

CHILDERSBURG AND ITS SCHOOL DURING THE
FIRST TWO AND ONE-HALF YEARS OF
WORLD WAR II

By

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The Problem

The problem of this thesis is to collect, to synthesize, and to interpret interrelated facts pertinent to the expansion of Childersburg, Alabama and its school during the first two and one-half years of World War II.

Reasons for Choosing the Problem

People living in the present usually fail to be impressed with everyday happenings as meaningful for the future. The events loom large at the moment but are soon forgotten.¹ This study is made:

1. To preserve for future generations the history of Childersburg, Alabama and its school during the stress of World War II.
2. To forewarn others of community and school problems that may arise in their community in case of sudden and rapid expansion.
3. To suggest ways and means by which some of these community and school problems may be met..

1. Lozo, John P., School and Society in the City of Reading, 1938, p. 8.

Source of Data

The area of research is confined entirely to the Childersburg community, its school, and the powder plant, located three miles from the center of the town. Almost all the data for this study were obtained from primary sources. Where no records were available, it was necessary to get information from persons who had lived during the time that the events studied were taking place. The principal mode of procedure, however, was the study of original records of which there were many. A classification of the source material follows:

1. Alabama Histories by Brown; Du Bose; Jackson; Meek; Moore; Odum; Yeuell; Summersell; and Pickett.
2. Periodical Literature
 - a. The Childersburg Press
 - b. The Childersburg News
 - c. The Talladega News
 - d. The Sylacauga News
 - e. The Sylacauga Advance
 - f. The Birmingham News
 - g. The Powder Wagon
 - h. Alabama
3. Reports
4. U.S.O. Surveys
5. Speeches
6. Questionnaire

7. Maps
8. Pictures
9. School records
 - a. Annual reports
 - b. Class record books
 - c. Pupil's enrollment blanks
 - d. Records found in the County Superintendent's office concerning the status of teachers
10. Personal interviews
 - a. Mr. E. A. McBride, County Superintendent of Education
 - b. Mr. John Nicholls, oldest living citizen of Childersburg
 - c. Mr. Demps Oden, town clerk
 - d. Mr. A. H. Watwood, principal of Childersburg school
 - e. Mr. H. D. Wilson, Mayor of Childersburg
 - f. Mrs. Helen C. Thompson, principal of elementary school, Childersburg
 - g. Mrs. R. P. Stock, president of Garden Club
 - h. Mrs. H. D. Wilson, president of Book Study Club
 - i. Mrs. Mary Henderson, supervisor of high schools in Talladega County

CHAPTER II

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHILDERSBURG PRIOR
TO 1941

Childersburg is located in Talladega County, Alabama, nineteen miles from the town of Talladega and ten miles from the southern border of the county. It is on the extreme western edge of the county, one mile from the Coosa River which serves as the boundary line between the counties of Talladega and Shelby.

Several historians agree that this location is on the site of old Coosa which De Soto and his expedition reached in 1540. One of the accounts of De Soto's visit to Coosa follows:

"The expedition now began to enter the far-famed province of Coosa, the beauty and fertility of which were known to all the Indians....

With a delightful climate and abounding in fine meadows and beautiful little rivers, this region was charming to De Soto and his followers....

On the 26th of July the army came in sight of the town of Coosa....

The town of Coosa was situated upon the east bank of the river of that name, between the mouths of the two creeks, now known as Talladega and Tallasehatchee. It contained 500 houses, and was the capital of this rich and extensive province....

After 25 days had passed at the capital of Coosa De Soto marched in the direction of the Tallapoosa, leaving a Christian Negro too sick to travel."....¹

1. Pickett, Albert James, History of Alabama, 1900, pp. 28-31.

Note the close similarity of the description of the location of Coosa with that of the location of the present powder plant reservation. A second historian says:

Crossing the east bank of the Coosa and continuing his march down the river, De Soto arrived July 26, at the town of Coosa, where lived the "greatest Prince" among the Indians according to the story related to him by the red-skinned queen on the Savannah. A twenty-five days' sojourn among¹ the reputedly rich Coosa revealed no wealth.

Probably the most direct statement supporting the evidence that Childersburg is now located on what was once the site of old Coosa is found in this quotation:

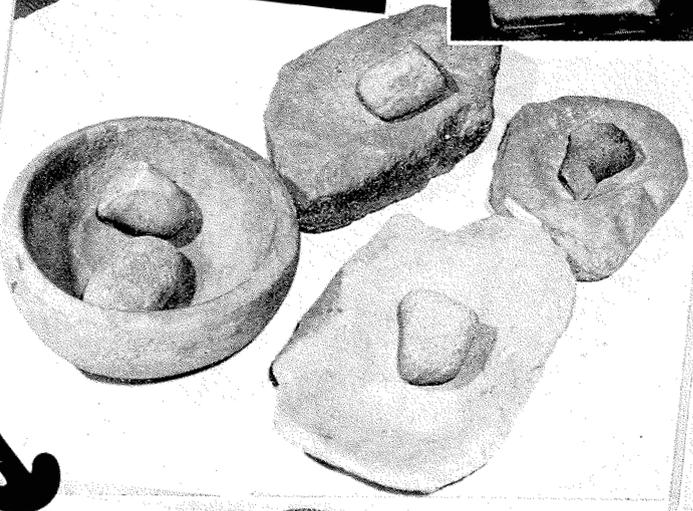
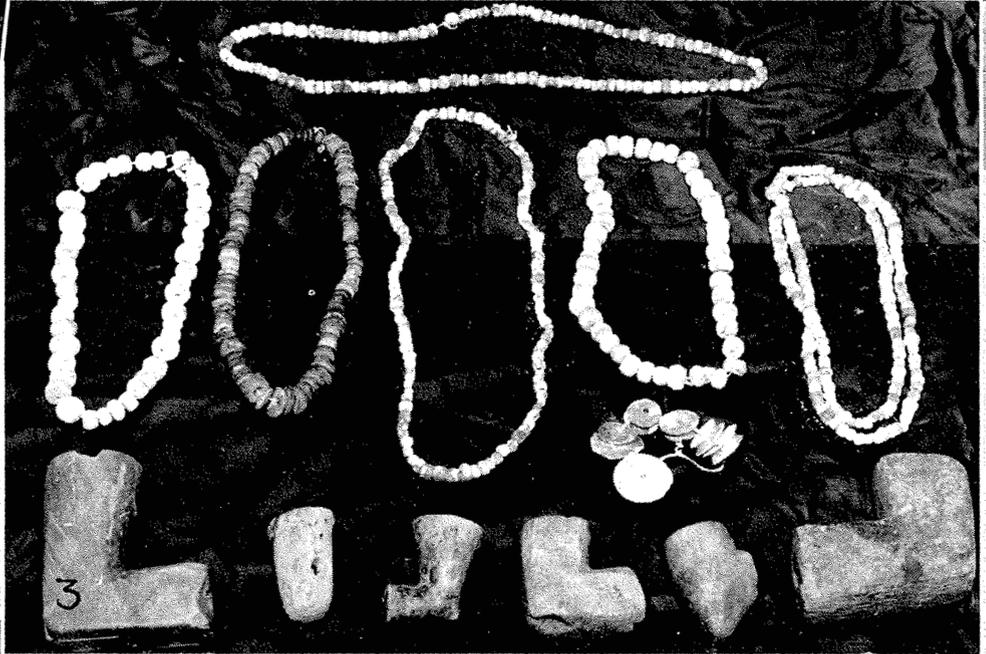
Coca is one of the best established points along De Soto's route. With few exceptions, students have agreed that it was the Upper Creek town of Coosa one which occupied a prominent place in Creek history and legend and stood on Coosa River between the mouths of Tallasseehatchee and Talladega Creeks but nearer the latter in the present Talladega County Alabama.....

