The History of Ashville

Ashville, Alabama, was named after John Ash, who settled the location in 1818, establishing a plantation, where he lived until he had made a name for himself and served his district as a state senator.

The writer has not had an opportunity to make inquiry about the family line of John Ash, but Thomas Ash was the first of the name he has been able to trace in the South and as many settlers came into the neighborhood of Ashville from the Palmetto State he is reasonably sure that a genealogist could easily find the later Ashes hanging from the same family tree as Thomas, a clerk on board his majesty's ship Richmond, sent out to Carolina in 1680 with instructions to inquire into the state of that province. He was the first adventurer into America this side of what is now the Mason and Dixon line.

Thomas Ash in his "Carolina--A Description of the Present State of the Country" (published in London, 1682), gives the earliest account of the English settlers in Carolina before their settlement of Charleston. One of the reasons of the success of the English colonists lay in the fact that they settled within the corn belt, which furnished unfailing food.

Here is his description: "Their provision which grows in the field is chiefly Indian corn, which produces a vast increase yearly, yielding two plentiful harvests, of which they make wholesome bread, and good bisket, which gives a strong, sound and nourishing diet; with milk I have eaten it dress'd various ways."

This boost for corn bread and buttermilk, made nearly 250 years ago, is a reminder of the South's negligence even today in not advertising the virtues of corn meal and the many palatable uses to which it had been put. If during the lapsed years the products of Indian corn as a food had been pushed as extensively as some articles of diet are now, not only the South, but the North, as well as all Europe, would be demanding that more corn be planted.

Now comes the question which might be left out, but to be true to the record, let Thomas Ash tell his own tale. Listen:

"Of the juice of the corn, when green, the Spaniards, with chocolet, aromatiz'd with spices, make a rare drink, of an excellent delicacy. " But wait a bit. "At Carolina they have lately invented a way of making with it good sound beer; but it is strong and heady; by maceration, when duly fermented, a strong spirit like brandy may be drawn from it, by the help of an alembick (still)". From this it would seem that way back in 1680 they were making "corn" around Thomas Ash in Carolina, openly; while today in the vicinity of the town named in honor of John Ash they are making it secretly.

It might be interesting, also, to let Thomas Ash throw some sidelights on the method of using corn as a food in his time:

"I have seen the English amongst the Caribbes roast the green ear on the coals, and eat it with a great deal of pleasure; the Indians in Carolina parch the ripe corn, then pound it to a powder, putting it in a leather bag. When they use it, they take a little quantity of the powder in the palm of the hands, mixing it with water, and sup it off; with this they will travel several days. In short, it is a grain of general use to man and beast, many thousands of both kinds in the West Indies having from it the greater part of their subsistence. The American physicians observe that it breeds good blood, removes and opens opellations and obstructions."

This is rather a long way to get to Ashville, but having arrived, the trip was well worth the making. Any town can have a home-coming; some can have a memorial day and unveiling of a monument; a limited number in Alabama can celebrate their centennial; but it took Ashville to do all three on the same day, and make a success of every one of the three features.

The social part was emphasized in the home-coming and they came from near and far; some afoot, a few on horseback, others in buggies, many on the

train, but the most in automobiles. It was a long cry from the days of the Indian trails when homes had to be blazed out of the virgin forests, and nothing showed the change better than the mode of transportation. On one of the principal corners is a rock weighing nearly a ton and hewn out of a nearby mountain, which in 1856 was brought into the village by "Jackie" Partlow, who clerked for Dean & Edwards, the firm being a family affair, being run by Widow Eliza Dean and her son-in-law, William A. Edwards. It was the great emporium of the day, and the great stone was placed so that the matrons and debutantes could step on it from their sidesaddles and then on to a smaller one and thereby dismount to make their purchases.

But the woman on horseback, the kind that used to come to town on business or pleasure bent, is but a memory. True it is that her Twentieth Century sister, in tailor-made riding habit, riding astride a trotting horse, is yet to be seen in the fashionable city parks; but the need of dismounting blocks has passed; this is why the one at Ashville serves merely as a place where two can have a heart to heart talk and it has furnished for more than threescore years a hard, but firm seat on which many pairs of congenial politicians have sat as they planned the political campaigns. Modes of travel may come and go, but the eternal game of local politics will continue to be played at Ashville until Gabriel toots his horn. The Ashvillians are born polititians and Clanton and Columbiana had better look well to their laurels as warring camps between the Republicans and Democrats or they will lose out to the county seat of St. Clair. The famous rock is furthermore a much better place for the peripatetic orator than is the traditional "soap box", and even the "stump speaker" feels on safer ground when he appeals to the "deer peepul " for their suffrage to save the country by electing him to office.

