

## SPRINGVILLE

Springville, once called Big Springs, is one of the older settlements in St. Clair County. Before the coming of the railroad, citizens of this area carried produce by wagon train as far as Tuscaloosa and Demopolis.

The railroad was built about <sup>(1844?)</sup> 1870, largely by Chinese and Negro labor. Labor and life were cheap. An epidemic of cholera broke out, taking many lives and threatening the whole enterprise. Many workers were buried in the fills of the road.

Mr. Lewis Herring gave seven acres of land to the railroad to get the depot placed near his land.

The community however, had developed before the coming of the railroad. About 1835 Dr. Osborn built a saw mill. Two hotels were established. A flour mill flourished. Fifteen or twenty families came from South Alabama. Two large tan yards were built. One of these had thirty or forty vats filled by a large wheel which used tin cans to pick up the water from the branch that flowed through the town. At these tan yards it took about a year to tan a hide.

The tanyard was an important industry, for nearly all shoes were made and sewed by hand. Mr. Mart Allison bought the first machine for sewing ~~for sewing~~ shoes about 1875. Before then every grocery store had an assortment of wooden pegs to use in pegging on soles. A peg had to be driven all the way in one lick. Common pegged shoes were made for \$1.50. Sewed shoes

were made for p8 or p10.

The town was incorporated around 1860. Included in the businesses were two bar-rooms and a ten pin alley. A petition was sent to the legislature to hve the bar-rooms taken out. They were removed under a ruling that liquor could not be sold within a mile of a school. However, a log house was bu lt outside the mile limit for a bar room. Another petition had the bar-room removed from the county.

An article appearing in the Birmingham Age Herald in May 1949 gives an earlier date of incorporation, quote:  
"Records indicate that Springville, was an incorporation in 1818. Not long after a huge hardware store was built. The Springville Hardware building is ssid to be the first brick store building ever built in St. Clair County. The present owner (1949) and son, R. R. Woodall has been carrying on since 1911."

The first post office was established at Thomason's Store on January 28, 1833. The name was changed to Pink Hill on November 19, 1833. On December 22, 1834 the name was changed to Springville.\*

\* General Services Administration, National Archives and Records and Service, Washington, D. C. ( This record was lent to Mrs. W. E. G. Sutton by Mr. A. L. Bradford of Springville.)



## SPRINGVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH

A Baptist church, known as Mount Zion Church was organized March 22, 1817. There were nine charter members: Joseph and Elizabeth Hill, John and Rebecca Mangum, Sarah McCollom, Margaret Riggs, Sion and Sarah Blythe.

This Baptist church stood on the hill near the cemetery. The Baptists shared their building with the Methodists until an announcement was made that on a certain Sunday the bishop would be present, and would at that time baptize any infants of Methodists parents. The Baptists felt that such a ceremony should not take place in their church. The Methodists withdrew and built a church on the hill near the big springs.

The present building occupied by the Baptists was erected in 1872. In 1945 the annex was added and the interior redecorated a short time later.

The following notations were taken from the minutes of the records of this Baptist church. They were copied by Martha Lawrence Terry from minutes in the possession of Mr. L. L. Terry and were destroyed when the Terry home burned.)

April Term 1821

Received Brother James, a black man, by letter.

July term 1821

✓ The church procede to say in what manner a member should be delt with for neglect to fill his seat in the church laid over till September meetin.

Sept Term 1821

✓ The church agree that if any male member neglects fo fill

his seat for two meetings, the third he shall be sent for.

February Term 1823

Appointed the March meeting to throw in money for the support of the gospel.

May Term 1832

Received by Experience Lottie, a black woman, and Lisha More and Alse Pike.

August Term 1832

Received by Experience, Sook a black woman.

March Term 1824

The Church appointed brethren S. Blythe, J. Thomason and Wm Hill to obtain a spot of ground to build a meeting house on the Tho. C. Bradford and make report to next meeting.

April Term 1823

The Brethren appointed se Mr. Bradford report it can be had. The same Brethren appointed to choose the place. Agreed that we build a fraim house 25 x 35.

Feb. Term 1825

The Mount Zion Church agree to move ther seet of desiplin to the big spring so soon as the house is finished.

Feb. Term 1826

✓ Appointed brethering Melton to site sister McMillian to meeting to answer to some reports circulating against her for making use of ill language.

March Term 1826

Took up sister McMillian's case and after due laborius being taken she took her seat.

Sept. Term 1826

Took up sister McMillian's case and not obtaining satisfaction she is excluded from the fellowship of the church for a contradiction between her and some of the brethering. References called for and the subject of enlarging the meeting house taken up and agree to add 20 ft. to the end.

(An interesting list of materials and their prices ~~are~~ as follows: Material for the prescher

65 lbs. pork \$2.00

2 bu. meal \$1.00

30 bu. cotton seed \$3.00

Some nice beef \$1.50

5 bu. corn \$1.75

1 ham of meat .75

31 lbs. of lard \$2. 17

21 cedar posts \$2.50

## SPRINGVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Spring<sup>ville</sup> Presbyterian Church was organized October 26, 1872.

"As history has it, and as far as we know, there was only one church building in Springville, Alabama in 1872, and this was the present Baptist building. In this year 1872, there was held a great religious revival or perhaps an old time camp meeting. For people came from far and near by way of wagon, buggy, oxcart, and horse back. Soon after this meeting there was organized a Cumberland Presbyterian Church with 36 members. This church was organized October 26, 1872 by the Reverend T. B. Taylor and Rev. Thomas McCluney. Thomas McCluney was the first pastor. The first officers were:

Elder A. W. Woodall; E. M. McClendon; M. M. Fulghum; W. W. Perkins  
J. B. Rankin. Deacons: T. W. Truss, Forest Pearson.

On December 28, 1872, there was a parcel of land deeded to the Presbyterian church by Mr. L. M. Herring for the consideration of \$125. The present church house and manse are located on this land. We do not know the date the church was built, but it was between 1872 and 1879. The original manse was built in 1889 and rebuilt in 1926. There were 234 ~~members~~ members from 1872 to 1904.

In 1906 the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was supposed to be dissolved, but several of their congregations held to their beliefs and property and there are at present quite a number of Cumberland Presbyterian churches in Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky and Georgia.

The members of the Springville Church were undecided as to just what was the best for all concerned. So after debating

they had different preachers to preach for them. On October 13, 1907 they called their first Southern Presbyterian preacher, Rev. E. E. Patterson from Germania, West Virginia.

The present building is the original building.

#### SPRINGVILLE METHODIST CHURCH

In 1871 the only church building in Springville was owned by the Baptists. This building was located on a hill near the cemetery, back of the Wilson home (now the place owned by Mr. E. C. Toombs) The building was small, and was used for church services and for the school. It was made of logs and was used for worship by three denominations, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians. (The Baptists had established their church, Mr. Zion) in 1817)

In 1871, R. F. Mountain, a Methodist minister, held a revival. He was the first Methodist minister. While he was here the Methodists were organized--also the Presbyterian, but all continued to worship in the little log church for some time. There were only 12 or 14 Methodists. Of this group, Mr. C. J. Allison is now the only living charter member.

In 1874, Bishop Deaugette conducted a district conference for the Methodists. During the conference some of the members had their infants baptized. The Methodists were then asked by the Baptists to find another building in which to worship. A little band of 12 decided to build a church of their own. By help of the Masonic lodge and the community the building was erected on a hill, near the springs, beside what is now (1953) the former parsonage. A big two-story building was hulled in. The Masonic Lodge used the upstairs.

At that time( 1874) a new preacher, F. E. Nicholson came. He remained 1 year. Terry Tarrant was the first superintendent of the Sunday School. Major Crandall encouraged buying the organ and taught the Bible Class. Major Crandall always sat in the amen corner. He often made talks, always turning his face to the wall, his back to the audience. Mr. Mart Allison was the choir leader. Mr. C. W. Allison is his son.

Mrs. Jane Allison (mother of C. W.) had a strong influence on the young people. Her home was the home of boys and girls.

In 1875 R. W. Coons was pastor. In 1876 R. J. Sampler. The church was very strict. A lady (Mrs. Mollie Copeland, mother of Mr. Lonnie Coupland went to an entertainment and danced a little. The following Sunday she was turned out of the church. She joined the Presbyterian Church, but often came to the Methodist services.

1878-1885 Ministers: J. B. Gregory, S. R. Emerson, J. W. Tucker, G. F. Boyd. During these years the church grew. Alvin Wood was made superintendent of the Sunday School. Manly Hill, and J. F. Galbreath were the next superintendents. Miss Ida Allison (Mrs. Will Byers), Adelaide Crandall (Houston's sister) and Lonnie Coupland were organists.

A parsonage, a 4 room house on a lot by the church was built about 1885. The next pastors were S. L. Dobs and J. W. Aiken.

Mrs. Mathews organized the Junior Missionary Society and taught the young girls to love missionary work. Then the Ladies Aid Society was organized. The Methodists held Love Feasts (An hour of prayer, closed the doors, served water and bread.)

About this time Mr. T. E. Moody, a worker with young people became president of the Epworth League. Later he followed Mr. J. F. Galbreath as S. S. superintendent. He served 50 years as superintendent and missed only one Sunday.

The old church turned out one preacher, Mr. Frad Osborne. His first sermon "God is Love" was a beautiful sermon, and was very impressive. He later gave up the ministry.

Methodists were very devout. Young and old shouted quite often. Ministers of this period were:  
1893 W. B. Andrews  
1894 R. I. Walston  
1895 I. C. Milton  
1897 W. E. Butts

These ministers were known as "Knights of the Saddle Bags". The church was a station under Andrews but was changed to a circuit. Ministers were interested in the spiritual life of the church.

Mrs. S. W. Henry was a teacher of the catechism. All children loved and adored her. Mrs. One Forman (grandmother of M. W.) worked in the Methodist Church. She was a wonderful worker in prayer meeting, league choir, and Ladies' Aid after the old school Presbyterians discontinued.)

A most beloved minister was S. R. Lester who came in 1898. He built the present church, and the church went forward under his leadership. Ladies' Aid gave chicken dinners ice cream suppers, and Mr. Lester got little jobs for children so all could pay for the church.

There were no electricity, no paved roads, no cars; the roads were awful in these horse and buggy days. It was with great effort and self denial that the church was built.

The building could not be used until it was paid for. They had to wait a year. Then came the dedication. Dr. Frank Culver preached the dedicatory sermon. Music for the occasion: H. I. Crandall was organist. The choir: Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Allison, Mrs. George Truss, Mrs. Cnc. Forman, Mr. F. F. Osborn, Miss Aderlaide Crandell. The stewards were: Dr. J. S. Ash, T. E. Moody Sr., J. F. Galbreath, S. W. Henry, B. L. Jones, and C. W. Allison. The theme of Dr. Culverson's sermon was, "The end of onw thing means the beginning of another."

The old church pews were sold to Pleasant Hill Church and are still in use.

The parsonage at this time was valued at \$500, the old building at \$1000. The bell from the old church was moved to the new church.

Bro. Lester was a most devout Christian. There was never a night too dark or a road too muddy for him to walk to see the sick and pray with the sad. He would walk four miles out in the country to pray wiht and visit the sick.

In 1899-1900 the church was put on the Trussville Circuit. It had the first Epworth League in the state.

Rev. S. R. Lester left this report of his last year (1900)

Rev. John S. Roberson P. E.

S. W. Henry exhorter

B. L. Jones, L. V. Coupland, T. E. Moody Sr., B. M. Hill, and J. F. Galbreath stewards.

H. I. Crandall president Epworth League



## SPRINGVILLE SCHOOLS

The first school building was located on the hill near the original Baptist Church and cemetery. An advertisement run in the St. Clair Diamond, published in Ashbille, was as follows:

Jan. 2, 1861  
Male & Female Academy Springville  
Rev. J. H. Willoughbie  
Teachers: Two Daughters  
Scholastic year 10 mo.  
1st class session 5 mo.  
Tuition \$7.50  
2nd class \$10.00  
3rd class \$15.00  
4th class \$ 20.00  
Piano, melodian, painting & waxwork also taught  
Boarding \$7.00 to \$8.00 per month  
L. W. Herring, L. B. Clayton, T. S. Freeman Trustees

\*\*In August 1879 there appeared the following notice in the Southern Aegis:  
Springville Academy--a high school for boys and girls  
Jno. C. Turner Sr., Principal.  
The fifth session of this school will begin September the first 1879. During the past two sessions students have been in attendance from six counties in Alabama. As high as seventy-five pupils have been enrolled in one session. A full high school course is taught. Tuition from \$1.50 to \$3.50 per month, board and lodging \$8.00 per month. School books furnished at publisher's prices. Locality healthful and desirable. Church facilities excellent. Destitute orphans taken at half price. No charges for lost time or for incidental expenses. For full particulars apply for annual circular.  
Jno. C. Turner Sr. Principal

\* information--a clipping found in Miss Minnie Woodall's note book.

\*\* Information given by Mrs Ab. Crow, Ashville--copy of a notice in paper.

The school which had been located on the hill near the cemetery was moved down into the valley to a building where the home of Will Jones now stands (1953). The principal was a Mr. Russell. After two years at the new location the Methodists and Presbyterians split. The Methodists wanted a Methodist principal and the Presbyterians wanted a Presbyterian principal.

The Methodists and Baptists remained at the school building with I. W. Hill as principal. The Presbyterians built a school building at the ~~site~~<sup>site</sup> of the present (1953) high school with Mr. Russell as principal. There was much rivalry between the two schools. So jealous were pupils of each other that the Presbyterian girls would not let the Methodists girls see their music for fear they would learn the same pieces. Young people from the two churches could not date each other. A Presbyterian boy was turned out of the church for dancing with a Methodist girl.

Later the groups came together at the new building and added more rooms, J. A. G. Lovett and I. W. Hill were co-principals. The school became Springlake College. Divisions in the school were Primary, Intermediate, Common School, High School and four years college.

This school had a dormitory upstairs over the chapel where the boys stayed. The college was chartered. Included in the curriculum were: music, art, Latin algebra, geometry, trigonometry, calculus, and analytical geometry.

I. W. Hill was an outstanding English and Latin teacher. Says Miss Annie Walker, "His question on the final examination on grammar was: 'Tell all you know about grammar.' I gave every rule in the book. In geography we would have to go to the

board, draw in any map with mountains, rivers, capitals."

The first graduates from the college were:

Nellie Perkins(Syers), Betty Forman(Smith), J. E. Stoval(who became a minister), Lizzie Wunnelly (Gramlin)

In the second class were: Annie Walker, Bert Walker, Pickens Pearson (who was very brilliant and who became a brilliant judge).

"Devotionals were held all together every morning. Every day after dinner Dr. Lovett gave lectures on good morals and gentle manners. He was very fine. One of his favorite Bible passages was 'Lift up your head O ye gates.' Many learned to quote the psalm from hearing him read it.'

'There were tow school papers, one by the girls, one by the boys. The boys called their paper The Diamond. The girls read theirs one day, the boys the next. The girls were not as good as the boys, and had to have help from the principal.

✓ 'Tuition for Seniors was \$5 a month. Incidentals were extra. Almost every home had student boarders. People were very proud of the school. Boys wore uniforms of blue trimmed in braid and buttons. They were drilled by Walter Crupmp. Girls wore uniforms of blue suits and blue caps. Commencement lasted about a week. There were visiting speakers, plays, readings, music recitals." \*

Notes taken from interview with Miss Annie Walker

The building known as Springlake College was destroyed by fire. The building was replaced by a part of what is now the Springville High School building. In 1921 a new rock building was constructed for the high school. Later the elementary school was moved to the rock building and a new wing added to the older brick building. The high school was transferred to the brick building (now in use) In 1948 the lunch room was built, and in 1952 a wing of three rooms and a library was added.

May 11, 1961

ST. CLAIR NEWS-ÆGIS, T

## To Be No More Grave About 134 Year Old

By Emmett G. Sheppard

SPRINGVILLE, ALA. — The ravages of time - wind, rain, heat and cold - are accomplishing what the State Highway Department would not do and that is the removal of a grave which contains the body of a man dead since 1827.

The grave, located about six miles north of Springville, on U. S. No. 11 has occasionally presented a rather startling effect on motorists as they see it arise suddenly in the distance, giving the illusion that it is in the road. One motorist travelling south reported that weird feelings came over him as he saw the grave silhouetted against the sunset. "It seemed as if I were going to drive right into it."

Actually, the grave, containing the body of William G. Gibson, as the stone slab identifies him, is on the right-of-way of U. S. No. 11, and when the road was paved several years ago, the construction crew made a slight projection as they cut the through area to preserve the grave. The grave juts outward from the property of Ancil Pearson, Springville lumber man. In fact, it is almost in his front yard.

Many are the stories told of the man buried there such as that Mr. Gibson, whose birth date on the grave stone shows December 12, 1795, was killed in a duel and another is that he was gored by an ox and died.

Mr. Pearson believes that a more prosaic story is true, that he died of an illness and was buried at the spot by friends with whom he was traveling. The party of travelers had camped at a large spring near the present site of the Pearson

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Mr. Pearson believes that a more prosaic story is true, that he died of an illness and was buried at the spot by friends with whom he was traveling. The party of travelers had camped at a large spring near the present site of the Pearson home. All the stories about the man in the grave agree on two points - he was a hat salesman and was from North Carolina.

The elements are taking their toll. The grave is coming "apart at the seams." The stone headpiece, in the form of a Celtic cross is crumbling, as is the foot piece. The stone slab on which is inscribed the legend: "William G. Gibson, December 12, 1795 - October 220, 1827" is settling into the ground and in a matter of time, the projection on which the grave is located will disappear, washed away by rains.



the shelves of the local branch. By this method books circulate from branch to branch.

Springville has received a set of encyclopedias, an unabridged dictionary, several basic reference books and a great many new fiction books for young people and adults. At present there are 1461 books assigned to the Springville branch.

## The Springville Library Story - - -

Mrs. Kathryn Lankford, clerk for the Town of Springville has been in charge of the Library since it opened in 1958.

(This is number 4 in a series of articles concerning the St. Clair County Library System).

Springville was the second town in St. Clair County to qualify for a library branch. On Oc-

tober 18, 1958 open house was held for the new branch which had quarters in the newly constructed Town Hall. Mrs. Kathryn Lankford is the clerk and she has been responsible for circulating books and making the reports to the central library in Pell City.

A committee of local citizens has been active and its membership changes from time to time. In the early days the committee helped keep the books straight and to call in over-due books. They also assisted the county librarian when books were exchanged with other branches.

In April 1966 the St. Clair County Library Board appointed Mrs. Glenda Van Pelt to assist for four hours each week. She is responsible for making reports and for calling in over-due books. There are several young people who come often to help Mrs. Van Pelt. They are especially helpful on days when books are exchanged. The county headquarters sends a small bookmobile filled with books. This is called "the swap shop" and it goes to each branch once a month. The branch librarian chooses from the new books and returns an equal number from

Sept. 29, 1966

ST. CLAIR NEWS-AEGIS, PELL CITY, ALABAMA



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A committee...



## SPRINGVILLE—

# SUCCESS STORY

Text and Pictures by John Ford

Eight years ago the town of Springville, in St. Clair County, had nearly "gone to seed, as the expression goes." Nearby coal mines had been worked out and abandoned. Agricultural income had dwindled. Sticks and leaves blew about the doorways of abandoned store buildings. Some townspeople commuted to Birmingham for employment, but many young people had moved away. Large numbers of the citizens remaining were "on relief".

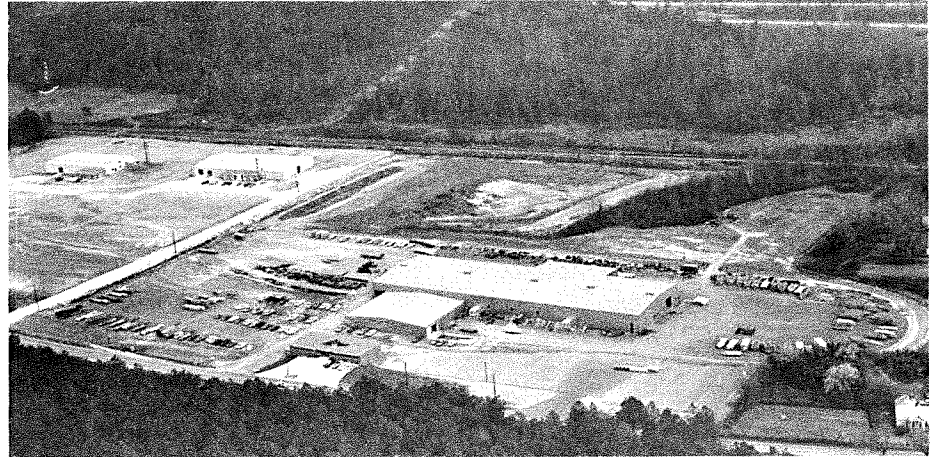
In March of 1962, a new community spirit began to stir. Under local leadership the Springville Development Corporation was formed and stock was bought by 129 persons and firms out of a total population of 822. Twenty-three shareholders bought stock on the installment plan, 17 of them paying five dollars per month for ten months to own a share in Springville's future. All of the stockholders now have a sense of plant ownership and pride that accounts for much of the success Springville has enjoyed.

Except for the local sawmill, only two small industries existed in Springville in 1962. The Crown Binder & Cover Company, Inc., started in 1961 as a six-man shop. With Springville Chamber of Commerce assistance they expanded and now employ 14 people to produce book covers and binders for magazines and catalogues. They have recently leased additional space for a new silk-screen process.

