

Clanton – A Walk Down 2nd Avenue
By Derric Scott
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Clanton – A Walk Down 2nd Avenue

By Derric Scott

The editor of the Union Banner (W. M. and T. E. Wyatt) took a walk down 2nd Avenue east of town and recorded some of his thoughts in March of 1930. A lot had already changed by then, within his memory.

When I got to walking I began to warm up and memories began to trickle through my mind. I headed down Second Avenue toward the cemetery. Don't know why, but I did. Here is the old Baptist Church lot. A few years ago I thought the old church would be replaced by some kind of a nice new business house. It hasn't happened yet. The old house is gone, but the lot looks worse than the old house. It is filled with a collection of old junked automobiles and various other things that ought to be somewhere else.

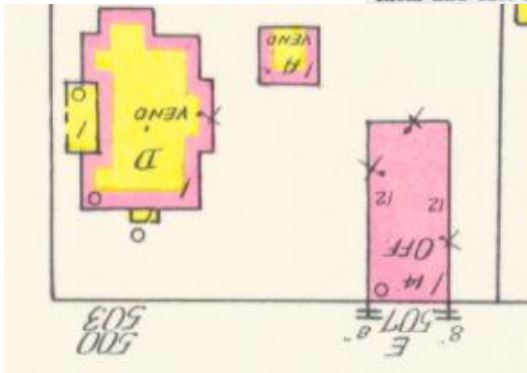


Original Clanton FBC,



now the site of current Clanton City Hall

As I passed the neat office building and beautiful brick home of Dr. Arthur Johnson, I looked back about twenty-odd years and saw the two little cottages that occupied the place. Miss Martha Dupree and her mother lived in one of them and Mr. and Mrs. Denty lived in the other.



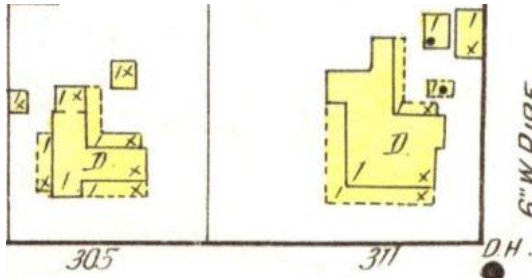
1928 Sanborn Fire Ins. Map, Dr. Johnson's,



now site of Colonial / BB&T / Truist Bank.

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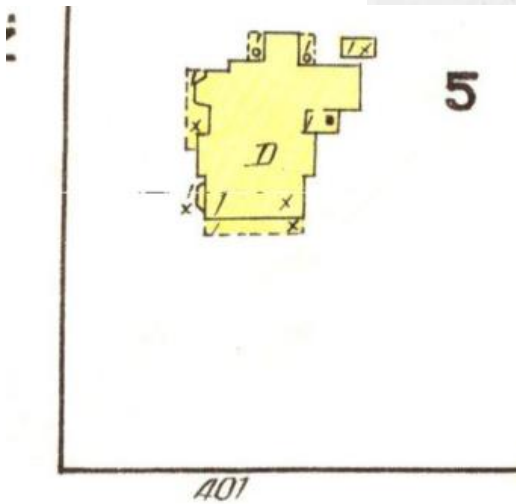
Across the street is the homes of Mrs. Potts and Mrs. Jean Evans. They are old places, but are kept neat. The yards were always full of beautiful flowers. They will be again in a few weeks.



1917 Sanborn Fire Ins. Map, Potts & Evans houses, and west side).

now site of Chilton Co. Courthouse (center

Second Avenue east from the business section of town is a beautiful vista of fine trees. Around the home of Uncle Billy Mullins they are plentiful, and give an atmosphere of calmness and serenity. A few modern touches as the years went by has kept the Mullins place from looking old. I believe it has a better appearance than it did when it was new. But why not? Uncle Billy himself is not even growing old.

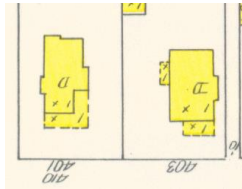
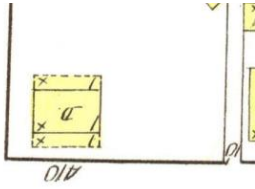


1917 Sanborn Fire Ins. Map, ½ block Mullins house,

now split lots and different houses.

