it and the natural advantages possessed by the location that he immediately began using his talents, his energy toward the promotion of a modern city. The first town charter was granted the Pell City Land Company on the 28th day of October 1887, its incorporators being, John B. Knox, T. S. Plowman, E. H. Rogers, J. A. Savage, John Postell and Judge John W. Inzer. The town site was surveyed, streets were laid out and a few houses built. During the year 1887 three railroads, the East and West, The Coosa Valley Railroad and The Southern Railroad built a joint depot, a two-story structure located about where the annex of the St. Clair Motor Company now stands. The East and West Railroad, later sold to the famous New York family of Pells. This is where the town of Pell City derives its name. At the time the railroad station was built the only other building in town was the Cornett Hotel, located where the home of H. C. Gravette now stands. Mr. Sumter Cogswell, at that time in the employ of the Home Life Insurance Company as General Agent. In the regular course of business Mr. Cogswell went to Talladega, Alabama, to establish an agency. Being unable to make train connections at Pell City, he was forced to spend the night there. This was in the spring of 1890. Being so impressed with the location, for a town site, he asked who the town belonged to and was told that he was to see Mr. Tom Plowman at Talladega, Alabama. Mr. Plowman informed him that the town belonged to the Pell City Land Company, of which he (Mr. Plowman) was president. Mr. Cogswell secured a two weeks option, and sold the Pell City Land Company to the Pell City Iron And Land Company of which Milford W. Howard, J. H. Barr, T. S. Plowman, G. N. Henderson and General Wilder Incorporators. $\frac{1}{4}$ for $\frac{1}{4}$ acres land.

50,000 400

The Pell City Iron And Land Company had the town site re-surveyed, streets laid out and several houses built. This company was instrumental in bringing to Pell City the Hercules Pipe Company, the first soil pipe plant to be erected in the South. At this time the young city seemed to be on a prosperity basis. W. G. Evans was the first mayor. A store was being operated by Mr. Lindsey, where Jess Williamson's blacksmith shop now stands. The postoffice was located where the Martin Building in the rear of the Pell City Drug Company now stands. A saloon was doing business where Hill grocery company stands at present. A Mr. Flanders was the proprietor of the saloon. In the panic of 1893-94-95 The Pell City Iron and Land Company was forced into receivership as was the Hercules Pipe Company. The Pipe shops were moved to Anniston, Alabama, which city now enjoys the reputation of being the largest center for soil pipe manufacturing in the world.

Mr. Cogswell had heard of the growth of the town, but did not know how disastrously the panic had affected its fortunes. In passing through Pell City in 1901, Mr. Cogswell naturally looked from the window of the train to see what progress had been made in the place he sold 10 years before. He was surprised to see that there was not a building to be seen from the train, and at the deserted appearance of the town. Upon arrival in Atlanta, he communicated with Mr. Floman, and asked what was the matter with the town? Mr. Floman, replied, telling him of the towns misfortunes and its ups and downs, and also said the town was for sale. Mr. Cogswell decided to buy. The price being agreed upon, the deeds were sent to the Atlanta National Bank for examination to title. Before payment, R. M. Smith and Judge Herring of Ashville, Alabama, examined the deeds and pronounced them good. Mr. Cogswell, then paid for, and secured the title to the town site, with the exception of the holdings of the Hercules Pipe Company. Louis J. Brandies 50 acres and Boston associate Justice of the US Supreme Court.

At this time there was only 45 people living within the co-operate limits of Pell City. Seven of these moved away, and in September 1901, Mr. Cogswell brought his family of five, to live in Pell City making the total population 40. At

At this time the town had grown up in woods and shrubbery. There was not a country road leading into or out of the town in any direction. There was nothing for the new owner to do, except promote some industry, which was the Pell City Manufacturing Company, now the Avondale Mills Company. In 1902 Mr. Cogswell went to Boston, and bought from Hon. Louis D. Brandeis, as trustee, all of the Hercules Pipe Company holdings in Pell City. At this time, an opening of a new era for the south, boom times were in evidence in all sections of dixie, particularly in Alabama, and in Birmingham, and the country adjacent to Birmingham. Steel and iron and coal in the red clay hills of Alabama was changing the old order of industry. Instead of depending all together on agricultural products for a living, well trained engineers and chemists were pointing ores the way for the erection of giant plants, utilizing the raw metals and ores found in native hills of Alabama. Thus bringing an influx of population and capital from all parts of country.

