

## MARGARET, ACMAR, WHITE'S CHAPEL

The history of the development of Margaret, Acmar, and White's Chapel is simply the history of the development of Alabama Fuel and Iron Company in St. Clair County.

Alabama Fuel and Iron Company was organized in 1905 by Col. Henry F. DeBardleben and was then known as Alabama Fuel and Steel Company. Colonel DeBardleben, was the grandson of Daniel Pratt, a pioneer developer of Iron furnaces in Alabama. The city of Prattville was named for Daniel Pratt.

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It was in 1908 that Margaret was built to provide homes for those men who were to manage and operate the mines and who were to dig the coal. The village was named for Mrs. Charles F. DeBardleben, whose husband, the son of Colonel Henry DeBardleben, was vice-president of the new company.

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It was at Acmar that the company built its central power and washer plants.

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For a number of years the mines in these areas produced an annual output of one million tons of coal. There was never any work stoppage caused by labor difficulties.

The development of Diesel locomotives and the increased use of natural gas so curtailed the use of steam coal that in November 1950, Alabama Fuel and Iron Company closed its mines and set out to liquidate all its assets.

By C. C. Garrison

# TOWN OF MARGARET

MARGARET, ALABAMA 35112

HISTORY

OF THE

QUARTER CENTURY

CLUB

OF

ALABAMA FUEL & IRON COMPANY

ORGANIZED FEBRUARY, 1935

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This Story is dedicated to  
COL. HENRY F. DeBARDELEBEN  
Died December 6, 1910

Originator of the  
Alabama Fuel & Iron Company

He was Alabama's greatest developer and creator of pay rolls, as well as being a poor man's friend. He was courageous as a lion and gentle as a woman; possessed a far seeing vision, equalled only by a prophet. His recreation was work to the very end of his life.

CHAS. F. DeBARDELEBEN

The originator of the Quarter Century Club. Through courage, determination and fairness he became a great leader; creating admiration and love of his fellow workmen.

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Col. DeBardeleben began his activities in the Coal and Iron Industries of this state in the year 1872. Up to this time he had devoted his whole time and attention to the manufacture of cotton gins at Prattville, Ala., being the active operating head of the Gin Factory of his father-in-law, Mr. Daniel Pratt. In the manufacture of cotton gins it was necessary to have pig iron, which prompted Mr. Pratt to manufacture his iron, and as result he purchased certain coal and iron ore lands and erected the old Oxmoor furnaces. Shortly after the completion of these furnaces Mr. Pratt died, and the responsibility of the Pratt estate fell on the shoulders of Col. DeBardeleben, then a young man, who was married to Mr. Pratt's only child. From this forced responsibility of managing coal and iron properties he expanded and made a wonderful success, not only in developing several properties and the City of Bessemer, Ala., but in doing so acquired quite a large fortune. The panic of 1892 did to Col. DeBardeleben what it did to many others in depriving him of his worldly possessions. However, this did not deter him from continuing his natural instinct to develop and create payrolls. He acquired his second fortune, and this was lost in a brown ore endeavor in Georgia.

At this time Col. DeBardeleben was in the neighborhood of sixty years of age, he having more knowledge of the mineral resources of Alabama than any man in the state at that time or since. This knowledge enabled him to select undeveloped coal lands in St. Clair and Shelby Counties and acquire favorable leases for a long period of time. These properties were presented by Col. DeBardeleben to Mr. J. M. Overton, of Nashville, Tenn., who was induced to join him in developing them for production of coal, having in mind two large customers for these coals, one being the Central of Georgia Railway Company

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Mr. Charles F. DeBardleben, then a young man, the second son of Col. H. F. DeBardleben was employed by these gentlemen to actively manage the affairs of the Company.

After the organization of the Alabama Fuel & Steel Company, the Central of Georgia Railway Company, having no coal mines on their rails and necessarily having to pay freight on the coal consumed by the railroad and steamships, purchased the properties on which Margaret is located and part of the acreage worked by the Acmar mines, and made a long time lease with the new coal company to develop coal mines on this property and agreed to purchase their requirements of coal from the coal company. The properties leased in Shelby County consisted of a large acreage carrying the Helena Seam, on which the old Acton mines were developed, and the L. & N. Railroad not only built a spur line from their main line at Helena to these Acton mines, a distance of about eight miles, but also bought a large percentage of the coal from these mines for their own use. The Central of Georgia also had to build a spur line from their main line at Henry Ellen to Margaret, a distance of about eleven miles. Both of these spur lines were built without any out lay of money by the coal company, this being another evidence of the trading ability of Col. H. F. DeBardleben. These two spur lines combined cost approximately \$600,000.00.

There were two mines immediately developed at Margaret, Nos. 1 and 2, on the Harkness Seam, and two mines developed at Acton, Nos. 1 and 2, on the Helena Seam. The Harkness Seam at Margaret has several partings and in order to make the coal merchantable it had to be washed, and the Alabama Fuel & Steel Company was the first coal company to wash coal for the commercial market. The coal produced at Acton was of such nature that it did not require washing and was of such high grade it drew a premium over other coals produced in the Cahaba Field.

The Company continued with just these two operations until 1908, at which time the property on which the Acmar mines are now located was acquired by Col. H. F. DeBardleben through a purchase by him from the Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Company, and this tract of land was leased to the Alabama Fuel & Steel Company; but in order to have sufficient capital to develop the mines at Acmar and build the Colgate washer the Company had to increase its capitalization, and this increased capital was acquired from New York gentlemen, among them being Mr. V. Everit Macy and Mr. Jas. C. Colgate, who have never parted with any of their original holdings, but on the other hand have added additional stock.

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At the time of the reorganization the new company took the name of Alabama Fuel & Iron Company, and the No. 1 Acmar mine was developed and a spur track built by the Central of Georgia Railway Company from the Margaret Branch to Acmar, a distance of approximately three miles, as well as all of the washer and yard tracks at Colgate, without any capital being furnished by the coal company, which was the last large transaction made by Col. H. F. DeBardleben for the company. He died just as this development was being well started, and the entire responsibility of the company then fell on Mr. Chas. F. DeBardleben, who although only had the title of Vice-President and General Manager was the active head of the company, and later succeeded as President Mr. J. M. Overton, who met an untimely death in an automobile accident.

In 1921 the Central of Georgia Railway Company, through the efforts of Mr. Chas. F. DeBardleben, was induced to build a spur from McCombs to what is known as Overton, a distance of about ten miles, and Overton Nos. 1 and 2 mines were developed. These mines continued operation until August, 1934, at which time the men who were employed there, notwithstanding they were told repeatedly that these mines were being operated at a dead loss simply to provide work for them, decided to follow off false gods and break a long record of twenty-seven years of this company in not having any labor disturbances, in becoming affiliated with the United Mine Workers, at which time these mines were closed and are still closed.

Our company has steadily grown, having our coals well established under their own trade names--Margaret, Acmar and Acton, until the year 1935 it attained the distinction of being the largest commercial coal producer in the State.

These coals are mined from lands that were condemned by several coal experts as being unworkable. Old Acton produced approximately 5,000,000 tons; New Acton has produced approximately 2,000,000 tons, Margaret approximately 11,000,000 tons and Acmar approximately 9,000,000, or a total of approximately 27,000,000 tons, and all operations except Old Acton are good for many more years production. This demonstrates the sound judgment of Col. H. F. DeBardleben in pronouncing these properties as profitable mining operations, and as a result has created homes for many families in most attractive mining communities; our communities being entirely different in appearance and living conditions from the ordinary mining camp in that our people take pride in the appearance of their homes and surroundings, as well as their conduct.

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Our company, I am sure, can boast of having more men working for it over a long period of years than any coal company in the state. In recognition of this great number of long service employees our President conceived the idea in the early part of 1935 of organizing what is known as the Quarter Century Club, composed of eighty-one (81) charter members, these employes having worked continuously for the company from twenty to thirty-one years. Many of these members have sons employed by the company who have never worked for any other company. Through the generosity of our President, Mr. Chas. F. DeBardeleben, each member of the club, both white and colored, is presented with a check for \$5.00 each month. Each member feels a great pride in belonging to this club, and that it is quite an honor to work for the best company in existence for this length of time, making them eligible for membership in this honorary club. The club expects to meet once or twice a year and welcome any new members who may become eligible for membership.

The formation of this Quarter Century Club, and the good derived from it, both financially and socially, is just one of the many good deeds of the company's President, Mr. Chas. F. DeBardeleben for his employes. The names of the members of the club and their occupation appear later in this brief history.

