
CHILTONIAN

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QUARTERLY MEETING

The Chilton County Historical Society will hold its spring meeting on **Sunday, April 15th, at 2:00 PM at the Senior Connection building.**

The speaker will be Alabama historian Jim Phillips. His talk is entitled "Lost and Found Treasures" and he will add some topics about "Old Maplesville."

Mr. Phillips is known for his presentations and videography on such topics as Alabama antebellum history, southern aviation, Sloss Furnaces, Birmingham-Southern, county histories, D-Day, and even ghost stories.

He is a historian, videographer, and collector of old bottles, coins, and is especially interested in old store tokens at this time. If you have any old store tokens please bring them!

You might be familiar with his brother, Dr. Doug Phillips, a naturalist who hosts *Discovering Alabama* on Alabama Public Television. .

The meeting is free and open to the public.

CHILTON COUNTY IS 150!!!

The year 2018 is the Sesquicentennial (150th) anniversary of the formation of Chilton County. Our newsletters in 2018 will focus on this celebration. Please feel free to offer any ideas to any officers.

Report on Sesquicentennial Activities:

The Chilton County Celebration Committee has scheduled the week of October 21 through October 27, 2018 as the Celebration Week, with Saturday the 27th being the "main event" celebration, the "Goosepond Gala." The website is beginning to flesh out – take a look:

<http://www.CelebrateChilton150.org/>

or the Facebook group and/or page "Celebrate Chilton County 150th."

The committee is meeting periodically now and is seeking ideas and participation. If you are interested or have suggestions, please contact an officer.

Union Banner Online:

Thus far the Union Banner issues from 1913 through 1926 have been digitized, with more to come in the near future. They are searchable by text, and you can see them at the below address. Just choose the **Wyatt Digital Archives** on the left, and then scroll down to the Union Banner link:

<http://libguides.montevallo.edu/archives/>

You can also Google for "Wyatt Digital Archive."

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Annual: Individual \$10 Family \$15, Student \$5 (All dues payable in January)
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NOTE: On your address label, the two-digit number after your name indicates the year through which your dues are paid. An "L" indicates life member.

Looking Back 50, 100, and 150 Years

In this issue we'll take a look back at events that were interesting in our county formation year of 1868 and the 50 year anniversaries of it, specifically 1868 and the anniversary years of 1918 and 1968.

Fifty years ago, in 1968, our county and nation were in the midst of the Vietnam War. The county lost two more soldiers in 1968, bringing the total lost from Chilton County to 13 by the end of the year. 1968 would prove to be the deadliest year of the entire conflict for the U.S. The North Vietnamese's "Tet Offensive" that began in January emphasized to the American public that the war was far from over, although they had been told otherwise. Domestic protests against the war intensified.

The other major issue in 1968 was the Civil Rights Movement. The unrest and protests increased and the movement suffered a major loss with the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in April. The Civil Rights Act of 1968 was passed into law later in the year.

Robert Kennedy was assassinated in June as he was seeking the Democratic nomination for President. Regarding the election, President Johnson said "I shall not seek and I will not accept the nomination of my party as your president." Richard Nixon would later defeat Hubert Humphrey and become President.

Notable events of that year include the release of "2001 A Space Odyssey" movie, the debut of "60 Minutes," the first manned Apollo launch (Apollo 7) and the first manned orbit of the moon (Apollo 8). The U.S. came off the gold standard, S&P Index topped 100 for the first time, the DOW finished the year at 943, and the average annual income was \$14,950. Sadly, the Zodiac Killer began his murderous spree and was never caught.

One hundred years ago, in 1918, World War I was still in progress, but would be over by year-end. The Spanish Flu was raging world-wide, including deaths locally in our county. Subjects printed in the 1918 Union Banner included:

- 1) Letters home from local soldiers and war news.
- 2) Lists of local young men newly registered for military service and details of their shipping out for training.
- 3) Politics and election information.
- 4) Campaign for ratification of Prohibition Amendment.
- 5) Ads for Kemps Dry Goods, Elmore's "Ladies & Gents Furnishings" (the 5&10 would come later), Upchurch Drugs, Wilson Hotel, The Ideal Theater, Clanton Mercantile Co., Downs Hardware, G. C. Shaw & Son in Jemison going out of business.
- 6) The "Food Administration" is controlling distribution, rationing, ordering "meatless days" and other food conservation.
- 7) News of the Chilton County Courthouse burning on Friday, August 30th, at 2:15 AM.
- 8) "GREAT WAR ENDS" – November 7th.

One hundred fifty years ago, in 1868, the South was in the "Reconstruction Era." Andrew Johnson had been President since Abraham Lincoln's assassination in April 1865. Ulysses S. Grant won the election in November to become the next President.

The southern states were writing new constitutions and ratifying the 14th Amendment in order to qualify for re-admittance to the Union. Alabama ratified their new state Constitution in February, which completed the process for re-admission. Elections were held for new U. S. Representatives. New U. S. Senators were appointed (they were not elected in those days).

