

CHILTONIAN

Volume 40, Number 2

April 2020 (late -published July)

April and July 2020 Quarterly Meetings Cancelled

Out of an abundance of caution, we cancelled our Spring and Summer 2020 Quarterly Meetings of the Chilton County Historical Society. By all current indications, our Fall meeting is in jeopardy as well. I am going to find some online virtual meeting options we can consider if necessary.

I apologize for getting this (and the next) newsletter out very late. This edition starts a short series on some of the buildings in Clanton. Practically all of this information was derived from the available online editions of the Union/Banner/Union-Banner newspapers.

Brief Origin Notes of Selected Clanton Buildings, Part 1

By Derric Scott

Around the time of the formation of Chilton (Baker) county in December 1868 the town of Clanton didn't exist; the land was a cattle ranch. The first courthouse, erected in 1870, was built of logs and located a couple of miles northeast in "Grantsville," an otherwise unknown location (presently within the Scottsdale Subdivision). By 1872 a new two-story courthouse was built in Clanton. Like all the buildings in town, until near the turn of the 20th Century, it was built of wood. In 1934 and 1938 the Union-Banner newspaper published some memories of Rev. Peter DeJarnette, Sr. of Cooper/Mt. Creek. He recounted that in 1879-1880 Clanton was sometimes known as Gullahorn Switch because of the sawmill that stood behind where the Big Four Hardware store would later be located. He said that the sawmill, the commissary, the courthouse, the log jail, and the railroad depot (which was a boxcar) were about all that existed at the time, and that the road from the railroad up to the courthouse "was nothing more or less than a real rough route, with stumps, treetops, logs and holes."

After the time of Rev. DeJarnette's recollections a lot of growth, progress, and construction took place. Just before the turn of the 20th Century, Clanton had the shape that we would recognize today. However almost all of the buildings were made of wood, as seen in this 1901 photo of the Long Brothers' Circus coming to town.

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

P. O. Box 644

Clanton, Alabama 35046-0644

OFFICERS:	President	-	Derric Scott
	Vice President	-	Colyn Moatts
	Secretary	-	Scarlett Teel
	Treasurer	-	Alvin Teel
	Reporter	-	VACANT
MEMBERSHIP RATES:	Annual:	Individual	\$10
	(Dues payable in January)	Family	\$15
		Student	\$ 5
		Lifetime:	\$250

NOTE: On your address label, the two-digits after your name is the year through which you are paid. "L" = lifetime



Photo from Courthouse tower, Oct 5, 1901, 2nd Ave N., of The Long Brothers Circus parade. The building at the right/top would later become Upchurch Drugs when rebuilt as brick.

Fire posed an existential threat to any town during this time period. One massive fire could completely destroy a whole town. In 1901 Clanton suffered two of these fires and whole city blocks were destroyed. After each fire the burned buildings were usually rebuilt in brick.

The 1896 courthouse was possibly the first brick building in town. The W. L. Sampey store may well have been next, in 1897. This building soon became the E. M. Pinckard Hardware Company, later the Big Four Hardware store which still stands. P. D. Wilson built his two-story brick building around 1900 in the middle of the 2nd Ave N block approaching the courthouse. After the 1901 fires, both Tipton Mullins and A. C. Smith rebuilt their office buildings as two-story brick buildings which were finished in 1902; most of us would know the Mullins building as Levine's store and would recognize the A. C. Smith white stone building across from the courthouse on 6th Street. By 1904 Albert Headley completed the rebuilding of his store by the railroad as a two-story brick building, which today is part of Chilton County Feed & Seed. The Union-Banner reported there were 22 brick buildings in town in 1904. Most buildings in this postcard photo, taken around 1905, still stand and are recognizable today. An exception is the "Upchurch Drug building" which was wooden and would be rebuilt as two-story brick in 1906.



Photo postcard from ca 1905 showing the E. M. Pinckard Co, Tipton Mullins, A. Headley buildings and others.

Note that the merchants of the 2nd Avenue North block nearing the courthouse were not sitting idle either. C. J. Stewart built the two-story brick building on the corner after the 1901 fire and other merchants there also rebuilt in brick. Brick buildings were built in 1902 from the railroad west to the corner of 2nd Avenue North and 8th Street; these were for J. B. Downs, Elijah Rollins, and Tom Tyus.

Chilton County Historical Society
P. O. Box 644
Clanton, AL 35046-0644

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED