
A Thumbnail History of Jackson County

9000 BC: Original settlers occupied Russell Cave near Bridgeport. Archaeologists from The National Geographic Society and the Smithsonian Institution began extensive excavations at the site in 1957.

500 BC: Inhabitants of Russell Cave exhibited evidence of a “woodland culture,” marked by the production of pottery and the burial of the dead with their valued earthly possessions.

1000 AD: The Mississippian period marked the probable abandonment of Russell Cave as a preferred habitat. Indians of the Mississippian period favored villages consisting of wooden huts.

1540: Longstanding tradition has it that Hernando DeSoto descended the Tennessee waterway, probably encamping on Long Island near Bridgeport. The early Spaniards called the Tennessee River *Rio del Espiritu Santo* (*River of the Holy Spirit*). Its current name is derived from the Cherokee village *Tanasi*. It was also called *The Singing River* by the indigenous natives. A large boulder placed by the DAR on Battery Hill in Bridgeport marks a presumed crossing by DeSoto’s men. A recent reexamination dispels the legend that DeSoto passed through the valley and asserts that the earliest European artifacts found in the Gunter’sville basin date to the 1680s and are English, not Spanish.

1721: A coalition of Cherokees and Chickasaws drove the Shawnees from the area. The area had traditionally been occupied by Creek Indians before displaced Cherokee established the “lower towns” after their diaspora from North Carolina.

1777: A “renegade” Cherokee leader named Dragging Canoe split from the larger Cherokee alliance over the tribe’s decision to sell ancestral lands to the Europeans. He and his people would establish the “five lower towns,” including Crow Town near Stevenson. Until his death in 1792, Dragging Canoe would wage unceasing warfare against white settlers who were attempting to use the Tennessee River as a conduit to the south and west.

1780: Dragging Canoe attacked a flotilla of settlers led by John Donelson just upstream from Nickajack Dam. Dragging Canoe’s warriors managed to capture only one flatboat. Its passengers consisted exclusively of settlers who had been quarantined for smallpox. In the rush to lighten the boats to let them drift over the shoals, a dresser drawer cradling a day-old baby was inadvertently thrown overboard, and the child was lost. Some years later, when retaliatory raids were carried out, smallpox had ravaged the Cherokee population.

1783: A group of North Carolina pioneers petitioned Georgia for the right to settle the land north of the Tennessee River, including the area that would become Jackson County.

1785: A land office was established in the *Great Bend* somewhere near Bridgeport in what was then the Georgia Territory to sell land for which they believed the Cherokees had been adequately and legally compensated. They established a county named *Houston* to be represented by Valentine Sevier, Jr., whom the Georgia legislature refused to seat. The project was abandoned in a matter of weeks as a result of escalating Cherokee and Chickasaw hostility toward the European settlers.

1789: The Tennessee Land Company was formed, purchasing 3.5 million acres from the state of Georgia. Their attempts to colonize North Alabama failed, abetted by the Spanish administration in Mobile which incited Creek Indians to thwart the land company’s plans.

1792: Dragging Canoe died near Chattanooga, reportedly from alcohol poisoning and exhaustion after an all-night celebration.

1794: Dragging Canoe’s former coalition, known as the *Chickamaugas*, signed a peace treaty and began a migration that would result in the abandonment of the lower towns.

1817: The Alabama Territory was created from the Mississippi Territory. White settlers who foresaw the likelihood of the area becoming a state struck deals with local Indians, hoping to preempt having to pay

government-set prices when the land was offered via land offices. The action was illegal, but still successful in many instances when previous claimants were “grandfathered” in.

1819: Cherokee lands in Jackson County were ceded to the Federal government. Alabama became a state and Jackson was recognized as a county in December. European settlement resumed with little native opposition. Sauta, known for the production of niter for gunpowder, would be linked by a road to Huntsville that year and would serve as the county seat for two years.

1820: Contrary to popular legend, Sequoyah did NOT introduce his alphabet on this (or any other) year at the mouth of Sauta (Saltpeter) Cave. A historical marker proclaiming that fact stood for many years on Highway 72 before the information was disputed and the marker was removed.

—The first mail route to Jackson County was established, running from Huntsville to the county seat, Sauta.

—The 1820 census of Jackson County showed the population as consisting of 8129 whites, 83 “free colored,” and 539 slaves.

1821: A poorly defined Jackson County was given set boundaries by administrators in nearby Decatur County, which was dissolved in 1825 when Decatur’s lands were returned to the jurisdiction of Madison and Jackson Counties. The county seat of Decatur was in Old Woodville, about three-quarters of a mile outside the current town. A new county seat (Bellefonte) was designated for Jackson County, supplanting Sauta. Bellefonte was incorporated in 1821, situated on land previously owned by Cherokee James Riley.

1822: The stone marking the grave of Rebecca Frazier in Frazier Cemetery on Goose Pond Island makes it the oldest marked grave in the county. The Frazier Cemetery graves were moved to Cedar Hill Cemetery to accommodate the construction of Revere Copper and Brass on nearby land. The oldest grave marker in Bellefonte Cemetery is dated 1826.

1825: There were four post offices in Jackson County: Bellefonte, Doyal’s Mill (near old Bolivar), Woodville, and Smith’s Store.

1828: A small steamboat, *The Atlas*, navigated the length of the Tennessee to claim a \$640 prize (1\$ per mile from the mouth to the source of the river) in Knoxville, sailing from Cincinnati in two-and-a half months, but the uniqueness of the feat only reinforced the impracticality of the river serving as a dependable conduit for commercial service. Navigational impediments at Muscle Shoals and Hale’s Bar effectively divided the Tennessee into three rivers until the advent of the TVA.

1834: The land for the Union Cemetery in Woodville was deeded to the town by Moses and Catherine Maples. The first burial there was Sallie Maples, the young daughter of Woodville resident Joe Maples.

1836: Having ceded their last claim to land in North Alabama on May 23, local Cherokees were mustered at Garland’s Ferry and Gunter’s Landing, staged for “The Trail of Tears.” Jackson County subsequently annexed the remainder of their ancestral land south and east of the Tennessee River.

1852: A post office was established in Jonesville, on the Tennessee River near the Tennessee State line. When a railroad bridge was completed there in 1854, the name of the town changed to *Bridgeport*.

1854: A post office was established at Scott’s Mill on May 10. James Monroe Parks, son-in-law of Scottsboro founder Robert T. Scott, was appointed the first postmaster. In the census of 1860, the town was designated *Scottsboro*. In 1868, the name Scottsboro was formalized when the town was incorporated.

1855: Jackson County native Alexander Gilliland was buried standing up in Coffeetown, MS where he was overseeing the construction of a new courthouse. He toppled from a scaffold on which he was standing to put the final touch—a weathervane—on the steeple. He landed in a wheelbarrow below. He was buried standing up because “He made his living standing up.” Stevenson has its own standing burial: Nancy Jones who died in 1889. She was so weary of travel that she requested the standing burial.

1856: A depot was constructed at Bellefonte Station (later Hollywood). It burned in 1887. The second depot burned in 1891 when thieves set the depot on fire while trying to drill through the floor to drain whiskey barrels being stored above and used matches to illuminate their task. Contrary to popular legend, the people of Bellefonte did not oppose the railroad in favor of river commerce. Instead, the route of the railroad was determined by geography: the shortest route between Jackson County’s largest town,

Larkinsville, and the point at which it would join the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad, Stevenson. A second determinant of the route was intense lobbying by Robert T. Scott and other residents who invested heavily in the new line.

1857: The Memphis and Charleston (M&C) Railroad was completed. The line ran from Memphis to Stevenson. In Stevenson, it joined the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad to give access to Charleston, SC and its seaports. A year earlier, 300 passengers had been taken on an inaugural ride on the recently completed stretch from Huntsville to Stevenson. The 60 mile trip took 4 hours.

1860: Jackson County voters, authorized by the state legislature to move the seat of county government from Bellefonte, chose Stevenson for the site of the new courthouse. Larkinsville, a town with a greater population than Stevenson, continued to lobby for the placement of the courthouse. The matter would remain unsettled for the next nine years while the civil war diverted energy and funding.

—Around 1860, Martin and Nancy Conley built the first brick residence in Scottsboro on what was then called Main Street (today, Mary Hunter Avenue). In November 1868, the house was rented by Probate Judge David Tate to store county records until a permanent courthouse could be built. In 1987, the structure, now known somewhat misleadingly as the “little brick courthouse,” was moved to the grounds of the Scottsboro-Jackson Heritage Center.

1861: The Scottsboro Depot was constructed. It is one of three extant antebellum rail depots in Alabama. Today, it serves as the Scottsboro Depot Museum and home to the Jackson County Historical Association.

1862: On April 12, Northern troops first entered Jackson County when General O.M. Mitchel rode in the cab of a Memphis & Charleston locomotive from Huntsville to Stevenson. Mitchel contemptuously noted that “[I accomplished the expedition] to Stevenson in person, from which place 2000 of the enemy fled as usual at our approach without firing a gun.” That year, Mitchell would also occupy Bridgeport. His occupation would initiate several skirmishes during the war as the Confederates sought to regain the ship-building facilities and rail/river transportation hubs. An accomplished scientist and noted astronomer, General Mitchel was vehemently disliked by Madison and Jackson County residents for what they perceived as his arrogance and contempt for them and for his turning a blind eye (or perhaps encouraging) the sack of Athens, AL by one of his generals.

—Union General John Beatty burns the town of Paint Rock to the ground, later writing in his biography “If they wanted to fight they should enter the army, meet us like honorable men, and not, assassin-like, fire at us from the woods and run. We proposed to hold the citizens responsible for these cowardly assaults, and if they did not drive these bushwhackers from amongst them, we should make them more uncomfortable than they would be in hell. I then set fire to the town, took three citizens with me, returned to the train, and proceeded to Huntsville.” The town of Woodville suffered a similar fate in retaliation for the actions of bushwhackers.

—Confederate General Danville Leadbetter’s forces were attacked by General O.M. Mitchel at Bridgeport’s Battery Hill. In the ensuing conflict, Union forces suffered three dead and eight injured. Confederate losses amounted to 31 dead and 42 injured. Three hundred and fifty Confederate troops were taken prisoner. Leadbetter burned the rail bridge in his retreat after his attempts to blow it up failed. Two subsequent bridges on the site would be burned by Confederates during the war.

—It is probable that the scheme that resulted in the incident known as *The Great Locomotive Chase* was planned and set in motion by O.M. Mitchel while encamped near Bridgeport.

1865: Confederate General and West Point graduate W.H. Lyon attacked the Scottsboro M&C depot which was defended by “colored” troops. The depot building was damaged by one artillery strike to the east wall and numerous rifle rounds both to the exterior and the interior. The Confederate troops set fire to the depot, although the blaze was quickly extinguished by Union troops. Some accounts described the colored troops’ deportment as “cowardly,” although their successful defense of the depot suggests otherwise.

1867: A massive flood caused the Tennessee River to rise 58 feet above the normal river level. In nearby Chattanooga, a riverboat rescued stranded visitors from the second floor of the Read House Hotel.

1868: Scottsboro was incorporated on December 29. Alexander Snodgrass was appointed as its first mayor. The city limits were set at a radius of one-half mile around the depot.

—A court decree designated Scottsboro as the county seat, despite an 1860 referendum favoring Stevenson. The new courthouse was completed in 1870.

—W.H. Payne's Drug Store opened on what is now Mary Hunter Avenue. It relocated to its current site on the square in 1891.

—Col. Alexander Snodgrass and P.J. Smith founded *The Jackson County Herald*, Scottsboro's first newspaper. A few months after its founding, Smith departed for Dekalb county and Snodgrass renamed the paper *The Alabama Industrial Herald*. The newspaper was subsequently named *The Alabama Herald* and *The Scottsboro Herald* before ceasing publication in the late 1880's.

—Col. John Snodgrass completed the home that would stand at the end of Peachtree Street in Scottsboro for 120 years. Known as the Morgan-Snodgrass house, the home was visible at one end of Peachtree Street and the First Baptist Church at the other.

1870: Vandalism to the school and physical assaults on its faculty forced the closing of Stevenson's Averyville School. The institution was built near the end of the Civil War with funds from Charles Avery, an abolitionist who was a strong proponent of education for the disenfranchised African Americans. The school's most notable student, William Hooper Councill, founded Alabama A&M University.

—Jackson County's first courthouse in Scottsboro was completed. It burned nine years later.

—Construction of the first brick building on the courthouse square was begun at the corner of Market and Laurel streets. John Parks and Milton Perry Brown commissioned the two-story building which was later altered to the one-story structure standing on the site today and known as the Brown Building.

1872: The current Stevenson Depot was built. Telegraph service among the depots debuted the same year.

—A water well being dug by M.W. Kirby in Scottsboro hit oil at a depth of 25 feet. About a barrel of oil pooled in the depression overnight. Estimates indicated that a barrel a day would likely be the ongoing yield of the well. Predictions of the area becoming the "new Pennsylvania" never materialized.

1873: A brick jail was built on Appletree Street in Scottsboro, replacing a temporary wood structure with a single 12x16 cell built three years before. Prisoners were transferred from Bellefonte to the new jail on September 29, 1873. The jail served as the county's primary lockup until the early 1930s when it was replaced by a new structure next door. In 1913, parts of the jail were deemed "too filthy for occupation" and some inmates were transferred to Huntsville. The building was once again in deplorable condition by the time it housed the Scottsboro Boys in 1931.

1875: Charlotte Scott Skelton donated the land for what would eventually be named Cedar Hill Cemetery. There are stones in the cemetery that predate 1875, but they are for graves relocated from Bellefonte and Goose Pond's Frazier Cemetery or are cenotaphs (memorial stones without accompanying burials).

