

# A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH OF LINEVILLE, ALABAMA

by

Don C. East

## INTRODUCTION

This brief historical sketch of Lineville, Alabama traces the town's growth from a crude frontier settlement in the 1830s to a modern, "close knit" town in 2010. The scope of this history did not permit a detailed examination of each of the town's businesses, churches, schools and prominent individuals. Instead, the intent was to detail Lineville's cycles of economic and population growth, and to highlight the major events that have impacted the town. Within this same scope, an attempt was made to place Lineville's progress over time into historical context with those major events taking place in the state, nation and world. If nothing more, this historical sketch will provide a chronological framework for a future, more detailed study. This story of Lineville was written upon the request of Barbra Pollard of the Lineville Centennial Committee, for use in celebrating the town's 100th anniversary of incorporation on Monday, December 14, 1998.

## THE EARLIEST INHABITANTS

The geographical area containing today's town of Lineville was inhabited by Native Americans as far back as at least 11,000 years ago. Up until the late 1500s, the local Indians were primarily from the Coushatta (Coosa), Alibamo (Alabama), Uchi, Tallassee, Arbeka, Choctaw, Cherokee, and Natchez tribes. White man probably made first contact with these local tribes during Hernando DeSoto's expedition in 1540. Some historians believe that a few of DeSoto's scouts came up Talladega Creek into what is now Clay County. The local Indian tribes suffered a major decrease in population because of the destruction and diseases brought upon them by the Spanish invaders.

The powerful and aggressive Muscogee Indian tribe moved into the east Alabama area from the southwest in approximately the late 1500s. These Indians were soon referred to as "Creeks," due to their practice of settling near streams or creeks. The Creeks quickly subjugated the smaller tribes, but gave them the option of remaining on their lands if they agreed to conform to the strict laws of the Creek Confederacy. The larger tribes, such as the Choctaw and Cherokee were pushed aside by the Creeks into southwest and northeast Alabama respectively.

The headwaters of Fox and Crooked Creeks were prime locations for Indian villages in the present Lineville area, and there have been many artifacts recovered from these sites. The Creek Indian names for these two streams were Chulahatchee and Cananehatchee respectively. Like many local Indian names, the early white settlers translated them into English because of the difficulty in pronunciation.

When white settlers began to move into the Creek lands in the early 1800s, inevitable conflict soon arose between the two cultures. As the resulting raids and retaliatory raids brought bloodshed, it soon led to the Creek Indian or Red Stick War of 1813-1814. Basically, this war

was a subset of the War of 1812, as the Creeks and other Indian tribes were caught up in the imperial ambitions of the British, Spanish, French and Americans. The Creeks were eventually defeated in this conflict by United States and state militia forces under General Andrew Jackson. Before their downfall, the Creeks dealt General Jackson's forces stinging defeats at the Battles of Enitachopko and Emuckfaw, the two major battles of this war that were fought in what is now Clay County. These two battles took place from January 22 through January 24, 1814, about 14 miles south of today's Lineville on Enitachopko and Emuckfaw Creeks. General White, one of Jackson's subordinates, also made a foray into what is now Clay County in November of 1813 where he burned several Creek villages and laid waste to the Creek Town of Hillabee in what was known afterwards as the "Hillabee massacre." Generals Jackson and White together traveled over 230 miles and spent about 18 days in what is now Clay County during this conflict. After their final defeat of the Creeks at Horseshoe Bend on the Tallapoosa River in March of 1814, the tribe was forced out of 22.5 million acres of their traditional lands in Alabama by the Treaty of Fort Jackson. They were then squeezed into an elongated slice of east Alabama land, measuring 5.2 million acres between the Coosa River and the Georgia/Alabama state line. What would later become Clay County and Lineville were now in the center of this new and downsized Creek Indian Confederacy.

After General Jackson was elected as the seventh United States President in 1828, he soon negotiated the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the Treaty of Cussetta in 1832. The Indian Removal Act included the Creeks and all other Native Americans east of the Mississippi River. The Treaty of Cussetta specifically dealt with the Creek tribe. Together these treaties allocated each Creek chief a section of land (640 acres) and each head of household one-half section (320 acres). The remaining lands in east Alabama would be eventually opened to white settlers. Further, the Indians were promised if they would remain on their lands for five years and behave themselves, they would be issued official title to it. After that, they were free to legally sell it to the whites and move west of the Mississippi at Government expense, or they could remain on their lands in Alabama as ordinary citizens. The treaties went on to guarantee that all whites would be removed and kept out of the Creek territory for five years so that those Creeks that wanted to move to the west could divest themselves of their land in an orderly fashion..

Unfortunately for all, shortly after the treaties were signed, white settlers and land speculators swarmed into the east Alabama Creek territory like bees. Most of the Indians were quickly cheated or deceived out of their lands. The Alabama legislature attempted to put some order to the chaos by establishing eight new counties from the east Alabama Creek Indian lands (Calhoun, Talladega, Coosa, Randolph, Chambers, Macon, Russell, and Barbour) in December of 1832. The legislature also assigned a judge to each of these counties. These judges were to ensure that the Indian lands were disposed of in an orderly and legal manner. Greed and corruption prevailed however, and within a short while there were approximately 20,000 white "intruders" (squatters) on the Indian lands. The United States government then sent federal troops and agents into the territory to enforce the treaty provisions. This resulted in clashes between the federals and the white settlers.

After the settlers considered taking up arms against the United States, and Alabama considered leaving the union over the matter, President Jackson sent the famous Francis Scott Key to Alabama as a commissioner to try and reach some type of settlement. At that time, Francis Scott Key was the District Attorney for the District of Columbia. It was finally decided that those whites who had already settled in the east Alabama Indian Territory before the treaties were signed would be allowed to stay, and that all other illegal settlers would have to remove

themselves from the Indian lands. This plan also proved to be unenforceable and the flow of settlers continued. This soon led to real trouble and eventually broke out into open hostilities between the whites and Indians. This violence prompted President Jackson to quickly modify and enforce the provisions of the treaties and force all Indians to the west of the Mississippi River, ahead of the original schedule.