In 1962, the Mary Louise Manufacturing Company employed ten women making children's dresses. With the Development Corporation's sponsorship, the City in 1964 erected a larger building and leased it to the Mary Louise Company for its first expansion. Today they employ 50 people.

This started the Town's industrial upturn and currently nine diversified, — small but growing industries enrich Springville. They employ 584 people, well balanced between men and women, who have a combined income in excess of \$2 million per year.

In 1963, the National Cabinet Corporation located in Springville to make various types of metal cabinets and stamp metal components for other cabinet makers. Since that time it has had three expansions and are planning another. Of the 141 employees, 67 percent were once on the County's relief rolls. The company has always qualified for purchasing discounts and buys 80 percent of its materials from Alabama sources. It received direct financing from the Small



Springville's Industrial Park is ideally located between U. S. Highway 11, at the bottom of the picture, and the Alabama Great Southern Railroad. Shown at top is Interstate Highway 59 connecting Birmingham and Chattanooga.

From left to right are the plants of Godwin Enterprises, American Plastics Corporation and the Birmingham Manufacturing Company.

Business Administration and indirectly from SBA through the Springville Development Corporation. The corporation has been cited by Senator John Sparkman as "the ideal example of what SBA loans can do for a community". National Cabinet now has 105,000 square feet of floor space on 6.7 acres in Springville's Industrial Park.

Southeastern Enameling Corporation was established in 1964 to make enameled steel plumbing fixtures for household construction and for mobile homes. It has expanded twice in two years and plans another expansion for 1971. They employ 62 men and three women in a 45,000 square foot plant, plus 30,000 square feet of warehouse space on 5½ acres in the Industrial Park.

The Birmingham Manufacturing Company builds lowboy and special type trailers for use in transporting heavy equipment. Its lowboys are used at Cape Kennedy to move rockets to launching pads. The market area includes the entire United States and several foreign areas including Israel and Arabia. This company moved from Birmingham in 1966, expanded in 1969, and now employs 101 men and women in a 46,000 square foot manufacturing plant, plus 10,000 square feet of warehouse space for parts and 8,000 square feet of offices on 24 acres of the Springville Industrial Park. A 108,000 square foot expansion is planned for the near future which will bring employment to 300.

The Fairmont Basket Company moved to Springville in 1967 from Birmingham. It employs three men and

15 women, making plain and fancy woven baskets for variety stores and food chains packaging fruits, meats, and nuts.

The Simmons Lumber Company, established in 1967, employs 19 men in a plant which will soon be moved to a larger location.

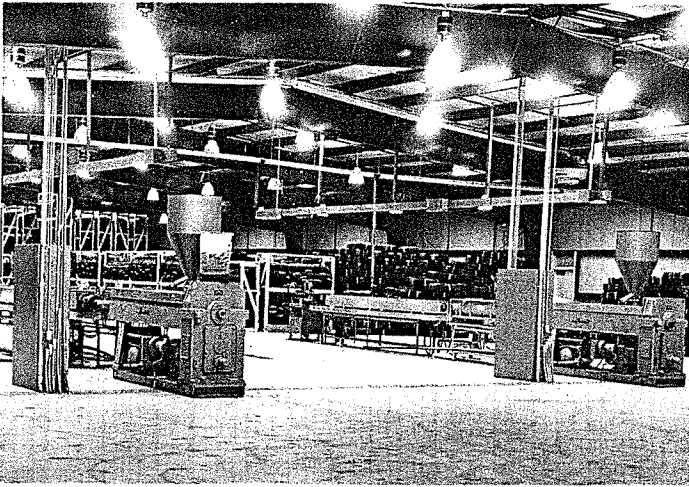
Godwin Enterprises, Inc., came in January of 1970 to make molded plastic items such as ice chests, styrofoam insulation and packaging materials of expanded polyethylene. It employs seven men and has plans for future growth.

The American Plastics Corporation is a new company started this year to make extruded plastic pipe of black polyethylene for plumbing uses and polyvinyl chloride for use as sewer pipe. The present plant, employing 25 people, is to be expanded to twice its size this year and reach top production in 1972.

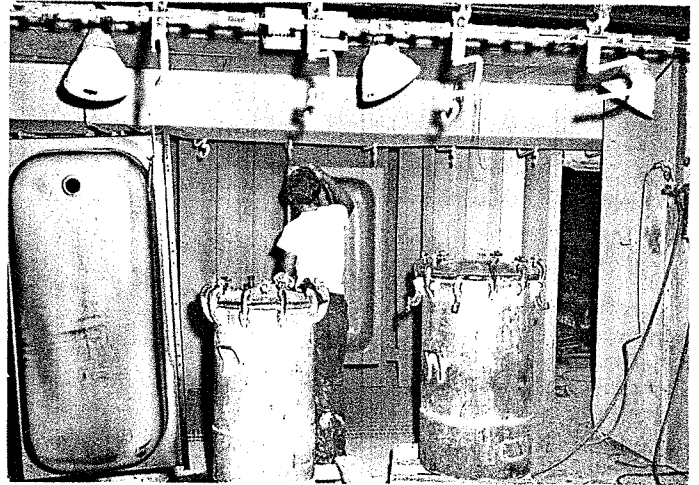
## PLEASE NOTE!

This is the first in a series of "success stories" in the industrial development of Alabama's communities. ADO plans to publish similar stories of economic growth in each future issue. Copies will be reprinted in brochure form and made available to the town concerned for use in industrial promotion.

Editor



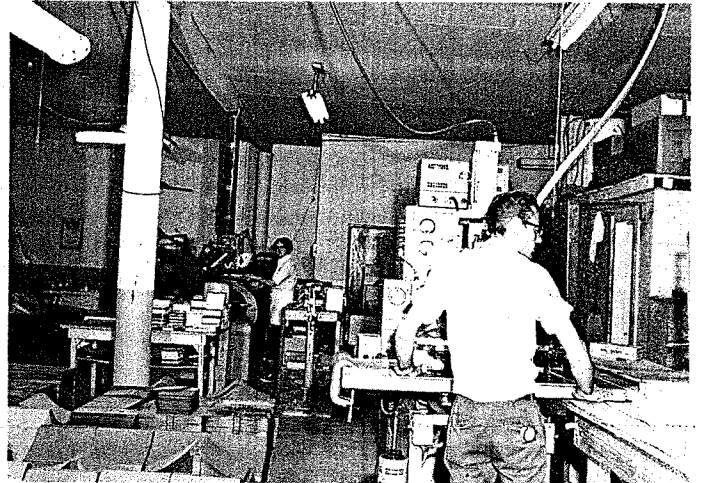
American Plastics Corporation



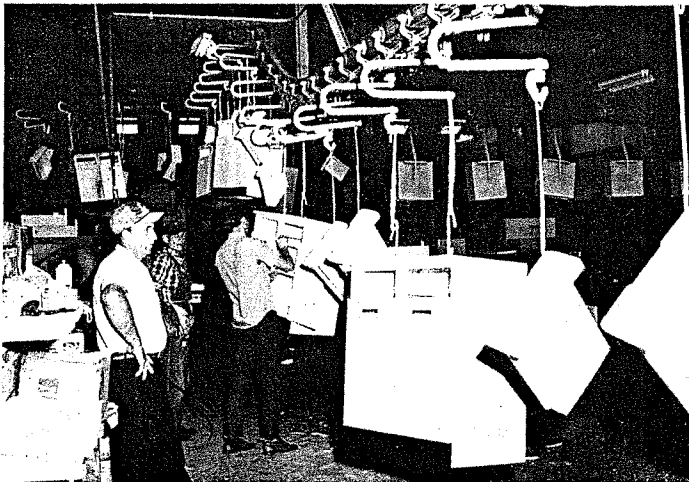
Southeastern Enameling Corporation



Fairmont Basket Works



Crown Binder and Cover Company



National Cabinet Corporation



Godwin Enterprises

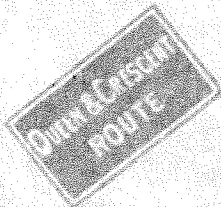
Construction of a new shopping center has been started by the Springville Development Corporation consisting of 40,000 sq. ft. of buildings with seven occupants. Already completed is a medical clinic and drug store. When this facility is finished, the old brick buildings "downtown" will give way to a new community center and recreation area to

be developed around the 3 million gallon-per-day spring which gives the town its name.

Every step of the way, Springville's development has been planned in advance — to have several small industries rather than one dominant one; to diversify types of industries, avoiding peaks and valleys of employment; to balance jobs for men with those for women; to develop

industrial sites prior to the need; and to organize financing in all ways available.

The Development Corporation, of 129 stockholders, following the leadership of president Archie Jones and of Mayor Marcus Pearson, has done wonders for the Town. Competent direction, careful planning, and hard work have paid off in the economic revitalization of Springville.



# THE ALABAMA STATE LAND COMPANY

OWNERS OF ALABAMA & CHATTANOOGA RAILROAD LANDS

H. J. CRANDALL  
DISTRICT AGENT

E. M. TUTWILER, JR.  
GENERAL MANAGER  
BIRMINGHAM, ALA.

SPRINGVILLE, ALA.

August 19, 1916-

Gen. Theo. M. Owen,  
Montgomery,  
Alabama-

Dear Sir:-

Your letter under date of the 1st, inst., to Rev. C. C. Godbey, has been referred to me for answer. - I take pleasure in giving you the following information, which is as nearly accurate as I can obtain:

The town of Springville, was named on account of the many springs of good pure water, located in the center of the town.-

The town of Springville, is located in Sec. 31, Tp. 14, R. 2 West, and is 15 miles from Ashville, the county seat of St. Clair County.-

The names of some of the first settlers are as follows: J. D. Coupland, Jas. Therasen, W. E. Spruiell, L. W. Herring, Wad Bates, Jim Larkford, Dr. T. S. Freeman, Dr. Phillips.

C. M. Pearson, was the first, or one of the first postmasters.-

C. M. Pearson and L. W. Herring were among the first merchants.-

A Dr. Phillips was possibly the first physician.-

Prof. Draper, was one of the first teachers.-

Rev. A. J. Waldrep, a Baptist minister, was one of the first preachers.-

Springville is located on the main pile road extending from Birmingham, Alabama to Chattanooga, Tenn.-

Springville, is purely a farming community, - no industries located here.-

There is located in the center of the town, a small lake, filled with fish of several kinds, and the lake is supplied with water from numerous springs nearby.-

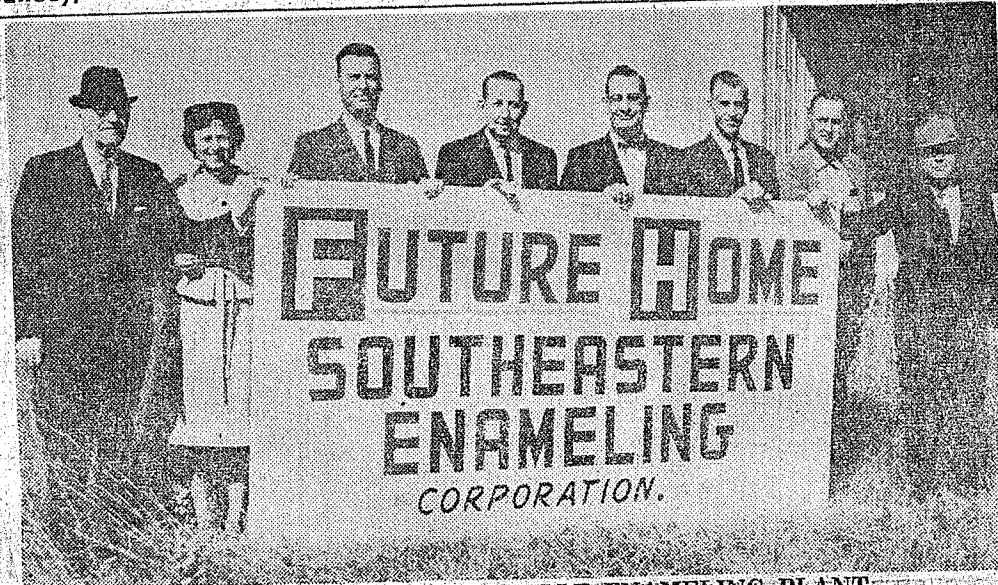
Very truly,  
*[Signature]*



St. Clair Co

Sunday, November 24, 1963

Birmingham News



**SITE CHOSEN FOR SPRINGVILLE ENAMELING PLANT**

From left, Judge M. W. Forman, Mrs. Sophia Davis, Clarence H. Cook Jr., Springville Mayor Marcus Pierson, J. P. Frey, Archie Jones, C. L. Dixon and L. B. Hallmark.

# Springville enameling plant construction to begin soon

BY IRVING BEIMAN  
News business editor

SPRINGVILLE, Nov. 23—Construction of the new Southeastern Enameling Corp. plant, to cost more than \$500,000, will get under way in about 30 days, J. P. Frey, president of the company, announced Saturday.

The new plant will employ 40 person when production starts next Spring, and an additional 40 will be added in the ensuing months.

The new plant, only 30 miles from Birmingham, will specialize in job type enameling and the manufacture of sanitary ware—porcelain on steel bath tubs and sinks, now made only

in limited quantities in the Southeast. million annually in the Southeastern states.

THE PLANT also will make prefabricated, package - type buildings; facing materials, such as fronts for service stations, restaurants and stores; porcelain on steel and aluminum signs, and other specialty products.

Current plans also call for the manufacture of glass-lined water heaters and other porcelainized appliances at a later date.

Steel from the Birmingham area will form the largest part of the new plant's raw materials, Frey said. He anticipates sales volume of more than \$1

“OUR MAJOR production facilities will include a semi-continuous gas-fired tunnel furnace to accommodate items approximately seven by 14 feet, and will be one of the most modern multi-purpose furnaces of this type in the nation,” Frey said.

“In addition to this, there will be other furnaces and metal treating, forming and laminating equipment.”

Research which assisted in determining the advisability of establishing an enameling plant in the Birmingham area was done by the industrial development department of Alabama Gas Corp., of which Clarence H. Cook Jr., is manager.

ASSISTANCE WAS also given by the Birmingham Committee of 100, the State Planning and Industrial Development Board, Development Board of Alabama Power Company and Rural Area Development of U. S. Department of Agriculture.

“We are especially indebted for the financial and other assistance provided by the Area Redevelopment Administration of the U. S. Department of Commerce, Small Business Administration Mayor Marcus Pierson

## SITE CHOSEN FOR SPRINGVILLE ENAMELING PLANT

From left, Judge M. W. Forman, Mrs. Sophia Davis, Clarence H. Cook Jr., Springville Mayor Marcus Pierson, J. P. Frey, Archie Jones, C. L. Dixon and L. B. Hallmark.

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“We are especially indebted for the financial and other assistance provided by the Area Redevelopment Administration of the U. S. Department of Commerce, Small Business Administration, Mayor Marcus Pierson of Springville and the residents of St. Clair County,” Frey said.

The plant site, in excess of five acres, was donated by the City of Springville, which is also making the new company a long term loan.

Frey also expressed appreciation to the Alabama Congressional delegation for its assistance in obtaining an Area Redevelopment Administration and a Small Business Administration loan. Frey also expressed appreciation to the many individuals, concerns and the stockholders, whose support has assisted tremendously in the development of this local project.

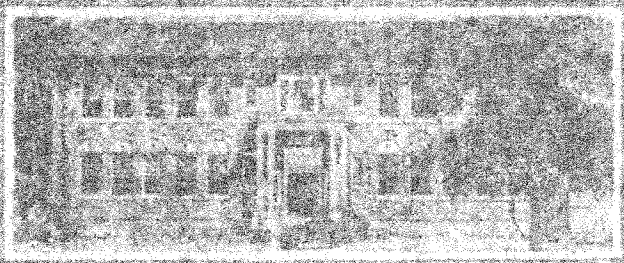
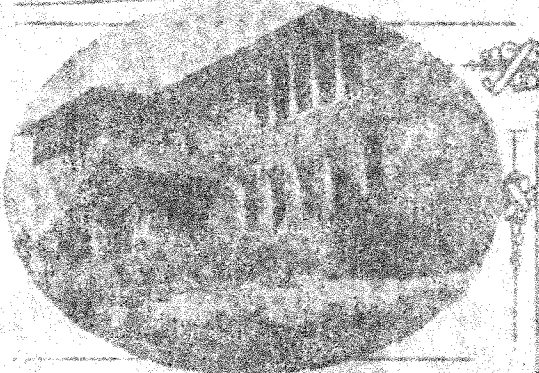
Robert Adams of Charles H. McCauley & Associates is the architect and Rives Construction Co. is the general contractor. The Ferro Corp., Cleveland, Ohio, is designing and will install the new equipment.



### *Springville cheerleaders win award*

The Springville High School cheerleaders won two coveted ribbons at the Mid-South Cheerleader Clinic at the University of Mississippi campus. Participating were over 700 cheerleaders from all over the South. Giving a big cheer are from left (front row) Merle Galbreath, Kay Wise, Linda Phillips, Joyce Allison, Jane Walker, Sandra Leopard, and Trudy Hodges. Second row: Brenda Scott and Jane Rutland. Top row, Linda Burttram.

# VIEWS OF SPRINGVILLE SHOW POND, SCHOOLS AND RESIDENCE OF ST. CLAIR COUNTY TOWN



Above are four views of Springville, one of Alabama's most beautiful little cities. The picture at the upper left shows the big pond, fed by the spring from which the town derives its name. At the upper right is one of the pretty residences in the town. The residence is that of M. W. Forman. In the lower left is a picture of the grammar school and at the right is the town's modern high school.

## EARLY HISTORY OF TOWN INTERESTING

Civitan Club, Newly Formed,  
Taking Active Part In  
Affairs Of City

This is the second of a series of articles on Alabama towns and personalities being written by Frank Willis Barnett, special writer for The Birmingham News and Age-Herald. In Barnett's next article was on Rossaville. Tomorrow it will be about Asheville. Don't miss this series.

BY FRANK WILLIS BARNETT

We have frequently had a hard time in finding out how Alabama towns got their names. In writing the story of several hundred of them, recalling for instance how in one place we had citizens to tell us that the town had been christened for this one and that one, and it was difficult to harmonize the testimony. But discovering the origin of Springville was dead easy as all we had to do was to gaze in the large and wonderfully beautiful spring which bubbles up 100 feet from the main highway. It was only to see in "mind's eye" the Creek Indians camped around its banks, for they long lived in the section. As we have seen on Big Cane Creek there were two Creek towns, Ulatu, situated on the site of the present Asheville, and Littafatchee, about 3000 miles away, between it and Springville.

To get a proper perspective of St. Clair County's history, one has to know it was carved out of Shelby County and remember that after Col. Lynn, commanding a detachment of Tennessee troops, surprised and burned Littafatchee, other engagements with the Indians had been happening and were to happen. After the treaty of Ft. Jackson, Aug. 3, 1814, all the remaining Creeks in the county were brought over and settled on the east side of the Coosa, as all of the county on the west side was embraced in the treaty.

Visited By De Seta

Along the Coosa River from a point above Tea Islands, the entire river boundary of the county is dotted with evidences of aboriginal occupancy. At Lock 3, at Lock 4, and Wood's Island and at points in the northwestern section of the county the indications are quite extensive.

Le Seta found the country on the opposite bank of the Coosa River quite thickly settled when he visited Coosa in 1810 and it is very reasonable to suppose these settlements extended west. As we ride through the territory in which De Seta and his proud cavaliers with all of their European trappings rode; we like to think of Andrew Jackson and his rough, poorly mounted Tennessee volunteers as they did their work which prepared the way for our pioneer forebears to establish settlements.

Settlers began to trickle in the section as early as 1818, for in 1818 Col. Byer and other of Jackson's men had cleared the way for them. Settlers from Madison county traveled down the old Indian trail that led from Leno's Landing on the Tennessee River to Ann Town on the Cahaba, while East Tennesseans came down the beautiful Tennessee River in flat boats, landing at Depost or Hunter's Landing (now Gunterville), thence to make their way to their new homes in the wilderness.

Georgians and Carolinians reached the Creek nation on the Coosa, by crossing the Chattahoochee at the Upper Shallow Ford, passing through Rome, crossing White Creek near Bennettsville and thence striking the east side of the mountains.

While we are on the Creek nation, we might add that it was near Geneport in July, 1864, during the War Between the States, Gen. Clanton, for whom Clanton was named, made a stand against Gen. Hoozean, who passed on to Chocoma and Leechapooka. Some of this history takes us to East Alabama, but it all had to do with the early settlement of St. Clair County.

We do not know who the first settlers at Springville were, neither do we know the time of its incorporation, but we do know it is an old town and in talking to two of its oldest citizens were told that when they settled there more than 40 years ago it was incorporated. There, however, are some of the older family names in the county (Wilson, Freeman, Woodall, McLenon, Perkins, Ash, Trask, Irwin, Campbell, Moody, Adcher, Herring, Pearson, Lacy, Scott, Crumell, Tamm, Walker, Cox, Revis, McLaughlin, Wanda, Alden and Byer).

H. P. Freshly Mayor

H. P. Freshly has been mayor for some 12 years and the addresses helping him to look after the matters are H. J. Guly, R. H. Gandy, Arthur Gierman, M. W. Gandy and J. W. Walker. The town also has a postoffice in many ways. The highway which runs through it has since it was paved, added much to its looks as well as to the comfort of residents. Store fronts have been modernized and several large buildings erected.