1877: *The Scottsboro Herald* reported that Col. John Snodgrass and Dr. W.H. Payne discovered the tracks of a giant while on a fishing expedition in Bellefonte. The footprint was reported to be 34 inches long and 14 inches wide. *The Herald* recounted the hunt for the giant by a posse of several hundred men and dogs. The report says that the giant was captured and bound with rope. He was measured at 21 feet and 3 inches tall with multi-colored eyes, tusks, a triangular mouth, vertical pupils, and four-inch fingernails. He broke free of his restraints and hid in the forests of Sand Mountain. Only in 1936 was the report finally refuted by an elderly E.H. Caldwell, who said the story was concocted to deter thieves from stealing corn and chickens from a farm owned by General Addison White. The ploy worked, he said.

1878: The *Scottsboro Citizen* reported that 20 of 24 brick buildings in Bellefonte had been destroyed since 1860. Around the same time, Hamlin Caldwell bought the Bellefonte town square at auction for \$275. By 1870, Bellefonte was home to only 72 inhabitants.

—Stevenson residents leveled criticism at railroad officials after a Memphis resident suffering from

yellow fever was ejected from a train and left to sit in the waiting room of the Stevenson depot. The railroad addressed the complaints by telling the town's officials to care for the man with the assurance that the rail line would reimburse the town for the medical bills. The man was loaded into a box car and shuttled out of town to rest on a siding. In writing about the incident, the editor of *The Alabama Herald* newspaper said he was not in a position to deny that the man had been buried alive, but the editor of the *Herald*, Alexander Snodgrass, frequently used the paper as an outlet for his sardonic humor (see 1877 "giant" story, above).

1879: Fire destroyed the Jackson County courthouse. It was rebuilt in the same year, although the soundness of the replacement building was called into question since so much of the of the new structure had been built reusing the ruins of the old, even utilizing the charred framing beneath new woodwork and plaster.

—The publication *Table of Landings* listed 21 steamboat landings in Jackson County.

1880: Three children in the Edwards family were killed as a tornado moved fifteen and a half miles from Owens Crossroads to Paint Rock. At least five homes were destroyed. Many more were certainly injured but no further statistics about the the storm can be found in any regional newspaper. This was one of four tornadoes that the national weather service cites for the year 1880.

—The publication *Table of Landings* listed 21 steamboat landings in Jackson County.

1881: A fire destroyed most of the town of Scottsboro on February 18, which was then laid out along the Memphis & Charleston rail lines along what is now Mary Hunter Avenue and Maple Street. The fire hastened the development of the business district around the courthouse square, which as recently as 1875 had been home to only two commercial buildings. A peculiar off-the-cuff comment in the March 3, 1881 *Scottsboro Citizen* says, "The report that every man in Scottsboro was drunk on the night of the fire is a wilful [sic] fabrication, and we denounce the originator as a malicious blatherskite. There were three or four sober men in town that night." (See 1877 and 1878 for other examples of *The Citizen's* editor's humor.)

1884: Jackson County executed three men convicted of arson on August 1. They were hanged behind a 16 foot fenced enclosure built adjoining the county jail on Appletree Street in Scottsboro which local attendees attempted to tear down in order to witness the executions. The men were charged and convicted of burning the Henry Porter home near Bryant after the family refused their extortion demands. These executions are the first verifiable legal hangings executed in Jackson County, although Jackson County historian J.R. Kennamer says there is credible evidence that one had been carried out in Old Woodville (see also 1892). Although many local children recall being shown "the hanging tree" in Bellefonte, there is no evidence of any legal executions being carried out there, although decades of legal documents that could establish such incidents were lost when the courthouse was burned near the end of the Civil War. Christine Sumner in her book, *Old Bellefonte*, quotes a Hollywood resident in a 1974 interview who says he had witnessed the hanging tree being cut down and remembered that a chain was embedded in the tree.

1885: Lizzie Skelton pulled a pistol from her sleeve and fired three bullets at Hugh Otis Bynum Sr. One struck Bynum in the shoulder while the other two grazed his clothes. She claimed that Bynum had defamed her character and "spoken slightly of her." Two years earlier, her sister had similarly attempted to gun down Bynum without his suffering serious injuries. Some decades later, Bynum would be the victim of yet another pistol assault, this one by his own son. In the third attack, the son would be disarmed by Mark Scott Skelton before he could inflict injury.

1886: The entire 272-mile length of the former Memphis & Charleston rail line was converted in a single day from a five-foot span to the national standard of four-feet, 8.5 inches between rails.

—Temperatures in Jackson County dipped to 8 degrees below zero. A storm that same year brought a 20-inch snowfall. That record low would be exceeded in 1899 (13 below), 1905 (10 below) and 1940 (12 below). The temperature also fell to minus 8 in 1899, 1966 (twice), and 1985.

1887: The name "Hollywood" first appeared in M&C records to refer to the station once known as Bellefonte, then Bellefonte Station, and then Samples.

1888: Hugh B. Garland was shot to death by Sheriff W.H. Dicus. As Garland was leaving a saloon on the north side of the square, an argument ensued, and both men drew guns. The fatal shot struck Garland in the heart. Dicus was hit in the leg, arm, and torso by bullets shot by Garland and his brother, E.W. Garland, who emerged from the saloon, took the pistol from his dying brother's hand, and fired the remaining two bullets at Dicus, whose pistol had been emptied during the altercation.

—Scottsboro's first building dedicated to education, The Scott Academy, burned five years after its construction on North Railroad Street (now North Houston Street). The institute had been founded in 1878 as the Scott Male and Female Academy. The curriculum consisted of mathematics, discipline, elocution, and English grammar.

—The opulent Battery House Hotel was built in Bridgeport, overlooking the Tennessee River from the promontory at Battery Hill. The three-story, forty-room hotel quickly failed in the "panic" of 1893-1894, putting an end to Bridgeport Mayor Frank J. Kirkpatrick's design for Bridgeport's becoming a "New York in Alabama." It sat vacant for a number of years before being demolished in 1920.

1889: The Bridgeport Land and Improvement Company, an organization capitalized at \$2.5 million, planned a revitalized Bridgeport, setting off wildcat speculation in the area. The bubble would burst just four years later when the company entered receivership. The Queen Anne architecture initiated by Frank Kirkpatrick, a director of the Bridgeport Company, dominated Battery Hill and Hudson Avenues.

—A "handsome brick building" at the corner of Scott and College Streets was completed to house the Scottsboro College and Normal School for Boys and Girls beginning on January 21, 1889. A chapel built behind the building in 1890 would serve as a civic center and sporadic seat of city government until 1957. It was originally lit by kerosene and served by "enclosed pit toilets." Today, the much modified building serves as the Page administration building, home to the Scottsboro City Board of Education.

—Street crews upgrading Broad Street in Stevenson uncovered the graves of two union soldiers. Pains had been taken to remove all the bodies at the site and rebury them at the National Cemetery in Chattanooga, but empty graves on either side of the discovered bodies indicated that they had been inadvertently overlooked.

—Nancy Jones, who died in while traveling in 1889, was so weary of travel that she requested and received a standing burial in the Stevenson City Cemetery.

1890: A moonshine still on Little Coon Creek was destroyed not by the internal revenue service but by an irate wife who dumped the contents and much of the hardware into the nearby stream. John Steel's wife, angered that her husband had been drunk for several days, set out to find the source of his alcohol and cut off his supply.

—*The Scottsboro Citizen* notes "A partition has been put up in the Probate office, which will enable Judge Norwood and his clerks to transact business without being bothered by loafers."

1891: The Scottsboro passenger depot was completed, but would not open until the following year, to the irritation of the townspeople and newspaper editors.

—The Memphis & Charleston Railroad entered receivership. It's likely that the final blow was the government's declaration in 1887 that the bridge at Florence was an obstruction to navigation and that the company was responsible for funding its replacement. The following year, a train fell through the bridge.

1892: Bob McCord was hanged in a makeshift 10x12 structure especially built for the purpose near the Scottsboro depot. McCord had been convicted the previous year in the bludgeoning death of his wife. *The Bridgeport News* reported that the couple often fought, "but she being the larger and stronger, always whipped him." McCord had previously attempted to murder his wife by adding "Rough on Rats" poison to her coffee. The only previous hanging under the jurisdiction of Jackson County courts, a triple hanging, had occurred in 1884. No Jackson Countian has been executed since McCord in 1892, although several have been condemned to death, only to have sentences commuted or to have the death penalty stricken down in subsequent trials. In 1931, for instance, eight of the "Scottsboro Boys" were condemned die in the electric chair. The state's electric chair, dubbed the *yellow momma*, replaced hanging as the state's

execution method in 1927. The yellow momma was so named because it was painted with the same paint used to mark highway “no passing” zones. As of this writing, there is one Jackson Countian awaiting execution.

1894: Prominent Scottsboro banker, R.C. Ross, was murdered in an ambush at the Stevenson rail depot by three Skelton brothers and a cousin in retaliation for what they believed to be the seduction of their sister, Annie. Annie’s sister, Dovie, had intercepted letters from the married Ross to Annie who was a houseguest at her home in Little Rock, AK, and she alerted the Skeltons to the affair. Ross had returned to Scottsboro to attend the birth of his fifth child. He had hoped to escape town undetected by riding a hired carriage to Stevenson where he intended to escape by train.

1897: A sulphur well was dug on the northeast corner of the square. Exorbitant claims regarding the health benefits of the water and the potential for drawing tourists were touted in the local press. In 1898, Lawrence Brown, writing in *The Progressive Age*, stated “That this white sulphur water is wholesome and uninjurious as drink has been too clearly proved to admit any denial. Even the doctors admit that and the habitual users have a ruddy face and a buoyant step to prove it, and some of those had thought they never could be rid of their chronic troubles.” The well was probably in use until it was covered over during the 1954-1955 renovation of the square.

1898: The original Memphis & Charleston Railroad sold to the sole bidder, Southern Railway. The company operated thereafter as “the Memphis Division” except in parts of Mississippi where law forbade the name change.

1899: The first moving picture shown in Jackson County was shown in “Mr. Payne’s opera house” in 1899. The operator of a “moving picture machine,” temporarily set up in the Scottsboro opera house for the first ever demonstration of the new technology, lost two fingers to the machine the next week in Tupelo, MS when the gas mechanism used for illumination exploded. “This broke up the show, and the [machine] had to go in for repairs,” reported *The Progressive Age*.

—The National Weather Service records Jackson County’s coldest day when the mercury fell to 13 degrees below zero on February 12. Temperatures the following night fell to 8 below.

1900: The first viable telephone service debuted in Scottsboro. Later that year, a 2,400 foot long cable was laid across the Tennessee River enabling long distance access to major metropolitan areas.

—*The Scottsboro Citizen* newspaper proposed “Why not have a day set apart each month in Scottsboro as a horse swappers’ day?” Although the trade day probably preceded the proposal, it would be 1904 before there is evidence that what would come to be known as “First Monday” was drawing significant crowds.

—The people of Jackson County were given a glimpse into the previous century when “Three large covered wagons drawn by good stock passed through...en route to the Indian Territory,” according to *The Scottsboro Citizen*. The wagon train arrived in Scottsboro on September 27 and a spokesman for the group told the reporter that “if they have no bad luck they expect to reach their destination about the last of November.”

1901: Sessions of court resumed and the grand jury convened on March 4 after smallpox was believed to have subsided in Jackson County, with the last cases reported on Cumberland Mountain. On the following July, several cases of smallpox were identified in Marion County, TN, and a committee of five doctors who constituted the “Committee of Public Health of Jackson County” urged that guards be posted on the road from Marion County to Jackson County to contain the spread of the disease. In September, the disease reappeared in Hollywood with 14 cases reported. Cases were reported in Scottsboro the following January.

—President McKinley was scheduled to pass through town by train on Tuesday, April 30 at 7:20 a.m. and hundreds of citizens lined the tracks to catch a glimpse of the President and his wife. However, a herd of cattle on the tracks delayed the train, and the train, running late, did not even slow down for the expectant crowd. Those lining the tracks were uncertain that the McKinleys were among those who waved to them from the passing train. McKinley would be assassinated the following September.

1902: A Scottsboro delegation travelled to Birmingham in an attempt to negotiate a more favorable rate for black convicts leased to Tennessee Iron and Coal to work in their mines. The company was paying the county \$6.60 a month for “the best class of convicts.”

1903: Alma Smith, the teenaged daughter of Dr. Barton Smith of Larkinsville, claimed that she woke to find a young black man named Andy Diggs standing at the foot of her bed. Diggs ran when she screamed, but allegedly confessed that he had entered the house when he was captured. He was removed from the Jackson County jail by a mob and lynched. Sheriff Dave Austin was shot during the raid. Diggs’ hanging is one of the three Jackson County lynchings documented at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery.

1904: What the November 3 Progressive Age labeled “one of the most cowardly and uncalled for attempts to destroy human life ever recorded in the history of our county” occurred in front of Payne’s Drug Store when Louis Adkins, “a worthless white boy about town” shot 21-year old Ed Coffman of Bridgeport in the back. The newspaper reported that Adkins had been behaving belligerently that day, drinking whiskey and knocking the hats off pedestrians before shooting Coffman in the back without provocation. Coffman died shortly from his wound.

1905: *The Progressive Age* reported temperatures in Scottsboro fell to 16 below zero on February 15 (see also 1886, 1899, and 1940); however, the national weather service records a low of 10 below on that date. There are frequently discrepancies in weather records from various sources and can vary four or five degrees between northern Jackson County towns like Valley Head and Huntsville. In many instances, the temperatures reported here are from local sources and not always in line with the national weather service records.

