

# CHILTONIAN

Volume 34, Number 1

January 2014

## QUARTERLY MEETING

The Chilton County Historical Society will hold its quarterly meeting at 2:00 PM on Sunday, January 12th, at the Chilton/Clanton Public Library. Our guest speaker had not been determined at the time of publication. All members of the Society and other Chilton citizens who are interested in our county's history and its preservation are encouraged to attend.

## CREDITS:

*Chiltonian* is a quarterly publication of the Chilton County Historical Society & Archives, Inc.  
P. O. Box 644, Clanton, Alabama 35046-0644  
(A Non-Profit Organization)

## OFFICERS:

President	-	Katherine Reece
Vice President	-	R. B. "Benny" Harris
Secretary	-	Scarlett Teel
Treasurer	-	Colyn Moatts
Reporter	-	Janette Bailey

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(Dues payable in January)

Lifetime: \$100

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Mr. James M. Sims was ninety-four years of age this past summer when he wrote up his personal memories of being a member of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) here in Clanton, Alabama. Mr. Sims lived the first fifteen years of his life in Birmingham, but due to disability of his step-father in 1935, the family moved to Jemison. Mr. Sims attended the second semester at Jemison High School until he graduated in 1936 with eight others. He came to Clanton as a member of the CCC soon after graduation and stayed until he entered the military in World War II. Miss Mamie Maroney, reared in Verbena, taught School at Jemison. Mr. James M. Sims and Miss Mamie Maroney were married on April 11, 1941. The couple are still together after seventy-two years, and they live in San Antonio, Texas. The following is the second and final installment of his memories of Clanton's CCC.*

## James Sims and The CCC Camp

By  
James M. Sims, Sr.

*(Continued from last issue...)*

## EVENTS AND PEOPLE

Sometime around Christmas in 1941, Chilton County had a five-inch snow. There was no work for three days. The first day was a play day with many snowball fights. The Company Commander, Lt. Johnson, ended it by putting most of the Company on wood detail, cutting and stacking wood the next two days. The normal work resumed the fourth day, although most of the snow was still on the ground.

The happiest days might have been rainy days when there was no work in the Kudzu fields. Some of the boys would stick their heads out the windows and



doors, look up in the sky, and say "Rain, Rain, Ease my pain".

Every six months there was a minor turnover in the population of the Camp. Some would leave and be replaced by new enrollees. The generations that came after mine would never comprehend the condition of many of the newcomers. They represented many cultures, such as the industrial areas of Birmingham, the varied rural cultures of the flat farms in central and south Alabama, and the Sand Mountain and Tennessee River Valley in northern Alabama. Many had home haircuts of various types, but seldom comparable to a barbershop. There was a barbershop on the street that crosses Hwy 31 and goes past the old RR Depot. It gave the first barbershop haircut to several hundred CCC boys. There was also a restaurant next to the barbershop that served a great hamburger for a dime.

The first CCC uniforms resembled Army uniforms but never had a high quality-jacket like the Army, so most of us wore civilian clothes when off duty. The CCC clothes were the best that some boys had ever had so they wore them until they could afford to purchase a few civilian clothes. We could distinguish the new enrollee's by their clothes. In the last years of the CCC, a new uniform was created, green pants and a green jacket tailored like a suit coat.

The food in my home was adequate to satisfy our hunger, but never in the variety the CCC had. Another way to identify a new enrollee was his dining habits. We sat ten to a table and soon learned to never seat more than two or three new boys to a table. They would almost empty a serving dish of meat/vegetables or deserts when it was passed to them. After a week or two, they learned the serving dishes were refilled and there was enough for everyone.

My library assignment brought me in touch with a number of enrollees and supervisory personnel. The CCC had a mission other than providing for economically depressed families. It also provided rehabilitation of boys in the "Reform Schools". There were several in our Camp. One was "Wm. E." who spent a lot of time reading in the Library. He and I built a good relationship when I invited him to my office for chatting. I had been impressed with his twice weekly visits to the library. He had lived in a broken home and his anger turned to theft and violence. His IQ was probably over 100. Anyhow, his behavior and

good reports from the Camp enabled him to get a job before he maxed out his two years.