Coming to Alabama, we find that he left the Tennessee at Gunter'sville, reaching the Coosa, near Atalla and Gadsden, and passed near Talladega on the way to Coosa town north of Childersburg.²

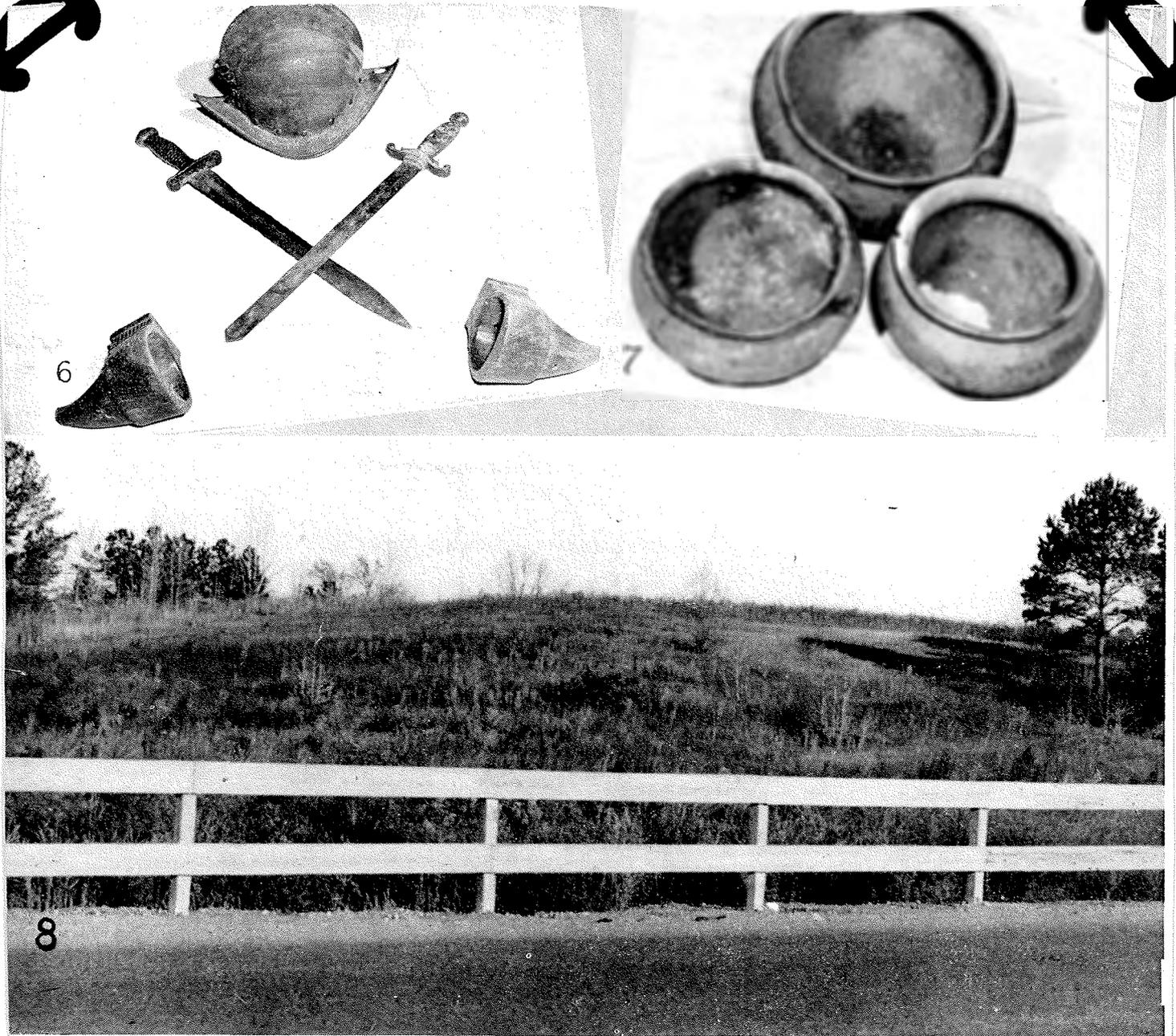
Further evidence that Childersburg is the old site of Coosa is substantiated by the fact that many Indian relics are still to be found buried in the soil of the town and the surrounding territory. Such relics are arrow points, stone knives, hatchets, burial urns, stone pipes and beads.

1. Moore, Albert Burton, History of Alabama, p. 36.

2. Final Report of the United States De Soto Expedition Commission, 1939, pp. 206-208.



(See page 7)



1. Monument erected in Childersburg in 1936 which is near the old town of Cosa; 2. Our Photoman got this picture where the Tallaseehatchie Creek flows into the Coosa. It was on these banks the city of 25,000 people lived 450 years ago; 3. Stone pipes, beads and buttons of Creek Indian origin found near the town site; 4. Mortars and pestles, used for grinding up corn and other grain by the Creeks; 5. Arrow points, stone knife, hatchet and other skinning implements used by the tribe that lived many years ago; 6. Spanish soldier's helmet, swords and stirrups of 1450 design. This is type of military equipment used by DeSoto's expedition; 7. Burial urns were among those relics which were dug up where the old city of Cosa was located; 8. Modern roads now traverse through this old city of Cosa Town.

Coosa was the capital of the vast region of Creek territory south of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi. The population of the Indian city has been estimated to be between thirty and fifty thousand. The Spanish records show that two hundred bushels of pearls were taken from the city by De Soto's men. Several members of the expedition who survived to reach Spain again wrote accounts of their experiences, and each gave glowing descriptions of the "good country Coosa".¹

Local historians claim that in all propriety, Childersburg should be called the oldest town in America above the Mexican border. "Already old when De Soto came, yet the date, 1540, antedates the founding of St. Augustine by twenty-five years; the settlement of Jamestown by seven decades; the landing of the Pilgrims by almost a century."²

After the De Soto visit, Coosa was left undisturbed for over one hundred fifty years. In 1698, a British trader opened a trade path through Coosa which reached from Charleston to the Mississippi. "Indians from up river and down river met white traders at Coosa to swap furs, herbs, and persimmon cakes for guns, powder and axes".³

1. Foster, A. C. and Pitts, C. N., Powder Wagon (February, 1943), pp. 5-8.

2. Oden, Demps, The Childersburg News (May 29, 1942), pp. 1-3.

3. Foster, A. C. and Pitts, C. N., Powder Wagon, (February, 1943), pp. 5-8.

Four years later, the French founded Mobile and began to compete for the Coosa trade. The British-French rivalry became acute, and played its part in bringing on the French and Indian War in 1754.¹