—The Bailey Hotel would open on Mountain Street (now Mary Hunter Avenue) and would serve transient rail passengers and resident boarders for over 60 years. The hotel prepared for a visit from President Theodore Roosevelt in 1910, but Roosevelt skipped the meal prepared by Nanny Bailey when his train ran an hour and a half behind schedule, opting instead for a brief “whistle stop” to address a large crowd from the platform at the rear of the train. Among the dignitaries who patronized the 20-room Bailey was William Jennings Bryan.

1906: 200 Confederate veterans and 2000 observers attended a reunion on the lawn of the Jackson County Courthouse. Ex-Governor Joseph F. Johnston “showed the righteousness of the South’s cause ... and showed himself an un-reconstructed rebel and loyal to the old South as well as the new,” according to the October 25 *Progressive Age*.

—Gadsden was the first Alabama city to receive municipal electric power. Scottsboro would be electrified ten years later.

1907: Scottsboro residents eager to secure a county high school to be located in town subscribed \$6,170 for building the proposed structure. The meeting was the result of a state mandate that each county establish a public high school and put forth at least \$5,000 in “earnest money” for the facilities.

1908: Jackson County High School opened in the refurbished buildings that formerly housed the Scottsboro College and Normal School at the corner of College and Scott Streets. It would field its first football team in 1913. What would come to be known as “Central School,” on the corner of Broad and Charlotte Streets opened the same year and assimilated students from several rural one-room schoolhouses: Randall’s Chapel, Campground, Bethany (Shakerag), Beech Grove, Wood’s Cove, and Centerpoint.

—A fire that began around 2 a.m. on Tuesday, June 23 engulfed several buildings at the intersection of Broad Street and Willow Street, with most of the damage done to the buildings across Broad Street from Payne’s Drugs. A small gathering of men doused the fire using buckets of water drawn from a nearby cistern. Both Payne’s Drugs and Skelton Hardware, both brick buildings, sustained minor damage while surrounding frame buildings were destroyed. The fire was the most destructive since the 1881 fire that destroyed the original business district around the freight depot.

1909: The Progressive Age newspaper was established by M.L. Tucker. It sold 10 years later to James S. Benson.

1910: The steamboat *John A. Patten* burned to the waterline in Bridgeport. The boat had previously won a much-touted race with the *Parker*. The *Patten* won the race when the boiler on the *Parker* exploded, knocking its captain into the river.

—Dee Meek began a 47 year career as stationmaster at the Hollywood depot. As telegrapher, it was his duty to deliver telegrams announcing the casualties of two world wars and the Korean conflict. During the First World War, he would read telegraphed dispatches from the front to townspeople who gathered at the platform, eagerly awaiting the updates. He died in an automobile accident in 1957.

1911: A fire lay waste to almost all of Stevenson's business district. Only five downtown businesses survived the blaze. Over 20 buildings were destroyed.

1912: The Jackson County courthouse was condemned, and the proposed renovation sparked a new round of contention to determine which community should be designated the county seat. Legal actions by Stevenson and Bridgeport to replace Scottsboro were set aside in court. Construction on the building which forms the core of the current courthouse, began in 1913.

—Coca-Cola was first bottled in Scottsboro in 1912 and the franchise went through several ownership changes before being acquired in 2014. Hamlin Caldwell, who became known as "Mr. Coca-Cola in Scottsboro" became plant manager in 1955, and remained in that position for nearly thirty-five years.

1913: The Alabama State Prison Inspector, Dr. W.C. Oates, judged the "negro cell" in the county jail to be "too filthy for occupation" and ordered the prisoners moved to Huntsville. He also ordered new windows be cut into the walls and the "cages" replaced. He also inspected the county poor house and had no criticism of the sanitary conditions there, but objected to the practice of paupers being leased on a bid basis as laborers.

—A three-year old child died of poisoning shortly after consuming a half dozen match heads.

—The Progressive Age reported: "Announcement is made here that as the result of a surgical operation ... Iva May Terry, who has grown up in Huntsville as the daughter of T.T. Terry ... has become a boy. Although the boy was reared as a girl, he is not a girl at all, as he and his father and all knew him supposed until a short time ago."

1914: Three masked men boarded a train near Stevenson and blew open the safe. They disconnected the locomotive and tender (the coal-bearing car) from the passenger segment of the train and, leaving the train crew behind, opened the throttle wide. The runaway train come to a halt only when its steam was exhausted, a few miles west of Scottsboro. Somewhere along the line, the three escaped with their \$100 take.

—Clarence Bloomfield Moore, the son of a wealthy Philadelphia family, explored the banks of the Tennessee River from his boat, *The Gopher*, unearthing Native American artifacts that are now displayed in the Museum of the American Indian.

—Lucille Benson, Jackson County's most recognizable voice, was born in Stevenson. She was discovered in the home with her 23-year-old deceased mother by her aunt Elma Kirby Benson. Mrs. Benson took the months-old Lucille, originally named Virginia Morris, to her home in Scottsboro where she was raised to adulthood. Lucille appeared in over 38 television series, 14 big screen movies, and 23 television movies.

—The first Jackson County Fair was held on September 30. The daily horse and mule races were a centerpiece event at 2:00 each day. And every day, The Bird Man Johnny Green, "[made] flight in his flying machine," an early biplane he built himself and named Betty.

1915: James M. "Jim" Skelton, one of the Skelton brothers complicit in the murder of R.C. Ross in 1894, died by self-inflicted gunshot wound in this office at Scottsboro Hardware at the corner of Broad and Laurel Streets in Scottsboro.

—The Public Power and Light Company of Chattanooga received a franchise to serve the town on Scottsboro. A transmission line was constructed from Stevenson to Scottsboro.

—Plans for the “Dixie Highway,” running from Huntsville to Chattanooga were announced. The road—by then known as the “Lee Highway”—would be completed and paved in 1937.

1916: Electrical power came to Scottsboro on January 21. It marked the first use of electric street lights in Scottsboro.

1917: The Bridgeport rail depot was completed.

1918: In the height of the Spanish Flu epidemic, county deaths in the fourth quarter of the year were triple what they had been in each of the previous quarters. Henry McAnelly, a Scottsboro mortician, buried 13 members of the same family.

—Sixty Jackson Countians died in WWI.

1921: Parts of the county were quarantined for two weeks because of a smallpox outbreak. All public meetings were cancelled. Similar quarantines had occurred in 1901 and 1902.

—Deputy Marshal Ed Moody was killed when he tried to quell a noisy gathering near the Scottsboro passenger depot. His killer, Joe Stone, was finally sentenced to life in prison after initially being sentenced to hang.

—Deputy Sheriff Ed Kirby was killed and his fellow deputy Jerde Owens was critically wounded during their attempts to disrupt a moonshining operation. Kirby was shot through the heart, but discharged his shotgun before dying, injuring his assailant, Effie Tally. Tally was operating a 30 gallon still at Sinclair Mill, seven miles from Scottsboro. Five others were arrested in connection with the bootlegging operation. Kirby left behind a wife and eight children. Tally was sentenced to 20 years for his crime.

—Violence pervaded the county as the result of conflict between landowners and the opposing “Night Riders,” also known as The Tenants’ Union. The Tenants’ Union’s stated purpose was to “keep this land idle until landlords agree to give the tenants a ‘fair deal’ and allow them to raise their families under more favorable circumstances.” In Stevenson, shots were exchanged between protesters and townspeople on Kentucky Avenue. The only casualty reported was Stevenson citizen Bayne Mitchell who, mistakenly believing he’d felled a protester, “became sick and lost his dinner.” The March 9 issue of *The Chattanooga Times* reported “Conditions in Jackson County are worse now than they were in the dark days of reconstruction. The better element of Jackson County [the landowners] is indignant, and determined that it shall not be ruled by terror. Unless there is an end to the fighting soon, we will have no crops at all this summer.”

1922: By a vote of five to four, the directors of the Lee Highway Association, meeting in Washington DC voted to construct a proposed New York to San Francisco highway through Jackson County. The southern route through Muscle Shoals and Scottsboro was chosen over an “all Tennessee” route.

—James Wylie Reece, labeled by *The Progressive Age* as a “holy roller,” died of a rattlesnake bite on Sand Mountain only 75 yards from the spot where he was bitten. Reece had asked neighbors not to kill rattlesnakes, but to call him so that he could capture them for use in church services.

—Two men drown on Christmas Day when the Island Creek Ferry, just south of Bridgeport, broke loose from the shore and dumped an unmanned wagon and its team of two mules into the Tennessee River. Fayette King and Arthur Green of Fabius leapt into the river in an attempt to save the team and were overwhelmed by the flood waters.

1923: A train carrying medical personnel was dispatched from Chattanooga to Scottsboro to treat those injured in a train derailment near Old Larkinsville Road in Scottsboro. There were no fatalities, and the train was used to transport an undisclosed number of injured passengers back to Chattanooga hospitals. Five months later, a second derailment only one mile west would result in one fatality and 25 injuries. The fatally injured man lived long enough to give responders his name and address. A mother who had climbed out a Pullman car window, was found sitting on the roadbed with her two children sleeping soundly beside her.

—A case of sleeping sickness was reported in Limrock where the daughter of Jim McCormick slept for ten straight days. Dr. Rayford Hodges stated that sleeping sickness often followed attacks from the flu.

—The May 24, 1923 *Progressive Age* reports that there is evidence that the Ku Klux Klan had become

active in the county as evidenced by a cross burning on “mountainside north of town,” saying “This organization seems to be spreading all over the country, [but] has not entered Jackson County in an organized form until the past few weeks.” The newspaper ran a recruiting ad for the organization. The September 20 issue of the newspaper reported that the KKK staged a march through Scottsboro, “led by a fiery cross,” and calling the parade “very quiet and impressive.” In October, a crowd estimated at over 4,000 gathered for a Klan rally in Stevenson at which 50 new members were initiated. One minister who addressed the crowd, G.L. Griffin, told the audience that 82 percent of Baptist ministers and 78 percent of ministers of all faiths were Klan members. In June, the “largest crowd ever assembled in the town at night,” watched the Klan parade around the courthouse square.

1924: The House of Happiness was established in Sauta Bottom, dispensing “Soap, soup, and salvation” to disadvantaged county youth.

—Novelist Bill Heath was born in Lake Village, Arkansas. He relocated to Scottsboro after the death of his mother when he was two months old. He grew up in the Maples house on Maple Avenue with an uncle, three aunts, and his grandmother. Heath published 8 novels and 28 short stories, and he scripted 3 television shows.

1925: Hodges hospital opened on Laurel Street in Scottsboro, founded by Dr. Rayford Hodges and Dr. George Earl Nye. The hospital replaced an earlier clinic run jointly by the two doctors which had been located on the square.

—A drought dried up the Tennessee River to the point that cars could be driven across with water only coming as high as the axles.

—Scottsboro Mayor W.W. Gross halted an attempt to establish the first bus line in the county along a route from Scottsboro to Guntersville, citing the poor condition of the roads. Later that year, however, a line was established between Stevenson and Huntsville.

1926: The Jackson County Health Office screened the students of the Scottsboro City School and declared 61 percent of the students to be physically “defective” in some aspect. 26 percent were underweight, 29.5 percent had defective teeth. 18 percent had defective tonsils.

—Jackson County had its largest single snowfall of 27.5 inches on January 7. The second latest snowfall was less than half that: 12 inches on March 13, 1993.

1927: Charles Lindbergh put on an aerial display in *The Spirit of St. Louis* for Scottsboro citizens on October 5, “circling and dipping over our town.” Schools were dismissed for the occasion, and “Lindy gave them a special dip at the campus.”

—A “nuisance tax” was levied on cigarettes and cigars by the state. The tax added one cent to the cost of cigars and two cents to the cost of a pack of cigarettes.

—A boiler explosion at a Pisgah mill killed three employees. Bricks from the wall surrounding the boiler were blown over one mile from the site of the explosion.

—An earthquake rocked downtown Scottsboro on Thursday, June 16. “It had the sound of a terrific explosion and shook buildings, rattled windows, and was very distinct to those out on the street.... In Scottsboro, the people rushed from the stores, thinking a heavy blast or explosion had occurred right in the center of town, and many thought the brick stores were collapsing when the quake arrived.” However, there was no reported damage as a result of the tremor.

1928: Two men drown at Widow’s Bar Dam when their boat came too close to the spillways and the current carried them over the dam. One man was thrown from the boat and a second clung to the overturned craft before being washed downstream. The bodies were recovered five weeks later.

—Contracts were signed for the construction of the B.B. Comer Bridge in the amount of \$467,913.55.

1929: The Scottsboro Hosiery Mill band was organized. It would be active until 1933, playing for family reunions, civic events, and dedications. The band was organized under the auspices of Claude Spivey, owner of the mill. The director was Dr. John Hays.

—Ethel “Babs” Hodges Deal was born in Scottsboro. She would publish 12 novels, several of which were set in a town similar to Scottsboro in which contemporary readers could identify townspeople and locales.

—The Young Women’s Book Club established the first public library in Scottsboro. It was temporarily quartered in Judge J.M. Money’s courtroom. Membership fees were \$1.00. In 1932, the library was moved to the second floor of the old city hall building, at the corner of Broad and Peachtree Streets. Under the direction of the Fortnightly Book Club (the successor to the Young Women’s Book Club), the library remained in the city hall location until 1964. Notable librarians at the city hall location were Eliza Hackworth and Idita Blanks.

1930: Claude “Curly” Putman was born near Princeton. He wrote over 800 songs, including “Green, Green Grass of Home,” a song about the singer’s finally rejoining family and community when he is brought home to be buried. Ironically, Putman was not buried in Princeton.