A Mexican boy was released from the "Reform School" to the CCC. For most of us, it was our first experience with that culture. The Library was on one end of the Recreation Building so I had a good opportunity to observe a lot about behavior and off duty activities. This boy was the best pool shooter in the Camp and often liberated money from the others. Once, one of the boys made a racial slur and the Mexican knocked him down. The accuser actually apologized after he got up. None of us reported the incident to the Commander because we knew the Mexican might be sent back to the Reform School. I don't recall any of the Reform School boys being returned. An Enrollee could own a car; however, the car could not be at or near the vicinity of the Camp. The only boy I knew that was dismissed from the Camp was one that had his car in Clanton.

A new enrollee was issued a comforter; two blankets; two bed sheets; a pillow and pillowcase; two suits of summer and winter underwear; a pair of khaki pants and one shirt; a pair of wool pants and one shirt; two pairs of denim work pants and two shirts; three pairs of socks; a winter coat; one khaki necktie; a work and dress cap; one bath and one hand towel; and, a toilet kit containing one toothbrush, a small tube of toothpaste, a safety razor, a package of two razor blades, one bar of soap, one bar of shaving soap, and a shaving brush to apply the soap. Bed linens were changed weekly. There were clothes washing facilities including drying racks in the camp. All of the boys washed their work clothes. Dress clothes were mostly sent to a Laundry and Dry Cleaning establishment owned by Bobby Minor and a Black Man.

There were four civilian Supervisors. Two lived off the Camp and two lived in the officer's quarters five days a week and went home for the weekend. Mr. Magee, who lived in the officer's quarters during the work week, visited the Library infrequently, reading and checking out fiction material. Mr. Ellis never came to the Library. Mr. Williamson and Mr. Haigler lived off Camp. Mr. Haigler was a very brilliant person. He was a regular at the Library, and he and I developed a good relationship. If the Clanton citizens ever knew what some of the books he read contained, he might have been jailed. These were books about Socialism and Communism. I know now that it was "defensive reading" rather than conversion. He later became an executive in the CIO labor



movement, and he wanted to know how to defend himself if he was ever accused of being a Commie or Socialist as many Union Leaders were. Mr. Haigler has a brief bio on the internet.

My Supervisor, Mr. Walker (the Educational Advisor), was a country boy from Lawley who worked his way through college at the U of Alabama with help by the R.O.T.C. He was a Captain in the Army Reserve. He remained a farm boy at heart. He felt cramped in his office and was most happy when conducting his farm projects at the Camp. The CCC funds allowed such projects and Mr. Walker was an expert in those funds. He was one of the first to have a large turkey farm in Alabama. There was an experimental turkey farm in Prattville which he and I visited. The view at that time was that turkeys were too temperamental to be farm raised; they would stampede like buffalo and could not be contained like chickens. Mr. Walker proved that theory was wrong. He obtained fifty baby turkeys and raised over forty, sold them for a profit to fund his future project which I will cover later.

CCC Educational Advisors, such as Mr. Walker, were supervised at the Command Level (Ft. McClellan) and therefore functioned independently of the Company Commander. Scuttlebutt was the Commander, Lt. Johnson, was jealous of this independence and also Mr. Walker was a Captain in the Army Reserve and outranked Lt. Johnson. After Mr. Walker disposed of his turkeys, he started raising chickens. When they were about frying size, he took several days including a week-end off and left on a short trip. On Saturday, Lt. Johnson ordered a work group be organized to kill and dress every chicken in Mr. Walker's project and cook them Saturday night and Sunday. I'm thankful I was at home that week-end.

I informed Mr. Walker of this when he returned to the office on Monday morning. He immediately left to observe his pens. When he returned, it was my first experience seeing him angry, not words, but fire in his dark brown eyes. He sat down at his typewriter and wrote a letter to his superior at Ft. McClellan. He never discussed the killing of the chickens or his letter to Lt. Johnson. Two weeks later, a red-bordered special delivery letter arrived from Headquarters to Lt. Johnson. He was ordered to turn over command of the Camp to Captain Walker and depart for active duty with the Army Infantry.

There was joy in the Camp. Lt. Johnson was a hard taskmaster and was all spit, polish and discipline. Our nickname for him was "Bulger", not in his presence, of course. It was about that time Lt. Blanton, very popular and respected, left for active duty. Mr. Walker's promotion lifted the gloom of Lt. Blanton's leaving.

About a month later, I was promoted to Leader and put in charge of the Supply House. About six weeks after that, the Senior Leader left and I was made Senior Leader. Three months later, Mr. Walker was called to active duty with the Army Coast Artillery.