(Sold to Avondale Mills in the Fall of 1919) Mr. Cogswell incorporated the Pell City Realty Company, donating to it 150 acres of land, and the Mills Spring which is at present site of the Avondale Mills. The cornerstone of the mill was laid in August, 1902 upon its completion in 1903 about 1500 more inhabitants moved to the town. This factory was built by the Howard-Bullock Manufacturing Company and The Draper Company of Hopedell Mass. and is now said to be the finest and most modern textile plant in the world. The town was now coming into its own. The first school was taught in a building in front of where Dr. Claud Martins house now stands.

Miss Laddie Griffith was the teacher. Zac Hazlewood operated a store where Steeds Market now stands. Col. M. B. Spears, Mayor of Pell City, reorganized the council by elections of aldermen. He was followed in 1902 by W. J. Purdy, who served in 1903 and in 1904. In 1903, Dr. H. A. Martin, a young physician came to Pell City to make his home and began the general practice of medicine. Dr. Martin has been instrumental in the promotion of several sub-divisions, and has been of its most public spirited and leading citizens, contributing much to the welfare and the upbuilding of the city.

In 1901 an election was held to locate a courthouse on the south side of Backbone Mountain, which is the geographical divide of St. Clair County. Pell City, Eden, Coal City and Riverside entered into competition to have the courthouse located in their respective towns. Pre-election activities were hot. A heated campaign was waged by each fraction. In the election, held November 6, 1901, Pell City won by about 600 majority over all, Sumter Cogswell then donated Block 26, for the erection of the courthouse and jail. County court is held here each month, Judge N. W. Forman of Ashville being the presiding officer of the county at the present time. The home of probate Judge Almer Lacey was located on this present court house site.

Home of Col. Spears was a log house. A term of circuit court is held here twice each year. Judge Rayburn of Gadsden and Judge Disque of Gadsden, being the present judges of this circuit. The peace officers of the county at the present time are: Ira Davis, Sheriff, R. E. Alverson, Pell City, Chief Deputy. Since the location of the courthouse here, naturally several attorneys made Pell City their home. The leading members of the local bar at the present are Frank B. Embry, W. T. Starnes and W. A. Weaver, Edwin Foliaday.

As the town thrived more stores continued to locate in Pell City.

Mr. H. B. Guy, who for years previously, had done business in a large department store, located at Eden, removed his business to Pell City. At that time Mr. Guy's store was the largest and most modern store between Birmingham and Anniston. During the year 1902, several county roads were opened up, among them being one going Northwest from Pell City, connecting with the Old Vandergrift Road. During the next year, road building continued, one going from Pell City, due North to Coal City and one from Pell City to the Coosa Valley Section. As the town grew the need was felt keenly for modern and up to date church and school buildings. Mr. and Mrs. Cogswell donated land for church sites to the Methodist, Baptist and Episcopal denominations and also land for church sites to the colored denominations. Land was donated for the site to of the present high school building and Negro school.

At about the time the court house at Pell City was finished and sessions of court were in full swing, a certain clique of citizens in the northern section of the county went before the State Legislature and asked that the sessions of the county and circuit court at Pell City be discontinued. The legislature abolished the court here and the Supreme Court upheld their decision. The court was abolished in 1905, when Judge John Pelham, was the circuit judge and J. L. North was sheriff. The abolished court was of course a serious setback to the young town. Business felt a sharp decline. The pride of the citizens was hurt. Showing a spirit typical of their pioneering ancestors, the people of the southern section of the county court re-established at Pell City. The campaign waxed arm. The people of the northern section endeavored to prove that the re-establishment of the court here was too expensive to the people of the county. The people of the southern section pointed out that with only one court in the

county, the docket was so crowded that litigants, lawyers, witnesses, judges, peace officers and anyone attending court from this side of the mountain was forced to make the trip to Asheville for several terms of court before their case finally came before the judge and jurors. In those days this was quite a trip. With the only means of travel, going to Asheville one had to make the arduous trip over the mountain, or going by train, had to make the trip by the way of Birmingham and Whitacy. John W. Moore of Pell City announced himself as a candidate for the state legislature from St. Clair County and pledged himself to vote to have the state constitution amended so that the same platform. The election was held in November, 1906 and John W. Moore and E. D. Hamner were elected to the legislature and senate respectively. The legislature and senate of Alabama met in January 1907 and the constitution of the state was amended, making branch courts legal. The Municipal code of 1907, was enacted by this session of the state senate and legislature, and was adopted by the town council of Pell City in 1908. After the re-establishment of the court here, Pell City began its real development.