—Popular Tupelo resident Harry Cunningham was murdered by a stranger, Myrtle Berry Graham, in the Drug Sundries Company on Market Street on the square. The 17-year-old Graham was the first woman tried for first degree murder in Jackson County. Nuby Moates, 16, was convicted as an accomplice. Graham was serving a life term when she was released in 1942, 12 years into her term, to die at home of a chronic illness. Moates did not appear in any official records either in advance of the murder or following her release from prison, also in 1942.

—The B.B. Comer Bridge was completed. The 50 cent toll per car and \$1.50 for a large truck was seen as exorbitant by many residents, and most ferries continued in operation. Bridge tolls were discontinued in 1936.

—The Bocanita Theater opened on the square. Theater manager Claude Bobo’s vision of recreating Atlanta’s Fox theater on a smaller scale proved too ambitious, and his financial backer, Aunt Tex Snodgrass, foreclosed. The theater was opened before completion and operated for a time with dirt floors. Bobo’s earlier theater, The Dreamland, was located on the second floor of the Claybrook building at 203 Market Street before moving for a brief time to the south side of the square to be housed in a wood frame building on the site where the Bocanita was eventually built.

—The Lone Star Bus Line was established to take advantage of the newly completed B.B. Comer Bridge. The line ran from Scottsboro to Ft. Payne. The trip took 2 hours and 15 minutes.

—Two of the hottest stretches in Scottsboro weather history occurred in July of 1930. The highest temperature ever recorded in Scottsboro, 109 degrees, occurred on July 13, 1930. Of the 31 days in July 1930, fifteen had high temperatures above 100 degrees. For eight days, between July 6-13 the high temperature was above 100 degrees. Resuming later in the month—for the seven days between July 25-31—the high temp was again above 100 degrees. The average high temperature for the month was 100.3. Temperatures have reached 107 or higher on 11 occasions and 105 degrees or higher on 28 occasions (most recently on July 15, 2023 at 107 degrees) since records have been maintained.

1931: Nine black youths were pulled from a train in Paint Rock and accused of raping two white women, setting off years of litigation known as the “Scottsboro Boys” case.

—Southern Railroad reported that 147 people were killed and 179 injured while trespassing not the tracks and trains of the Southern Railway system. 141 had been killed the preceding year.

1932: Thirty two Jackson Countians lost their lives in a tornado that destroyed the town of Paint Rock. Over 300 Jackson Countians were injured. Statewide, 268 died.

—Jackson County Sheriff Matt Wann was murdered by a shotgun blast in Scottsboro. Speculation persists that he died as a result of his determination to protect the Scottsboro Boys from a lynch mob while they were held in the county jail on Appletree Street in a scenario reminiscent of Atticus Finch’s stand in *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Running afoul of bootleggers was also cited as a potential and more likely motive.

—Thirty schools in Jackson County were forced to close on November 25 only one month into the term when the state ran a deficit of \$115,000 in funding. Scottsboro schools remained open, supported by contributions from city and county residents.

—Scottsboro was recognized as a “city” when its population rose above 2,000.

—*The Jackson County Sentinel* newspaper was established by Parker Campbell who had split with his former

publisher, Jim Benson, over politics. In 1938, Benson's newspaper, *The Progressive Age*, merged with *The Jackson County Sentinel* under Campbell's editorship. Campbell retired in 1958.

1933: The Third Reich's "Graf Zeppelin" passed over Jackson County on its way to the "Century of Progress" in Chicago. Among the passengers was a stowaway who, as a member of the ground crew, had held on to the tethering lines when the ship left its moorings and had climbed to the passenger gondola. One side of the tailfin of the zeppelin was painted with the Nazi swastika, and the obverse was painted with the German flag. The zeppelin could circle gatherings displaying one graphic or the other, depending on the local residents' sympathies with the Nazi regime.

—The Tennessee Valley Authority was created by the Roosevelt administration. TVA's land acquisitions for the Guntersville Lake impoundment reshaped the region geographically and socially.

—Physician Marvin H. Lynch, the assistant medical examiner who evaluated the two Scottsboro Boys accusers after their alleged rapes, met with Judge James Edward Horton in the men's room in the Morgan County courthouse during retrials of the boys in Decatur. He told Horton that the two women showed no signs of assault and even laughed when he had questioned him about their alleged rapes. "My God, Doctor," Judge Horton is reported to have asked, "is this all a horrible mistake?" Following the meeting, Judge Horton set aside the jury's guilty verdict and ordered a new trial for the accused. One of the two accusers, Ruby Bates, later recanted her allegations, but much of her deposition was disallowed in a subsequent trial. All the nine defendants had been released or had escaped from prison by 1946. The last surviving defendant, Clarence Norris, was pardoned in 1976 by Governor George Wallace.

—The Cumberland Mountain Road, linking the Tennessee Valley with the Cumberland Plateau was dedicated on November 1. It was accomplished as the result of a grant applied for by Probate Judge James Money. Five thousand workers appeared on the first day of the project to work for \$1 per 10-hour day. Many workers appeared without shoes and were bought work boots by Judge Money. They appeared without food and were fed sweet potatoes by Harry Cunningham. The road was completed in 7 months for under \$13,000.

—The Tri-County Hospital for tuberculosis sufferers opened on Backbone Ridge across Highway 35 from the Scott Cemetery, but sat idle for three years due to lack of funding. It burned in 1937 after housing patients for 16 months. The "poor house" west of Scottsboro was repurposed as a TB hospital and opened on March 1, 1938.

—Two men, Boyd Derrick, 20, and Esmond Sherrill, 19, were killed near Scottsboro after they apparently fell asleep on the tracks.

—43 of 67 Alabama counties voted to repeal the 18th amendment, which banned the sale of alcohol. Jackson County, however, voted "dry." With 3,000 county residents voting, the margin against repealing the amendment carried by 264 votes. Alabama was among 18 states supporting repeal; no state voted to remain dry.

—A steel bridge across Crow Creek near Stevenson collapsed, pinning a truck that was hauling railroad ties to the bottom of the creek. One man was killed, and four were injured.

—Two Jackson County deputies, Fred Jackson and J. H. Holland, were killed near Flat Rock following their raid on a still. In 1935, Frank Gross would be acquitted of the murder of Jackson, but found guilty of first degree murder in the shooting of J. H. Holland.

1934: Nolan Strong, lead singer for doowop group *The Diablos* was born on January 22 on North Houston Street (once named Railroad Avenue) in Scottsboro. The Diablos' first popular recording was *The Wind*. The song is listed in the top ten of the *100 Greatest Detroit Songs Ever* by The Detroit Metro Times. Strong died in Detroit in 1977.

—The Skyline Farms Project, a cooperative farming community originally called *Cumberland Farms*, was established under FDR's Federal Emergency Relief Administration. The experiment lasted 10 years before the farm plots were sold to private investors.

1935: For the second time, the US Supreme Court set aside death sentences for the Scottsboro Boys, this time citing lack of adequate inclusion of Blacks in the jury process. The following week, Governor Bibb

Graves ordered that counties “empty all jury boxes and refill them with names of Negroes qualified to serve as jurors.” The following month, Victoria Price, one of two accusers, swore to nine warrants as the first step to indict the boys yet again and bring them back to trial in an effort to once again seek the death penalty. The second accuser, Ruby Bates, had previously renounced her charges. The subsequent indictments in Jackson County provided for December arraignments and January retrials for all nine defendants in Decatur. Previously, in 1932, the Supreme Court had set aside verdicts on the basis that the boys had been denied adequate defense council.

— A jury convicted Frank Gross of first degree murder in the death of county deputy J.M. Holland in 1933. In 1932, Gross was acquitted of the murder of Fred Jackson, a second deputy killed in the same ambush. A second man charged with the murder of Holland was acquitted when the jury failed to reach a unanimous verdict.

— Citing poor attendance, “Aunt Tex” Snodgrass and Claude Bobo announced that the Bocanita Theater would be showing movies only two days a week: Saturday and Monday. Women over 50 were given free admission to the Monday showings.

1936: Twenty Black convicts on a work detail burned to death in the back of a truck deployed from Camp Scottsboro located on Highway 72. The truck skidded on icy roads and spilled gasoline from a drum placed near the prisoners’ lockup in the bed of the truck. The gasoline and was ignited by a makeshift stove, which had been lit to keep the caged prisoners warm in near-zero temperatures.

—Twelve-year-old Al Tipton was indicted for first degree murder after killing one man and injuring another. He was handed a gun by his father during an altercation between the father and two other men on the south side of the square during a First Monday gathering. The boy was eventually acquitted after tearful testimony in which he said he was protecting his father. Unfortunately, the man he killed was trying to intercede as a peacemaker.

—The Ritz Theater opened on the west side of the square. It closed in 1970 and was replaced by the Holiday Cinema on Willow Street.

—*Life Magazine* photographer Alfred Eisenstadt visited Scottsboro as part of a ten-state driving tour with Jonathan Daniels, editor of Raleigh NC’s *News and Observer*, to document the seeds of the civil rights movement in the South. Eisenstadt took exceptional photos of the square (including his much-circulated photo *The Melon Salesman*), the Scottsboro passenger depot, the 1930 city hall, and the old jail on Appletree Street where the Scottsboro Boys were incarcerated.

1937: Scottsboro’s Peniel Roy “Sergeant Sammy” Baker boxed at Madison Square Garden for the welterweight world championship. He lost to Pete Latzo in a decision.

—L. C. “Mess” (short for “Messenger,” harkening back to his delivery boy days) Hodges bought James Presley’s drug store business. In 1945, when Mess was 35 years old, he died as the result of a motorcycle accident on the square. His brothers R. L. and Charles purchased the business from Mess’s widow, Elizabeth, and the business was known informally as “Hodges Brothers Drug Store,” a fixture on the square for over 30 years.

—On May 12, a group of musicians and dancers from Skyline Farms Project performed for President and Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt at a garden party at the White House and later that evening took a cruise on the presidential yacht.

1938: A Scottsboro youth was shot by a circus sharpshooter and admitted to Hodges Hospital with a chest wound. The boy was standing outside the circus tent when he was struck by the .22 calibre shell.

—The new Jackson county jail was opened April 18. It was built on Peachtree Street, adjacent to the previous jail, built in 1873.

—Governor Bibb Graves commuted the death sentence of Clarence Norris. Norris was the last of the Scottsboro Boys to have his sentence revoked.

1939: The Scottsboro Electric Power Board was established as a public corporation following a bond referendum that passed by a popular vote of 301 to 42.

—After the city of Scottsboro purchased distribution equipment from the Alabama Power Company, the

city began receiving TVA current.

—TVA closed the locks on the Guntersville dam, creating Guntersville Lake. The reservoir was filled and then drained twice to clear debris that could damage the turbines and navigation locks before finally being filled.

—Widows Bar Dam was demolished in April, leaving only the 300-foot navigation lock intact for use by boats used in the TVA malaria-control efforts. The dam had been completed in 1925 at a cost of \$1.1 million dollars (over twice the cost of the B.B. Comer bridge). The dam, which had been inundated two months before by the rising waters of the newly constructed Guntersville Dam, was built to provide a six-foot deep navigation channel from Widows Creek to the Hales Bar Dam. The TVA embayment provided a 15-foot channel for navigation on that stretch.

1940: The Ritz Theater sold advanced reserved seating for *Gone With the Wind*. 2000 people had previously viewed the movie in its premiere showings in Atlanta at a price of \$10 per ticket. The Ritz showed the movie twice a day at 1:45 and 8:00. Prices for the evening show were \$1.12. Prices for the matinee were \$.77.

—A low temperature of 10 degrees below zero was recorded in Scottsboro on January 6. The temperature dropped to 7 degrees below zero on each of the two following nights, January 27 and 28 (See 1886, 1899, and 1905). There have been 26 sub-zero days recorded in the county since 1900.

—A Bridgeport fisherman drown in the Tennessee River when he attempted to fight off a “huge snake” that had crawled into his boat. He fell backwards into the water, and companions’ attempts to reach him came too late.

—The Jessica Hotel opened when an annex was built with an entrance to Willow Street. The new edifice adjoined the Jessica Apartments which faced Laurel Street and had begun operation many years earlier, having been converted from the home of attorney Jesse Brown.

1941: The first diesel locomotive, *The Tennessean*, passed through Jackson County. By 1953, 100% of passenger trains through the county were pulled by diesel power. Southern had purchased its last steam locomotive in 1928, and its aging rolling stock hastened the move to diesel. Passenger service ended in Jackson County in 1967, although *The Tennessean* continued to stop in Huntsville until it discontinued service on March 30, 1968. In 1972-73, Southern Railway would be one of four major lines to refuse to participate in Amtrak’s resumption of passenger service.

—The artist Harold H. Betts began accepting commissions for portraits in Scottsboro, extensively documenting the Word and Benham families. He also painted several landscapes, most notably two from Section bluff, and historical portraits, including Scottsboro founder Robert T. Scott, Robert E. Lee, and George Washington.

—Several local Scottsboro businesses announced that they would be closing on Thursday afternoons, a practice that continued for several decades.

—3.5 inches of rain fell overnight on Tuesday, July 22, causing some of the worst flooding in the town’s history. The businesses along Bynum Branch, along what is now Mary Hunter Avenue, were the hardest hit. The eastern end of Maple Avenue was inundated in September 2011 when 10 inches of rain fell in two days, resulting in the the loss of an entire stretch of homes and businesses that had once been the heart the Black community.