When Mr. Walker left, I felt I had lost a father. He gave me and many others wise counsel. When I took the examination for my U.S. Civil Service job (where I worked for over 33 years), I had no way to get to Montgomery for the test. He discovered he had business in Montgomery that day. He drove me there and bought my lunch. One of his bits of advice for me and all other Enrollees was "Spend your time and energy for what you're for, don't waste them for what you're against".

Before he left, he recommended me to the National Youth Administration (NYA) District Administrator to replace the Supervisor who was leaving his job of supervising a NYA project at the Camp. I left the CCC and worked at that for three months and then worked at V.J. Elmore warehouse in Birmingham until I accepted a U.S. Civil Service appointment.

The Military Draft and the jobs created building military bases and arming them began affecting the CCC in late 1940. The last Enrollment I participated in in March 1941 was composed mostly of boys under 18. Most of the "Permanent Party" Leaders had left for jobs or military service. Assistant Company Commanders had been mostly Second Lieutenants, and there was a great demand for them to train the new Army Recruits. In early 1941, the CCC initiated a program to train Leaders for Assistant Commanders. Aubrey Rogers (the Leader in charge of the Mess Hall) and I were chosen for the program. I wasn't much interested because I had made up my mind to leave the CCC at the end of March to work for the NYA and much more important, to be married in April.

Mamie Meroney, raised in Verbena and teaching in the Jemison School, and I had been dating



for more than a year and had set a date to marry. We were married April 11, 1941. Aubrey Rogers was my Best Man. In the fall of 1940, I had revealed my intentions to Mr. Walker and asked him, "How does one know real love and decide who to spend the rest of your life with?" He hesitated several moments and replied, "Jim, I can't answer that, but you will know". As usual, he was right; Wednesday we will celebrate 72 years of marriage.

The CCC was good to me in many ways, especially in helping my family and ceasing feeling sorry for myself when I saw so many of my generation in conditions worse than mine.

This concludes my memory of History. I will add some remarks. The last time I saw the old Camp the Kudzu had encompassed the last building. I drove to the back area which is terribly eroded. To the best of my knowledge, there are no "Monuments" to the CCC in Alabama. If the U.S. Government owns the site, it is possible it could be granted to your organization. With Alabama Senators and Reps and local support, it could be granted to your Society for a park. A professional Grant Writer could possibly get a grant to develop the site. **EDITOR's NOTE:** *As many of you probably are aware, the former site of the old CCC camp now contains a residential subdivision.*

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

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## Value Plus

*Old Schools of Chilton County Alabama*  
By Lorene LeCroy  
\$15.00 + \$3 S&H

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*Baker/Chilton County Marriages,*  
1870 - 1893  
\$22.50 + \$3 S&H

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29 Skidmore Lane  
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Tel: (800) 568-1511]

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*Of Mrs. Grover Bice*  
\$20.00 + \$3 S&H

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# CHILTONIAN

Volume 34, Number 2

April 2014

## QUARTERLY MEETING

The Chilton County Historical Society will hold its quarterly meeting at 2:00 PM on Sunday, April 13th, at the Chilton/Clanton Public Library. After assembly at the Library, we'll convoy to the area of Clanton's old L&N depot for a short walking tour hosted by Mr. Johnny McKinney. All Chilton citizens who are interested in our county's history and its preservation are encouraged to attend.

## FAREWELL

Benjamin D. "Buddy" Roberts, Sr., age 83, passed away on January 12, 2014, after a long battle with cancer. Buddy was a retired Lieutenant Colonel who graduated in 1955 from the US Military Academy at West Point. During his retirement, Buddy served many years as President of the Chilton County Historical Society and was a driving force behind the Society's 1980 Cemetery Census. He was buried at the Alabama National Cemetery in Montevallo.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** While Scarlett Teel continues writing on her "Ramblings", we'll devote this issue to more articles from the 1950 Chilton County News "Opportunity Edition".

From  
***The Chilton County News***  
***"Opportunity Edition"***  
October 19, 1950

**Mr. R. C. Williams**  
President, Clanton Kiwanis Club



R. C. WILLIAMS



"The coming of natural gas to Clanton, which we hope in the near future will be a reality, will do worthwhile things in the way of development of industry. It would be a great thing for Chilton County to get some small industrial plants such as the manufacturer of shirts, overalls and ladies ready-to-wear. The citizens of this community should make an effort to get a greater payroll. In so doing, that money circulating through the channel of paid wages would stimulate every line of business and increase the value of every bit of real estate.