Since the company was formed the employes have been encouraged to attend welfare meetings monthly, where any employe may make known any complaint he might have and receive satisfactory consideration of his complaint. These meetings are held at each division monthly, having separate meetings for white and colored employes. During the entire history of the company there has not been any friction or race trouble, as each race is required to conduct its affairs on the same high plane, but separately. This is probably the only company in the entire country whose employes, white or colored, may carry any just grievance to any official of the company and have same adjusted to their entire satisfaction.

In addition to these monthly welfare meetings, the officials of the company, including their wives and daughters, meet each month at one of the divisions for inspecting the properties, having luncheon, and a business meeting. These are known as staff meetings, and are also attended by representatives of the employes for the purpose of hearing reports from the company and to make any suggestions they think proper for the improvement of their conditions and welfare. These monthly staff meetings have done much toward cementing the good feeling which has always existed between the company and its employes. This feeling of loyalty has been very plainly demonstrated during the past two years. While all other companies were having labor troubles and strikes the Alabama Fuel & Iron Company did not lose a day's work from any kind of labor disturbance, mining and shipping more coal while all other companies were closed by strikes than it has in years, and this has been the case through all periods of labor troubles and strikes since the company was organized in 1905.

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The company has gained many customers by being able to ship coal when it is wanted, which proves to all buyers that they can depend on getting coal of the best grade, at any time when ordered, from the Alabama Fuel & Iron Company, thus giving our employes more work than those with other companies.

This good work with the best of wages, and the most comfortable homes at the cheapest rate of rent, and pleasant surroundings, make the people of the Alabama Fuel & Iron Company the happiest and most contented people to be found anywhere in the entire country. They have more of the comforts of life, and are more self-sustaining than any people of any other company. No other company does so much for the welfare of its employes, and not a single man has failed to stand up for the company and show his appreciation during the hardships and troubles of the year just ended.

All these good advantages that both the company and its employes enjoy are directly attributable to but one thing, the fellow feeling and the exercise of the Golden Rule by our leader, Mr. Chas. F. DeBardleben. There is no other industrial leader who has the interest of his employes more at heart or does so much in every way possible for their welfare as does this good man.

We, the employes of the Alabama Fuel & Iron Company, feel that there is no other company or any other leader as good as ours. He feels that he is one of us, and does not fail on any and all occasions to affiliate and enter into our lives and welfare. Through his vision of anticipating the many hardships that were in store for us as a result of the depression, he conceived the idea of home production of food stuffs, and as a result of this none of us have been forced to accept charity from any outside agency, as has been the case with employes of other companies throughout the nation.

In addition to the \$5.00 per month given each member of this Quarter Century Club, as a token of appreciation of their long service, each member has been given a gold badge signifying their membership, which is a badge of distinction and can be handed down to future generations as evidence of having been a faithful and loyal employe for the period of years specified. There is an insignia on this badge signifying friendly relations existing between laborer and employer. No man can desert, without just cause, a friend of twenty years standing to take on as a substitute a man of short acquaintance and untried sincerity. I therefore feel that the membership of this club stands as a unit to at all times protect and defend the giver of this badge against all enemies.

I deem it a privilege to have written this brief history and description of our Quarter Century Club, and trust I will be one of its members the remainder of my active life. Naturally any member who severs his connection with the company automatically severs his membership in the club.



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We have lost three members since the organization of this club, two having severed their connection with the company and one through death, the two lost by severance being Mr. R. M. L. Burt and Harry Lyons, colored, and the one by death Mr. W. S. Sloan. In the death of Mr. Sloan we have sustained a great loss, as he was not only a most efficient Peace Officer but was a gentlemen under any and all circumstances, and added materially to the morale of the community in which he lived, as well as taking a part in all civic matters. We have gained several new members since the club was organized by having served their requisite number of years, which gives us at the present time a total membership of 90, a complete list of the membership being attached hereto.

This is our first anniversary of the Quarter Century Club. Our first meeting for organizing the club was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Chas. H. Shepherd, Jr. in Acmar, where we enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Shepherd, being served with delightful refreshments, and brought together those of us who seldom are brought together in a body, practically the entire white membership of the club, accompanied by their wives, being present. We find ourselves meeting again in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Shepherd; however, this meeting is given by Mr. Chas. F. DeBardleben. It is the greatest satisfaction to look into many of the same faces this time as at our original meeting, which I hope will prove the case in many of the succeeding meetings, resulting in our friendship for our fellowmen and our company growing each year.

Respectfully,

R. W. BAIN, Historian.

January 22, 1936

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## WHITE MEMBERS OF QUARTEL CENTURY CLUB

Name	Date Service Began	Occupation	Present Occupation
T. R. Akridge	May 1913	Miner	Mine Foreman
R. W. Bain	Mar. 1908	Tipple Man	Cashier
A. J. Bradshaw	Aug. 1914	Laborer	Mine Foreman
Ulric Brandt	Jan. 1914	Laborer	Asst. Electrician
Marshall Brasher	Sept. 1907	Blacksmith helper	Safety Man
E. F. Brown	Jan. 1913	Miner	Miner
Borden Burr	Nov. 1907	Attorney	Counsel
A. B. Crane	Aug. 1909	Mechanic helper	Engineer
R. F. Culvahouse	Mar. 1910	Store Manager	Purchasing Agent
Chas. F. Debardeleben	June 1905	Gen. Manager	President
P. L. Dryer	May 1905	Engineer	Chief Engineer
W. S. Forman	Sept. 1914	Casualty Manager	Casualty Manager
W. P. Frazier	June 1912	Saw Mill Hand	Engineer
W. W. Fulghum	Jan. 1911	Auditing Dept.	Sec. & Treas.
Art Fulmer	Sept. 1915	Laborer	Carpenter
A. J. Garrison	Aug. 1909	Miner	Miner
Bert Glidewell	Oct. 1914	Miner	Fire Boss
W. T. Glover	Sept. 1913	School Prin.	School Prin.
Ed. Griffin	Nov. 1912	Laborer	Head Lamp Man
J. G. Hammock	Oct. 1910	Laborer	Miner
Jim Henley	Oct. 1908	Driver	Bath House Attd.
J. M. Hughes	July 1908	Weighman	Lamp Man
E. L. Hurst	Sept. 1912	Laborer	Carpenter Boss
C. H. Jackson	Dec. 1907	Saw Mill Hand	Pumper
C. A. Jones	July 1910	Delivery Boy	Store Manager
Less Lawley	Feb. 1914	Laborer	Boss Driver
H. F. (Foley) Lee	Oct. 1911	Laborer	Miner
Ira E. Lee	Sept. 1914	Laborer	Washer Man
Jim Martin	Sept. 1914	Miner	Engineer
C. S. Moore	1910	Miner	Contractor
Otis Moore	Sept. 1912	Miner	Miner
T. F. Moore	Dec. 1912	Miner	Miner
G. P. Peoples	May 1912	Miner	Miner
W. W. Pyle	Jan. 1913	Laborer	Miner
W. L. Rainey	Mar. 1908	Tipple Boss	Tipple Boss
G. E. Roper	Sept. 1914	Laborer	Power House Oper.
Mrs. Eddie J. Sandlin	April 1915	Stenographer	Sec. to Pres.
E. H. Sansing	Sept. 1914	Engineer	Engineer
R. A. Sansing	Oct. 1910	Boss Driver	Superintendent
Chas. Shepherd, Sr.	May 1905	Mine Foreman	Retired
C. H. Shepherd, Jr.	Jan. 1912	Miner	Superintendent
W. O. Stine	Aug. 1912	Miner	Mine Foreman
Jim Watkins	Jan. 1910	Laborer	Gen. Utility Man

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## COLONED MEMBERS OF QUARTER CENTURY CLUB

