

**A. C. Smith, Attorney, and the Smith Building**  
**By Derric Scott**  
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From newspaper research and information from the Facebook group "U know u lived in CLANTON as a kid," and other sources.

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## A. C. Smith, Attorney, and the Smith Building By Derric Scott

Allison Constantine "Allie" or "A. C." Smith was born on January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1862. He was admitted to the bar at Prattville, Autauga County on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1890 and began his law practice there. He moved to Clanton on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1893 and soon began his practice.

(Explain this? UB article note: Mr. A. C. Smith's first documented appearance in Clanton is in October 1893 when he rented Mr. Patrick Smith's residence and moved his family from Bozeman. He must have originally run a school (a topic for further research) because it is noted that he closed it in January 1895.)

Soon he is doing law work in Clanton (by 1897) and becomes the **County Solicitor** (by 1899) and later the **County Clerk** (by December 1901). Earlier in 1901 he loses a building in the great fire of that year that Moses Mims had been renting. Practically all of the businesses in that corner near the courthouse were burned out in that fire, including stores of **J. W. Davis, A. Popwell, L. D. Popwell, C. W. Robinson, Mrs. G. L. Phillips (W. T. Callen building)** and her new store, and others. By September 1901, most have either been rebuilt, or are in the process of construction, and it is said that "two new buildings are for A. C. Smith and Moses Mims, and are located next to **Abe Kanter's** old store, right up to the courthouse well." This is most apparently the southwest corner of that intersection.

May through July of 1902 is spent building his new brick office building for his law practice. At the very end of July he moved his practice into the new building. By 1903 he is advertising with a partner, Mr. J. O. Middleton in the building across from the Courthouse.

J. Osmond Middleton is elected **Mayor of Clanton** in 1904.

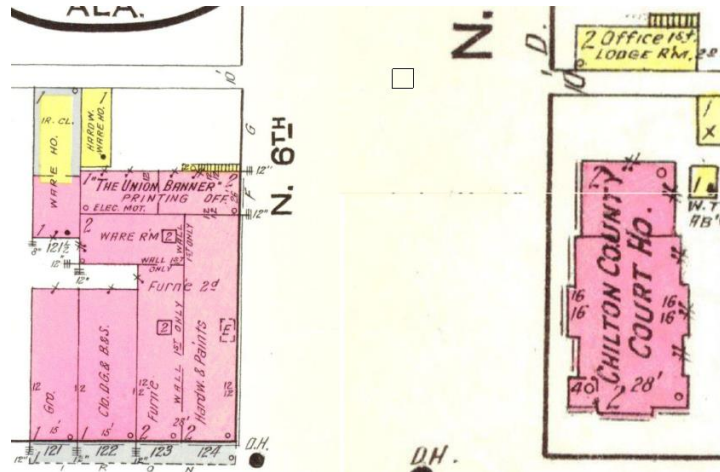
In September 1911 A. C. Smith partnered with Tipton Mullins and moved into Mullins' building. Dr. V. J. Gragg moved into the ground floor of the A. C. Smith building in January 1912. Also in 1912, the **Union Banner** mentions that the **A. C. Smith building** has "*one of the prettiest fronts to any building in Clanton*" and "*the lower story is of white pressed brick and the second story is artistically moulded in cement, or 'stucco' ... Elias Hopkins is the artist who has performed the work.*"



Photo of the A. C. Smith building ca 2016 and a close up of the upper roofline.

The **Union Banner** has been located in a wooden frame building "at the rear of the courthouse" and moves into the upstairs of the **A. C. Smith building** at the end of 1915. A few years later it will move into its own building on 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

A. C. Smith, Attorney, and the Smith Building



The 1917 Sanborn Fire Insurance map of Clanton shows the Union Banner in the Smith Building across 6<sup>th</sup> St from the Courthouse. Also the small wood-frame building behind the courthouse may be the previous Union Banner location.

A. C. Smith's home in south Clanton was destroyed by fire the night of June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1921. Instead of rebuilding, he moved to Cooper to run a general merchandise business there named the "**Cooper Mercantile Company**" and continued his law practice in Clanton.

In 1922 **Reynolds & Reynolds** law office moves into the upstairs "over the former location of the **Union Banner**" in Mr. Smith's office who has not practiced law for some time due to failing health. On the 1917 **Sanborn Fire Insurance map** the **Union Banner** is on 6<sup>th</sup> Street directly across from the Courthouse. In May 1923 Grady and Omar Reynolds move **Reynolds & Reynolds** into the new Gore Building.

A. C. Smith's health problems resulted in the amputation of his leg. He was back in town by March of 1922. He said he would restart his law practice when his son Cecil finished his law degree from the **University of Alabama**. In August, the **Union Banner** noted that A. C. Smith now had an artificial leg which he liked better than crutches.

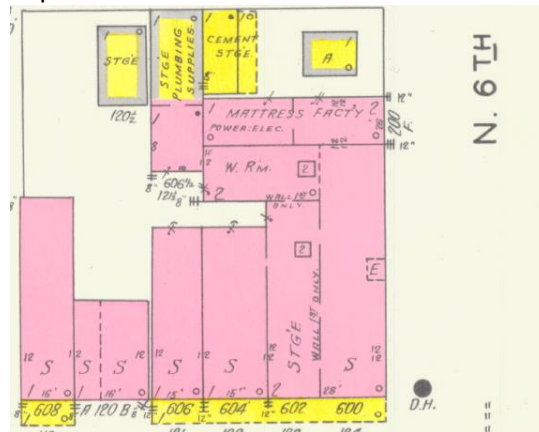
Cecil B. Smith graduated in May/June of 1923 and with his father, A. C. Smith, formed "**Smith and Smith**" and moved into the second floor of his building.

In January of 1926 the **Lime-Cola bottling** plant got new owners, Herbert Lowery (of Thorsby) and J. A. Pullen (of Gorgas). They planned to leave the plant location where it was, in the Smith building next to Jones Hardware.

That same year, T. Calvin Stephens, former principal of CCHS, partnered with A. C. Smith in the law office on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. T. Calvin Stephens was from Georgia and got his law degree from the University of Chicago in 1909. He also practiced law in Panama City and joined the Army in WWI before beginning his teaching career.

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The **Clanton Mattress Factory** moved into the **Smith Building** in October 1927, on the lower floor. The 1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance map showed their location.



Segment of the 1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance map showing the Mattress Factory in the Smith Building.

A. C. Smith changed partners to Raymond C. Smith by November 1930. Raymond was the County Solicitor at the time.

In September of 1931 A. C. Smith became seriously ill and died on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1931. He was buried in Samaria Baptist Cemetery beside his wife Nancy Mae "Linnie" Callaway Smith (born April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1868 in Weogufka, Coosa County, died May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1913, Clanton). At their February 1932 session, the court had a special memorial for Mr. A. C. Smith.

Business continued on, and the **Helene Curtis Beauty Shoppe** formally opened in the **Smith Building** on January 27, 1941. It is mentioned that this location was previously the **County Welfare Commodity Warehouse** and has been remodeled. **The Beauty Shoppe** was previously 2 blocks east of the **City Hall** and now working with Mrs. Mims at the **Shoppe** is Mrs. Ruth (Mitchell) Easterling.

## References

**Union Banner**, many small items in many issues. Too many to list.

**Facebook groups** “*U know u lived in CLANTON as a kid,*” “*WE GREW UP IN CLANTON, ALABAMA*” and others.

**Sanborn Fire Insurance maps** of Clanton, 1917, 1928.