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... HISTORICAL EDITION ...



The Huntsville Parker



HISTORICAL EDITION

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Editor: Sarah Huff Fisk



In preparing the history contained on the following pages, every effort has been made to give names, dates and facts as correctly as possible. However, since we were dependent on human memory for much of the information given, we cannot vouch for the absolute correctness of every detail. Therefore, neither the publisher, Huntsville Manufacturing Company, nor the author and editor, Sarah Huff Fisk, will assume any responsibility or liability for mistakes of any type which might appear herein.

Published during our City's
Sesqui-Centennial Year
To Review the Important Role played by
Huntsville Manufacturing Company
and its Predecessor,
Merrimack Manufacturing Company
in the History and Progress
of
Huntsville, Alabama.

Foreword

THE COLLECTION OF MATERIAL for this history was begun with the hope of putting into writing the story of our Plant's beginning and the subsequent years of its history while it is still possible for us to hear this story from those who experienced the events recorded herein. It is a very moving and wonderful story—not just the construction of a plant and village, but the living story of the development of a successful industry and a thriving community. Hard work, trials, disappointments, pride of workmanship and pride of achievement have all gone into the building of what we have today.

In this work, the early years of the plant's history have been covered in more detail than later years, as the happenings of these first years are the least known now, and, therefore, of the most interest.

The material for this history could not have been assembled without the help of many, many people—present employees, past employees, and individuals whose only connection with the company is their great interest in it. These people have searched their memory and come forward with interesting events. Many of them have brought photographs taken over the years which make it possible for us to really see the things we read about. Many of them have brought in souvenir items, family pictures and mementos which help us to visualize the days gone by. While we could not possibly reproduce all these interesting items in the following brief pages, they have helped to create a feeling for the past that made possible the writing of this story.

Among the written records which were sources of help to us in the preparation of this history, were the following: The Huntsville newspapers published over the period of our history: "The Weekly Democrat", "The Republican", "The Mercury", "The Tribune", "The Huntsville Daily Times", "The Huntsville Times", past issues of our own publications, "The Merrimacker" and "The Huntsville Parker"; "History of the Cotton Textile Industry in Alabama" by Dwight Wilhelm; annuals published by Joe Bradley School; the records of the transfer of property in the Madison County Probate Office; the records of our community's churches and the records of the First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville.

In the section of this history devoted to the early employees of the plant, we have attempted to list the names of those who were the "charter members" of this organization—the employees who worked in No. 1 and No. 2 mills during the first five years of their operation. In an effort to preserve the names of these early employees, we have depended on the memory of those among them who are now living, as there are no written records available with this information. We have tried to get this list as correct and as complete as possible and, while we cannot accept liability for mistakes or omissions, we will be sorry to hear of any that may appear.

In conclusion, we wish to extend thanks to the following people without whose help the writing of this history would never have been attempted:

John Marks, William H. Cummings, Jim Marks, Charlie Vann, Mr. and Mrs. L. C. Watson, Mrs. Thelma Harper, J. B. Marks, William A. Smith, Mrs. Houston Sadler, Homer Sadler, Marvin Winkles, Mrs. Ernest Winkles, Charlie Oldfield, Mrs. Annie Vaughn, Rev. H. C. Vance, Jess Tucker, Clarence Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Bayless, Charlie Russell, Alvie Allison, Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Clopton, Miss Robbie King, Miss Ethel King, Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Esslinger,

Judge Thomas W. Jones, Louis Davis, Floyd Raney, Cliff Coleman, Dewey Brewer, Cliff Esslinger, Jess Wilson, Clarence Holmes, Buford Wilkes, James Hendrix, Mrs. Hilda Faulkenberry, Mrs. Richard Nelson, Miss Helen Petty, Charlie Drawhorn, Mrs. Levada Cleghorn, Hosea Watson, E. F. DuBose, Searcy McClure, Lester Westbrook, Felix Swaim, Mrs. M. G. Chaney, Mrs. Ellen Archer, Mrs. Annie Vaughn, Gardiner Esslinger, Miss Nettie Spurlock, Mrs. Josie Foote, Franklin Bryson, Mrs. H. J. Bentley, Mrs. Willie Vaughn, Mrs. Nettie Leach, Wade Harris.

Sarah Huff Fisk, author

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AN INDUSTRY AND A COMMUNITY

LOOKS BACK AT

FIFTY-FIVE YEARS

OF

PROGRESS

City Of Promise

. . . CHAPTER I

Shortly after its founding in 1805, Huntsville began to enjoy a period of such unusual, almost phenomenal, growth that nationwide attention focused on it as one of the bright spots of the south. The town was the center of a rich agricultural region that offered fresh untried lands to the pioneer. With its "Big Spring", beautiful, unfailing source of pure water, its numerous other springs and creeks, and its fringe of majestic mountains, it was considered one of the beauty spots of the Tennessee Valley.

Even at that early date, the town offered cultural and educational advantages far in advance of its size. Many of the leaders of Alabama came from Huntsville and only its location in the extreme northern part of the state kept it from being chosen as the capital. During the administration of President James Monroe, Huntsville was being so much talked about that he made the tiresome and hazardous trip by horseback and stagecoach all the way from Washington, D. C. to visit the city.

Despite the promise of its early years, Huntsville's progress came to a gradual standstill and finally to an abrupt stop with the advent of the Civil War and the long years of hardship which followed. After the reconstruction period, the town settled down to a quiet, unhurried, dignified pace, content to subsist from the trade of land owners and farmers who raised cotton and corn on the fertile fields of Madison County. For more than thirty years it remained unstirred, willing to leave thoughts of industrial

COTTON FOR SALE

For around a hundred years, the county square in Huntsville served as the market place for the county's most important crop—COTTON. Farmers brought their bales hopefully to this spot to be sampled and sold to the highest bidder.



(Photograph courtesy of Bryson Studio)

progress to newer and more vigorous cities.

In the year 1898, Huntsville passed its ninety-third anniversary. Though it boasted many magnificent homes, relics of its ante-bellum days, its streets were largely unpaved and many of its creeks unspanned by bridges. Aside from the courthouse and a few other buildings, most of the structures in the business section of town were of frame construction and presented serious fire hazards. The opera house drew large crowds to see the best productions of the day, but the building itself was considered to be unsafe. No trolleys operated on the city streets nor connected the business section with its suburbs. Indeed, the suburbs were largely unpopulated and many acres of land on the edges of the town were still under cultivation by large land owners.

Only in the Dallas and West Huntsville suburbs had industrial progress made any start whatsoever. In these two suburbs, thanks to the farsightedness of men like G. M. Fogg, T. B. Dallas, and Tracey W. Pratt, stood the beginnings of Huntsville's cotton textile industry—an industry which was destined to bring the city into a second period of nationwide prominence.

EARLY TEXTILE MILLS

The first textile mill to locate in

Huntsville proper—or its three-mile surrounding area—was the Huntsville Cotton Mills, which in 1881 built a steam-powered plant on Jefferson St. near the depot. Officials of this mill were: A. S. Fletcher, president; R. L. Pulley, treasurer; Luke Matthews, manager. Number of spindles was 10,048.

In 1892, two suburban mills were completed and put into operation.

The West Huntsville Cotton Mills, also steam-powered, had 5,200 spindles. Tracy W. Pratt was president of this company and headed its operations.

The Dallas Manufacturing Company, located in the northern suburb of Huntsville, was by far the largest of the three mills. At the beginning of its operation in 1892 it had 700 looms, 25,000 spindles, and was considered one of the finest mills in the South. G. M. Fogg, of Nashville, was president, and T. B. Dallas, of the same city, treasurer and general manager.

Two early mills located some distance from Huntsville on the Flint River had ceased operating before 1898. One of these, the Cabiness Factory, a spinning mill, was the first mill built in the state of Alabama. It was built sometime between 1809 and 1815, not more than fifteen or twenty years after the building of the first spinning mill in

the United States, at Providence, Rhode Island. The Cabiness Factory used water for power, wood for heating, candles for light, and hand ginned cotton. As advertised in the "Huntsville Republican" in February 16, 1818, they spun cotton yarn in numbers "400 to 1000" for sale or exchange for raw cotton, at the rate of ".50c per lb." to "\$1.25 per lb."

The second of the early Madison County mills was the Bell Factory Mill. Incorporated by the legislature in 1832, operated by slave labor, this mill was the first cotton manufactory of any consequence in the South. It had 80 looms, 3,216 spindles, and produced sheeting, plaids, ticking, and yarns. It had been idle since 1885.

In 1898, in spite of its early prominence in textile manufacturing, Huntsville had only the three mills—Huntsville Cotton Mills, West Huntsville Cotton Mills, and The Dallas Mills—in operation. It was directly through the efforts of Tracy W. Pratt that the fourth and largest textile plant chose to locate in Huntsville. This plant was the Merrimack Manufacturing Company, later to become the Huntsville Manufacturing Company, with whose history and progress this story is directly concerned.

Invitation To An Industry

... CHAPTER 2

About two miles beyond Huntsville, along a winding dirt road leading west by way of the one bridge which spanned Pinhook Creek, lay the small suburban community of West Huntsville. Triana Pike passed south through this community and wound toward the town of Triana some ten miles away on the Tennessee River. On the west side of Triana Pike within the community of West Huntsville was a small brick building where a furniture factory operated periodically. About one block behind the furniture factory stood the West Huntsville Cotton Mills and warehouses, one of the few new industries in Huntsville. It was around the furniture factory and the textile plant that the small community of West Huntsville had grown.

Mr. Tracy W. Pratt, head of the West Huntsville Mill, was a man of vision and enterprise. He saw Huntsville as the ideal location for industrial investment—especially investments in textile enterprises—and he knew men in the east who had capital to invest. He had creative imagination enough to visualize Huntsville—quiet little center of a cotton raising section—as a thriving textile city, manufacturing the cotton into cloth, and he had the courage and wisdom to set about making his dreams come true.

Mr. Pratt enjoyed traveling around the town and its suburbs, looking for possible industrial sites. Within one mile of his own plant, and directly south on the Triana Pike, he could see

two large plantations. Here was an area within three miles of town, with plenty of level land, adjacent to a large spring—an ideal spot for a manufacturing enterprise!

In the latter part of 1897, or early 1898, Mr. Pratt heard that the Merrimack Manufacturing Company, of Lowell, Massachusetts, was interested in a southern plant site. He knew this company to be one of the oldest and strongest in the textile field and he immediately saw that Huntsville would be moving a big step toward the realization of his dream of a textile center if he could persuade such an enterprise to locate in or near the city. And the perfect spot seemed this area directly south of West Huntsville in the Branhan Spring vicinity.

FLOOD IN 1898

This was the highest water ever reported at the Huntsville Big Spring, which overran the canal walls by several inches on March 18, 1898. This flood probably is the one which occurred at the time the Merrimack officials first visited Huntsville to inspect a possible plant site.



(Photograph property of Mrs. H. J. Bentley)

Mr. Pratt wasted no time in writing the Merrimack officials and describing the advantages of the Brahan Springs area. Immediately, they expressed interest and asked him to secure a quotation from the owners of the lands.

For many years the McCalleys had owned the lands lying to the west and southwest of Brahan Springs. Old Doc McCalley was said to have owned slaves who cultivated his acres before the Civil War. Since his death, the lands had passed to his three sons, William J. (Bud), Charles D. and George, who lived in the old McCalley home which stood on the hill about half a mile directly west of the spring.

Immediately after Mr. Pratt received the letter from the Merrimack officials, he asked William H. Cummings, then paymaster at the West Huntsville Mills, to get in his buggy and drive down to the McCalley place and bring Mr. "Bud" McCalley back to the mill office. Mr. McCalley came, was interested in the deal, and made an offer.

Mr. Pratt promptly let the Merrimack officials know Mr. McCalley's price and they expressed further interest, stating that a group of their officials and representatives would visit the plant site at the earliest possible date. It seemed, then, to Mr. Pratt that the outlook toward Huntsville securing the Merrimack Mills was bright indeed.

DISASTROUS FLOOD

The day, or night, before the Merrimack officials were to arrive in Huntsville to inspect the site, the city suffered one of the worst rain storms and floods in its history. Water backed up into the creeks and stood in all the low spots of ground, covering the western suburbs and low parts of the city to a degree never before witnessed by the inhabitants. It was a discouraging sight to present to visitors.

With some difficulty, the Merrimack officials were conveyed to the office of the West Huntsville mills and then to the McCalley home. Everywhere they looked they saw water standing, especially in the low places in that area. It was impossible for the visitors to visualize the perfect plant site about which Mr. Pratt had written, among all those acres of seemingly no-good swamp land.

"Did you think we wanted to locate in a lake?" they asked him, unable to conceal their disappointment and disgust at the conditions they saw.

It was in vain that Mr. Pratt, Mr. McCalley and their friends insisted that the flooded conditions had never happened before. The Merrimack visitors were unable to look at the flooded area and visualize the beautiful picture of dry lands and green fields those same acres usually presented. They returned to Boston and Lowell with any interest in a Huntsville plant site completely washed from their minds; and any hope of Huntsville persuading the Merrimack Mills to locate in the city seemed dead.

MR. PRATT IS DETERMINED

Mr. Pratt was not a man to be easily discouraged. He knew that the plant site he had offered Merrimack was an excellent one and he courageously set out to prove it in the most direct way he could think of. He secured letters from the city mayor, Mr. W. T. Hutchens, and from the Rev. J. M. Banister, of the Episcopal Church, certifying that the recent extreme flood in Huntsville had never happened before in the memory of any of its citizens. Mr. Pratt took these letters, got on the train and went to Boston, where he called on the Merrimack officials, presented his proof of the flood and begged them to visit Huntsville again at any time and see for themselves that the flooded conditions would be gone. Mr. Pratt was so determined and so positive at being right that he persuaded the representatives of the company to make their second visit. Hope of Huntsville securing the big Merrimack industry was again held high.

At the second visit of the Merrimack delegation, headed by Mr. John Pete, the sun was shining and the land lay high and dry and beautiful. It wasn't hard for the visitors to see why Mr. Pratt had insisted that the location was an ideal one for the erection of a textile plant. They inspected the acre-

age, the spring and the adjoining plantations—the Fennell place to the west and the McDonald place to the south—and came to the enthusiastic decision on the main acreage of the McCalley place and the Brahan Spring tract which was owned by Mr. Milton Humes. With everything settled, Mr. John Pete and his associates returned to their Lowell plant well pleased over their selection of a spot for the operations in the south.

THE BIG ANNOUNCEMENT

On February 22, 1899, the following announcement appeared in the pages of "The Huntsville Weekly Democrat".

"A NEW FACTORY!"

Huntsville In The Swim
Two Million and a Half Dollars!

"For sometime past it has been rumored that Huntsville would have another cotton mill, and it has at last materialized. There will soon be erected by the Merrimack Mfg. Co. of Lowell, Mass., on the Fennell place, with 200,000 spindles, and with 5,000 operatives, an immense cotton factory. The charter has been granted and the ground will be broken in a few weeks.

"The governor's veto of the bill, exempting factories from taxation for ten years, will not affect the contract.

"The plant will manufacture various kinds of cotton goods, calico, gingham, sateen, velveteen, nice dress goods, domestics, etc.

"It is thought that the additional industry will increase our population almost double.

"Mr. Tracy W. Pratt has received the highest encomiums for his success in securing this industry. He, with other prominent business men of our city has been using his influence for this result for the past eighteen months, and it is a great triumph worthy of congratulations."

Plant Site Established

CHAPTER 3

MERRIMACK MFG. CO.

The Merrimack Manufacturing Company, so whole-heartedly welcomed by the "Huntsville Weekly Democrat" as an industry which would double the population of the city, was certainly a firm worthy of an enthusiastic reception. It was founded in 1822 by a group of men headed by Jackson, Appleton Moody and Bott and the company was (and still is) generally conceded to be the oldest corporation in the United States doing business continuously under the same charter without change or reorganization.