And now, having given a faint glimpse of the manner in which the native

sons and daughters harkened back to their home town, let's try and get in our mind's eye a picture of the scene which was being made notable by the waving of flags, military music, unveiling of a monument to the men who wore the Gray, and patriotic addresses linking together the past and the present and visioning the future. For it was an hour in which the early settlers, as well as the Confederate heroes were being praised, and both belong to the race of men who have made this country what it is, the hope as well as the envy of the other nations, a land where Americanism is the badge of honor and any other "ism" is not wanted.

The early settlements of the valleys of northern St. Clair took place in the years from 1816 to 1822, but the writer is not here going much into the history of the county but will give attention largely to the county seat. The masterful address of Col. O.R. Hood, who is of Gadsden, a truly noteworthy contribution to the history of St. Clair, gave the historic background for his tribute to his home town which he had gleaned from original research as well as written records and whould be sent to the Archives of History at Montgomery, to be preserved among the records of the county. The writer passes up the Indian portion of the story, as well as the manner in which the territory in time came to be the State of Alabama, as he has covered much of it and will from time to time make use of it.

There is romance in De Soto's touching St. Clair or coming near it, just as there is in the Indian wars and the conflict of the whites with the red man, but about all that is needed to be recorded here is that by a legislative act of the Alabama Territory, Nov. 20, 1818, the county seat of St. Clair was temporarily located at Upper Cataula, a point about 4½ miles west of Ashville, on or near the Springville Road, at the spot known as the Capeheart place. The house of Alexander Brown, built out of timbers hewn from the forest, was designated for the temporary holding of the court. St. Clair was added to the

middle judicial circuit.

In looking over some old records it was found that at a session of the superior court, September term, 1819, at the courthouse of St. Clair County, H. Y. Webb, judge of the superior court of law and equity for the Alabama Territory held court and the following jurors were sworn: John Ash, John Crump, Henry Bose, William Hill, James Martin, David Brown, John Dill, Benjamin Low, John Greenwood, Thomas Thrasher, John McCollum and William Watson. Jesse C. Roberts was clerk; David Conner, sheriff, and John Bush, deputy. In the first case tried Thomas A. Rogers was plaintiff's attorney, and the suit was for false swearing. Polydon Naylor's name shows about this time as practicing in the court.

William H. Cather, who wrote some interesting articles about the Indians, says:

"A great many Indians were tried at Ashville in the early days. Three Indians were brought in the 20's to Ashville for trial, having been apprehended for horse stealing. They were ironed or handcuffed at the Ashville blacksmith shop (probably at Bill Alman's blacksmith shop, which stood either on the north side of the John O. Turner lot on the public square, or on the north side of the lot belonging to the late Judge L. F. Box, just opposite D. B. Goode's residence). While the "irons" were being made and put on these Indians, one of them made 'motions' or 'signs', indication of wanting to write a letter to send back home (in North Alabama) by the officer who had arrested and brought him here. Thereupon somebody brought him paper, a pen and ink and he wrote a letter in the Cherokee written language, which had been invented by the Indians several years before."

It may be of interest at this point to give a list of the probate judges, as the old county courts were abolished in 1849-50. The first was Irby Wolley, then came Ross Phillips, T. S. Logan, J. W. Inzer, Alfred Turner, J. A. Zelner,

M. Montgomery, Henry Deberry, E. J. Robinson, A. W. Lacey, James T. Greene, A. W. Watson, W. S. Forman, James L. Herring, Perkins McClendon, and Sam High, the incumbent. In this list are names of men who have played a big part in the making of history not only in Ashville and the county, but in the state.