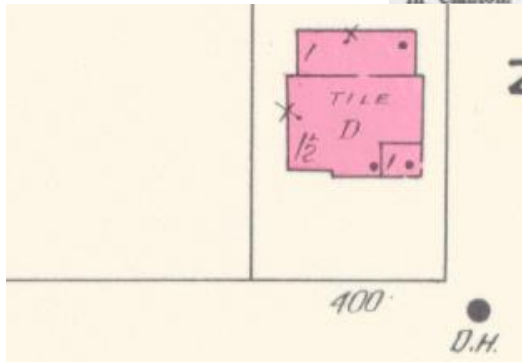
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The old Joe Foshee place is only a memory. Now it is occupied by two new bungalows, the homes of Mr. Prince, the telegraph operator, and Buck Gore, the corner storekeeper. Uncle Joe Foshee, the famous fiddler from Coosa, lived there for a long time. His residence was made out of an old church building, which I believe was the first Baptist Church built in Clanton.



1917 Sanborn Fire Map (Foshee), 1928 Sanborn Fire Map, and now still the two houses mentioned in 1930.

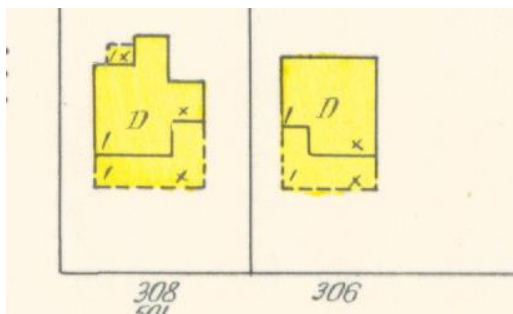
Down on the east side of Uncle Billy's garden is the handsome home of his son J. Renfro Mullins. It is one of the most beautiful places in Clanton.



1928 Sanborn Fire Ins. Map, now the same house is still there.

Next is the home of Dewey and Tom Rockett, on the old Chestnut property that used to be the Chilton County Fair Grounds. They are beautiful places.

Reference 7

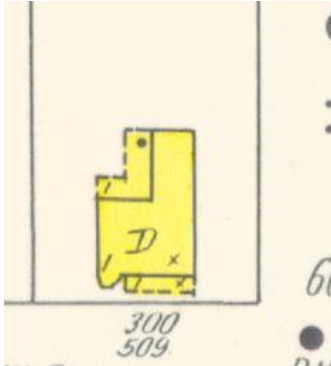


1928 Sanborn Fire Ins. Map, Rockett houses, now same houses still there.

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The old Phillips house still stands close to the sidewalk. I remember how I used to wonder at Mr. Phillips as he walked back and forth along the narrow porch, smoking a cigar. He was always kind and polite, greeting everyone who passed.

Reference 1

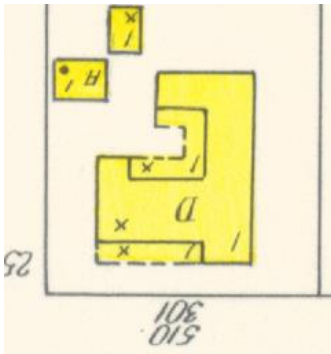


1928 Sanborn Fire Ins. Map, Phillips house,

now a different house.

Across the street is the old Curry house just as it was built about twenty-five years ago.

References 2, 6

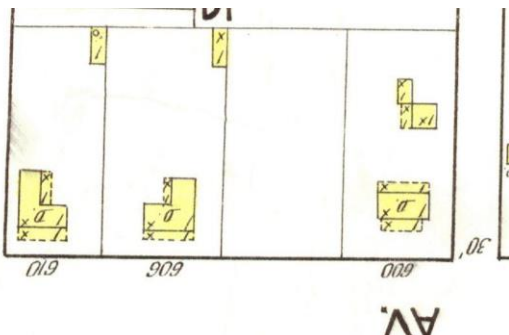


1928 Sanborn Fire Ins. Map, Curry house,

now a house built by the Rocketts later.

Miss Rena Rembert's place with the pear tree in the front yard still looks like it did in years long ago. I remember how the ripe pears used to fall on the sidewalk outside the yard fence, and were the prize of the first urchin who came along. Sometimes they didn't fall, but that made no difference to some of the kids. They got them just the same.

References 3, 4



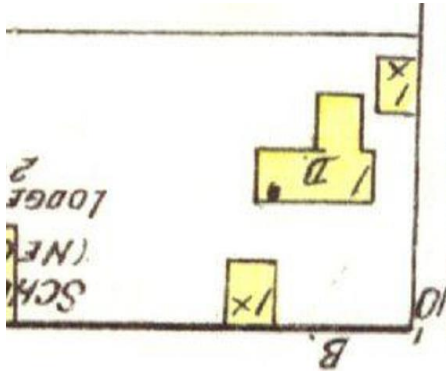
1928 Sanborn Fire Ins. Map, Miss Rembert's in center,

now different house.

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The old place of Uncle Junius down on the corner would never be recognized. Now it is the site of the beautiful home of Town Councilman and town drayman, Joe Franklin. The Millicans sold the property at auction a few years back, and since that time it has been made beautiful by Mr. Franklin. The neat rows of onions and other vegetables which Uncle Junius kept so carefully came back with a startling freshness in my memory. And the good old negro rolling his wheelbarrow to town and back.