The first cloth was made in Merrimack's Lowell, Mass., plant in the year 1823. Wood block printed calicoes were the main products in those early years. The world's finest velveteens, corduroys and blended yarn constructions have long since replaced those calicoes at Lowell. Even in those early days a good moral atmosphere prevailed and the general welfare of the many members of the Merrimack organization was of great concern to the founders.

In coming south, the Merrimack Company sought a site for a grey goods mill in a promising location where there would be room for expansion. They were in great need of more grey goods to keep the twenty-six printing machines at their printing and dyeing plant going. It was impossible to buy grey goods so the alternative seemed to be to manufacture it.

LANDS PURCHASED

Besides the acreage purchased from the McCalley brothers and the Brahan Springs Tract owned by Milton Humes, the Merrimack Company bought adjoining acres from Martha Hooper, Nancy J. Watkins and James E. Penny. All of these 1898 purchases together gave them a total of 1,385 acres of land, extending east to the Huntsville

Springs Branch, south to Cottage Street, southwest to the Fennell Place, northwest to Jordan Lane, north to Madison Pike and northeast to the N. C. & St. L. Railway siding, except for one tract bordering on Triana Pike on the east, adjoining the siding.

Included in this acreage were many sections of cleared land under cultivation. The site selected for the building of the plants themselves was a high level spot bordering Triana Pike on the east. This tract, which had perhaps been under cultivation for many years, was planted that season in cotton by Percy Jones, overseer for the McCalleys. The acres of cleared land extended as far west as the Fennell place, but much of the eastern section was heavily wooded, as were portions of the surrounding lands, particularly to the southeast. There were, also, various sections of low land in the acreage, at least eight spots being designated as swampy land.

The old McCalley home, a large two-story house which sat facing west, surrounded by a grove of big trees, at the top of the hill above the present store building, had its back to swampy area and a pond where geese swam. This pond, formed by the overflow from several springs in the low area, lay directly north of the present store building. The springs remained active for a number of years after the Merrimack Company bought the property, until they were capped with concrete and their flow diverted.

The area where the War Memorial Park and the ball park are now located was swampy and overgrown with willows. This swamp extended back of the school and existed for several years after the present building was erected.

Triana Pike was a narrow dirt road and at the spot where it wound between the goose pond and the swamp, was so low and treacherous that it had to be reinforced with log slabs in order to make it passable. Even then it was difficult to get heavily loaded teams across the low section.

FEW HOMES IN AREA

Besides the McCalley home, there

were only three houses in the entire area from McDonald Grove to the mill at West Huntsville. Mr. Lawless lived in a small cabin across the road from the present home of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Clopton and made his living by raising corn for sale. A little farther north, across from where the Church of God stands today, Isiah McCrae farmed a small acreage. The next house was the McCalley home on the hill to the west and then lay a stretch of fields and woods as far as the present site of the picker stick mill in West Huntsville, where Mr. Rhoden cultivated a small tract of land.

MERRIMACK CHARTER

According to the understanding of some of our early residents, Merrimack Mfg. Co. had in mind the building of eight separate mills on the tract of land they purchased in Huntsville. The announcement in the "Huntsville Weekly Democrat" which stated that 5,000 employees would be needed certainly seems to bear this out. However, as the announcement was in error about the land purchased being the Fennell place, it could easily have been in error on the point of the number of employees or the number of spindles.

Whatever extended plans the company had in mind, they lost no time in beginning their execution. They immediately applied for a charter under the laws of the State of Alabama and were granted one by legislative act No.H-772, which read in part as follows:

"To authorize and empower the Merrimack Manufacturing Company, a Corporation of the State of Massachusetts, to own, build, construct, purchase and operate cotton mills and other manufactories in Madison County in this State, to confer upon it other powers enumerated in this Act, and to exempt its mills and factories so erected from taxation for ten years."

SWAMPY LAND



This view, looking westward from the Huntsville Big Spring during flooded conditions in 1875, is representative of the swampy appearance of portions of the West Huntsville area during high water.

(Photograph courtesy of Bryson Studio)

The Act, which continued in eleven sections, describing in detail the powers granted the company, was approved on February 17, 1899, by Joseph H. Johnston, Governor of Alabama, and listed in

the Public Acts of the General Assembly of Alabama, 1888-1889.

On May 8, 1899, the Merrimack Company petitioned the court for permission to build a railroad track spur from the lines of the N. C. & St. L. Rail-

road in West Huntsville to the site of their proposed plant. With the granting of this privilege and the closing of all property transfers, everything was in readiness for the construction of the first plant.

The First Mill Is Built

CHAPTER 4

GROUND BREAKING

Ground breaking ceremonies for the first plant of Merrimack Manufacturing Company were held on July 4, 1899. This was a big event and was given wide publicity in the newspapers of that time. It was in the form of a Fourth of July celebration and also included ceremonies of ground-breaking for the street car lines which were to be Huntsville's next major improvement. The lines were to operate in town and also serve the three manufacturing plants in the suburbs. They would pass from the town of West Huntsville by the shortest route possible and continue on into the vicinity of the Merrimack plant, stopping on the north side of Spring Street (now Ivy Street), opposite the present ball park, and east of the last house on the street. The construction of the street car lines promised to be a great convenience for the citizens of Huntsville, especially those who worked in the manufactories in the suburbs.

CONSTRUCTION OF MILL

The actual work of constructing the mill began soon after the ground was broken. Labor was recruited from the surrounding areas to dig out the ground for the foundations. All of the excavation was pick and shovel work, entirely by hand. Timbers were shipped in by rail, but at least part of the bricks were made and baked in ovens on the mill grounds. Cliff Coleman, negro laborer and farmer, who still lives in this area, opened the first oven and helped remove the bricks.

The smokestack was built at the same time and contained more brick than the mill itself. The brick and mortar were carried up the stack to the masons. George Allison, another local negro, helped with this work.

HOUSES FOR EMPLOYEES

At the same time as the construction of the mill was started, work was also begun on houses for the employees, as the company expected to recruit most of their operatives from mills in other towns or from out-lying areas and wanted to offer them convenient housing near their new jobs. Most of these

houses were two-story, two-family dwellings with five or six rooms to the side, to accommodate the large families that were prevalent at that time. Houses were set on lots of a generous size, large enough to allow space for outbuildings for the stabling of cows or horses, which employees were encouraged to keep and to pasture on the company's pasture.

It is possible to trace the progress of the mill's construction through the articles that appeared in the local weekly papers at that time. On January 6, 1900, "The Republican" carried the following enthusiastic and far-sighted item.

"As the Merrimack Mills near completion, the attention of the public is attracted to West Huntsville and it appears that there will soon be a lively little town out that way.

"Last week, we made notice of the fact that a gentleman had begun the erection of a building to locate a steam bakery. There is also good prospects of locating a bank, meat market, grocery, and a general store.

'All of this shows that our recent prediction that West Huntsville was going to be one of the best suburbs to our city, is getting more prominent every day. We would advise investors to keep in touch with West Huntsville.'

STREET CAR LINES LAID AROUND SQUARE



Ground breaking ceremonies for the new plant of Merrimack Mfg. Co. and for the city's first street car lines were held at the same time—during a city-wide Fourth of July celebration in 1899.

(Photograph courtesy of Bryson Studio)

WATER FOR STEAM

As the mill was to be operated by steam, one of the first jobs in its construction was the piping of water from the Brahan Spring to a cooling reservoir at the mill. A more difficult problem was the obtaining of sufficient pressure to force water to the top of the mill to use for fire protection. As Russell Hill, more than a mile northwest of the plant site, was the only point high enough to furnish such pressure, the company purchased land on this hill and began the excavation of a large reservoir and the job of laying pipes to and from this reservoir.

On February 24, 1900, "The Republican" reported:

"The excavation of the Merrimack Reservoir will be finished before April 1st with ordinary fair weather. Work at Merrimack is progressing rapidly in all departments. The entire plant will probably start in motion by May 1st."

On the same date, another news item read:

"The county commissioners have a large force of teams hauling rock from the new reservoir on Russell Hill. The rock is given free to the city on condition that it be used to repair West Clinton Street. W. J. Bennett & Co. began Thursday morning moving the city crusher up to Russell Hill where they will crush rock for the city and county streets and pikes."

On March 31, 1900, the same paper reported the excavation of the reservoir near completion:

"W. J. Bennett & Co. will finish the contract for the excavation of the Merrimack Reservoir on Russell Hill within the next ten days. The interior will be lined with brick and at the bottom concreted. Bennett & Co. have taken the contract to haul 100,000 brick to the hill for that purpose. The brick are unusually hard and are made in Chattanooga."

A. W. HUNKING, FIRST SUPERINTENDENT

The Merrimack officials chose Mr. A. W. Hunking as their first superintendent at the Huntsville plant. Apparently, he was in charge during the work of construction as his name was mentioned in "The Republican" on May 26, 1900.

"Supt. Hunking has completed the smokestack to the Merrimack Mill and

has unfurled a United States flag 27 feet long over it. The stack is the highest in Alabama. All other work at the big mill is under good headway and all indications point to the mill being in operation in another month."

The April 14, 1900, issue of "The Republican" mentioned progress on the construction of houses:

"The Merrimack Manufacturing Company, has awarded a contract to Patterson Bros., contractors, for the building of fifteen additional eight room cottages for mill operators in the village of Merrimack. The houses will cost about \$1,000.00 each."

Work of completing the mill moved along swiftly as reported by the following comments in "The Republican" on June 9, 1900:

"The first addition of the Merrimack is completed and it is the general opinion that the mill will be in actual operation at an early date. A large force of hands are employed placing the machinery in position."

On July 16, 1900, the same paper reported:

"It is thought that the first of the Merrimack Mills will be put into operation by the first of July. It will require 750 to operate this mill. About one half of which are known as skilled cotton mill workers. A large majority of these workmen will come from the cotton mill towns of the east. The houses at Merrimack so far completed will house 70 families so we presume that others will be pushed to completion at once."

Since no warehouse had yet been built, cotton for the operation of the mill was first stored in the basement at the back of the mill. This basement had only a dirt floor.

SOME MACHINERY IN OPERATION

On July 14, 1900 (a Saturday), "The Republican" reported the actual beginning of operation at the mill as having taken place the preceding Monday morning, which would have been July 9th—almost exactly one year after the ground-breaking ceremonies.

"THE MERRIMACK MILLS STARTED MONDAY MORNING

"The Merrimack Cotton Mills successfully inaugurated its cotton goods production at Huntsville Monday morning. Manager A. W. Hunking, accompanied by a few friends, took breakfast at half-past five Monday morning and in a few

minutes was on the ground superintending the situation.

"The big engine was started and cotton was fed to the machines which were ready. The days operation proved quite successful. The rest of the machinery will be set as rapidly as possible. Operatives are coming rapidly and the mill will soon have a full force."

The operation begun was possible opening and carding as no cloth was woven until a month later.

The actual completion of the reservoirs was reported by "The Republican" on July 21, 1900:

"The big reservoir of the Merrimack located on Russell Hill is now finished and water will be turned into the receptacle within a few days. It is stated that the cooling reservoir at the mill is near completion."

FIRST CLOTH IS WOVEN

On August 11, 1900, "The Republican" made the report that cloth had been woven at the new Merrimack plant.

"AT MERRIMACK MILLS:

"The first cloth has been made at the Merrimack Mills and was woven by Will Esslinger. Looms will be started as fast as ways are ready and large quantities of cloth will be turned out daily.

"A large force of hands are at work grading the new streets for the Merrimack Village and the place now puts on a city-like appearance. This work will be completed at an early date.

"Bryson Chapel located at the Merrimack Mills is now receiving its last coat of paint and will soon be completed so services can be held in it."

Progress on the houses was reported in "The Republican" on October 20, 1900.

"E. L. Patterson has now under construction six new houses for the Merrimack Mfg. Co. Five of the frames have been completed and the additional houses will be under frame this week. Mr. Patterson has the contract for building ten more new houses for this company which he will complete by the first of January. They now have sixty-two story and six one-story houses completed which are nearly all occupied by tenants."

The first houses completed were those on the two blocks directly facing the mill and on the streets directly west of these blocks back as far as the east side of C Street (now Clopton Ave.).

First Mill In Operation

CHAPTER 5

GEORGE MARSH, NEW SUPERINTENDENT

While A. W. Hunking appears to have been manager of the mill when its operation began, George Marsh came in soon after as the head official. Gordon Cobb was assistant superintendent for many years. These men had more problems connected with the initial operation than we can conceive of today.

STEAM POWER

The machinery was powered by steam, which operated an engine to turn the machinery by means of 2" manila ropes stretched from a drum beside the engine up a ropeway connecting with all three floors of the mill. This ropeway passed up through what is now the ell of No. 1 cardroom and the second floor space opposite the laboratory (recently the superintendent's office).

The problem with steam power was to keep the steam up to the maximum required to keep the engine operating steadily. If the steam fell, the whole mill slowed up or stopped. In order to keep steam up, the boilers had to be fed constantly. The boiler crew consisted of four men to shovel coal to the fires, four to roll coal from the pile by wheelbarrow, and several spare hands.

Cotton was brought in to the plant by drays pulled by two mules. On rainy days, these drays often got stuck in the mud on the mill grounds. After the warehouse was built back of the mill, cotton for use in the opening room was hauled up every day by horse and wagon.

The many windows in the mill were to let in as much daylight as possible as the only inside lighting provided at first was from oil lamps hung in brackets on the walls. Later, a generator was installed to furnish electricity for lighting the mill. However, these first electric lights were very weak and dim.

Among the machinery installed in this mill, much of which was probably second-hand, were the old 'suck-shuttle' looms. The only way to get the thread through the deep eyes on these

shuttles was to "suck" it through. In those days, weavers did everything but fix their looms when they broke down. They filled batteries, wove the cloth, and doffed it. Children who worked in this department only operated a few looms, probably from two to six, while they learned to weave.

In the spinning department, children operated from one-half an end to a full end, often standing on a box in order to reach the spindles. Children were sometimes doffers and often sweepers.

They had considerable leisure time between their duties to play inside, or even occasionally outdoors. Families often worked together in a department, the older members teaching the younger children.

Hours were long, probably from six in the morning to six at night, (only one shift operated), but workers had periods of free time during the day, often enough to allow them to leave the plant to attend to some necessary duty at home or to run an errand.

COTTON ON DRAYS



View showing cotton bales on wagons or drays pulled by two mules. This was the manner in which it was delivered to the plant in the early days.

(Photograph courtesy of Bryson Studio)

NO. 1 CARDROOM IN 1905



(Photograph property of Mrs. Willie Vaughn)

This room contained 400 small cards, known as "railroad" cards. Weights seen hanging off the cards on the left hand side of the picture could be added to or taken away as the case warranted, if the lap were light or heavy.

Seated, left to right, are Jake Lehman, overseer, and Ewing Bowers.

Standing, Liege Buckner, Ernest Biggs, Mr. Bishop, Will Buckner and George Cleveland.

Mr. Cleveland helped to start the card room after No. 1 mill was completed and worked here for nearly fifty years.

SICKNESS COMMON

Many spare hands were employed in the mill in those days because of the erratic attendance of workers. Home duties and sickness, especially among the children, caused most of the absenteeism. The swampy areas around the village was a breeding place for mosquitos and, consequently, malaria was common during the summer months. In February of 1901, a small pox epidemic broke out, several cases being reported in the Merrimack community. As a result of this small-pox "scare", travel between town and the suburbs was restricted for a period of several weeks.

WAGES PAID IN GOLD

Wages were paid entirely in gold coin, until about the time of the First World War. In the early days, workers passed by the office, probably once every two weeks, presented a metal disc with their identification number, and received their pay—between three and four dollars for a full week's work.