*This page consists of segments and passages from various articles printed in our **Chiltonian** in the past. They all relate to the founding of our county or relevant stories of that time-frame.*

*First, an excerpt from an article published in our June 1989 **Chiltonian** Newsletter "**In Days Long Gone**" by Benjamin D. Roberts:*

... Formation of the county passed into law in December of 1868 and construction of the S. & N. Alabama (*Editor's note: South & North Alabama – S&NA RR*) rail line had progressed to within the current boundaries of the county at the time. By 1871 it was completed through Baker and Shelby counties. Station names were decided upon by the Railroad Company. Three of those were named after Civil War personalities: former Confederate Senator Robert Jemison; former CSA Brigadier General, James H. Clanton; and the late artilleryman, CSA Colonel Tennant Lomax.

Some local communities existing when the Railroad Company decided to commemorate those august officials were affected by the RR Company's station naming. In the north part of the county a community known as Campbell's Hill lost its name to posterity and has since held on to the name of Jemison.

In February, 1871, Mr. Alfred Baker, for whom the county was originally named, received a commission as Postmaster of a Post Office named Goose Pond. As it was the custom in those days to co-locate the Post Office in the Postmaster's place of business, we surmise that the Post Office was in Mr. Baker's store, which stood in the old McCain Mule Barn lot, now vacant, between Weldon's and the old Chilton County News office building.

The Goose Pond Postal facility was not destined to survive. A number of the settlers who had relocated to the area were veterans of the Civil War and a great many of them had served under General Clanton. It was probably by their efforts that four months after its establishment the Goose Pond Post Office was renamed as the Clanton Post Office and Mr. John W Gullahorn, a Confederate Veteran, was made Postmaster. Then in December 1874, Baker County passed into history and the county's name has since honored a distinguished Alabamian; the Honorable William P. Chilton.

*Next are some paragraphs from an article by Colyn Moatts where he writes about Alfred Baker and details some of the sparse documentation about Mr. Baker's life, from "**Alfred Baker: The Quest for Documentation**," published in the **Chiltonian**, October 2001. This article is very long and very detailed and I will excerpt only some pertinent statements:*

... Perhaps the absence of private documentation can be partially explained by a frequently told family story that all Alfred's personal papers were burned shortly after his death.

(He died on 9 February 1896, a Sunday, at Clanton.) ... we can document Alfred's election as a Justice of the Peace of Autauga County on 3 March 1862; we have records of his enlistment and service in a "90-day company" of the militia or Home Guard (known as the Autauga Rangers), also in March of 1862; and, we have records of his service in the Legislature, after being elected as a Radical Republican in the "5-day follies" election of February 1868.

... in the handwritten log of legislative activity, the name of "Mr. Baker" appears only occasionally, usually in reference to acquiring tax-free liquor licenses for some of his business associates. His major accomplishment as a Legislator from Autauga County was the establishment of Baker County – a political and geographic power base for himself, his relatives, and his friends. ...

... We now have documented evidence that his Civil War military service was limited to 90 days of duty (in Mobile from March – June of 1862). We know that the Autauga Rangers Home-guard unit participated in the "defense of Selma" in the spring of 1865, and we can infer that Alfred – as an officer of that unit – participated in the fighting before Selma, perhaps even at Ebenezer Church; however, this is inference based on logic, and no supporting documentation has been found. Because of the "Certificate Given" to him by Governor Watts in 1864, we now have documented proof that Alfred was exempt from the Conscription Law and regular service.

(Editor's note: Mr. Moatts now quotes an article written by Alfred's son Cary in 1927, which mentions Alfred as) A man of public spirit and pride in his neighborhood, he donated the ground on which the courthouse stands in Clanton, and also the site for the Methodist Church, and he was the original owner of the town-site of Clanton. For some years he was the leading merchant of Clanton, and he died a rich man...

*Finally there are some excerpts from a County History that was first published in the Chilton County News, May 31, 1928 and reprinted in the December 1990 and March 1991 **Chiltonians**. There are some known inaccuracies and I will note them in the text.*

Bibb, Autauga, Perry, and Shelby counties lost portions of their territory when the legislature carved out of those four the present boundaries of Chilton County, on December 30, 1866 (*Editor's note: 1868*). When first established, the new political body was given the name of Baker County, for Alfred Baker, a prominent citizen of the Autauga section. On December 17, 1871 it was changed by act of legislature and named in honor of Judge William Chilton, Chief Justice of the (Alabama) Supreme Court and former member of the Confederate Congress, wherein he represented the Montgomery district.

The act of establishment named Reuben Powell, Anderson

Baker, William Vines, E. Ward, and John Pernel as commissioners to hold an election, locate a county seat, build a court house and jail, and levy a tax to pay for these evidences of civilization and government. The first county seat of Chilton County was at Grantville, about four miles east of the present court house at Clanton. The old building was made of logs. It had but one room, about 16x20 feet. There must have been a jail, also, though no mention is made of such in any of the records so far discovered. The county's first officers were Mordecai Roberson, Probate Judge, and Thomas H. Williams, sheriff. Both were commissioned in 1869.

The town of Clanton was laid out in 1872 and was named for the Confederate General James Holt Clanton, a native of Georgia and long a prominent figure in political life of Alabama. A more imposing courthouse was built of lumber at the new county seat and served its purpose until it was burned in 1919. (*Editor's note: the lumber courthouse was sold and moved in 1896 and a brick one built, which burned in August 1918.*) The South and North railroad, which later became the Louisville and Nashville, reached the point where Clanton now stands in 1870, and later connected Montgomery and Birmingham. Clanton and Birmingham are practically the same age.

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