Springville. Postoffice and station on the  
A. G. S. R. R., in the W part of St. Clair county,  
Sec. 31, T. 14, R. 2, E, 15 miles W of Ashville. Popu-  
lation: 1870 - whites 818, colored 262, total 1,080;  
1880 - Springville Beat 4 - 1,831; 1880 - village  
proper - 185; 1888 - 350; 1910 - 350. Attitude: 717  
feet. Name: The Name of Springville. It is  
named for the springs that gush up in its  
streets, it bore this name 100 years ago. The  
first settlers were J. D. Coupland, James Thomason,  
W. B. Spruell, L. W. Herring, Wad Bates, Jim Lamb-  
ford, Dr. T. S. Freeman and Dr. Philips - the first  
physicians; C. M. Pearson, first P. M.; L. W.  
Herring and C. M. Pearson, first merchants.  
Prof. Draper, first teacher, Rev. A. J. Waldrop,  
Baptist, first preacher. It is located on the Bir-  
mingham to Chattanooga Pike. A purely farm-  
ing community. A small lake, full of fish, is form-  
ed in the center of the town, by the numerous springs;  
it is a natural curiosity.

Letter of Col. John W. Inger, Aug. 1916; Brewer's Alabama, p. 823  
" " H. J. Crandall, " " ; Polk's Ala. Gaz. - p. 736



# Alabama Amblings

## Project is slow in speed center

BY FRANK SIKORA, News staff writer

Come September, Talladega is going to be known as one of the speed capitals of the nation, with the Talladega 500. But speed is something that hasn't marked the erection of the city's new municipal complex.

It was supposed to have been finished Feb. 3. However, it won't be completed until about the end of May — if something doesn't happen.

Actually, some bad weather is the main problem. But some city leaders wanted to stop any further payments to the contractor until more progress was made.

### Emergency number helps

UP IN HALEYVILLE, Minnie L. Kimbrell, the city clerk, has been getting phone calls for 24 years from people who want to know who they should call in some sort of an emergency.

Now she doesn't have to memorize police, fire and ambulance numbers anymore. The city has the general emergency number of 911, which may be dialed in any crisis.

Haleyville is reportedly the first city in the nation to have the number. There are only five so far with the number, but others are planned.

### Lawn mower lost

HERE'S a sign-of-spring type yarn. It seems the Elba police, like all police departments, find misplaced items and have to advertise to the public to come and claim bicycles, trunks and what not.

But the Elba department somehow came up with a lawn mower. And as yet, no one has claimed it.

They're talking about building a new airport to serve the Elba, Enterprise and New Brockton area. It's something the rapidly growing area needs.

### Time for beauty

THIS SEEMS TO be the time of year for beauty pageants. Today the "Gem of the Gems" will be picked at Jacksonville State. Thursday Auburn students pick "Miss Auburn." And later this month the University of Alabama will present the "Miss Alabama-Universe" pageant.

### Area's oldest grave

MRS. W. P. LAMAR of Springville Rt. 1 has been digging into the history of the area. Her search brought her to probably the oldest marked grave in the region. It's the resting place of a William G. Gibson, who died in 1827, as he journeyed with his family westward.

The grave is near the Pleasant Hill Cemetery. However, it's also near U. S. Highway 11, and Mrs. Lamar says there's danger of it slipping and falling onto the road.

### Kansas 'largest'

Here's something that's sort of interesting. Texas, Ala., in Marion County, is bigger than America, Ala., in Walker County. And Kansas, Ala., also in Walker, is bigger than both of them. That's unofficial, of course.

And for some reason, the American flag isn't flown at Moody School in St. Clair County. At least, this was the case the last time we went by there. We don't know why.



FRANK SIKORA

*St. Clair*

*St. Clair*

# City of Pell City

1905 FIRST AVENUE NORTH  
PELL CITY, ALABAMA 35125



COUNCIL MEMBERS  
*Forest A. Walls*  
*James McGowan*  
*Bernard White*  
*Donnie Todd, Jr.*  
*Darrin DeLoach*

*Guin Robinson*  
MAYOR

*Marinda Gipson*  
CLERK

TELEPHONE: (205) 338-2244  
FAX: (205) 338-2320

MEMO

DATE:

## Open House Saturday At Springville Plant

The people of Springville and St. Clair county will mark the opening of another brand new industry in their city Saturday of this week.

Mayor Marcus Pearson said city officials and citizens of the community and county would co-operate with officials of Southeastern Enameling Corporation in holding Open House at the company's new plant at Springville beginning at 11 a.m., Saturday.

Sen. John Sparkman, junior United States Senator from Huntsville, will be the main speaker at the Open House celebration. Through his connection with the Small Business Administration in Washington, Senator Sparkman has been a strong factor in helping to bring many new industries to Alabama in the past dozen years.

Southeastern Enameling is the second major industry to

locate in Springville in the past few years. The First was National Cabinet Company, a going plant that is furnishing a substantial payroll to the community.

Starting at 11 o'clock Saturday morning Open House will be held at Southeastern's new plant, constructed near National Cabinet's operation. Their new plant will be in partial operation so that visitors will be enabled to see it running.

Southeastern at present has 31 employees. They expect to employ about 60 workers when the plant is in full operation. Most of the employees will be residents of the Springville area. This will bring in an additional payroll of approximately \$250,000 a year.

Refreshments will be served at Saturday's Open House. The public is cordially invited.

NOVEMBER 17, 2004

# Dying Springville is healthy again

Guin 3  
MA

Marinc  
CL

TELEPHON  
FAX: (205) 3

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. John Sparkman, D-Ala., today told the story of a small Alabama town which was dying but is now on its way to a successful economic revival.

Sparkman, in a speech prepared for U. S. Senate floor delivery, told congressmen about Springville.

Springville, a rural community 30 miles northeast of Birmingham, began to lose employment when a coal mine closed in 1952, he said. By 1962, with only 822 people left and classified as an official depressed area, 87 Springville citizens organized a local development company to attract new industry.

"This company decided to build a \$188,000 factory to lease to newly organized firms to manufacture metal stampings," Sparkman said. "They raised \$48,000 locally. The Small Business Administration provided \$140,000 on a long term loan and the factory was soon in operation.

"Starting with 60 employees in 1962, employment rose to 75 in 1963 and 117 in 1965. Today

135 persons are regularly employed," he continued. "Of the firm's present employees, 92 were previously unemployed, many on welfare. Today these employees are skilled, confident of the future, supporting families, and paying taxes."

Springville News. April 26, 1967

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c

# Springville Chamber rebounds; provides unity for town

By GARY HANNER  
News-Aegis Reporter

SPRINGVILLE—Since its establishment in the 1950's, the Springville Chamber of Commerce has seen some highs and lows.

"When we first started, it was one of the leading civic organizations in Springville," said J.B. Martin, who was a member of the very first chamber here and is now serving as chamber president.

"On that first one we probably had about 25 members and we were a very active organization. One of the most active members back then was Marcus Pearson who was once

mayor in Springville in the 1960's." The 1980's saw the chamber go through a dormant period.

"I think the reason we went through that period was the failure to attract young people," Martin added. "The younger business-oriented people were branching out."

"We knew we had to do something, so in the late 1980's, the local businessmen reactivated the Chamber of Commerce and incorporated it into the Springville area. That was the turnaround as we headed into the 1990's."

Some of the projects the chamber has undertaken are community improvement and beautification,

historical preservation, and supporting Olde Tymes Day.

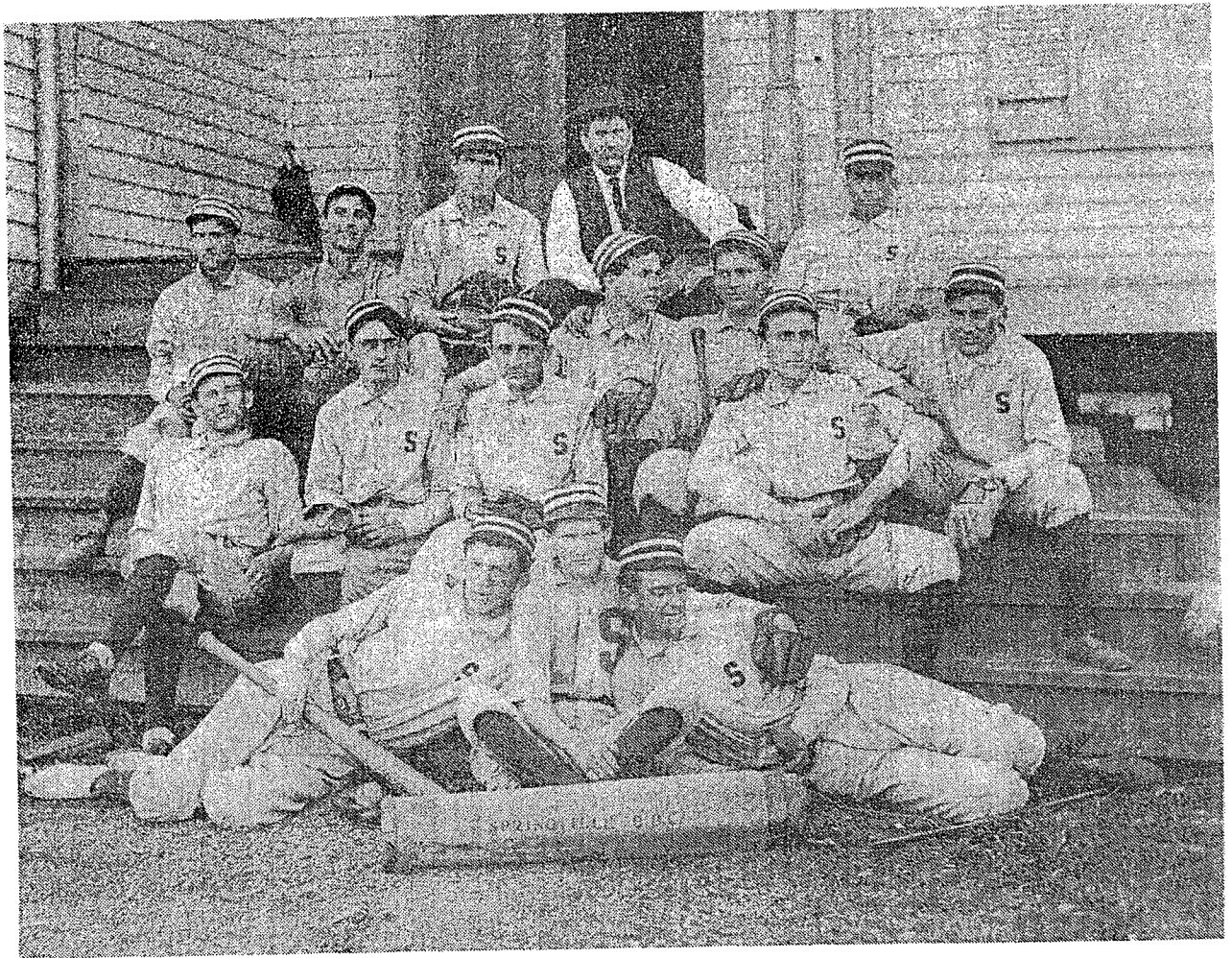
One of the goals for 1992 is to become a major sponsor for the Springville Youth Association.

"We just contributed \$1,000 to the Youth Association," Martin noted.

Other goals in 1992 are to give promotion assistance to the business and industrial membership, especially concerning the Alabama Disability Acts, Workers Compensation and Health Care.

"Right now the Chamber of Commerce has about 40 members," Martin said. "Our goal for 1992 is to have 75 members."





**SPRINGVILLE BASEBALL**—This early picture of this Springville baseball team was made in the early 1900's. The men are unidentified. Do you know who they are?

# Teacher Appreciation Day At Springville

A teacher appreciation day, a project started at the beginning of school last year by the Parent - Teacher Association, was culminated this week with Mayor Ralph Windham acting as principal in place of B. G. Smith.

Teacher appreciation day was inaugurated as the result of the efforts of Mrs. L. R. Windham who has just concluded her tenure as president of the PTA. Under the plan, any teacher who desired to take at least one day off with pay could do so, and a parent would take her place in the classroom. Throughout the year, some teacher would call a

parent that she would be off the next day. The parent then would appear in her place.

However, it was just this week that some of the teachers realized that they had not taken advantage of the opportunity, and suddenly several of them took "French leave". The local schools had their share of parents for the day. Mayor Windham led the teaching parents as they acted as tutors.

Local PTA officials term the project a success as the parents learned at first hand just what a teacher goes thru during a day's work.

## Children Enjoy Train Ride

The A and G S express from Washington to Birmingham made an unscheduled stop in Springville Saturday morning and forty-eight wide-eyed youngsters stepped from the passenger cars.

The boys and girls, many of whom had never ridden on a train, were members of the music class of Mrs. Maude Russell of Attalla. It was Mrs. Russell's idea to take her class on such a trip instead of giving a music recital.

"I thought a train ride would encourage some of the young people, especially the boys, to become interested in music," Mrs. Russell said. "Some of the boys are rather bashful about appearing at a recital but a train ride, well, that's different."

The class, accompanied by seven counselors, were met by a group of Springville residents and were taken over the main

thoroughfare of the town. They wound up at the lake where the chamber of commerce had prepared a picnic for the youngsters and their counselors.

The girls and boys seemed delighted with their train ride and being escorted over the town. One little lady, getting out of the car driven by Mrs. Ralph Windham, was heard to boast that she rode in the mayor's car.

Mrs. Russell, whose husband is a railroad man, said she thought the children would enjoy a train ride since it is becoming something of a rarity.

She selected Springville as the first excursion because it was not far from Attalla and had the attraction of the lake where the children could watch the fish and feed them by hand.

After attending a movie, the music class left on the afternoon train for Attalla.

## CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

The radio series "How Christian Science Heals" to be broadcast over WVOK Sunday at 10 a. m. will have as its subject, "Finding Ourselves."

The TV series, to be telecast over channel 13 Sunday at 9:45 a. m. will have as its subject "How Mental Housecleaning Aids in Healing."

Studies of seaside vegetation indicate that the level of the ocean has risen about 12 inches in the last 100 years.

# The Birmingham News

## Fireball threatened to bathe Springville in a flood of flame

BY BOB HAWKINS  
News staff writer

### SPRINGVILLE

A huge red fireball rose from the wreckage of a freight train on a warmish Wednesday afternoon here.

Fascinated, terrified residents watched it rise several hundred feet in the air.

It started down, threatening to bathe this town of 1,000 in fire.

THEN, MIRACULOUSLY, it disintegrated into smoke, not too far above rooftops.

Even so, the heat set fire to house tops and lawns over a four-block area.

This started a siege of

fright, started when a Southern Railway freight derailed, starting a raging fire.

Former Probate Judge Ward Forman was having a 2 p.m. lunch with his son, Madison. His engineer son was to leave today for the hot, arid oilfields of Saudi Arabia.

MADISON FORMAN was to become acclimated to the heat of the Middle East before stepping off the jet.

The two went outside when they first heard the noise and saw the explosion.

"When the fire started toward the ground it's the second time in my life I thought I was a goner," Madison Forman, a U.S.

Naval Academy graduate, said.

Judge Forman stumbled and fell, but not before the heat had scorched his back.

RALPH TUCKER and his wife were delivering The Birmingham News two blocks from the explosion.

"It scared my wife to death . . . my car just jumped up and down," he said.

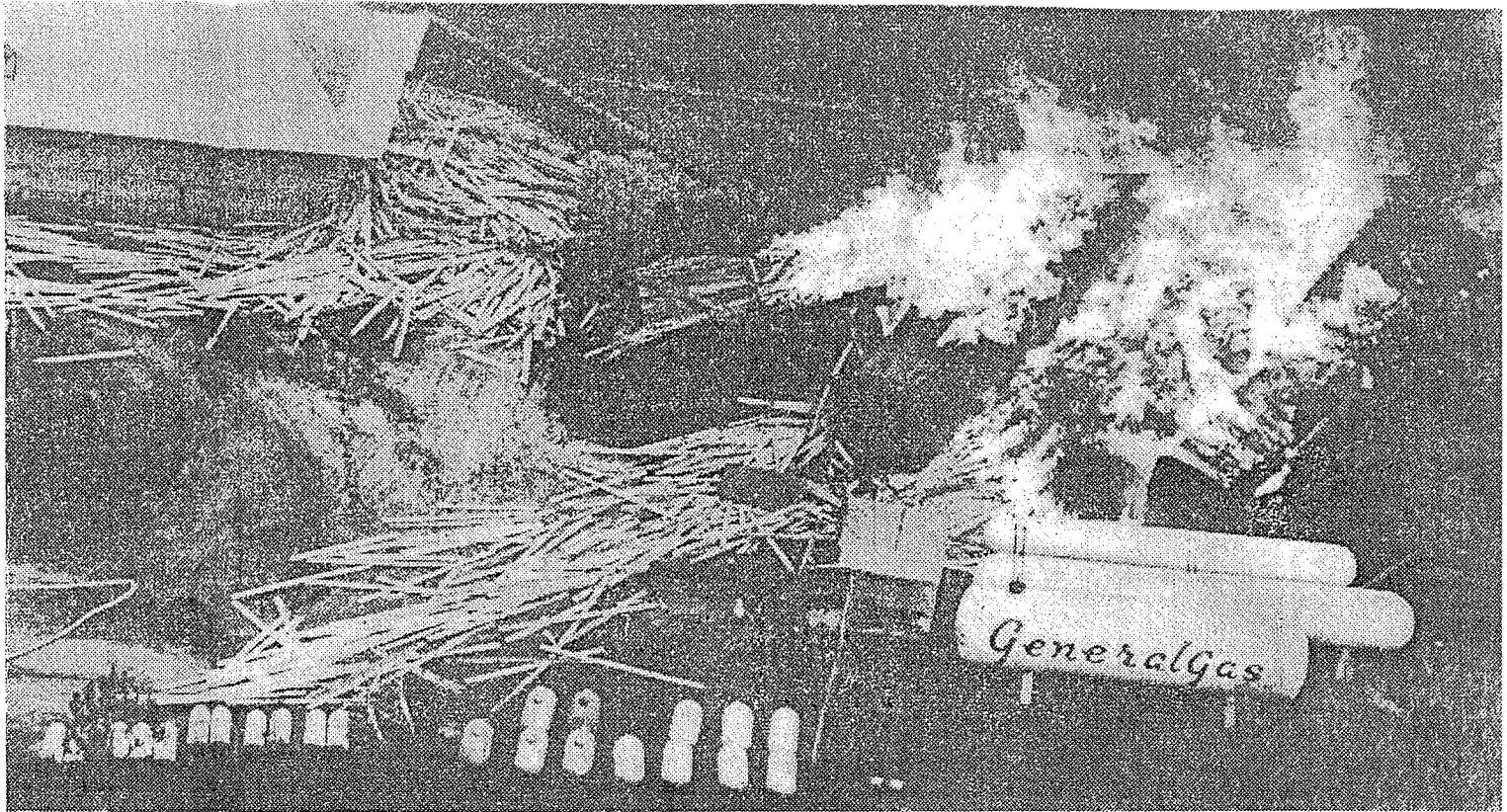
Students at the high school were told to load on the buses immediately by their principal, Horace Robinson. Those students who lived in Springville were ordered to get aboard too and "go home with somebody."

A mild panic erupted at the school. Fortunately, no one

was in  
evacuat

SEVE  
ing on





**LUMBER SPILLED FROM TRAIN, CAUGHT FIRE AFTER TANK CAR EXPLODED NEAR GAS STORAGE AREA**  
 . . . Blaze raged throughout afternoon and night, threatening town of Springville

ired and all were  
 l promptly.

tracks fled on foot into the  
 hills with what belongings  
 they could carry.

der attack. Some went to the  
 National Guard armory, oth-  
 ers simply vanished.

prepared for such an emer-  
 gency, but marveled in the  
 way people cooperated in the  
 orderly evacuation.

"We are extremely gra-  
 for the help we received  
 our neighboring towns  
 providing firemen and ec-  
 ment," the mayor said.

AL FAMILIES liv-  
 he east side of the

Townpeople scattered like  
 refugees with their town un-

Springville Mayor Marcus  
 Pearson said his town was not

# A coat lay burning in yard giving doctor, wife a scare

BY BOB HAWKINS  
 News staff writer

## SPRINGVILLE

Springville's only physician,  
 Dr. James Burgess, and his  
 nurse-wife were horrified  
 when they returned from a  
 house call to find their daugh-  
 ter's coat lying burning in  
 their front yard.

train wreck explosion and  
 sent them to a Birmingham  
 hospital for observation.

Mrs. Burgess later showed  
 what Springville people are  
 made of, and became a "fire-  
 ball" herself, securing quar-  
 ters, sleeping arrangements  
 and food for the displaced  
 who had nowhere to go.

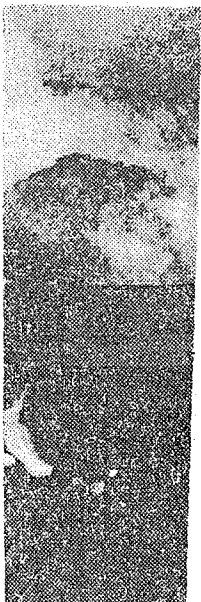
looked like a city under siege.  
 Scores of firemen, state troop-  
 ers, policemen and sheriff's  
 officers busied themselves do-  
 ing whatever they could.