Some of the Indians began voluntarily leaving the east Alabama area as early as 1832, but others chose to resist, and by the spring of 1836, war broke out. This was known as the Second Creek War, or the Creek Indian War of 1836. This Creek uprising was quickly put down by state militias and federal troops, and the forced removal of the remaining Indians got into full swing. The removals continued as the smaller bands were rounded up, and by 1850, most of them had been relocated west of the Mississippi River.

As the Indian removals occurred and the lands in east Alabama were legally opened up for white settlement, the flow of land-hungry pioneers turned into a flood as they surged into the new territory to lay claim to homesteads. The majority of these early East Alabama settlers were from Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia and the Carolinas, and many came bearing land grants provided for their service in the Creek Indian War of 1813-14 or the Revolutionary War.

### A FLOOD OF PIONEERS HEADING WEST

The Lundie (also spelled Lundy and Lunday) family were the first settlers and the founders of today's town of Lineville, Alabama. The patriarch of the family, Hezekiah Lundie was born in Virginia in 1778. After his first two children, Henry and Thomas F., were born in 1797 and 1812, respectively, Hezekiah and his family began a seventeen-year migration that would eventually result in the settlement of our town. The Lundies first moved from Virginia to Edgefield County, South Carolina in around 1815. Two more sons, William Y. and Patrick were born in South Carolina in 1816 and 1821, respectively. In approximately 1825, the Lundie family again joined the migration trail and headed into Georgia.

From Georgia, the Lundies were among the large numbers of land hungry settlers poised to pour into east Alabama as the Indian removals began in the early 1830s. Hezekiah Lundie initially moved into Chambers County, Alabama around 1832. The Lundie family migration from Virginia to Alabama had followed the classic Piedmont/Coastal Plain migration route used by tens of thousands of early Southeastern settlers. While the remainder of the family remained in Chambers County, Thomas F. Lundie took one of his younger brothers, William Y., and headed on westward to seek his own land and fortune in the east Alabama territory being vacated by the Indians.

Thomas and William Lundie arrived in the area of today's Lineville around 1833 or 1834. The brothers subsequently obtained land grants on September 9, 1835. Thomas Lundie's grant was for land on the east side of the Randolph/Talladega County line, and his brother's was on the west side of the county line. At this time, Thomas was 23 years old and had a wife and a one-year old child. His brother William was only 19 years old. Several years later, the remainder of the Lundie family; Hezekiah, his wife Mary, and the other two brothers, Henry and Patrick, joined Thomas and William in the new settlement they had founded.

When these first frontiersmen arrived, they found a heavily forested region, crisscrossed by numerous streams and narrow Indian trade trails. These earliest settlers made the majority of their cash through the sale of livestock that they free-ranged on the public lands at the edge of the frontier.

The next white settlers were Robert C. Wilson and his brother-in-law Mark E. Moore, who settled on land grant property to the west of the Lundies in 1836. Instead of moving into the east Alabama lands from Georgia as most of the early settlers did, apparently the Wilsons and Moores moved in from St. Clair County. St. Clair was one of the Alabama counties established in the 1816-1819 period that bordered the Creek Indian lands on the west. Family stories show that some of the early settlers reached these counties by rafting down the Coosa River from Georgia, instead of using the traditional overland routes. Just as many settlers were poised to flood into the new east Alabama counties from Georgia; these St. Clair, Shelby, Blount, Autauga, Morgan, Montgomery, Madison, Pike, Jackson and Henry County settlers were now positioned to stream into the new counties from the west. Meanwhile, the Creeks were rapidly pressured and squeezed between these two groups of settlers.

Further settlement of the area was slowed for a few months by the Second Creek War in 1836. However, the pioneer stream soon picked up again, and in 1838 the Lundie brothers built a trading post. This was the first business established in the fledging settlement and marks the beginnings of today's Lineville. Earlier, there was a fairly large gold strike in east Alabama around 1830. The Lundie Trading Post was a key resupply point for the large number of miners traveling between the gold mines at Cragford, Hog Mountain, Idaho and Chulefinnee. The Lundie Trading Post was also a major stop for pioneers headed further west to settle in the eight new counties established in east Alabama by the 1832 legislature. The Lundie Trading Post was on the Old McIntosh Trail, which was a major east-west Creek Indian trading trail connecting the Indian village of Talladega with those in west Georgia. The Treaty of Cussetta allowed white settlers to use this and other major Indian trails to pass through the Creek territory enroute the established counties to the west. In short, the Lundie Brother's Trading Post was in the right place and at the right time.

Apparently the Lundie Trading Post did a very profitable business. The 1840 census showed that the twenty-four year old William Lundie was now married, had acquired 9 Negro slaves, and had branched out into agriculture. A large portion of the Negro slaves acquired by these early east Alabama settlers were purchased from the local Creek Indians as they divested themselves of their land and other property for the move west of the Mississippi River. Some of these former Indian slaves were especially valuable to the early settlers because they could speak the Creek Indian language as well as English. This allowed their owners to use them as translators in conducting lucrative land deals with the Creeks. These bilingual slaves were those that had been captured by the Creeks in raids against white settlements, or were runaways from plantations in Georgia or the settled areas of Alabama. A Creek Indian census was ordered by the Treaty of Cussetta and taken a year later in 1833. This census showed that there were a total of 902 Negro slaves owned by the Creeks in east Alabama. As well, there were also hundreds of black freedmen among the Creeks as members of the tribe. Most of these slaves that were not sold to the incoming white settlers, were subsequently taken west with the Creeks during the Removals. Many of these slaves became freedmen in the new territory to the west. After slavery was abolished, large numbers of the Negro ex-slaves and the freedmen were adopted by the Creek tribe in Oklahoma.