—The Louvin Brothers, Charlie and Ira, played publicly for the first time on July 4 at a holiday gathering in Flat Rock. “We each made \$3 that day. Now my daddy worked from dawn to dusk and made 50 cents a day. So we decided music was the path for us,” Charlie Louvin said in a 2007 interview.

1942: Alabama Governor Frank Dixon declared a state-wide speed limit of 40 miles per hour. The state had not had a speed limit law since 1936 when a maximum of 45 mph was the top allowable speed. From 1936 to 1942, the rule of law was “reasonable and proper.”

—A B24 Liberator, a four-engined military bomber, crashed into Sand Mountain near Pisgah, killing five servicemen. Reports said that the tail of the aircraft was sheared off during a lightning storm.

1943: A military aviation trainee, Edward Putar of Bethlehem, PA, crashed into a field owned by Leonard Barbee near Randall's Chapel after he ran out of fuel searching for suitable landing site. Barbee carried the injured pilot to Hodges Hospital where he died four hours later of his injuries.

—A boiler explosion at Scottsboro Laundry and Dry Cleaners at the corner of North Houston and Willow Streets destroyed the building and showered debris for blocks, hurling a 200 pound steel beam 1500 feet to the Hotel Scottsboro at the corner of Broad and Willow Streets. Bricks landed at Five Points, over a mile away. No one was injured in the blast.

1944: Five people died in a house fire in Fackler. A grandmother, Mrs. Nannie Barber, awoke to accompany four of her grandchildren to safety, but reports recount that she calmly returned to perish in the burning house when she realized her daughter, son-in-law and two grandchildren were not going to be able to escape.

1945: Rear Admiral Houston L. Maples of Scottsboro was the dinner guest of Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin at the Kremlin. Maples was chief of the naval section of the US Military Mission.

—George Rumph, given 30 years in prison for a felony committed in 1941, won his release from Scottsboro's convict camp under the terms of a work/release agreement under the custody of Dr. Rayford Hodges after serving only four years of his sentence. Known as Reverend Rumph in the white community and Mr. Preacher in the black community, George Rumph gained Dr. Rayford's attention as a first responder at the convict camp, ably treating injuries and illnesses. Following his release, he served as a medical liaison and physician's assistant in both the black and the white communities for almost 50 years and won notoriety as an excellent barbecue pitmaster.

1946: Official reports record that 106 Jackson Countians lost their lives during WWII. Twenty four were from Scottsboro; however, *The Progressive Age* tallied 120 deaths. The newspaper counted all the men who were born in the county or were county residents at the time of their deployment; the official tally, on the other hand, was based on the county where the men were inducted to determine mortality statistics.

—A Bryant man crawling through a thicket in an attempt to kill crows who were destroying his corn crop was mistaken for a ground hog by a neighbor and shot with a 12-gauge shotgun. The injuries were not severe, but the neighbor who fired the shots was found to be hysterical after the incident and threatening suicide until he could be reassured that his neighbor and life-long friend would recover.

—John T. Reid opened Reid's Sundries near the Ritz Theater after having closed it in its former location in the Proctor Building on Market Street to join the army, having posted a sign on his former location reading "Gone to Hitler's Funeral." Reid's Sundries was a popular grill and soda fountain into the 1960s.

—The Jackson County High School defeated Gurley 20-6 on Monday, October 28th in the school's first homecoming game. Sue Wilson (later Bergman) was crowned homecoming queen. Clayton Wood caught three touchdown passes for the Wildcats, two of them from Luke Boykin Jr.

1947: Robert Emmett "Bob" Jones Jr. won a special election to fill the vacated Congressional seat of John Sparkman who been elected to the Senate. In the primary, Jones received 5,394 votes in the county. His six opponents received a total of 129 votes. The following year, he won the seat in the regular election, the first of 14 terms he would serve before retiring in 1977.

1948: Jet aviation pioneer Cecil Floyd died in an accident when his prototype fighter, an F-80, stalled on a landing approach in Utah. Cecil was remembered as a mild-mannered and timid man in contrast to his brother, Jesse "HooDaddy" (also referred to as Oo-Daddy) Floyd, whose bravado is widely recounted in local legends. Both were highly decorated WWII veterans. His obituary stated that Cecil was the first glider pilot to land during the Normandy invasion. Jesse was shot in the leg during his parachute descent into France in the invasion. HooDaddy Floyd allegedly got his nickname when admiring women would remark upon seeing the handsome Floyd, "Ooo Daddy!"

—Hammer's Store opened on the courthouse square. Herb Kern, with assistance from his family, his wife Helen, and his daughter Anita, would manage the store for decades. Anita continues to oversee store operations today. Herb Kern's tenure is believed to be the longest of any businessman on the square.

—Three Pullman cars at the rear of the northbound “Tennessean” passenger train derailed one mile east of Fackler at 2:30 on the morning of November 24. There were no fatalities, but several seriously injured passengers were transported to Chattanooga for treatment in the undamaged lead cars of the train. The accident was caused by a broken rail. Maintenance workers repaired a mile of track, restoring traffic in a matter of hours.

1949: The first TV signal was received in Scottsboro when Clyde Williamson, a radio repairman, and “Cricket” Powell engineered a receiver capable of capturing a signal from Atlanta. The April 28 *Progressive Age* noted that “So Scottsboro this week got its first look at television, and the exhibition is drawing crowds equal to the first radio here many years ago, which was installed upstairs in the Ford garage. Now you can look at the actual performers and speakers while they are 150 miles away and all this comes through the air waves and projects itself on the little screen in the television set.” The Chattanooga Times ran a story entitled “TV at Scottsboro Astounds Experts: Reception There Supposedly Impossible, but Williams Gets Many Broadcasts,” and stated Williams received broadcasts from both Atlanta and New Orleans.

—The Tawasentha Drive-In Theater opened on Highway 72 between Scottsboro and Hollywood.

—Circuit Solicitor John B. Tally and Circuit Judge Jeff Haralson issued a writ of injunction “closing the place known as Salt Petre Caverns [claiming] the place was a public nuisance and had been the scene of frequent disturbances and unlawful activities.” The most notable attack came on January 15, 1949 when Hugh Otis Bynum Jr. stabbed Scottsboro plumber Vaughn Parker when the two were attending a cockfight at the cave. Vaughn survived numerous stab wounds inflicted by Bynum. Bynum would be charged with assault with intent to commit murder in each of three consecutive years. He was never convicted. He also escaped prosecution for assaults on attorney Harold Foster, newspaper editor Fred Bucheit, the shooting of white high school student Ray Webb, and a pistol attack on his own father that was thwarted by Mark Scott Skelton. Finally, he was charged and brought to trial for shooting two black youths, Willie Lee McCamy and Claxton Green, Jr. He was charged with assault in that case and fined \$500. Eventually, he would be convicted for the 1972 car bombing of attorney Loy Campbell. He died in Kilby Prison in 1980.

—Public sentiment began to turn against the Ku Klux Klan, with the June 30 *Progressive Age* declaring “there is mounting evidence that thousands of people in the South have had their stomachs turned by recent outrages of hooded gangs in Alabama. From church pupils, labor unions, and a large part of the press have come denunciations of the ‘bedsheet bullies’ ...” Unfortunately, the klan reemerged in 1972 with a cross burning on Tupelo Pike.

—The Boaz chief of police wrote an open letter to Scottsboro residents, asking them to refrain from drunkenness and violence at the annual meeting between the two football teams, saying games between Scottsboro and Boaz marked the only contest in the Boaz schedule in which there were predictably physical altercations among spectators.

—The Scottsboro First Baptist Church burned on Wednesday, November 16, 1949. For some reason, the exact date of the burning has been in doubt for several years, with published materials and histories offering conflicting dates.

1950: Scottsboro’s National Guard Company B was deployed to Korea. All 164 Jackson Countians who were deployed returned home in 1952 without suffering any combat casualties. Mark Scott Skelton and Charles R. Bradford, both exempt from deployment as a result of their participation in WWII, still volunteered to serve in Korea with “their boys.”

—Scottsboro citizens, gathered after midnight by Frank Henshaw, Charles Hodges, and James Thompson, organized a caravan to an airstrip just off Tupelo Pike to light a path for a pilot lost in a storm. The pilot, Robert Kieran, was eager for his parents not to learn of the incident, but they heard the news on Lowell Thomas’s nationally syndicated radio show the next day while sitting in a bar in Manhattan.

—The FCC licensed two radio stations for Scottsboro: WCRI in June and WROS in November. WCRI would go online in 1950. WROS would go online in 1952 as “The Wild Rose of Scottsboro,” named for its manager, “Rose” Kirby. During the 1950’s and 1960’s, local musicians would sit on the front porch of the

station's studios on Scott Street on Sunday afternoons to await their turn in front of the microphone. Uncle Josh Varner, an announcer at WROS, was a close acquaintance and trusted talent scout for Sun Records' Sam Phillips.

—Jim Annis Gay, owner of a sporting goods store on Laurel Street, shot and killed two men, brothers Paul and Luke Stewart, in his shop. Gay was acquitted of the murders with a ruling of self defense.

—Jackson County purchased school buses and trained drivers, replacing the practice of subcontracting school transportation that had begun almost 30 years earlier.

1951: Two Stevenson Policemen were shot in an ambush. Patrolmen Wesley Smith and Alfred Arnold were shot after locking up a prisoner whom the gunmen, Gene Joyner and Edward Dobbins, intended to help escape. Response to the crime was delayed when telephone service circuits in Stevenson and Bridgeport failed. The disruption in telephone service and the ambush were not connected, according to Sheriff Lawrence Sebring. Smith's injuries were serious, but he survived following surgery at Erlanger Hospital. Arnold was treated and released with a wound to his hand.

—15-year-old Clayton Winkles of Larkinsville was killed when he was smothered by corn while working in a grain elevator. His brother was also caught in the deluge, but kept his head above the level of the corn and summoned help.

1952: The TVA's Widows Creek coal-fired generation facility went online. More units were added in 1954, 1961, and 1965. Its most prominent chimney, built in 1977, was the second tallest structure in Alabama at 1001 feet until it was demolished in December 2020. The facility shut down in 2015, the year in which Google announced it would invest \$600 million in a data center to be run entirely on renewable energy on land adjacent to the plant on the north side of Widow's Creek.

1953: The 1913 courthouse began major renovation and expansion to its current size and appearance.

—The Korean Conflict ended. Eleven Jackson County men lost their lives in the war. Many others suffered debilitating injuries, particularly from exposure to extremely frigid temperatures.

—A state highway department truck carrying 20 cases of dynamite exploded in Pisgah. The driver and his crew abandoned the vehicle when they detected smoke rising from beneath the hood. A single wheel from the truck was the largest piece to survive the blast. A home situated 465 feet away was damaged. A shard of metal passed through the windshield of a partially deaf man who did not understand the warnings issued by the road crew and continued to drive toward the blast site.

1954: Mary Texas Hurt Garner was elected the youngest Secretary of State in the county at the age of 25. She would subsequently be elected State Auditor and State Treasurer.

—Burlington Industries announced it would build a \$1.25 million mill in Scottsboro employing 300 people in the manufacture of women's seamless hose.

—Government agencies took thermometers from local weather observer Kenzie Bobo to verify their accuracy after they registered 105 degrees on September 4 and 5 of 1954. The accuracy of the instruments was verified. The highest temperature ever recorded in for Jackson County was 109 degrees in 1930.

1955: Jake Word and Jim "Fox" Broadway completed the airstrip that would eventually be known as "Word Field," Scottsboro's municipal airport. The airstrip was paved in 1960 when demands of commercial traffic, particularly by Burlington Industries, required infrastructure upgrades.

—The Jackson County Hospital on Woods Cove Road was dedicated by Senator Lister Hill. As the polio epidemic continued unabated, *iron lungs* (machines intended to help paralysis victims breathe) so overwhelmed facilities at the Jackson County Hospital that they lined the hallways and were even placed in the visitors' lobby.

—The renovated Jackson County courthouse, sporting two new wings off the original 1912-1913 edifice, was dedicated on May 14 by Governor "Big Jim" Folsom.

—A delegation of Scottsboro citizens, concerned about the abandonment of unsold dogs in the wake of First Monday trade day, appealed to the city council to pass a dog control ordinance calling for the destruction of any unregistered dog within two days of its capture by city police. The Humane Society based in Huntsville objected to the proposal, but proponents pointed out that no other city faced the

volume of stray dogs faced by the city of Scottsboro. Local news reports say that 50 to 75 stray dogs wandering city streets in the wake of the trade day were not uncommon. (See 1957)

1956: Just after midnight on the morning of February 18, a tornado tore through Scottsboro, destroying several businesses and homes. There were minor injuries, including a woman who clung to a tree after fleeing her own home to warn neighbors of the severity of the storm. The storm damage was the most extensive since the tornado of 1932. There were no deaths.

—The Scottsboro City Council passed a two-cent cigarette tax to pay for repairs to the high school athletic field. The debt for the field's improvements had just been retired when the February tornado destroyed all the recently completed facilities.

1957: John Dudley "Cast" King of Pisgah recorded eight music tracks for Sam Phillips at Sun Records in Memphis. None of the tracks was released until a Sun Records retrospective was issued almost 40 years later.

—*The Jackson County Farmer* newspaper began publication. It would fold as a standalone newspaper in less than three years, but its editor for most of 1957, Brown Stephens, would serve two more stints with local newspapers, the third of them with *The Jackson County Advertiser*, ending in 1980. In Stephens' obituary in 1989, Southern columnist Louis Grizzard eulogized Stephens in his syndicated column as "the best human being I ever met."