About 1830, the Creek Indians were removed to the West. Then the scattering white settlements around what was once Coosa began to focus at the present site of Childersburg. The business section of the town was built near the Southern Railway station. In 1887, the Central of Georgia Railway intersected the Southern Railway at Childersburg. The town was settled by John Childers, John Oden, John Keith, John Butts, John Roden, and Tom Coleman.²

1. Foster, A. C. and Pitts, C. N., Powder Wagon (February, 1943), pp. 5-8.

2. Owen, Thomas, History and Dictionary of Alabama Biography, Vol. I, p. 28.

CHAPTER III

A DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWN AS OF APRIL 1, 1941

The Town

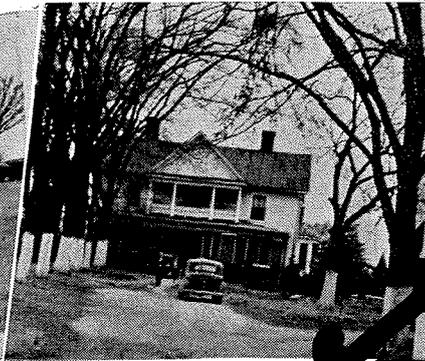
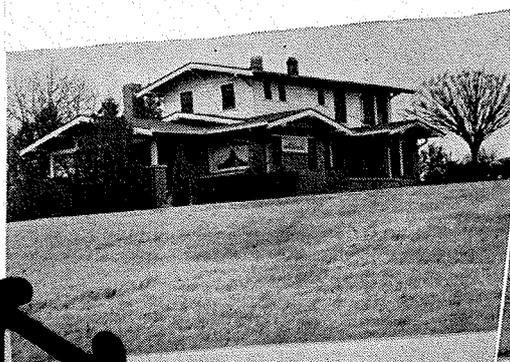
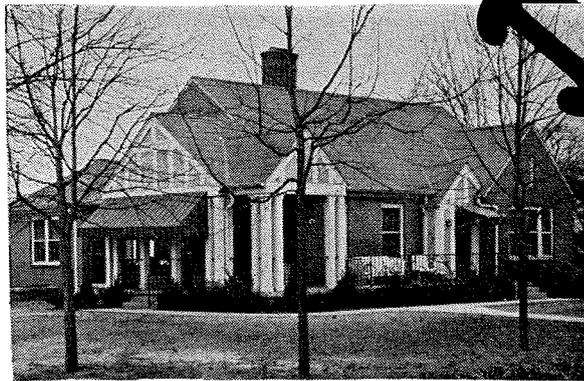
The total population of the incorporated town of Childersburg, Alabama, according to the 1940 census, was five hundred fifteen.¹ The occupants of some of the better homes dated their titles of ownership back to the third and fourth generation. The inhabitants of this little town were accustomed to a quiet, settled undisturbed life. Apparently, their chief interests and concerns centered in their immediate families and their own little community. Their community interests seemed to be concentrated especially in the churches and the school. The churches were the nucleus around which nearly all the social life of the community revolved. The men had no organization outside the churches. However, the women had formed two non-religious clubs; the Book Study Club which was organized in 1907 and The Garden Club which was begun in 1935. Clubs for the young people were restricted entirely to the church and the school. There was no form of commercial amusement within the town.

According to the Childersburg Housing Authority's survey, completed February 1, 1941, the residential sec-

1. United States Bureau of Census Population, 1940, Vol. I, p. 79.

tion had within its incorporated limits one hundred thirty-three family units. This survey was made by actual count. The count included two apartments; one a two room unit; the other a three room unit. Of these houses, only thirty were considered to be such as to meet minimum housing standards. That is, only thirty of these were weather tight, structurally sound, and equipped with sanitary facilities.

THESE of Childersburg's attractive residences. At right is the home of E. V. Ogletree, merchant and member of the town council. Below, home of Dr. R. P. Stock, chairman of the board of the Chamber of Commerce. Lower right, T. B. Russell home.





SERVING the religious life of Childersburg are these buildings—the town's four houses of worship. Upper left, Baptist; upper right, Methodists; lower left, Church of Christ; lower right, Presbyterian.



The business section of the town was concentrated within about two city blocks. It consisted of five general stores, a filling station, a garage, the post office building, and the city hall. All these buildings were alined on either side of the main street which extended from the Southern Railway to the Church of Christ. Five of the constructions were of wood while the other four were of brick. All were one story edifices except three which contained two stories.

Several years previous to 1941, sidewalks through the business section of town had been laid with red bricks. These bricks, through the years, had either risen, sunk or remained stationary, thus forming a very irregular, unattractive walkway. Except for this brick sidewalk, there were no curbings, no paved sidewalks, and no hard surfaced streets in the town.

The water supply of the town was pumped from a deep bored well, and for this reason was very limited. On April 1, 1941, only about thirty homes were supplied with water.

The principal industry of the community was farming. Many of the more prominent families living within the town owned and operated farms on the outskirts of the village. Those who did not own farms, had gardens, fruit trees, cows, and chickens. This gave various members of the

family occupation and also helped in the contribution of the family support.

Very few salaried people lived in Childersburg. The highest salaries paid were those received by the postmaster, the railroad employees, the ministers, and the teachers.

The town drew its richest outside contributions from its lines of transportation. Childersburg is served by the Southern Railway, the Central of Georgia Railway, and the A.B.C. Railway. Highway 91, known as the Florida Short Route, and Highway 78 both pass through the town.

CHAPTER IV

1941, THE COMING OF THE POWDER PLANT

Just prior to December 23, 1940, a few prominent citizens of Talladega County had been notified from Washington that the Federal Government anticipated the building of a huge powder plant in Alabama. Talladega County, the report said, was being seriously considered as a location. On the night of the twenty-third, a group of interested citizens were holding a meeting in Talladega when they received a message from Congressman Sam Hobbs that Childersburg was being very favorably spoken of as the probable location. Talladega, Sylacauga, and Childersburg each sent representatives to Montgomery to confer with Senator Lister Hill concerning the project. They found that River Side, a small community three miles from Pell City, was also an interested contender for the location. From December the twenty-third until January the third, the people of Childersburg were kept in a state of suspense.

In an address to the Alabama Chapter American Society, Jefferson Davis Hotel, Montgomery, Alabama, December 9, 1941, Captain I. T. Mastrom gave some reasons as to why Childersburg was chosen. A part of his speech is quoted:

Primary negotiations were carried on between the Ordnance Department, the Quartermaster

Corps, and the E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company just a year ago for the construction and operation of a smokeless powder plant near Childersburg or Pell City, Alabama. The site of the Plant was finally picked in an area north of Childersburg, Alabama. The selection of this site was governed by thorough consideration of a host of factors, the most important of which were adequate rail facilities, adequate water supply and adequate labor supply. The contract for design, engineering, construction, equipment, training of key personnel and operation of the Alabama Ordnance Works was signed January 22, 1941, although previous to this the du Pont Company had been furnished with a letter of intent, and had proceeded with the placing of equipment orders and design. At this time the construction quartermaster was appointed, and arrangements made to set up the office in the field in order to get the work started. Previous to this the real estate department of the quartermaster corps had undertaken, through the Soil Conservation Service of the Bureau of Agriculture, to purchase the land necessary. This was no small task, and the land was not available for the start of construction until the last of April of this year, which is but seven and one-half months ago.