The first office was a tiny square building standing where the present office is located now. Later it was moved into the west end of No. 1 card room, along with the supply room and the machine shop. Among the early office employees were: Ernest McCree, Bob Wheaton and Robert Weeden.

MANY HANDS UNSKILLED

Employees who came to work in the new Merrimack mill were from various sections of the south. Many experienced workers came from mills in Georgia or South Carolina. Some of these people worked at the Dallas or West Huntsville mills before coming to Merrimack. Others came direct to the plant. Farmers from outlying areas, or from Tennessee, came with their large families to learn the textile trade. Of the first employees, probably many more than half were unskilled and had to learn the work after the mill started.

Many of these early employees remained at the Merrimack Mill for the rest of their working days. Of the few who are working today, none are known to have been continuously employed by the company since the early days of No. 1 mill's operation. However, their descendants, who have since been associated with the company, number among the hundreds.

FIRST EMPLOYEES:

Among the people who are known to have helped with the construction of No. 1 mill are the following:

Cliff Coleman, negro laborer, helped dig foundations; carpenter helper; helped install water lines.

Willie Vann, negro laborer (brother of Charlie Vann), helped dig foundations.

Harvey Matkins, negro laborer, carpenter helper.

Among those who are known to have performed tasks for the first time in No. 1 mill are:

Cliff Esslinger, who worked the first day in the spinning room and put up the first end on a spinning frame, is working in the plant at the present time.

John C. (Pop) Strickland worked the first day and became the company's first slasher man. He worked continuously until his retirement several years ago.

W. A. Esslinger wove the first piece of cloth.

George Cleveland helped to start cards in No. 1 Mill and worked for nearly fifty years afterward.

EARLY WORKERS IN NO. 1 MILL

Others who are thought to have been employees during the first few years are:

Henry High, appointed by Sheriff Fulgham in July, 1900, as first deputy sheriff for Merrimack.

Billy Buckner, gatekeeper; Mrs. Bessie Buckner, creeler on warpers; Bill Buckner, frame fixer in carding; Licher Buckner, card grinder; Nannie Buckner, drawing-in hand; Lizzie Buckner, spooler hand;

Mr. Maynard, master mechanic; Mr. Hambaugh, head carpenter;

John Talley, warpers; Will Talley, Maude Talley, spinner; Mollie Talley, drawing-in hand; Mae Talley, spinner;

Luella Stolz (Mrs. Shelby Steager) carding; Jessie Steager, Shelby Steager, Etta Steager, Bertie Steager, all in carding.

Thomas S. King, opening room; Ann King, creeler on warpers; Ethel King, spinner; Robbie King, spinner; Tera King, spinner;

James R. Marks, carding; Lilly Marks (Mrs. Lilly Berry), weaver; Will Marks, weaver; Lida Marks (Mrs. Charlie Russell), weaver; Jess Marks, weaver; John Marks, weaver, later fixer, gateman at present; Jim Marks, weaver; Walter Marks, weaver;

Katie Biggs (Mrs. John Marks), spinner; Elsie Biggs (Mrs. Marion Lehman), spinner; Fred Biggs, spinner; Arthur Biggs, carding; Ernest Biggs, carding; Lula Biggs (Mrs. Rob Foster), carding;

Rob Foster, carding; Joseph Foster, Nathan Foster, Paul Foster, Eard Foster, all in carding;

Markham Spencer, Marion Spencer, Lemer Spencer (Mrs. Jim Marks), Vera Spencer, Vesta Spencer (Mrs. Leonard Marbrey), all weavers;

Jake Lehman, cardroom overseer; George Lehman, spinning overseer; Henry Lehman, spinning secondhand; Will Lehman, frame fixer; Jim Lehman, master mechanic at early date;

Eb Parker, section man; Ida Taylor (Mrs. Eb Parker), spinner; Jennie Taylor (Mrs. Cook), spinner; Ann Parker, laid up roping; Lilly Parker, spooler tender; Albert Parker, doffer; Minnie Parker, spinner;

Charlie Chaney, Hettie Chaney (Mrs. Jarard), Tee Chaney, Walter Chaney, Jeff Chaney, Lowe Chaney, all weavers;

Mrs. Kelly Corum, Mrs. Rose, Rob Rose, Sally Rose, Cleve Rose, all weavers;

Will McClure, ran engine in No. 1 mill;

Mattie Lou Lemley, Sallie Lemley, Jane Lemley, Chatt Lemley, Cherry Lemley, all spinners;

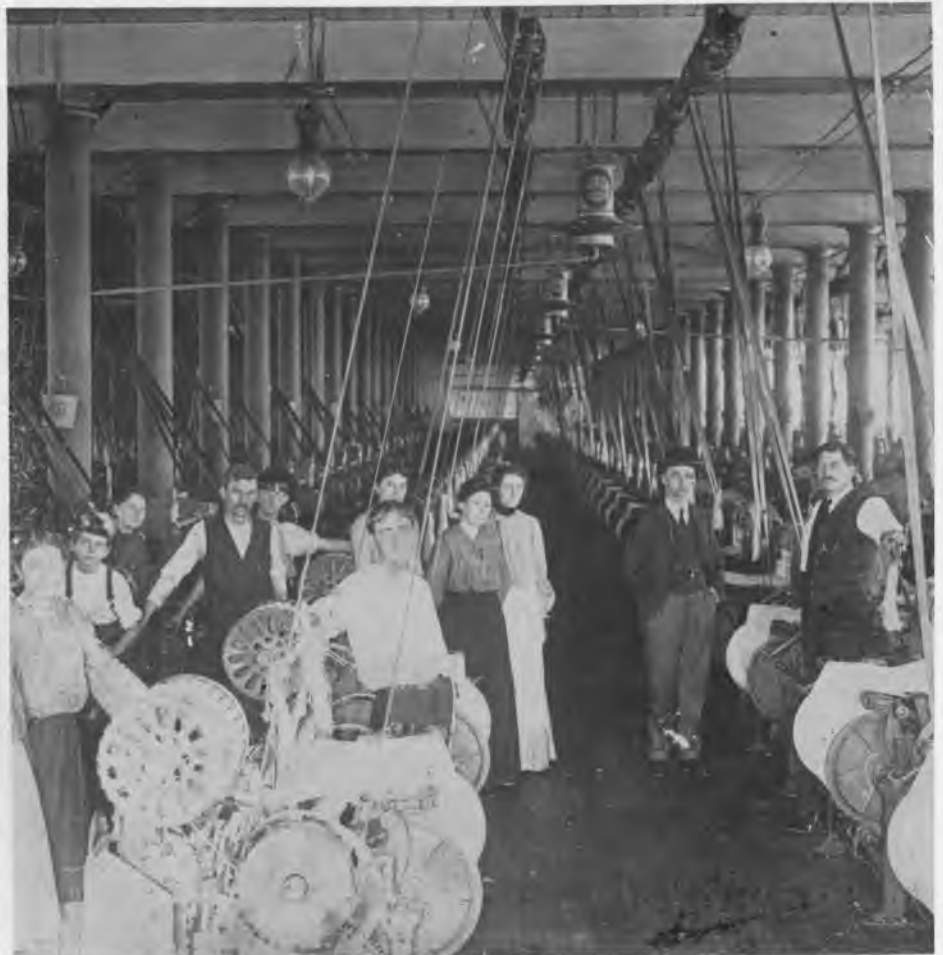
Alec Cloud, carpenter foreman; George Cloud, weaver; Annie McNatt (Mrs. George Cloud), warper tender; Mert Cloud, doffer; Bert Cloud, doffer;

OLD WEAVE ROOM SCENE

This view taken in the No. 2 weave room in 1905 shows J-model looms, old arc lights, and humidifiers that looked like lanterns.

Early employees who can be recognized now are: Sam Dunn, Lester Bell, Miss Ethel King, Mrs. Gossup, Miss Etta Youngblood, Gordon Cobb, Supt., and Lem Hawkum, overseer.

(Photograph property of Miss Ethel King)



Lou Ella Hill, drawing-in hand; Myrtle Hill, spooler tender; John Hill, spooler tender; Pearl Hill (Mrs. Adrian Knight), spooler tender; Carrie Hill, spinner; Carlos Hill, fixer in spinning;

Maldie Brooks (Mrs. Savage), spinner; Realdie Brooks (Mrs. Mack Smith), spinner and weaver; John Brooks, George Brooks, Tip Brooks, section hand in spinning; Ruth Brooks, spinner; Bes-sie Brooks, spinner;

Clarence Baker, loom fixer; Nina Allen (Mrs. Clarence Baker);

Jim Ellett, spinning secondhand; Eva Ellett (Mrs. Houston Sadler), spooler tender; Claude Ellett, qualified spinner, doffer or fixer; Percy Ellett, spinner and doffer; Ed Ellett, spinner; Bertie Ellett (Mrs. W. E. Terry, Sr.), spinner;

Emma Meadows (Mrs. Ernest Winkles), one of first spinners; Nettie Meadows (Mrs. Seales), spinner; Ruby R. Meadows, weaver; Frances Meadows, weaver;

Marvin Winkles, ran railway heads; Dora Winkles (Mrs. Hardy Hill), spinner; Ernest Winkles, doffer; Ida Winkles (Mrs. George Beard), spinner;

Myrtle Craft (Mrs. Clarence Kelly), spinner; Bernice Craft (Mrs. Chitwood), spinner;

Ernest Brannum; Ed Brannum; Claude Brannum; John Brannum; Lillian Brannum; Maude Brannum; Freddie Brannum (Mrs. Jerry Malone); Ruby Brannum;

Jim McCarver, spooler secondhand; Will McCarver, cardroom fixer; Cynthia Justice (Mrs. Jim McCarver), spinner; Ada McCarver (Mrs. Jim Davis), spooler and warper tender;

Charlie Jackson, weaver; Hattie Jackson (Mrs. Hill);

Walter Power, loom fixer; Harrie Wilkes (Mrs. Power); weaver and smash hand;

C. S. Brown, house man and deputy; N. R. (Razz) Brown, weaver; Perry Brown, weaver; Ellen Brown (Mrs. Dave Phelps), weaver; Della Brown (Mrs. John Preston), weaver; Henry Brown, weaver; Jennie Brown, spinner; Curnell Brown, spinner and weaver; Ida Brown (Mrs. Henry Morison), spinner and weaver;

Dave Phelps, weaver and fixer; John Preston, weaver; Mary Williams (Mrs. Razz Brown), weaver; Maude Crane (Mrs. Perry Brown), carding;

John W. Esslinger, weaver; Cliff Esslinger, spinner; W. A. Esslinger, weaver; Joe Esslinger, spinner; Doc Esslinger, weaver; Celia Brooks (Mrs. W. A. Esslinger);

Andy Ransom, spinning secondhand; Albert Ransom, Bessie Ransom (Mrs. Ozro Stafford), spooler tender; H. T. Ransom, carding; Houston Ransom, weaver; Emma Ransom (Mrs. Tom Stanley), weaver; Annie Ransom (Mrs. Tom Vaughn);

Bethel Wheeler, first supply room man; Laura Wheeler (Mrs. Will Marks), spinner; Walter Wheeler, weaver; Alvie Wheeler, weaver; Taylor Wheeler (Mrs. Will Venable), spinner; Adah Wheeler (Mrs. John Reynolds), spinner; John Reynolds, weaving secondhand;

Mrs. Venable, weaver; Will Venable, weaver; Jim Venable, weaver;

Avo Wilkerson; Ovie Wilkerson; Sisie Wilkerson, Will Wilkerson, Tom Wilkerson;

Willie Oldfield (Mrs. Clay Ledbetter), spinner; Ethel Oldfield (Mrs. Harry Craft), spinner; Lizzie Oldfield (Mrs. Thomas Cope), spinner; Oma Oldfield (Mrs. Dee Vaughn), speeders; Lula Oldfield (Mrs. D. B. Wells), carding;

Etta Rhoden, carding; Mary Dent, clothroom; Betty Sartain, clothroom; Lula Dent, clothroom;

Ozra Stafford, weaver; Josie Merritt, creeler on warpers; Dicie Curnutt, spooler tender; Ida Hopkins, spinner; Ewing Bowers, carding secondhand; Basil Dickerd, electrician; Mr. Richardson, weaving overseer; Charlie Barefield, weaving overseer;

A New Community

CHAPTER 6

NEW HOMES

The community built by Merrimack Mfg. Co. for its first employees was laid out in a city-like manner, more spacious in arrangement than was usual for industrial villages. The houses were strongly built, with rooms ample for the large pieces of furniture used at that time. All of these early houses were two-family dwellings, each apartment entirely separate, with rooms on each floor and a large porch.

The houses were set well back so that even after board fences surrounded the lots, the streets appeared wide and straight. They were dirt streets, leveled and graded, but no worse than most streets in Huntsville at that time.

On January 19, 1901, "The Republican" made the following announcement concerning the new village streets:

"Merrimack is now thoroughly lighted by street lamps. The mill company has placed a light at every street corner".

These new lights were oil lamps swung from posts. The lamps had to be filled with oil, lighted each evening and blown out each morning.

Houses were lighted by oil lamps during the early years. Drinking water was piped down the alleys from Brahan Spring and was available at the hydrants at the back of each lot.

Livestock was a common sight on the village streets for many years as most residents owned cows, or bought milk from those who did. Owners stabled their stock on their lot at night and drove them back and forth to the pasture each morning and evening. Wagons delivering baled hay and straw passed regularly through the village alleys. Pens for hogs were provided a little distance from the village area but when the wind blew from that direction, they seemed closer.

Outlying garden spots were assigned to those residents who wished to raise fresh vegetables for their families or to sell to others. Gardening was almost a necessity in those days before industrial canning.

STREET CARS

Had it not been for the street cars, transportation would have been a big problem for the early residents of the community — many of whom did not own a horse and buggy. The cars started running about four months before No. 1 mill was completed, as evidenced by the following announcement in the March 3, 1900, issue of "The Republican".

"TAKE A RIDE: Huntsville's electric railway has at last started. The cars began running regular Wednesday morning. The first car leaves the barn at 6:00 o'clock in the a.m. and the last car at midnight".

At this time the railway company had four cars in operation. The fare was five cents.

Not only was it a great convenience for the early residents to ride the trolley, but an exciting thrill as well. The fact that the line extended within the village limits brought many town sightseers to the new community, and the Brahan Spring, close to the end of the car line, was a popular spot for city-wide events, such as Fourth of July celebrations. Sometimes the electric railway offered a special rate of five cents for the round trip to those who wished to attend the day-long events at Brahan Spring.

OLD SUMMER STREET CAR

This type of car was used locally on the trolley lines during warm weather. It is shown here at the end of the line in Merrimack, where the motorman reversed the trolley and started back to town. Looking west from the south end of what is now North Broad Place, the old Bradley home can be seen in the background. This particular house burned about 1917 and was replaced with the present house.

(Photograph property of Mrs. Nettie Leach)





AT DINNER IN 1906

This photograph was taken at 149 Park Blvd. and shows Mrs. Ernest McCree, left, Mrs. Scott Holder, right, and the two Holder children. Mr. McCree worked at the mill office and was also a photographer. He is thought to have taken this photograph and also many others made at that time and earlier. The house where this picture was made had a platform on its roof for many years from which excellent long-view pictures could be made.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)



CHANEY DELIVER WAGON

Mr. M. G. Chaney operated a general merchandise store for many years in the community and his delivery wagon was a familiar sight on the streets.

In the background can be seen the picket fence which surrounds the mills and the paint and lumber sheds which then stood inside this fence. This photograph was made before 1920 when Triana Pike was paved.