The present officers of St. Clair County are Sam High, judge of probate; Jim Bowlin, sheriff; Oscar McCain, circuit clerk; O. A. Steele and Woodson Martin, circuit judges of the 16th judicial circuit; Noah Sibley, circuit solicitor; C. D. Adkins, tax collector; C. D. Gray, tax assessor; Carl Baxter, superintendent of education; Miss Martha J. Ware, supervisor of schools. The board of education, Mrs. Mary Hodges, president; J. C. Merchant, J. M. Mize, Pickens Pearson, and A. P. Rich. The county commissioners, W. C. Besson, F. H. Copeland, A. S. Box, and T. H. Spradley. It can be seen from the names given that St. Clair has a forward-looking lot of men and women to look after its affairs.

It was probably in the election of 1819, when the voting places were at Joel Chandler's, Peter Ragsdale's and William Guthrey's, that the county seat was moved to Lower Cataula, the present site of Ashville. John Ash, John Massey, John Cunningham, Joel Chandler and George Shortwell were appointed to superintend the erection of a courthouse and jail. Log buildings were put up and used for several years. A tract of 30 acres of land was acquired from Phillip Coleman, who at that time lived at the Billy Jones place, one mile north of Whitney, out of which Ashville was surveyed. Later about 1822, brick structures were built and used until 1844, when the present one was built, except the wings. Littleton Yarbrough was the builder and Campbell Jefferson the bricklayer. Manoah Yarbrough, the father of the builder, came to St. Clair in 1822 from ~~Roen~~ Rowan County, North Carolina. The complete records of the county from 1821 are stored in the vaults. They include many valuable early deeds, wills, and Indian records. The seat of justice has ever

since remained at Ashville. The first court at Ashville was held probably in the year 1819 or 1820, in a log house which occupied the lot where the home of Mrs. Nellie Hodges now is situated.

If John Ash, along with other early settlers, could have been among the home-comers at St. Clair's county seat on April 26 they could hardly have believed their eyes, for all about them would have been evidence of the great improvements since their day and generation, but "ashes to ashes and dust to dust" means that they have passed on to that "bourne from which no traveler returns," and must wait until the general resurrection day. Ashbys, Ashfords, Ashtons, Ashleys, Ashbournes all testify that the Ashes have given their names to towns and cities both here and abroad.

Although the writer has a large number of the names of the old settlers of St. Clair, he will not put down some of them who had nothing to do with Ashville. The list is by no means complete and is limited largely to those who lived in the town before the Civil War.

Among the first merchants were William Sloan, James Rogan(grandfather of the Birmingham Rogans), Alemeth Byers, Moses Dean and Tilman Dean, John I. Thompason, Alfred Goode, Goodwin & Mitchell, etc. The physicians were Drs. Bothwell, Farrer, C. A. Crow (father of Judge Ed Crow), A. W. Nixon, Levi Lloyd, William H. Beason and others. Attorneys, Polydon Naylor, James Lewis, Oran M. Roberts, Rufus W. Cobb, Girard Hewitt (a Northern man who went to St. Paul and amassed a fortune), John I Thomason, Thomas Hayden, J. W. Inzer, Andrew Pickens Earle, an old bachelor who was buried in 1835 and whose grave still is preserved in good, the monument and iron railing showing that in those days good workmanship was the rule. James Rogan had the first gin, Armstrong & Cox had a water mill, as did A. B. Vandegrift, whose mill was run by the town spring, which at present is walled in and when the writer first saw it on a winter day thought it was one of the loveliest small bodies of water he had ever seen. The mill by the town spring was operated by Col. Massey.

Earle's grave should be moved to present cemetery

One of the historic places in Ashville is the Hood Hotel, which was built about the time the town came into existence. It is a century old and,

while built of wood, has never been damaged by fire. The writer some 35 years ago, after a long cold drive, arrived at it and registered. It was not a very handsome structure, but its long double verandah is inviting. Think of getting by a log fire and thawing out and then going to supper where fried chicken was the piece de resistance, hot flaky biscuits, honey and golden butter, and real coffee on the side, while country ham simply by its aroma tempted the hungry to try it. And then to a room with a fireplace big enough for a room in a modern apartment house sending out its cheer and finally to lose oneself in a feather bed, to be awakened by the breakfast bell and then to be charged $1 for it all. Small wonder that it lingers in the memory of one who at present has to put up $3 for supper, bed and breakfast at the country hotels. J. D. Hood is considered to be one of the best gardeners in the St. Clair County and the hotel garden is big and fertile and it's a poor day in season when half a dozen or more delicacies fresh from it are not found on the dinner table. The building is owned by Mrs. Margaret Fulghum, the mother of Mrs. Hood, who in spite of her years was having the time of her life at the home-coming. The Hoods have been in charge about 40 years. During the Civil War it was run by Alfred Goode, who took charge in 1857 and retired from it in 1867. It was known in its early days as the Lawson Hotel. The writer also has stopped at the Teague Hotel, which is run by Mrs. Lulu Teague, and under her hospitable roof has had equally as good treatment. He has given the Hood House space on account of its age.