—Confusion ensued when all telephone numbers in Bridgeport and Stevenson changed at 1:00 a.m. on August 18. All Bridgeport numbers were preceded by HYacinth (HY) plus five numbers. All Stevenson numbers were preceded by HEmllock (HE) plus five numbers. Previously, all telephone numbers in northern Jackson County had been four numbers, and were accessed via dial phones, years in advance of dial service being offered in Scottsboro.

—Caperton's Ferry across the Tennessee River near Stevenson was slated to close as the Snodgrass Bridge neared completion. With the closing of Caperton's Ferry, only one ferry remained active in the county: the Bridgeport Ferry, which would end service in 1994.

—Author Borden Deal was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship Award, the only Alabamian to receive one in 1957. Deal was a Scottsboro resident for several years in the 1950s and 1960s and the husband of Babs Hodges Deal, a Scottsboro-born author with several novels to her credit.

—The Scottsboro City Council passed an ordinance that all dogs, whether lawfully registered or not, had to be confined from Monday to Friday of the first week of the month, a period where stray dogs released from First Monday vendors ran the streets in what Mayor John T. Reid called "the biggest headache of my office." On a single Monday afternoon in the summer of 1957, a newly hired dogcatcher collected 78 dogs from Scottsboro streets. First hand reports state that the dogs were euthanized by gunshots on the grounds of the Scottsboro High School.

1958: Pat Trammell graduated from Scottsboro High School (known before 1958 as Jackson County High School) and was recruited by the University of Alabama's rookie head coach, Paul "Bear" Bryant. Bryant's outlandish claim in 1958 that Alabama would win a national championship within four years was realized in 1961 when quarterback Trammell led the team to a perfect season. Other SHS players recruited from the 1958 class by Bryant were David "Bull" Webb and John O'linger.

—Sheila, a seeing eye dog belonging to Sam Huskie of Scottsboro, was poisoned with strychnine. The Scottsboro Lions Club had paid for the dog and for Huskie to undergo training together in California. Three years prior to Sheila's poisoning, around 100 dogs in Scottsboro had been similarly poisoned, including "Queen," the Scottsboro Fire Department's mascot. No culprit was ever identified.

—Oakley "Red" Sharp was hospitalized with extensive burns after the modified stock car he was driving caught fire, trapping Sharp inside. For the rest of his life, Sharp wore long sleeved shirts and frequently wore gloves to cover the scars and to avoid painful physical contact. He remained active in racing as an owner and team manager.

—The TVA reported 63 drownings in the system's lakes in 1958, 6 of them on Guntersville Lake. Eight had drowned in Guntersville Lake the year before.

—A portion of the Jessica Hotel burned. The burned portion consisted of the renovated home of Jesse Edwards Brown and housed permanent, rather than transient, boarders. The newer portion of the hotel, facing Willow Street, continued in operation for several years.

1959: *The Jackson County Farmer* newspaper began publication. It would fold as a standalone newspaper two years later, but its editor, Brownie Stephens, would serve two more stints with local newspapers, the third of them with *The Jackson County Advertiser*, ending in 1980. In Stephens' obituary in 1989, Southern columnist Louis Grizzard eulogized Stephens in his syndicated column as "the best human being I ever met."

—Dr. Rayford Hodges Sr. announced the closing of Hodges Hospital after 33 years of service, citing ill health and the opening of the Jackson County Hospital in 1955 as his reasons for closing the hospital's doors on January 1. His son, Durwood Hodges Sr., continued to run a clinic there for several years. The doors to the clinic finally closed and the building left derelict in 1972.

—Prominent educator and civil rights pioneer, Mary Weatherly Hunter, died. She was instrumental in the establishment of Rosenwald schools in the county, which were built with grants from the president of the Sears and Roebuck Company and Booker T. Washington to serve the marginalized Black community. For 40 years, she served as principal of Hollywood Junior High School. She was the mother of noted Scottsboro educator Thomas Weatherly. Railroad Avenue in Scottsboro was renamed Mary Hunter Avenue in her honor.

—Bids were solicited for the construction of two public housing projects in Scottsboro: a 46-unit complex on Woods Cove Road for white families and a 14-unit complex on North Houston Street for "colored" families.

—Only 227 voters of Scottsboro's population of 6,500 voted on whether to switch from well water to river water to supply the town's needs. The well water infrastructure had reached its capacity, and six attempts to drill new, productive wells had failed. The new water was less "hard" than the well water, but residents were universally unhappy with the taste. The vote to switch to river water passed 222 to 5.

—An eight-year-old boy stole a car from Benham's Underwear Mill and went for a joyride on the north side of town. He was so short, he had to drop into the floorboard to push the accelerator and then climb back onto the seat to steer. He crashed the car on North Houston Street. As the boy's punishment, Judge R.I. Gentry offered the mother two choices: he could be sent to the state industrial school or could receiving a "switching" by the mother in the judge's presence. The mother chose the latter, as did most other families who were offered the "switching" option. The judge's staff expressed concern that the wailings of children undergoing such punishment would alarm courthouse visitors. Judge Gentry justified his practice by saying that no child ever returned from "reform school" as a better person.

—Ten cases of polio had been reported in the county by August.

—North Jackson Hospital, a 25-bed facility, opened between Stevenson and Bridgeport.

1960: Four children were killed and eight injured when a school bus was struck by a freight train near the Fackler depot. A fifth child would die of her injuries one week later. The driver of the bus reported that he attempted to stop the bus at the crossing, but his brakes failed. The rear end of the severed bus was pushed a almost one mile down the tracks before coming to a rest.

—39 percent of Caldwell School students were absent on Wednesday, February 17 during a flu epidemic.

—The Democratic slate for the presidency, consisting of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Baynes Johnson, carried Jackson County by a two-to-one vote. Democratic votes totaled 4789; Republican votes totaled 2036. The county's political allegiance changed after LBJ championed and signed the Civil Rights Act.

—The Tawasentha Drive-In theater, located between Scottsboro and Hollywood, burned on August 16. The screen and the living quarters below the screen were completely destroyed. The screen was rebuilt, and the theater continued in business for over 20 years.

1961: Russell Cave was declared a national monument.

—The Scottsboro City Council approved the showing of movies on Sunday afternoons. The Council also allowed bowling between the hours of 1:00 and 5:00. They declined to pass rulings allowing retail stores

to remain open on Sundays.

—The Scottsboro Public Library announced that it housed 12,788 books in its collection with 25,564 instances of books being checked out in the previous year.

—Burglars attempting to force open a safe at Word Motor Company were thwarted when they activated a tear gas canister set to go off in case of tampering. The burglars escaped.

—A special session of the Alabama legislature provided funding for a two-year college to be built either in Jackson or Dekalb county, provided the institution could be operational by September 1, 1963.

—9.9 inches of rain fell on the county in December, and flooding was complicated by 18 degree temperatures, sleet, and snow that left roads and fields covered in ice.

—The brutal spectacle of the “coon on a log” contest was last held at “Leck’s Fishing Camp” (now Mud Creek Barbecue). The activity consisted of chaining a raccoon to a log, pushing the log into the water, and setting a dog on the animal in an attempt to throw him from the log. Both dog and raccoon were frequently injured, sometimes mortally, in the contest. The walls of the popular Scottsboro “meat and three” restaurant, *Katies*, in the Scottsboro Hotel building, were decorated with pictures of the event.

1962: Dial phone service came to Scottsboro on June 17 at 1:01 am on a Sunday morning. The new system cost \$180,000. Sixteen operators whose skills were no longer required by the new technology posed in the old facility on Market Street for a group photo in front of the obsolete switchboards.

—Mussel fishing on the Tennessee River collapsed in a single season. One fisherman who had harvested a half million dollars in mussels the previous year said that the mussels he harvested in 1962 were dead and their shells had begun to deteriorate, making them unfit for the Japanese market, where they were made into buttons.

—The program to distribute 40,000 doses of the Sabin polio vaccine were postponed with county health officials citing “adverse publicity” regarding the oral form of the polio vaccine.

—County caves were surveyed for their fitness as fallout shelters. Dozens of caves were assessed for potential protection from radiation and for their maximum occupancy.

1963: Scottsboro Police Patrolman Wayne Clifton Boggus was killed on North Houston Street while attempting to subdue a subject described as drunk and disorderly. Believing he’d disarmed his prisoner, Boggus was surprised when the man pulled another gun, a .22 calibre pistol, and shot Boggus in the neck. Boggus returned fire, killing his assailant. Boggus is the only Scottsboro Police officer killed in the line of duty and the sixth officer killed in the line of duty in the county, preceded by U.S. Marshal Ed Moody and county deputy Ed Kirby, both in 1921, County Sheriff Matt Wann in 1932, and deputies J. H. Holland and Fred Jackson in 1933. In 1888, Sheriff W.H. Dicus was shot three times in a gunfight outside a Scottsboro saloon, but survived the attack while killing his assailant.

—Nine of eleven people crossing the Tennessee River on a flat-bottomed fishing boat in choppy waters drowned just short of Starkey Island. Among the dead were Mrs. Violet Caves, 34, and six of her eleven children.

1964: Johnny Daniel Beecher, an escapee from the Scottsboro convict camp, was accused of murdering Martha Jane Humphrey Chisenall, who was 21 years old and pregnant at the time of her death. He was the target of a massive manhunt that ended with Beecher losing his leg when he was shot by law enforcement. He was tried and convicted of murder three times and sentenced to die in the electric chair. Beecher, 32 at the time of the alleged crime, was serving a 10-year sentence for rape. His case was heard in the US Supreme Court based on the allegation that his confession was coerced and was elicited under the influence of pain killers.

1965: Conditions at Scottsboro’s 22-bed TB sanatorium were declared by state health officials to be unsuitable. The facility was running at 90% occupancy, providing 7,272 patient days of patient care in 1964. County officials entered discussions to convert the never-occupied new convict camp into a “Recalcitrant TB Facility” at a cost of \$100,000 to \$200,000. Recalcitrant patients were those that would not agree to treatment for the condition.

—The mummified body of Marie O’Day, murdered night club entertainer, was displayed on the

courthouse square along with shrunken heads and other “objects of interest to the public.” O’Day’s body had been submerged for 12 years in the Great Salt Lake before being found “perfectly preserved.” Her mummy has recently appeared on an episode of “American Pickers,” but was far from “perfectly preserved” several decades after her Scottsboro showing.

—Northeast Alabama Junior College admitted its first students.

1966: Horace “Philco” Wilkerson gained national notoriety for Scottsboro when he appeared in *Life* magazine posing behind the wheel of a Volkswagen Beetle outfitted as an official Scottsboro Police Department vehicle. The caption of the ad read *Don’t Laugh*. Philco got his nickname as a result of this work as a radio repairman and having a Philco radio sign displayed in the front yard of his residence. He also managed the Ritz Theater where he tolerated no foolishness from boisterous children.

—The Bocanita Theater was razed and replaced with the Garner Building.

—The *Jackson County Sentinel* and *The Progressive Age* ceased publishing as separate papers and published for two years as *The Sentinel-Age*. The name changed to *The Daily Sentinel* in 1968. Today it is doing business as the *Jackson County Sentinel*.

—WCNA, Scottsboro’s first FM station, began broadcasting on November 5, 1966 under the ownership of Dr. Ralph Sheppard.

—For the first time, women’s names were added to the jury roles because of a recently passed state law. At the time of the law’s passage, Alabama remained only one of only three states where women were not allowed on juries, along with Mississippi and South Carolina. Women in Wyoming had been given the right in 1870.

1967: Southern Railway ended passenger service in Jackson County.

—Voluntary integration, allowing black students to enroll in Scottsboro High School, began two years in advance of mandatory integration. The integration was accomplished without incident, due in some part to the excellent athletes who were the first to make the move: most notably, Sam McCamy, who would eventually play in the NBA. In an attempt to delay integration, the school board made significant capital improvements, including a new gymnasium, to the all-black Carver School to better demonstrate “separate but equal” facilities. Carver School was razed in 2024 after standing derelict for decades.

—Postmaster Tommy Bellomy announced that zip codes would be introduced by the US Postal Service on January 15, 1967.

1968: Kenneth Muse barely escaped injury when a second plane landed on top of his at Word Field in Scottsboro. The rear half of Muse’s plane was nearly severed when the prop of the second plane tore through the fuselage just inches behind the cockpit where Muse was seated. The second pilot said he believed that when he first spotted Muse on the runway, Muse had been throttling up for takeoff and would have already been airborne.

—An auto accident, recorded by the Associated Press as the worst in the nation for the Thanksgiving 1968 holiday, occurred at the intersection of Clemons Road and Highway 35 at what is today Lakeview Grocery. Five people were killed in the accident: a mother, two of her daughters, and two of her granddaughters aged 1 and 3. A third daughter survived the crash, but lost a leg to amputation after being transported to Jackson County Hospital. Three occupants of a second car were listed in fair condition in the Jackson County Hospital following the accident. The wreckage of the cars were towed to Word Motor Company where they drew gawkers for several days.

—Pat Trammell, standout Scottsboro athlete, died of cancer on December 10, 1968 at the age of 28. At the time of his death, he was a resident in dermatology at UAB.

—In a mock trial intended to illustrate the horrors of communism, Baptist minister Tom Mansell was removed from the pulpit by a group of “expertly trained Communist Youth.” In the kangaroo court that ensued, one “true Christian” was executed at gunpoint; one “weak Christian” was converted to communism; one woman who renounced her faith was released unharmed. “It was all an act, but has happened under communist rule,” the *Sentinel-Age* newspaper cautioned.

1969: Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company broke ground for a \$12 million dollar plant in Scottsboro.
—Dan Carter published his landmark book, *Scottsboro*, bringing to light several pertinent details about the Decatur trials of the Scottsboro Boys. The book shed favorable light on Judge James Edwin Horton, whose bold legal maneuvers saved the defendants from a second round of convictions.