Prominent lawyers came here to make this city their home. The leading members of the bar during this period were, W. A. Starnes, Captain J. Gardner Greene, who later organized and led the Pell City Guard in France during the World War, and was killed in action "over there." H. M. Smith, who moved his family from Asheville to Pell City in 1903. In 1904, The Pell City Hardware Company was organized, its officers being John W. Moore, President, R. M. Alverson, Claude B. Alverson and Hardie A. Cornett. The need for a bank was keenly felt. Sumter Cogswell, Melane Tilton, and others organized the bank in St. Clair County and located it where M. L. Lewis and Son Grocery now stands.

Its officers were the following: Sumter Cogswell, President, Frank H. Lathrop, Vice-President, McLane Tilton, J. Mautz, Cashier, Pickens Pearson, Assistant cashier. The Bank's directors consisted of the following: Sumter Cogswell, F. H. Lathrop, W. N. Maddox, W. S. Foran, J. W. Moore, W. T. Brown, J. Hall Robertson, Jas L. Herring, A. J. Draper, E. Mautz and McLane Tilton, Jr. Dr. R. A. Martin, established the Pell City Drug Company. The Griffis and Saylor's General Merchandise Store was located here in 1906. Leroy Truitt operated the first furniture store in the building where Cohen's Store is now J. H. Willingham opened the first embalming and undertaking establishment here in 1910. In 1908, T. H. Rennie, an experienced mill man came here as president of the company. E. A. Thompson, was the superintendent. 150 acres of barren land had been turned into a giant industrial plant. A model city had been built around the plant.

The automobile industry progressed, and competition between manufactures, brought prices in the range of the pocket book of the working people, the need was felt for more and better roads. Senator John Hollis Bankhead of Jasper, Alabama, for many years the most enthusiastic advocate of good roads in the United States Senate, had long visioned a hard surfaced road from the National Capitol at Washington to the Pacific Coast. He finally succeeded in having a bill passed through the National Congress providing for this highway. Each state through which the highway passed was to furnish part of the funds needed to build and maintain the road and the federal government was to supply the rest of the capital needed. When the bill was passed, influential men in Pell City and St. Clair County went to work to have the Road pass through Pell City. Naturally there was keen opposition from property holders in other parts of the county. Delegations from several parts of the county went before the state legislature in Montgomery, and the Congress at Washington.

Frank B. Mabry, local attorney, was at that time St. Clair County's representative in the state legislature. With the help of Sumter Cogswell, W. A. Starnes, L. Cook and several other influential men, Mr. Mabry finally succeeded in having the highway routed through Pell City here this of course, was a great help to the business men and property owners in this section. The coming of the good roads brought other means of transportation in addition to the excellent railroad service that Pell City enjoys. Huge truck and bus lines routed their trucks and buses through here. At the present time the road is being paved from Pell City to Leeds and when this is completed about July, 1933, The Bankhead Highway from Birmingham to Atlanta will be completely hard-surfaced. This will bring Birmingham about one hour from here by highway and Atlanta about three and one half hours ride. The Bankhead Highway will be one of the main arteries of traffic from all parts of the country.

For the past seventy five years the discovery of oil in any section of the United States, particularly in the southwestern states in the Alleghany Mountain section of the eastern states, have led to "Booms" and land settlements that have caused the migration of thousands of people to these gas and oil sections, and the making of towns overnight. For many years, men who are in position to know have said that there was gas and oil in St. Clair County, particularly near Pell City, and running west by the Eden to Cooke Springs. However, nothing much was done about this until 1929. Mr. J. D. Linthicum, a geologist from Texas made an extensive survey over this county. In his report, he states that all the geological formations of the Appalachian Range exist here. In the Appalachian Province, are located the richest crude oil and gas sections of the United States. This includes the states of, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia and the northeastern part of Tennessee. In his survey, Mr. Linthicum, found the oil and gas in many parts of the county that points to the present of gas

Additional findings in the survey also showed the presence of all the minerals that are to be found where oil and gas is found such as Bauxite, Kaolin, Barite, Copper, Paint Base Clays, Asphalt and outcroppings that showed a possibility of lead. After their report of the survey was made public, naturally the enthusiasm of the people of county ran high. Several major oil companies were interested and contemplated moving in machinery and drilling here, but due to the unsettled business conditions, no drilling has been done up to the present time. However, several of the major oil companies are interested in the possibility of oil and gas in this section, and will beyond a doubt, move machinery here, and drill, as soon as the conditions of the gas and oil business warrant it.