Thomas Lundie also had economic interest aside from the trading post. He was evidently involved in land speculation. A Talladega County court case on October 3, 1839 dealt with a land squabble between Thomas Lundie and Daniel Richie. Richie had apparently either unknowingly or illegally sold some land to his father-in-law, David Brown, that actually belonged to Lundie. Lundie won the judgment.

Slowly, as the eastern edge of the Southern frontier acquired more and more settlers, the economy of the area evolved from a herdsman/hunting/trading economy to one of subsistence farming and trading. By now, there were enough people in the settlement to warrant a church. The first church built was the Crooked Creek Baptist Church. This church was organized in 1839, with Dr. Samuel Henderson as the first pastor. This church was located near Crooked Creek, one and one quarter mile west of today's downtown Lineville.

Another trading post was built in the settlement around 1840. This establishment was owned and operated by Linzy Burney and Ben Haynes. Soon, the first crude roads were built north-south from Montgomery to Oxford and east-west from Talladega to the Georgia State line. These two roads intersected at the Lundie and Burney/Haynes trading posts, and the community picked up the name "Lundie's Cross Roads," in honor of it's first white settlers.

When the community had enough young children to warrant a school, a primitive one-room log school house was built. These first schools on the Alabama frontier were known as old "field schools." The old field schools were primarily elementary schools, in which reading, writing and "ciphering" (arithmetic) were taught. These schools were partially financed through charges levied for each child. The parents of each student were charged around \$2.50 for a five or six month term. The Alabama Constitution also contained some crude provisions for education funding. The primary one was called the "Sixteenth Section Fund." This provision set aside the sixteenth section in each township for the funding of the county school system. Meanwhile, the village's founder, Thomas F. Lundie, was elected as a Randolph County Commissioner, and served from 1844 until 1852. The 1850 census of Randolph County showed that Thomas and his wife Winefred now had a total of six children. Lundie unsuccessfully ran for the State Senate as a member of the "Whig" Party in 1853. Henry M. Gay defeated Lundie by only 34 votes in this election.

#### FROM LUNDIE'S CROSS ROADS TO COUNTY LINE

After several more families of settlers arrived in the village, a post office was established on April 4, 1856, and the official name of County Line, Alabama was bestowed on the village. At this time, Clay County had not yet been established, and the location of the village of County Line was astride the north-south line separating Talladega and Randolph Counties. The north-south main street in County Line (today's Third Avenue) was the old Montgomery-Oxford Road, which was located directly on the line separating the two counties - thus the derivation of the village name. A well was dug on this street at approximately the location of today's downtown traffic light. This well was a public watering place for man and beast.

Shortly after the post office was established, the Lundie brothers divided 5 acres of their property into lots on the east side of today's downtown traffic light. The brothers donated the proceeds from the subsequent sale of these lots for the establishment of a new school. By now the old field schools were being replaced in the larger communities by an institution usually known as an "Academy." Also, many of the old field schools in nearby smaller communities began to close and consolidate their students with those in the new academies of the larger communities. The academies taught the same basics as the old field schools, plus some additional subjects. Some of the academies also offered what would today qualify as high school subjects. The tuition usually charged for each student in these new academies was on the order of 5-15 dollars per term for the primary subjects and 10-20 dollars for the high school subjects. This new school was named County Line Academy. County Line Academy would comply with

a new state general statute passed in 1854, called the Alexander B. Meek Bill. This bill provided for a system of free public schools. This was an important bill for education in the counties, because by 1854, over half of the counties in the state had sold all of their sixteenth sections of land to fund their schools. Therefore, this new law brought some timely and welcome state funding.

The community of County Line continued to add new citizens and businesses, and by the start of the Civil War it was a thriving town. By the 1860s, a large portion of the dense forest in the area of County Line had given way to the axe and the plow. Subsistence farming had transitioned to a cash crop system of agriculture, where cotton and corn were the principal crops, and merchandising continued to expand and prosper.

## THE WAR OF NORTHERN AGGRESSION AND A NEW COUNTY

Although cash crop agriculture was now the primary economy in the greater County Line area, there were very few farmers that owned Negro slaves. Studies show that of 1,628 Randolph County families engaged in agriculture in 1850, only 217 of these owned slaves. Of those slave owning farm families, the greater percentage (71.43%) owned only one to five slaves each. The figures were similar in 1860; in that only 300 out of 2,468 Randolph County farm families owned slaves, and again the majority (68.33%) owned only one to five slaves each. Even though very few of the residents of the County Line community were slave owners, they were nevertheless staunch supporters of the Confederate states rights cause, and marched off to war in large numbers. There was a predominance of Scotch-Irish inhabitants in the County Line area. The Scotch-Irish were known as the perpetual champions of individual and states rights. Because of this, our region probably sent more men to the war per populace than many areas in the state that had huge cotton plantations and large slave holdings. Even though there were no Civil War battles fought on our county's soil, the residents nevertheless felt a major impact from the struggle because of the large number of casualties suffered by local men, and the rigors of the harsh eleven-year Reconstruction Era afterwards.

Those men lucky enough to survive the war and return to County Line, found life had taken a giant step backward. The local economy was in shambles, the Confederate money was worthless, and law and order had returned to a frontier level. During the Civil War and the Reconstruction Era afterwards, the population of County Line was reduced significantly. Part of this population loss was simply as a results of war casualties. The other part of the loss was those that moved to Texas and other points west. Some of those migrating west were forced to do so because of the hardships of the postwar era; others were simply caught up in the new wave that was pushing the boundaries of the nation westward in search of America's "manifest destiny".

