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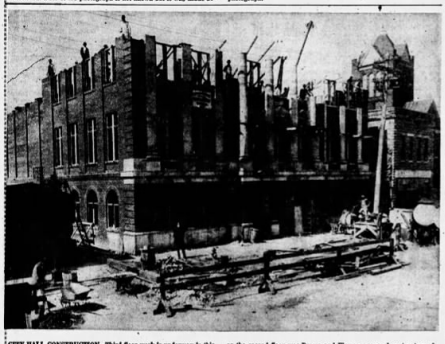
HITCHED ON MAIN—The white mule stands placidly at the hitching post in front of the Martin Hotel on East Main Street looking Westward. Date of the photograph is not known but it was made before the Young Building was constructed. Note the old fashioned center street light. Sewer lines were being laid at the time of the photograph.



CITY HALL CONSTRUCTION—Third floor work is underway in this photograph of the city hall-opera house, built during Joe Baker's administration 1914-16. The construction firm, according to the sign on the second floor was Brown and Flowers, general contractors of Dothan. The tower at right is the present Houston County Health Department, but at that time was the Houston County Jail.

Mystery Of Malunjin Indians Baffles All Making Efforts Toward Solution

The Malunjin Indians — they walked the earth as late as 1885— were quite a problem for those who have been helping put together the Houston County story.

Where they come from and where they went, nobody seems to know. The people who remember of the Malunjins carried their knowledge to the grave where most of it is preserved.

Oscar L. Tompkins, author of "Wiregrass Sagas, gives the reader a fleeting glimpse of this tribe —but no more.

He points out that the Malunjins were a "mixed breed community, residing some three to six miles northeast of Dothan."

"Where they dispersed to is the limbo of forgotten men," Tompkins declares.

Tompkins got his trace of the Indians from the late R. P. Poynor, born near the Malunjins' community. Some of them used to bring milk to Mr. Poynor's mother while he was quite young. He could remember them.

The Poynors lived in the rural area of Houston County between Webb and Kinsey.

R. P. Poynor, Jr., Dothan businessman could shed little light on the Malunjins, other than what his father had told Tompkins. He remembers hearing the late Mr. Poynor discuss "an old Indian woman who used to bring the milk."

Convinced that the Malunjins— although huffing — were more truth than fiction, Eagle chroniclers fanned out their search.

It even led to the Alabama Bureau of Archives and History. But the letter from there was as blank as the stares most people gave when you asked the stock question:

"Did you ever hear of the Malunjin Indians who used to live in Houston County?"

An Eagle reporter even interviewed a 104-year-old man who spent most of his adult life in Kinsey. His memory failed him on the Malunjin subject and the search continued.

Did you ever eat any Malunjin bread? Or did you call it "syrup cake"?

The Malunjins were noted for this mixture of flour, egg, milk, seasoning and syrup—instead of sugar. This suggests that they led a meager existence. Syrup, being more plentiful than sugar and less expensive, was an ingredient that found its way into much of the Malunjin squaw's cooking.

Exactly whether the Malunjins gave the Wiregrass cook this syrup cake delicacy can't be substantiated by records. But many believe they were the first to make syrup cake.

And Malunjin bread still graces many a table, not always because the family can't afford sugar, but because a good slice of syrup cake has no substitute.

When the white man moved into this territory to settle—the Indians notwithstanding — he left only two tribes unmolested, according to Tompkins' Sagas.

One was the Uchees or Euasnees, kinsmen of the Creeks or Seminoles who lived at the mouth of the Euasnee (O'Munee or Mercer) Creek near Columbia.

Part Indian

The other was the Malunjins of the 1800s.

The Euasnees were friendly to the whites throughout Alabama's territorial days which might explain why whites spared them.

The Malunjins were part Indian and part white which apparently explains why the whites spared them.

But where they came from—where they went, nobody seems to know.

"Did you ever hear of the Malunjin Indians who used to live in Houston County?"

Electric System In City Major Source Of Revenue

The light department is the biggest money-rainer the City of Dothan has. And it has been for a good many years.

However, back in 1909, when C. W. Rainey took over as superintendent of the City Light Department, the department wasn't on quite the secure financial footing it is today.

In fact, recalls Mrs. C. W. Rainey, 309 W. Bardeshaw St., there was a time when Mayor Buck Baker, one of Dothan's early settlers and boosters, bought coal to operate the city's light plant and collected as best he could.

In more ways than one, Dothan in the early 1900s was a far cry from the Dothan of today. When Mrs. Rainey was born, before the turn of the century, the city was a flourishing metropolis of some two or four stores.

City Hall Site

Mrs. Rainey, sister of Wiley Deal of Dothan and Walter Deal of Mobile, was born in a house which stood where Dothan's City Hall is now located.

Her father, W. R. Deal, Sr., moved here from Columbia in 1887. He was one of the early builders of Dothan and helped lay out city streets.

In reminiscing over the city's earlier days, Mrs. Rainey related the following information:

Dothan's growth from its brawling, butty infant days is a panorama of causes and effects.

And one of the principal reasons Dothan today is a growing thriving city is this: Columbia, located on the banks of the Chattahoochee, was the trade hub of the area and river boats were the principal means of transportation and travel.

"The Alabama Midland, now the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, came to Dothan because Columbia residents thwarted efforts of the railroad to come through there," Mrs. Rainey said.

Fire Horse

The city's early history is a record of fighting, growing, rioting and laughing.

Take early Dothan's fire department she recalled. In the beginning, the city had one fire wagon and one horse. Later, as additional equipment was added, the first horse was replaced by two younger ones, and the fire horse was assigned to the ignoble task of pulling the trash wagon.

But pride and memory were still there. One day the fire whistle sounded. The ol'war horse, with startling swiftness, came charging into town to stand panting but expectant at the fire department, ready for service.

Richmond Community First County Seat

A little community about eight miles northwest of Dothan called Richmond was the first Henry County seat, when that county, comprising almost all of the present Wiregrass, was formed.

The spot is near what is now Wiggins Church in Dale County, according to Oscar L. Tompkins in his "Wiregrass Sagas."

Tompkins' account says the county seat remained at Richmond from 1819 until 1822 when it was moved to Columbia. In 1833 the county seat was moved to Abbeville.

The Richmond area was a virtual wilderness. Tompkins story says judges and lawyers attending court on circuit at Richmond spent much of their time hunting deer and wild turkeys, shooting bears and an occasional Indian.

Joe Baker paid $1,600 for the old city hall and $400 for the old jail lot at a sale, April 8, 1910.

in the center of the city you'll find...

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"Put" Harvard's Service Station, a Standard Service Dealer in Dothan for 18 years, is located in the center of the city situated on Federal Highways No. 231 and No. 84. No.231, the gateway to northwest Florida and No. 84, the entrance to southwest Georgia. Our location is such that we can service the through traffic without inconvenience. We highly regard the patronage of these people

For the citizens of our fair city, who have made our business a great success, we extend sincere appreciation. For Houston County for which we are proud indeed of the progress it has made in the last half-century. We salute you, Houston County, and we offer our cooperation towards the next fifty years of Progress.

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