The writer was able only to find that The St. Clair Diamond was established in Ashville, April, 1860, until the last of July, 1861, when the paper was suspended, the office locked up and everybody on it entered the Confederate service. In 1863 The Ashville Vidette started up, but in 1864 fell into the hands of Gen. Rousseau, of the Federal Army, who used the printing outfit for printing orders and blanks, and getting out at least one number of a paper, the editorials being written by a member of his staff. A copy of this issue would be invaluable. No doubt there were other papers, but these two are the only ones about which any date was to be had.

Here is a good opportunity to ring in the Southern Aegis, one of the most remarkable weeklies in the state, as it has been in the hands of the Cather family a half century, it being established in 1873. It is today printed in the old building in which The Vidette was published.

A man would have to travel wide to find as clever a fellow as is B. B. Cather, its present owner. He is one of the few editors and owners in the county seats who is comfortably fixed in this world's goods, and what he has is at the service of his church, his town and his friends.

Up to this time, the events and persons entering this story played their part before the Civil War, but, having brought the Southern Aegis into it, let's get a line on things around the early 70's, about the time Birmingham was being born. G. R. Cather was its editor and proprietor. The following lawyers had cards in the issue of Wednesday, Jan. 6, 1875: John W. Inzer, John D. Strange, James T. Greene, Leroy F. Box. The Ashville Hotel(now Hood Hotel), J. F. McClellan, proprietor, carried an ad; William McCurry advertised as a wheelwright. W. H. Paul, Birmingham, had an ad headed "Mineral City" Tin and Stove Man. Church notices showed that Rev. Jesse Collins was serving the Baptists; Rev. P. E. Nicholson, the Methodists, and Rev. Thomas McCluney, the Cumberland Presbyterians. The Aegis carried a local advertisement of A. B. Vandergrift and quite a few Gadsden, Birmingham and Chattanooga advertisers used its space.

Like other settlers coming from the Virginias, Carolinas, Tennessee and Georgia, it wasn't long after rude log houses were built and patches cleared before the pioneer preachers began to hold religious services in the rude cabins, in bush arbors or out under the trees. Unfortunately, however, few of the early churches preserved any records and it has been mighty hard to get even the names of many of the old heroes of the cross.

It is practically certain that the Methodists and the Baptists and probably the Presbyterians got a foothold in and around Ashville in the early 20's.

The only names among the Baptists which Judge Inzer could give were those of Harris, Blythe, Byers, Williams, Collins, Montgomery; then those serving the

church at Asnville, but not all, or in order, have been John A. Glenn, R. Lloyd, L. M. Stone, A. E. Burns, M. Rogers, I. W. Inzer, J. E. Flemming, Collis Cunningham, and the present pastor, B. L. Wyatt.

Among the Baptist families of the older generation, the Hodges, Partlows, Neeleys, Yarbrough, Cobbs, Turners, Galbreaths, Ramseys, Bowlins and others. But when Judge John W. Inzer came to Ashville in 1856 there were only two male members, who lived in the town, and he thinks they had been excluded, and so when he put in his letter he was rather lonesome. There were others who lived in the country as in those days the membership was largely outside of the incorporation. The present church, which is located in the crest of a hillside in a grove, was built in 1853. Before that it seems all denominations worshipped in the old schoolhouse which had been abandoned for another site. It occupied the location of the present Baptist Church. across the road

The Methodists built a little later, and from the first in and around Ashville there was preaching. Such noted elders as Moody, Hearn, and Brown were watchful for the interest of the demomination to which they gave their wholehearted support, braving real dengers and all kinds of physical discomforts to spread the doctrines of Methodism. Some of the later pastors have been John W. Aiken, P. E. Nicholson, George Driscoll, R. B. Greene, Mose Butt, E. W. Jones, F. F. Lester, W. L. Holdridge, E. H. Horton, J. E. Jenkins and H. F. Whittle. W. L. Morris is the present pastor.