Only Ernest Whitley, and  
 his brother, Fred, who lived  
 on the main street remained  
 at home. Fred was very sick  
 and flat of his back in bed.

Southern Railway provi-  
 food and coffee at the arm-  
 for displaced families  
 firefighters who had gathe-  
 in anticipation of another  
 gas car that threatened  
 explode.

Miss Ella Sue Herring to  
 ed her tiny Chihuahua pup  
 "Lady," underneath her c

By 7 p.m. Mrs. Burgess had





Quality tone with beautifully styled cabinetry of

Birmingham News - February 9, 1969 Page A-14

# PSC reports 'poor' track conditions at time of Springville train derailment

The president of the Alabama Public Service Commission said Saturday the track was in "poor condition" at the time of a train derailment in Springville which set off a raging fire and explosions.

Eugene Connor said an investigation by Norris Payne, chief inspector for the PSC, revealed "old and rotten" cross ties causing rail spikes "to be loose and able to be removed by hand without any effort."

The Alabama Great Southern freight derailed in the city limits of Springville heavily damaging a four-block area

when two tank cars loaded with liquefied petroleum gas exploded.

THE NATIONAL Transportation Safety Board is conducting an investigation into the Springville derailment and two others, all within a 13 day period. All three derailments were on the AGS and all involved train No. 154. The NTSB has not released its findings yet.

The first derailments were near Batelle in DeKalb County on Jan. 13, followed two days later by the 30-car wreck in Springville.

One tank car filled with gas

One of the men, Payne said and the other for the section was responsible for the track between Attalla and Chattanooga.

## MAJOR FIRE AT SPRINGVILLE—

James V. Gray  
2001 19th. St. So 3

# Tank Car Explodes After Train Derails

An apparent train derailment and the subsequent explosion of at least two butane gas tank cars resulted in a holocaust that swept through a large area of Springville early Wednesday afternoon.

At News-Aegis press time, sketchy reports indicated that "several houses" had been damaged as a result of the explosion which sent flames sweeping into wooded areas surrounding the Southern Railway tracks and spreading into the fringes of Springville residential areas. All residents in the immediate area of the fire were being evacuated.

The force of the first explosion was said to have blown a big tank car about ¼-mile onto a hillside, completely demolishing two houses and damaging several others. Windows in the downtown Springville area were said to have been broken by the explosion, and grass flames spread for several blocks into residential areas.

Fire trucks were called in from Ashville, Pell City, Trussville, Center Point and Birmingham to help fight the rapidly-spreading blaze, according to early reports, and National Guard units with heavy equipment were summoned from Birmingham.

Chief Deputy Clemons Roe, in a radio report to fellow law enforcement officers from the scene, described the situation as "about as bad as it could get."

At the time of Deputy Roe's report, a second, smaller butane tank car had exploded and it was feared that a third one might explode. The Springville Depot was also reported to be burning, and an unidentified man inside the depot was injured. Extent of his injuries was not known.

No further information was available as the News-Aegis went to press Wednesday afternoon.

"I was right near one of them tank cars when all of a sudden it went with a big bang," he said. "I started talking to my Master then, and dove under my truck. The fire went straight up and over me, a solid sheet of flame."

Witnesses said it went into the air at least 1,200 feet.

There was a loud hissing roar and a tank car filled with propane gas was propelled from the tangle of twisted cars. The flaming missile tore up more than a quarter mile of hillside, splintering two houses and shearing off part of a third as if plowed up the land.

Shrapnel-like chunks of the car knocked down trees a hundred yards away.

Miraculously, no one was in the houses. The car finally stopped, setting off a woods fire that for long anxious moments had a few families trapped.

Officials passed the word early Wednesday afternoon to get the people out of the area. Several other propane-filled tank cars were near the center of the fire, and were in danger of exploding.

WITHIN MINUTES, most of Springville was a ghost town. At nightfall the dead streets were aglow with the weird glare of the fire which extended more than a quarter of a mile along the tracks.

The only movement in the streets was that of troopers and running firemen, and the flickering blue and red lights of their vehicles. But by 6:30 it became apparent that the flow of water was not enough to subdue the blaze.

As the fire raged the firemen, unit by unit, withdrew swiftly from the town, leaving it to the flames if the expected explosion occurred.

Near the fire were Metho-

again like the breathing of some huge demon.

Troopers were kept busy keeping away swarms of spectators who drove from all over the northern part of the state to view the blaze.

THE TRAIN rolled past the Springville station, and suddenly about 35 cars buckled and careened off the tracks. Some came to rest beside large propane-filled tank cars with the remainder scattered along the tracks.

An explosion started a fire on cars loaded with heavy lumber, and flaming embers shot four blocks from the scene, starting numerous grass fires in the area.

A second explosion followed minutes later, shooting the tank car up the hill, leveling two houses and damaging another as it cut a 10-foot wide swatching path of destruction.

The pair of explosions left a twisted maze of cars stacked three deep as the flames leaped nearly 1,000 feet in the air, setting on fire the old Springville railroad station.

Fire fighters from Springville tried in vain to fight the inferno, but Mayor Marcus Pearson, fearing another explosion ordered firemen away from the scene.

Minutes later, the Birmingham Fire Department arrived and Fire Chief Neil Gallant ordered his men to start pouring water on the propane-filled tank cars to keep them from exploding.

Heavy brown smoke boiled from the old station house for several minutes before flames began lashing from the roof's edge, engulfing the entire structure.

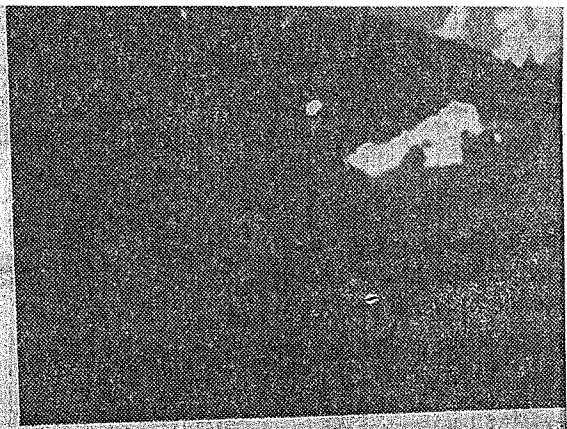
Fire fighters fought the blaze for more than four hours, pouring thousands of gallons of water on the tangled piles of metal.

Shortly after sundown, firemen were ordered away from the scene as flames licked near four 33,592-gallon tank cars loaded with highly flammable gas.

Gallant said that the danger of the remaining tanks exploding, was too great to leave men and equipment nearby.

At that time, law officers moved their cordon out to a half mile from the fire.

And firemen, lawmen and residents could only wait and hope the small town would not be rocked by another explo-



"RED BOARD" BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH A Signal semaphore rises above ruins



The want to know where in Alabama and are big banks have been on o need that they are not State National mergers? "The only reason the can come up with for sudden interest is because statewide branching will create competition in



# Springville rocked by two more blasts

From Page 1

Jessie Herring, Mrs. John Brewster, and James Woody, who suffered minor burns. Dixon was burned, and was also hospitalized for shock.

All were taken to East End Hospital in Birmingham.

The first firefighter on the scene was assistant chief of the Springville department, E.

## Springville schools closed

All schools and plants in the Springville area will be closed at least through today because of the explosions and fire caused by a train derailment Wednesday, according to the Highway Patrol.

"There is no power and the glass in most of the buildings on Main Street has been blown out, so most people won't need to go to work," a spokesman for the Highway Patrol added.

L. Kirkland, 64, who jumped into a truck and roared to the blaze.

"I was right near one of them tank cars when all of a sudden it went with a big bang," he said. "I started talking to my Master then, and dove under my truck."

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Shrapnel-like chunks of the car knocked down trees a

dist. Presbyterian, and Baptist churches, the school, and well as numerous business firms.

Springville Fire Chief J. B. Martin pulled his men back early in the fight because of the explosion danger.

Persons evacuated were taken to the National Guard Armory. Some spent the night there, others went to the homes of friends and relatives.

Shortly after 8 p.m. the local National Guard unit was ordered to duty, transporting the evacuated to shelter.

The site of the wreck was within a hundred yards of where another Southern Railway train derailed last summer. Earlier this week a Southern train derailed near Valley Head in DeKalb County.

FIREMEN AND troopers, as well as the guard stayed on duty through the night, watching the huge blaze from a relatively safe distance of a half mile.

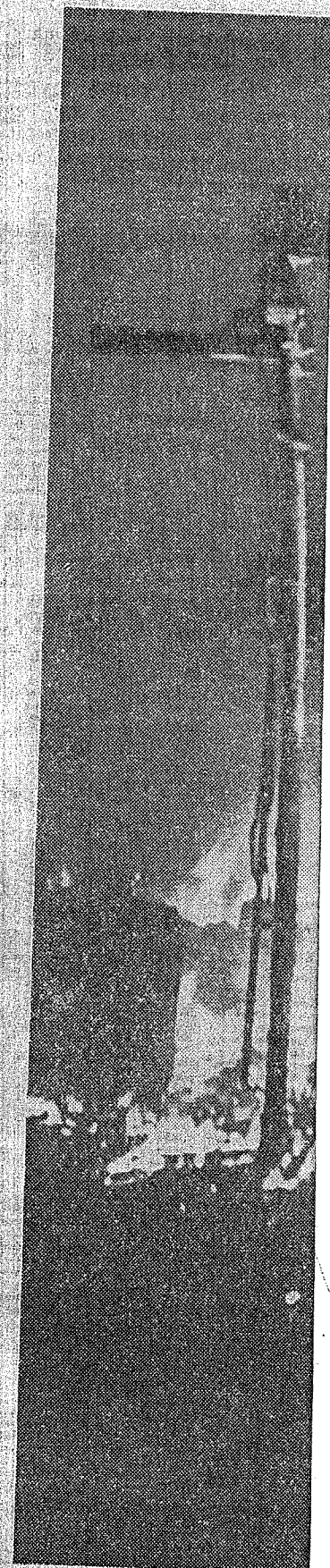
Machine gun like bursts would echo in the night as the propane tank cars expanded in the intense heat and blew their safety lids.

The fire, which was visible for miles away, would swell and diminish, then glower again like the breathing of some huge demon.

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Near the

News staff photo—Charles Nesbitt  
**ORTH AND SOUTH AS FIRE, EXPLOSIONS SCAR LITTLE SPRINGVILLE**  
re rises above ruins of depot; foundation supports at right all that's left

hundred yards away  
Miraculously, no one was in minutes later, shooting the  
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Where Study Con

# Birmingham News

*Serving A Progressive South*

Birmingham, Ala., Thursday, January 16, 1969

Contents copyrighted 1969  
The Birmingham News Co.

ctions

FLAMES BOIL AMID THE TANGLED LITTER OF DERAILED TRAIN  
 Explosion followed split second after cars slammed into Springville depot

# Two more blasts rock Springville

BY FRANK SIKORA  
 AND ORBIE MEDDERS  
 News staff writers

SPRINGVILLE  
 A glowering cloud of fire and a heavy shroud of black smoke continued to keep Springville tense today following a series of explosions Wednesday and this morning in a 150-car Southern Railroad train derailed and caught

at least a third of the town's population was evacuated immediately, three schools and the train station closed, and the downtown area threatened by the

blast which rocked the area in the mid-afternoon.

Two more explosions ripped the seared and shattered area shortly before dawn, blowing out windows of schools, churches and business establishments.

However, no one was reported injured and no additional fires were started. One additional tank was in the fire area and considered a threat, authorities said.

The early morning explosions, which were visible in Birmingham, knocked out the town's power supply, and the

school, as well as most businesses, were closed today.

FIRE FIGHTING units from throughout the area rushed in to battle the flames. Four persons were injured in the sudden explosion, none seriously.

Less than 250 yards from the crash scene, 680 students at Springville High rushed frantically from the building, many of them screaming and crying. Overhead a towering ball of fire and smoke loomed above them, and streak of fiery objects hurtled through the air.

"The whole town's burning!" someone cried.

Mrs. Archie Jones had just parked her car in front of the school to pick up her children when the explosion tore into the afternoon calm.

When she heard the panicked children rushing from the school, she thought something had happened there and ran over to the school.

"It seemed to happen quickly," she said, "but actually it must have taken several minutes for the children to be ordered out."

DEPOT AGENT Carlos Dixon paid no particular attention to the train as it whistled by. Suddenly there was a deafening roar and the old building seemed to buckle.

Fire fighting units from Pell City, Ashville, Odenville, Birmingham, Ragland, Trussville and Center Point were called in to aid the Springville force and state troopers and their

standing that the two sides could view the conference in any way they chose, and the Americans and South Vietnamese still stress their view that it will be two-sided.

THE SUDDEN and unexpected breakthrough makes it possible for peace conference machinery to be in motion two days before the expiration of President Johnson's term of office.

But for some time it is expected the enlarged conference will deal with procedural matters before it finally gets down to talking about how to achieve peace in Vietnam.

WILLIAM JORDEN, spokesman for the U. S. team, said the fully agreed package is as follows:

—On the seating arrangement it was agreed there would be a large round unmarked table, flanked at mid-point on either side by two rectangular tables, each about 18 inches away from the big one. The side tables are for secretarial personnel.

—There will be no flags or nameplates in the conference hall.

—On speaking arrangements at the Saturday meeting, the allied side — the United States and South Vietnam — will speak first. The allied side designated as its first speaker the No. 2 man of

## Inside The News

### Special reports: Fire . . . schools

• FIRE—When word of the train wreck and fire flashed from Springville, The News rushed a five-man team of reporters and photographers to the little Clair town.

Chief Photographer Tom Seft took to the air in a chartered plane. Charles Nesbitt covered from the ground.

Reporters Bob Hawkins, Orbie Medders and Frank Sikora teamed to capture all aspects of the dramatic broadcast. See Pages 1, 2 and 23.

• SCHOOLS—State Editor Allison Stanton, political experts Al Fox and Dan Dowe digested the long-awaited Hilpott report on the educational needs of the state. Their stories are on Pages 1 and 2.

### Bank council would bar

BY IRVING BEIMAN  
 News staff writer

MONTGOMERY

The Executive Council of the Alabama Bankers Association Wednesday took a position which would block the proposed merger of Central Bank and Trust Co. of Birmingham and State National Bank of Alabama at Decatur.

The Council itself recommended a three-point legislative program that would accomplish the following:



# rock Springville

BY FRANK SIKORA  
AND ORBIE MEDDERS  
News staff writers

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ville force and state troopers  
and their auxiliary poured  
into the area to take charge of  
evacuation and traffic control.

The injured included Carlos  
Dixon, the depot agent, Bill  
Brooks, who suffered cuts.

Turn to Page 4, Column 1.

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complish the following:

1. Prohibit branch banking  
across county lines by merger  
or any other way.
2. Outlaw multi-bank regis-  
tered holding companies so  
that this device could not be  
used to establish chain bank-



## Fireball threatened to bathe Springville in a flood of flame

BY BOB HAWKINS  
News staff writer

### SPRINGVILLE

A huge red fireball rose from the wreckage of a freight train on a warmish Wednesday afternoon here.

Fascinated, terrified residents watched it rise several hundred feet in the air.

It started down, threatening to bathe this town of 1,000 in fire.

THEN, MIRACULOUSLY, it disintegrated into smoke, not too far above rooftops.

Even so, the heat set fire to house tops and lawns over a four-block area.

Thus started a siege of

fright, started when a Southern Railway freight derailed, starting a raging fire.

Former Probate Judge Ward Forman was having a 2 p.m. lunch with his son, Madison. His engineer son was to leave today for the hot, arid oilfields of Saudi Arabia.

MADISON FORMAN was to become acclimated to the heat of the Middle East before stepping off the jet.

The two went outside when they first heard the noise and saw the explosion.

"When the fire started toward the ground it's the second time in my life I thought I was a goner," Madison Forman, a U.S.

Naval Academy graduate, said.

Judge Forman stumbled and fell, but not before the heat had scorched his back.

RALPH TUCKER and his wife were delivering The Birmingham News two blocks from the explosion.

"It scared my wife to death . . . my car just jumped up and down," he said.

Students at the high school were told to load on the buses immediately by their principal, Horace Robinson. Those students who lived in Springville were ordered to get aboard too and "go home with somebody."

A mild panic erupted at the school. Fortunately, no one



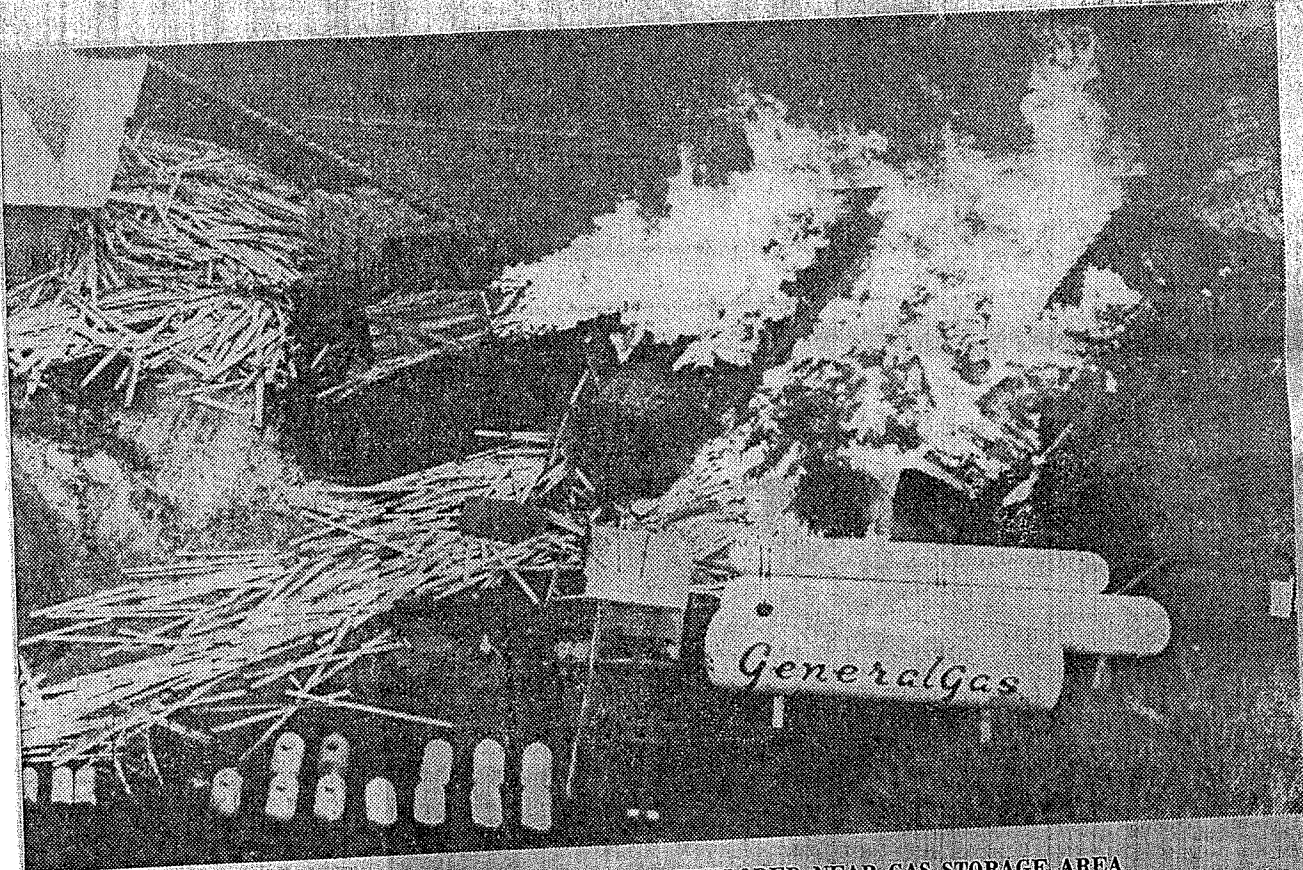
LUMBER

was injured and all were evacuated promptly.

SEVERAL FAMILIES living on the east side of the







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**FILLED FROM TRAIN, CAUGHT FIRE AFTER TANK CAR EXPLODED NEAR GAS STORAGE AREA**  
 Blaze raged throughout afternoon and night, threatening town of Springville

People fled on foot into the streets with what belongings they could carry. Townspeople scattered like geese with their town un-

der attack. Some went to the National Guard armory, others simply vanished. Springville Mayor Marcus Pearson said his town was not

prepared for such an emergency, but marveled in the way people cooperated in the orderly evacuation.

"We are extremely grateful for the help we received from our neighboring towns in providing firemen and equipment," the mayor said.

# A coat lay burning in yard giving doctor, wife a scare

**BY BOB HAWKINS**  
 News staff writer

**SPRINGVILLE**  
 Springville's only physician, James Burgess, and his wife were horrified when they returned from a house call to find their daughter's coat lying burning in their front yard.

However, their fears were allayed when the couple learned that their maid had run into the yard wearing the doctor's coat and dropped it when the tank car exploded.

train wreck explosion and sent them to a Birmingham hospital for observation.

Mrs. Burgess later showed what Springville people are made of, and became a "fireball" herself, securing quarters, sleeping arrangements and food for the displaced who had nowhere to go.

By 7 p.m. Mrs. Burgess had arranged for beds and food for everyone.

**FIRE COMPANIES** from Birmingham and surrounding

looked like a city under siege. Scores of firemen, state troopers, policemen and sheriff's officers busied themselves doing whatever they could.