Name	Date Service Began	Occupation	Present Occupation
Ed. Adkins	Oct. 1911	Miner	Miner
W. J. Beck	Oct. 1913	"	Pension
Wm. Brown	Oct. 1914	"	Miner
Mack Burgess	May 1911	"	"
Will Cochran	Jan. 1906	"	"
Will Drisholl	Feb. 1906	"	Pension
Rich Ford	Jan. 1906	"	Miner
Amos Forman	Aug. 1914	"	"
Jim Gordon	July 1912	"	"
Adam Green	Aug. 1914	"	"
Jim Hale	Jan. 1916	"	"
Frank Hallman	Oct. 1908	"	"
John Harris	Oct. 1911	"	"
Joe Harvey	Oct. 1911	"	"
W. H. Hightower	Oct. 1905	"	Blacksmith Helper
John Hitt	Sept. 1909	"	Miner
Will Hitt	Sept. 1909	"	"
Will Holmes	Nov. 1909	"	"
W. T. James	Oct. 1914	"	"
A. Jones	Sept. 1914	"	"
Ross Jones	Oct. 1911	"	Motor Man
Tom Jones	Sept. 1908	"	Miner
Dave Lauderdale	Oct. 1913	"	"
Andrew Mack	Aug. 1910	"	"
Geo. Moffitt	Feb. 1913	"	"
Robt. McDonald	Jan. 1910	"	"
Auston Olds	Sept. 1910	"	"
Will Owens	Nov. 1910	"	"
Jno. Pickett	May 1914	"	"
Geo. Raiford	Mar. 1907	"	"
Jeff Robinson	Jan. 1915	"	"
Tom Russell	Sept. 1910	"	"
Jess Sanders	Oct. 1912	"	"
Will Scott	Sept. 1913	"	"
C. Skanes	Oct. 1909	"	"
Sam Small	May 1915	"	"
Andrew Smith	Aug. 1912	"	"
Ernest Smith	Sept. 1914	"	"
Bob Thompson	Mar. 1913	"	"
Oliver Towns	Oct. 1912	"	"
Porter Truss	Mar. 1909	"	"
John Turnbo	Oct. 1905	"	"
Jas. Walker	May 1914	"	"
Jeff Washington	Aug. 1912	"	"
Milton Whitten	Oct. 1910	"	"
Louis Wilson	Sept. 1912	"	"
A. Young	Oct. 1911	"	"

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At the time of the reorganization the new company took the name of Alabama Fuel & Iron Company, and the No. 1 Acmar mine was developed and a spur track built by the Central of Georgia Railway Company from the Margaret Branch to Acmar, a distance of approximately three miles, as well as all of the washer and yard tracks at Colgate, without any capital being furnished by the coal company, which was the last large transaction made by Col. H. F. DeBardeleben for the company. He died just as this development was being well started, and the entire responsibility of the company then fell on Mr. Chas. F. DeBardeleben, who although only had the title of Vice-President and General Manager was the active head of the company, and later succeeded as President Mr. J. M. Overton, who met an untimely death in an automobile accident.

In 1921 the Central of Georgia Railway Company, through the efforts of Mr. Chas. F. DeBardeleben, was induced to build a spur from McCombs to what is known as Overton, a distance of about ten miles, and Overton Nos. 1 and 2 mines were developed. These mines continued operation until August, 1934, at which time the men who were employed there, notwithstanding they were told repeatedly that these mines were being operated at a dead loss simply to provide work for them, decided to follow off false gods and break a long record of twenty-seven years of this company in not having any labor disturbances, in becoming affiliated with the United Mine Workers, at which time these mines were closed and are still closed.

Our company has steadily grown, having our coals well established under their own trade names--Margaret, Acmar and Acton, until the year 1935 it attained the distinction of being the largest commercial coal producer in the State.

These coals are mined from lands that were condemned by several coal experts as being unworkable. Old Acton produced approximately 5,000,000 tons; New Acton has produced approximately 2,000,000 tons, Margaret approximately 11,000,000 tons and Acmar approximately 9,000,000, or a total of approximately 27,000,000 tons, and all operations except Old Acton are good for many more years production. This demonstrates the sound judgment of Col. H. F. DeBardeleben in pronouncing these properties as profitable mining operations, and as a result has created homes for many families in most attractive mining communities; our communities being entirely different in appearance and living conditions from the ordinary mining camp in that our people take pride in the appearance of their homes and surroundings, as well as their conduct.

# TOWN OF MARGARET

MARGARET, ALABAMA 35112

Our company, I am sure, can boast of having more men working for it over a long period of years than any coal company in the state. In recognition of this great number of long service employees our President conceived the idea in the early part of 1935 of organizing what is known as the Quarter Century Club, composed of eighty-one (81) charter members, these employes having worked continuously for the company from twenty to thirty-one years. Many of these members have sons employed by the company who have never worked for any other company. Through the generosity of our President, Mr. Chas. F. DeBardeleben, each member of the club, both white and colored, is presented with a check for \$5.00 each month. Each member feels a great pride in belonging to this club, and that it is quite an honor to work for the best company in existence for this length of time, making them eligible for membership in this honorary club. The club expects to meet once or twice a year and welcome any new members who may become eligible for membership.

The formation of this Quarter Century Club, and the good derived from it, both financially and socially, is just one of the many good deeds of the company's President, Mr. Chas. F. DeBardeleben for his employes. The names of the members of the club and their occupation appear later in this brief history.

Since the company was formed the employes have been encouraged to attend welfare meetings monthly, where any employe may make known any complaint he might have and receive satisfactory consideration of his complaint. These meetings are held at each division monthly, having separate meetings for white and colored employes. During the entire history of the company there has not been any friction or race trouble, as each race is required to conduct its affairs on the same high plane, but separately. This is probably the only company in the entire country whose employes, white or colored, may carry any just grievance to any official of the company and have same adjusted to their entire satisfaction.

In addition to these monthly welfare meetings, the officials of the company, including their wives and daughters, meet each month at one of the divisions for inspecting the properties, having luncheon, and a business meeting. These are known as staff meetings, and are also attended by representatives of the employes for the purpose of hearing reports from the company and to make any suggestions they think proper for the improvement of their conditions and welfare. These monthly staff meetings have done much toward cementing the good feeling which has always existed between the company and its employes. This feeling of loyalty has been very plainly demonstrated during the past two years. While all other companies were having labor troubles and strikes the Alabama Fuel & Iron Company did not lose a day's work from any kind of labor disturbance, mining and shipping more coal while all other companies were closed by strikes than it has in years, and this has been the case through all periods of labor troubles and strikes since the company was organized in 1905.

# TOWN OF MARGARET

MARGARET, ALABAMA 35112

The company has gained many customers by being able to ship coal when it is wanted, which proves to all buyers that they can depend on getting coal of the best grade, at any time when ordered, from the Alabama Fuel & Iron Company, thus giving our employes more work than those with other companies.

This good work with the best of wages, and the most comfortable homes at the cheapest rate of rent, and pleasant surroundings, make the people of the Alabama Fuel & Iron Company the happiest and most contented neope to be found anywhere in the entire country. They have more of the comforts of life, and are more self-sustaining than any people of any other company. No other company does so much for the welfare of its employes, and not a single man has failed to stand up for the company and show his appreciation during the hardships and troubles of the year just ended.

All these good advantages that both the company and its employes enjoy are directly attributable to but one thing, the fellow feeling and the exercise of the Golden Rule by our leader, Mr. Chas. F. DeBardleben. There is no other industrial leader who has the interest of his employes more at heart or does so much in every way possible for their welfare as does this good man.

We, the employes of the Alabama Fuel & Iron Company, feel that there is no other company or any other leader as good as ours. He feels that he is one of us, and does not fail on any and all occasions to affiliate and enter into our lives and welfare. Through his vision of anticipating the many hardships that were in store for us as a result of the depression, he conceived the idea of home production of food stuffs, and as a result of this none of us have been forced to accept charity from any outside agency, as has been the case with employes of other companies throughout the nation.

In addition to the \$5.00 per month given each member of this Quarter Century Club, as a token of appreciation of their long service, each member has been given a gold badge signifying their membership, which is a badge of distinction and can be handed down to future generations as evidence of having been a faithful and loyal employe for the period of years specified. There is an insignia on this badge signifying friendly relations existing between laborer and employer. No man can desert, without just cause, a friend of twenty years standing to take on as a substitute a man of short acquaintance and untried sincerity. I therefore feel that the membership of this club stands as a unit to at all times protect and defend the giver of this badge against all enemies.

I deem it a privilege to have written this brief history and description of our Quarter Century Club, and trust I will be one of its members the remainder of my active life. Naturally any member who severs his connection with the company automatically severs his membership in the club.