One of the greatest steps that the people of Pell City have made toward the building of a modern city, and one of the most progressive items that have featured the rapid growth of this city from a cross roads village to one of the most habitable places of residence in the south was the erection of a modern, city owned, waterworks system, on May 10, 1926, during the administration of Hon. Frank B. Embry, as Mayor, Sumter Cogswell, serving at that time on the Board of Aldermen, of the town of Pell City, introduced an ordinance, for the purpose of submitting to the qualified voters of the town, whether or not they will authorize the mayor and town council to issue bonds for the purpose of erecting waterworks and this ordinance was unanimously adopted June 21, 1926. Mr. Robert L. Totten, a consulting engineer was employed, and after a careful survey of all the available sources water supply, recommended Dunlap Springs, about one and one half 1 1/2 miles airline from Pell City, as the logical source of water supply, Mayor Embry, was authorized by the town council to start whatever legal proceedings he deemed necessary for the purpose of vesting the title of this property in the town of Pell City.

The bonds were bought by Steiner Brothers, a financial house of Birmingham. Then pumps and a chlorinator were purchased, a transmission line was built from Dunlap Springs to Pell City, and the present, modern, municipally owned water works system became a thing of reality. As the years progress, we find in 1933, that through the vision and foresight of a few dauntless men, that Pell City, the country hamlet forty six years ago, is now a modern city in every respect. The chief resources upon which Pell City relies for its future growth are coal, iron, wood and cotton. Pell City is located in the center of the Brown Hematite Iron Ore District of Alabama. The south holds the reserve forest lands of the United States. Lumber can be bought cheaper here than either in the west or north. Pell City is a good cotton market and there is no better place in the world for cotton mills. Pell City is located in the center of the industrial development of Alabama, with Birmingham 35 miles west, Gadsden 40 miles north, Anniston 28 miles East and Talladega 21 miles south. Pell City is about the center of these growing and thriving cities and Pell City as ever natural advantage of any of them, with the additional great advantage of the Coosa River. None of the cities above named, except Gadsden are situated on a River, and with the completion of locks on the Coosa River, which is assured in the near future, Pell City will grow by leaps and bounds, and will assume her natural place among the thriving cities of industrial Alabama. Ten thousand bales of cotton are raided annually within a radius of ten miles of Pell City, producing a by-product of 5000 tons of cotton seed. The cheapest and best steaming coal in Alabama is mined at Coal City, only five miles distant. The coal mines are on the Seaboard Airline Railway, which has its terminus at Pell City, St. Clair County, has a population of over 23000, 80 per cent of which are white, therefore, the best native labor can be had in abundance, and at very

reasonable wages. Pell City, with her invigorating and health giving climate, with her competing lines of railroad, iron, coal, lumber and cotton, presents the ideal place and opportunity for the building of a city of cotton, iron, clay and lumber industries making a complete chain of industries from the raw material to the finished product.

Comfortable homes have been erected for the employees, where rents, electric light, water and fuel were furnished at a nominal rate.

The company established a school in the Hill Village, in fact, everything to make the employees happy and content, was done. Industry sprang up in the Hill section, mercantile establishments, markets, barber shops, shoe shops. Places of recreation, Athletic activities, baseball, basketball etc., were encouraged by the officials of the company.

With the advent of the automobile, old roads were repaired and new ones built. The principal one, known as the Pell City Cut Off of The Bantthead Highway NR 73 United States Ala NR 4 from Pell City, to Anniston was built. Before this road was built, to go from Pell City to Anniston, the traveler had to go by the way of Talledega. The road from Pell City to Birmingham, by the way of Leeds was built. T

The first automobile Garage was started in 1913 E. D. Love was the proprietor, and he started business where Tom's Junk Yard now stands. His garage was quickly followed by a more modern one, built by Claude Hays, Julian DeGaris and John Wade in the building were Alex Anders Garage is operating at the present time. Insurance agencies were established. The post office was moved to its present location. The school were raised to the grade of a high school, and was accredited by the State Department of Education. A handsome and attractive city hall was built. The town took on all the characteristics of a thriving city. The Pell Realty Company continued in active promotion of the town.