On January 3, 1941, Mr. H. D. Wilson, Mayor of Childersburg, was notified from Washington that Childersburg was the chosen location for the Alabama powder plant. On the same day, the Birmingham News carried this front page headline: "TWO HUGE DEFENSE PLANTS APPROVED NEAR BIRMINGHAM". The news item in part follows;

Construction of a smokeless powder plant has been approved by the President and the National Defense Advisory Commission the News Washington Bureau learned Friday, January 3, 1941.

The powder plant was located on the Coosa River about three miles from Childersburg. Construction began

on plant 1 April 1, 1941. The size of the plant was given by Captain I. T. Malstrom in an address made December 9, 1941:

The reservation is spread out over 13,500 acres east of the Coosa River. The manufacturing area is concentrated in 5,000 acres in the center of the tract, the balance being for safety, protection, and control of facilities. There will be 740 buildings, 90 miles of railroad and many miles of surfaced roads, water and sewer lines, steam process piping, electric and power lines in the powder and TNT plant alone. - All in all a huge and interesting project.

According to a questionnaire filled out by Mr. C. H. Dexter, one of the government department heads at the plant, the construction of plant 1 was begun April 1, 1941. Plant 2 was begun September 1, 1941. The total expenditure was \$133,413,000.12. The largest number of employees at any one time was 24,612. The peak month of construction through July 1, 1944, was October, 1942. The kinds of products made are smokeless powder, TNT, tetryl, sellite and oleum. While the composition of these products, at this time, is restricted information, yet Captain I. T. Malstrom had this to say:

The chief ingredient of powder is cotton, and there is approximately seventy-five pounds of cotton to one hundred pounds of powder. It takes from fifty to seventy-five gallons of water per pound of powder.

According to Mr. C. H. Dexter there have been employees from every state in the union. It is also believed that employees came from every county in Alabama.

Many of these employees were former teachers. In answer to the question, "What were the kinds of work for which teachers were employed?" Mr. Dexter lists clerical work, accounting work, patrol duty, powder explosives inspectors, and chemists.

The location of such a tremendous project near the small village of Childersburg caused the town to actually become a city almost overnight. Because of the transient population, it was extremely hard to get a definite count of the inhabitants. However, an unofficial census was taken about March 10, 1942, under the supervision of the town clerk. It showed that within an area of about three square miles there was a population of 8,000. The natives still repeat the story of how they stood on the street corners on April 1, 1941, and watched in amazement the continuous line of cars, trailers, trucks, buses and other kind of vehicles roll into the town. Mr. H. D. Wilson, Mayor of Childersburg, said:

By April the first and before, the crowds had already descended on Childersburg. The little village was filled with spectators, who had taken options on every available house and vacant lot. Glowing electric real estate signs could be seen in every section of Childersburg. The sound of carpenters' hammers and saws could be heard day and night seven days a week. Living quarters, from one room shacks to bunk houses, containing thirty to forty rooms, were being rudely and hastily constructed. Every housing unit in town was filled to overflowing, some homes having as many as six or eight cots in an ordinary size bedroom. Every shade tree in town had

two or three trailers parked thereunder. Trailer courts by the score were being constructed. On three-fourths of an acre of ground, one could count from thirty-five to forty trailers, while small garden spots would serve as a court for fifteen trailers.

Promoters had begun the erection of business houses in the heart of the town, jammed on and against each other and of any kind and type of material to be found.

Housing

Naturally this tremendous expansion brought many problems. One of the most serious problems to be met was the housing condition. The housing situation was acute for several months. In a special survey made by a committee representing the U.S.O. of Childersburg, many startling facts were revealed with regard to the housing facilities available as of March 15, 1942.

The territory included in this survey was that which was located immediately next to highway 91 from the bridge over the Coosa River to the mountain, four miles southeast toward Sylacauga, as well as the town of Childersburg. However, all of the many people whose dwellings were situated along the side roads leading into the highway were excluded, as were also all of those people who dwelt in buildings which constituted houses of a permanent type. Only temporary housing was taken into account.

The classification of the types of dwellings in the study included trailers, shacks, tents, cabins, bunk-

houses, rooming houses, and tenements.

In the following table the frequency of occurrence of each of these types of living places is given.

Table 1

Types and Number of Temporary Living Quarters in a Limited Area Along Highway 91 and in Childersburg

Type of Dwelling	Number
Trailers	526
Shacks	123
Cabins	95
Tents	71
Tenements	48
Bunkhouses	19
Rooming Houses	10
Hotels	2
Total	894

The meaning of the terms "trailer", "tent", and "hotel" is self-evident. A "bunkhouse" is a building erected primarily for providing sleeping quarters for men; a long row of cots is frequently to be seen in a shelter thus designated. "Rooming-houses" and "tenement houses" are similar, although the latter, more frequently than is characteristic in the case of the former, are divided into apartments or flats, as well as rooms. "Cabins" are generally more carefully constructed than are "shacks". The "shacks" are of the crudest design and built of exceedingly rough and coarse lumber. Very often, also,

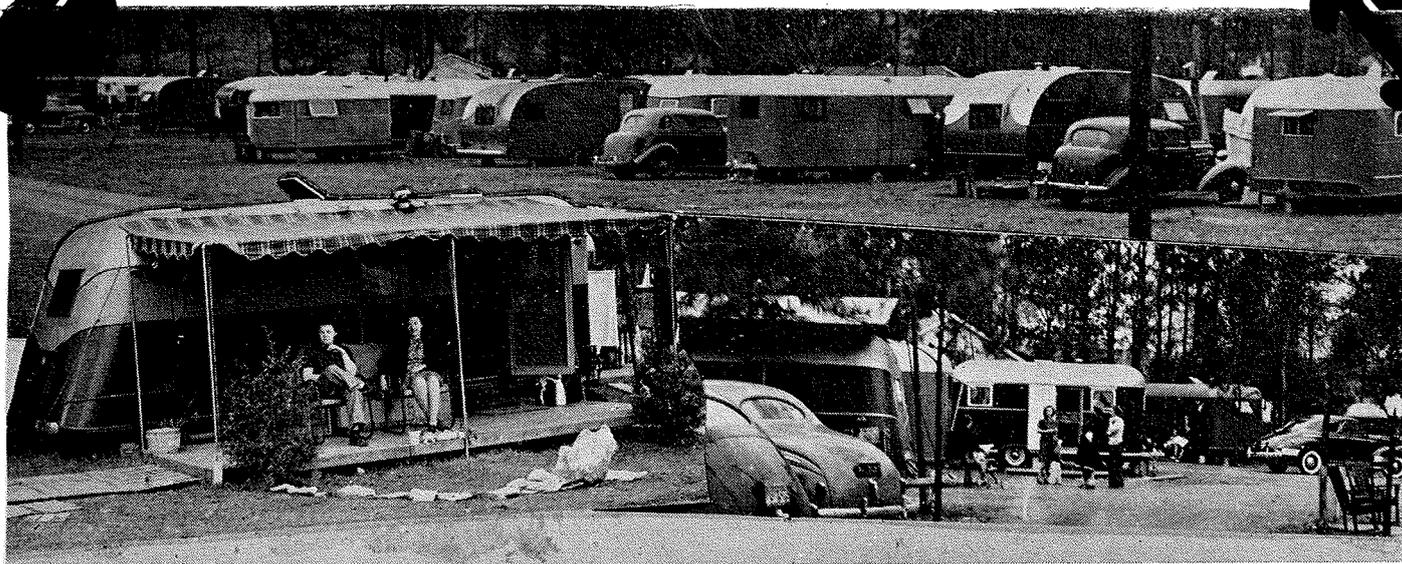
the "shacks" were units which had originally been garages, tool sheds, chicken houses and out-buildings of other types.