The Episcopalians built a churchhouse in 1859 which was moved to Elyton in 1871 and still is standing. It was under the influence of Bishop Cobbs. Rector Morris, from Jocksonville, used to supply for the local Episcopalians. Some of the members were Peyton Rowan and wife, Mrs. Eliza B. Dean and Capt. W. A. Edwards and wife.

The Presbyterians had an organization but no church building. Judge James and wife, Alemeth Byers and wife and Joe Moore were among the members.

The Christian church was the latest to occupy the field and at present they have a growing congregation. W. C. Graves is the pastor.

With the settlers gathering in communities the pedagogue was called in

to teach the children (among the older teachers being William C. Griffin and John H. Caldwell). The old school house, which sat on the site of the Baptist Church for years, was the intellectual Mecca for the boys and girls in the surronding territory. It finally came near rotting down and passed from school to religious purposes, as the school had moved to the other side of the village. For years a large wooden building crowned one of the nearby hills, but last year gave way for a modern schoolhouse built of the same material as the famous Huffmas school. It is a credit to Ashville. The public school is closed for the season.

For many years Ashville has had a Masonic Lodge. It was organized before the Civil War. Back 50 years ago there was a notice in The Southern Aegis calling a meeting. At that time it was known as Cataula Lodge and E. J. Robinson was the worshipful master; W. T. Jones, senior warden; R. V. Early, senior deacon; J. E. Handley, junior deacon; Oscar McCain, secretary; John W. Inzer, treasurer, and John S. E. Robinson, chaplain. It has its own Masonic Building.

Coming down to the present, J. H. Frazer is mayor; U. H. Prickett, clerk, and J. N. Glenn, marshal of Ashville, while the aldermen are A. L. McBrayer, R. T. Nunnally, J. M. Stewart, and U. H. Prickett.

Ashville has the following industries:

The Ashville Cooperage Company, of which Sam High is the president and moving spirit, is a large concern doing a big business and employing a lot of labor.

Mrs. Amelia Cox, M. R. Abernathy, and John Yarbrough have water mills.

The following have sawmills: Henry Cash, George West, R. R. Hodges, J. H. Frazier, Alvin McEntyre and L. R. Lonnigan.

Sam High operates a cotton gin.

Thereare a number of progressive merchants and the new brick block makes a fine showing among the old-timers which have come down from before the Civil War, one attractive thing about the square being the old-time law offices.

There are two banks and each one housed in an up-to-date brick building. The Ashville Savings Bank is the oldest, it having been established in 1906;

while the Farmers' and Merchants' Bank was organized in 1920.

The Ashville Savings Bank has a capital of $12,500, surplus of $8,500, and undivided profits, $2,000. James L. Herring is president; J. C. Du Bois, cashier; and directors, James L. Herring, W. A. Beason, John W. Inzer, Sam High, and John L. Hamilton.

The Farmers' and Merchants' Bank has a capital of $15,000; surplus, $1,000; and undivided profits, $2,500. W. A. Beeson is president; B. M. Teague, first vice president; Perkins McClendon, second vice president; and Hugh H. Prickett, cashier. The directors are W. A. Beeson, B. M. Teague, Perkins McClendon, Hugh Prickett, Oscar McCain, and B. B. Cather.

Each of the banks have deposits of about $100,000.

Ashville has its garages, barber shops, drug stores,etc., but one of the most interesting things in a business way is that of W. D. Prickett, who for 15 years has specialized in raising honey. He started with a few colonies and at times he has as many as 40 or 50. His best year was when he got 1,400 pounds from 17 colonies. In 1921 he got 1,100 pounds from 30 colonies. Last year was a bad one on account of a late Spring, and the lack of sunshine and flowers. The price has run from 15 to 25 cents. Mr. Prickett's honey has a fine reputation in all the markets where he has shipped it. The writer bought some several years back and found it excellent.

Ashvillians did not get into the war of 1812 as they, at the time, had not come together in a community, but in all the later wars they had a part. It is a pity that the names of those who went to the Mexican War have not been kept. There is a better roster of those who fought in the War Between the States, but small account has been taken of the Spanish-American War veterans, and unless some one takes it upon himself or herself the World War heroes in a generation or more will be lost to memory.