It was during this post-Civil War Reconstruction Era that Clay County was established as the state's 58th county. It was named after Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky. There were two major reasons for establishing the new county. Perhaps the primarily reason was because of the difficulty that Talladega and Randolph were having in administering those remote sections of their counties which lay between the two major geographic obstacles - the Talladega Mountains and the Tallapoosa River. According to some historians, a second reason for establishing Clay County was a political one. Clay was one of seven new counties created after the end of the Civil War by three sessions of the 1866 Alabama General Assembly. The other six were Bullock, Cleburne, Elmore, Crenshaw, Lee, and Etowah. These seven new counties were

sometimes referred to as the “Carpetbagger Counties,” because it was said they were created in order to ensure the federally imposed reconstruction government in Montgomery a firmer control on the state.

## ESTABLISHING A COUNTY SEAT OF GOVERNMENT

For whatever reason or reasons for its formation, the new county of Clay was established on December 7, 1866. Clay County was created primarily out of lands taken from the western side of Randolph county and the eastern side of Talladega County. Governor Robert M. Patton signed the act that created Clay County, and therein also designated five commissioners to hold a referendum on the first Monday in March, 1867. The purpose of this referendum was to elect county officers and to select a site for the new county seat. Meanwhile, in 1866 a survey was made to determine the geographic center of the new county. When the March 1867 election took place, two sites were on the ballot to compete for the location of the new county seat; the site of the geographic center of the county, and the town of County Line. County Line would appear to be the logical choice since it was the only existing village of any size in the area. There had been larger villages within the confines of the new county during the gold mining boom in the late 1830s and 1840s. However, nearly all these people had packed up their picks and shovels and headed for California during the 1849 gold rush. This exodus left towns like Cragford as nearly “ghost towns.” Surprisingly, the geographic center site received the majority of the votes. The election results was no doubt influenced by the fact that Mr. Hollingsworth Watts had donated 40 acres of land at the geographic center site for the building of a new town. The county seat would later be named Ashland, after Henry Clay’s Kentucky home. At the same time, the town of County Line was designated as the temporary county seat of Clay County until the new courthouse could be built in Ashland.

For the period that County Line was the temporary county seat, court was held in the old Baptist Church. In 1863, the church had been moved from Crooked Creek into the downtown area. While County Line was the temporary county seat, a log jail house and several more homes and store buildings were erected. Ashland’s new one-story log courthouse was soon completed, and the official functions of the county seat shifted to that new settlement. This initial county courthouse subsequently burned on December 18, 1875.

In 1869, the Alabama Reconstruction State Superintendent of Education made the decision that blacks were entitled to a share of state funding for their separate schools. Shortly after that decision, a black public school was built at Spring Hill on today’s Oak Grove Road. This log construction school building was along the same pattern as the old field schools discussed earlier, and served the local Negro population until 1926. There were other black old field schools established in villages around County Line, such as New Hope at Barfield and Young’s Chapel northeast of County Line. Like the white old field schools, these black schools would gradually be closed and their students consolidated with the larger black schools in Ashland and County Line.

## FROM COUNTY LINE TO LINEVILLE

On February 3, 1870, the name of the town and the post office was officially changed from County Line to Lineville. This name change was made because the Randolph/Talladega county line running directly through the town had gone away with the establishment of Clay County. In

short, the town was no longer situated on a county line. However, the citizens insisted upon keeping something familiar in the new name - thus "Lineville" was a compromise of sorts. Besides, they reasoned that the center of the town was still on the north-south line separating Range Eight East from Range Nine East. With the harsh Reconstruction Era now over, life in Lineville was gradually returning to normal. As the town continued to grow, the first telegraph line was strung from Oxford to County Line in 1888.

Meanwhile, the old County Line Academy had undergone several enlargements and more grades were added since its establishment in 1856. In keeping with the town's new name, the school was renamed as "Lineville Academy."

In the late 1890s, Lineville was granted a charter for a secondary college. On September 12, 1899, Lineville College was open for business with H. J. Willingham as the first president. During its initial year of operation, tuition was \$10.00 per year and board was \$7.50 per month. This baccalaureate degree-granting institution operated until 1911.

The town of Lineville was incorporated on December 14, 1898, starting the countdown to our centennial celebration in 1998. The first mayor elected was Dr. R. D. Evans. In 1899 graphite mining came to the county. This would prove to be a major industry for the area for several years to follow. A year later in 1900, the town's population had increased to 422, and shortly thereafter, J. H. Ingram organized the town's first bank, named The Lineville National Bank.

## THE ARRIVAL OF THE RAILROAD, ELECTRIC POWER AND CITY WATER

In the Autumn of 1907, the Atlanta, Birmingham and Atlantic Railroad (A, B and A RR) brought track through Lineville, thus paving the way for further economic growth. After the railroad came to town, the lumber and mining industries expanded rapidly. Timbers for the construction of railroad cross ties and bridges, and for use in mine shafts could now be shipped out by rail. This great need for construction timbers accelerated the disappearance of the huge forest of longleaf pine and other species of trees in the region. Before long, local people could take advantage of the new rail passenger service on the four runs provided through Lineville each day. Two hotels, two churches, and more than 40 business buildings and homes were built shortly after the railroad came through town.

In 1907, the Alabama Legislature established a mandatory county high school system, and at the same time decided to create local centers of agricultural, industrial and vocational training throughout the state. These two decisions led to the creation of nine Congressional District Agricultural Schools that were supported by the fertilizer and tag tax fund. This funding came just in time for Clay County, since only two of its original allocation of sixteenth sections used to support county schools were remaining at this time. Lineville received one of the new Congressional District schools, named North East Alabama Agricultural and Industrial Institute (NEAA & II). NEAA & II was built in 1910 and became the new public school for grades 1 through 12, replacing the old Lineville Academy. This new school began classes for the 1911-12 school year, and operated under this name until 1918.