A compilation of the data collected revealed that on the 15th of March, 1942, 3,683 people lived in these temporary types of dwellings.

Of this number, 1,992 were men, 974 were women, 144 were children above school age, 209 were in the school-age group, 218 of pre-school age, and 146 were infants under two years old.

The trailer camps varied greatly in appearance and in sanitary accommodations. Some were laid off with streets, planned recreational space, drainage and sanitary toilet facilities and garbage disposal handled through the central office of the camp. However, even the best trailer camps leave much to be desired. The trailers were too close together, the electric wiring was below standard, and the toilet facilities limited. For example, trailer camp number 26 was classed by the survey as being the best camp in the area. At the time of the survey it contained 103 trailers, 4 cabins and 14 tents. This camp was situated only a few blocks from the post office. It had an attractive wooded setting. However, the trailers were placed too close together, the drainage was poor, and the management of garbage was unsanitary.

In one cabin group, there were twenty cabins with four privies located in the rear on a 100' x 200' lot.



TAXED greatly beyond capacity by the heavy inflow of defense workers and their families were Childersburg's housing facilities. Helping to fill the need are up-to-date trailer camps such as shown in these views.

The cabins were only four feet apart with an eight-foot road between the two rows of cabins.

The bunkhouses were hastily built to accommodate the men who first came to work on the construction of the powder plant. They usually contained about forty rooms. These rooms were small and bare except for bunks arranged in upper and lower decks. The men often slept in shifts. Fire hazards were great, and several bunkhouses burned during the year of 1942.

Rooming houses were reported to be only slightly better than the bunkhouses.

Because of these difficulties, it was practically impossible for a woman to find a room of any kind in Childersburg. Waitresses, beauty operators, clerical workers, and teachers were obliged to crowd into trailers or commute from communities as much as fifty miles distant.

Traffic

A second problem to be confronted by the people of the community was the traffic congestion. The powder plant was located just north of the town and on the east bank of the Coosa River. To the southeast of the plant are two large creeks, namely the Talladega and the Tallassee-hatchee, while to the south and west of the plant are the foothills of the Renfro Range of mountains. Therefore, Childersburg was the only ingress or egress to and from the plant. There was only one narrow country road leading from the town to the plant. This road was a continuation of a forty foot avenue which was one of the main streets of the town. Before the completion of any other accessible roads to the plant, the number of cars using this road twice daily was estimated to be about fifteen hundred. The writer, in an attempt to estimate the cars, sat in the office of the Southern depot, and counted cars at the rate of fifteen per minute at intervals of about two hours. The line of traffic started about five-thirty in the morning and continued until seven-thirty in the afternoon. The

return traffic began passing about four-thirty and continued until about six-thirty. During these four hours, the citizens of the town hardly tried to cross the main street (on foot). A car ventured forth only in extreme emergencies, and then, perhaps, bore the marks ever afterwards.



DAY'S END and homeward-bound employes at the huge Childersburg powder mill stream from the access road into the main highway.

The unpaved clay streets of the town were cut into deep holes and ruts by the heavy and frequent traffic. In dry weather dense clouds of red dust remained in the air almost continuously. Flowers, especially roses, did not bloom. The buds would appear, but would be so laden with dust that they withered without opening. In wet weather the clay mud was a foot or more deep. Cars frequently slid into holes on main street from which they had to be dragged. Boots apparently were the most popular, as well as the most sensible, footwear for both men and women.

The du Pont patrolmen, the town officials, and the state highway patrolmen all cooperated in trying to see that the line of traffic passed the most congested areas.



A Street Scene of Childersburg
Alabama

A rhyme which appeared in The Childersburg News,
May 29, 1942, attempts to give some of the problems of
the defence workers in the town:

I traveled a thousand miles to Childersburg town
To help make the powder that brings the Axie down.
I sweat and I toil and I sleep when I can,
And sometimes I wonder whether I'm mouse or man.
They've rationed the sugar but haven't the dust,
And my craw gets so full I think I shall bust.
And when it rains the dust becomes mud,
And the Coosa rises and becomes a flood.
I think I shall never see
Such lack of patriotism in the Powers that be.
They arrested me once and said I was drunk
But anybody can tell you that is the bunk.
I was trying to find my way home
But without street lights, I just had to roam
In hopes that a star would come out and shine
And I caught my neck on somebody's clothes line.

By Powder Monkey Joe

Health

Health problem in the Childersburg defense area due
to bad housing, limited water and sewage system, congested

traffic, and lack of recreational space for both children and adults was of serious concern to the town. The town had only two physicians. The second doctor moved to Childersburg when construction of the powder plant began. There was no hospital of any kind. The lack of ambulance service was a very distressing problem. One man whose back was broken enroute to work was obliged, because of the congested traffic, to remain lying on the roadside for nearly three hours while the ambulance came from Sylacauga. In another instance a woman with a fractured pelvis had to lie in the ditch into which she had been thrown after an automobile accident for an hour for the same reason.

Recreation

Since there were no parks, no library, no sidewalks, the need for wholesome recreation was outstanding. The churches did what they could, but they were far too small to accommodate the crowd to be served. The crowded homes could no longer function in any form of recreation. The problem of amusing the younger children was often an extreme one. Especially was this true when there was illness in the family who lived in a trailer or a one room shack or when the men on night shifts were obliged to rest in daytime. A story which appeared in the Childersburg News, Friday, May 29, 1942, may give some idea of the many problems that the plant workers met. The story is entitled

"Defense Worker's Problems", and is addressed to the editor.

There are several people near me and they represent as many states and circumstances of life.

First, there is Nadine, whose husband suffers from high blood pressure. That is why she is here. Her caloric intake must be carefully checked. Nadine knows that her husband's life depends upon her dietetic ability. She has two teen-age children who have been left at home to finish high school. She lives in a stuffy trailer. She admits sleepless nights, but points to others on this front who are not able to keep two homes, but have been forced to withdraw their children from four or more schools over the year.

Ann is a carpenter's wife. She is expecting a baby. She has an upstairs apartment - no bathroom, no running water. The doctor warns her she must get settled. It is a great risk to her health as well as the baby's, but she stays on with her husband.

Jane came two days before her husband was expecting her. Her husband and six other men were sleeping in the same room. The landlady refused to allow Jane a night's lodging. Jane found that the natives had little use for a "transient", an "oakie" or an "arkie". But what amused Jane most was being called a "dam-yankee". She comes from Missouri.