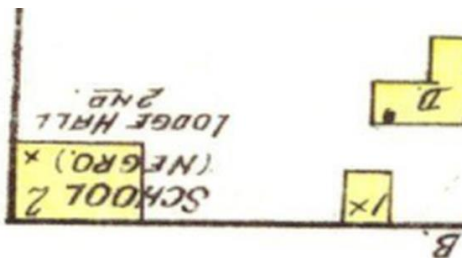
Reference 5



1917 Sanborn Fire Ins. Map, Uncle Junius Winfield, now gone, as well as later Franklin house mentioned, gone.

The negro lodge hall stood on the corner. There was a stairway outside. At the top of the stairway the landing was sheltered by a little projecting roof. A nice place for a big wasp nest. Joe Robinson, Sam Kanjutzky and I were going fishing. We needed the wasp nest for bait. Sam said he would get it. His self assurance indicated he was not well acquainted with wasps. Before he got down the stairway he had learned something about them. I was afraid he would jump off and kill himself. We got the nest and Sam got stung.

Reference 8



1917 Sanborn Fire Ins. Map, 2-story School and Lodge Hall,

now residence, different building.

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Walked through the cemetery. Saw some signs of flower vandals. The flowers around Heath Jones' grave have been treated badly by someone. I wish people would leave the flowers in the cemetery alone. A flower is a little thing. But a flower that has been planted with tender care by the grave of a loved one means more than words can tell. One had as well break the tenderest cord of my heart as to molest a flower I planted by the grave of a friend.



Clanton City Cemetery

As I looked over toward the Chilton County High School, I was attracted by the different appearance of the place. The campus shows that it is getting splendid attention. The building, and the whole place in general looks like somebody is staying there and taking an interest in it. My conclusion is that Prof Warr has done a good job of "selling" the school to the student body. Much of the improvement in the appearance of the building and grounds has been made by the boys and girls themselves. The best way to make a great school, in fact, I will say the only way, is to get the boys and girls to have the right kind of interest in and respect for it. Enthusiasm of teachers alone can not build a great and worth-while school.



CCHS, 1914 edition,



now remnants of CCHS, 1940 edition (later Adair Jr. HS).

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The town of Clanton has just completed the building of a concrete walk from the front entrance of the building straight out to the street. This has been sorely needed for many years. Thanks to our city fathers for the gift. The Senior Class plans to erect an arch over the entrance from the street to this walk. The Class of 1930 want to leave some kind of a permanent sign that they were there. The plan of the pillars and arch is good. It will be a lasting monument to the class and a worthy adornment to the campus.

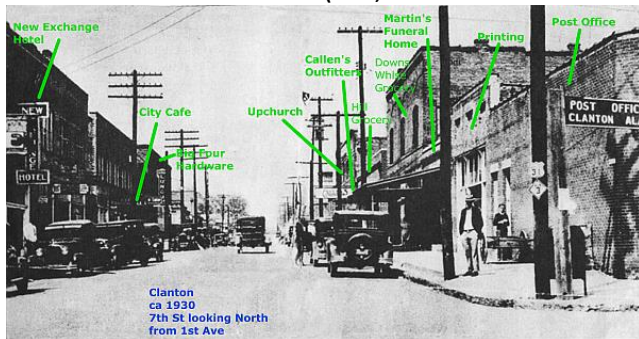
By the cooperation of friends of the school with the teachers and the student body, I believe the progress of Chilton County High School in the last two years has been altogether wholesome and satisfactory. Improvements have been made, one after another. The school is growing better—and may it continue. We need a better school, and must have it, regardless. Some time right soon I expect to outline to my readers in detail, a plan that has been thought out by Mr. Warr for the future of the school. It will work, and it will build out of the Chilton County High School such an institution as can not be excelled by any county high school in Alabama.

Personally, I think Prof. Warr is the right kind of a hustler. He is a builder. He is a member of the Kiwanis Club. The motto of Kiwanis is "We Build." In my opinion Mr. Warr has done more to stabilize the Chilton County High School than any man since McDonald. He now has plans ready to give the whole building a new coat of paint. This has been needed for years, and could have been done if somebody had been hustler enough to get it done. The school is out of debt, and as long as Warr is there it will stay out of debt. That is another good thing about his management.

When I went to see "Betty Lou" last Friday night, I noticed how comfortable the new seats were. There is an item of something like \$1,500 that has been added to the school in the past year. And remember it is all paid for. How was it done? I don't know; but I would guess that it was done because somebody was interested enough in the school to work and get it done.