Only Ernest Whitley, and his brother, Fred, who lived on the main street remained at home. Fred was very sick and flat of his back in bed.

"I don't know whether to leave or not, Fred's so sick," Ernest Whitley nervously eyed the flames.

Southern Railway provided food and coffee at the armory for displaced families and firefighters who had gathered in anticipation of another bulk gas car that threatened to explode.

Miss Ella Sue Herring tucked her tiny Chihuahua puppy, "Lady," underneath her coat and fed him a slab of ham. This amusing sight eased the tension somewhat.

St. Clair Sheriff Joel Wood said traffic through Spring-



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However, their fears were dispelled when the couple found that their maid had run into the yard wearing the daughter's coat and dropped it when the tank car exploded. Their daughter was safe in the home of a friend.

DR. BURGESS treated the four victims of Springville's

train wreck explosion and sent them to a Birmingham hospital for observation.

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FIRE COMPANIES from Birmingham towns rushed in laying miles of hoses, trying to cool off the raging inferno.

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HELP IN THE FORM of sheriff's deputies later came and assisted the two aging brothers to a place of safety.

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St. Clair Sheriff Tom Whitley said Springville was hardly a problem since the interstate highway by-passes the town about a mile to the west.

FAMILIES • the Alabama kind

# Working together pays for St. Clair Pearsons

## First in a series of family stories

This is the first in a series of picture stories about "Families, the Alabama kind," a story for the third successive year. The Birmingham News spotlights the achievements and virtues of wholesome family living.

More than 40 Alabama counties have honored outstanding families by nominating them for this year's "Alabama's Exemplary Family" search.

Stories and pictures of each of the outstanding families will be carried each day in The Birmingham News.

COUNTY WINNERS in the contest are chosen from nominees selected by various civic clubs in each county.

After the nominees are announced, the probate judge selects a screening committee to select the county winner.

Then a story, with photographs, of each county nominee is run in The News.

A panel of judges then select the four district winners, who come to Birmingham for a week-end of gaily and entertainment, by the two sponsors of the project, The Birmingham News and the Auburn Extension Service.

A second set of judges then select the winner, "Alabama's Exemplary Family."

BY JACK HOPPER, News staff writer  
SPRINGVILLE, Dec. 26—The Marcus Pearson family were united Friday to celebrate the most joyous of holidays.

Not a cross word was spoken.

It was a little different on Thanksgiving.

Mother and Dad tried to keep "peace" in the family, but readily admit it was impossible when the family watched the Alabama-Auburn football game.

The two children, Mark and Mrs. Carol Sue Waid, were definitely on opposing sides.

Mark, currently working on his master's degree in Engineering Mechanics at the University of Alabama, was yelling for the "Crimson Tide."

Carol Sue, who attended Auburn for two years, was yelling "War Eagle."

But it was a friendly family rivalry.

AS MRS. PEARSON says, "The day of the game is a little hectic around here." But it's all in fun.

Working together the other

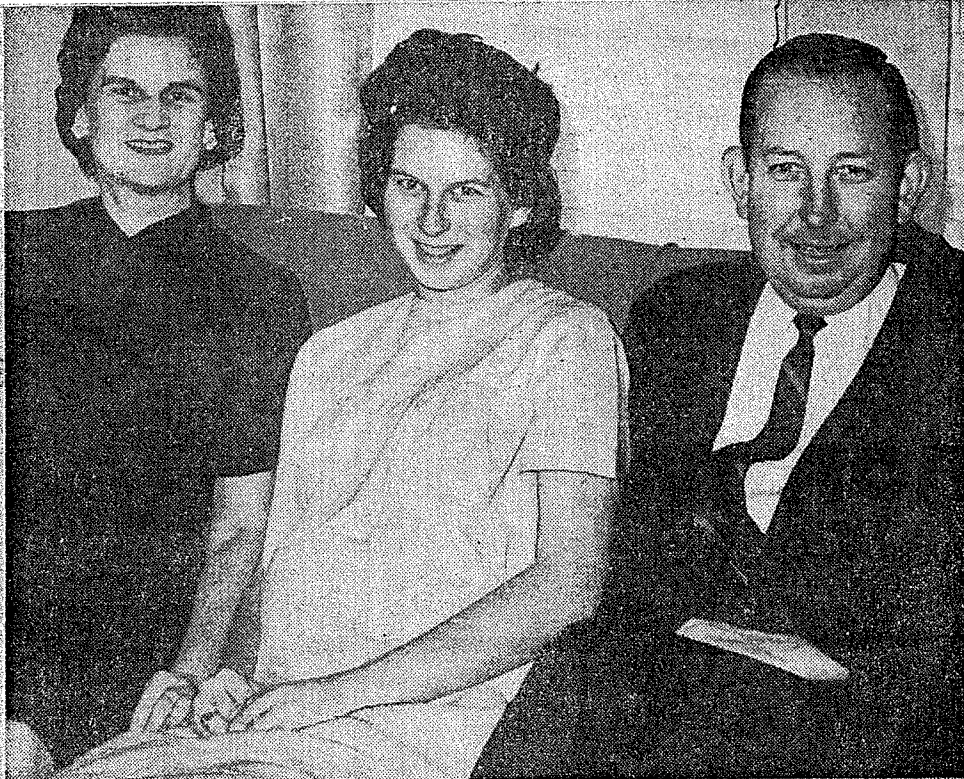
364 days for so many years has won the Pearson family the honor of representing St. Clair County in the annual search for Alabama's Exemplary Family, a jointly sponsored program by The Birmingham News and the Auburn Extension Center.

Marcus Pearson, really a busy man in this small town, is serving his second term as mayor. He was elected to his second term this year without opposition.

Before being elected mayor, he served 14 years on the Town Council.

He and his wife, the former Dorothy Sue Overton, own and operate a hardware store in downtown Springville.

HE IS EMPLOYED as purchasing agent and sales engineer of Southeastern Enameling Corp., an industry he



**PEARSON FAMILY ALWAYS AGREE EXCEPT ABOUT UNIVERSITIES**  
... From left, Mrs. Pearson, Carol Sue, Mr. Pearson

helped settle in Springville.

Since he took office, Springville has secured four new industries, has excellent hope of securing two more in the near future, has purchased 20 acres for other industries, has extended the town's water system, and has donated \$10,000 to the building of the new elementary school.

Pearson has served as a member of the St. Clair County Board of Education, is on the advisory board of Camp Utopia, a school camp located near Springville. He has been president of the PTA, president of the Chamber of Commerce, president of the Lions Club and various other civic organizations.

He and his family are members of the Springville Presbyterian Church, where he has been an elder for many years. He is also church treasurer and has taught a men's Bible Class for many years.

MRS. PEARSON, in addition to a full-time job of managing the hardware store, is active in community activities. She has served as

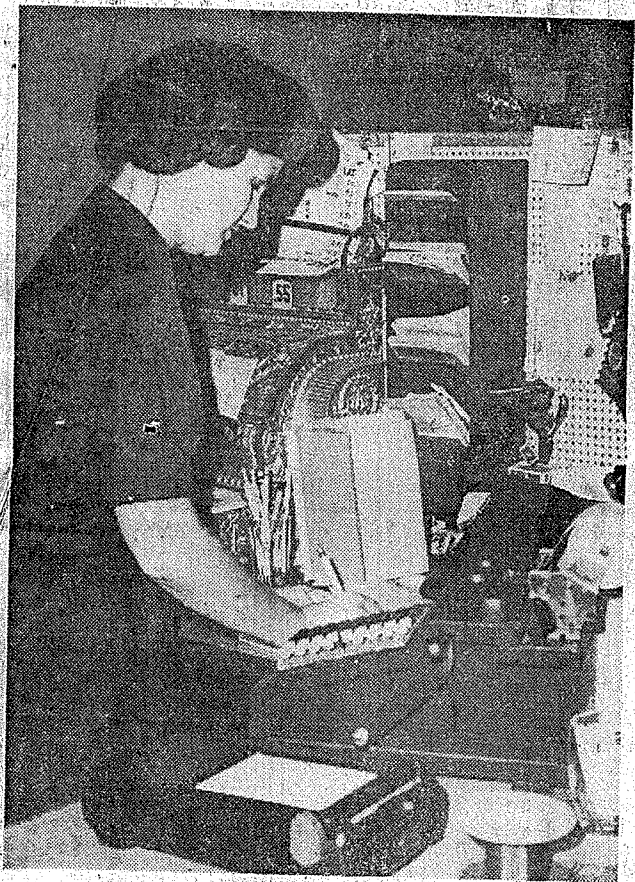




**MAYOR PROUD OF CITY'S INDUSTRIAL GROWTH**  
 ... Shovel used to break ground on newest

... of the PTA, has been addition to working on his master's degree, is on the asurer of the Women of the church of the Presbyterian staff of the university doing church, and has been secretary of the Chamber of Commerce research work.

A graduate of Springville High, he was selected the outstanding high school student in leadership, citizenship and



**MANAGING HARDWARE STORE IS BIG JOB**  
 ... Mrs. Pearson likes business life

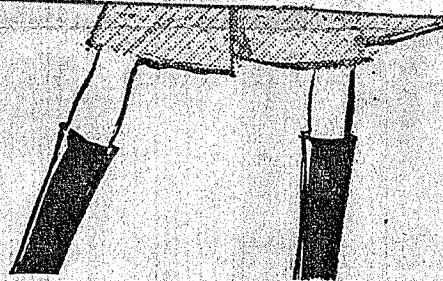
service. He lettered in football and was a member of the Beta Club.

Carol, the youngest, is living at Auburn with her husband, Frank. She has completed two years of school and plans to enroll again in the future. She has won many

awards in 4-H Club work, winning several county cooking and sewing contests.

Before leaving home to attend Auburn, Carol Sue managed the phonograph shop, a part of the hardware store. She also assisted her mother in keeping books.

**1200 better coats go on sale tomorrow!**





## A tribute to Margaret Forman

BY LEWIS WINDHAM

For those of us who have lived in St. Clair County all of our lives, Miss Margaret Forman of Springville will always be remembered as one of the truly "grandames" of the county. In fact, no edition of this paper dedicated to progress and changes in this area would be complete without recognition of Margaret's many contributions.

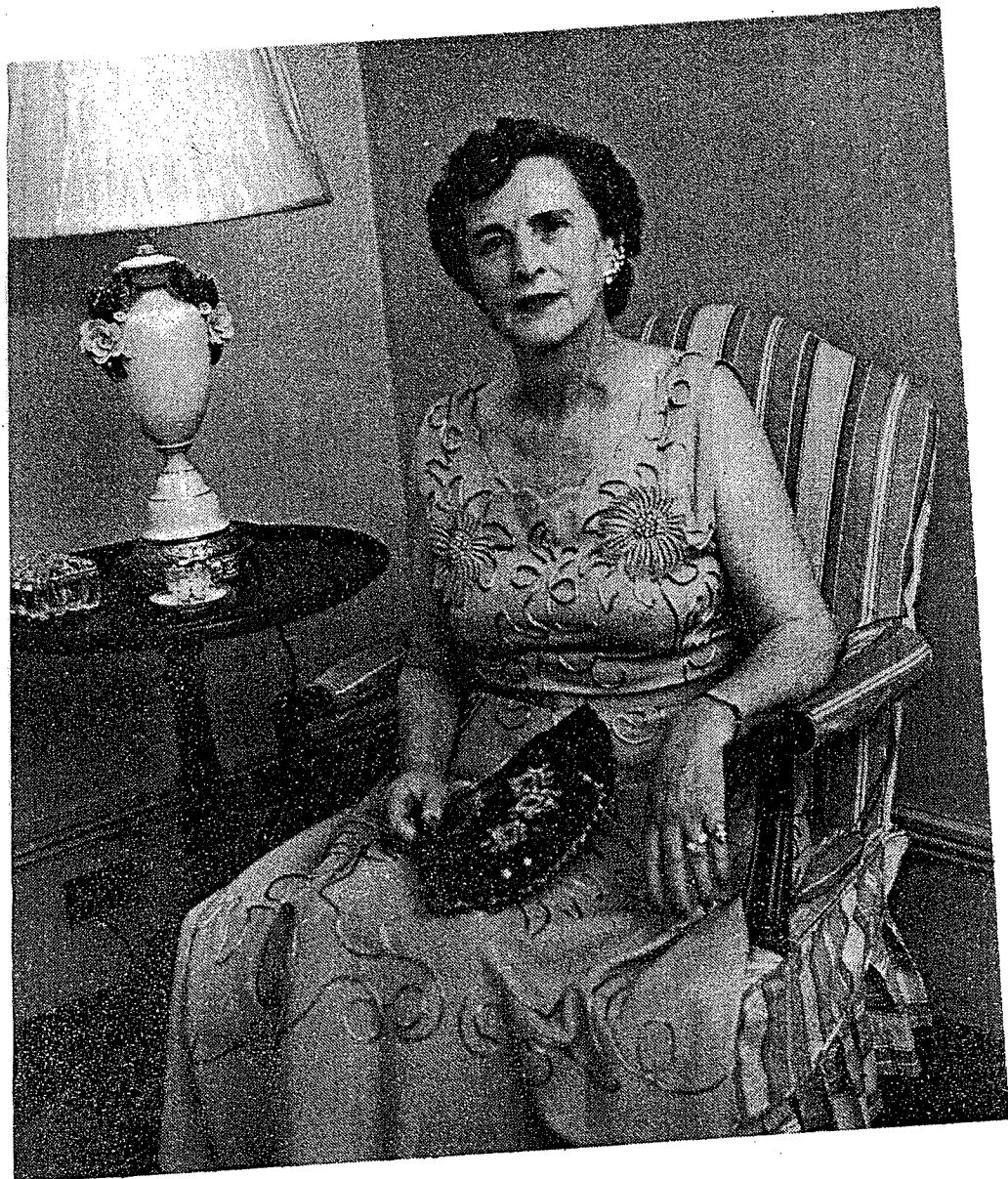
She was born in Springville on May 5, 1891, daughter of James and Laura Forman and sister of Grady and M. Ward Forman (later to become Probate Judge of St. Clair County). She was raised and educated in Springville and attended the University of Alabama where she was recognized as being a University beauty and cheerleader. Never to marry, she returned to Springville to assume duties in the Bank of Springville (then a family business) and soon she became its Vice-President. She was an active member of the Civitan Club, treasurer of the Chamber of Commerce, the Presbyterian Sunday School the Springville Cemetery Committee and treasurer and co-organizer of the Springville Development Corporation. She was an

officer of Alabama Womens Bankers and executive officer of the St. Clair County Democratic Committee. She underwrote insurance for Continental and Servier Insurance and was a correspondent of the St. Clair News-Aegis. I am certain there are other positions she held and organizations she supported but I am not aware of all of them.

Most important and significant of Margaret's endeavours was her untiring support of the community and the individuals who make up that group. Whenever there was an event at the Springville High School she was there and she took special interest in knowing who's children were taking part, which ones won and could tell you everything that took place from memory in the next issue of the Aegis. She had an uncanny memory for birthdays, to some people's dismay, and tried to visit the ill and shut-ins. Her face was seen in almost every wedding and funeral gathering in and around Springville. She cared.

After loosing her sight to glaucoma, Margaret died on April 25, 1979. Her heirs include Margaret F. Windham and Madison W.

(See Forman page 17)



**Miss Margaret Forman**

## A tribute to Margaret Forman

BY LEWIS WINDHAM

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(See Forman page 17)



## Forman

(Continued from page 16)

Forman of Springville and James L. (Onc) Forman of Birmingham. She had two great nieces, Beth Windham and Pam Forman and a great nephew, Lewis Windham of Springville. For those of us in her family, we will remember her fondly as "Auntee" and for those who knew her in St. Clair County, she will be remembered as "Miss Margaret."

## Farming

(Continued from page 7)

from \$26,000 to \$128,000; fruits, vegetables, nuts, greenhouse and nursery sales increased from \$9,122,000 to \$11,675,000 and farm forest products increased from \$285,000 to \$1,169,000.

Total cash receipts from sales of timber products by forest land ownership was listed at \$4,222,000 for 1979.

FORWARD WITH



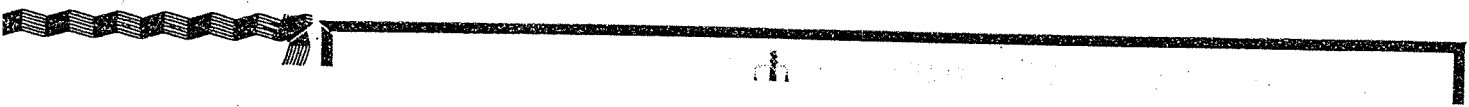
PROGRESS



### **Forman Gathering**

Margaret Forman has been described as a leader in St. Clair County. Above she is pictured with other members of her family. They include from the left, Grady Forman, Judge M. W. Forman, Ralph Windham, Ethel Forman, Margaret Windham, Margaret Forman, Madison Forman and Frances Riley.

***The best is yet to come!***





## WATER IS THE LURE

# New industry sparks Springville

BY FRANK SIKORA  
News staff writer

### SPRINGVILLE

U. S. Highway 11 lifts you over a wooded rise then puts you down smack in the middle of one of the most thriving small towns in the state.

You don't have to be a businessman to see that the program in Springville (population 1,400) to get new industry is paying off. On the east side of the highway you see a row of new buildings . . . so new, in fact, that some of them don't have grass planted yet.

JUST WITHIN the past two weeks the latest additions to the business rolls here got off the ground and into business. That's American Plastics and

Godwin Enterprises.

Mayor Marcus Pearson isn't by nature a bragging sort of man, but he is proud of the new faces. "Our water supply (from a spring, as the town name implies) is a key factor in getting new business."

But even a natural spring needs some help. So the town is in the midst of trying to get a federal loan to help with a \$360,000 program that would mean better pumping facilities.

However, the new program — if it comes off as expected — will mean the end of Springville's most noteworthy feature . . . the spring.

IT'S LIKE SOMETHING you'd find on a picture post card. Lazy, twisted trees rim

the small lake. Children enjoy playing by it or sailing objects in it. Young couples, for years, have been coming here just to walk or sit on the grass.

That spring will still be here, to be sure. But the town plans to erect a fence around it and any direct touch with the water will be out of the question.

"The reason," said Mayor Pearson, "is because with the new pumping facilities the water will be taken directly from the lake. In the past we've been sipping it from the small, satellite springs which empty into the main spring."

The need for better pumping facilities has been dramatized by the arrival of the new

industries. American Plastics alone will use more than a million gallons of water a month, Pearson said.

"TO BE IN LINE for any other industries in the future," he said, "we're going to have to have plenty of water available. We've got the water, but not the means of getting it processed fast enough."

The addition of the two new industries adds about 40 new jobs in the community.

Most of the industry in the town has located within the past several years.

The interesting thing about the big spring here is that it isn't the largest in the vicinity. Just a few miles away, is an even larger one and there

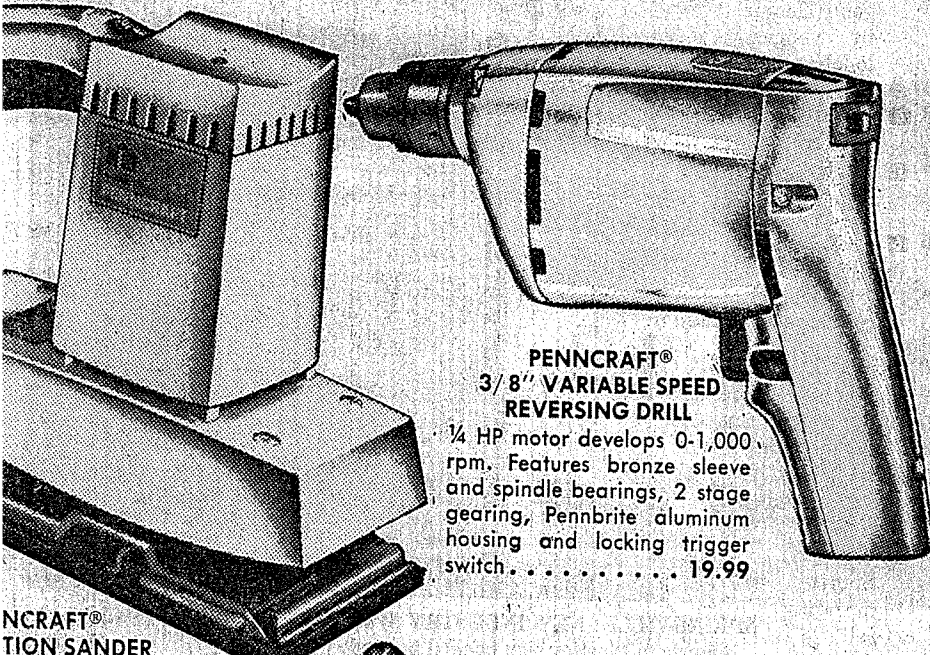
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Two possibilities: a division with an end of its own, or an ind requires plenty of a

## POWER TOOL SALE!

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3/8" VARIABLE SPEED  
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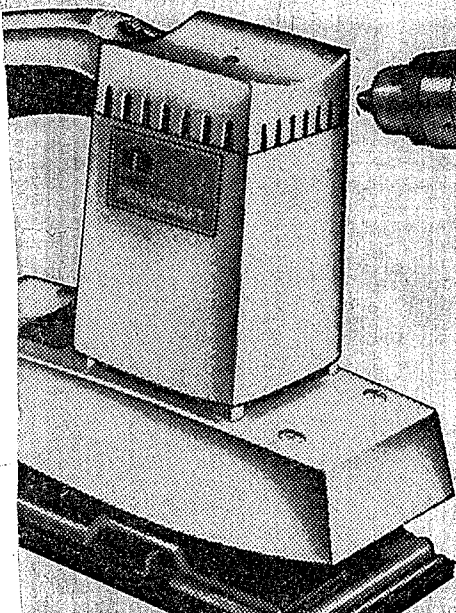
are already plans by individuals to take advantage of the natural lake.