# TOWN OF MARGARET

MARGARET, ALABAMA 35112

We have lost three members since the organization of this club, two having severed their connection with the company and one through death, the two lost by severance being Mr. R. M. L. Burt and Harry Lyons, colored, and the one by death Mr. W. S. Sloan. In the death of Mr. Sloan we have sustained a great loss, as he was not only a most efficient Peace Officer but was a gentlemen under any and all circumstances, and added materially to the morale of the community in which he lived, as well as taking a part in all civic matters. We have gained several new members since the club was organized by having served their requisite number of years, which gives us at the present time a total membership of 90, a complete list of the membership being attached hereto.

This is our first anniversary of the Quarter Century Club. Our first meeting for organizing the club was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Chas. H. Shepherd, Jr. in Acmar, where we enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Shepherd, being served with delightful refreshments, and brought together those of us who seldom are brought together in a body, practically the entire white membership of the club, accompanied by their wives, being present. We find ourselves meeting again in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Shepherd; however, this meeting is given by Mr. Chas. F. DeBardleben. It is the greatest satisfaction to look into many of the same faces this time as at our original meeting, which I hope will prove the case in many of the succeeding meetings, resulting in our friendship for our fellowmen and our company growing each year.

Respectfully,

R. W. BAIN, Historian.

January 22, 1936

# TOWN OF MARGARET

MARGARET, ALABAMA 35112

## WHITE MEMBERS OF QUARTER CENTURY CLUB

Name	Date Service Began	Occupation	Present Occupation
T. R. Akridge	May 1913	Miner	Mine Foreman
R. W. Bain	Mar. 1908	Tipple Man	Cashier
A. J. Bradshaw	Aug. 1914	Laborer	Mine Foreman
Ulric Brandt	Jan. 1914	Laborer	Asst. Electrician
Marshall Brasher	Sept. 1907	Blacksmith helper	Safety Man
E. F. Brown	Jan. 1913	Miner	Miner
Borden Burr	Nov. 1907	Attorney	Counsel
A. B. Crane	Aug. 1909	Mechanic helper	Engineer
R. F. Culvahouse	Mar. 1910	Store Manager	Purchasing Agent
Chas. F. Debardeleben	June 1905	Gen. Manager	President
P. L. Dryer	May 1905	Engineer	Chief Engineer
W. S. Forman	Sept. 1914	Casualty Manager	Casualty Manager
W. P. Frazier	June 1912	Saw Mill Hand	Engineer
W. W. Fulghum	Jan. 1911	Auditing Dept.	Sec. & Treas.
Art Fulmer	Sept. 1915	Laborer	Carpenter
A. J. Garrison	Aug. 1909	Miner	Miner
Bert Glidewell	Oct. 1914	Miner	Fire Boss
W. T. Glover	Sept. 1913	School Prin.	School Prin.
Ed. Griffin	Nov. 1912	Laborer	Head Lamp Man
J. G. Hammock	Oct. 1910	Laborer	Miner
Jim Henley	Oct. 1908	Driver	Bath House Attd.
J. M. Hughes	July 1908	Weighman	Lamp Man
E. L. Hurst	Sept. 1912	Laborer	Carpenter Boss
C. H. Jackson	Dec. 1907	Saw Mill Hand	Pumper
C. A. Jones	July 1910	Delivery Boy	Store Manager
Less Lawley	Feb. 1914	Laborer	Boss Driver
H. F. (Foley) Lee	Oct. 1911	Laborer	Miner
Ira E. Lee	Sept. 1914	Laborer	Washer Man
Jim Martin	Sept. 1914	Miner	Engineer
C. E. Moore	1910	Miner	Contractor
Otis Moore	Sept. 1912	Miner	Miner
T. F. Moore	Dec. 1912	Miner	Miner
G. P. Peoples	May 1912	Miner	Miner
W. W. Pyle	Jan. 1913	Laborer	Miner
W. L. Rainey	Mar. 1908	Tipple Boss	Tipple Boss
G. H. Roper	Sept. 1914	Laborer	Power House Oper.
Mrs. Eddie J. Sandlin	April 1915	Stenographer	Sec. to Pres.
E. H. Sansing	Sept. 1914	Engineer	Engineer
R. A. Sansing	Oct. 1910	Boss Driver	Superintendent
Chas. Shepherd, Sr.	May 1905	Mine Foreman	Retired
C. H. Shepherd, Jr.	Jan. 1912	Miner	Superintendent
W. O. Stine	Aug. 1912	Miner	Mine Foreman
Jim Watkins	Jan. 1910	Laborer	Gen. Utility Man

# TOWN OF MARGARET

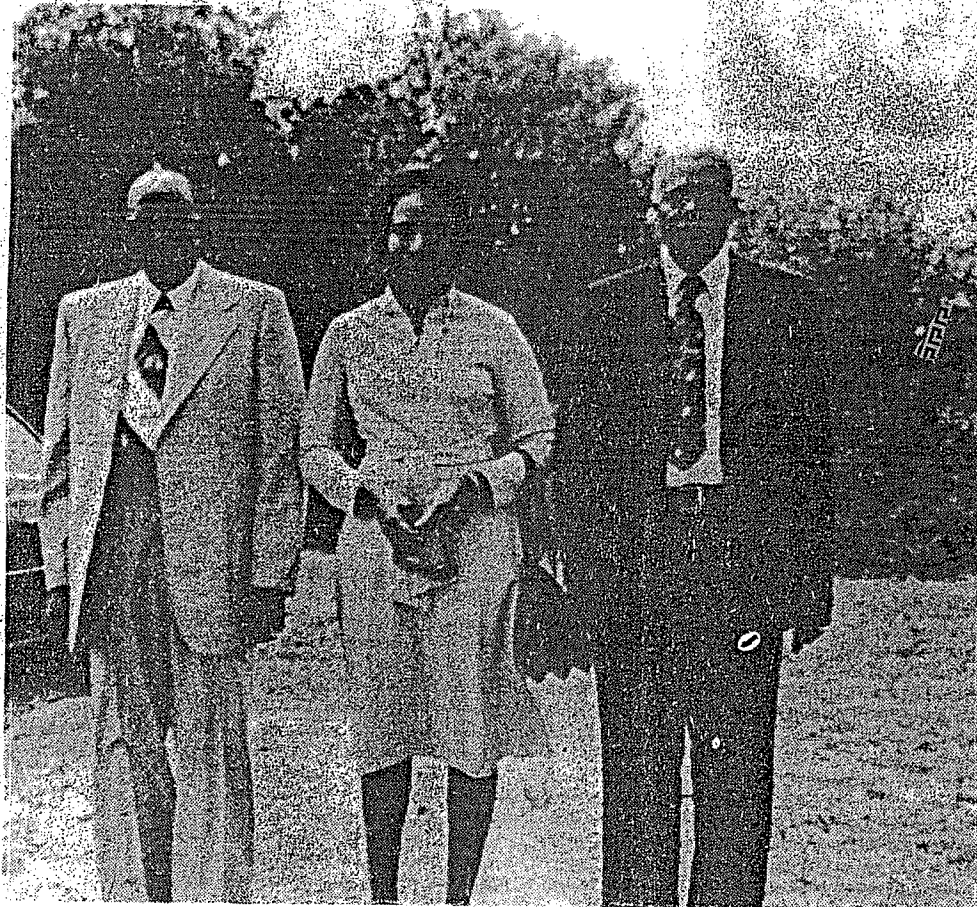
MARGARET, ALABAMA 35112

## COLORED MEMBERS OF QUARTER CENTURY CLUB

Name	Date Service Began	Occupation	Present Occupation
Ed. Adkins	Oct. 1911	Miner	Miner
W. J. Beck	Oct. 1913	"	Pension
Wm. Brown	Oct. 1914	"	Miner
Mack Burgess	May 1911	"	"
Will Cochran	Jan. 1906	"	"
Will Drisboll	Feb. 1906	"	Pension
Rich Ford	Jan. 1906	"	Miner
Amos Forman	Aug. 1914	"	"
Jim Gordon	July 1912	"	"
Adam Green	Aug. 1914	"	"
Jim Hale	Jan. 1916	"	"
Frank Hallman	Oct. 1908	"	"
John Harris	Oct. 1911	"	"
Joe Harvey	Oct. 1911	"	"
W. H. Hightower	Oct. 1905	"	Blacksmith Helper
John Hitt	Sept. 1909	"	Miner
Will Hitt	Sept. 1909	"	"
Will Holmes	Nov. 1909	"	"
W. T. James	Oct. 1914	"	"
A. Jones	Sept. 1914	"	"
Ross Jones	Oct. 1911	"	Motor Man
Tom Jones	Sept. 1908	"	Miner
Dave Lauderdale	Oct. 1913	"	"
Andrew Mack	Aug. 1910	"	"
Geo. Moffitt	Feb. 1913	"	"
Robt. McDonald	Jan. 1910	"	"
Auston Olds	Sept. 1910	"	"
Will Owens	Nov. 1910	"	"
Jno. Pickett	May 1914	"	"
Geo. Raiford	Mar. 1907	"	"
Jeff Robinson	Jan. 1915	"	"
Tom Russell	Sept. 1910	"	"
Jess Sanders	Oct. 1912	"	"
Will Scott	Sept. 1913	"	"
C. Skanes	Oct. 1909	"	"
Sam Small	May 1915	"	"
Andrew Smith	Aug. 1912	"	"
Ernest Smith	Sept. 1914	"	"
Bob Thompson	Mar. 1913	"	"
Oliver Towns	Oct. 1912	"	"
Porter Truss	Mar. 1909	"	"
John Turnbo	Oct. 1905	"	"
Jas. Walker	May 1914	"	"
Jeff Washington	Aug. 1912	"	"
Nilton Whitten	Oct. 1910	"	"
Louis Wilson	Sept. 1912	"	"
A. Young	Oct. 1911	"	"