This has been said to lead up to the great work of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, for it is largely due to their unceasing and loving efforts that the names of the men who wore the gray, along with the Ladies' Memorial Association, have been remembered on April 26 with loving ceremonies, flowers for their graves and high words of praise for their gallant services.

But Ashville Daughters, organized in 1913, with Mrs. M. A. Beeson, president, on April 26 were doing more than strewing garlands above the last sleeping place of the departed Confederate dead, and a glorious monument in enduring marble was being unveiled, which will continue to speak when the voices of the present day orators are hushed. It stands out boldly as a silent witness to let all who pass it by know that the heroes who gave their all, some even to life itself, still

live enshrined in the hearts of the local chapter, made up of more than 50 members.

The officers are Mrs. James A. Embry, president; Mrs. R. R. Hodges, first vice president; Miss Elizabeth Yarbrough, second vice president; Mrs. Sam High, secretary; Mrs. Perkins McClendon, treasurer; Mrs. A. G. Teague, historian; Mrs. J. C. Montgomery, registrar; and Mrs. Elizabeth Ashley, chaplain. The chapter was greatly aided in the enterprise by the splendid work of the monument committee, of which Mrs. Sam High was chairman; Mrs. J. C. DuBois, secretary, and Mrs. J. A. Embry.

It seems strange and yet fitting that George A. Ash, grandson of John Ash (now living in Birmingham), and the representative of the McNeel Marble Co., of Marietta, Ga., should be given the contract for the erection of the handsome monument. It makes a striking appearance with its life-like statue of a Confederate soldier standing on a towering base. The inscription reads: C. S. A., 1861-1865, To the Honor of St. Clair County Confederate Soldier, Erected by Their Descendants, Through Ashville Chapter U. D. C., 1923.

It was a solemn moment when the hour arrived for the unveiling of the monument. Prayer was made by Dr. W. B. Holmes, Presbyterian pastor, Springville and after a beautiful song by the quartet made up of Mesdames T. J. Hodges and Floyd M. Baird and Messrs J. P. Montgomery and R. T. Nunnally, and a lovely solo by Mrs. Stella Box Hodges (Mrs. R. Hodges was the accompanist), Mrs. W. A. Beeson, in choice and gracious words, introduced Mrs. E. L. Huey, the state regent of the U. D. C., whose address was filled with the recital of the great deeds of the immortal Confederates. She thrilled her hearers time and again as she told of Davis, Jackson, Forrest, and Lee and others whose names will never perish as long as Southerners live. James H. Embry had made a stirring memorial address in the morning.

Space prevents any sketch of the events which led up to the War between the Union and the Confederacy, and only brief mention can be made of the part which St. Clair men played in it. The people of the county did not want to secede and sent John W. Inzer, anti-secessionist, to the Secession Convention at Montgomery, but when it declared for secession he took up arms against the invaders. St. Clair, when once in, contributed more than 1,200 loyal soldiers of the Confederacy and their deeds are a part of the great conflict. Many sleep on the famous battlefields of Virginia, Tennessee, and Georgia, but more sleep beneath the sod of their home county.

The sons of St. Clair went largely into the Tenth and Fifty-Eighth Alabama Regiments, and some won high rank. William T. Smith was at one time colonel on the Tenth; John H. Caldwell, lieutenant colonel; James D. Truss, major; Samuel A. Wyatt, Le Roy F. Box and B. F. Sides, captains. Of the Fifty-Eighth, John W. Inzer was lieutenant colonel; Wiley Spruill, adjutant; Sheriff Brewster, George Markham, W. M. Inzer, R. W. Wiggins, Sidney F. Lister and A. B. Vandegrift, Captains. Many non-commissioned offices were held by brave men from St. Clair, while the rank and file were known for their fearlessness.

Small wonder then that when the dinner was set, a place was roped off for the old veterans and their wives. They were given seats while the daughters waited on them. There was dinner fora all the visitors, but none was served with the same loving care as fast fading remnant of Confederates.