"When we take stock of our assets, with which nature has endowed us, we can go to the forefront in industry and agriculture. But like everything else in the world, the effort must be made to build up a condition of that character. Fine labor, transportation, water, [and] electricity, joined with splendid churches and schools, makes Clanton and Chilton County most desirable places in which to live and carry on business. With the coming of the automobile, distances were eliminated. Anything that would bring a greater degree of prosperity to Chilton County should also receive our support," said Mr. Williams.

This gentleman is a well-known business executive in this area of Alabama. He is the wholesale distributor of the Shell products in this and adjoining counties and has one of the finest retail filling stations to be found between Montgomery and Birmingham.

R. C. Williams is a member of the Methodist Church and Superintendent of the Sunday School. Clanton is fortunate to have him as one of our City Councilmen. In the latter responsibility he can do a tremendous amount of good by instructing our young people in the path they should walk. He is also President of the Clanton Kiwanis Club.

He is rated as having the fine public spirit and a most useful citizen.

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**Mr. Fred R. Smith**  
Mayor Jemison, Ala.



FRED R. SMITH

This is one of the best-known executives of a municipality to be found in Chilton County. He served on the Council at Jemison for four years and was Chairman of that Council. Since he was inaugurated as Mayor of Jemison, he has given the best that is in him to this responsibility and takes a real pleasure in working to the best interest of this city all the time.

He has a natural trend of ability that equips him to give worthwhile service to the whole community. He is also a member of the Board of Education for Chilton County and takes a real interest in this constructive work.

Since [he became] Mayor of Jemison the population has grown from four hundred fifty to eight hundred fifty-seven. Mayor Fred R. Smith is a daily booster for Jemison and Chilton County. He knows the value of a dollar and how to spend it economically. Under his administration as mayor and serving as councilman, the water system, street paving, fire department, full time police have been established, and this lovely little city is getting a good administration.

The auditorium at the High School at Jemison bears witness to his public spirit. Many people thought that it could not be built with the money that was appropriated, but Mayor Smith took every angle of it in charge and gave it his personal attention and it was carried on to a successful conclusion.



Many friends of the Mayor look for him to be called to higher political office in the future. He has the constructive ability. He is in the grocery and dry goods business and owns his store where it is located.

Mayor Smith is a member of the Baptist Church and a fine gentleman.

////////////////////////////////////

**Mr. John B. DeRamus**  
Chairman Chilton Co.  
Board of Education



JOHN B. DeRAMUS

To the writer's way of thinking, this is one of the finest responsibilities to carry on and do good that one meets with. To influence youth for good that they may assume their correct place in the years to come is certainly most laudable. Mr. DeRamus also serves as one of Clanton's City fathers, a position of trust he has occupied during three terms of office.

The gentleman has been a resident of Clanton for the past twenty-two years. He is a native of Chilton County and was born near Verbena.

Speaking to the Chilton County News he remarked, "Chilton County is noted for its agricultural resources. Now, if we can get small factories they will add greatly to our local prosperity. Such industry as overall factories, shirts, garments, and for our farming friends, canneries. These things it seems to me, would

add greatly to our advantageous situation. We have plenty of good transportation near the port of Mobile and water shipping, close to Birmingham and within twelve hours of large markets. Labor is plenteous, there is an abundance of electricity and good highway and rail transportation."

John B. DeRamus is one of the partners and active in the Planters Gin and Warehouse which pays out approximately one hundred thousand [dollars] a year in cottonseed. This money does a great deal for local trade in stimulating buying among our merchants.

The gentleman is a member of the Baptist Church of Clanton.

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**Mr. John Maples**  
Cashier Bank of  
Maplesville



JOHN MAPLES

This gentleman impressed the writer as having an intellectual reflection of good and honest thoughts. This is a state of affairs that we admire very much.

While conversing with Mr. Maples he said, "Chilton County has an abundance of opportunities, among which is truck farming, market processing, [and] canneries. When the grower is prospering, that happy state is reflected in the whole community, stimulates commercial activities and makes life more



hopeful to many people. One reads almost every day of factories coming to the Southland. Most certainly, in and around Maplesville we have many attractions especially for the industries in the North and Central States who are dissatisfied with the chaos and confusion now existing there. Maplesville is a fine community in which to live and carry on business."

