

Coffee Springs, Alabama - Heritage book

Situated in the north central section of Geneva County, Coffee Springs was named for the bubbling springs of icy water located there and for General John Coffee who had made a name for himself in the Creek Indian Wars and was said to have camped at the springs.

Before there was a town, people came from far and near to camp and bathe in the pool. Some had various ailments and hoped to be aided by bathing in or drinking this water considered to be high in mineral content. Military groups used the grove as a camp and for drill, and tent revivals were held here.

When the first settlers arrived is unknown, but the US Census shows a Hatton family in the area in 1850 and a Cumbie family in 1860. The town was incorporated in 1900 and the railroad came in 1901. Soon the town began to prosper in the middle of a pine forest, and citizens could hear the buzz, hum and whistle of the saw mills involved in the lumber, crosstie and turpentine business.

By 1906 there were two drug stores, eight general merchandise stores (selling everything from furniture to caskets), a turpentine company, four lumber companies, and a crosstie company. In time there was a bank, blacksmith shops, cotton gins, warehouses to handle fertilizers and seed in the spring and cotton in the gathering season. There were livery stables that furnished surreys, buggies, and teams to people who wished to travel and also transportation for the salesmen and business men who came and went. There were also several fine hotels that stayed very busy with customers.

Dr. William Matheny was the first doctor in Coffee Springs. Dr. William W. Smith came in 1900 and practiced until his death, caused by cancer, in 1923. Dr. Fleming, Dr. Sellers, Dr. Carter and two dentists also lived in Coffee Springs during this time. Dr. Riley came about 1903 and stayed until his death in 1948; he was the last doctor to have a practice here.

"Back in the good ole days", Coffee Springs had the best baseball club in the entire area and was known as "Amateur Champions of the World". What? Well, Mr. Wallace Newsom remembered going to some of the games, he explained: "A team came here from Highland Home, a college was located there. They toured the United States and played every outstanding amateur team in the USA. They usually played a series, sometimes three and sometimes more games. They became known as the "Amateur Champions of the World".

When they came here we whipped them and took that title over. We kept the title from 1907 to about 1910."

The growth of Coffee Springs was hurt by a fire, which destroyed several businesses before 1920. The owners did not rebuild and some moved away. Then the great depression came; about the same time there were many crop failures. The bank closed its doors. The last Central of Georgia passenger train made its run on October 26, 1941. It was a sad occasion for many. The latest devastating blow came in 1994 when one of the major structures of the school system burned. The Geneva County School Board declined to replace the building, resulting in closing the high school and the following year the elementary school was closed.

Of the churches located here, the First Methodist and the First Baptist are still very active. The First Baptist Church, recently completed building a new Worship Center.

Today, Coffee Springs is a very quiet community with little business activity. But it's a nice place to live.

Submitted by: Lavinia Helms, 103 Lakewood Drive, Enterprise, AL 36330 Source: "Coffee Springs, a History", 1982, by Lavinia Helms and Rochelle Farris, and other research materials.