Two possibilities are a subdivision with an enticing lake of its own, or an industry that requires plenty of water.

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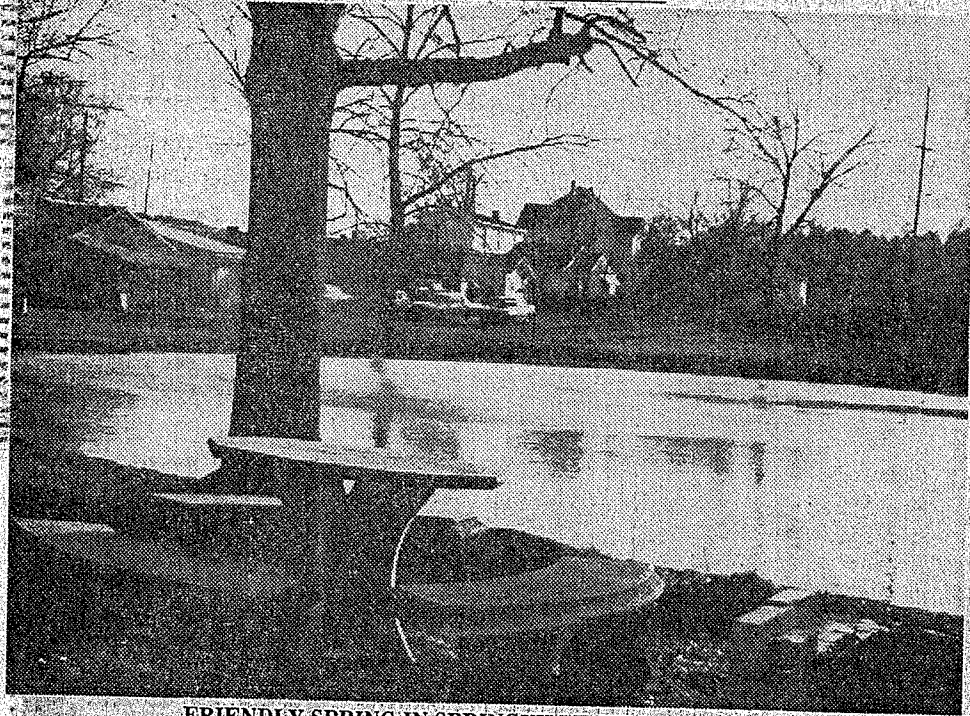
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REVERSING DRILL

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**FRIENDLY SPRING IN SPRINGVILLE WILL BE FENCED**  
... Scenic spot was centerpiece around which town of 1,400 was built



**MAYOR PEARSON**

News  
**Spotlight**  
on

**SAINT CLAIR**



**COUNTY**



**SPRINGVILLE, NEWS**

# Springville has abundant

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Much of the historical material used in compiling this story was taken from the book, *History of Springville, Alabama*, compiled in 1969 by Mrs. Margaret Frances Windham. Appreciation is also expressed to Springville Mayor Marcus Pearson, City Clerk Mrs. Kathryn Lankford and Paul Hicks, the town's water superintendent. This is the first of two stories about Springville, dealing with the town's water system and its history. Another installment will deal with other bits of history.

**BY DICK BELL**  
P-H Staff Writer

**SPRINGVILLE** — In this day and age of increased turmoil over pollution of all types, and water pollution in particular, many small towns are in a quandary about a pure water supply.

But not this St. Clair County town where fresh, clear water abounds. The only problem for years has been pumping it fast enough to supply the people who use it.

The area in the northwest corner of St. Clair County now called Springville, just 25 miles from Birmingham, was first settled around 1815.

With the Indians being attracted to good watering places, the early frontiersmen soon followed.

The clear springs, bubbling forth with their cold water, made the area a perfect spot for camping for families moving south and west from the Carolinas, Georgia, Tennessee and Virginia.

The area of the springs consisted of five small springs that formed a semi-circle around a larger spring. The

springs emptied into a common branch with the area being referred to as "Big Spring."

"Big Spring" was the hub around which early churches and homes were built. The name stuck until a post office was established and the name changed to Springville.

In 1883, then Mayor Dr. James M. McLaughlin owned the land around the springs and decided the springs should belong to the town.

On Dec. 22, 1883, a deed was recorded whereby Dr. McLaughlin sold the springs and land around them for \$500.

After the town purchased the property, it was decided that a lake would be made in the area where the springs were.

The area was dug out to a depth of about three feet, leaving an island in the middle where a tree was growing. A concrete wall was built around the lake leaving openings for the springs to flow into the enclosure.

It is estimated that now between 1,200 and 1,700 gallons of water flow from the springs each hour.

When the lake was completed, Dr. McLaughlin placed the first giant carp fish in the water. These fish have sustained themselves over the years, with some bream and bass being added through the years. Some of the carp weigh as much as 20 pounds now.

Although families had been pumping and dipping water from the lake and springs for years, the water system wasn't added until 1934.

Through the years, the lake and area surrounding it has been the center of social activity for the area.

A bowling alley once stood by the lake and later a summerhouse, where varied activities from just sitting, to weddings, was built.

The lake was always a tempting place for young swimmers, but being spring fed, was so cold that people didn't stay very long.

When the water system was built, it was calculated that the largest of the springs would be enough to serve the city's water needs. But, looking to the future, a second spring was capped and fed into the pumps that were over the big spring. The pumps were replaced in 1965, increasing the pumping capacity, and the system is the same today as it was then.

The water is pumped directly from the springs, not from the lake itself. When the original system was constructed, the pump produced 100 gallons per minute into a 100,000 gallon storage tank located about ¼ mile from the springs.

In 1963, the pumping capacity was increased to 200 gallons per minute, and two pumps capable of producing that much water were installed, with one to be a stand-by unit. Another 100,000 gallon tank was installed.

Presently both pumps are operated 14-hours-per-day and one the remaining 10 hours, giving a capacity of close to 300 gallons a minute overall.

And that still isn't enough.

Water Supt. Paul Hicks said the level gets pretty low late in the week, but builds back up on weekends when the big industrial users aren't using water.

Presently industrial users

use 66 per cent of the water pumped.

The quaint little lake is a place of real scenic beauty, but isn't serving its purpose completely and the future of good clear and clean water for Springville isn't as good as it has been, if proposed improvements aren't made.



**Big 'un**



# water but lacks pumping

The improvements include pumping water directly from the lake, enlarging the pumping capacity 3 and a half times, enlarging the lake and making it deeper and, much to the dismay of those who admire the beauty of the spot, putting a fence around it.

"This is to protect the equipment, and to keep people from throwing foreign material in the lake," Mayor Marcus Pearson said. "We don't intend to destroy any scenic beauty more than is absolutely necessary."

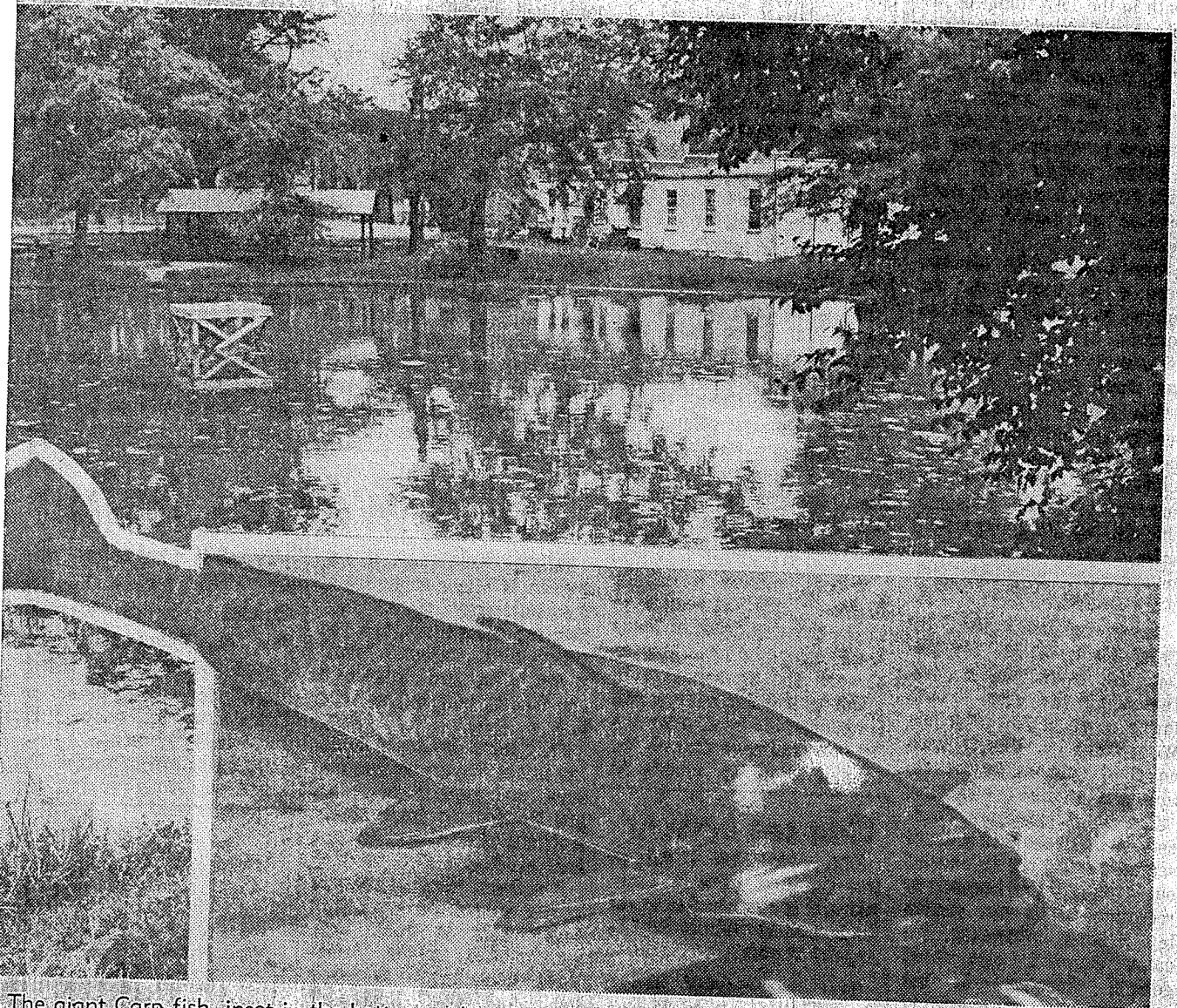
Included in a \$375,000 project presently being

studied is a sewer system for the city. The city is now without commercial sewer services and the new system will be operated in conjunction with the water services, with the sewer bill being one-third of the water bill.

Several methods of financing are being discussed but no

definite plans have been established.

Springville has a beautiful and plentiful supply of water. A little beauty might be sacrificed by some improvements, but the gain in increased good, clean water will far overshadow any scenic losses.



The giant Carp fish, inset in the bottom of the picture, is one of those that swim in Big Spring Lake at Springville. Al-

though blown up out of proportion, the fish actually weighs an estimated 15-20 pounds. Springville's water supply comes from the springs that feed the lake. (Post-Herald photos by Bill Ingram)

—Originally had fireplace

# Large Simmons house

The Forman-Simmons home, in the heart of downtown Springville, is an imposing dwelling. Its great size, in comparison with neighboring structures, full length porches on both levels, three chimneys and many gables make it noticeable to passersby.

The home was built, according to Mrs. W.P. Simmons, by Bud Forman in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century. Mrs. Forman thinks that the house was about 70 years old when she and her husband, an automobile dealer, bought it in 1939. At that time there were ten rooms, each with a fireplace. There were wide central hallways on both levels, running the length of the house. "You could stand in the front door and if the back door was open, you could see the street," said Mrs. Simmons.

Mrs. Simmons, who was born about three miles from Springville, visited her uncle Dr. Hendon when he owned the house. At that time she was a little girl. She didn't remember the house as being extraordinary, it was just the home of her uncle.

The Simmons bought the property from Mark Jones when they decided to leave their home of 15 years, which was about one mile from downtown Springville. The property had been rental property before it was purchased by Jones. At times, there were three families living in the home — one family upstairs and two families downstairs.

"The lawn was full of tall weeds, grass and coal piles when we bought the place. The house had not been properly cared for, and there was a lot of work to be done in painting and minor repairs," noted Mrs. Simmons.

The Simmons, in addition to the general refurbishing

room, and installed central heat. The front hall was incorporated into a larger living room and shut off as a hallway.

Removal of the barn, chicken house and outhouse and widening of the front porch were not immediate improvements, but followed after the Simmons moved into their home.

One of the ten rooms was turned into a furnace room; the kitchen was partitioned into a breakfast room and kitchen, and two rooms were added at the rear of the house. The Simmons built a garage and built an apartment over the garage to house domestic employees.

Outside these changes, the Simmons have maintained the house as it was built — adding new window panes where needed, and applying paint when needed. The house

remained white from its time of initial completion until 1974, when Mrs. Simmons decided to change the color to buff.

The lumber used in building the house was heart of pine which has endured, aided with the maintenance measures of the Simmons.

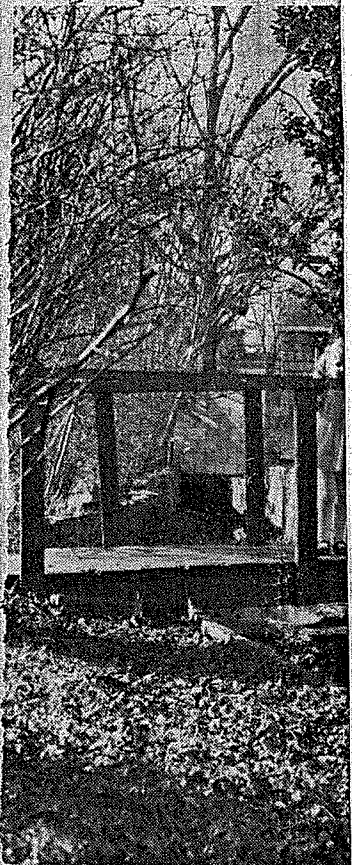
The wide brick-tiled porch across the front of the first story of the house is inviting because of its view and depth and the furniture placed there, but Mrs. Simmons and family rarely use the porch because of air conditioning and increased traffic in the downtown area. The second floor, along with the rooms are unused now. Ceilings on the second floor have not been lowered and contain the original molding.

A great deal of attention has been devoted to the lawn. The Simmons cemented and rocked the drainage ditch which bor-

ders their lawn, and they built a bridge across to connect their property with that of their neighbors.

The lawns have been tended with care since 1939, with the addition of boxwood, English dogwood, crepe myrtle, pyracantha, daisies, forsythia, Christmas honeysuckle, daffodils, jonquils, Iris, roses (which have died out) and other varieties of flowering and growing plant plants. Mrs. Simmons likes to have flowers blooming all summer and has planned her lawn to have year round results in some instances.

The town of Springville has changed since 1939, but the



Christy Elam - Sim



place in each room —

# e is hospitable abode

changes have not bothered the Simmons family. The location makes Springville shops convenient, and the downtown location has never presented problems.

As to living in an historic district, Mrs. Simmons doesn't see that the fact alters her life very much. She thinks that the fact of the part of the town being in an historic district is interesting, but doesn't see that there will be much change.

The Simmons house is large and requires a lot of maintenance, but to the family it is all worth while — it's home, and a home they love.



Simmons Great-

The W. P. Simmons Home  
Feature and Photos by  
Jenna Whitehead  
News Feature Editor

## FOREWORD

In 1951 a group of teachers in this system expressed an interest in studying the history of St. Clair County. It was felt by many of the teachers that the instructional program could be enriched and improved through such a study.

During the pre-school conference at Cook's Springs in August 1951 approximately thirty teachers began developing an outline of work for the school year. The group was composed of principals and teachers. All grades in the system were represented. The interest of pupils was enlisted as the school term opened. Later some parents joined in the study. The project was continued for a period of three years.

The following sources for information were used as the work got underway: pioneer family records, interviews, old letters and newspapers, church minutes, early school records, old land grants, folklore, and cemetery records.

Approximately one hundred pages have been completed in mimeograph form. The material is still in the rough. Time has not permitted rewriting and correction of errors. So much research had been done that every one was eager to get the information in a form to be preserved.

It has been my privilege to work closely with those who participated in this project. I know something about the efforts put forth, and the amount of work accomplished.

As superintendent of county schools, I should like to give recognition to those who participated in the preparation of this bulletin.

Roy Gibson, Superintendent  
St. Clair County Schools  
May 15, 1955



The town was incorporated around 1880. Included in the businesses were two bar-rooms and a ten pin alley. A petition was sent to the legislature to have the bar-rooms taken out. They were removed under a ruling that liquor could not be sold within a mile of a school. However, a log house was built outside the mile limit for a bar room. Another petition had the bar-room removed from the county.

An article appearing in the Birmingham Age Herald in May 1949, gives an earlier date of incorporation, quote: "Records indicate that Springville, was an incorporation in 1818. Not long after a huge hardware store was built. The Springville Hardware building is said to be the first brick store building ever built in St. Clair County. The present owner (1949) and son, R. R. Woodall has been carrying on since 1911."

The first post office was established at Thomason's Store on January 28, 1833. The name was changed to Pink Hill On November 19, 1833. On December 22, 1834 the name was changed to Springville.\*

#### Springville Baptist Church

A Baptist church, known as Mount Zion Church was organized March 22, 1817. There were nine charter members: Joseph and Elizabeth Hill, John and Rebeccah Mangum, Sarah McCollom, Margaret Riggs, Sion and Sarah Blythe.

This Baptist church stood on the hill near the cemetery. The Baptists shared their building with the Methodists until an announcement was made that on a certain Sunday the bishop would be present, and would at that time baptize any infants of Methodists parents. The Baptists felt that such a ceremony should not take place in their church. The Methodists withdrew and built a church on the hill near the big springs.

\*

General Services Administration, National Archives and Records and Service, Washington, D. C. (This record was lent to Mrs. W. E. G. Sutton by Mr. A. L. Bradford of Springville.)

February Term 1825

The Mount Zion Church agree to move their seat of discipline to the big spring soon as the house is finished.

February Term 1826

Appointed brethering Melton to site sister McMillian to meeting to answer to some reports circulating against her for making use of ill language.

March Term 1826

Took up Sister McMillian's case and after due laborious being taken she took her seat.

September Term 1826

Took up sister McMillian's case and not obtaining satisfaction she is excluded from the fellowship of the church for a contradiction between her and some of the brethering. References called for and the subject of enlarging the meeting house taken up and agree to add 20 ft. to the end.

(An interesting list of materials and their prices is as follows: Material for the preacher

85 lbs. pork \$2.00

2 bu. meal \$1.00

30 bu. cotton seed \$3.00

Some nice beef \$1.50

5 bu. corn \$1.75

1 ham of meat \$.75

31 lbs. of lard \$2.17

21 cedar posts \$2.50

## Springville Methodist Church

In 1871 the only church building in Springville was owned by the Baptists. This building was located on a hill near the cemetery, back of the Wilson home (now the place owned by Mr. E. O. Toombs). The building was small, and was used for church services and for the school. It was made of logs and was used for worship by three denominations, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians. (The Baptists had established their church, Mt. Zion, in 1817.)

In 1871, R. F. Mountain, a Methodist minister, held a revival. He was the first Methodist minister. While he was here the Methodists were organized also the Presbyterian, but all continued to worship in the little log church for some time. There were only 12 or 14 Methodists. Of this group, Mr. C. W. Allison is now the only living charter member.

In 1874, Bishop Daugeette conducted a district conference for the Methodists. During the conference some of the members had their infants baptized. The Methodists were then asked by the Baptists to find another building in which to worship. A little band of 12 decided to build a church of their own. By help of the Masonic lodge and the community the building was erected on a hill, near the springs, beside what is now (1953) the former parsonage. A big two-story building was hulled in. The Masonic Lodge used the upstairs. At that time (1874) a new preacher, P. E. Nicholson came. He remained one year. Terry Tarrant was the first superintendent of the Sunday School.. Major Crandall encouraged buying the organ and taught the Bible Class. Major Crandall always sat in the amen corner. He often made talks, always turning his face to the wall, his back to the audience. Mr. Mart Allison was the choir leader. Mr. C. W. Allison is his son.

Ministers of this period were:

1893 W. B. Andrews

1894 R. I. Walston

1895 I. Q. Milton

1897 W. E. Butts

These ministers were known as "Knights of the Saddle Bags." The church was a station under Andrews but was changed to a circuit. Ministers were interested in the spiritual life of the church.

Mrs. S. W. Henry was a teacher of the catechism. All children loved and adored her. Mrs. Onc Forman (grandmother of M. W.) worked in the Methodist Church. She was a wonderful worker in prayer meeting, league choir, and Ladies' Aid after the old school Presbyterians discontinued.)

A most beloved minister was S. R. Lester who came in 1898. He built the present church, and the church went forward under his leadership. Ladies' Aid gave chicken dinners, ice cream suppers, and Mr. Lester got little jobs for children so all could pay for the church.