Of new building—

# Mt. Avery has dedica



The enterin  
service of the  
Church was h  
1977. Theme  
Lord: build  
labour in va  
Psalms 127:1-

The pastor,  
G. L. Battle  
marched from  
singing "We  
Zion." After  
church, Mr.  
cut the ribbon  
the oldest citi  
and will becom  
October. He is  
Beulah Baptis  
members co  
march into the  
male chorus s  
Step."

In the pro  
upstairs it wa  
struggle. The  
hardships and  
happened, but v

# very has dedication



The entering and dedicatorial service of the Mt. Avery Baptist Church was held July 20th-24th, 1977. Theme was "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain," taken from Psalms 127:1-A.

The pastor, Rev. and m. Mrs. G. L. Battle and members marched from the Hicks' home singing "We Are Marching to Zion." After arriving at the church, Mr. Grover Marbury cut the ribbon. Mr. Marbury is the oldest citizen in Margaret and will become 100 years old in October. He is a member of the Beulah Baptist Church. The members continued their march into the church with the male chorus singing "Step by Step."

In the process of getting upstairs it was a long, long struggle. There were many hardships and many things happened, but with the Lord and

our pastor's help, we came ti far by faith.

The pastor and his wife, Re and Mrs. J. Whetstone, pi chased a piano. The men of t church purchased an orga. The ladies of the church pu chased the public addre system. The youth of the chur is working to buy a atypewrite

The past year we hav labored, working hard ar looking forward to going in the sanctuary. The membe enjoyed a lovely occasion wit visitors and many friends.

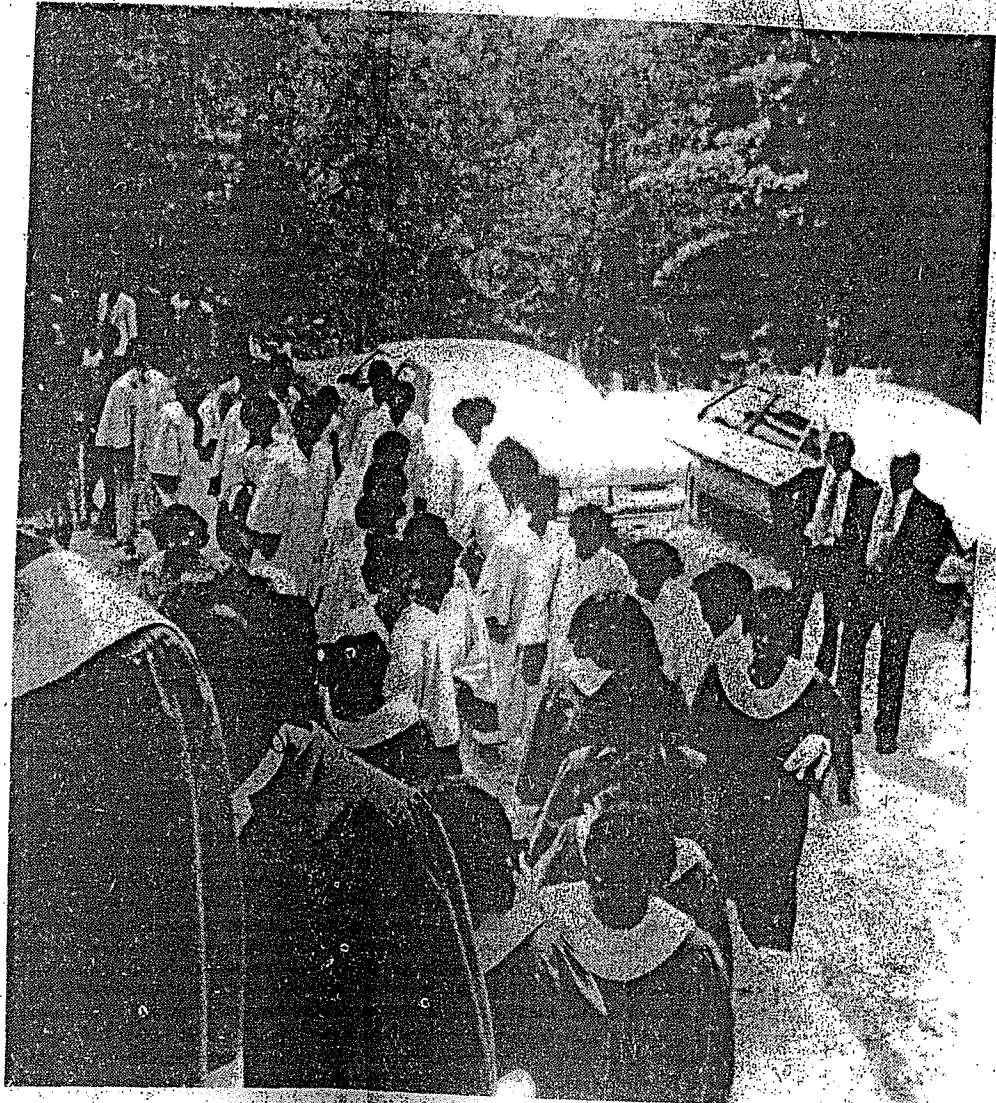
Sunday School at Mt. Ave Missionary Baptist Church held at 9:30 a.m. Sunday morning service begins at a.m.; and evening service at p.m. The church invite everyone to attend and worsh in its semvices.

— Submitted by Rev. Whetstone, pastor.

