

# CHILTONIAN

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## Clanton's Hotel on the Hill: Elliot/Palmer/Wilson/Thomason/Willingham/Dewitt/Clanton

A Multipart series by Derric Scott



One of the most asked about buildings in Clanton is the old Willingham Hotel. The hotel and its predecessor have held many names over the century of their existence. Below is what I've learned so far.

### Early Days

When Clanton was young, the streets were a bit different than they are today. In 1908, if you travelled south on Eight Street past the Methodist Church, at Second Avenue North you would dead-end right into the old hotel. This large, two story, wood frame hotel stood in what is now the middle of Eighth Street. This hotel had 25 rooms and was named the Hotel Elliot. It was likely built between 1900 and 1906.

### QUARTERLY MEETING

The Chilton County Historical Society will hold its sprint meeting on **Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>**, at **2:00 PM** at the **Senior Connection**.

Our speaker has not been confirmed at this time, but will be on topics of local history.

The meeting is free and open to the public.

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**CREDITS:** *Chiltonian* is a quarterly publication of the  
**Chilton County Historical Society & Archives, Inc.**

**P. O. Box 644**

**Clanton, Alabama 35046-0644**

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#### MEMBERSHIP RATES:

|         |                 |
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| Annual: | Individual \$10 |
|         | Family \$15     |
|         | Student \$5     |

(Dues payable in January)

Lifetime: \$250

**NOTE:** On your address label, the two-digits after your



Postcard for the Hotel Elliot postmarked 1908

Though originally named the Hotel Elliot, a few years later, about 1910, a new postcard was published that listed the Hotel as the Palmer Hotel (also sometimes called the Palmer House).

In the August 25, 1910 issue of The Clanton Press there is an article entitled, "Whom I Met in Clanton," by a "roving reporter" named Mary T. Whitson (reprinted in the Chilton County Historical Society Newsletter October, 1984). It is one article in a series documenting her travels through the county. She

states “Clanton has got the best hotel in Alabama, the Hotel Palmer. Mrs. Palmer sets before her guests the most palatable cooking I ever ate. The hotel is in the loveliest place in Clanton. The dining room is always full and the spacious galleries always crowded. She is a gracious landlady.”



Left: Sometime before 1910, it is renamed to the Palmer Hotel. Right: A view of it in the distance from the 1896 courthouse's tower.



From 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave N looking back to the hotel (just to the right of the brick grocery), Original wooden First United Methodist Church on right.  
(This article will continue in the next issue)

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