(Photograph Property of Mrs. M. G. Chaney)

BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS

A general store was a necessity for outlying communities and the Merrimack Company lost no time in providing a building for this purpose. This building, probably finished about the same time as No. 1 mill, stood on the mill yard almost directly in front of the spot where No. 2 mill now stands. The company leased it to W. L. Halsey, who employed a manager at the location.

On August 3, 1903, J. B. Clopton took over as manager for Mr. Halsey. Other employees in the store were Scott Holder, Mr. Knight and Richard Day. Mr. Holder went about the community taking orders each day and Mr. Day made the deliveries.

No. 2 mill was under construction at this time and, since the store building was in the way, the company hired a well-known local house mover, Homer Middleton, to transport the building to a new location. Heavy rollers were placed under the store, ropes attached, horses were hitched to the ropes and began slowly to propel it down the Pike. Mr. Clopton kept the store open for business and so gentle was the process of moving that only one bottle was broken.

The building was brought to rest at the spot where it now stands, as the front section of the "Park Inn". Mr. Clopton operated it there until 1908 when he took over the McCalley Bros. store, also for Mr. Halsey.

Many houses were moved in those days, as houses were considered so much more valuable than land. When the Merrimack company bought the local acreage from the McCalley brothers, the deed stated that the big McCalley home was to be moved off the company land to a section still owned by this family south of the village. This transfer was made and the house placed at the top of the rise which Buena Vista subdivision now occupies. It stood there for many years, until after the company purchased the property in 1923 and took the old building down.

Sometime after the McCalley home was moved, Mr. Bud McCalley built a frame store building, with a porch in front, on the southeast corner of Triana Pike, opposite his home. By turns, he leased this building or operated it himself under the name of McCalley Bros. General Store. Mr. Clopton managed it for W. L. Halsey from 1908 to 1914.

In the early days, there was a meat market in McCalley Bros. store and since there was no abattoir in Huntsville, the market slaughtered its own cattle on a platform a short distance behind the building. Another feature of the McCalley's store was their burglary alarm system—a cow bell rigged up to ring every time the cash register was opened.

Sometime before 1908, Francis Stewart, a son of Judge Stewart, operated a bicycle shop, perhaps in a small building attached to the McCalley store. Bicycles were a popular means of transportation over the dirt roads of those days. This shop probably sold new cycles and repaired damaged ones.

Another early business located adjoining the McCalley's store, was the photographic studio of M. G. Chaney. This studio was said to have first been operated in a tent at that location and later in a lean-to to the store. Many of the early local photographs which are today in a good state of preservation were taken by Mr. Chaney.

Another local photographer who took many pictures, both inside the mill and out, was Mr. L. C. Watson (Hosea Watson's father). Several of the views inside the mill which appear in this book were made by Mr. Watson. It was because of the good work of Mr. Watson and Mr. Chaney that we now have such a fine photographic record of the early days of the mill's operation.

There were at least two barber shops in the community before 1906. Mr. King had a shop at his home at 223 Alpine. Jerry Lambert had a shop upstairs at his home at 248 Alpine. Lon Sanford was his assistant.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Social activities of the early residents were mostly in connection with the churches or lodges. The churches are described individually in other chapters.



1920 STORE BUILDING

This photograph was made on July 17, 1920, looking south. The frame store building stands where McClure Bros. is now and was operated by M. G. Chaney. The hall upstairs was the meeting place for various lodges, including Odd Fellows, Junior Order of United American Mechanics, Woodman of the World, and the Red Men.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)



1911 STREET SCENE

This photograph was made in front of the Merrimack Hospital, 337 South Broad, in 1911. This was many years before sidewalks were built or streets paved.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

During the early period, the lodges met over the store building which stood in the mill yard. They continued to meet in the same building after it moved to its new location. At least four

lodges had members in the community—Odd Fellows, Junior Order of United American Mechanics, Woodmen of the World, and the Red Men Lodge.



PICNIC AT BRAHAN SPRINGS

This photograph is thought to have been made between 1898 and 1900 and is probably the oldest picture recorded in this book. The ladies are shown enjoying a picnic at Brahan Spring, seated beneath the large oak tree which is still a landmark at that spot.

Left to right: Nettie McGuire (McCrutcheon), Addie Buckner, Annie Hazel, Celia Brooks, (Mrs. W. A. Esslinger). All of these ladies worked in No. 1 Mill when it first operated.

(Photograph Property of Mrs. W. A. Esslinger)



EARLY SCENE AT BRAHAN SPRING

A view of Brahan Spring probably taken about the year 1914. This is thought to be the first fence erected around the spring and lake. The mill can be seen in the background.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

Building No. 2 Mill

CHAPTER 7

PLANS FOR NO. 2 MILL

1900 was a banner year for Huntsville. Not only was the large No. 1 Merrimack mill completed, but the town secured eleven other new industries. And the incredible number of "five hundred" new houses were built. In 1901, the population of the city and its suburbs was estimated at 8,000.

An article that appeared in "The Republican" in 1901 gives an excellent idea of the growth of the local textile industry and the position Huntsville had in this industry, not only in the South but in the entire United States.

"TENTH COTTON MILL: The cotton mill which secured special water privileges at the meeting of the city council Tuesday night will be erected on one of the available sites in Huntsville.

"Mr. Pratt is the local representative of the company and he is not yet ready to disclose the identity of the men who are interested in the enterprise. However, it is not a secret that they are organized with a capital of \$1,000,000 to be expended in the establishment of cotton mills in the south. Their largest and finest mill will be placed here and it will be Huntsville's tenth. The nine others established or in process of construction are:

"Huntsville Cotton Mills, Dallas Mills Nos. 1 and 2, West Huntsville Mill, Merrimack, Lowe, Poore, Rowe, Madison Spinning Mill.

"When all the mills including the tenth are fully equipped, Huntsville will have more spindles than any other city in the south and will be second only to one city in the United States and that is Lowell, Mass.

"This city has won much fame in handling the new cotton mills that the eastern capitalists who desire such investments first inquire if they can be accommodated with a site here before maturing their plans for organization.

"Several more mill enterprises are seeking sites in and around Huntsville and it is likely they can get what they are looking for without going further".



CONSTRUCTION OF NO. 2 MILL

This picture taken April 30, 1903, shows No. 2 Mill as the first floor was being laid. The small houses in the far left background were the only ones then completed on Cottage Row. The Methodist Church had only recently been completed. Beyond it and a little to the left lay the first ball diamond. In the distance can be seen the woods which covered many acres in this area. In the right foreground one corner of the company store is visible. A few months later, this store was moved down the street where it stands today as part of the Park Inn.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

NEW INDUSTRIES

In this bustling textile town, the building of the second plant of the Merrimack company was forecast in "The Republican" on August 25, 1900, almost three years before it was actually be-

"It was authentically stated Thursday that work of building the second mill of the Merrimack would begin about September 5th. Preparations are now being made to carry this into execution on the date as above stated when Superintendent Hunking returns from Lowell, Massachusetts where he is now on business. The second mill will be the same size as the one now in operation. The same smokestack and engine will be used to operate the two mills".

Plans for this mill were changed considerably during the two years following that newspaper story. When it was finally built the second mill was far larger than the first one and, although the same smokestack was used by both, a new engine was installed in No. 2. Sometime between the publishing of this article and the actual construction of the mill in 1903, Supt. A. W. Hunking was succeeded by George T. Marsh.

On February 25, 1903, a Huntsville weekly newspaper "The Mercury" carried the following announcement:

**"A MONSTER MILL
Will Be Second In The
Merrimack Group**

**"Plant Will Have 65,000 Spindles—
Ground Plans Now Being Made**

"The ground plans are now being



WORK ON THIRD FLOOR OF NO. 2 MILL

When this photograph was made, work on No. 2 Mill was progressing nicely. Coal for the operation of the boilers in No. 1 Mill can be seen piled in the foreground. The timbers in No. 2 Mill came from South Georgia and South Alabama and are of a size and type unheard of in quantity today. In 1903 this lumber could be bought for \$10 - \$15 a thousand board feet.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

made for the second mill at Merrimack. Some of the contractors are already here and before another week is gone they will, under the direction of the chief engineer, be actively at work on the new building.

"The Mercury has already given in detail the dimensions of the mammoth structure soon to be begun. An idea of its size may be gained from the statement that it will contain in round numbers 65,000 spindles and 2,000 looms.

"When the work begins in earnest, which will occur about March 1st, an extra force of skilled workmen will be employed and the mill will be pushed to rapid completion. The size of the structure justifies the opinion that it will require several months to complete the building and place the machinery. But with the usual dispatch employed at Merrimack, it is safe to say that the new year will scarcely be ushered in before cloth is going from the mill to the Merrimack bleachery.

"The second of the Merrimack group of mills will be one of the largest cotton mills in America. It will be used solely for the manufacture of 64x64 print cloths, which, when bleached and dyed will carry the famous Merrimack brand. When the Merrimack mill is completed here, the plant will have in operation 90,000 spindles, 2,900 looms, all employed in the manufacture of high grade print cloths".

The installation of so many looms in this plant was possible because of the size of these machines, at least the majority of which were only 28" wide.

WORK BEGINS

The Merrimack Mfg. Co. employed the Lockridge-Green Company of Boston, Mass., designers of probably fifty percent of the mills then under construction, to design their new Huntsville plant. All mills built during this period followed a general trend of the times and the same pattern can be observed in mills all over the South.

The work crews that built No. 2 mill were brought down from the North on work-trains. While the building was going up, they lived on the spot. Superintendent of construction was Mr. Calvin with Ross Construction Company. Five hundred men worked ten months on the building.

On April 22, 1903, "The Mercury" reported progress on the work.

**"WORK GOES FORWARD
"Very Rapidly On The New
Merrimack Mill
"200 MEN ARE EMPLOYED**

"The construction work on the new Merrimack Mill is progressing rapidly, more than 200 men being employed. All of the excavation work has been finished and the foundation walls are going up. Many of the floor sills are in place and within a few days the carpenters will begin.

"The great force of workmen make Merrimack one of the busiest villages in the state and many people visit there daily to see what is going on.

"The new building is to be 438 by about 100 feet and will be five stories high. It is understood to be the intention of Merrimack to build two additional mills the same size of that at present building as soon as this is completed. All of these additions were contemplated from the first and the mill in operation was here as an experiment further additions depending on its success. Under the management of Supt. Marsh the mill has been such a dividend payer that the company is fully justified in carrying out its original plans in full".

It took very little digging to put in the basement and foundation of the mill. After the digging and basic work in building, a new floor was added every three weeks. The brick that went into the walls of the building were made in, or near, Nashville, Tennessee. Only the finest materials were used in the building of a mill and at no time was the builder called upon to stretch materials or skimp on them. The timbers in the mill came from South Georgia and South Alabama and cost approximately \$10.00 to \$15.00 a thousand feet. The floors were all built on pendles, which lessens the vibration and keeps the mill from shaking itself to

pieces. Dogs were placed in the side-walls to anchor the roof.

ENGINE INSTALLED

Mr. A. P. Stephens was the engineer sent down by Merrimack Mfg. Co. He installed the Corliss engines and fan room in No. 2 mill. The Corliss engine was a marine engine and operated the mill through its ropeway in the same way as No. 1 mill was operated.

DIGGING FLUME

One of the major projects in the construction of No. 2 mill was the digging of the flume for the piping of water from Brahan Spring to the new mill. This flume was so planned that water would flow through it by gravity to the reservoir at the mill. When test holes were drilled to determine the depth at which granite would be struck, before the digging was started, these holes happened to fall in places where the granite strata took deep dips—in other words, the granite strata lay in formations like ocean waves and each test hole happened to hit at the bottom of a wave. Consequently, when the actual digging of the flume was begun, large quantities of dynamite were required to clear away the rock that rose high in the areas not tested.

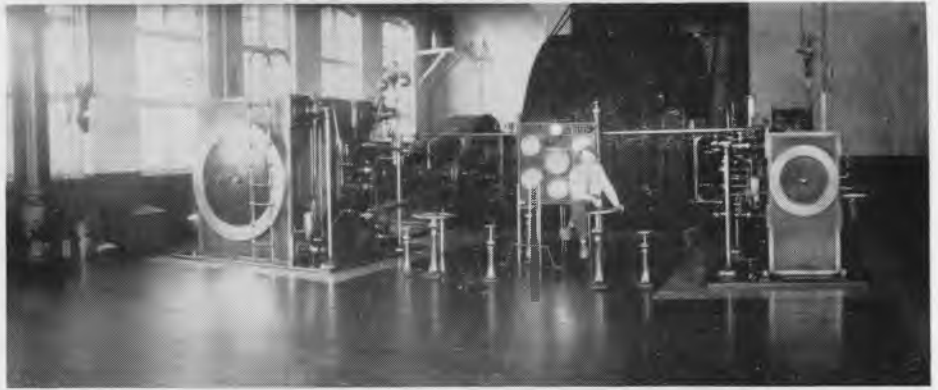
The digging of this flume required a large force of men for it went down as much as thirty-five feet in spots. All the digging was done by hand and because of the depth, platforms had to be built along the way so that the excavated dirt could be thrown up from the bottom of the ditch to the platform and perhaps to a still higher platform before it could be thrown out of the diggings.

The same problem was encountered at the excavation of the thirty by fifty foot reservoir at the mill end of the flume, about where the machine shop now stands. This reservoir was well braced with timbers and the bottom and sides of the excavation heavily lined. Five pumps were installed. Inside the flume was laid a water main four feet in diameter, bricked in in the clear, with manholes at intervals.

MACHINERY GOES IN

By November, the mill was nearing completion, as reported in "The Mercury" of November 11, 1903:

Corliss Engine Which Operated No. 2 Mill for Many Years



This was the engine which started up No. 2 Mill. It turned the drum in back-ground. Heavy ropes, 2" in diameter, ran from the drum up the ropeway all the way to the fifth floor of the mill, connecting with fly wheels and counter shafts which in turn operated the machinery on each floor. These wheels and shafts can be seen overhead in the 1905 Filling Room picture in this group.

This photograph was made about 1922. George McNatt, engineer is seated in foreground.

(Photograph Property of Mrs. Earl Bayless)

EARLY SCENE ABOVE THE DAM AT BRAHAN LAKE



This view, also thought to have been made in 1914, shows the brick house built in 1903 or 1904 over the end of the brick flume which carried water by gravity to the reservoir beside No. 2 mill. The building of this flume, which is thought to be over thirty-five feet deep in some places, was one of the big projects in connection with the construction of No. 2 mill.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

NO. 2 MILL GOES INTO OPERATION



This photograph was taken about 1904 or 1905, shortly after the plant began operating. At that time the clothroom was separate from the mill. Cotton was stored on the first floor of the mill in these early days. A coal car can be seen on the trestle that ran between the mills.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

"MACHINERY BEING INSTALLED:

"Machinery is rapidly being installed in the new Merrimack Mill. Work is being pushed on the mammoth plant so that it will be ready for operation about the first of next year. A party of machinists from Massachusetts is here to put up the machinery".

By May of 1904, this machinist crew was still working at the plant, as evidenced by an interesting sidelight published in "The Mercury" on May 6th:

"GAME AT MERRIMACK

"A fast, exciting game of baseball was played on the Merrimack ground Saturday between the Draper Company and Lowell machine shop men, both from Massachusetts. The latter outplayed their opponents on every point. The score was 17 to 13 in favor of the Lowell boys".

NO. 1 EMPLOYEES START NO. 2 MILL

The "Lowell boys" were employees from the Merrimack Mfg. Co. plant at

Lowell. Both of these machinists crews were probably, at that time, engaged in overhauling the machinery in No. 1 mill, for after No. 2 was completed the labor force in No. 1 mill left their jobs there and went over to start up the new mill. This was doubtless a gradual process, as no mention seems to have been made in the local press of the initial operation of No. 2.