—A freight train derailed in the backwater of the Tennessee River near Fackler involving 24 cars, some containing the poisonous chemicals anhydrous ammonia and sodium sulphate. The resulting explosion produced a mushroom cloud visible in Ider and Chattanooga and resulted in the biggest fish kill in the state's history. A loss of life was averted because the explosion occurred in a remote location.

1970: Three buildings owned by Hugh Otis Bynum were set ablaze the day after he shot two black youths, Claxton Green Jr and Willie Lee McCamy. Both youths were hospitalized and listed in "fair" condition after being hit by 12 gauge blasts while walking near a pasture owned by Bynum. In his trial for the shootings in 1971, Bynum was acquitted of the charge of assault with intent to murder, but found guilty of the lesser charge of assault and fined \$500. At his trial, Bynum claimed the boys had been shooting at his cattle. The fire department's efforts to extinguish the blazes were thwarted when a stalled train blocked the tracks, preventing water from being transported to the site. Tanker trucks were necessary at the time because substandard infrastructure on the north side of the town meant there were no city fire hydrants to fight the fire.

—Robert Porch, a teacher at Scottsboro High School, foiled a carjacking attempt when two men who had robbed a service station near Tarrant commandeered a camper driven by his son. Porch was asleep in the back of the camper, unbeknownst to the carjackers, and was awakened when the carjackers fired shots at his son who had been left on the roadside. Porch blindly fired a deer rifle through the front of the camper, hitting the driver in the back. In an ensuing crash, the camper was detached from the truck with Porch still inside. He was knocked unconscious and taken to University Hospital with broken ribs.

—The boy scout camp Camp Jackson opened, the culmination of an effort that had begun with a land purchase ten years earlier.

—The Holiday Cinema opened in Holiday Plaza with a 30 x 17-foot screen, leading-edge stereophonic sound, and rocking chair seats.

1971: Oni Armstrong and Erin Davis both retired from teaching English at Scottsboro High School in the same year. Both demanded recitations of students (Mrs. Armstrong from Shakespeare and Mrs. Davis from Chaucer), and decades of SHS graduates can still recite the first few lines of the prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*. Miss Lilly Porter, a Scottsboro educator for over 40 years and participant in the Oak Ridge Manhattan Project, died that year.

—News sources reported that Jackson County's oldest resident, Daniel Bibbs, died at age 119, saying that he had been born into slavery and recalled when the courthouse square was a wooded area. The claims of his longevity were later disputed, but never convincingly refuted.

—A disruptive strike halted operations at Revere Copper and Brass when employees of the Burns Detective Agency, contracted to provide security at the plant, barricaded the gates to the industry. Assaults and vandalism were directed toward Revere management who attempted to keep the business operating.

—Two Scottsboro High School students, Willie Hutchins and Calvin Cothron, were electrocuted while installing irrigation lines at a practice football field adjoining Trammell Stadium.

—An estimated 35,000 people attended the 1971 Labor Day First Monday, the largest crowd ever to attend the event.

—The Cornelius Company ended operations in Scottsboro. At the time of its closing, Cornelius employed 310 people with a payroll in excess of \$1 million.

—The new Revere Reduction Mill was identified as the source of an oil slick affecting 200 acres of Lake Guntersville near Goose Pond Island. The spill was contained with straw dams and cleaned up quickly.

—Harness racer Sanders Russell, 70, was one of eight sports figures inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame.

—A tank car filled with propane derailed at Revere and a box car loaded with cotton caught fire by the Scottsboro Train Depot. Firemen hacked through the top of the car to insert hoses and extinguish the flames.

—Construction began on what would become Trammell Stadium at Scottsboro High School. The amount of fill needed to prepare the marshy site for construction was determined by local contractor Red Sharp, who amused onlookers by leaning over, sighting between his legs, and then standing upright to announce the number of cubic yards of fill that would be needed. He was dead-on in his assessment, despite varying significantly from more sophisticated (and incorrect) mathematical projections.

—The BB Comer bridge was number five on a list of bridges identified by the state as inadequate.

1972: Plans were announced for the construction of the Bellefonte Nuclear Plant, billed as “the world’s largest.” The condemnation proceedings by which the TVA would acquire the land, dragged on for months. In 1971, the TVA had acquired land in both Langston and at Bellefonte, initiating speculative land purchases at both sites in preparation for the construction effort.

—A cross was burned on Tupelo Pike by the KKK as part of a statewide resurgence intended to prove that the group was “still very much alive and working.” County politicians refused to allow the organization to stage a rally on the courthouse square.

—The remaining portion of the Jessica Hotel was razed, 14 years after the rear half of the hotel had burned. It had been managed for over 30 years by Mrs. O. C. Proctor.

—Attorney (later Judge) Loy Campbell was critically injured in a car bombing. Hugh Otis Bynum Jr. would later be charged and found guilty of the crime. Bynum reported to Kilby Prison to begin serving his sentence in 1978.

—A plane in which Green Bay Packers quarterback Bart Starr was a passenger crashed in an aborted landing at Word Field in Scottsboro. The pilot reported that a gust of wind blew his twin-engine craft into a hangar owned by Jake Word. There were no injuries. Catastrophe was likely averted because Mr. Word’s plane was not in the hangar at the time. He had taxied to the apron of the runway, awaiting takeoff.

—Widow’s Creek Steam Plant was declared the largest single source of air pollution in the state.

—The Bridgeport ferry, the last ferry still running in Jackson County, reduced its hours to eight hours a day Monday through Friday.

—A four and a half month strike at Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company ended.

—A county-wide wet-dry referendum was defeated 4756 to 4147.

—The Lozier Corporation based in Omaha, located in Scottsboro.

1973:

—The “Flood of the Century” hit the Tennessee Valley in March, bringing the highest water levels since the TVA impoundment of Lake Guntersville 40 years before. Rainfall on March 15 and 16 exceeded 8 inches. The water levels in Guntersville Lake from that storm have not been equalled in the decades since. Rainfall in 1973 measured 64.6 inches. The wettest year on record was 2020 with 87.32 inches. Second is 1990 with 77 inches. 1975 saw 76.23 inches of rain. The driest year on record is 1964 with 52 inches. Since 1973, the region has sustained several rains equalling the 1973 deluge without similarly disastrous consequences. (For the pre-TVA record, see 1867)

—Ground was broken for Meade Paper in Stevenson.

1974: Stevenson’s entire police force resigned when the city council cut allowable hours from 65 to 50 a week, citing financial shortfalls.

—County schools were forced to close for two days due to a nationwide strike by independent truckers that cut supplies of heating fuel. Some local industries such as Fieldcrest were also forced to close in the frigid February weather. Long lines developed at local service stations as gasoline supplies dwindled. Gasoline shortages persisted for weeks past the strike’s end as wary motorists hoarded fuel.

—Scottsboro police chief Ed Cotten defended his department’s reluctance to arrest young people “streaking” (running naked) in Scottsboro, saying the threat to the public was not worth the risk to the safety of the young perpetrators. His statement followed an organized streak with approximately 75

observers and six naked men at the Scottsboro Plaza Shopping Center.

—A bomb was discovered under the hood of a car owned by Judge John B. Tally. Wired to detonate when the high beams were switched on, the bomb failed to detonate because of “faulty wiring,” according to the ATF. The ATF refused to correlate this instance with the car bombing incident that had earlier disabled attorney Loy Campbell.

—One hundred and fifty students walked out of Bridgeport High School in December as temperatures hovered in the teens. Students complained that conditions in the school were intolerable.

1975: Robert Batey, 28, was arrested on a charge of assault with intent to murder after firing a shotgun into the trailer home of Billy Ray McCrary, the primary witness for the prosecution in the Hugh Otis Bynum case. Investigators say the incident arose from an earlier conflict and was not related to the Bynum case.

—Downtown Paint Rock was gutted when Highway 72 was widened, eliminating one entire side of the town’s main street. The landmark Rousseau’s Store was among the structures lost.

—Campus Inns of American, along with principle investor Bart Starr, was sued by the city of Scottsboro for failing to meet contractual obligations at the new Goose Pond Colony development.

—A black bear walked from Stevenson to Scottsboro unmolested. In place at the time was a \$5,500 fine for shooting bears.

—Twelve hundred marijuana plants were discovered growing at the boundary of Cedar Hill Cemetery.

1976: Ruby Bates, one of two plaintiffs in the trials of the Scottsboro Boys, brought suit against NBC for slander, libel, and breach of peace in connection with the airing of the made-for-TV documentary “Judge Horton and the Scottsboro Boys.” The network was working on information that she and co-plaintiff Victoria Price had died in 1961. She was was in fact living in Washington state. Later that month (May), Victoria Price emerged from Fayetteville, TN to initiate her own suit against NBC in August. Joe W. Burleson, who was in charge of the national guard troops protecting the boys in Decatur, would file a third suit later in the year, saying the documentary portrayed his actions as cowardly. Bates died in 1976 before her case could be heard. Price settled out of court for an undisclosed amount. She died in 1982.

—A bust of Andrew Jackson was unveiled on the Jackson County Court House square. The statue was frequently vandalized and was once reconstructed by dentist Ralph Sheppard, who used dental adhesive to repair the bust. Jackson has been suspected of sporting an asphalt toupee which was applied after one especially serious incident of vandalism.

—Two workers were killed and six injured when a construction crane collapsed at Widow’s Creek generating plant.

—“Operation Townlift,” a project to renovate the court house square, began in Scottsboro. During the renovation, elm trees planted in remembrance of WWI veterans but afflicted with Dutch elm disease were removed, radically changing the visual appeal of the courthouse facility. County Commissioners fretted over each tree removal, citing the name of the veteran in whose name the tree had been planted, so “cutting Charlie” or “cutting Ed” became agenda items on the Commission docket. Also on the docket were concerns about the “red fog,” the persistent construction dust kicked up during square renovations.

—Clarence Norris, one of the nine Scottsboro Boys, requested a pardon for his conviction. The state Pardons and Paroles Board said the request would not be granted as long as Norris remained a fugitive. Within weeks, the board reversed its decision, and Norris became the first man in the history of the state to be pardoned after being sentenced to death.

—A bank robbery attempt at J.C. Jacobs’ Banking Company Branch in Hollywood was foiled when the would-be robber, Johnny Eugene Carroll, was killed at the front door by gunshots fired by FBI agents who had replaced the bank’s tellers on a tip that the robbery was imminent. Carroll fired a shotgun at one of the agents. One pellet shattered the agent’s glasses and two others hit the agent in the face without breaking the skin. Otherwise, the agents were unscathed.

1977: Charles X. Hale, wanted in Scottsboro for his connection to the Loy Campbell car bombing, was convicted in Florida for the July 1974 murder of Robert L. Lowery.

—The Scottsboro Police Department vowed to enforce “blue laws” which prohibited businesses from opening on Sunday, and succeeded in having the newly opened Big K store shut its doors on one Sunday. However, the Big K persisted in its refusal to abide by blue laws, and Police Chief Ed Cotten relented, saying that no store owners would be arrested for resisting the Sunday closing requirement.

—An endangered species report prepared by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, recommended that the Sauta Cave system be purchased by the US Department of the Interior in order to preserve a critical habitat of the gray bat and the Indiana bat. The owner of the caves, Harry Hoover of Birmingham, was blasting the stream bed of the lower (Blowing) cave to create a bed for use as a trout farm.

1978: Halstead and Mitchell Industries in Scottsboro installed five solar collection panels that were designated to heat houses.

—Hugh Otis Bynum reported to Kilby Prison to begin serving a 20-year term (see 1972).

—The sale of Revere to Alcan Aluminum Limited was called off. Negotiations to buy the Scottsboro operation had begun in December 1977.

—A nation-wide coal miner strike pushed this issue to the front of the news this year. In Scottsboro, Alabama State Troopers were assigned to Jackson County to combat sabotage of trains hauling coal through the area.

—Traffic on Highway 35 was being studied by the State Highway Department because of the increase of accidents on the road. There had been 12 accidents in 1974, 18 in 1975, and 34 in 1976.

1979: The worst gasoline shortages since the 1974 Arab oil embargo hit local service stations. The shortage was blamed on a two-month stoppage of Iranian production and refineries’ inability to keep up with the production of unleaded gasoline, which was the required fuel for new cars. Experts projected that gasoline prices would reach one dollar per gallon by July 4.

1980: Two Jackson County residents died of heat exhaustion and seven others were hospitalized between July 10 and 17.

—Sixty two of Sixty four registered voters turned out to vote in Langston’s first municipal elections.

—The county’s first homeless shelter opened in the Thomas Building on Willow Street.

1981: A vagrant was struck by a car and killed beneath an overpass at the intersection of Highways 35 and 72. He remained at Scottsboro Funeral Home for three weeks while numerous people attempted to identify him. He was finally buried in an indigent plot in Cedar Hill. In 2014, he was exhumed after similarities were noted between him and the man who headed the FBI’s most wanted list, William Bradford Bishop, who was accused of murdering five members of his family. DNA from the unknown man and Bishop were compared, and the unknown man was discounted as a match. He was reinterred in a new casket and vault.

1982: Hydrilla, which before the appearance of eel grass was the dominant invasive aquatic plant species in our area, was first discovered in Guntersville Lake. Hydrilla is able to photosynthesize at a greater depth than Eurasian milfoil and began eradicating milfoil in many areas. Milfoil first had appeared in Guntersville Lake in the 1950’s, most likely as the result of an aquarium being dumped into the Tennessee. In 1989, the TVA announced plans to release 300,000 sterile grass carp to control the plants. Neither of the plants proved as invasive and destructive as the current infestation of eel grass.