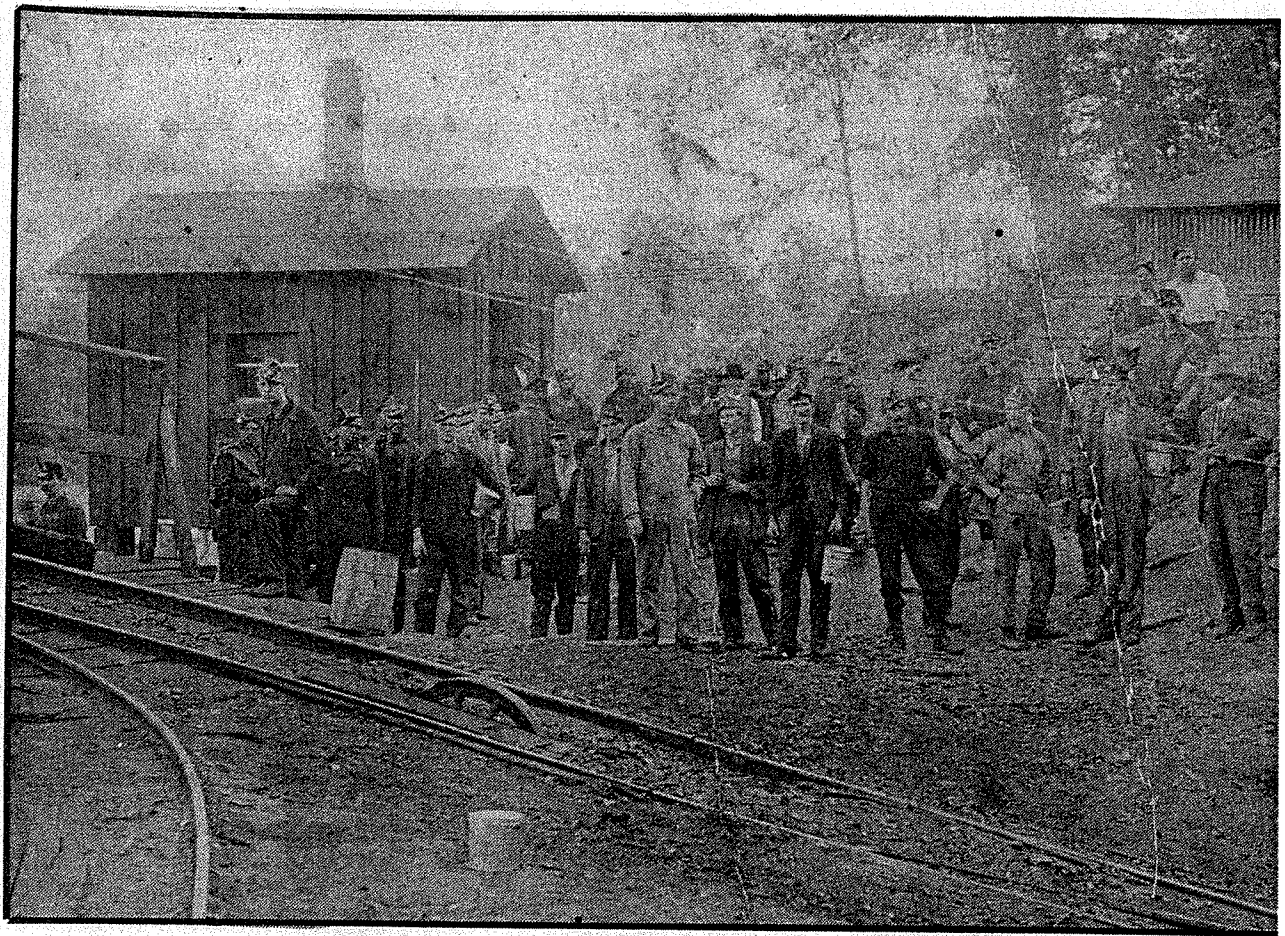


Rev. J. Whetstone, Rev. & Mrs. G.L. Battle

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Mr. Avery Choir



**Acmar miners circa 1910**

## At Acmar

# C. W. Martin recalls coal mining

By Fonde Taylor

C. W. Martin is one of a handful of the old timers left in Acmar who remember the yesteryears when this place was a self sufficient coal mining community run by the Alabama Fuel and Iron Company.

The 69-year-old Martin, born and reared in the little community nestled in the rolling hills of the western part of St. Clair County, has seen Acmar go from a thriving community with about a dozen mines in operation to a kind of ghost town after the mines were shut down. It has grown up again but now its more of a bedroom community. The days of underground coal mining are nothing more than a cherished memory for people like C.W. who says in a nostalgic tone, "Those were the happiest days of my life."

That nostalgia is kept alive with scrapbooks containing old photos of the mining community. There are also a few relics such as his old miners hat and carbide lamp that Martin keeps around the house as tokens of the work that was the livelihood of Acmar's people. And Martin's house - a spacious green wood frame home with a tin roof - is itself a giant relic of that era, having formerly served as a mine foreman's home.

C.W. grew up in a coal mining family. His father, Jim Martin, worked in a mine located near where the two railroad trestles cross over I-20 between the Hwy. 411 and Red Diamond interchanges until it shut down. Afterward, the family moved to Acmar in 1909 where the Alabama Fuel and Iron Company had opened additional mines.

C.W. was born in 1917 in Acmar. The initials stand for Clayton Woodford. "I was named after Dr. Clayton (the company doctor who delivered him)," Martin explained. "When I was born, he told Mama, 'If you'll name him Clayton, I'll give him a suit of clothes when he gets 12 years old.'" The doctor kept his promise and delivered the new suit when Martin was 12 years old. Martin adds with a chuckle that he later discovered there was a whole

times. A lot of people would just fish during the Depression so they could eat, C.W. explained.

Work in the mines was scarce then. You'd get out one day a week. But they'd give you a bucket of coal if you sold it (the coal) or not. They knew you'd sell it.

But by the 40's, the economy in Alabama was beginning to pick up again and the mining work schedule. In fact, C.W. was able to buy his first car then, a '29 Ford Roadster with a top.

When they weren't working, the people would take part in. "We had everything included a community house where they would or just gather together for a "good time" have dances, some ball fields for some miniature golf course.

C.W., who had taken up playing the fiddle, continued to play the instrument, would attend gatherings.

Acmar was a close knit and mostly 1,000 in its heyday. But after the mines closed, the community. "The first thing I knew commenced to movin' out. It was just mines shut down. Everybody just went home.

The events leading up to the closing of the mines were violent. C.W. said the president of the company was toward union men. A "machine gun" mine were suspicious of strangers was set up near to where Minnie Lee's Grocer store was located.

C.W. went to work in the mines when he was 18 years old and worked there for the next 16 years until they were shut down after hostilities erupted between company men and union men who wanted to organize the miners.

Martin started out making 75 cents a day. His first job was "rock dusting" in which he was responsible for spraying a white fireproof chemical on the coal to keep it from igniting in case of an explosion or fire.

Martin later went on to loading coal and the last job he had was operating the engine that hauled the coal cars out of the number six mine. The engine had a massive electric motor and a giant spool with eight foot flanges onto which the steel cable that was connected to the coal cars would be wound.

Martin's description of his fellow miners depicts a strong and hardy group of men. He boasts that they held the record for the most coal ever pulled out in a day - 2300 tons - from any of the Acmar mines at the number six mine where he worked.

C.W.'s description of the mules that were used to pull the coal cars off to a side track away from the mines is even more colorful than that of the miners. "We didn't use no Shetland ponies, we had big ol' workin mules. You talk about big mules - them sapsuckers - I bet they weighed 1,800 pounds. There was one mule they called 'Big Red'. They said he weighed 2,100 pounds."

The miners generally worked five to six days a week in the winter and two to three days a week in the summer as the demand would slack off in the hot weather.

The mining families would also grow gardens to provide food in the lean

this other guy walks out and makes sure and lived here and was going home. If and they'd beat the hell out of you. I ain't whip you with a mining whip man."

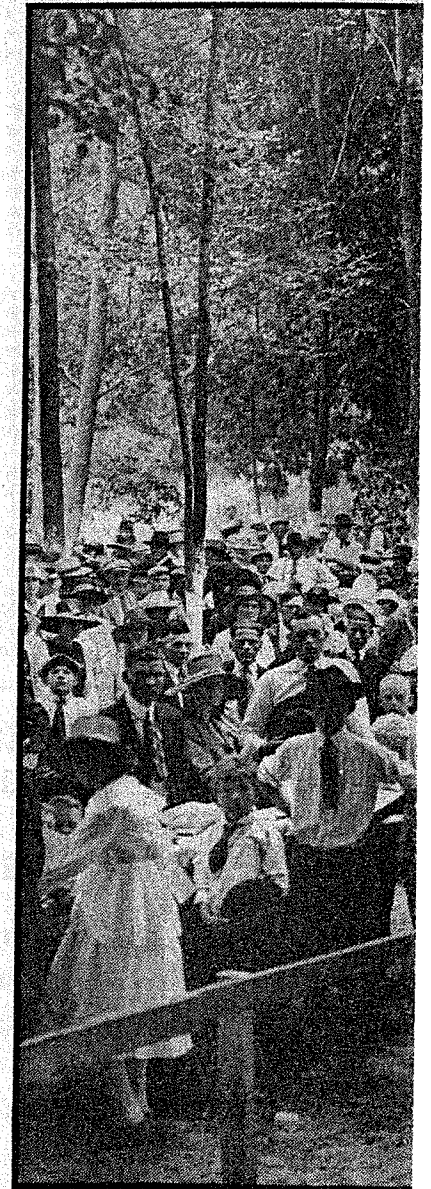
Their methods were apparently effective president was able to keep the union front died and his son took over, they again," Martin said.

"A bunch of 'em (union men) went to roadblock down there one morning and that bunch of union men, 'You all can't do down. I'm not organizing, My daddy did they all just left."

After the mines shut down, Martin took jobs, selling cars in Leeds, policing in C settling into retirement after seven years in Ingham.

But those jobs apparently cannot compare. Martin organized the first Acmar Coal their families seven years ago and they ly to share stories and memories.

"It's hard to forget, you know," Martin wife keeps telling me to stop thinking about me. I enjoy thinking about them times."



