

Peter A. Brannon

A TRAVEL LOG

One of a Series of Historic Stories
of Trips Through Alabama

Prepared for

Alabama Highways



By

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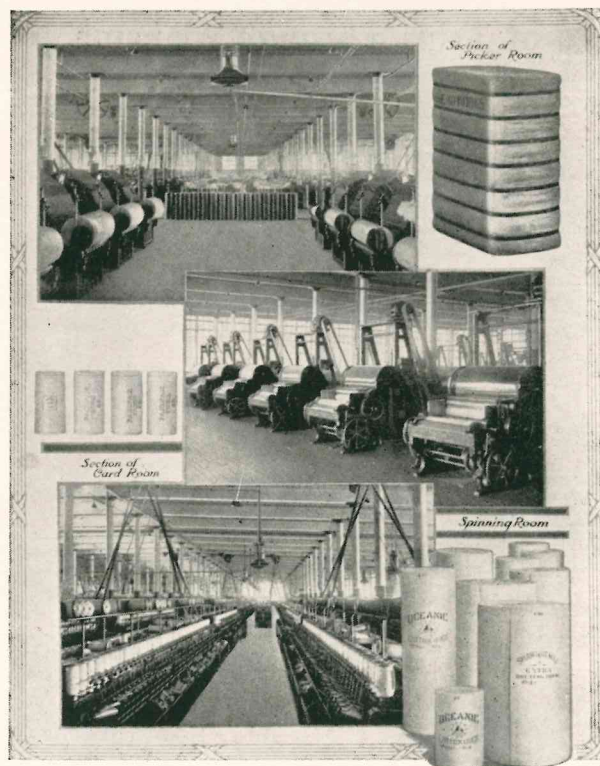
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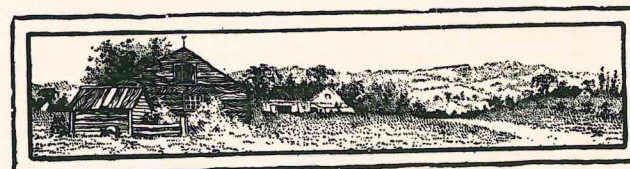
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Brannon

Montgomery, Ala.
THE PARAGON PRESS
1928



West Point Manufacturing Co.
Characteristic View of Cotton Mills in Chambers County.



A TRAVEL LOG

Sidney Lanier made that stream whose name in the Creek Indian tongue is "pictured rocks," say,

"Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall."

United States Highway Number 29 enters Alabama from the Empire State at the point on the Chattahoochee where she "splits at the rock" and forms those rapids which turn industry's wheels miles beyond. If you are on your way from Atlanta to New Orleans, you will pass Fort Tyler site on the western bank of the river, as you leave West Point behind. Here, on April 6, 1865, was one of those two engagements between the Federals and the Confederates which marked the

(4)

fight on the last day of the War between the States. Then, you enter Lanett, a mill town, which with Shawmut, Langdale, Fairfax and Riverview, forms in Chambers County, a com-



R. E. Lee

An Honored Name and Figure in Alabama's Memory

(5)

munity where more than 200,000 spindles consume equally as many bales of cotton annually to manufacture white duck cloth. Fifteen minutes west is Cusseta, named for the Indian town on the eastern bank of the river after it has "attained the plain" below, and where Fort Benning is now. Next you reach Opelika where they built a little log church in 1837 and called it Lebanon. Soon around it they had a settlement and they called that for the Upper Creek town on the Coosa River, which to us means "big swamp"—**Opillako**.

If you tarry a while here you may run out southeast some ten miles to old Yonkesborough, where in 1861 was born Robert Lee Bullard, U. S. A., and there is here before you another evidence that those old Russell County people loved Virginia's soldier, for in 1866 when the Legislature made them a new county they called it for Robert E. Lee and built the court house at Opelika. Salem is on this same byway and here was the first post office in that section of the state.

Now, continue on your original way over state road No. 15 and in ten minutes you are in Auburn where Alabama's Polytechnical Institute is located and where the Agricultural Experiment Station is operating. Next is Loachapoka, a rendezvous point for volunteers hastening to join the Confederate service in 1861. The little church just to the right of the highway before you reach the railroad station, is that same one on the steps of which, the boys from the East Alabama Male College, (Auburn's predecessor) were sworn into the Sixth Alabama Infantry Regiment. Loachapoka and Notasulga, the next point reached, suggest Indian towns, but those whose names they bear were far west of here and in the Coosa River valley.