While the employees were starting No. 2 mill, the machinery in No. 1 was given an overhauling, a project that was probably very much needed since most of the machines were, without doubt, "used" machines when Merrimack acquired them. By a statement of the Merrimack engineer, Mr. Stephens, it is known positively that all the machinery installed in No. 2 mill was second-hand machinery taken from mills in the North which had been closed down. Among these machines, were many of the old "suck-shuttle" looms like those installed in No. 1.

FIRST EMPLOYEES:

Many of the employees of No. 1 mill, mentioned previously, were also among the first employees of No. 2 mill, since

the No. 1 labor force was employed in starting up the second mill. Some of the employees who are known to have performed tasks for the first time are:

Alvie Allison, Alvie Matkins and Harvey Matkins, negro laborers, unloaded the first bales of cotton for use in No. 2 mill.

The east end of the first floor of the mill was used as a warehouse at that time.

Marvin Winkles tied on bands ahead of first spindle plumbers in No. 2. Mr. Winkles works at the plant at the present time.

Mrs. Ernest Winkles helped to start up the first spinning in No. 2 mill. She also works at the plant now.

Sabra Smith (Mrs. Beard Vaughn), Bertha Smith (Mrs. D. Meeks), William A. Smith and C. P. Smith started the first set of looms in No. 2 mill, second floor. These were J-models.

Other people who are thought to have worked in No. 2 during its beginning operation (besides those named in No. 1) are:

Jerry Lambert, first slasher operator; Dee McClure, operated engine; Bill Estes, ran pump room; L. C. Watson, slashing;

Dollie Hood, rope layer in spinning room; Rosie Kennamer Hood, Pearley McClure, Squirrely Cook, H. C. Johnson;

Cynthia Roberts (Mrs. Jess Tucker), spinner; Lou Roberts (Mrs. Allen), spinner; Will Roberts, secondhand in weaving;

Mr. Vaughn, carding overseer; Beard Vaughn, carding; James Rhodes, card fixer;

Ella Baker (Mrs. William A. Smith), Gracie Estes (Mrs. Marvin Winkles), spinner; Geneva Estes, spinner.

History of Operations - 1905-1945

CHAPTER 8

MONEY PANIC IN 1908

With the completion of No. 2 mill the local operations of Merrimack Mfg. Co. entered a quiet, steady phase, with no major changes or improvements for a number of years. Plans for the building of additional mills on the Huntsville property were deferred indefinitely — perhaps because of the financial panic of 1908.

This panic brought a scarcity of money in circulation. It was hard to get gold coin and many banks closed. Local residents suffered but not as much as they would have without the operation of the mill. During this time, a band of around one hundred soldiers camped at the Brahan Spring and many of them begged from house to house for something to eat.

JOSEPH J. BRADLEY, AGENT, 1905

About three years previous to the panic, the local management of the mill had changed, with George T. Marsh being replaced by Joseph J. Bradley on June 24, 1905. Mr. Bradley was then thirty-seven years old and was understood locally to have been relatively inexperienced in textile operations at that time. He was a Philadelphia man, but had possibly come here from Georgia. In spite of his inexperience, Mr. Bradley soon became a leader very much loved by the workers in the plant, the people in the community, and the citizens of Huntsville, in whose progress and welfare he took an active interest.

HOSPITAL ESTABLISHED

Possibly one of Mr. Bradley's first projects was the establishment of a hospital, with a resident doctor and resident nurse, in the community. This hospital was established at 337 South Broad, then a small cottage. As the years went by this hospital was increased in size, even including a dental clinic. Its establishment was a great help to the people of the community as the Huntsville Hospital was overcrowded until the city hospital was built in 1922. Even doctors were fairly scarce and hard to get in the suburbs.

VIEW OF MILL AND FOREGROUND, 1905



This photograph shows board fences, dirt walks and streets, and recent plantings of shrubbery on lawn in foreground.

(Photograph Property of J. B. Marks)

ELECTRIC LIGHTS IN MILL

By 1906, or before, the Merrimack company installed in its local plants a generator to generate electricity to light the buildings. The first lights were carbon lights and were very weak and undependable.

CHILD LABOR LAW

Around 1903, the first child labor law was passed by the State of Alabama. This law was weak, however, in that it provided no method for enforcement. Consequently, it had very little effect on the general employment of children, both in the textile industry and in numerous other industries. Where children did quit work, the local press freely accused the parents of not forcing them to attend school and openly complained of groups of children loitering about the streets. Even after truant officers were established to force school attendance, children still continued to work and to hide when the officers searched the work premises. Because of the difficulty in enforcing the laws on

Early Looms With Filling Boxes



This photograph of John Garner was taken about 1916. Over the loom at left can be seen one of the early "filling boxes". Weavers filled their aprons from these boxes and carried the filling along to place in batteries where needed.

(Photograph Property of Mrs. Josie Foote)

1905 VIEW OF NO. 2 FILLING ROOM



No. 2 Mill had been in operation only a little more than a year when this photograph was made. Small children were sweepers and doffers. Henry Cleghorn was overseer.

(Photograph Property of Mrs. Nettie Spurlock)

VIEW OF MILL GROUNDS, 1925



This photograph was made shortly after the paving of Triana Pike and the streets and walks in the mill yard. Many portions of grounds now used as parking lots for automobiles were then covered with flower beds. Large vine at right of picture grew at end of railway trestle.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

compulsory education during its first years of existence, it is hard to say when child labor in the plant came to end, though its end probably came earlier here than in many sections of the state because of the deep interest Mr. Bradley felt for children of the community.

LANDSCAPING AND BEAUTIFICATION

One of Mr. Bradley's great joys was the beautification of the plant grounds and the community proper. Long before the streets in the mill yard, or even Triana Pike, was paved, the plant was surrounded by beautiful flower beds and shrubbery. Trees were planted in the community and the grounds of the Bradley home became a show place, complete with greenhouse. Special gardeners were employed to care for the flowers.

NO. 1 MILL EXTENDED

It was 1920 that the next great improvement program took form at the Merrimack plant. In April of that year, the building of an extension to the east of No. 1 mill was begun. This extension, generally known as "the kitchen" contained approximately 30,000 square feet of floor space and was completed about September of the same year.

In order to build the extension to No. 1, it was necessary to tear away the original toilet towers which stood at that end of the mill. A new tower housing modern toilets was begun at the south side of the mill in April of 1920 and completed about August.

FROM STEAM TO ELECTRICITY

Also in 1920, the company made what was perhaps its most important improvement from the year 1905 to 1945, by changing the operation of the mill from steam-power to electricity. Electric motors were installed to operate groups of machines by shafts and belts. This was the mill's initial step in modernization.

JOE BRADLEY DIES

On October 26, 1922, the employees of Merrimack, citizens of the community and of Huntsville as a whole, were saddened by the death of Mr. Bradley. He was held in such high regard locally that the Mayor of Huntsville issued a proclamation that all business suspend operations for the first five minutes of his funeral services. The funeral was held at the Bradley residence and was attended by the mayor and city council in a body, throngs of friends, and hundreds of school children from the school which he built.

JOE BRADLEY, JR., AGENT, 1922

After Mr. Bradley's death, his son, Joseph J. Bradley, Jr., became agent of the mill, continuing many of the policies and projects founded by his father.

In 1925 the streets in the mill yard were paved by the Company; and Triana Pike was paved from town to two blocks south of the mill gate. The paving of this pike was done by the county.

The period of depression years followed soon after and continued for a number of years. The latter part of the depression was characterized locally by much labor unrest and at least half a dozen short periods of work stoppage caused by strikes.

HENRY J. McKELVIE, AGENT, 1937

In August, 1937, Joseph J. Bradley, Jr., was succeeded by Henry J. McKelvie as agent of the mill. In the latter part of the year, the mill was again closed by a strike and remained closed during the entire year of 1938.

When operations were resumed in 1939, machinery and properties were in need of repair and a general program of improvement was begun. This included the installation of steel sash in the mill windows to take the place of the old wooden sash and numerous painting projects.

CONSTRUCTION OF NO. 1 MILL EXTENSION



This photograph was made on July 17, 1920 while No. 1 "Kitchen" was under construction. At that time the cotton conveyor pipe ran from the opening room beneath a concrete walkway to No. 1 picker room. Cartload of dirt or gravel are visible at the left. Work on the building appears to have reached the second story.
(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

During the years of World War II, the mill operated at top speed, producing goods for the armed forces and needed civilian uses.

A. D. ELLIOTT, AGENT, 1945

In July, 1945, Henry McKelvie was succeeded by A. D. Elliott as agent of the mill.

Mr. Elliott came to Huntsville from Pacific Mills, Trion, Georgia, where he was Assistant General Superintendent. Prior to that, he was Superintendent of Reigel Textile Corporation's Trion, Georgia, plant.

Mr. Elliott began his textile career with the Mount Vernon Woodberry Mills in Baltimore and worked at their Tallassee Plant as secondhand and as overseer.

Building of No. 1 Toilet Tower In 1920



This picture was made on July 24, 1920. At that time the extension to No. 1 mill was under construction at the east end of the mill and the toilet towers which had been at the east end were torn down and new toilets built on the south side of the building. Toilet towers on No. 2 mill were not changed after the original building was finished.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

The Growth Of A Community

CHAPTER 9

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON BRICK STORE BUILDINGS



This photograph, made on September 18, 1920, shows the beginning of the brick store buildings. The frame building already on the corner was left standing and the architecture of the new building fitted to it.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

END OF STREET CAR LINE IN 1925



This view looks south on Alpine Avenue. Street cars came to the row of concrete posts which marked the Broad Street intersection, then reversed and returned to town. Alpine Avenue has since been widened at this point.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

There were few local changes during the early years of the community, after the first houses were completed with the building of No. 2 mill.

In the early years a small building was erected slightly north of the present store building and housed a barber shop in the front and a meat market, operated at one time by Jock Ward, in the rear.

It was around 1913 that the first frame building was erected at the corner of the present store site. Its first occupant was Chaney Bros., who had previously occupied the old store across the street (present Park Inn).

In 1920 the company built the new store building, incorporating into its construction the two-store frame building on the corner. The Merrimack Drug Co. occupied one of the sections of this new building. Mr. Chaney continued to operate his store in the corner until about 1932, when it was run by Mr. Christian for an owner who resided in Shelbyville, Tenn. In March, 1939, this corner section was leased to McClure Bros. for a grocery store, which is still being operated by Searcey McClure.

The second unit has been a cafe for many years under various managements and is now leased to George Archer. The third unit has been operated as a grocery store since 1939 under the various managements of J. A. Allen, Sam Sneed and, since 1950, Harry Owens. Bob Pedigo has operated a barber shop at his present location since around 1939. The north section of the store building has been operated as a variety store under several managements.

There have been several stores and cafes in the area south of the village, including a grocery store which was operated for many years by Miss Robbie King.

VILLAGE IMPROVEMENTS

In 1920, the present concrete sidewalks, gutters and curbs were built throughout the village. The sanitary sewerage system was also begun at this time.

By 1922, all houses in the village were wired for electricity and residents began to enjoy the conveniences offered by this great invention.

Between 1922 and 1925, a number of houses in the southwest part of the village were constructed, thus increasing the number of houses in the community to 279. Most of the later houses built were a smaller type cottage than the early houses.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Among the many organizations which have improved life in the community over the years have been the various lodges, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Home Demonstration Club, Allied Youth Club and the Parent-Teachers' Association.

The scouting organizations have contributed greatly to the life of the youth of the community. Boy Scout Troop I was organized in 1919 by Cecil V. Fain. The organization came just three years after Congress had granted the National Boy Scout Charter and was the first troop in Madison County. This troop has continued without a break to the present time, winning much recognition over the years.

Girl Scout Troop I was registered in the year 1922 about the time the scouting program was recognized nationally. Mrs. J. B. Clopton was captain of the group in its early days.



BUILDING SIDEWALKS



This view of sidewalk construction was taken on April 22, 1920. Howard Jones was foreman of this construction work. Sidewalks and curbs were laid all over the village by the company. It was five years after this that the county paved Triana Pike.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

1925 STREET SCENE



This 1925 view is taken on Spruce Street looking east toward the Methodist Church. A cow is moving down the center of the street. Many residents stabled cows on their lots at that time and pastured them in the company pasture. The lack of trees shows the newness of this section of the village.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

Operations Under Huntsville Mfg. Co.

CHAPTER 10

PLANT SALE RUMORED

For some time before 1946, it was rumored that the Merrimack Company would either sell or liquidate their Huntsville, Alabama, plant. During the war, a great portion of its production had gone to supplying textiles for the armed forces. With the cessation of hostilities, the company was faced with problems of returning to peace-time production and the sale of their product on a highly competitive market.

The machinery at Huntsville was old and in need of repairs. An immense amount of money would be required to bring the mill into a competitive position. In addition, the Merrimack Company no longer needed the Huntsville mill as a source of grey goods for their bleachery. For some years previous, the entire production at the local plant had been sold to outside finishing plants, both in the south and east.

M. LOWENSTEIN & SONS, NEW OWNERS

Under the circumstances, the following announcement which appeared with a Fall River, Mass., dateline of November 25, 1945, came as no surprise:

"HUNTSVILLE MILL SALE ANNOUNCED: The Huntsville, Ala. plant of the Merrimack Mfg. Co., producers of print cloth, has been sold to M. Lowenstein & Company, of New York, it was announced here today by Jacob Ziskind, president of the Crescent Corp., agent.

"The equipment of the plant consists of approximately 110,000 spinning spindles and 2,500 Draper automatic looms and has a normal production capacity of 50,000,000 yards of print cloth per year".

On December 8, 1945, "The Chattanooga Times" carried a news release dated Huntsville, Alabama:

"MERRIMACK MILL WILL EMPLOY 1,100.

"Huntsville Industry Planning Growth Under New Owners.

"The Merrimack Mills, great textile industry here recently purchased from the Merrimack Com-

pany of Lowell, Mass., by M. Lowenstein and Sons of New York, will be operated on a more intensive scale than formerly and a third shift will be added as soon as sufficient labor is available, a spokesman of the new purchasers has announced.

"New operatives are being recruited and trained for the work and the number will be increased from 800-odd now employed to about 1,100.

"H. G. Kletcher will be controller of the mills and A. D. Elliott, general agent for the Merrimack Company since last October, is expected to remain in operational charge.

"The Lowensteins will take over the property on Jan. 14 and a program of improvements is expected to be under way as soon as possible. Reconditioning of all machinery to increase the capacity of the plants housed in two large brick buildings will be undertaken immediately, all houses in the village of Merrimack will be repainted and repaired and negotiations with the proper authorities started for the paving of the main streets of the village.

"The cloth made in these mills will be sent to the Rock Hill, S. C. printing mill, largest in the world, for finishing and a steadier demand will be created for Merrimack products".

MERRIMACK OPERATIONS END AFTER 45 YEARS

January 13, 1946 was the last day of nearly forty-five years of operation in Huntsville by the Merrimack Mfg. Co. In the hearts of those employees who had been associated with Merrimack for many years, there was mingled sadness at the breaking of old ties with hope and anticipation for what the future might hold under a strong new company.

On January 14, 1946, company employees passed through the gates under a huge banner bearing the words, "Welcome To The Huntsville Manufacturing Co." Bulletin boards in the plant were posted with scores of congratulatory telegrams to the new company and its employees.

HOUSE OF LOWENSTEIN

The "House of Lowenstein" — M. Lowenstein & Co., Inc., of New York, purchaser of the Merrimack property— was begun in 1889, when Abraham Lincoln Lowenstein and his son, Morris, invested \$2,000 in a small piece goods store on Lispenard Street in New York City. Since that time, the tiny store had expanded into one of the great textile firms of modern times.