Delinquency and Vice

In a community crowded with men not living with their families there was the definite immoral influence to watch. The streets were lined with cafes and cheap places of commercial amusement such as shooting galleries, gypsy fortune tellers, bingo games and slot machines. Under such conditions, apparently, men and women of normal background seem to undergo a change, probably due to loneliness or improper company. They often take to drinking and other

vices. There were many reports of cases of public drunkenness, brawls, broken homes, and cases of venereal infection.

CHAPTER V

HOW THE TOWN ATTEMPTED TO MEET SOME OF ITS PROBLEMS

Almost two months before construction actually was started on the powder plant, Mr. H. D. Wilson, Mayor of Childersburg, evidently realized that the housing condition of Childersburg would be a major future problem. To cope with the difficulty, he appointed on February 3, 1941, a commission of five men, known as the Housing Authority of Childersburg. The first commission consisted of Dr. R. P. Stock, Walden Boaa, W. H. Cliett, R. T. Jones, and W. D. Bates. These men served in that capacity until February 1943 when A. B. Chapman and A. H. Watwood replaced R. T. Jones and W. L. Bates.

The purpose of the organization was to provide safe and sanitary dwelling accommodations for the war workers and their families who were brought into this area because of the powder plant.

A report of the activities of the commission to the town was made on September 30, 1943. The report gives briefly what the organization has done to relieve the housing condition. The report follows:

Since the organization of the Housing Authority the following projects have been constructed and put into operation:

The first project, Ala-1071, Coosa Court, consisting of 100 dwellings and one Administrative Building was built by Algeron

Blair at a cost of \$278,880.98; electric refrigerators for the project were purchased for \$2,821.94; gas stoves were purchased for \$2,394.11; gas distribution system was installed for \$4,947.25; the project was landscaped by Wood-Howell Nurseries of Bristol, Virginia for \$7,257.20. This made a total cost of the project of \$303,301.48. At the present time a Child Service Building is being added to this project by Day Richardson of Birmingham, Alabama at a cost of \$8,030.00.

The second project, Ala-1075, Coosa Court Extension, consisting of 50 dwellings and located adjacent to Ala-1075, was built by D. T. Underwood of Birmingham, Alabama at a cost of \$157,146.17; mass purchase of equipment such as stoves, refrigerators, etc. by the Government for \$16,000.00; gas distribution system was installed at a cost of \$6,125.00 which included furnishing of gas hot water heaters; the project was landscaped by Birmingham Nurseries of Birmingham, Alabama at a cost of \$6,640.00. This made the total cost of the project \$185,911.81.

The third project Ala-1078, Miner Terrace, consisting of 180 dwelling units and one Administration Building was constructed by D. T. Underwood of Birmingham, Alabama, at a cost of \$646,309.76. Mass purchase by the Government of equipment such as stoves, refrigerators, etc. at a cost of \$12,600.00; gas distribution system was installed at a cost of \$11,919.50; the project was landscaped by McMahan Greenhouses of Gadsden, Alabama at a cost of \$11,138.75. This made the total cost of the project \$581,968.01. At the present time plans and specifications are being circulated among contractors to install asbestos board skirts around all those dwelling units and to construct a storage house and garage. It is estimated that this will be done for about \$10,900.00.

The cost outlines above do not take into consideration costs for supervision and inspection by the Federal Government, supervision by the Local Housing Authority, and architectural costs. The total for this type of expenditures for all three projects is \$59,367.00. The

total for this type of expenditures for all three projects is \$59,637.00. The total cost of all three projects is more than \$1,149,478.28. This provides homes for 330 War Workers.

From July 1941 until March 1, 1943, the Childersburg Housing Authority of Childersburg, State of Alabama acted in a supervisory capacity for all construction work. As the projects were constructed and ready for tenants the Federal Government acted in a Management capacity, taking care of all rental, etc. On March 1, 1943, the Local Housing Authority took over the Management of all the projects and has acted in that capacity since that time. At present, September 30, 1943, the projects are 98% occupied and bring in an income of approximately \$12,000.00 per month. The monthly cost of operation averages \$5,000.00.

Each of the 330 housing units consist of from one to three bed rooms, a bath room, a kitchen and a combination living and dining room. This program together with the construction of many private residences has practically relieved the housing shortage.



COORA COURT, Childersburg's 200-family governmental housing development

The Business Area

On April 1, 1941, the town had only six fire hydrants. An overview of the buildings that were at that time being constructed caused concern regarding fire hazards. Therefore, the city governing body enacted legislation creating a fire zone including fourteen city blocks prohibiting the erection of any building of materials save incombustible fire proof materials and being equipped with all modern safety devices. This act put an end to all further fire traps and caused the erection of several modern and up-to-date fire proof structures.

Traffic

During the early months of 1942, Talladega county through the cooperation of the Alabama Ordnance Works constructed two new highways that lead to the plant. These highways allowed the traffic to pass on the outskirts of the town rather than down the main street. The estimated cost of these two roads was \$47,800.



CONSTRUCTION scene in edge of Childersburg on four-lane access road for traffic to, and from the huge ordnance works reservation. In foreground are seen automobiles traveling the present temporary access road.

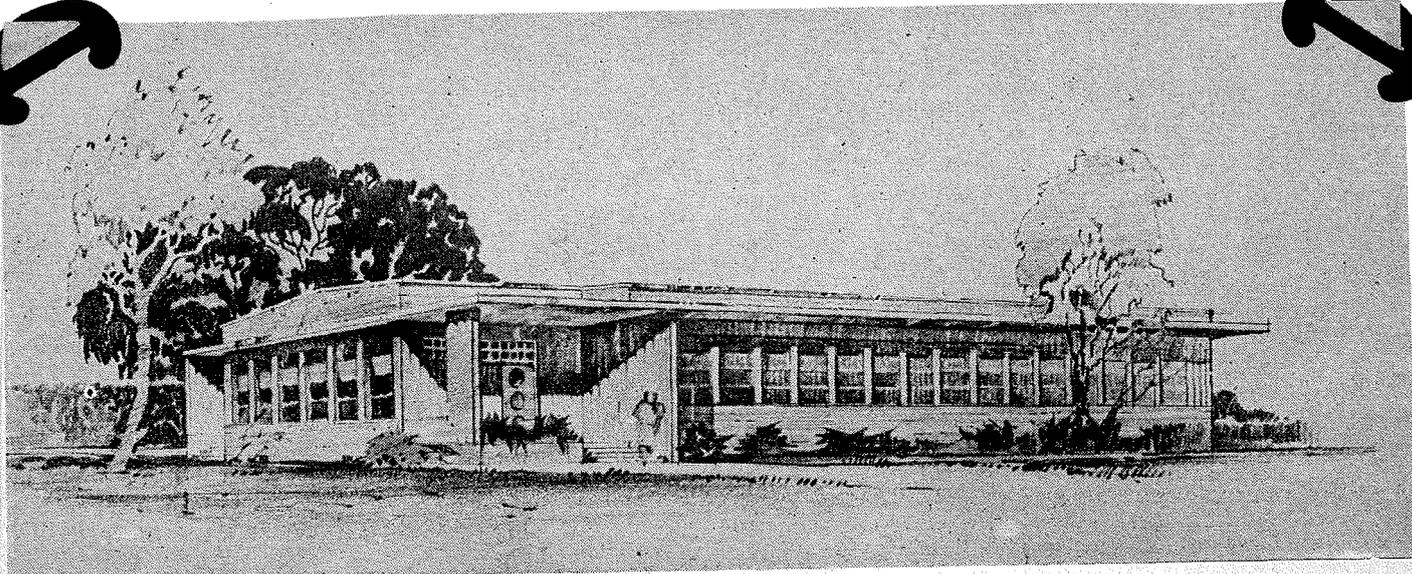
Health

The construction of these two roads leading into the plant relieved the unpaved streets of the heavy morning and evening traffic. This to a great extent relieved the dust problem, thus proving a factor toward better health conditions.