John Maples has the respect of all this community. He is a courteous and considerate gentleman.

Mr. Maples is a director of the Bank of Maplesville, besides being cashier. He is a member of the Baptist Church.

////////////////////////////////////

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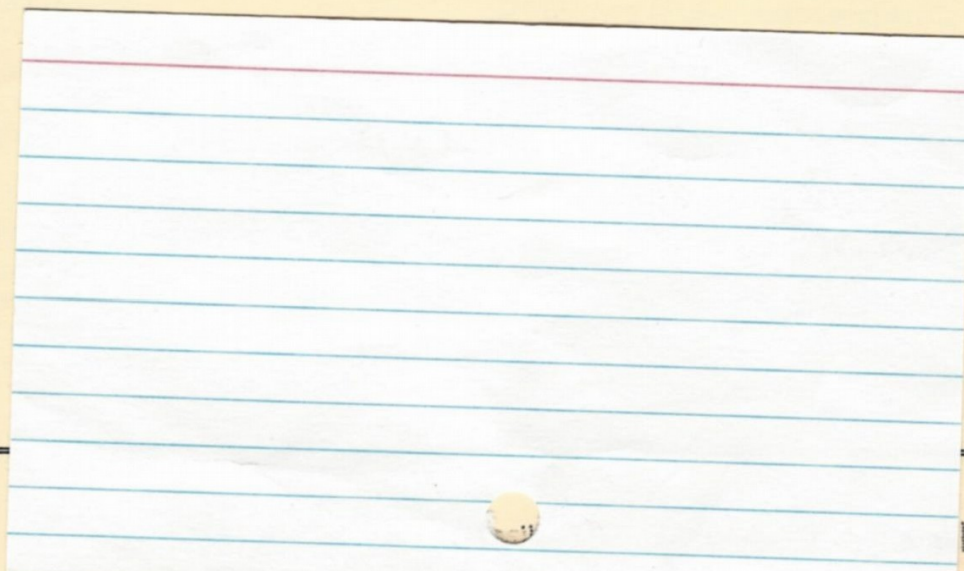
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# CHILTONIAN

Volume 34, Number 3

July 2014

## QUARTERLY MEETING

The Chilton County Historical Society will hold its quarterly meeting at 2:00 PM on Sunday, July 13th, at the Chilton/Clanton Public Library. Mr. Billy Singleton (of the Clanton Airport Authority) will speak on the history of Clanton's Gragg-Wade Field, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. All Chilton citizens who are interested in our county's history and its preservation are encouraged to attend.

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**Mrs. Eunice Hagan**

## Mrs. Eunice Hagan Owner Murrah's Curb Market



**EUNICE HAGAN**

This well-known market was established two years ago and since its inception it has grown in the affections of a large number of housewives who look to Murrah's Market to supply their table requirements. Mrs. Hagan gives the selection of all her items exceptional care. She goes on the theory that nothing is too good for her customers and wants them to enjoy the best.

*(continued, next page)*



Mrs. Eunice Hagan is a native of Clanton and comes from a fine family. Speaking to the Chilton County News she remarked, "One sees many opportunities in agriculture in Chilton County. For instance, the tomatoes, green peppers, peaches and berries. We could open canneries that would be a splendid outlet for the growers and give them a ready market. And this cash paid for produce would be put into immediate circulation. From the industrial standpoint we sit in a top location as we have the labor, the products, the materials, power and all vital elements necessary."

The many friends of Mrs. Hagan take a special pride in her success. She is a member of the Baptist Church.

////////////////////

### Mr. O. P. Klinner

**Mr. O. P. Klinner,  
Owner O. P. Klinner  
Furniture Company**



**O. P. KLINNER**

"There is strength in unity. Cooperation is a badge of sanity. When everybody in a city or a rural community work together for a given object they put that objective over. Diversification means a greater wealth. Pasturing is a money making objective. Dewberries, strawberries, peaches, peppers, when put to a more intensive development, produce increased wealth which not only benefits the grower but the whole community.

"There is scarcely anything that can be grown to which the soil of Chilton County will [not] respond with greater output. Small industries such as shirt factories, garment factories, overall factories, dress factories, could be carried on profitably in this area because we have the labor, the power, and everything vital to its success," declared Mr. Klinner.