The first principal of NEAA & II was Brandt Le Boon. According to a 1914 NEAA & II handbook, the stated purpose of the school was to educate the boys and girls, young men and women of east Alabama, both theoretically and practically in the science of Agriculture, Farm Mechanics, Domestic Science and Art, together with giving them a well rounded education in the literary branches. The handbook went on to say that in the past our boys and girls were lured



away from the farms and had their minds fixed on the overcrowded professions of law and medicine. It continued by saying that changing conditions have now provided the possibility of profitable scientific farming, and the child must now be educated toward the farm and not away from it. The slogan for the new school was: "back to the farm!" With such strong emphasis on agriculture, it is not surprising that the nickname of the NEAA & II student body became "The Aggies," a nickname that continues until this day.

The NEAA & II building was a large, two-story brick structure, located on almost the same site as today's Lineville High School. In addition to the school building, NEAA & II owned a nearby school farm that was used as a school garden, experimental farm, and for the school's practical agricultural work. No tuition was charged at NEAA & II, but all students were required to pay a \$2.50 matriculation fee at the beginning of each term. Initially, the school had no dormitory, but many of the town's private homes boarded out-of-town students for a fee of \$10.00 to \$15.00 per month. As an example of the school's out-of-town boarders, during the 1917-1918 school year there were a total of 41 boarders listed. 32 of these boarders were from Clay County, 7 from Randolph, 1 from Tallapoosa and 1 from Georgia. For the 1914-1915 school year, NEAA & II had a total enrollment of 408 students and a new Principal, Professor Sharps. His faculty included the following: J. D. Pepper - mathematics, J. E. Shotts - science and agriculture, Lenna Arrant - French and expression, Nora West - English, literature and Latin, Dorothy Caldwell - home economics, Stella Browne - music, Emma Hardy - fifth and sixth grades, and Bonnie Williams - first and second grades.

1913 was the first graduating class of NEAA & II, and it included J.O. Barfield, Carrie Billingsley, Ester Billingsley, Bessie Birchfield, J. C. Fuller, Vada Glass, G. W. Griffin, O. D. House, Earl G. Smith, and Luther T. Young. Other data found during research at the Auburn University Library provided the names of the graduates of NEAA & II for the years 1914 through 1917 as follows:

1914	1915	1916	1917
Ida Blake Barfield	Earl Bartlett	Irene Gay	Carrie Davis
Vera Barfield	Mildred Boazman	Arnold Harmon	Gertrude Harris
Annie L. Barnhill	Mattie Birchfield	Mayme Matthews	Shellie Hendon
Myrtis Clark	Albert A. East	Ruth Moon	Euna Jackson
Joseph J. Cockrell	Levis Handley	Annis Pearson	Plimer T. Orr
T. Baron Gibson	Ida Ola Jarrell	Anna Maude Swift	Cecil B. Pepper
J. Roy Hines	Pauline Jones	Raleigh Willingham	
Vernie Holdridge	Frost Langston		
William Ingram	James Moon		
Thomas N. Jarrell	William Parker		
Myrtle McCain	Ettie Smith		
Elizabeth Moon			
Emmitt Parker			
Millard Price			
Zera Smith			
Minnie Lee Sephens			

Around 1917, Professor R. L. Burkes replaced Professor Sharps as the principal and North East Alabama Agricultural And Industrial Institute continued in operation for another year before it received a new name.

It was around this time that the renowned series of Lineville-Ashland football games began. The competition in this annual game has always been as intense as any series anywhere, high school or college. This event, known as the "Clay Bowl," has been more than just a football game over the years - it has been a major social event that is woven into the very fabric of both towns.

Meanwhile, on the political scene, D. M. David was elected as Lineville's second mayor in 1908, and the third was Wyatt Green, elected in 1912. The next year, on May 9, 1913, a disastrous fire broke out downtown. The fire destroyed the B. C. Bynum mercantile building and most of the First Methodist Church before it could be extinguished. In 1914, Lineville's fourth mayor, C. S. Phillips, was elected. By now the town of Lineville had a telephone exchange, three banks, two modern hotels, furniture and fertilizer factories, cotton seed oil mills, cotton gins, saw mills, a brick yard, a mica factory, and a large cotton warehouse, as well as more than two dozen merchandising stores.

R. H. Moon became Lineville's mayor in 1916 and the town's next economic boost came with the electrical power that was provided the next year. With this new power source, the town could now compete with other parts of the state and nation in manufacturing and other enterprises. This same year saw Lineville build its now famous landmark - the Lineville water tower. This 100 foot tall structure held 75,000 gallons of water, and resembles a medieval sentry tower. The water tower is located on today's College Street, and is one of only four Clay County structures on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage. 1917 also saw the construction of an improved railway depot for Lineville. This facility served as a combination passenger and freight station.

By this time, Alabama was producing around 58% of the nation's crystalline graphite, most of that coming from Clay County. Nearly 50 graphite mines were in the county up until the 1920s. Although the earlier mining of gold, iron ore, pyrite, sulfur, soapstone, tin, mica, copper, slate and other minerals had brought some boost to the Lineville economy, the graphite boom made the greatest mark.

1917 also saw the United State's entry into World War I. Many of Lineville's men went "over there," and several did not return.