(6)



Air View of Capitol Hill
What the Future Traveler Will See as he Heads East
Toward Georgia

(7)

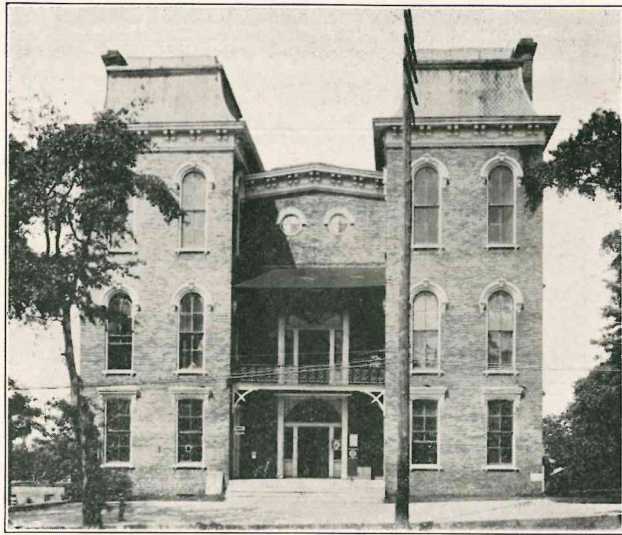
Tuskegee, on the hill further along the way, bears the name of the birth place of Alexander McGillivray's mother—Taskigi—, at Fort Toulouse site, thirty miles west. Established ninety-six years ago by General Thomas Woodward, the old town is rich in historic traditions. Osceola, the Seminole leader, was born nearby and when General Woodward built his house there he brought from the Indian's birthplace, five cedar sprouts to shade his view. These trees were cut but a few years ago from in front of that modest little home on the left just before you take the right-hand fork on your way south to Union Springs. Fort Hull, erected by John Floyd's Georgia militia in the winter of 1813, was located four miles southeast and nearly on your way. Woodward wanted his settlement on the ridge, but in 1841 when they built the Montgomery Railroad they feared they could not pull the hill, so they ran up the valley making a junction to reach the village on the east and the stages traveled the upper road to connect Columbus at Chehaw with "the cars for Montgomery." The town has kept intact its old types of architecture to a greater extent than any other in Central Alabama. These will interest you.

Passing south, in a short time you reach Fort Davis, not the site of an old Fort, but named for Mister Fort Davis, an honored citizen. Here you will see that railroad—the old Union Springs and Northern,—now the Birmingham and Southeastern, which, originally though only seven miles long, was "just as wide as the biggest." Neither will you see the springs which united to give the next town, Union Springs, its name, for one goes northwest through Okfuski, to the Tallapoosa River forty miles away, and the others go to form the Conecuh and Escambia and to mingle with

(8)

the ocean's brine at Pensacola, while those rising but a few feet away help to make the five rivers to swell the waters of the Gulf at Mobile.

Side trips from here may include Perote, a rural village with a picturesque history and the fossil beds in the railway cuts along Chunnenugee Ridge. These latter have given the section a nation-wide reputation. And the highway to Montgomery should interest you. Not very many



Court House, Bullock County

years since, the planters in the Black Belt through which it passes, were obliged to use four mule teams to haul two bales of cotton to market and then had to wait for a dry season in which to do it. Now, two mules can well carry twelve bales if you can pile them on and a small auto truck has unlimited possibilities.

Montgomery, the Capital City, "Your Opportunity"—if you look for one, is the state's most

(9)

romantic stopping point. Its aboriginal and pioneer history, its Confederate association, and its gripping interest as a political center, gives a rare chance to see something yet left of the Old South. Since the beginning of travel in the Gulf Country, the town has enjoyed the patronage of most globe trotters and many of the Journals of early days refer to impressions made here.

Alabama State Highway Number 53, Federal Highway No. 231, will take you southeast and a trip through Troy, Ozark, Enterprise, Elba, Andalusia, Brewton, Atmore, Bay Minette and Stapleton to Mobile, or Robertsedale to Pensacola, will give a fine chance to see South Alabama. When you go by Pine Level you will travel the old aboriginal trail along the natural ridge for

"We boast of roads that we shape and tread;
But whether we like or no,
We take the roads that were made for us
Long ages and ages ago."

Striking the pavement at Orion you soon reach Troy, which was one time Zebulon for did they not call the county for the lieutenant with the Lewis and Clark Expedition, who left his name on the Peak near Denver? But Pike's Christian name was too hard and some one suggested that they name it for that beauty of the ancients and Helen was honored. The old settlers were original Democrats and Monticello was their first county-seat. You pass the site—the village is gone—, on the way to Brundidge and on to Ozark. Here in Dale, is a typical county-town with the Court House in the center of the "Square," which custom prevails in quite a number of our smaller cities. It is traceable to the arrangement of the Square in the Indian town of the Gulf Country.