As a temporary means of relieving the water shortage, the town arranged with the du Pont Company to obtain water from the plant reservation. The water was trucked from the plant site to the town's distributive system. The arrangement was a crude and very unsatisfactory one.

Early in the spring of 1942, the town negotiated a loan from the government through the F.W.A. as provided in the Lanham Act of the National Congress for the extension of the water and sewage system. This health project, alone, cost \$240,000. The work was completed the latter part of 1942. The source of the new water supply was from the De Soto Springs, a few miles outside the city. These Springs flow about 12,000 gallons of water per minute, which is estimated to be about twelve times the maximum flow necessary for the Childersburg area.

In September 1943, a modern health building costing \$20,000 was completed. At this time July, 1944, the center has a staff of one full time physician and four full time nurses.



APPROVED for Childersburg as a city-sponsored project is a modern health center, architect's conception of which is shown here. Architect for the project is Birmingham's Charles H. McCauley. The health center is included in a broad program of Childersburg public improvements.

Recreation

Early in 1941, the city appealed to the United Service Organization, known as the U.S.O., to sponsor a recreational center in Childersburg. The building, costing \$90,000, was authorized by the Federal Security Agency, and erected by the Construction Division, Quartermaster Corps, United States Army.

The dedication program of the Federal community building was held in Childersburg, February 12, 1943, at eight o'clock P.M.

The U. S. O. center has four trained staff workers. Since the opening night, the club has served as the coordinating medium for civic and social activities. It

has also promoted many kinds of programs and has given numerous kinds of personal services. These services are classified as follows:

Clubs	Programs
Round Table Club	Children's Fun Group
Men's Discussion Club	Rangers
Commander Club	Boy's Basketball
Girls Service Organization	Girl's Basketball
Hi-Y Club	Extension Programs
Ladies Bridge Club	Children's Movies
Sportsmen's Club	Features Movies
Camera Club	Saturday Night Jamboree
Dramatic Club	Square and Round Dancing
Model Airplane Club	Musical Programs
Services	Outside Groups Using Club Regularly
Library	Rotary Club
Club Rooms	Baptist Sunday School Club
Bath Rooms	Catholic Discussion Group
Meeting Rooms	Catholic Children's Group
Meals to Groups	

The actual expenditures of the U.S.C. Club for the year ending 1943 were \$11,404.70. An itemized report follows

Wendal T. Wilson, program assistant; Mrs. E. D. Stephens, secretary; Mrs. Lauretta Hair, associate director; A. B. Chapman, Jr., director.



USO CLUB OPERATED BY THE YMCA AT CHILDERSBURG, ALA.
AGENCY LOCAL UNIT BUDGET - 1944

Account Number		Actual Expendi- ture 1943	Budget 1944
<u>BUILDING MAINTENANCE</u>			
34A	Heat	\$ 490.79	\$446.04
34B	Lights & Power	1035.23	1100.04
34C	Water	200.58	240.00
36A	Janitorial Salaries	2085.71	2496.00
36B	Janitorial Supplies (Bldg.)	340.74	399.96
49	Repairs & Replacements (Labor and Material)	285.66	503.04
	Total Building Maintenance	4438.71	5185.08
<u>ADMINISTRATION</u>			
11	Clerical Salaries	1990.82	2400.00
12	Other Salaries	419.87	946.80
22	Automobile Operation	688.62	576.00
32	Repairs & Replacements, Furn. and Equipment	31.17	50.04
32A	New Furniture & Equipment	12.09	9.96
37	Miscellaneous Expenditure	102.12	84.96
40	Office Supplies and Expense	218.77	229.20
42	Postage		75.00
51	Telephone	313.22	300.00
52	Telegraph	4.84	19.92
53	Travel	53.77	100.08
	Total Administration	3835.29	4791.96
<u>PROGRAM</u>			
43	Program Equipment	3130.70)	188.04
44	Program Supplies	)	256.80
55A	Arts & Crafts	)	15.00
55B	Religious Service & Articles	)	270.00
55D	Athletic Games	)	220.08
55E	Dances	)	330.00
55F	Dramatics & Movies	)	821.04
55G	Educational	)	81.00
55I	Musical	)	39.96
55K	Other Programs	)	80.04
55L	Women & Girls	)	24.00
	Total Program	3130.70	2325.96
<u>GRAND TOTALS</u>		-	\$11,404.70 \$12,303.00

The principal form of commercial recreation located in the town is the theatre. Mr. J. C. Clarke, present manager, estimates the cost of construction to be about \$15,000. The building seats 1,250 people. To accommodate as many plant workers as possible, the pictures are shown from eleven in the morning until twelve at night for seven days per week except on Sunday. The doors of the theatre are closed during both the morning and evening church services.



New Theater, Childersburg,
Alabama

CHAPTER VI

CHANGES AND PROBLEMS IN THE CHILDERSBURG
SCHOOL FROM 1940-1944

Perhaps no phase of Childersburg's community life was so radically changed by the coming of the powder plant as that of its school. The tremendous expansion of the town population was closely paralleled with an innate increase in school enrollment. In order to show the true picture of the school's expansion and to account for the problems arising therefrom, the writer has made several studies concerning the school situation, and has recorded the data in table form. The study covers a period of five years, beginning with the normal school life of 1940 and continuing through the scholastic year of 1944.

Table 2 presents the findings relative to the changes of school population over the five year period.

Table 2

Pupil Population of Childersburg, Alabama School, 1940-1944

Yrs. Ending	No. of Elem. Pupils	% of Elem. Pupils	No. of Jr. High Pupils	% of Jr. High Pupils	No. of Sr. High Pupils	% of Sr. High Pupils	Total
1940	331	62.45	142	26.79	57	10.75	530
1941	330	59.46	165	29.73	60	10.81	555
1942	911	67.58	320	23.74	117	8.68	1348
1943	814	65.96	290	23.50	130	10.54	1234
1944	747	69.92	244	24.55	103	10.36	1094

The table shows that the total enrollment during the scholastic year ending 1940 was 530 pupils. As previously stated the construction of powder plant no. one was begun April 1, 1941. Therefore, the 530 students represented the school's normal enrollment.

By the end of the scholastic year 1941, the enrollment had increased only 25 pupils, which tends to show that only a few defense children entered during that year.

However, by September 1942, the construction of the powder plant was well under way. The town was completely overrun with defense workers and their families. Therefore, the expected increase in school enrollment materialized. The table shows that during the year ending 1942, the peak enrollment for the five year period was 1348, an

increase of almost 300 per cent over the normal school population.

Before the close of the year 1943, the construction period was practically passed. The operation of the plant required fewer workers. Hence, both the town and school population dropped. As will be noted in the table, the total enrollment for the year ending 1943 was 1,234.

