

OLD BELLEFONTE.

Former Capital of Jackson County--  
Postoffice Discontinued--Reminis-  
cential.

In ante-bellum days, and in fact up to 1868, Bellefonte was the capital, the pride and glory, of Jackson county. Especially in the good old halcyon days, before the war, was Bellefonte in its glory. It was the county seat and chief town of Jackson, and around it was clustered some glorious recollections to the old settlers. It was a beautiful inland town, one mile south of the railroad, and surrounded by a rich agricultural country. Some handsome brick business houses and beautiful residences were seen, and beautiful shade trees encircled the square. It was an old fashioned, ideal Southern town.

Bellefonte had two newspapers, and they were a power in the county in those "olden days and golden." They contained very little news and were devoted mainly to politics and in publishing political speeches.

Bellefonte had an able bar. The lamented Pope Walker commenced his brilliant and successful career as a lawyer at this place, and his eloquence was first heard in the court-house at that place. Hon. R. C. Brickell, the present distinguished Chief Justice of the Alabama supreme court, attended courts regularly at Bellefonte, and was a familiar figure at every term of the court. Other men of prominence at the bar attended court at Bellefonte—gentlemen who have since distinguished themselves at the bar and in the field of politics.

Hon. John H. Norwood, who died three years ago, and who was twice probate judge of Jackson county, practiced law at Bellefonte before the war and made it his home at the time of his death. Our fellow-townsmen, W. H. Norwood, also commenced the practice of law at the old county seat.

The late Capt. Wm. H. Robinson, a lawyer of well known ability, started out in the law at old Bellefonte, and his father, Maj. Nelson Robinson, also lived there.

The old Bellefonte Inn, a celebrated hostelry in its day, was kept by the late Daniel Martin, the father of Mrs. W. G. Stuart of Scottsboro. It is said that all the "big folks" stopped with Uncle Daniel, and the old Inn was one of the best kept hotels of those good old days.

Bellefonte had a good array of business men, but most of them have passed over the "silent river." Messrs Hamlin Caldwell and W. G. Stuart, of Scottsboro, sold goods there before the war, and were successful merchants.

The late Col. Hal Bradford, of our town, the "eagle orator," and a gallant soldier in the Mexican war, commenced the practice of law at the old capital of Jackson county. His widow still survives him and lives with her daughter, Mrs. Eva Timberlake, at Stevenson.

Judge M. P. Brown is another one of our fellow-citizens who at one time lived at Bellefonte, and was a probate judge of Jackson county.

Judge Nelson Kyle, a former probate judge of the county, always claimed old Bellefonte as his home and was buried near there on a beautiful spot in the family burying ground. He left several farms in that locality, which have been divided among his children.

William Sterna, our popular Tax Collector, was born and reared near the old county seat, and his father was a respected physician of that community.

Dr. D. B. McCord, one of the most popular physicians that ever lived in our county and who was County Treasurer for so many years, used to live at Bellefonte. He died a few years ago.

The late Dr. A. G. Clopton, who died in Florida some time ago, at one time was a popular physician at this old town.

The only colored person in Scottsboro who lived at old Bellefonte before the war is Sol Robinson. He was the body servant of his old master, Major Nelson Robinson, and Sol now delights to talk about those "good old days."

Poor old Bellefonte! She is now a thing of the past, and these lines were suggested because the postoffice has been discontinued, and the people have to go to Hollywood for their mail. Her glory has long since departed, and bats and owls will now inhabit her once prosperous site. But with all this, Old Bellefonte has some pleasing and happy recollections to some of our oldest citizens, who will ever have a tender spot in their hearts for the once proud capital of High Jackson.

Tri-State Normal University.

This school now numbers about 175 pupils and is gaining in popularity every day.

Prof. Rose and his able corps of assistants are demonstrating to the people that they are splendid teachers and are fully competent to fill all the expectations of their patrons. They are going to build up a great school at Scottsboro. Now is the time to lend helping hand.

The next issue of the Scottsboro Citizen will be No. 1, Vol. 18. The Citizen is the oldest paper in Jackson county and well deserves the title of "Old Reliable." Political tides may come and go, financial crashes may leap upon the country like a forest fire, new parties may spring up and look inviting, but you can always tell where to find the Citizen—faithful to the Democratic banner. Brother Armstrong luckily may hold a good position at Washington, but his better half, Mrs. A., fully keeps up the Citizen's good record in his absence. May it live to grind out successfully seventeen more sparkling volumes. Stevenson Chronicle.

This compliment is highly appreciated, coming as it does from Editor Vaught, the leader of the gallant democracy of the upper end of Jackson county,

## Passing of Old Bellefonte as the Capital of "High Jackson"

BY H. M. HENDERSON, SR.

Several years ago I visited this antebellum old town where at one time some of the finest citizens of the county resided—and this is what I saw:—

Standing well up on an eminence overlooking the Tennessee river whose waters have become historic, a lone brick building weather stained and dark with the ages of years ago whose crumbling walls and ivy clad chimneys inhabited by the bats and owls, was the remaining relic of old Bellefonte once proud capital of "High Jackson."