**12-year-old C. W. Martin**



**Martin displays his miner's hat**

**ing days**

d work their gardens during the  
ed.

was slack. Sometimes we'd only  
you one day a week whether they  
d to live."

na and the rest of the country was  
s were able to return to a regular  
save up enough money to buy his  
ruble seat.

of Acmar had plenty of activities  
it here," C.W. explains. That in-  
ould go to see a movie on Sundays  
", a pavillion where they would  
ball and baseball games, and a

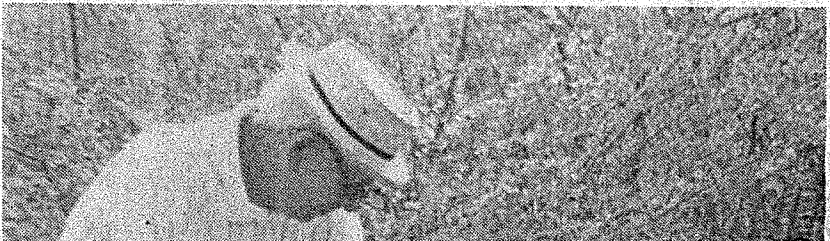
iddle at an early age and has com-  
ometimes play at the community

If sufficient community of about  
ut down there was not much left  
w, they shut down and everybody  
like a ghost town to me after the

the underground mines at Acmar  
he company had no kind feelings  
" manned by company men who  
at the entrance to the community  
(now TD's Korner Grocery) is



**Entrance to the No. 6 mine at Acmar**



he knows you and you worked here  
you didn't, man they'd get you out  
t' kiddin you. I mean they'd actual-

ective as Martin said the company  
om organizing. But after the presi-  
"commence to trying to organize

own to number nine and they had a  
he shut 'em down buddy... He told  
) whatever you want to but I'm shut  
n't want it so that's the way it is. So

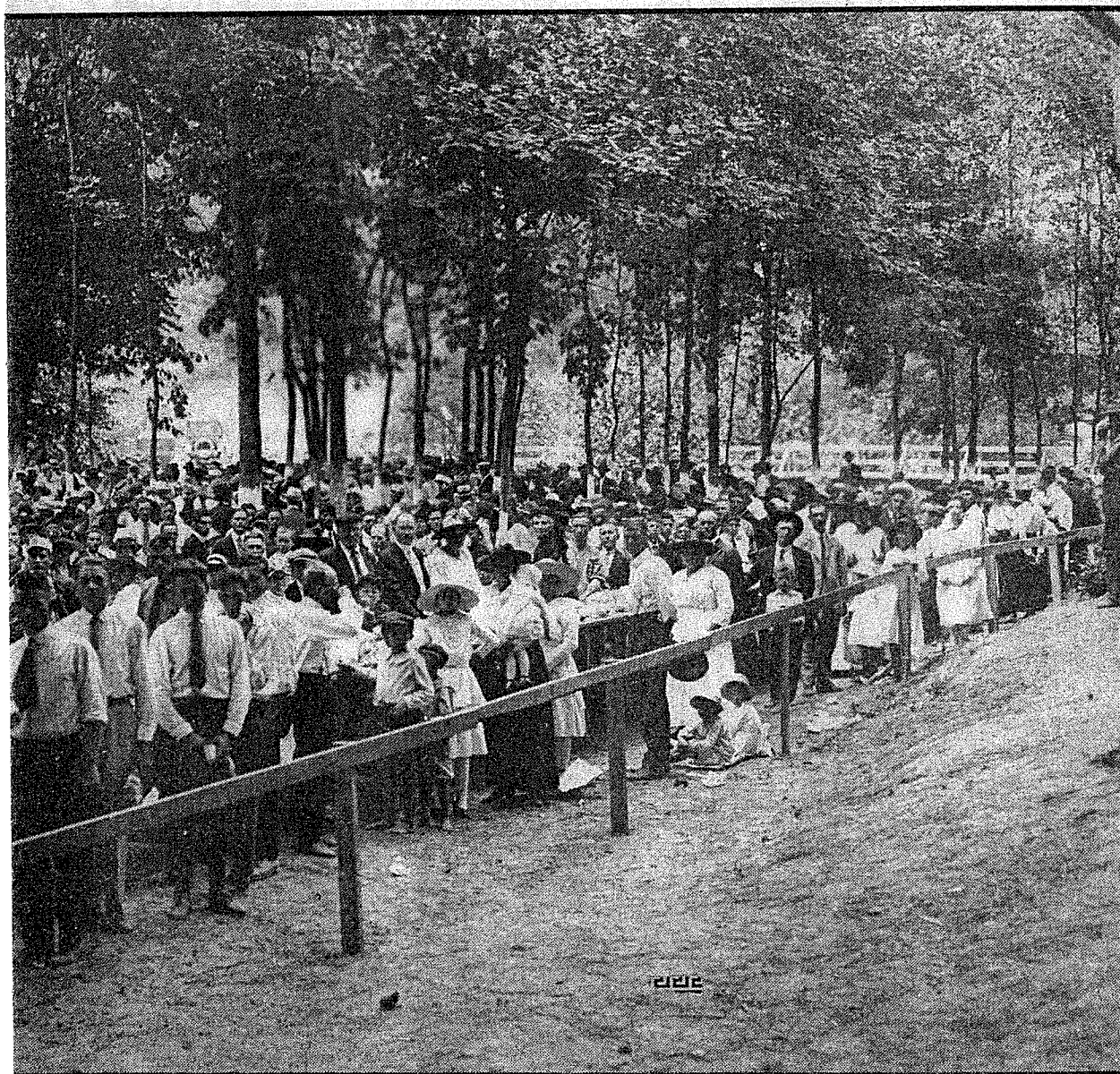
ted his hand a at couple of different  
denville for a few years and finally  
rs at Auto Diesel Machine in Birm-

pare to his first job as a coal miner.  
Miners' reunion for the miners and  
roup has continued to meet annual-

in says of the old mining days. "My  
bout it but I tell her it doesn't worry



**Martin surveys remains  
of No. 6  
Engine room**



**Company picnic July 4, 1917**

# From Acmar to world traveler, Ada

By MARIE WEST CROMER  
(Part I)

ACMAR — Bill Adams, Pan Am 747 captain, has seen it all and done it all, and as he approaches retirement in two years, his thoughts are turning back to the place in St. Clair where it all began.

Born in the coal-mining community of Acmar, delivered by the company doctor (father of Pell City doctor H.C. Clayton), in the company-owned hospital, Adams has had many people in the state and throughout the world, upon seeing Acmar on his birth certificate, ask, "Where in the world is Acmar?"

The village's name came from the first syllable of Acton, a mining town in Shelby County that was owned by the DeBardeleben Coal Co., and the first syllable of Margaret, wife of Charles F. DeBardeleben. The nearby coal-mining town of Margaret also honored Mrs. DeBardeleben.

ACMAR, MARGARET, Marketta, Overton and Henry Ellen mines were routes his father, William Rex Adams, drove mining trains over for 41 years for the DeBardeleben Coal and Iron Co. Bill Adams and his brothers and one sister grew up in Acmar, nestled among the hollows and hills of western St. Clair County.

They were just a few of the communities monied Birmingham industrialist Col. Henry Fairchild DeBardeleben started building over a century ago. His large business empire would later be managed by son, Charles F., and grandson, Prince DeBardeleben.

In the words of Col. DeBardeleben, "There's nothing like taking a wild piece of land, all rock and woods, ground not fit to feed a goat on, and turning it into a settlement of men and women; bringing railroads in, making payrolls, starting things to going; nothing like boring a hillside through and turning over a mountain."

THE BIRMINGHAM Industrialist founded Bessemer, and the Alabama Fuel and Iron Co., which opened up the mining communities in St. Clair County. Grandson Prince opened and operated the Red Diamond Mining Company between Leeds and Birmingham.

Today, travelers on I-20 West into Birmingham, past the Leeds Exit, can see the remains of the Red Diamond Mines on their right, in the form of a huge slag pile, now overgrown with trees and shrubs. The No. 1 mine at Red Diamond ran under what is now I-20 and for many years on a cold and frosty morn, steam could be seen escaping from the old mine shaft.

When the Alabama Fuel and Iron Co. opened Margaret Mine near White's Chapel in 1905, DeBardeleben induced the Central Georgia extend spur tracks to the new mine, which by 1906 employed 180 men. Tracks were then extended to all the nearby mines.