There were no electricity, no paved roads, nor cars; the roads were awful in these horse and buggy days. It was with great effort and self denial that the church was built. The building could not be used until it was paid for. They had to wait a year. Then came the dedication. Dr. Frank Culver preached the dedicatory sermon. Music for the occasion: H. I. Crandall was organist. The choir: Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Allison, Mrs. George Truss, Mrs. Onc. Forman, Mr. F. F. Osborn, Miss Aderlaide. The stewards were: Dr. J. S. Ash, T. E. Moody Sr., J. F. Galbreath, S. W. Henry, B. L. Jones, and C. W. Allison. The theme of Dr. Culver's sermon was, "The end of one thing means the beginning of another."

The old church pews were sold to Pleasant Hill Church and are still in use.



\*\* In August 1879 there appeared the following notice in the Southern Aegis:

Springville Academy--a high school for boys and girls  
 Jno. O. Turner Sr., Principal.  
 The fifth session of this school will begin September the first 1879. During the past two sessions students have been in attendance from six counties in Alabama. As high as seventy-five pupils have been enrolled in one session. A full high school course is taught. Tuition from \$1.50 to \$3.50 per month, board and lodging \$8.00 per month. School books furnished at publisher's prices. Locality healthful and desirable. Church facilities excellent. Destitute orphans taken at half price. No charges for lost time or for incidental expenses. For full particulars apply for annual circular.

Jno. O. Turner Sr. Principal

The school which had been located on the hill near the cemetery was moved down into the valley to a building where the home of Will Jones now stands (1953). The principal was a Mr. Russell. After two years at the new location on the Methodists and Presbyterians split. The Methodists wanted a Methodist principal and the Presbyterians wanted a Presbyterian principal.

The Methodists and Baptists remained at the school building with I. W. Hill as principal. The Presbyterians built a school building at the site of the present (1953) high school with Mr. Russell as principal. There was much rivalry between the two schools. So jealous were pupils of each other that the Presbyterian girls would not let the Methodists girls see their music for fear they would learn the same pieces. Young people from the two churches could not date each other. A Presbyterian

\*\*Information given by Mrs. Ab. Crow, Ashville-copy of a notice in paper.

'Tuition for seniors was \$5 a month. Incidentals were extra. Almost every home had student boarders. People were very proud of the school. Boys wore uniforms of blue trimmed in braid and buttons. They were drilled by Walter Crump. Girls wore uniforms of blue suits and blue caps. Commencement lasted about a week. There were visiting speakers, plays, readings, music recitals.'\*

The building known as Springlake College was destroyed by fire. The building was replaced by a part of what is now the Springville High School building . In 1921 a new rock building was constructed for the high school. Later the elementary school was moved to the rock building and a new wing added to the older brick building. The high school was transferred to the brick building (now in use). In 1948 the lunch room was built, and in 1952 a wing of three rooms and a library was added.

\*Notes taken from interview with Miss Annie Walker



# ALABAMA DEVELOPMENT news

ALABAMA DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

STATE OFFICE BUILDING (205) 269-7715

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36104

*For file - St. Clair Co. Towns*

Vol. 1

June, 1970

No. 5

## STATE PLANNERS TO GET COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AID; ACTION PLAN WILL BE DESIGNED BY ADO AND BATTELLE

Alabama's local, county, and regional planners will soon have a standard means of planning for development, according to the terms of a contract recently signed by the State and the Battelle Institute's Columbus Laboratories. Titled "An Action Plan for an Alabama Community Development System," the program's overall objective is to design and test a system that can be implemented at each level of planning throughout the State. It will be managed through the Alabama Development Office to further ADO's mission of promoting the human, economic, and physical resources of the State.

J. E. Mitchell, Jr., ADO Director, said, "This plan will serve as a tool for all planners in the State to inventory their resources, identify their needs, set realistic goals, and measure progress in comparison with other communities.

Additionally, the plan will provide regional and State planning offices with a continuous flow of information on development programs at county and municipal levels."

The Action Plan will strive to meet the requirements of all Federal assistance programs and will assist planners to accomplish the following:

Establish goals and objectives through citizen participation and involve agencies, local interest groups, and individuals.

Conduct inventories to determine current status and potential resources in functional areas such as education, housing, transportation, etc.

Identify needs and desires based on inventories and set priorities for each participating county, region, and municipality.

Measure progress in reaching the objectives and comparing performance with similar communities.

Develop a program evaluation system and feedback mechanism for ADO and all participants.

Director Mitchell emphasized that preparing and implementing the Plan will be a team effort requiring the participation of many other State agencies and



ADO Director J. E. Mitchell, Jr., (L) is shown signing the contract for design of an Alabama Community Development System with Richard A. Forster of Battelle Memorial Institute.

individuals. John A. Rogers, Deputy Director for Planning will coordinate other agency inputs.

The contract between ADO and Battelle Memorial Institute was facilitated by approval of a grant from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under Title IX of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966. Richard A. Forster, head of the Battelle-Montgomery office, and coordinator for the Action Plan stated, "Our organization is pleased to work with the ADO in this far-reaching endeavor and believe it will be of great

significance to State development. My colleagues, Richard Davis and David Sweet, regional economists in our Columbus Laboratories, agree with me that Battelle's function is to augment the ADO staff in preparing a program of statewide importance."

The Battelle Institute has had offices in Alabama for the past several years at Huntsville and Montgomery.

An additional aspect of the Action Plan of State interest is that Alabama's program will likely serve as the prototype of community development systems for other states.

## DEVELOPING ALABAMA

**HUNTSVILLE'S MODEL CITIES PROGRAM** has been approved for \$1,969,000 in funds for its second year program. Notice of the grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was received by ADO on June 11. This action will enable the Madison County metropolis to implement phase two of their 5-year comprehensive Model Cities plan. The contract includes approval of 13 new projects — mostly in education and social service problem areas — and continuation of 19 projects and activities initiated in the first phase of the program. HUD grants to Huntsville since 1967 for this program total more than \$4 million.

**A \$1 MILLION GRAIN ELEVATOR** will be built at the State Dock on the Chattahoochee River at Columbia according to a recent announcement from Governor Brewer's Office. With an initial capacity of 136,400 bushels, the elevator may be expanded to meet future demands for increased production of soybeans, corn and wheat in Southeastern Alabama.

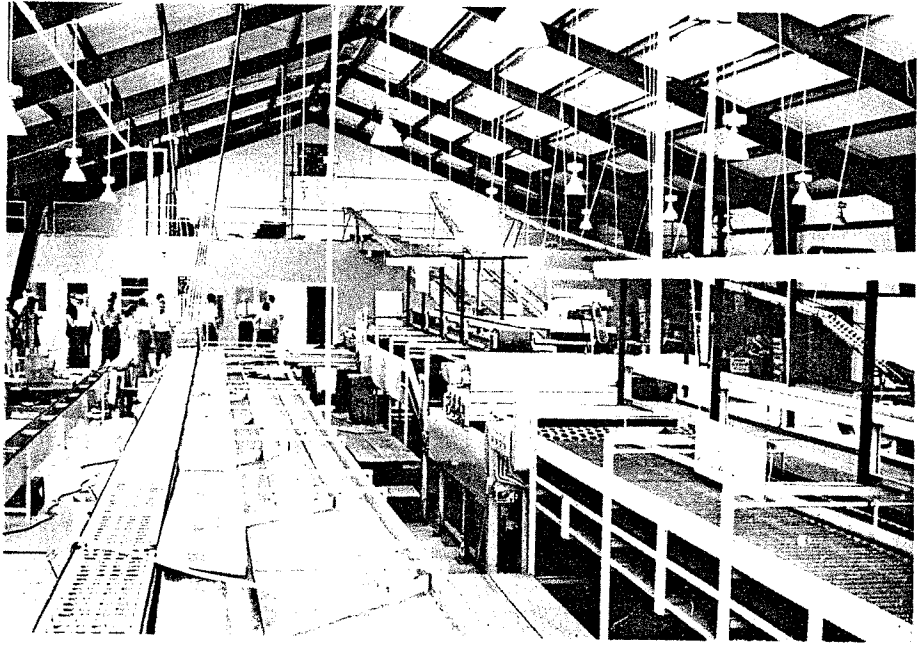
**BIRMINGHAM'S VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES** were broadened with the announcement from the Governor's Office in May that \$884,800 was approved in grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission to construct a new Parker Area Vocational High School. The facility will provide training for nearly 800 students and adults in learning skills related to the present and projected job market in the Birmingham area.

**A YOUTH OPPORTUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM** for the State was initiated on June 11 through approval of a \$34,800 grant to ADO by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The project's purpose is to develop and coordinate a comprehensive year-round youth employment program involving all public-private agencies dealing with job development, placement and counseling.

**A \$250,000 GRANT** from the Appalachian Regional Commission will assist the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa to construct a new Biological Science Building on campus. The 4-story building will comprise 90,086 square feet of floor space and will replace a 50 year old structure now being used, as well as a "temporary" building in use since World War II. Total cost of the project is \$4 million and includes funds from ARC, Title I of The Higher Education Facilities Act, and the University.

**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR GRANTS** have been made to the mayors of Birmingham, Huntsville, Mobile and  
(Con't. to page 6, col. 3)

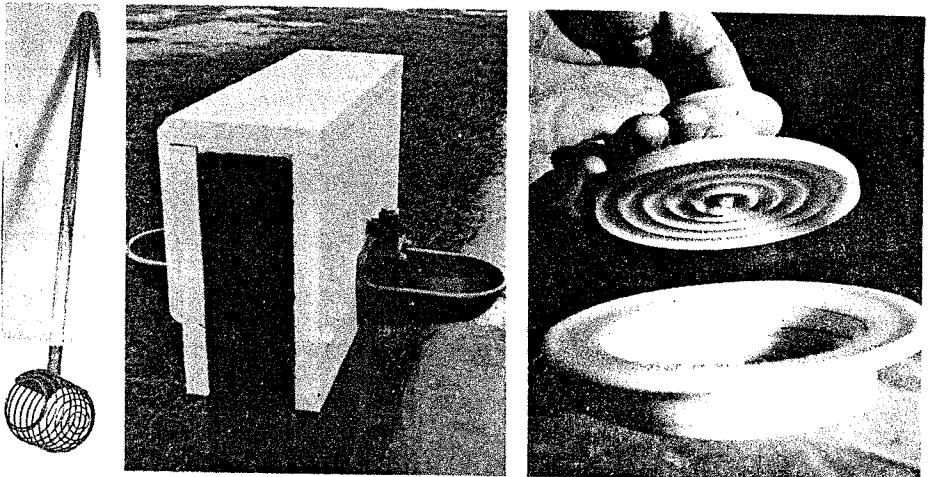
## TOMATO PACKING SEASON TO OPEN



The Chandler Mountain Tomato Growers Association packing shed is pictured ready for the 24-hour-per-day operation expected to run from mid-July until about mid-November. With favorable weather, an estimated 10,000 tons of tomatoes will be packed this year. The Association is anticipating expanded tomato production, starting this year, as a result of the construction of 11 new lakes and spray-water ponds for irrigation purposes. Additionally, a new dam will be built this year to provide some 150 acres of irrigation water for 15-18 farms. These projects have been developed under the Appalachian Conservation Program in conjunction with agencies of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The Chandler Mountain packing shed is located in St. Clair County between Birmingham and Gadsden. It serves approximately 70 families growing some 3,000 acres of tomatoes. The facility was completed in 1969 at a cost of \$200,000.

## ALABAMA INVENTIONS



A pecan gatherer, an automatic stock-waterer, and a ground-meat patty press shown above are among the inventions of John Robinson of Foley and are manufactured and marketed by the Robinson Company, Inc., plant at Summerdale. The items were patented with the assistance of ADO's Invention and Innovation Section.

The plastic press provides uniform patties of ground-meats and potatoes that are corrugated to improve cooking and retain natural juices. The pecan gatherer greatly facilitates and accelerates the seasonal harvest of nuts. The livestock waterer, primarily for horses, cattle and pigs, allows animals to obtain fresh water by themselves through use of the automatic on-off valves.

Robinson's inventions have contributed materially to small — industry development in Baldwin County.



THURSDAY, DEC. 8, 1960

## SPRINGVILLE SCHOOLS

Springville Schools have a long and interesting history dating back over a hundred years.

The first school was held in a one-room building located above the lake, near the cemetery.

In January 1861 an advertisement run in the "St. Clair Diamond" listed the school as "Male and Female Academy Springville". In 1879 a notice in "Southern Aegis" called the school "Springville Academy" — a high school for boys and girls.

At one time the Methodists and Baptists operated a school with Mr. I. W. Hill principal. The Presbyterians built a school building at the sight of the present high school with Mr. Russell principal. There was much rivalry between the two schools.

Later the groups came together, added more rooms to the Presbyterian school, and used Mr. J. A. G. Lovett and Mr. I. W. Hill as Co-principals. This school became Springlake College. It was a chartered college with the following divisions: Primary Intermediate Common School, High School and four years college. Included in the curriculum were: music, art, Latin, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, calculus, and analytical geometry.

Boys wore uniforms of blue trimmed in braid and buttons. Girls wore uniforms of blue suits and blue caps.

The Springlake College building was destroyed by fire and was replaced by a part of what is now the Springville High School building.

In 1921 a new rock building was constructed for the high school. Later the elementary school was moved to the rock building and a new wing and auditorium were added to the old building. The high school was transferred to the building now in use.

In 1948 the lunch room was built, in 1952 a wing was added, to the high school build-

Sixth Grade. B. S. Alabama College. Member of: N. E. A., A. E. A., C. T. A., P. T. A.

Mrs. Nina A. Crandall . . . First grade. A. B. Howard College - also attended Alabama College. Member of: N. E. A., A. E. A. C. T. A., P. T. A.

Mrs. Mattie Lou League Crow — Library, English B. S. Jacksonville. M. A. University of Alabama - - also attended Alabama College. Member of: N. E. A., A. E. A., National Library Association, Alabama Library Association, Committee Selection of Professional Books.

Mrs. Jacqueline E. Jones . . . Physical Education. B. S. Jacksonville. M. A. University of Alabama. Member of: N. E. A., A. E. A., P. T. A., C. T. A.,

Mrs. Martha Buchford McClendon - - Fifth grade. B. S. Howard College. Graduate work Birmingham Southern. Member of: N. E. A., A. E. A., C. T. A., P. T. A., Defense Committee N. E. A.

Miss Nancy McQuary . . . Business Education. B. S. Mississippi Southern - - also attended Itawamba Jr. College. Member of: N. E. A., A. E. A., C. T. A., P. T. A.

Mrs. Juanita Johnston McVay - - Vocational Home Economics. B. S. Auburn. Member of: N. E. A., A. E. A., C. T. A., P. T. A., American Home Economics Association, Business and Professional Women's Club, American Association of University Women, Advisor for Future Homemakers Association.

Mr. Harold Manley - - Coach - - Science. B. S. University of Alabama. M. A. University of Alabama - - also attended the University of Georgia. Member of: A. E. A., N. E. A., C. T. A., P. T. A.,

Mrs. Helen A. Moody - - Second grade. A. B. Howard College - attended also Alabama College, Birmingham Southern. Member of: N. E. A., A. E. A., C.T.A., P.T.A.

Mr. Joe W. Roberts . . . History; B.S. Jacksonville — also

T.A., English Teachers Association.

Mr. James C. Streetman, B. S. Birmingham Southern. Member of: N.E.A., A.E.A., P.T.A., Chairman, athletic committee.

Mrs. Evelyn B. Sutton . . . Third Grade; A. B. Huntingdon; Graduate work University of Alabama; also attended Troy State Teachers College. Member of: N.E.A., A.E.A., C.T.A., P.T.A., D.K.G., Committee, Teacher Education and Professional Standards, 2nd Vice President D.K.G.

Mrs. Odette T. Waldrop . . . Spanish, Mathematics; A. B. Huntingdon. Member of: N.E.A., A.E.A., C.T.A., P.T.A., D.K.G., American Association of Spanish Teachers.

Mrs. Maud S. Walker . . . Elementary Head Teacher and Third Grade; B.S. Howard College; also attended Jacksonville State Teachers College. Member of: N.E.A., C.T.A., P.T.A., D.K.G., Public Relations Committee for C.T.A.

Mrs. Helen Walker . . . B. S. University of Alabama; also attended Huntingdon, Member of: N.E.A., A.E.A., P.T.A.

Mrs. Frances S. Windham . . . Fourth Grade; A. B. University of Alabama. Member of: N.E.A., A.E.A., P.T.A., C.T.A.

rooms and a library.

In 1956 two basement rooms were finished and made into class rooms.

The two school buildings, the lunch room, the gymnasium and the football field are situated on approximately twenty acres of land touching Highway 11.

The present enrollment is 582. Classes are held in nineteen rooms.

Students enjoy activities provided by the following. Beta Club; Glee Club; F. T. A.; F. H. A. Dramatic Club; 4-H Club; S Club; Student Council; Amateur Radio Club.

The school has recently gone through a period of study and evaluation looking toward accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities.

Following is listed the present faculty, their training and positions:

Dr. F. D. Dotson - - Principal

B. S. Florence State

M. A. University of Alabama

Ed. D. Columbia University

Member of A. E. A., N. E. A., Alabama Secondary School Principals, N. A. S. C., K. P. K.

Mrs. Annie Mae Buffington - - Second Grade

B. S. University of Alabama - - attended also Howard College, Snead Jr. College. Member of: N. E. A., A. E. A., C. T. A., P. T. A.,

Miss Margaret Byers - - First Grade - - B. S. Jacksonville - - attended also Bush Conservatory, Athens College, Huntingdon College. Member of: N. E. A., A. E. A., C. T. A., P. T. A., D. K. G.

Mrs. Sara Helen Hays Cash - - Fourth grade, B. S. Alabama College: also attended Howard College. Member of: N. E. A., A. E. A., C. T. A., P. T. A.

Mrs. Mildred L. Coats - - -

Ed, member of N.E.A., A.E.A., C.T.A., P.T.A.,  
Mrs. Henry H. Shirley . .  
Fifth and Sixth Grades; A.B.  
Bob Jones College. M.A. Colorado College of Education, also  
attended Jacksonville. Member  
of: N.E.A., A.E.A., C.T.A., P.

Dr. E. L. ... Co.  
Birmingham News  
4-14-50

# Springville Pastor Goes On Sitdown Strike

SPRINGVILLE Ala., April 14—The pastor of the Springville Methodist Circuit is on a "strike" in one of his three churches.

The Rev. J. Clyde Cruse, news-paperyman-cum-pastor turned preacher in 1946, is refusing to conduct services in the Springville Methodist Church.

He also has refused to vacate the parsonage of the Circuit as directed to do by the cabinet of the North Alabama Methodist Conference.

A NATIVE of Birmingham, Cruse is a minister on "trial" basis. He was allowed to preach after appearing before a board late in 1948. The Springville Circuit is his first charge.

At the end of two years in the Conference, he would be ordained a deacon. After another two years, he would become an elder or a full-fledged member of the Conference.

Cruse, former church editor of a Birmingham newspaper, is in effect defying the authority of the Methodist cabinet to remove him without a trial before a jury of 13 elders, (or Conference members).

Officials contend since he is not a member of the Conference, but merely on an "employed" basis, he is not entitled to the trial.

CRUSE'S REFUSAL to preach in the Springville church followed a suggestion from his 14-member board of stewards that he be merely "lectured" and "diplomatic" in his preaching.

He had been preaching strong sermons against sin in general and had heavy hit at drinking.

His reply to the suggestion was that "The Bible is the word of God and must be taken as such. The board has no right to put restriction on preaching. . . . The Lord is my real boss."

His refusal to preach came in the form of a printed bulletin March 13.

He left the bulletin in the church and went home.

The bulletin was preceded by four verses from Amos. The first of the four verses says: "I hate and despise your feast days and I will not spend in your solemn assemblies."

The last of the four Bible verses says: "But let judgment roll down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream."

The bulletin message started: "There will be no worship services here this morning, and no more sermons preached by the present pastor until there is a change in the prevailing conditions."

HE THEN REVIEWED the promise he had made to be more "lectured" and "diplomatic" in his sermons.

"It is now very clear," the bulletin said, "that this promise should not have been granted and cannot be kept in consistency with the pastor's prime obligation of getting and delivering the message of God to fit the moral and spiritual needs of the people without regard to personal feelings."

"It is not wrong preaching which has offended these tender feelings, but the challenge to unsundered, unconfessed and unforgiven sins of all kinds in various members here, which have been tolerated, soft pedaled and even condoned until they have weakened and sickened the church and robbed it of spiritual power."

He explained that his stand did not affect his work at the St. Clair Springs and Pleasant Hill churches, also part of the Springville Circuit.

Cruse, who attended Birmingham Southern College and Emory University, was associate editor of Ala-

bama Magazine in Birmingham for several years prior to entering the ministry. He also is a licensed pilot.

He is the father of two sons, and for several years taught Sunday School classes and was active in the church and Woodlawn Methodist Church.

THE REV. MR. CRUSE also has strongly attacked some of the general programs of the Methodist Church. In a letter to The Alabama Christian Advocate a few weeks ago, he all of the Advance for Christ movement.

That is one of the main programs of the General Conference of the Methodist Church. He scolded it as "designed to isolate the thinking of world Methodism into channels which the Advance promoters think to be right."