This gentleman has lived in Chilton County for the past sixteen years and has a wide acquaintance in both town and country. As owner and operator of the O. P. Klinner Furniture Company, his many friends and acquaintances know that when he makes a statement about the quality of furniture, that it is a truthful statement. He keeps in touch with the large markets and notes the changes in styles and variety.

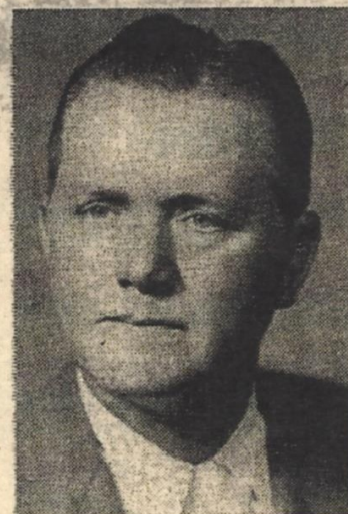
Associated with him in the business is Charles Klinner, son of this gentleman. During World War II he marched under the colors of Uncle Sam and gave the nation the best that was in him. He rated as Lt., Junior Grade. He attended the University of Alabama and Georgia Tech where he majored in Aeronautical Engineering.

O. P. Klinner is affiliated with the Masons and a member of the Methodist Church.

////////////////////

### Mr. C. W. Ballard

**Mr. C. W. Ballard, Pres.  
Clanton Fertilizer Co.**



**C. W. BALLARD**



"It is most interesting and pleasant to watch the growth of Chilton County and surrounding counties. Nature has given us a wonderful birthright and the next few years this community should show remarkable strides of growth. It is a pleasure to me to know that the Chilton County News is featuring agriculture in the forthcoming Opportunity Edition for the very simple reason that the farming land is the basis of all wealth.

"Our farmer friends have been loyal to this community and we should do everything we can to stand by them. Canneries for berries would be something that would work for the financial benefit of the growers. We also have splendid opportunities for industry, especially for garments, dresses, shirts, and manufacturing lines of that character," declared Mr. Ballard.

The Clanton Fertilizer Company, Inc., is a very fine boom to this area. It furnishes employment to 25 workers and that number will no doubt be increased in the future. The product is a good one and known as the "Ballard Brand." There is a good demand for the product. The capacity is 250 tons per day. Associated with C. W. Ballard is his brother, H. D. Ballard, who is secretary-treasurer and outside contract man in the surrounding territory. Both of these gentlemen are experienced and the money spent in this territory for wages during the course of twelve months is considerable.

The plan is now being expanded in a general way and there is a store room being erected that will give a lot more space. This is a company that the people of this community may be proud of.

The investment approximates \$100,000.00

Both of these gentlemen are members of the Church of Christ.

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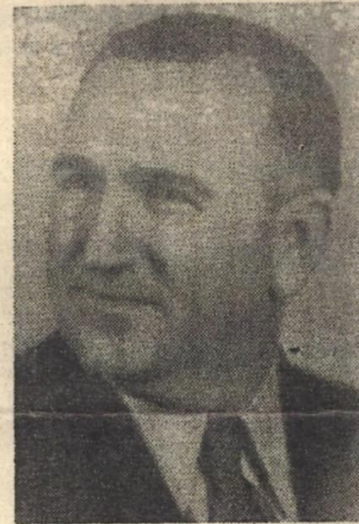
### **Mr. E. B. Allison**

"The fertility of the soil in Chilton County is tops. Our farmers are a credit to the farming fraternities. There is not a town in the county or in the area that has not been the beneficiary of the crops grown in Chilton County. Therefore it behooves us to do everything we can and cooperate in every way for a greater agricultural program.

"Canneries, especially for berries, would be a good thing for the community and it would give the grower a ready cash market and stimulate commercial activities with greater buying power," declared Mr. Allison.

### **Mr. E. B. Allison, Owner The Bargain Store, Clanton, Ala.**

ALLISON'S CLOTHING STORE,  
MAPLESVILLE, ALA.;  
REPRESENTING NATIONAL LIFE  
ACCIDENT INSURANCE CO.



E. B. ALLISON

During World War II he rated the rank of Staff Sergeant in the Counter-Intelligence. He marched under the colors of Uncle Sam for three years and two months and is a member of the American Legion. Representing the National Life Accident Insurance Company both in Chilton and Shelby Counties, Mr. Allison has a wide acquaintance both in town and country districts. He is well liked and popular. The gentleman is a member of the Clanton Kiwanis Club.