With the new electric power, a town water supply and the railroad service, several new businesses soon sprung up in Lineville. A snapshot of some of Lineville's businesses during this era is as follows: W. B. Smith and Sons Merchandise (clothing, groceries, school supplies and undertaker supplies), Clay County Oil Mill and Fertilizer Company (commercial fertilizers and cotton seed products), The Citizens National Bank (W. H. Reddock, President; A. D. Langston, Cashier, \$230,000.00 resources), Barfield-Green Mercantile Company (up-to-date line of merchandise), The Lineville National Bank (J. H. Ingram, President; May Barfield, Cashier; W. D. Haynes, Chairman of the Board; capital and surplus \$75,000.00), Griffin and Sons (general merchandise and tailoring), L. H. Crumpler Druggist (drugs, school supplies and cold drinks), Clay Hardware-Furniture Company (hardware, furniture, blankets, crockery, coffins and burial robes), Lineville Drug Company (drugs, eye glasses, stationery, school supplies, candies, soda fountain), C. O. Glass (attorney-at-law), H. Rosen (clothing, shoes, hats), J. W. Burrow Company (general merchandise, clothing, hardware), Lineville Livery Company (livery and feed stable, carriages and hacks, auto service), Mitchell and Blank's Lineville Bottling Works (ginger

ale, soda water, coca cola and other carbonated drinks), The Lineville Cafe (open to men and women), Nixon and Phillips Livery (livery, feed stable, wagons, buggies, harness, horses and mules), M. B. Smith Electric Company (electrical supplies, automobile supplies, bicycles, tires, oxy-acetylene welding), J. C. Weaver and Sons (dry goods, notions, clothing, groceries and shoes), Farmers and Merchants Bank (W. J. Green, President; C. W. Bell, Vice President; William E. Carpenter, Assistant Cashier), Owens Brothers (groceries), The Best Drug Store (drugs, school supplies, toiletries, flowers, candies, cold drinks and cigars), Dukes Brothers Furniture Company (furniture, stoves, ranges, suit cases, trunks, dishes, cooking utensils, coffins and caskets), M. G. Langston (clothing), The Sanitary Barber Shop (C. N. Cain , Proprietor), O. B. Yates and N.G. Blair (dry goods, clothing, groceries), Rudd Medicine Company (makers of Livaclena Medicine), and Lester's Department Store (clothing and stationery).

Lineville's residents elected J. C. Gaines as the town's sixth mayor in 1918. 1918 also saw North East Alabama Agricultural and Industrial Institute change its name to State Secondary Agricultural School, or "SSAS" for short. However, The nickname "Aggies" that was adopted under NEAA & II, was maintained.

Several newspapers have served Lineville's citizenry over the years. Some of these were countywide newspapers and others were local Lineville publications. Such were The Clay County Watchman (printed in Lineville 1884-1889), The Lineville Educator (1887), The Clay County Advance (1888), The Central Democrat (printed in Lineville 1889), The Clay County Free Press (printed in Lineville 1889), and The Lineville Headlight (began in 1902).

## THE GREAT AMERICAN DEPRESSION AND ITS AFTERMATH

In 1920, D. F. Gibson was elected as the mayor of a Lineville whose population had quickly grown to 1,507. During the 1920s, there were improvements in the county roads in the vicinity of Lineville. Because of this, many more of the outlying old field schools closed and their students consolidated with the larger schools in Lineville and Ashland. A chapter in Lineville's history that has caused some controversy came in 1922, when one of its own, Hiram Wesley Evans, became Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. That same year, R. H. Moon was elected as the town's mayor for a second time. Moon was followed by J. W. Jones in the town leadership post in 1924. In 1927 Robinson Manufacturing Company was established in Lineville. Robinson would be the forerunner of several more clothing manufactures for the town.

In 1926 the old Spring Hill black school was replaced by a new building at the site of today's Vocational School. This new black school was named Clay County Training School, and would serve Lineville's black community until integration came in 1969.

During the latter part of 1929, Lineville began to lose population for the second time in its history. During these hard economic times, many people lost their farms and went to the larger cities in search of employment. Many of the cotton and corn fields began to go fallow. To make matters worse, it was also about this time that the huge demand for graphite begun during World War I, dramatically decreased. Any demand for the mineral that remained, was taken up by the discovery of large deposits in Madagascar, where labor for extraction was much cheaper. By 1930, the population of Lineville had dropped slightly to 1,476, but then the drop became precipitous as the Depression deepened. Through natural regeneration and the efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the forest in the area began to reclaim the abandoned farms. Ironically, during these hard times, Lineville was often referred to as "The Chrysanthemum

City” because of the profusion of these flowers in season. In 1933, The Lineville Headlight became the Lineville Tribune, and continued to serve the media needs of the town. T. L. Barnhill was elected mayor of Lineville in 1934 and served ten years in that office to bring the town out of the Depression.

In 1939, the State Secondary Agricultural School (SSAS) was renamed as “Lineville High School,” however, the now popular nickname “Aggies” remained. After the Depression, the population of Lineville began to slowly climb again. By 1940, the population was back up to 1,300, and now the town had it’s first movie theater.

## MORE INDUSTRY AND JOBS

In 1940, the county’s first hard surface road, highway #9, was completed from Montgomery to Heflin, where it connected with U. S. highway #78. Lineville received a major benefit from this new highway since it went directly through downtown, where it was named Main Street. This new road also marked the beginning of the end of local railroad passenger service, although it dribbled on until the 1950s.

The disruption of World War II hit Lineville as hard as it did the rest of the nation. Scores of residents answered their nations call to arms, and again, many did not return. Also, some residents temporarily left Lineville to work at the defense plants in Sylacauga and Anniston. To provide for the town’s medical needs, the Lineville Clinic was founded in the 1940s, with the first doctors being Drs. Foster and Suit. J. O. McCain was elected mayor of Lineville in 1944. He served during the remainder of the World War II years and through most of the Korean conflict, leaving office in 1952.

Up until this point, the economy of Lineville was based primarily upon the two mainstays - agriculture and the forestry businesses. By 1947, there were five lumber mills in Lineville; Buzeman, Hooten, Twilley, Sentell and Brown. The Shaddix lumber yard and sawmill would come a year later. Earlier, in 1946, Lineville Manufacturing Company (Higgins) ran its first pair of pants off the assembly line on the Fourth of July. Higgins was key to the diversification of Lineville’s economy and helped the population to continue its upward trend. In 1948, Lester Proctor took over the Lineville Tribune newspaper and served the media needs of the town for 42 years.