The Lowensteins were among the first to see the new trend in the garment manufacturing business. In consequence, they resolved to sell their goods directly to the small cutting shops springing up all over New York. They also sold direct to chain and department stores, which was another departure. By doing this, they filled important needs, firmly rooting their business in what was to become one of America's greatest industries.

In 1918, the business was incorporated as M. Lowenstein & Sons with Morris Lowenstein as president. He died the same year, and his son, A. L., became president and Leon was named treasurer.

It was under A. L. and Leon that the firm's highly specialized divisional organization for the handling of different fabrics was established. To this organization has been credited much of the company's success.

In 1918, the Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Company was begun and became the nation's largest plant for bleaching, dyeing, and finishing cotton grey goods, with an initial capacity of 50,000,000 yards annually. By 1944, this capacity had been increased to 360,000,000 yards annually.

In order to supply this huge bleachery with cotton grey goods, the Lowenstein Company began in 1944 to purchase mills that manufactured this type cloth. At the time of Merrimack's purchase, they owned the Saratoga Victory Mills at Albertville and Guntersville, Alabama.

Later in 1946, the Lowenstein Company purchased the Entwistle Mfg. Co. at Rockingham, N. C., which was changed to Aleo Mfg. Co., and Orr Mills

AIR VIEW OF MILL 1954



Taken shortly after the completion of the new three story air conditioned building, joining No. 1 and No. 2 mills, this photograph shows some of the changes since 1925. Building between the mills is the concession stand and space at right of it is used as a parking lot for mill supervisors. At far right is another parking lot which is lighted at night.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

at Anderson, S. C. The following year they acquired Limestone Mills at Gaffney, S. C. The combined capacity of all these plants, in 1948, was 17,500,000 yards annually.

(After 1948, the company acquired the Lane Mills at New Orleans, Wamsutta Mills at New Bedford, Mass., Somerset Mills at Roxboro, N. C., built a synthetic mill, The Lyons Division, at Anderson, N. C., sold the Saratoga Victory Mills, making eight branch mills owned at present, besides the Rock Hill Printing & Finishing Co.)

At the time Merrimack was purchased, the House of Lowenstein specialized in diversified lines, comprising print cloth and sheeting, war goods, underwear, pajama and shirting fabrics, lining and pocketing, cretonnes, drapery fabrics, curtain materials, Plisse fabrics, men's work clothes fabrics and sports and rain wear.

MILLIONS INVESTED

Lowenstein invested \$1,700,000 in the Huntsville properties, with a long-range plan for the investment of many millions more to renovate and expand the operations. The Huntsville Manufacturing Company, a corporation under the laws of Alabama, was organized to operate the new plant. Under the guidance of A. D. Elliott, vice-president of the new company, and general manager of the plant, the work of putting these plans in operation went forward.

By the end of 1946, the Lowenstein company had increased the operation of the mill from one and one-half shifts to three full shifts with approximately 1,500 employees. Plans were under way to improve working conditions and repair machinery as fast as possible.

TWENTY-FIVE YEAR CLUB

During that year, the Twenty-Five Year Club was founded by the company to include all those with twenty-five or more year's service. This club was formed with a membership of fifty. Pen and pencil sets were given to new members and watches to those with thirty-five years of service. Two years later the awarding of service pins, with jewel setting to denote the number of year's service, was begun. These awards were made at an annual dinner each fall, honoring the membership. In 1955, the membership of this club is expected to reach one hundred and forty.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

1946 closed with a big Christmas party on the mill lawn, with gifts being distributed to over 1,500 children of the employees. This party has been an annual affair since.

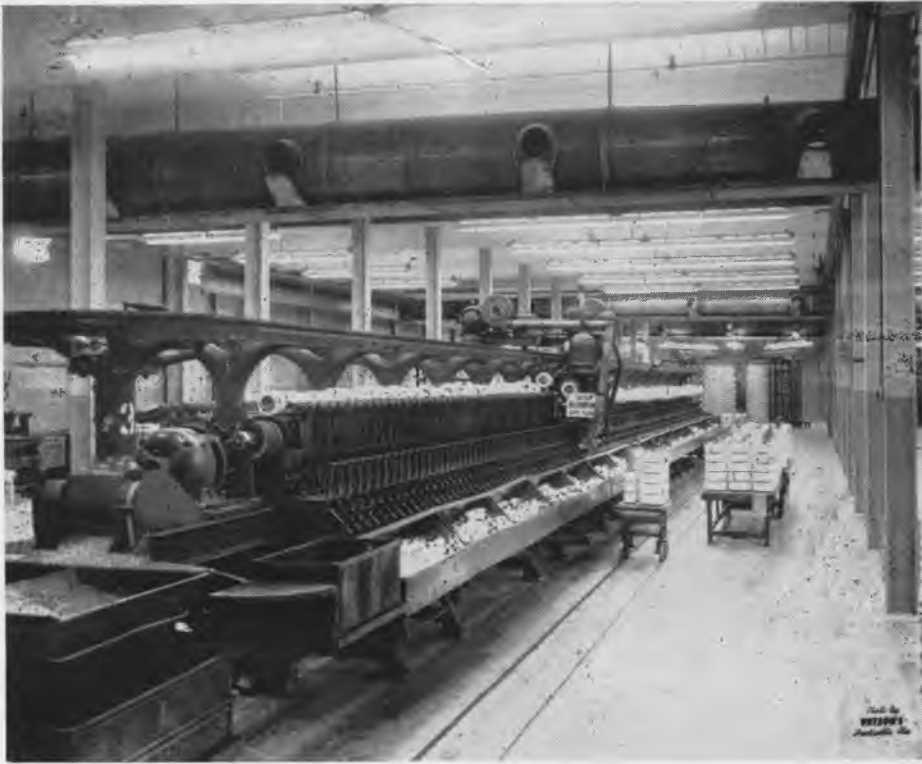
LARGE SCALE IMPROVEMENTS

Early in 1947, programs were begun for the refinishing of all floors in the plant and for the installation of fluorescent lighting.

On June 27, 1947, announcement was made of the first expansion program planned by Huntsville Mfg. Co. This plan included the addition of 80 new spinning frames which would increase the spindles from 109,696 to 118,530. This increase would place the mill as the largest south and west of the Carolina. An addition of 27,000 square feet in floor space, back of the old boiler room in No. 1 mill, and better utilization of floor space through No. 1 mill, were included in the program. The cost would be around \$1,000,000 and the increase in machinery would add \$100,000 to the annual payroll paid by the mill.

Other changes under way at that time included building of a sub-station made necessary by the anticipated increase in electricity; the providing of additional storage for cotton; and changes in the water system to provide separate industrial and household supplies. A new chlorination system was put in operation to take care of the additional load on the water lines.

A parking lot was constructed south of the mill for the convenience of employees. At the same time, Park Boulevard was widened three feet and side-



1955 VIEWS IN MILL



walks built on the south side of the Boulevard from the south corner of the mill yard to the intersection of Spring Street, three blocks north. An additional parking lot was added northwest of the school auditorium.

On September 26, 1947, announcement was made of the addition of 104 looms to be placed in an area of No. 2 mill formerly used for cloth storage.

Also in September, 1947, M. Lowenstein & Sons, Inc., was judged by the Financial World Annual Report Survey as "Best in the Textile Industry" and received the "Oscar Of Industry" trophy.

In January, 1948, an additional expenditure of \$500,000 was announced at the Huntsville plant, this money to be invested in various parts of the mill in programs of rearrangement, renovation and the addition of new machinery.

In 1949, the mill began a four-hour operation on Saturday morning. Also about that time, the Lowenstein company set up a central office in Anderson, South Carolina, for the purchasing of cotton and mill supplies for all its branch mills.

STRIKE POSTPONES PLANS FOR ADDITION TO MILL

In the early spring of 1951, plans announced for the long anticipated addition to connect the No. 1 and No. 2 mills were interrupted by a strike which closed the plant for about six weeks. Work was resumed on April 10, 1951, with a gradually increasing force of workers. However, the loss of production and resultant cancellation of many orders, put the mill operation back to a forty-hour week for many months to come and forced the laying aside of current expansion plans.

MILLS JOINED BY NEW BUILDING

It was two years later, the spring of 1953, before these plans could be resumed. At that time, the company began the construction of a three-story, air-conditioned, building to connect No. 1 and No. 2 mills and to house one of the finest yarn preparation departments existing in any modern mill. At the same time, work was begun on the excavation of the basement of No. 1 mill,



1955 VIEWS IN MILL



which would be completely air-conditioned and modern in every respect by the installation of 420 new Draper 46"X2 model looms. The supply room in the west end of No. 1 basement was also renovated and steel bins installed. A new entrance was constructed to this basement area.

The completion of this expansion program in October, 1953, brought about the addition of over 150 new employees. The work week at that time was forty-eight hours and has remained so up to the present time, in spite of an unsteady textile market.

1955 MODERNIZATION

Early in 1955, the company announced another large improvement program, including the air-conditioning of No. 1 weave room; the complete overhauling of its 837 E-model looms; the construction of a new opening room in the warehouse; equipping of this room with new machinery throughout; the remodeling of No. 1 picker room; the addition of new cardroom frames; and the rearrangement of machinery in order to completely modernize No. 1 mill. Additional building and floor repairs were also undertaken. At the present time, this modernization program is well on the way toward completion.

With the completion of the addition joining the two mills under one roof, the plant is again believed to be—as it was in 1903—the largest print cloth mill in the south. It now operates 145,896 spindles, 3,437 looms (much wider looms than its initial operation included); uses 43,000 bales of cotton per year; and produces 95,000,000 yards of cloth annually. At the present time, it operates three shifts, six days a week, and employs approximately 1,500 operatives.

PRESENT OPERATIONS

The program undertaken by M. Lowenstein & Sons, Inc. at their Huntsville properties, as elsewhere, has been one of almost continual improvement and growth. Capital investments in buildings and new equipment with general improvements and repairs have brought the value of the company's property to a current estimate of \$11,000,000. This is more than seven times the initial local investment and proves beyond a doubt the interest and faith that the "House of Lowenstein" holds in the people of Huntsville and the future of the textile industry here.

The Huntsville Park Community

CHAPTER 11



BEAUTIFUL EXAMPLE OF HOME REMODELING IN HUNTSVILLE PARK

Changes and improvements in the community were evident very soon after Lowenstein took over the Huntsville properties. The name of the village was changed from "Merrimack" to "Huntsville Park". On April 18, 1946, announcement was made of the renaming of streets, many of which had been previously designated only by letter symbols.

Pike Street (Triana Pike) became Park Boulevard; A Street became Alpine Ave.; B. Street became Bradley Ave., in memory of Joseph J. Bradley; C Street became Clopton Ave., in honor of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Clopton; D Street became DuBose Ave., in honor of Prof. E. F. DuBose; E Street became Emm Ell Ave., in honor of M. L. Lowenstein; and G Street became Grote Ave., in honor of Dr. Carl A. Grote.

East-west streets were given names for the first time in the existence of many of them. Spring Street (since changed to Ivy Street) and Willow Street (formerly Cottage) were the names given to the two streets running east from Park Boulevard. West of the Boulevard, reading from north to south, east-west streets were named: Elm, Holly, Cedar, Broad — with two branches, North Broad Place and South

Broad Place—Spruce, Oak and Linden. Pea Ridge Road was changed to Ridgecrest Street.

The next improvement was the removal of the high wire fences which had surrounded all village lots for approximately twenty years. This change, alone, greatly improved the appearance of the community.

Painting and repairing of all 279 houses in the village was the next project undertaken. The recreation hall and gymnasium were redecorated, with new lights and additional seats added to the gym. The "teen-canteen" and various community sports programs were inaugurated.

In November, 1948, the Leon Lowenstein War Memorial Park, located in the triangle west of the ball park, was dedicated by appropriate ceremonies, with Brig. Gen. William E. Brougner as speaker. Two bronze plaques were unveiled. The north plaque lists 262 World War I veterans; the south plaque, 348 World War II veterans.

In October, 1949, after the completion of repairs to the village houses, the company began the sale of 269 of them to employees. Prices, based twenty percent below an FHA appraisal, ranged

from \$1,725.00 for a three room house, to \$4,900.00 for a twelve room house. Nearly all houses were double-unit homes and the prices asked were considerably less than any comparable property was selling anywhere in Alabama. Lots averaged more than 100 feet across the front, some nearly 200 feet, and from 100 to 170 feet in depth.

Terms of sale on the houses included a ten percent down payment, monthly payments for the balance due, and financing of all closing costs by the company. The only houses not sold were the first nine houses on the west side of Park Blvd., from north to south, and the house at No. 1 Broad Place, which were retained for supervisory personnel.

On December 30, 1950, the Huntsville Mfg. Co. deeded the Huntsville Park water and sewerage distribution system to the City of Huntsville. This gift, a valuable one to the city, included the Brahan Spring and lake section and the reservoir on Russell Hill.

In 1951, for the first time in its fifty-year history, the community saw the beginning of a street-paving program within its area. This work was accomplished under the planning of Roy Stone, Chairman of the County Commissioners. The county had graded and graveled the streets many times, but never before been able to pave them.

Since the sale of houses to individual owners and the paving of the streets, the community has taken on a "new look". Approximately half the houses have been repaired and remodeled, with the expression of the individual taste of the home owners bringing about a complete and refreshing change in appearance to the whole community. The suburb, with its tree-shaded streets and well-kept homes, is perhaps prettier now than at any time in its half-century of existence. The hundreds of automobiles on its streets, and rows of television aerials on its roofs, attest to the prosperity that a textile industry has brought to at least one area of Huntsville.

The distant hum of the mill's machinery and the sight of its lights at night are a source of continuing satisfaction and pride to the hundreds of people who have worked for it and profited from it over the fifty-five years of its existence in Huntsville.

Growth Of A Great School

CHAPTER 12

FIRST SCHOOL

Before the Merrimack Company built the mills in southwest Huntsville, there were only a few scattered farmers living in the area. If these farmers wished to educate their children, they had to send them away to private schools or pay a tutor to come to their homes, for there were no schools in the immediate area. The nearest private schools were in Huntsville, three or four miles distant, and there were very few public schools anywhere in the county.

In 1900, Judge Stewart, who was then Madison County's Probate Judge, lived in the old McDonald house in the grove south of what later was to become the Merrimack community. Judge Stewart had a number of children and wanted to give them a good education. After the street cars began running in March of 1900, he engaged Miss Annie Bradshaw (later Mrs. J. B. Clopton) to ride out each day on the street car and tutor his children.

The street car lines ended more than a block north of the future site of the mill, almost a mile from the Stewart home, but one of the Stewart boys usually carried the teacher this distance by horse and buggy.

Several of the neighboring farmer's children were invited to attend this private school taught by Miss Bradshaw until there were finally about 14 pupils in all. Classes were held in one room of a section of rooms which extended behind the main house. This school continued for about seven months, which was probably considered a "term" in those days, and is thought to be the first school in the area.

SCHOOLS HELD IN DWELLING HOUSES

In June of 1900, a Huntsville newspaper, "The Republican" states that Miss Jessie House, a Presbyterian missionary, came to the Bryson Memorial Chapel, which the Presbyterians had erected about one block north of the newly completed Merrimack Mill. Miss House established a kindergarten in the community, either in the Chapel or elsewhere, and possibly also began night "reading and writing" classes for some of the children who worked in the mill during the day.

EARLY SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPH



This group of children were probably attending the second school to be established in the community. The school was located in a dwelling house at 360 Broad Place. Teachers were Miss Emma Dill and Miss Mae Crutcher. First school at the present location was built in 1914.

(Photograph Property of Mrs. M. G. Chaney)

At that time, there were no laws in existence restricting children from working, regardless of their age. Therefore, boys and girls seven and eight years old were encouraged by their parents to go to work to help support the family. Fathers of large families were often accused by the local newspapers of those days of "loafing" while their young children supported the family.