—Revere Cooper and Brass announced plans to close its reduction operation in Scottsboro with the loss of 700 jobs. Revere would file for chapter 11 bankruptcy in October of 1982.

—Three people died in a school fire in Pisgah: the principle, Wayne Pendley; a student, Tim Brown; and a custodian, Alex Jeffrey.

1983: John Steinbeck’s novel *Of Mice and Men* was taken off Skyline School’s reading list following a petition for its removal that was signed by 784 people.

1984: The Scottsboro Jackson Heritage Center opened its doors, the culmination of four years of renovation and artifact/furnishing collection

1985: Norandal purchased Revere and announced in September that they planned to spend \$13 million over the next three years to modernize and streamline operations.

—One of the two remaining public wells in Hollywood was closed because it failed to meet environmental standards.

—Four young bald eagles arrived for a nesting project to begin to re-establish eagles in the area. Seven more were added in the Mud Creek area in April, 1986.

—White amur fish were reportedly making a dent in the invasive vegetation in the Town Creek embayment as part of a study being conducted by the TVA.

—Skyline became Jackson County's newest town when officials there agreed to incorporate.

—The long-awaited Robert E. (Bob) Jones Bridge adjacent to the B.B. Comer opened.

—With the new dog pound completed, Scottsboro began enforcement of the new dog control ordinance.

—Benham's of Scottsboro announced the shutdown of its Skyline plant with the loss of 150 jobs.

1986: The projected cost of the Bellefonte Nuclear Plant was set at \$8.5 billion.

—The Jackson County Hospital opened a new Outpatient and Ambulatory Care Center in August 1986.

—In August 1986, Jackson County was declared a disaster area because of drought. Regional farmers with hay to share met at the fairgrounds to donate hay to those suffering more. By October, some parts of the state were 15-20 inches below normal rainfall.

—In November 1986, Republic Guy Hunt won a sweeping victory over Democrat Bill Bailey, to become Alabama's first Republican governor in 112 years. Democrat Richard Shelby narrowly defeated Republican Jeremiah Denton in the U.S. Senate race.

—An agreement was reached for Stamford, CN-based Revere Copper and Brass, Inc. to purchase the Revere Aluminum Smelter facilities on Goose Pond Island.

1987: An infant was discovered downstream of Metheny bridge outside Macedonia. The baby girl, apparently thrown from the bridge, was wrapped in a homemade quilt and placed in a plastic bag. Although the bridge is in Dekalb county, the body was discovered in Jackson County, putting it in the jurisdiction of the Jackson County Sheriff. There was no autopsy performed on the infant, and no samples that could be used for DNA analysis were preserved. The lead investigator in the case, Jackson County Detective Calvin Bell, died in 2020, haunted by his inability to solve the case. He tended the grave and brought flowers for years after her interment. Hers is one of only three burials of unknown persons of the 7,000 documented burials in Cedar Hill Cemetery.

1988: Video stores in Scottsboro were ordered to remove pornographic tapes from their inventory.

—The TVA Board of Directors voted to indefinitely suspend construction of the Bellefonte Nuclear Plant. The Board also approved the dismissal of 7,500 from the TVA workforce.

—Goose Pond officials unveiled a \$1.5 million development plan that included an 18-hole golf course.

—Waylon Dwight Perry was found guilty of the murder of Bryce Wallace on the basis of DNA evidence, marking the first time DNA had been used as forensic evidence in the state of Alabama.

1989: The reported sighting of an unidentified flying object in February brought nationwide attention to the small community of Fyffe and caused many residents in Jackson and Dekalb counties to scan the night skies for similar objects, described as shaped like a banana. The report was given credence by Fyffe Police Chief Junior Garmany who said that while investigating the reports, he saw a strange aircraft hovering at about 1,000 to 1,500 feet overhead. A horde of UFO seekers descended on Sand Mountain after the sightings, and UFO festivals continue in the town today.

—Speculation ran high the first half of 1989 that a dog track would be built in Jackson County. The bill passed the state legislature in March, clearing the way for a voter referendum, where it was defeated 6943 to 6181 in June.

—Quadrex Corp of Campbell, KY conducted a 14-week feasibility study about completing the Bellefonte Nuclear Power Plant, just one of many who made this unfulfilled promise. TVA estimated that \$2 billion would be required to make the plant operational. TVA had already invested \$4.2 billion in developing the site.

—The Scottsboro Rec-Com facility opened August 13, 1989 and cost \$2.2 million to build. The substantial cost caused the plan to remain on the books for 18 years before being bought to fruition. The expenditure was a central issue in local elections.

1990: The Alabama Supreme Court nullified a June election in which the city of Bridgeport voted to allow alcohol sales. The proposal had passed by a vote of 629 to 341. The results were set aside because the city council had not met state law requirements in calling for the election, the court ruled.

—Goose Pond officials announced a \$1.7 million marina facility expected to be completed in 1991.

—Plagued by years of strikes and labor disputes, Goodyear sold its facilities to a then-unnamed Dutch firm.

—The proration of state education funds caused the Scottsboro School Board to lay off 20 teachers and 4 staff members. In June, the board considered charging a fee for students to ride buses.

—In response to cutbacks in funding from the city council, the Scottsboro Public Library began closing on Monday and Tuesdays in November 1990.

—Jackson County experienced record rainfall for a 24-hour period of 6.8 inches. The second largest rainfall occurred in 2010 with 6.6 inches. In September 2011, ten inches of rain fell in a two-day period, flooding a neighborhood at the intersection of Maple Avenue and Tupelo Pike, obliterating an established Black neighborhood and resulting in the razing of several residences. The land remains undeveloped today.

1991: Scottsboro police formed a union in January 1991 and claimed intimidation and threats of violence resulting from their actions. Tensions ran high and conflicts persisted all year.

—Darlene Summerford accused her husband, evangelist Glenn Summerford, of forcing her hand into a rattlesnake cage in an attempt to kill her. The snakes were kept in a shed behind the Summerford's home and used in snake handling services at Summerford's church, *The Church of Jesus with Signs Following*. The following year, Glenn Summerford would be convicted of the attempted murder of his wife Darlene and sentenced to 99 years in prison. An additional 30 years were tacked on to his sentence after an escape attempt gained him 45 minutes of freedom.

—Korean company Donghae planned to construct four wood chip mills along the banks of the Tennessee in Bridgeport. The TVA held at public hearings in several local towns in January and February 1991 where citizens and environmentalists voiced their concerns about clearcutting. The environmental battle raged the first two months of the year. The State Historic Preservation office entered the fray because of the plant's proximity to the historic Bridgeport Ferry. Donghae's offices were vandalized and many of their planning documents were destroyed.

—Caving accidents plagued the county in 1991. In January, a student from Indiana University fell 200 feet to his death when his rope broke while exploring Megawell Cave on the side of Crow Mountain. Three Virginia University students were rescued from Fern Cave on Nat Mountain in Paint Rock in March. In September an Atlanta man lost control when repelling to the bottom of a pit and sustained serious injuries. Jim McCamy, director of the Jackson County Emergency Management Agency, organized a new Initial Response Team to deal with caving accidents.

—Walt Hammer went to Washington in March 1991 to lobby for a proposed interstate linking Atlanta and Memphis and for it to pass through Jackson County, one of four routes being considered at the time.

—The Bridgeport Ferry was swamped and completely submerged. Later in the year, the County Commission purchased a new ferry.

—Racial tension flared in Stevenson when members of the black community held discussions with the city council about racial injustice. Scottsboro police believed that youth gangs were being formed in Scottsboro and broke up a gang-related fight near Trinity Baptist Church. The superintendent of Scottsboro schools Dr. John Balentine took a tough stance on youth gang violence.

—Highway 117 from Stevenson to Flat Rock sustained cracks in January that forced traffic to be rerouted for at time through old Fabius. In September, a cave-in occurred on the same highway.

1993: The town of Bridgeport voted to go “wet” by a 622 to 568 vote margin. Officials estimated that tax revenue from alcohol sales would generate \$150,000 a year for the town.

—The TVA announced that it would recommence work on the Bellefonte Nuclear Plant, anticipating that it would be producing electricity by the year 2000.

—The “blizzard of the century” hit the eastern US, dumping 12 inches of snow in parts of Jackson County. Power was out for days in many rural communities, especially on Sand Mountain.

—The Jackson County Commission, under a court order to replace the jail facilities on the top floor of the courthouse, levied a one-cent sales tax to cover the costs of the new facility. Earlier in the year, Jackson County voters had rejected the tax in a non-binding referendum. Scottsboro merchants had been troubled by friends and families of the incarcerated who would visit with inmates by standing on the sidewalks outside the courthouse and shouting up to the prisoners.

1994: A hot air balloon with Olympic speed skater Bonnie Blair and her son aboard, promoting the new Pampers Rash Guard diaper, could not take off and land in Rash, AL, disappointing a crowd of 500 and the NY advertising executive who planned the event to promote Rash Guard diapers by landing there.

—A train derailment below Battery Hill in Bridgeport resulted in nine cars leaving the tracks with no spillage from the cars. However, the engineer of the locomotive died of a heart attack four hours after the incident. The NTSB said that the heart attack had not been a factor in the accident since the engineer had been interrogated in the hours following the accident.

—The Bridgeport ferry was taken out of service for repairs. Attempts to renew service were thwarted when no insurance carrier would provide coverage. The ferry had been in operation for 150 years.

—One year after announcing its intentions to resume construction at Bellefonte, the TVA once again announced that it was abandoning the project.

—Jackson County Probate Judge R.I. Gentry was recognized for having kept the court house clock running for 30 years. He gave notice to the county commission in December that he did not intend to continue his work on the clock after his retirement the next month. He never received compensation for his work on the clock.

—Jackson Countians remained hopeful that a new interstate highway, intended to run from Memphis to Atlanta, would pass through the county, probably along the route of Highway 72.

1995: Dennis Covington published *Salvation on Sand Mountain: Snake Handling and Redemption in Southern Appalachia*. The book examined pentecostal beliefs and practices in the region and recounted the story of the Glenn Summerford case (see 1991).

—A proposed hunt intended to rid the Goose Pond Colony golf course of hundreds of Canada geese that were fouling the grounds was called off when unlikely allies, hunters and animal rights activists, both spoke up to oppose the event. “It is embarrassing to me that men who call themselves hunters will go out on an 18-hole golf course and do this,” said Buster Betz, one of the many hunters who were disgusted by the hunt. “This is not a sport,” said Mr. Betz. “These geese are tame animals. It would be like me going downstairs and killing my two cats.” The incident was documented by Rick Bragg in the January 6, 1995 *New York Times*.

1996: TWA Flight 800 crashed shortly after departure from New York’s JFK airport. On board were five Stevenson residents: Mike and Barbara Scott and their son, Joseph, and Brenda Privett and her son, Thomas Weatherby. The five were flying to Paris on vacation. Only one town suffered greater loss: Montoursville, PA lost 21 students and teachers.

—Jackson County Schools Superintendent called for a boycott of Scottsboro businesses to protest a county-wide one-cent sales tax being levied to pay for the new Scottsboro High School, which was administered as part of a separate education board. The following year, the county commission passed tax legislation that provided for county school improvements.

1997: At a city council meeting, the Scottsboro Electric Power Board proposed building a community-owned telecommunication system that could provide cable television, telephone service, and high-speed data transmission service. A citywide petition drive was launched on July 28 to measure support for the

telecommunications system proposal. Over 5,000 people signed the telecommunication petition in support of the SEPB's proposal. The system was deployed the following year.

—Robert Emmett Jones Jr. died. Bob Jones was the last congressman to represent the 8th district of Alabama before it was dissolved as a result of the 1970 census. He served 14 consecutive terms until his retirement in addition to having served a partial term to fill the seat vacated by John Sparkman (see 1947).

—Traffic was rerouted for seven months to repair the Highway 35 overpass at John T. Reid parkway. A truck carrying a rock crusher was lodged under the bridge with a load that was six inches too high to pass underneath. Repairs cost over \$700,000.

—The Jackson County Commission refused to put the new \$7 million county jail into use, citing “technical difficulties” with the structure.

—Byron Woodfin published *Lay Down with Dogs: Hugh Otis Bynum and the Scottsboro First Monday Bombing*.

1998: An alligator was hit by an automobile driven by Hughlon Cornelison near Pikeville store. The animal, measured by game officials at 10 feet long and 250 pounds, was estimated to be 30 years old. Sheriff's department deputies lassoed the severely injured alligator using techniques they'd learned from watching wildlife specials on television. The alligator was euthanized by state authorities.

—Four-laning of U. S. Highway 72 in northeast Alabama was completed through Jackson County and to the Tennessee line. Work on the western end of the highway had begun 28 years before.

—Approved in January 1998, the Scottsboro Electric Power Board began construction of a modern telecommunications system to supply cable television, high-speed Internet, and telephony. Construction began in June and the first CATV customer connected in December.

1999: The Scottsboro Hotel, built in 1932 at the corner of Willow and Broad Streets, was razed ten months after a fire had gutted the building. The 3-story, 33-room hotel had rented rooms for \$3 to \$5 a night during its decades of operation. It housed popular restaurants like *Katies* in its first floor.

—After 40 years of hosting Scottsboro and JCHS basketball, the Carter Gym closed with a game against traditional rival Pisgah. The gym was named for Coach Q. K. Carter who led the Wildcats to a 1967 state championship.

—Three people were killed and seven seriously injured when a gas main explosion devastated downtown Bridgeport. A fourth person would later die from his injuries. The explosion occurred when a Bridgeport utilities crew was using a backhoe near a gas line.

DRAFT: Please do not distribute

July 16, 2024

David Bradford