He has been a resident of Clanton for twelve years.

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### **Miss Elsie Barrett Owner of Elsie's Shoppe**

[No photo]

This charming shopping store is well stocked with beautiful things for the kiddies to set them off



advantageously. Also, certain lines are carried for the ladies who want to get something that is out of the ordinary such as lingerie, blouses and hosiery. Since the opening of the doors to Elsie's Shoppe she has done very nicely. The number of customers is increasing.

Miss Barrett has been a resident of Clanton for the past quarter of a century. She is well known in both town and country as being a business executive of both tact and charm. She visits the market and chooses that which is both lovely and charming with the pleasure of her guests.

"Please permit me to express my appreciation to the ladies of this community for their kind reception of my business interest."

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# CHILTONIAN

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## QUARTERLY MEETING

The Chilton County Historical Society will hold its quarterly meeting at 2:00 PM on Sunday, October 12th, at the Chilton/Clanton Public Library. The "Coopers Cousins" will present the history of Chestnut Creek Baptist Church and the surrounding area. All Chilton citizens who are interested in our county's history and its preservation are encouraged to attend.

## CREDITS:

*Chiltonian* is a quarterly publication of the Chilton County Historical Society & Archives, Inc.  
P. O. Box 644, Clanton, Alabama 35046-0644  
(A Non-Profit Organization)

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *We continue (from the July 2013 issue) with more of Scarlett Teel's "Ramblings".*

## *Ramblings in My Chilton County Place*

By  
Scarlett Ray Teel

### Sidewalks of Clanton (*continued*)

Clanton and Chilton County were well known for their interest in and promotion of gospel music. WKLF Radio Station first came on the air in the 1940s, and the studio from which it was broadcast was located on Second Avenue near the Clanton Depot.

Mr. Marion W. Easterling wrote many well-known gospel hymns and played those and many others on his long-running radio broadcast on WKLF. His show still runs daily on the station and is known as the longest running radio show ever.

The "rallies" that were performed on the steps of the Chilton County Courthouse might start off with a group or quartet of gospel music of WKLF singers; possibly pass a hat for donations and then the politician would speak.....or perhaps it might be a preacher giving a sidewalk sermon. Many people milling around on the sidewalks stopped to listen; then, the politicians left town until the next time.

I think these events were considered entertainment by the many people milling around

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on the sidewalks of Clanton, as the people on the streets visited and passed time while they waited for their paydays.

Also on the sidewalks of Clanton, one might encounter a woman giving paper poppies for donations to a veterans' group; perhaps a nun in full habit or a father from Marbury's Catholic Mission or African American citizens. The streets and sidewalks of Clanton were dynamic and teeming with all kinds of humanity and all walks of life going about their individual businesses and concerns of life during the 1940s, 50s and 60s, seemingly peacefully enough. These streets paved the way for the diversity that seems to be prevalent today on the streets of Clanton and Chilton County.

The Vida Hotel at Lomax



*Only Known Photo of the Vida Hotel*

North of Clanton, Alabama, is located the community of Lomax that started as a railroad stop. A spur line was built from the main railroad line for a lumber mill called Vida Lumber Company. As a result of need for lodging for lumber workers, their families and travelers, a hotel was built just east of U.S. Highway 31, halfway between Jackson Chapel and Lomax on

property of now the location of the home of Mr. Gene Sorrell. It was called the Vida Hotel. The two-story building of twelve rooms upstairs and twelve rooms downstairs was sited on twelve acres there. It was said that several small houses for the workers were built nearby.

Brothers Mr. Carl Muncher and Mr. Jobie Muncher came to Lomax from Mt. Olive, Alabama, to work for Vida Lumber Company. Mr. Carl Muncher met and married Miss Jessie Jackson, the daughter of Mr. Joseph H. Jackson and Mrs. Lora Jackson, who had acquired the ownership of the Vida Hotel. Mr. and Mrs. Carl Muncher lived for a while in the Vida Hotel where their children were born, Mrs. Mildred Muncher Smitherman in 1926 and Mr. Richard Muncher in 1931.