Actually, the children's work in the Merrimack Mill was not too difficult. They tended only anywhere from two to six looms and from a half side to a full side of a spinning frame. They had time to rest and even to play while on their jobs. But the hours were long and prevented them from attending school, therefore, the education they got was meager indeed.

Miss House must have been greatly saddened to see so many children missing the opportunity to learn while they were young. Not long after she began

the kindergarten and the night classes for children, she started a day school in a dwelling house at 205-07 Alpine Avenue. This was possibly in 1901, as she was certainly an accredited county teacher at that time, for in November of 1901 she presented a paper at the Madison County Teacher's Institute. The details of this early school on Alpine Avenue are not known, but the enrollment must have been small and the attendance erratic.

Possibly in the year 1906, the school was moved to another dwelling house—at 358-60 B Street (now North Broad Place). Miss Emma Dill and Miss Mae Crutcher (and one other teacher) were known to have taught at this new location. Here the enrollment began gradually to grow, helped along somewhat by a state law requiring a child to attend school for six weeks out of the year. Some children possibly attended school half a day and worked half a day during this period.

FOUR ROOM SCHOOL, 1914

In 1914, a four-room frame building was erected on Triana Pike at the present school site. The enrollment during the first year here averaged seventy-five pupils to a room, making around three hundred pupils for the four-room building. Attendance, however, was still very erratic and continued so until the passage of the compulsory education laws.

It was during the period 1907 to 1919 that the state and county first began to levy taxes to make available funds adequate for the support of a good general free education program. Through this increase in funds, it was possible for the county to engage more teachers than ever in its history. With the greatly increased enrollment and the additional teachers, the four-room school at Merrimack became entirely inadequate.

NEW BUILDING, 1919

In 1919, the Merrimack Mfg. Co., aware of the deplorable over-crowding,

began the construction of a larger school building at their own expense. The original frame structure was extended and renovated, becoming part of a beautiful modern brick school building. This handsome edifice was named the "Joseph J. Bradley School" in honor of Joseph J. Bradley, agent of the Merrimack Mfg. Co., who had shown his interest in the school and the children of the community in innumerable ways over the years of his administration.

The new building was completed in 1920. Cecil V. Fain was principal then and continued through 1922. In speaking later of his years at Joe Bradley, Mr. Fain listed the following "firsts" as belonging to the community: the first high school in a suburban area of Huntsville, the first Boy Scout Troop in the county, the first camp for youth in the county, the first Girl Scout Troop, the first American Legion post, first vocational high school and first school for adults to learn to read and write.

E. F. DUBOSE, PRINCIPAL

In 1923, E. F. DuBose became principal of the school, having served as assistant principal under Mr. Fain. At that time, the school offered many high school subjects, vocational studies, domestic science, school sport participation, adult training in various subjects. In 1925, the Merrimack Company enlarged the school again, providing additional rooms and a large auditorium.

In 1926, the Joe Bradley School became an accredited high school. The 1927 class, first to graduate at the school, had as their session room teacher, Mrs. J. B. Clopton (the Miss Annie Bradshaw, who had taught the first school in the community twenty-six years before). At this time, the school had a faculty of nineteen teachers and was continuing to grow. Additional rooms and a library study-hall were added in 1929.

1914 FOUR ROOM SCHOOL

(Photograph property of Wade Harris)



This group of children stands in front of the first school building erected at the present location. It had four rooms and averaged seventy-five children to the room. Miss Laughinghouse was one of the teachers.

ERECTION OF SCHOOL AUDITORIUM IN 1928



This view shows the construction of the school auditorium and additional rooms in 1928. Expansion of Joe Bradley School was undertaken several times by Merrimack Mfg Co., after they built the first section in 1919.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Parkers)

ACCREDITED HIGH

By 1944, the Joe Bradley School stood as one of the finest accredited consolidated graded and high schools in the southeast. It had an enrollment of 800 students, 22 teachers and offered courses in Home Economics, Shop, Commercial, Sciences, Music, etc.

In 1946, the Lowenstein interests purchased the Merrimack properties and set about renovating the school as one of their first projects. This was a general repair and improvement program in 1947. In 1948, it included the excavation of the Home Economics and Shop Building and the construction of a concrete basement. The shop machinery was moved to this basement, leaving the upper floor for Home Economics classes.

COMPANY GIVES SCHOOL TO COUNTY

In 1951, the Huntsville Mfg. Co. made a gift of the entire school property and facilities to the Madison County School System. Official signing by A. D. Elliott, for the Huntsville Mfg. Co., and P. R. Ivy, chairman of the County Board of Education, took place on November 30th (a Friday). The value of \$300,000.00 was placed on the school and its equipment by W. E. Popejoy, business manager of the County Board of Education, and mill officials.

The class of 1951 was the last to graduate from the Joe Bradley School. In 1952, high school students from all the suburban areas of Huntsville attended Butler High School, the new consolidated modern high school in West Huntsville. Since then, the Joe Bradley School has included only grade school and junior high, issuing ninth-grade diplomas to its graduates.

Since 1952, the enrollment of Joe Bradley has grown along with the growth of the city until, with the opening of the 1955-56 term, around 900 pupils are expected to register for the nine grades offered. Prof. E. F. DuBose will serve his 34th year as principal during the coming term. The present school building has 24 classrooms, (including the shop and home economics departments), an auditorium, study hall, office and teacher's room.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Over the years, Joe Bradley School has been represented by many outstanding teams in the field of sports. These teams have won county-wide trophies and championships galore. For season after season the Joe Bradley football team "The Gamecocks" determinedly faced a much stronger foe, the Huntsville High School's "Crimson Panthers", for the first game of the season. This immensely strong city school was able

to field a team that could defeat "The Gamecocks" every time, sometimes by large scores. Every time until 1947—on September 19th that year, a strong Joe Bradley team, coached by Durwood Moore, at last bowed the heads of the "Crimson Panthers" winning by a score of 6-0, before a crowd of 5,000 spectators at Goldsmith-Schiffman Field in Huntsville. This was certainly one of the high moments of Joe Bradley's sports events.

In an effort to serve the community as a whole, the Huntsville Mfg. Co. has sponsored many activities through the school. Year after year, they have backed a recreation program for children and young people. This program includes outdoor sports, baseball, and other activities in the summer months and indoor recreation, basketball, and a "teen-canteen" program in the winter.

Around 1940, the Merrimack Mfg. Co. initiated a plant and community newspaper, "The Merrimacker", which was published through the school with Miss Edna Keel, high school English teacher, serving as editor. In 1946, the name of this publication was changed to "The Huntsville Parker". In 1952, when Joe Bradley School ceased to be a high school and Miss Keel left to teach at the city high school, Mrs. Burke Fisk, an office employee of Huntsville Mfg. Co., became editor. At this time, the focus of news-reporting changed from the school to the Huntsville Mfg. Co. plant. This "Special Historical Edition" is one of the periodic issues of this publication.

LOWENSTEIN SCHOLARSHIPS

In 1948, the newly formed Leon Lowenstein Foundation announced the awarding of an annual college scholarship worth \$500.00. This scholarship, open to close relatives of employees of Huntsville Mfg. Co., and renewable for four years on an annual basis, was awarded several Joe Bradley school graduates. Three of these students, Doris Cobb, George Wright and Arthur Boyanton, have received college degrees under the plan.

In reviewing this brief history of the community schools, particularly the Joe Bradley School, it is quite evident that the excellent and faithful work done by the teachers, the principal, and the students, over the years, has laid the ground work for the growth and improvement of the community and the progress of its industry.

Histories of Community Churches . CHAPTER 13

HUNTSVILLE PARK BAPTIST CHURCH

The early Baptist congregation occupied the first church building erected in Merrimack. However, the Baptists did not build this church. It was erected by the First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville, as announced in a Huntsville newspaper, "The Weekly Tribune" on May 13, 1900.

"Bryson Memorial Chapel:

—To be Established Out at the Merrimack Mill.

About \$1,000.00 Raised by Subscription at The Presbyterian Church Last Sunday—

Rev. George L. Bitzer, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, has been an advocate of this movement to establish an offspring of the Presbyterian Church for the benefit of the people who will work at Merrimack after the mill at that place has been put in operation. At last this plan has come to a head. Plans for the Bryson Memorial Chapel have been drawn and accepted and it is stated that work on the chapel will commence within two months and services will be held in it six months from now".

As noted by other announcements, the work on the chapel continued rapidly and the June 2, 1900, issue of "The Republican" stated that a missionary would be established there.

"Miss House Comes To Bryson Memorial Chapel:

Mrs. Cyrus McCormick, of Chicago, has informed the First Presbyterian Church that she will maintain a home missionary at the Bryson Memorial Chapel at Merrimack. The Chapel is being built by the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of which Mrs. McCormick is an ardent member. The Chapel will be completed in the next six weeks. Miss House will be missionary and will arrive in September. She has been in the field several years and lately has been in the Blue Ridge Mountains".

On August 11, 1900, announcement was made that the chapel was receiving

its last coat of paint and would soon be ready for occupancy. It is believed that this building stood on Spring Street (Ivy Street), slightly east of the end of the street car lines, although the early minutes of the Presbyterian Church describe it as between Merrimack and West Huntsville, some distance from the mill on the east side of Pike Street.

Miss House came to the Presbyterian Mission, established a kindergarten there and did educational and mission work among the children of the community before a school was established and later taught at the first school on Alpine Avenue. She was well thought of in the community. But on the whole, the Presbyterian congregation must have been dissatisfied with the location of the mission.

On May 31, 1903, at Congregational Meeting, the members of the First Presbyterian Church decided to sell the first Bryson Memorial Chapel to the Alabama Baptist State Convention and to build a second Chapel in the village of West Huntsville—to be known as the Bryson Memorial Chapel.

On June 3, 1903, at a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church, a motion was passed that the original Chapel be sold to the Alabama Baptist State Convention and two members of the Board of Trustees were empowered to complete the sales transactions.

Of the early Baptist congregation which purchased this chapel, only one member is living today—Mr. W. A. Esslinger, who was the first Sunday School superintendent and served for many years thereafter. The first pastor was Rev. Culpepper.

About 1910, the congregation repaired and enlarged the original chapel. The congregation grew steadily and made various other improvements to the church in subsequent years. In 1951, an educational building costing \$8,000.00 had just been completed when the edifice caught fire and burned to the ground.

After the fire, the congregation met in the Joe Bradley School until the completion of their new church on the east side of Park Boulevard. On September 7, 1952 the first service was held in the beautiful new sanctuary. Besides the sanctuary, the building has 41 rooms, 9 assemblies, a chapel. Since its construction it has been air-conditioned. Rev. G. D. Barrett is pastor now and served during the construction of the new church.

Other preachers have been: Rev. Odem, Rice, Wooly, Merrell, Greagory, Steelman, Eugene Steelman, A. C. Steaveson, Henry Branom, S. S. Hacker, Ewell Sexton, Calvert, Roy Fincher, and Ewell Sexton, who served for a second term.

ST. PAUL METHODIST CHURCH

The St. Paul Methodist Church was organized in the fall of 1901 by Dr. George E. Boyd, presiding Elder of the Huntsville District of the North Alabama Conference. At the Annual Conference held in Anniston, Alabama, November 27, 1901, under the direction of Bishop E. R. Hendrix, Rec. C. C. Godby was appointed as the first pastor to the charge.

Construction of a church building was begun soon after on the lot where it now stands, directly south of the mill. In 1949, the Huntsville Manufacturing Company deeded this lot to the church as a gift. During that same year, a complete remodeling program transformed the appearance of the church and increased its size by the addition of a Sunday School annex. In 1955, the building was renovated and additional improvements made to the appearance of the sanctuary.

The following were charter members of the church: Mr. and Mrs. George T. Marsh, Mr. and Mrs. James Ray, Miss Etta Youngblood, Samuel S. Pettus, William J. Bailey, Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Richardson, Mr. and Mrs. Charles D.

Barefield, Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Brown, Ellen Brown, Della Brown, Rasmus Brown, Sallie O. Rose. Mr. George Marsh, who was first superintendent of the Sunday School, was manager of Merrimack Mfg. Co. for several years.

Pastors who served the charge from the beginning until the present time are: C. C. Godby, 1902; R. T. Tyler, 1902-6; M. L. Heflin, 1906-7; Henry M. Hurst, 1907-8; Marrin McCain, 1908-9; S. E. Maples, 1909-10; B. F. Miller, 1910-12; C. P. Hamby, 1912-14; D. S. McGlawn, 1914-15; John C. Savage, 1916 (died); Guy F. Ponder, 1916;

S. B. Smith, 1916-18; R. N. Moore, 1918-19; R. M. Bentley, 1919-21; R. E. Meigs, 1921-22; R. G. Hannah, 1922-23; Elijah Upton, 1923-25; H. C. Brown, 1925; J. M. Gibbs, 1926-28; T. H. Wilson, 1928-29; Elijah Upton, 1929-31; George E. Pharr, 1931-37;

C. G. Martin, 1937-39; C. W. Patton, 1939-42; H. A. Screws, 1942-43; McKnight, 1943-45; L. G. Lankford, 1945-47; J. J. Webb, 1947-49; Marin Swilling, 1949-51; Z. R. Carpenter, 1951-53; Hilland C. Vance, 1953 to the present.

HUNTSVILLE PARK CHURCH OF CHRIST

The first meeting of the Church of Christ was held in a tent on Triana Pike, just below the present Church of God. W. J. Cullom preached to those assembled. At the conclusion of the meetings in the tent about sixty persons formed into the congregation which founded the present church.

The families of George and Dave Thorneberry were charter members of the church and at the present time, forty-eight years later, six are still here; Mrs. George Thorneberry, Ellen Thorneberry Archer, Florence Thorneberry Preston, Mrs. Dave Thorneberry, Bessie Thorneberry Franklin, and Kittie Thorneberry Coop.

Other early members of the church were: Frank Gattis, J. W. Wilkes, Beecher Martin, Charlie Russell, and members of their families; also the Grady family.

After their organization in the tent, the Church of Christ met for some time in the school building, which was then a dwelling house at 358-60 North Broad Place. Preachers who visited them during this period were: Sam Hall, Eli

Campbell, Dr. Horton, John Jenkins and Joe Jones.

In 1913, the congregation laid their cornerstone and built a church on the second lot north of the present store buildings. The building was of frame construction with a very tall steeple. John Hayes preached the first sermon in the new building. Other preachers who held meetings there at various times are: W. C. Phillips, H. M. Phillips, R. N. Moody, R. E. L. Taylor, Willis Jergen.

From 1940 to the present time, local preachers have been: Ed Reaves, Morris Land, Gordon Slatom, Floyd Parker, T. H. Gilley, R. L. Andrews and Charles Maples, who is pastor at the present time.

In 1953, during the pastorate of R. L. Andrews, the congregation erected a handsome brick church at the northeast corner of Park Blvd. and Ivy Street. This edifice, erected on a lot given to the church by the Huntsville Mfg. Co., houses a beautiful sanctuary and many Sunday School rooms. Air-conditioning was installed in 1955.

* * * *

THORNEBERRY FAMILY: An interesting sidelight to the history of the Huntsville Park Church of Christ, is the history of one of its charter families, the George Thorneberry family. Mrs. Lizzie Thorneberry (George's wife) is still living and can number one hundred and thirty of her direct descendants who are alive today. She has eight children, thirty-seven grandchildren, seventy-seven great-grandchildren, and eight great-great-grandchildren. Many of these descendants live in the community and four of the great-grandchildren are now supervisors at Huntsville Mfg. Co.

HUNTSVILLE PARK CHURCH OF GOD

About twenty-one years ago, a group of devout people in the Merrimack community sought to form a church of their own denomination near their homes. At first they had no building but met in Audrey Thomas' Grocery Store on Ridgecrest Road. As visiting minister, they invited Bro. C. J. Weaver, evangelist and founder of many churches.