Row crop farming was now on the decline, and the large commercial pulp and timber companies were beginning to buy up the abandoned farmland to plant pine trees. The area around Lineville eventually began to resemble the heavily forested countryside the first settlers found when they moved in during the 1830s.

By the end of the 1940s, the county was crossed by three hard surfaced roads, and by the end of the 1950s, practically all the major county roads were hard surfaced as a results of the “farm to market” program. These new roads and the faster vehicles using them, significantly improved the volume of trade Lineville businesses would get from the surrounding farm communities. Unfortunately, Lineville’s new economic gain was soon nullified by these same roads and vehicles, because of easy access to the large shopping malls now being built in nearby larger cities. Accordingly, many of the downtown Lineville businesses saw the first signs of hard economic times, and eventual closure.

Meanwhile, on the agricultural scene, row crop farming finally bottomed out in the 1950s. Now, after struggling for over 100 years to make a living row crop farming on this poor soil, local farmers finally came upon a profitable form of agriculture that was suited to the rocky hills

around Lineville - cattle, chickens and pine timber.

When the Korean War broke out in 1950, Lineville's residents again answered the call to duty, and again, many did not return to their hometown.

Clay County Hospital opened its doors on September 3, 1951 to ensure the medical needs of the county and Lineville residents would be better served. One year later, John T. Hudson was elected as Lineville's twelfth mayor, and he was succeeded by J. O. McCain in 1956.

By 1960, the population of Lineville was 1,612, and shortly thereafter, new businesses such as Wellborn Cabinet Company and Cal-Maine Foods came to the area. Although these plants were located in Ashland, they nevertheless provided many jobs for Lineville residents.

Our brief era of peace was once again shattered in 1964 by the Gulf of Tonkin incident. This event propelled the United States seriously into the Southeast Asian conflict. Once again, our young men answered the call of duty, and once again, many never returned to their beloved homeland. Claude M. Denson was elected as mayor of Lineville that same year, and remained in office for twelve years - longer than any mayor to date.

In 1967, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued the license for a Lineville AM (amplitude modulated) radio station. The new station was assigned the call sign WANL and operated on 1,000 watts of power. In 1985, owner Bob Perry applied to the FCC to have the power increased to 5,000 watts. At the same time, the call sign was changed to WZZX. The Federal desegregation order of 1967 resulted in the integration of the Lineville public schools in 1969. The old black Clay County Training School was soon converted into a Vocation School. By the next year, the population of Lineville was 1,971.

#### A DECADE OF RAPIDECONOMIC EXPANSION

During the ten-year period from the mid 1970s until the mid 1980s, new manufacturing facilities came to the county and provided much needed jobs for Lineville residents. Among these were Russell Manufacturing Corporation, ACE Products, and Tyson Foods (who bought out Spring Valley and expanded). Mayor Jack Whatley was elected in 1976, and would preside over much of this new growth.

In order to support this increase in industry, a Clay County airport was constructed in the 1970s between the towns of Ashland and Lineville. About the same time, a golf course and country club facility was opened; again it was located midway between the two towns.

In 1974, The Alabama Power Company began construction on R. L. Harris dam, 8 miles southeast of Lineville. This nine-year construction project provided jobs for many people in the area. When the generation equipment went on line in 1983, the Lake Wedowee impoundment behind the new dam began to provide first class recreation for local and area residents, as well as a cheap source of electrical power.

By now the rural countryside around Lineville was transformed to that of its current state - it was a matrix of dense forest, with interspersed pasture land and dotted with the long houses of the chicken industry.

A public library was opened in Lineville in 1979, and by the next year, the town's population was 2,200. Perry Young was elected as the town's next mayor in 1984. Two years later the Lineville City Park was built. This park was needed to supply a recreation facility and a place to hold large public events. The Lineville City Park is one of the most picturesque parks in the region, with its stunning view of the Talladega Mountains and Mount Cheaha. Several events

are held in this park, such as the Antique Tractor and the Alcazar Antique Auto Shows. These annual events draw thousands of visitors from near and far.

In 1988, Jack Whatley returned to the mayor's office for his second time. Due to the growth of Clay County in general, and the need to attract new businesses, tourist and retirees, a countywide Chamber of Commerce was established in 1990. The Chamber was housed in the old Farmer's Market, halfway between Ashland and Lineville. Also in the anticipation of increased industrial growth, the Lineville government established an industrial park that same year. Upon the death of his father in 1990, David Proctor took over the reins of the Lineville Tribune, and on the sixth of September that same year, printed the first issue of the new Clay Times-Journal newspaper. The 1990 census count of Lineville was 2,354.

### THE BUGLE CALLS AGAIN

When the Gulf War came in 1990, Lineville's National Guard 1208th. Quartermaster Company was mobilized for active duty. Additionally, many Lineville residents were in Ashland's 127th. Medical Group and other National Guard units in the area that were also mobilized. These units received a rousing sendoff as county residents lined highway #9 for miles when the troops pulled out. The area Gulf War veterans received a similar patriotic welcome when they returned in 1991.

During the Gulf War, hordes of media personnel descended upon Lineville and the remainder of Clay County. We had our lifetime allocation of "fifteen minutes of fame," and more, as national attention was riveted on our "volunteer" spirit. Feature articles were written in newspapers such as USA Today, in magazines such as Newsweek, and were shown on Television programs such as CNN News and all the major networks. Clay County's claim that we had more military personnel serving in the Gulf War per populace than any county in America was never disputed. Lineville has always been a close-knit small town where patriotism runs to the very core. The only casualty Clay County military personnel suffered during the Gulf War was one death due to a heart attack.