Alone, like some ghostly sentinel standing watch over what once was, but never to be again, "gone from the earth forever." In fancy I lift the coffin lid of the once beautiful city and bending mournfully above the silent form scatter sweet flowers o'er what has passed to nothingness. The town has gone and with it many a glorious throng of happy dreams, its mark is on each brow its shadow in each heart. It is said that a tribe of Indians worn with battle and tired of strife sought a place of refuge and a home in the genial wilds of the sunny south. On arriving where the deer roamed free and the spirit of peace brooded o'er its waters, their chief halted drove his staff into the ground and exclaimed in his wild beautiful tongue "Alabama, Alabama, here we rest; here we rest, some of the old timers tell me that it was here in the sun-kissed hills of High Jackson and upon the banks of the beautiful Tennessee was the spot that called forth the peaceful and restful utterance of the big brave. Old Bellefonte as a capital is no more and her halls of Justice have long since crumbled into decay, and the silver tongues of her orators, that poured forth like liquid moonlight, are forever silenced. The once beautiful town lives in memory only.

Here at Old Bellefonte, I have been told, long before the war of the sixties, was a shipping point. Tennesseans and Kentuckians with large droves of fine mules and horses would board the boat and make a trip down the Tennessee river to Paducah into the Ohio. Memphis and New Orleans via the Mississippi, with their stock. That of course was before the days of railroads, and old Bellefonte was the nearest place where the desired transportation could be obtained. Here, too, the North Alabama Register was published with Joshua Madden as its editor. The school was conducted by Miss Henley and the building stood near the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Dr. Morris and Dr. Lewis were the practising physicians. Mr. David Martin was the proprietor of the Martin Hotel; also owner of the old time stage coach that ran between Bellefonte and Guntersville, which was a continuation of Nashville-Bellefonte line.

The old stage road run along the Backbone Ridge to its end. At Bellefonte the drivers and their horses were changed and the passengers and mail continued on to their destination. M. S. Swan and Robert Russell were among the prominent merchants in those days. John Shelton was the first railroad agent the new railway station. Among the many prominent and splendid citizens living in and around the town were the names of the Norwoods one of whom was Probate Judge here later; Caldwell, Coffeys, Snodgrass, Martins, Shooks, Col. Ad White, Judge Ryan, Gullatts, Starkeys, Tates, and many others. When the old Memphis and Charleston, now the Memphis division

of the Great Southern Railway System, was being surveyed out for the proposed line, the citizens of old Bellefonte would not hear of the railroad running through their aristocratic old town and the consequence was the railroad company built a depot three miles from the capitol of Jackson and it was called New Bellefonte and subsequently changed to Hollywood, which is now a live and progressive little city. About 1868 or 1869 the question as to a change in the county site arose, and after long and heated arguments, debates and fiery speeches, pro and con, it was finally moved to Scottsboro. Larkinsville was a very strong rival to Scottsboro for the new court house. Col. G. W. R. Larkin and W. S. Maron, two of the wealthy men of the county at that time made flattering offers of money and lands at Larkinsville for the court house.

Scottsboro, the present county site is situated on the highest point along the Memphis division of the Southern Railway four miles back from the Tennessee river, nestling at the foot of the Cumberland mountains. The town has a population of nearly two thousand, with fifty miles or more of the Tennessee river flowing through it. The county is rich in farm lands and agriculture, together with its great lumber interests are the chief industries.

The town is well laid out, possesses a sixty-five thousand dollar court house, five churches commodiously built, there are two hotels, three strong banks, two magnificent schools, wholesale house, overall factory, knitting mills, two ice plants and the most up-to-date newspaper of any town of its size in the state and would be a credit to a much larger city. While a majority of the people can boast of no great wealth, the larger number of them own their homes, they are cultured and refined people and strangers receive kind and courteous treatment.

The county without exception has one of the finest systems of good roads in the state—many miles of asphalt paving. The town and county have splendid telephone service and the city a beautiful white-way, and asphalt streets and magnificent silver cornet band and is to have a thirty thousand dollar opera house in the near future.

The beautiful plot on which the court house stands was presented to the county by Col. Robert Scott for whom the town derived its name, in addition to that, he gave every other lot on the now pretty square away; the lot where the first High School stood until being destroyed by fire caused by the explosion of chemicals exploding in the laboratory was donated by Col. Scott—This building stood across the railroad near where the old town once stood up near the foot of the mountains in a beautiful grove after the destruction of the High School across the railroad, Mr. R. S. Skelton one of the most progressive and finest citizens in the county gave the beautiful campus on which the present High School now stands together with fifteen hundred dollars in cash to help erect it which will be a monument to his memory for aeons.

Standing upon the threshold of the twentieth century, the citizens fully realize the opportunities that are now being offered and at no distant day the capital of "High Jackson" will have all the opportunities that go to make a wide awake progressive city.