This group profited so much by their worship together that they soon decided to secure a minister of their own. Thus, Bro. Carlise Garritt became the first regular minister for the Merrimack Church of God (later, the Huntsville Park Church of God).

Charter members of the congregation included: Bro. C. J. Weaver; Bro. and Mrs. Carlise Garritt; Mrs. Levada Cleg-horn, first Sunday School Superintendent; Mrs. Justice, Treasurer; Ruth Justice, Secretary; Bro. and Mrs. Howard Haynes; George Bailey; Mr. and Mrs. Rosenblum; Mr. and Mrs. Pete Mahathey and Will Bolden.

The congregation continued to meet in the store and in the upstairs of a building on Triana Creek until 1936. At that time they felt that they were able to build a sanctuary of their own and appealed to the Merrimack Manufacturing Company for a vacant lot on Triana Pike. The location leased them lay just north of Miss Robbie King's store and there the members began the construction of a frame church building.

Before this building was completed, they were able to secure the change of their lease to the corner lot and moved their church building to the spot where it stands today. In 1949, the Huntsville Manufacturing Company made the church a gift of this lot.

In 1936, Bro. N. L. Mason came to serve the church as pastor. Under his guidance, work on the sanctuary continued. Various improvements were made and, in 1940, Sunday School rooms were added to the building.

Other ministers called by the church have been: O. D. Varner, N. L. Jones, Allen Stinson and John O. Bradley. Bro. N. L. Jones, who is serving the church at the present time, has been pastor longer, perhaps, than any other preacher, having served at two different periods.

Today, the church has good facilities and its members are doing great work in the service of God. Those early members who met years ago in the store building can be grateful for having founded the congregation that worships together today.

METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS



This group of young Sunday School pupils is pictured in front of the doors to the earliest Methodist Church. The photograph was taken between the years 1902 and 1906, shortly after the church was built. At left is Miss Mammie Dickerson, teacher. At right, stands the Rev. R. T. Tyler, who served the pastorate from 1902 to 1906.

(Photograph Property of Mrs. Annie Vaughn)

CHURCH OF CHRIST 1935 DINNER ON THE GROUND



R. E. L. Taylor preached that day to the Church of Christ congregation and dinner was served on the lot between the (old) church and the store building.

(Photograph Property of Buford Wilkes)

Church Groups Of Years

Huntsville Park Church of Christ in 1913



This photograph shows the Huntsville Park Church of Christ shortly after its construction in 1913. The steeple contained a church bell that weighed over 50 pounds and shook the whole building. After its removal, the steeple was shortened.

(Photograph Property of Mrs. Ellen Archer)

And Buildings Gone By

Remodeling Of Early Baptist Church



The date of this photograph is unknown, probably around 1910. Sometime previous a storm had struck the church, unleveling it on its foundation. This picture shows it after being straightened and with the addition of a new and taller steeple and a fifteen foot enlargement to the sanctuary. When completed, the church had two entrances, one at right and one at left, as shown here.

EARLY BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC



This photograph of the Baptist Sunday School was made around 1909 either at Brahan or Byrd Springs.

(Photograph Property of Mrs. W. A. Esslinger)

METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS



This photograph was made in Mr. L. C. Watson's photographic studio, which once stood next to McCalley Bros. store (near present Church of God), in the years 1907 or 1908. Most, or all, of the young ladies in this Sunday School class worked in the mill during its early days.

First row, left to right: Etta Rhoden, Nine Allen (Mrs. Clarence Baker).

Second row: Mary Dent, Lemer Spencer (Mrs. Jim Marks), Betty Sartain, Lula Oldfield (Mrs. D. B. Wells).

Third row: Clara Sartain (Mrs. Ed Brandon); Lula Dent, Ethel Oldfield (Mrs. Harry Craft).

(Photograph Property of Charlie Oldfield)

A Brief Local History Of Baseball

. . . CHAPTER 14

EARLY INTEREST IN BASEBALL

Over the period of the last half century, baseball has been, without doubt, the one sport most enjoyed by the great majority of people. Interest in the game was especially high in the early days of the century in the smaller communities where few forms of entertainment were available.

From those early days to the present time, baseball in this community has received the enthusiastic support of the mill management, who over the years have provided ball parks, playing equipment and operating funds to whatever degree possible. As a result, the teams sponsored have been outstanding in the sport.

The first mention of a Merrimack ball team was found in "The Mercury" on April 22, 1903.

"MERRIMACK BALL TEAM

"The Merrimack baseball fans have an excellent team to play this season and are looking forward to some interesting games with East Huntsville and other nines. The Merrimack team has purchased a first class outfit from Humphrey & Sons and will begin practice at once".

EARLY DIAMONDS

The first baseball diamond was a cleared plot of level ground slightly southeast of the Methodist Church. This spot was probably used until 1905 or

1906 when the location was changed briefly to the west side of Triana Pike, on the hill north of the present Baptist Church.

In 1908, the diamond was located slightly west of Brahan Spring on the north side of Spring Street (Ivy Street). No seats for spectators were provided at any of these early ball fields. Members of the 1908 team all worked in the Merrimack Mills. Games were played only on Saturday afternoons.

EARLY TEAMS

Members of the 1908 team were: Gordon Cobb, 1b; Clarence Baker, 2b; John Watley, ss; Charlie Drawhorn, 3b; Mack Taylor, rf; Claude Seagroves, cf; Mack Smith, lf; Forest Cruse, p; Trice Esslinger, p; Henry Henderson, p; Glover Faulkenberry, c. The equipment they used, uniforms and all, was about the same as used by the 1906 team pictured in this history.

It wasn't long after that until the ball diamond was moved again—just across the road this time. Here it stayed for a while and was then moved closer to the Spring on the same side of the road. Seats were provided for players at this diamond and since it was convenient to the end of the street car line, games were attended not only by community fans but by visitors from Huntsville and other suburbs.

One of the outstanding teams that played at this location was the 1917 team, who had a record of 38 wins, with only 7 losses. Members were: Grady "Lena" Styles, c; Gordon Cobb, 1b; Clarence Baker, 2b; Charlie Joplin, ss; Bill Ohls, 3b; "Scotty" Carter, lf; Orville Sparkman, cf; Hosea Watson, rf; Lester Westbrooks, Sr., utility; Merritt Wikle, p; "Bull" Sanford, p; and Rans Killingsworth, p.

About 1926, the diamond was moved to the hill west of the Merrimack Village. Here, a grandstand with a top was built and excellent facilities were provided. Many of the players on the teams that played at this park were recruited from colleges or were outstanding players who had their eyes on the minor or major leagues.

THE MERRIMACK BASEBALL TEAM IN 1906



One of Merrimack's earliest teams. Their complete equipment is shown in this picture, three bats being all they owned. Uniforms were red shirts, caps, socks and heavy quilted pants.

As far as they can be recognized from the photograph, the members shown were as follows:

Front row, left to right: Gordon Cobb, mgr.; young Cobb, mascot; Henry Henderson, p; J. J. Bradley, Jr., bat boy; Seal (Pete) Bowden; John Clark, c; unknown.

Second row, left to right: E. E. (Eb) Parker, cf; Royden Gibson; unknown; J. J. Bradley, Sr.

Third row, left to right: R. P. Weeden, 2b; unknown; Albert Parker; Erby Shasteen; Oliver Talley; unknown.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

Because of the caliber of the players and the excellent competition they secured, great crowds were attracted to the games at this hilltop ball park. Automobiles were parked sometimes three deep the entire distance around the park and many people came by street car or on foot. All games were played on Saturday afternoon and admission was ten cents. Shelby Price was manager during this period.

Two outstanding teams that played at this location were the 1930 and 1931 teams. Several players on these teams went on to the minor or major leagues. Buck Carter, a pitcher, went with the Philadelphia Athletics. Charlie English, third baseman, joined the Chicago White Sox. Sam Case, catcher, went to Chattanooga; Pete Fleming, center fielder, to New Orleans; and John Gallagher, center fielder, to Shreveport.

None of the teams at this period ever played for the Semi-Pro Championships because the local season ended in August to enable the college players to return to school and the championship tournaments were played later than August.

About 1939, the ball park was moved to its present location, north of Joe Bradley School. A sheet metal fence and grandstand were built. By 1944, floodlights had been installed for night baseball, making possible the playing of more games each week.

"EMM ELLS"

When M. Lowenstein & Sons, Inc., purchased the Merrimack properties, more improvements were made to the ball park. The 1946 team, named "The Emm Ells" after Mr. M. L. Lowenstein, had a very successful season, drawing good crowds. This team continued to play for several years with Floyd Bryant as manager.

"HUNTSVILLE PARKERS"

In 1952, a dwindling interest in local baseball was revived by the organization of a new team called "The Huntsville Parkers" under the management of Brooks Church. This team was fitted out with new uniforms. The stands were also revamped and enlarged to seat around twelve hundred fans.

In 1954, Lester "Sonny" Westbrook took over the management of "The Huntsville Parkers". Under his direction, the team built up a record of 38 wins and only 10 losses and attracted much attention. Players were: Bill

THE MERRIMACK BASEBALL TEAM IN 1931



The 1931 baseball team was one of the best amateur teams ever to play in this area. They had a high percentage of wins and many of the players went on into Major League play.

Front row, left to right: John Gallagher, cf; Shep Laughter, 2b; Johnny Watson, ss; Rip Fanning, c; Mack Carter, utility; Shelby Price, mgr.; Sam Case, c.

Back row, left to right; Ben Newton, 1b; Lefty Sprowl, p; Charlie English, 3b; Goose Robinson, p; Fritz Lotts, p; Phil Terry, rf; Ralph Stanfield, rf.

(Photograph Property of Felix Swaim)

THE 1955 HUNTSVILLE PARKERS



The 1955 Huntsville Parkers, One of our greatest ball teams, shown after they won the Alabama State Semi-Pro Championship. In a few days after this picture was made, this team went on to win the Alabama-Georgia Regional Semi-Pro Championship, which brought them a second trophy.

Front row, left to right: Bill Stewart, p; Fred Hammonds, 2b; W. C. Baker, rf; George Burns, p; Harold Hill, p; Bill Michael, cf; Bill Gant, c.

Back row, left to right: Jimmy Faulkenberry, c; Cliff Coggins, p; Donnie Mincher, cf; John Gault, ss; James Talley, 1b; H. T. Watson, lf; Jim Mathis, 3b; Tom Bragg, p; Lester Westbrook, mgr.

Not pictured: Floyd Kelley, asst. mgr.

(Photograph Property of Huntsville Parkers)

TROPHIES WON BY 1955 HUNTSVILLE PARKERS TEAM



Won during one season's play, these trophies represent "Fifth Place" in the National Semi-Pro Baseball Tournament; "First Place" in the Alabama-Georgia Regional Playoff; "First Place" in the State of Alabama Tournament; and the award to the "Most Popular Team" to play in the National Tournament.

Individual trophies shown from the National Tournament are: Bill Stewart, "All-American Pitcher"; Donnie Mincher, "All-American First Baseman"; Sonny Westbrooks, manager, "Individual Sportsmanship". Trophies received in the State Tournament: Bill Stewart, pitcher, two "Player of the Day" awards; John Gaught, shortstop, one "Player of the Day" award; Tom Bragg, pitcher, one "Player of the Day" award.

(Photograph property of Huntsville Mfg. Co.)

Gant, c; George Wright, c; George Burns, p; Tom Bragg, p; Bobby Craft, p; Joe Limbaugh, p; Donnie Mincher, 1b; Abie Daniel, 2b; Fred Hammond, 2b; John Gaught, ss; James Mathis, 3b; H. T. Watson, lf; Billy Michael, cf; W. C. Baker, rf; Kenneth Dugan, rf; Bobby Bayless, lf; Floyd Kelly, coach.

GREAT 1955 TEAM

The 1955 team was formed under Mr. Westbrook's management, with the same coach and many of the same players. This team proved to be one of the most successful amateur teams ever to play in this area. In August, they entered the state Semi-Pro Tournament, won the Alabama Championship, and went on to the district tournament, where they were awarded the title "Alabama-Georgia Semi-Pro Champions".

On August 19th, sponsored by the Huntsville Mfg. Co., the Huntsville Chamber of Commerce, and their many local backers, "The Huntsville Parkers" made the trip to Wichita, Kansas, to compete for the National Semi-Pro Championship.

The team was highly successful in the National Tournament, winning "Fifth Place"—the first time in the history of this tournament that an Alabama team has received such a standing. The Huntsville Parkers also received another honor when they were voted the "Most Popular Team" in the tournament. Their record of wins in the tournaments was outstanding. In the play-offs they participated in 13 games and won 11. They made a season record of 36 wins and 9 losses.

Many individual awards came to members of the team during the tournament play. At the National Tournament, trophies were awarded to: Bill Stewart, "All-American Pitcher"; Donnie Mincher, "All-American First Baseman"; Sonny Westbrooks, manager, "Individual Sportsmanship". Trophies were received in the State Tournament by: Bill Stewart, pitcher, two "Player of the Day" awards; John Gaught, shortstop, one "Player of the Day" award; Tom Bragg, pitcher, one "Player of the Day" award.

The "Million-Dollar" Band

CHAPTER 15

In the summer of 1925, a group of musicians in the Merrimack community met at the home of George Davis with the idea of organizing a band. They invited Mr. John Hay, an experienced band director to assist in the organization and he became their leader.

Since musical instruments were very expensive and many members of the band could not afford to own the instrument they played, especially the larger instruments, the band appealed to the Merrimack Mfg. Co. for financial help. Joseph J. Bradley, Jr., who was agent of the mill at that time, took immediate interest in the organization. In acknowledgement of his assistance, the group called itself the "Joseph J. Bradley, Jr. Band".

The band played their first concert in the fall of 1925 in the Joe Bradley School auditorium, which had just been completed. They had a very fine reception and, after that, played numerous concerts and took many trips with local organizations. They played a number of years at the Madison County Fair and also the Lincoln County Fair.

The group performed at the local celebration in honor of the Confederate Veterans held at the famous estate of Miss Virginia McCormick. United States Senator Almon was guest speaker and compared the band favorably with many of the great musical organizations he had heard play.

J. Emory Pierce, editor of "The Huntsville Daily Times" referred to the Merrimack Band as "The Million Dollar Band" and thus it became known throughout the area. It was called on to perform at most important ceremonies and played for the dedication of three bridges — Decatur, Whitesburg and Scottsboro.

THE "MILLION DOLLAR" BAND



At the time of this photograph, the band had come to Mobile with the Knights Templers and was playing a concert in Bienville Square.

Members were, beside drums, left to right: Paul Ray and Virgil Lovell, Jr.

First row: Walter Holmes, Clarence Baker, Clarence Holmes, Hilden Holmberg, Oland Marks, Hiram Williams, Alfred Phillips, Red Smith, S. W. Walker, Jasper Pogue.

Second row: Ocie Cloud, Bill Rigsby, Greene Phillips, Stanley Parton, Lidge Tuck, Mr. John Hay, director, Authur Boyanton, Albert Smith, Loew Oldfield, Charlie Oldfield, Jeff Bayless.

Third row: George Davis, Edwin Phillips, Jess Wilson, Jim Potter, Hermar Watley, Harvey Parks, F. B. Alexander, Harrison Williams, Linwood Bayless.

(Photograph Property of Charlie Oldfield)

The band made numerous trips with the local Knights Templers. They played in Decatur, Montgomery, Mobile and Dothan with this group. In the early days of radio, they played over Station WSM in Nashville with much success.

The group disbanded in 1934, having given hours of enjoyment to many people and made "The Million Dollar Band" a musical group long to be remembered.