(10)



Claybank Methodist Church, Ozark

Though they have modern and up-to-date houses of worship, the denomination, for the sake of sentiment and love of the memory of its founders, continues to use this building also for their services.

While in Ozark, visit old Claybank Methodist Church, on the outskirts of the town to the south. This little split-log building is an interesting reminder of pioneer religious beginnings and the descendants of old Uncle Zack and Uncle Dempsey Dowling have worshipped in it for ninety-nine years. And the pavement will carry you out further to Newton,—one time county-seat and to the Choctawhatchee River, where the section of Southeast Alabama known as the Wiregrass Country, is stretched before you.

Now, run back to Ozark, resume your journey, go west by south through Enterprise, a new town quite suggestive of its name and then northwest to another county's principal town. Like their neighbors to the east who honored the Indian fighter, Sam Dale, when these settlers selected a name for their county, they remembered John

(11)

Coffee, Andrew Jackson's "right arm", and carrying their militant feelings still further, they called the county-seat for that little island in the Mediterranean, made famous as the residence of Corsica's "Little Corporal" when he was Emperor there in 1814. Here you cross Pea River where as early as 1818 there was a "Publick Boat" and "the traveler could pass without difficulty over the stream 50 yards wide."

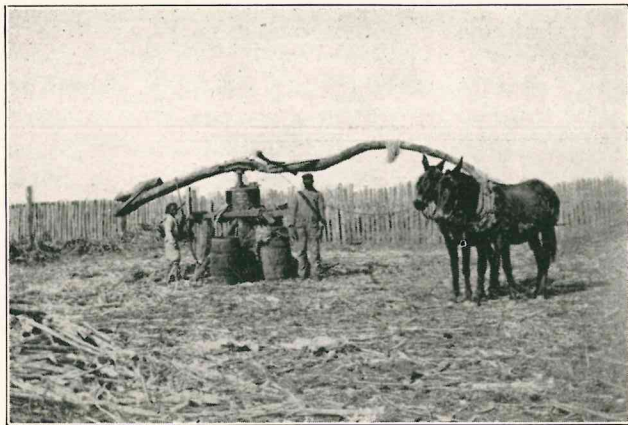
Then, as you proceed southwest again, you soon enter the county originally called in memory of General Leonard W. Covington of Maryland, but which was one time "Jones." Maybe it was because the locality was in the vicinity of old Spanish West Florida that they called the county-seat **Andalusia**, but the town has no flavor of Spain. Continuing out in the same direction (southwest) you follow the general route, and in a few cases the actual line, of the old "3 Notch Road" of 1826, cut by Captain D. E. Burch of the U. S. garrison



Entering Andalusia
Pavement in City Being Laid 1928

(12)

at Fort Barancas as a means of transportation for supplies to Fort Mitchell on the Chattahoochee. "Scurlocks" on the Conecuh River (about a mile west of Mason) was a celebrated tavern stop, but they were exorbitant in their prices. For corn as horse feed, they charged \$6.00 per bushel. Brew-ton, a modern little city, is still further west and here you will see the remains of Fort Crawford erected as a supply base in 1818.



Sugar Cane Time

Original methods of pressing juice out of ribbon cane. The boiling kettle in which syrup was made was a necessary adjunct. The Wire Grass County and Baldwin County produce most of the state's cane. Now triple-cylinder mills are operated by electricity.

Next is Flomaton on the state line, and U. S. Highway No. 331 goes south to Pensacola, but if you will continue on by Atmore and Bay Minette you will be well repaid for the extra mileage. Atmore was originally "Williams Station" but soon outgrew that name and they called it for C. P. Atmore of the L. & N. R. R. Bay Minette was once **Bayou Minet** but then it was in French Louisiana. Though not a large city, it enjoys the dis-

(13)

tion of being the county seat of the largest county in the Southern States. Baldwin County, named for Senator Abraham Baldwin, of Georgia, has fifteen hundred and eighty-five square miles.

Now traveler, if you are Mobile bound, go south to Stockton and then west by old Blakeley, across Cochrane bridge over the bay and into the city, but if you are headed for Pensacola go further on to Robertsedale or Foley, and east to Florida. Daphne, where one of the county's five court houses once stood, is as picturesque a spot as is found in Alabama. Fairhope, Battles, Point Clear and Magnolia Springs are lodestones to attract one on pleasure bent. They are all but a few miles off the main ways of travel and form Alabama's Riviera on the Eastern shore of Mobile Bay.

Nunez or Lillian Bridges, either, will take you in to Pensacola and that old city is quaint and attractive.



Site of Old Spanish Fort, Baldwin County, in the old Kennedy Land Grant, State Highway No. 6 passes this point.