Cruse was informed last Tuesday of the cabinet's action in dismissing him. A Birmingham minister, the Rev. W. Owen Hope, was appointed to succeed him.

Owen visited Cruse after the Rev. Fred Cooper, superintendent of the Gadsden district of the conference, told him that he should move out of the parsonage.

"I intend to continue to occupy the parsonage pending proper settlement of the issue."

Regarding the situation at Springville and the general program of the Methodist Church, Cruse said: "I find it impossible to operate as the Lord wants me to. Here my real boss, with the prevailing conditions here, must be standpoint of the general church organization and its efforts over a period of years over the individual church membership."

CRUSE SAID he is meeting his stewards' stand "in the way I feel the Lord told me to stand up to tell me what to do."

The situation. The Lord leads me. He told me to do this."

After the church bulletin was printed, the stewards conferred with Sgt. Cooper, who took it to the cabinet.

Cruse had been increasingly critical in his preaching during the past few months. He among other things, had suggested nothing. His preaching program was general.

The preacher said he had not appealed to any of his members for support and will not do so. "I will not allow a split in the congregation," he said. "I am staying in the church and fighting this thing through the way the Lord would want me to do."

He said he intends to continue preaching at the St. Clair Springs and Pleasant Hill churches.

The Springville church with a membership of about 200, pays most of his salary.

James A. Bryan, chairman of the Springville board of stewards, would not comment on the situation. Neither would Dr. J. H. Childwood, of Birmingham, who presided at the cabinet meeting in the absence of Bishop Claire Purcell, who is ill.

Cruse attacked the Advance for Christ movement and other protrusions of the church as "just a way of organizing a big program to get money and to make way up the hill."

HE SAID IT IS "another example of how the church has gotten away from its main program. Such organizations as the Federation for Social Action was included in his condemnation."

Cruse took his stand knowing that a heated controversy might follow. "I am willing to be the center of what might be considered an unfavorable development, because God directs me. He told me to stand up to tell me what to do."



**CENTER OF CONTROVERSY**—The Springville Methodist Church is the center of the controversy between the Rev. Clyde Cause and the Methodist Church. He refuses to preach in this church until certain conditions have been met or he is tried before a jury of elders. Another preacher, the Rev. W. Owen Hops, of Birmingham, has been assigned to the church.



**WILL NOT LEAVE PARSONAGE**—The Rev. Clyde Cause is shown on the front porch of the parsonage of the Springville Circuit of the Methodist Church. He said he will not obey orders of the North Alabama Methodist cabinet to vacate the parsonage until he gets a trial before a jury of elders. Shown with him here are his wife and two sons, Howard, 6, left, and Alan, 8.



*Traveling the*  
**BACKROADS**

# THE SPRING IN SPRINGVILLE

Springville Lake in  
the early 20th century



## Story by Jerry C. Smith

Submitted photos

Water is an absolute necessity for any permanent settlement, be it an Indian village or a major city. An area in northern St. Clair County is blessed with five springs, arranged in a circle around a sixth major spring that provided early settlers a virtually unlimited supply of pure, cold water.

In Davis & Taylor's *History of Springville, AL*, Margaret Forman Windham tells of Springville's earliest days: "As the Indians had been attracted to good watering places, so were the early frontiersmen. The springs which bubble forth cold, clear water made this area a camping spot for families moving westward from the Carolinas, Virginia, Tennessee and Georgia.

"The first settlers were some of these voyagers who so admired the hills, streams and virgin forests that they decided this would be their home for all time. ... Big Springs was the name the settlement went by prior to the establishment of the post office in 1833."

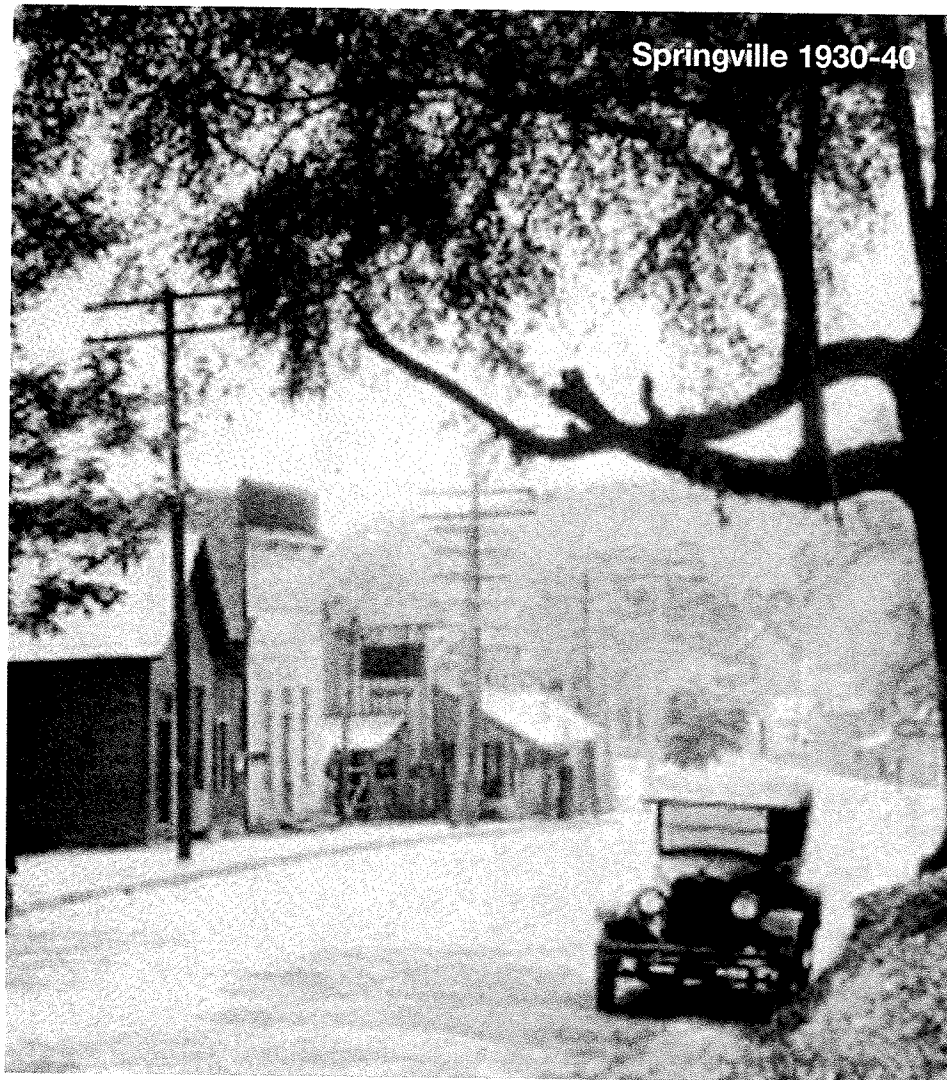
It took little imagination for the town fathers to come up with another appropriate name — Springville. Windham relates that the first industry which made major use of these waters was a tannery. In no time at all, houses, churches, and businesses began to "spring" up near the basin.

Some prominent pioneer families were Thomason, Truss, King, McClendon, Woodall, Bradford, Laster, Forman, Osborn, Sprueill, Fuller and Keith. The area is still populated with their descendants.

As Springville grew, the city decided to build a lake in the center of town. Windham describes its construction: "With mules and scrapes, the area was dug out to a depth of about 3 feet, leaving an island on which a tree was growing in the center of the lake. About 1900, a concrete wall was built around the lake leaving openings for the five surrounding springs to empty their waters into the lake." According to Windham, Dr. James McLaughlin, owner of the property and mayor of Springville, deeded the whole thing to the city. Once completed, McLaughlin himself introduced a large species of carp into its waters, eventually adding bass, bream and trout as well.

The carp flourished and quickly grew to enormous size. Various stories put their length at up to 4 feet and weight as much as 20 pounds. Feeding these gentle giants became a favorite leisure pastime for the townsfolk and their visitors, the fishes becoming so tame they would take food right from one's hand.

The city augmented the fishes' feeding with corn, which enticed the huge carp and other species to root for the kernels on the lake bottom, uprooting and destroying moss which had become a problem. Windham's narrative also mentions the strange fact that all the bream stayed on one side of the lake while all the trout kept to the





## Traveling the BACKROADS



Baptism, early 1900s

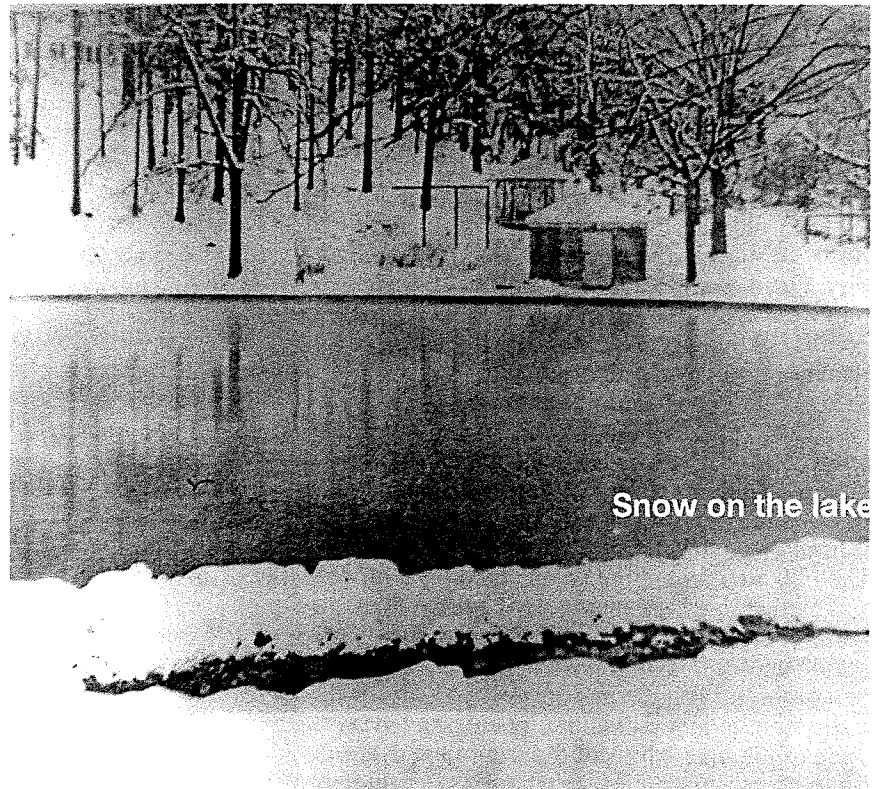
opposite side.

This pleasant ritual continued for decades. Your writer remembers feeding them in the 1950s during rest stops, as my family traveled from Birmingham to visit relatives in Etowah County. Springville native Margaret Cole remembers that, when her mother worked at Milner's Cafe in the 1930s and 1940s, they would often give Margaret stale bread to feed the fish. Her daughter, Donna Cole Davis, also frequented the lake while her mother was at Mrs. King's beauty parlor. Mrs. Cole also remembers baptisms in the lake, when she was 6 years old.

In earlier days, a bowling alley was built on a hill behind the lake, quickly becoming Springville's social center, hosting square dances and other community events. The bowling alley was eventually replaced with a latticed summer house.

This new structure had a bench going around all four walls inside, a favorite place for young people to gather. Like its bowling alley predecessor, the summer house was a favorite place for weddings, Boy Scout programs and other group functions.

Easter Sunrise services were held on the hill behind the lake. Windham describes it thusly: "... the service was carried on over a loudspeaker



Snow on the lake

## Traveling the BACKROADS

Herring Hotel



which allowed the people the choice of staying in their cars or getting out. The beautiful natural setting and the opportunity for a rather private worship gave a very special meaning to the service.” Mrs. Cole also recalls these occasions, and the giant cross on the hillside made of white stones which were later taken up and stored for re-use the next year.

In the 1930s, tennis courts were added, built by the city and maintained by local young folks. These courts were replaced by a municipal swimming pool in 1960. Perhaps the pool was installed to curtail swimming in the spring lake itself, as described by Windham in her treatise:

“The lake always tempted the young people to come in for a swim, but the water was so cold the swimmers seldom stayed for long. ... Two young men who were staying at the Herring Inn went to the lake at night for a brief swim in the nude. (Two local boys) found the secret of the bathers and decided to play a joke on them. One dressed up like a girl and after making sure the swimmers were in the water, he and the other boy strolled to the lake and took their seat on a bench close to the water.

“Being a bright moonlit night, the swimmers dared not leave the water, but soon became so cold that they called out to the couple to please leave so they could get out. The couple made no reply, and the shivering boys decided to

climb up on the island. Realizing the one tree was insufficient cover, they again asked the young couple to leave.

“When nothing happened, the boys swam to the edge closest to their clothes and scrambled out. Only then did they discover it had been two boys sitting there all the time.”

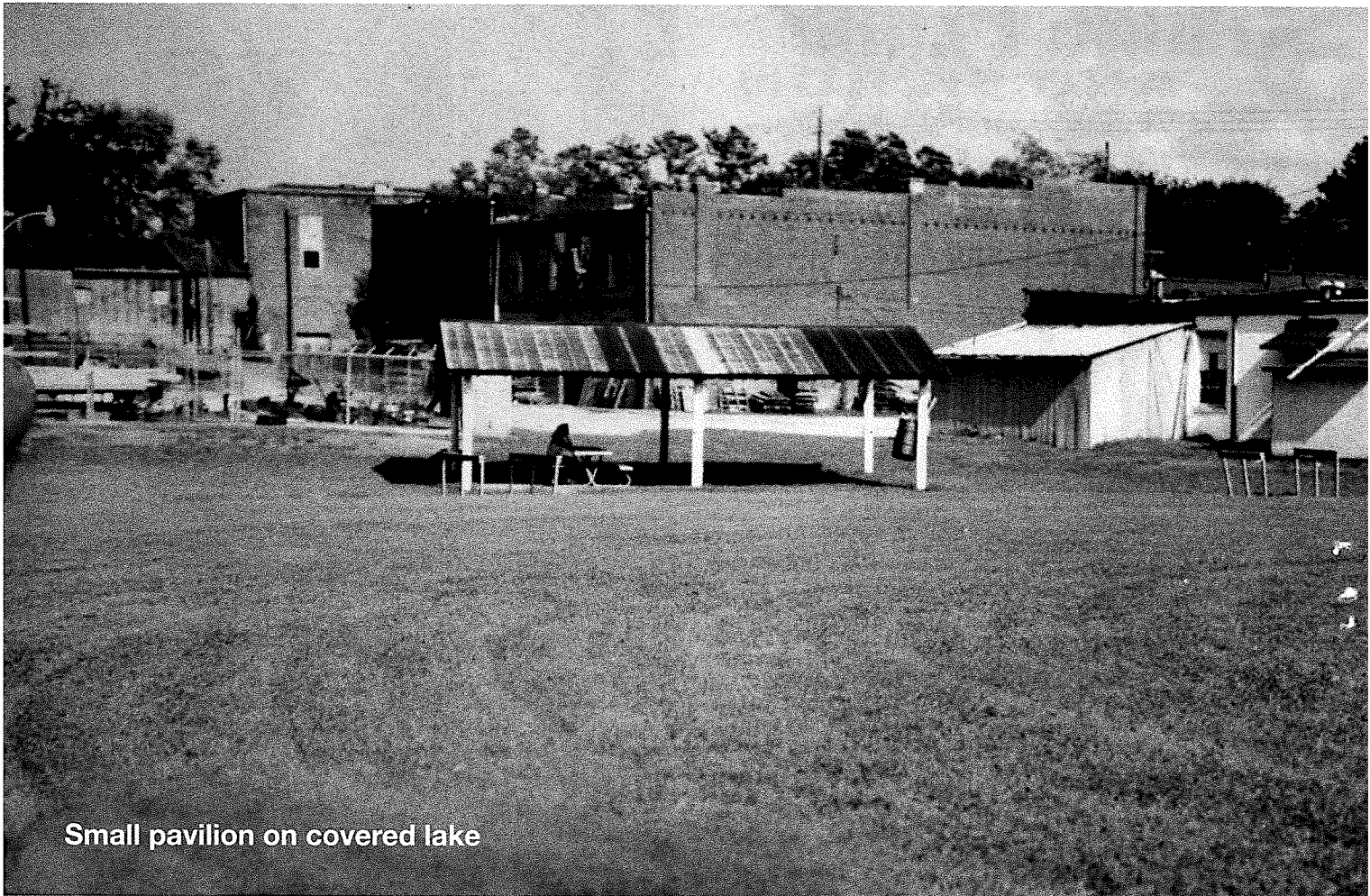
Margaret Cole recalls another amusing incident, where in a lady of her acquaintance who was a fanatic about housecleaning took umbrage when a local boy spotted some dust in her house. She chased him down the hill and threw him in the lake!

Springville installed a city water system in 1935, capping two of the largest springs to ensure a never-ending water supply. However, there was little chance of a shortage. According to Windham, Alabama Power Company estimated the total natural outflow from the lake at a million and a half gallons per day, its water so pure it needed almost no chlorine or treatments.

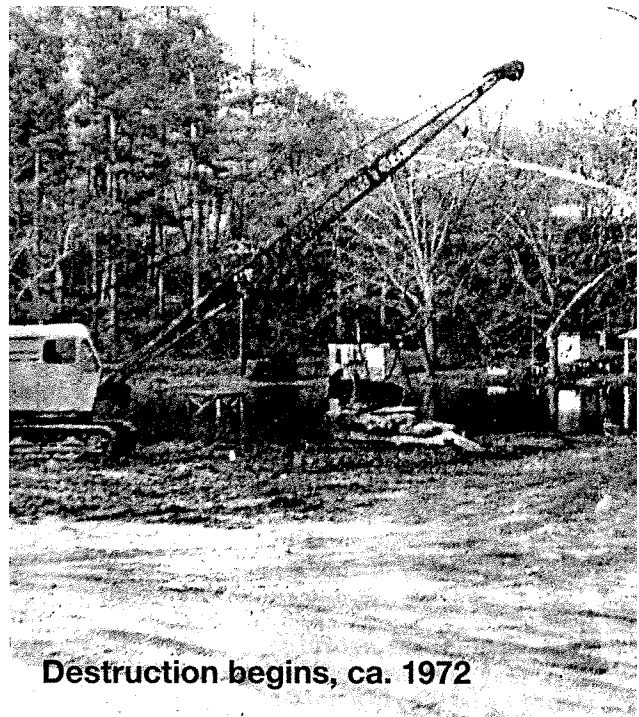
This municipal water came directly from the springs themselves, at least for the time being, what occurred in the lake had no effect on the water supply. It’s said the lake sometimes overflowed due to heavy rains and drainage, with fish occasionally washed out onto the banks, but the water was never muddy except following an earthquake in Alaska in 1964.



*Traveling the*  
**BACKROADS**



Small pavilion on covered lake



Destruction begins, ca. 1972

Springville Lake continued as a tourist attraction and local gathering place through the late 1960s. Mayor Pearson himself often officiated over raffles and other social events at the lake. But time and progress change things. New industries and residents in town required that an even more abundant water supply be furnished.

There are several other springs in the area, but the cheapest method was to simply fence in the lake to minimize surface contamination, and draw water from the lake itself as a multi-spring-fed reservoir. This move drew opposition from several prominent Springville residents, but the fence prevailed until 1972, when the State Health Department ruled that its open-air water supply was inherently unhealthy, despite the fact that other cities like Birmingham routinely use surface water supplies.

In a move that incensed people all over the county and beyond, the city filled in the lake with dirt, capped a couple of major springs, installed powerful pumps, and resumed drawing water from them just as before, except now Springville's treasured lake was gone, never to be seen again.

Letters of protest and op-eds flew like autumn leaves, but to no avail. One such editorial was written by then-recent newcomer to St. Clair Springs, writer Carolynne Scott: "... The fact that Springville needs more water has my sympathy, but I sincerely feel burying Springville Lake is not the way to do it. ... Everywhere I go ... people are asking about the Lake, reminiscing about the days when the garden clubs beautified it, and they all drove out to have picnics around it on Sunday afternoon."

Frank Sikora of the *Birmingham News* wrote: "Springville Lake was a natural park. ... You could hardly walk around the place through the crowds that came on July 4. Now it's gone. Where the water was, there is now only red-yellow dirt ... Nobody wanted it to happen, but it did."

Today, the lake basin can be seen as a round clearing, directly behind the former House of Quilts on Main Street. A pristine, crystal-clear stream gushes out its overflow pipe, passes under US 11, thence onward to merge with effluence from other springs in Springville's new Big Spring Park, the combined waters eventually finding their way into Canoe Creek and the Coosa River at Lake Neely Henry.

No doubt many old-timers still feel an occasional nostalgic twinge when recalling their childhood experiences of picnics, dances and watching gigantic carp take food right from their hand. Such simple pleasures are hard to come by anymore.

Lew Windham wrote some poignant verse as an epitaph for Springville lake. Here are a few stanzas:

### I WILL COME BACK

*I will come back to step on the worn yet worthy wooden bridge,  
And recall the many times we dove into the cool clear water;  
Plunging deeper to the bottom in hopes  
Of finding handsome treasures thrust into it years before.*

*I will come back and sit at the picnic table under the elms,  
And gaze into the circular body into which pounds of bread  
Feed the ever-hungry carp which crowded about  
To gulp down any small bite.*

*But the path, the bridge, the spillway, the fish  
And the lake will be gone this year, and my coming back  
Will only be a sad journey, I fear. ●*

SINCE 1971

**HUNTING LAND!**  
ASHVILLE, AL  
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