With the exception of just a few, small mention will be made here of the living, as what space is at the command of the writer will be used to speak of the noted native sons who have gone to their reward. It's the memories of the fore-fathers which shine forth shedding a luster on the present generation, and well it was that a day was set apart giving those who lived at a distant time to get back once more to the home of their ancestors. The Chinese may carry the worship of ancestors a bit too far, but too often Americans in their busy way fail to take time to do honor to their fore-fathers. Sons and daughters of the pioneers have gone forth from the paternal roof into various cities and states, and whatever they have done and wherever they have gone they have carried with them at least a portion of the characteristics of that sturdy stock which blazed its way through wilder-nesses, carved homes out of the forests, planted crops while fighting off the Indians.

Take, for instance, Birmingham, and here are a few who were either born in Ashville, or lived here for a time: Dr. George Morrow, lawyers, James P. Herring, John D. Strange, Charley Robinson, J. R. Forman, Jerome Edmondson, J. S. McLendon, Capt. A. B. Vandergrift, one of the old merchants, and then a whole host of younger men who are actively engaged in many pursuits, such as Grant Nelson, John Inzer and Solon Hood, D. A. Partlow, Will Forman, T. J. Hodges, Ed P. Montgomery, J. C. McCain, J. H. McCain, John Inzer Freeman, T. D. Moor, A. H. Cather, J. R. Nunnally, Grady Prickett, L. E. Garrett, J. M. Nunnally, Charles Turner, Clifton Prickett, H. V. Robinson, and others.

But way back yonder a native son, after the beginning of a distinguished career here in this state, went to Texas and made a great name for himself. The writer first learned of him several years back. He had been invited to preach at the Baptist Church at Ashville, and after breakfast left the hotel and took a walk out to the top of a commanding hill to get a view of the valley below. In a clump of trees on the crest were two graves which on inquiry proved to be those of the father and mother of Oran M. Roberts (the name appears in print sometimes as "Oren," Orren", "Oran", and "Orran", but unfortunately the writer fails to remember just how the Texas statesman, born and reared at Ashville, spells his first name, although only last year in the library of the University of Alabama he dug up a precious manuscript in his own hand giving an account of his stay at the University during his student days). He got his first education in the

common schools of his home town, and studied law at Ashville, where for a time he was a member of the bar. He served in the Alabama Legislature in 1840, being a member of the house. It was his only session and Garrett says: "He was modest and unpretending, though his talents were manifest." In a few years he moved to Texas, where (this before the Civil War), honors soon began to pour in upon the head of the young and talented Alabamian. He was elected to the supreme court; he was president of the Secession Convention in 1861, and, in 1865, was elected a senator in the United States Congress, but never took his seat, being hindered by the Republicans majority, which used its full authority in the awful days of reconstruction, giving as a reason for not seating him that Texas had joined with other Southern States in insurrection. Then he had served as a colonel of a Texas regiment, C. S. Army, 1862-64. After the war he was again elevated to the supreme bench, taught law in the Gilmer Law School; elected governor of Texas, 1878-82, and afterwards was professor of law in the University of Texas. He also wrote some legal and historical works which brought him money and fame.

But Ashville had a native son, who, born in the old Cobb home north of Courthouse square, studied law there and twice became governor of Alabama. Rufus W. Cobb, like Oran Roberts, in his ability to gather offices of emolument and honor, however, was unlike him in that he remained at home and received them at the hands of his own people without having to take the trouble to pile them up in a distant state and among strangers. Ashville's favorite son has a strong claim on Birmingham, as here it was he spent the latter days of his life, dying in the Magic City Nov. 26, 1913. It is here that his daughter, Mrs. Dora C. Fell, one of Birmingham's best posted club women, resides while here he has grandsons and granddaughters who adorn various walks of life, one among the number, Charles Fell, managing editor of the Birmingham News. Not only was Rufus W. Cobb twice govenor of Alabama, but he was the only man in Alabama who was governor and Masonic Grand Master at the same time. His father, a Virginian, John W. Cobb, served in the Creek War with General Andrew Jackson as colonel of a regiment, was twice a member of the state legislature, and died at Ashville in 1845.

Gov. Cobb was educated at an academy at Ashville under Profs. Wasson and Drury, and was graduated from the University of Tennessee, at Knoxville, in 1850. Returning to Ashville, he had read law in the office of John C. Thomason, and was admitted to the bar in 1845, forming a partnership with his legal instructor, he practiced in St. Clair and adjoining counties until 1867, when he moved to Shelby County and when he moved he became associated with B. B. Lewis, the partnership continuing until the latter was elected president of the University of Alabama.