In 1947 twelve rooms were torn from the Vida Hotel with which a house was built for the grandparents of Mr. Leland West on U.S. Highway 31 south of Lomax. This house still stands today. After the death of Mr. Joseph H. Jackson, his second wife, Mrs. Minnie Cleckley Jackson, sold the hotel along with the furnishings. Mr. Joseph H. Jackson was also the father of Mr. Joe Jackson, who later ran the Central Alabama Drive-in Theater (known as the "Show Place of Central Alabama") in the general area.

#### Baseball and other Sports at Clanton

On Wednesday and Sunday afternoons a crowd would gather in the area of today's Clanton City Shop on U.S. Highway 31 North to buy Cokes from a tin building on the grounds and to watch games of baseball played by an independent Clanton team against teams from Montevallo, Sylacauga, Selma, Blue Diamond Mines, and sometimes even a team of prisoners from Speigner Prison.

The team from Clanton worked together pretty much without any one individual serving as the coach. Other independent team games of basketball and football would sometimes be

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played in and around Clanton and Chilton County.

Clanton's pool playing professional, Mr. Pud Walker, plus Mr. Mutt Marcus, and Mr. Kermit Jones, who even went to umpiring school, performed the duties of an umpire for the games.

Mr. Gabby Tiffin played catcher, Mr. Bill Simpson played right field, and Mr. Bull Watkins was the pitcher, being so good at pitching that he once pitched a sixteen inning game to win. In the late 1930s Mr. Virgil Glass was a pitcher for Clanton. Others who played on Clanton's team were Mr. L. D. Easterling, Mr. J. E. Easterling, Mr. Dock Baker, Mr. Ted Littlejohn, Mr. Clint Jones, Mr. Benson Simms, Mr. Durwood Williamson, Mr. Alec Hayes, and Mr. Clydie Cleckler. Mr. Bob Alred gathered up the stray balls.

Once, during one of these baseball games that Clanton played against the Speigner Prison team, one or more of the prisoners escaped, disposing of their prison clothes in the backyard of Mr. J. L. "Jakie" Teel's home on Second Avenue North.

#### Drive-in Theater

Central Alabama Drive-in Theater was nicknamed the "Showplace of Central Alabama" and it truly was. It was owned and operated by Mr. Joe Jackson, the son of Mr. Joseph H. Jackson, along with his family who kept the grounds clean and beautiful with blooming flowers. It was the place to be on warm muggy summer evenings for families to sit either inside or on the hood of their parked car and listen to the sound of the speaker attached to each car. Woe was the show goer who drove off with the speaker still attached to the car!

Children could play on the playground during intermission while mom and dad bought popcorn and Coke at the concession building. Many romances developed and blossomed and ended also as a result of the fun times at Clanton's

drive-in theater. Sometimes the admission rate was based on the car rather than individual admissions, so I imagine that the management had to keep a keen eye out to prevent a car coming in with the trunk full of passengers also.

#### Rolling Stores

Rolling stores were just exactly what they were said to be—stores on wheels that rolled to the customers! They were trucks, vans or buses that had been converted to stores with display areas.

The operator drove the vehicle out into the outlying areas of Chilton County in which the customers did not have ready access to merchandise. The operator had a regular schedule of time and place to be. The customer would know to expect the rolling store to stop by their homes on certain days and might have freshly churned milk and butter, eggs or chickens to trade for the merchandise that they wished for off the rolling store that day or they might just "pay" for it with a little money.

My cousin, Louise Brown Spencer, tells of my mother giving to her and my sister, Cherrell Ray Vines, eggs to "spend" for candy on the rolling store when it came by the house on Enterprise Road at the foot of Mt. Pisgah hill. The racks would be filled with food staples, candy, material and other sewing items, household goods, small tools, cooking wares, chamber pots and usually a cage hung underneath the vehicle for live chickens taken in trade or for sale.

One rolling store was a converted truck with a roofed extension on the back with a kerosene pump to dispense kerosene along the route. It was an exciting day when the rolling store stopped by for the week.

Those who drove rolling stores around Chilton County during the 1940s and 1950s were Mr. Arnold, the father of Mr. David Arnold and Mrs. Dorothy Arnold; Mr. K.V. Lowery,

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Mr. Hughey Taylor of Cooper, and Mr. Jim Blair. Mr. Blair was the father of sons Mr. Joe Blair, Mr. Jim Blair, and a daughter, Miss Annette Blair. He later ran a store near the Cotton Mill Village.

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EDITOR'S COMMENT: *This concludes the current installment of Scarlett Teel's "Ramblings"—we look forward to additional installments for future newsletters.*

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