"Dr. Hyman and Reenie Taylor walked to the postoffice. They were discussing hard times. Doc got a letter, opened it, and there was enclosed a check for \$60. As he came back up the street he had a big broad smile, and times did not seem so hard. Well, that is the way it goes. Little things sometimes make a big difference.

(Note, the Clanton PO was at 1st Avenue and 7th Street in early 1930.)



Apr 1929, 1st Ave and 7th St, north facing, USPO on right,



now auto garage.

References

Facebook groups “U know u lived in CLANTON as a kid,” “WE GREW UP IN CLANTON, ALABAMA” and others.

Union Banner:

1. I notice the foundation being laid for what appears to be a nice dwelling house on the old Phillips lot, now the property of Dewey Rockett, on Second Avenue and Third Street North. This will be the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Maddox (Lois Rockett). To old-timers this will be remembered as the site of Clanton's first schoolhouse; in fact, the old dwelling which Mr. Rockett razed some years ago was the remnants of the old schoolhouse itself. But that corner will have an air of modernistic quality when Mr. and Mrs. Maddox get their home completed, the premises landscaped, Etc.

Jul 5, 1951 UB

2. **NEW HOUSE ON SECOND AVENUE**
Mr. Tom Rockett is building a new residence on Second Avenue next to the old Curry home. The new house will be occupied by Mr. Boyd, the new president of the Peoples Savings Bank.

Jan 20, 1927 UB

3. Miss Rena Rembert has about completed a neat dwelling at East Clanton. (There may be others).

Sep 27, 1906 UB

4. **Old Resident Of Clanton Passes**
Miss Rena Rembert, age 87, died at her home in Clanton last Thursday afternoon, January 11th, about 5 o'clock. Funeral services were held Sunday afternoon at the Clanton Methodist church, conducted by Dr. J. L. Daniel. Burial was in Clanton cemetery, Martin in charge.
This aged lady was one of the oldest living residents of Clanton, she having moved here when Clanton was less than ten years old. About 1880 Miss Rena, with her mother, Mrs. Welch, and half brother, Ben Welch, came to Clanton and made their home on the Sharp property, about where the old Dr. Crompton home stood. They lived there several years and operated a dairy, supplying milk for the sawmill workers in the then village of Clanton. 44 years ago Miss Rena purchased one-half of a block of city property on east Second Avenue, paying forty dollars for four building lots. She has lived on this property since that time.
Surviving are a few distant relatives, one of which is Mrs. Clifford Popwell of Clanton, whose grandmother was a half sister of Miss Rena. A step-nephew is Mr. Thomas Hawkins of Cordrey's Old Mill community, and a step-niece is Mrs. Lizzie Allen of Knoxville, Tenn. In her earlier years Miss Rembert was a fine seamstress, having done sewing for a number of older residents of the city.

Jan 18, 1940 UB

5. **UNCLE JUNIUS DEAD**
Old Uncle Junious Winfield, the oldest negro in Chilton County, died at his little cabin home on First Street near the cemetery last Saturday night. Uncle Junius had been sick for two or three days before the end came.
No one knows the exact age of Uncle Junius, but old settlers say that he was over a hundred, and judging from his appearance, this estimate is very conservative.
This old dorky will be greatly missed in Clanton by the white people as well as the black, as he has been jogging his old bended form over the streets of Clanton as long as most people here can remember. Everybody in this neighborhood knew Uncle Junius, and his friends were numbered no less. He was buried in the Clanton cemetery Monday of this week.
Uncle Junius, as a liberated slave, came to Chilton County shortly after the Civil War. When Clanton was being settled, he acquired a small lot in Clanton on which he built him a cabin. He has lived there ever since. His trusty old feminine companion, Aunt Mary, died three or four years ago. They were the parents of no children.

Nov 3, 1932 UB

6. **25 YEARS AGO**
November 3, 1907
News Items As Published in The Union-Banner
The Eastern District of the Alabama Baptist W. M. U. will meet at the Clanton Baptist Church November 3rd and 4th. Delegates from eleven associations are expected. This is an event of unusual interest to our town and county.
The old Tom Curry house on Second Avenue has been torn down and work will start at once on a new modern bungalow. This property now belongs to Messrs. Tom and Dewey Rockett.

Dec 4, 1924 UB

7. **NEW BUILDINGS**
J. T. Rockett and Dewey Rockett are engaged in tearing down and moving the old Chestnut house on the lot which they recently bought. They intend to build two new bungalows on the old Chestnut property facing Second Avenue. They will be nice modern structures and will be located in the finest residence section in Clanton.

Jun 28, 1923 UB

8. E. W. Burt is principal of the Clanton school for negroes, and is holding school temporarily in the negro church and lodge hall until the new building can be completed.

Dec 19, 1929 UB