He was president when the writer attended the University, and a courtly gentleman he was. When war was proclaimed in 1861, Gov. Cobb entered the Confederate Army as captain of Company C, Tenth Alabama Infantry Regiment, Forney's Brigade, and went to Virginia with that regiment, remaining there until 1863. He was assigned to Gen. Joseph Wheeler's cavalry in Tennessee, in charge of a scouting party. After the war for a time he lived at Marion, practicing law there until 1868, when he went to Columbiana, staying there until 1873, when he moved to Helena. He served two terms in the Alabama Senate and during his second term was made president of the body. He, in conjuction with Peter A. Hamilton, of Mobile, and others, devised the plan for the readjustment of the state debt which Gov. Houston submitted to the legislature after elaboration. Senator Cobb was the adviser and friend of Gov. Houston during his administration. He was nominated and elected governor in 1878, and reelected in 1880.

These are some of the outstanding facts in the life of Ashville's distinguished son, but, knowing them and more than is here set down, the thing which impressed the writer most about him was that on the courthouse square there stands a mammoth oak planted by his hands, but which today towers high above the cupola on the seat of justice and too broad around for even two persons linking their hands to circumscribe it. It was typical of the man who set it out, slow but sure rooted in the eternal principles of justice.

There are quite a few others who are worthy of mention, but this story is to fill a page and not a volume, and, therefore, they are with regret left out, but before passing to the one living man who is the embodiment of the best traditions of Ashville and St. Clair, Judge John W. Inzer, let this writer lay an humble wreath on the birthplace of Capt. Gardner Greene, that brilliant son who in the World War on Sept. 12, on the battlefield of France, made the supreme sacrifice for America and shed glory on the brilliant One Hundred and Sixty-Seventh Infantry, that fighting machine which was the admiration of the Allies and the toast of the American Army.

Much has been written about Judge John W. Inzer, the stalwart Georgian who turned his back on Gwinnet County and came and settled in St. Clair and Ashville in 1856 and ever since has been a beacon light as well as a tower of strength to his adopted town, county and state. The house in which he lives partakes of his strength and character. It was built in 1851 for Maj. Moses Dean, and the brick were burnt and laid by Jefferson Campbell, a master brickmaker and layer. The walls extend from ground to roof and even the dividing walls between the rooms are brick. There isn't a crack in any of the outside or inside walls and even the doors and sills are in perfect condition. John.W. Inzer read law under the late Senator John T. Morgan, being licensed to practice in 1855. He opened an office in

Ashville where he has lived for 68 years and today despite being in his 89th year, his mind is as clear as a bell and the writer got the larger part of his information about Ashville from him during an hour's chat. He was at all of the exercises of the day and at suppertime, where the writer supped with him in the hospitable home of his son-in-law, J. P. Montgomery, he seemed as fresh as at the beginning of the day. For more than a score of years the writer has from perhaps time to time come in pleasant personal contact with Ashville's "Grand Old Man", and while he admires him for his public service at the bar, on the bench, in the legislature, in the constitutional as well as the Secession Convention, and for his courage as a Confederate soldier, it is not merely for these distinguished services that he looks up to him, but for his unwavering and unflinching stand for the best there is in the public and private morals of his community; ever ready to reward the well-doer and never afraid to rebuke the evil-doer. It was, however, during the hell of reconstruction that he stood like a lion against lawlessness and disorder and by his moral and physical courage brought bad men to their senses while rallying good men to his help.

Today there are a lot of strong young men in Ashville who are carrying on the best traditions of the men who founded it, and it is just full of "elect ladies" who never tire in working for the best interests of all the community. It is a town of lovely homes, has recently built a beautiful and commodious school, has three churches; and in fact is a good place in which to live and do business.

Ashville has every reason to be proud of the handsome way in which it staged the home-coming, the unveiling of the monument, and the Centennial Celebration. The decorations were the best the writer has ever seen in a town. The parade was excellent in the number of cars in line and the manner of their decoration. The dinner was really a feast. Tables had been built on three sides of the square and they groaned beneath the good things which were put upon them. But, best of all, was the friendliness of the people towards the home-comers, as well as the visitors. It was real old-time ante-bellum hospitality brought over into the Twentieth Century.