### A NEW WAVE OF INDUSTRY

In 1992, Perry Young was elected for his second time to the office as Lineville's eighteenth mayor. During the early 1990s, he presided over Lineville's acquisition of a new wave of small and medium size manufacturing plants. Some of These facilities were John-Co Manufacturing, Lace Wood Incorporated, Higgins Embroidery, and Three Dimension Woodcraft. Also, to support the rapid growth of cattle farming in the area, the Clay County Livestock Auction Barn was built in 1992. These new family owned and satellite industries, along with the larger ones already in place, supplemented the timber and agriculture economy of the Lineville area. This more balanced economy has recently brought the county and Lineville's unemployment rate to the lowest levels in history. As the economy outgrew the available labor force, the county industries followed the lead of other areas of the nation and began to import Hispanic workers. There are an estimated 500 Hispanic workers in the area today.

## THE LINEVILLE OF THE LATE 1990S

The Lineville of 1998 was a striving town of three banks, one motel, around a dozen churches, and over sixty businesses. Some of the town civic organizations are the Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, Jaycees, Exchange Club, Inter Se Club, and the Progressive Study Club.

Lineville even boast an astronaut among its products. U. S. Navy Commander, Joe Frank Edwards, a NASA astronaut, lived in Lineville and is a graduate of Lineville High School. After he piloted the space shuttle on a mission early in 1998, our local politicians in Montgomery passed a resolution on the first day of the 1998 legislative session to make Thursday, January 22nd declared as Joe Frank Edwards day in the state of Alabama.

But Joe Edwards is not the only graduate of Lineville High School to make a mark in our society. Many bright young men and women have graduated from this proud school and gone on to make major contributions in all walks of life. In addition to academics, Lineville High School has also made a name for itself in the field of athletics. In recent years, the Aggies were declared state 2A football champions in 1961, and were voted by the Birmingham News for the top spot in 1962. They also won the state 2A championship in basketball in 1996, and were state runners-ups in 1963, 1965 and 1966. More recently, in 1996, Lineville and Ashland each won their respective divisions in the football playoffs, and for the first time in state history, two teams from the same county played for the state 2A championship. That day was declared an official holiday in the county and a large portion of the population attended the game at the Iron Bowl in Birmingham - Ashland won the bragging rights for that year.

With the vastly improved road system and faster transportation of the past few decades, Lineville's citizens have left the stately old business buildings of Main Street and Third Avenue downtown for the large shopping malls in Birmingham, Anniston, Montgomery and Boaz. This phenomenon is not unique to Lineville, but has occurred in towns of all sizes throughout America. In order to bring businesses back to these vacant buildings, and to bring the customers back to downtown, the Pride of Lineville Program was recently initiated. This is a collective effort, combining the work of smaller groups which individually simply didn't have enough momentum to make the necessary changes. The Pride of Lineville Program has recently spawned the Lineville Downtown Redevelopment Authority to specifically address the problem. This program is modeled after many successful ones, namely Rome and Dalton, Georgia and Tupelo, Mississippi.

In 2000, Mayor Perry Young retired and was replaced by Roy Adamson as Lineville's nineteenth Mayor. Under his leadership, several Lineville downtown beautification projects were completed.

In 2003, the Bibb Graves School and the Mellow Valley schools were closed, leaving only Ashland and Lineville as the county's two public schools. During this same period, First Assembly Christian, Mellow Valley Christian, and Bethel arose as private schools. Then, in late 2010 ground will be broken for a consolidate single County public school. This school will be built between the two county incorporated towns of Ashland and Lineville.

2004 saw the election of the first Clay County native as the Governor of Alabama. Bob Riley is currently serving his second term as Governor and will leave office January 2011. With his and the Director of Alabama Tourism, Lee Sentell's backing, the author has recently gained approval, and written the wording, for a new Alabama historic marker to be placed on the lawn of the Clay County courthouse. This two-side marker will commemorate the actions of General

Andrew Jackson and his army during the Creek Indian War of 1813-14, emphasizing those actions that occurred in what is now Clay County. The opposite side will commemorate the Creek Indian Confederacy, with emphasis on the Red Stick or Upper Creeks, that opposed General Jackson in that conflict. This new historic marker is expected to be installed during the latter part of 2010 and will join another recent historic marker on the courthouse lawn telling the Clay County story.

Two other recent factors that will improve Clay County and Lineville's marketability were a major improvement in the County Airport under the leadership of the Airport committee Chairman, John DeCoursey, and the extension of the Appalachian Trail southward to nearby Mount Cheaha.

The latest census (2009) of Clay County was 13,640. The town of Lineville counted 2,424 residents in the town limits and 5,346 in the 36266 zip code area.

### 2010, THE NEXT 100 YEARS, AND A NEW MILLENNIUM

With the natural beauty of the local lakes and mountains, the low cost of living, low crime rate, and the equidistant location between three of the South's larger cities, Lineville stands poised for continued growth. With clean industries, tourism and a recent influx of retirees, Lineville has found that growth does not have to come at the expense of its good quality of life. As Lineville enters the next one hundred years, it is also in a new millennium and a globe that is shrinking with high technology. Although it is certain that the next one hundred years will bring considerable change, Lineville will adapt and prosper as it has in the past. As a town that is twenty eight years older than the county it lies in, Lineville is prepared and anxious to lead Clay County through the twenty first century.

---

Author's note - The author wishes to thank Carolyn Dunagan, a former Clay County Chamber of Commerce Director and Mary Patchunka-Smith, the current Director, Faye Cole of the Lineville City Library, Tina Nolen of the Ashland Library, Mary Bob Williams and Pam Shirey of the Clay County Heritage Book Committee, Arthur (Coach) Oliver, Mark Griffin of the Lineville City Hall, Tom Farrow of the Alabama Extension Service, Peter Branum of the Auburn University Library, and the personnel at the Alabama State Archives in Montgomery for their assistance in conducting my research.