All the mining communities were self-contained towns, with a hospital, post-office, commissary, service station, ice house, community center and housing for miners and their families. Many of the buildings are still standing today.

THE OLD COMMISSARY at Acmar, ice house and service station, located on a dead end road alongside Little Cahaba River (which became Black Creek after coal was washed in it), is owned by Lorraine G. Smith. When her brother Henry A. Pazdyka, of Chicago, retired two years ago he joined her at the compound where they live comfortably in a new home constructed between the old commissary and the service station.

They have researched the history of the community and their home place and are hoping the county will declare all the mining commissaries and surrounding buildings a landmark to be noted with a proper marker. At the present, strip mining is all that is going on in that section of the county.

climbed into the engine car to warm themselves from the furnace before leaving for school.

Adams related how he and his friends once borrowed a railroad pump car to go to Margaret. They were having a ball on the track until a freight train came barreling down on them.

THEY JUMPED OFF and pulled the pump car with them ... fast! "My father really tore us up good," he remembered with a grimace.

Bill Adams graduated from the old Odenville High School where he drove the school bus his last two years in school, over roads which were not paved. He went on to the University of Alabama to study to be a doctor, until his father told him, "Doctor, doctor, everyone wants to be a doctor! Get into aviation, it's the thing of the future!"

Adams reminded his father, "But I'll have to go two more years." "You go — I'll pay," was his father's reply, and Bill has never regretted following his father's advice. His wings have carried him throughout the world and have provided an exciting, well-paying, and often hair-raising lifestyle.

Adams has piloted Pan Am's flight to Copenhagen, then on to Nigeria, Australia, West Africa and back to the United States for over 11 years. He served in World War II (European and Pacific), and participated in the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam.

HE WAS INVOLVED in the Berlin Airlift, carrying food, cattle and other live animals, into West Germany. He was one of the first to view Auschwitz at the close of the war and his pictures were so horrific in content they were confiscated by the State Department and to his knowledge have never been shown.

Stationed later in the South Pacific, he was involved in flying, piece by piece, the atomic bomb to be assembled at the airbase on the island where

boy  
wor  
A  
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wa  
Hir  
we  
Sta  
des  
wit  
F  
—  
far  
pre  
"p

# Adams has seen and done it all



Bill Adams points to father's name on old employee roster outside of Acmar mining commissary. (f)

s, we're about to blow up the  
ld!"

Adams didn't know what he was  
rring to, but three days later he  
flying over Nagasaki and  
shima taking pictures ... which  
e once again taken over by the  
e Department. The sight of such  
h and destruction has remained  
Adams all his life.

WENT ON to serve as a test pilot  
ring the Korean conflict flew the  
ed "Black Widow Spider,"  
cessor to the U2 plane and  
ved the field over Red China." He

went on to explain that even today,  
"fields are being plowed" in the same  
manner ... flying at altitudes of 40,000  
feet or more, they literally plow the  
skies at night, photographing  
everything with infrared film, making  
180 degree turns at corners in the sky,  
much as a farmer plows his field. All  
film was shipped immediately to the  
State Department.

"It was so cold up there after several  
hours, we had to be lifted out of our  
cockpits in a sitting position and  
massaged by flight surgeons to regain  
use of our limbs. China has to be the  
coldest place in the world," Adams  
went on.

Adams was the test pilot for the

Navy's "Sea Dart," an airplane  
constructed to take off from a sub-  
marine, something along a VTA  
pattern (vertical take off). The plane  
worked well but was never built.

His plane has been shot out from  
under him three times, and back then  
there were no buttons to press for  
automatic ejection, he simply rolled  
his plane over, unfastened his belt and  
dropped.

Landing in the Pacific Ocean once,  
he was not retrieved for 11 days and his  
parents were notified of his death and  
received his \$10,000 life insurance  
benefits. When he was picked up and  
taken to Australia, he called home. (f)

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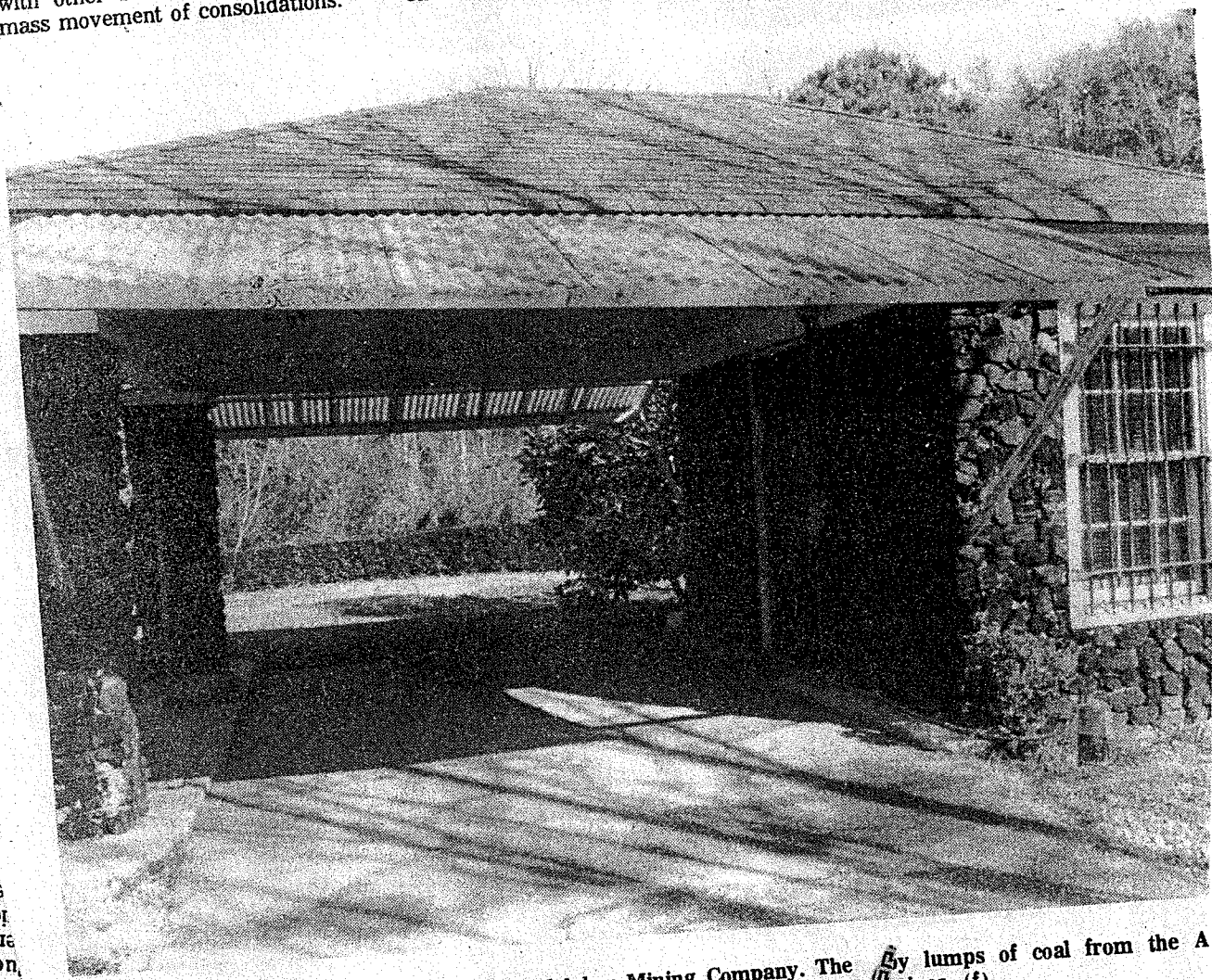
(AP) —

The Col. often stated, "I was the eagle and I wanted to eat all the crawfish I could — swallow up all the little fellows, and I did." Although he was no little fellow, he too was swallowed up by TCI in 1892, along with other smaller companies in a mass movement of consolidations.

Bill Adams likes to talk of the old days at Acmar. As he walks over the area, memories return of his childhood when he rode the trains with his daddy, hauling miners on their shifts, and buying his overalls at the commissary. On cold mornings, the young boys

realizing what was being assembled.

When President Truman arrived in his special-built plane with an elevator which lowered him to the ground, he alighted with his cane and addressed the assembled airmen with, "Well,



The service station at Acmar mining village served miners and the DeBardeleben Mining Company. The outside of the building is "rocked in" by lumps of coal from the A mines. (f)

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