By the end of the year 1944, the plant was operating with still fewer employees. Thus, the school enrollment was still further decreased, the total enrollment being 1,094.

During the entire five year period, the table reveals that almost 60 to 70 per cent of the school population was elementary pupils; about 23 to 30 per cent was junior high students, while about 10 per cent of the enrollment was senior high students. This increase in school enrollment was attended with many kinds of difficulties, difficulties that could not be solved overnight. The change had come so suddenly that the school was faced with problems so baffling that it seemed the whole organization was threatened with a collapse.

Over-Crowded School Plant

The school plant in April 1941, consisted of only two buildings, the main building and the home economics

building. The former was a brick structure built to house about five hundred pupils. It contained the principal's office, two rest rooms, eleven class rooms, and an auditorium with a seating capacity of about three hundred. There were a long central corridor and two winged ones. The home economics building was a wooden edifice painted white. It contained five rooms. Three of these rooms, the living room, the dining room, and the kitchen were used by the students studying home economics. The other two rooms, one a class room and the other a shop, were used by the boys studying vocational agriculture.

The playground surrounding the two buildings was very limited and very poorly equipped.



The School Plant as of April 1, 1940

This school plant had been built to house about 500 pupils. To try to accommodate more than twice this number in a building containing only eleven class rooms was a perplexity that could not be satisfactorily met.

Every available space within the building was

utilized. The auditorium was divided into six class rooms, one room being the former stage. Partitions were made of heavy cardboard which permitted sounds to travel very easily from one room to another. Furthermore, the light and ventilation in these rooms were extremely bad.

A statement from Dr. J. H. Hill, Talladega County Health officer, concerning this condition is on record in the office of the County Superintendent of Education, Talladega. The statement is given below:

This is to certify that in my activities as County Health officer of Talladega County, I found the Childersburg school utterly overrun with children. Every foot of available space was taken up, and conditions were so crowded that it was absolutely impossible to ventilate the rooms sufficiently to prevent the air from becoming very offensive.

As further evidence that the school plant was utterly overrun and that the school was in desperate need of help, a letter written by Mr. A. R. Meadows, Supervisor of research and surveys is quoted. This letter is dated September 18, 1941 and is on file in the office of the County Superintendent of Education, Talladega. The letter in full follows:

Alabama State Department of
Education
September 18, 1941

Dr. H. F. Alves, Senior Specialist
in State School Administration
U. S. Office of Education
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

I have just talked to Superintendent E. A. McBride, Talladega County Superintendent, Talladega, Alabama, and he reports that 1,268 white pupils of parents in defense work in the Childersburg, Alabama area are enrolling in school this week. This report was made through an official investigation of actual Alabama School Register Attendance records.

School conditions in that area are in desperate need, and no funds are available for the education of these children from state, county, or local sources. Federal aid under the Lanham Act is desperately needed in that area. The class rooms in that area already have over 50 pupils per class room and this number will be drastically increased within the next week, due to the fact that many of the native children in that area are now picking cotton in the absence of adult labor for this work, but will enroll in school within the next ten days.

Federal aid through the Lanham Act is desperately needed for the purchase of school busses and for employing additional teachers. It is realized that class rooms cannot be constructed overnight, even though they are badly needed. However, if the projects which I understand have been submitted to Washington could be approved, and if some plan could be set up whereby the County Superintendent and County Board of Education could have some assurance that the building project would be undertaken, and that the amount requested for operation and maintenance would be granted, the school officials could proceed to relieve the situation. The projects which I understand have been forwarded to Washington are listed as follows by docket number:

Childersburg	Docket No. Ala. 1-126
Munford	Docket No. Ala. 1-128
Lincoln	Docket No. Ala. 1-167
Talladega County	Docket No. Ala. 1-M-3 (Busses and operation and maintenance)

I realize that you have a large number of projects to consider at this time, but I certainly hope that these projects can be cleared

immediately. If there is a hot spot in facilities needed in any national defense area in the United States, the Childersburg, Talladega County, area is truly that spot.

Yours truly,

A. R. Meadows, Supervisor
Research and Surveys

Diversification of Students

A check of enrollment blanks over the five year period of study shows that the student body before the location of the powder plant in Childersburg was practically all natives of Talladega county. Yet, beginning with the construction period, April 1, 1941, the geographical source of school enrollment rapidly changed. By the end of the scholastic year 1943, the School had enrolled students from practically every state in the union; several foreign countries, including Canada, Mexico, and Greece, as well as every county in Alabama.

The student body was composed of pupils with the most diverse school and home background. The schools from which these pupils came varied from the most technical Bostonian high schools to the most backward rural schools of Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. Some came from highly organized "Child-Centered" schools, while others were from the strictest college preparatory institutions. In reality, the North, the East, the South and the West had truly met in one "Alabama Spot".

Measured from a standpoint of home background, school training, religious faith, and geographical origin, the student body of Childersburg's school from September, 1942 to the end of the scholastic year, 1944 was, indeed, a hodgepodge.

Attendance

Under such crowded conditions as have been described, one would think that the annual attendance of the pupils would be far below the normal school year ending 1940. However, the comparative five year study of attendance reveals just the opposite fact.

Table 3

Annual Percentage of Attendance for Childersburg, Alabama School, 1940-1944

<u>Years</u> <u>Ending</u>	<u>Elemen. %</u> <u>of Attend.</u>	<u>Jr. High %</u> <u>of Attend.</u>	<u>Sr. High %</u> <u>of Attend.</u>	<u>Total %</u> <u>of Attend.</u>
1940	81.83	88.20	91.73	85.02
1941	81.17	85.52	91.51	
1942	84.17	88.39	87.71	85.97
1943	86.32	88.68	90.93	87.49
1944	85.07		90.26	

Table 3 reveals an increase rather than a decrease in the attendance of the almost normal year ending 1941 and also in the extreme critical year ending 1942. Yet

this year was the year of greatest hardships for both teachers and pupils. This gain in annual attendance could mean one of two things. Either the teachers were so heavily loaded that they did not keep accurate records, or else the homes were so uncomfortable that the children and the parents preferred for them the crowded school rooms rather than the still more crowded homes.

The senior high school group lead almost uniformly in attendance; the junior high group came second, while the elementary pupils fell third. This respective listing from high to low remained constant during both the normal years and the years of expansion.

Entries and Withdrawals

Perhaps the most distressing problem confronting the school was the continuous coming and going of the students. Hardly a day passed during the construction period that several new students did not enroll and as many others withdraw.

Apparently the principal cause for so many withdrawals lay in the method used by the employment bureau at the powder plant. A father with several children in school might and very frequently was dismissed from work or else transferred to a distant state with only a few hours notice.

Mr. A. H. Watwood, principal of the Childersburg school, states that very often he was awakened by six

o'clock in the morning and asked for a student transfer blank. If he remonstrated about the early hour, he would in all probability receive some such reply as this:

"Daddy was laid off at the plant last night and we're checking out this morning."

"Checking out" meant that their trailer, holding all the household goods, would be attached to the family car, thus to their new destination they would go. Probably, the mother enroute would be able to perform the usual household duties with but little disturbance.

Table 4 gives a graphic picture of withdrawals from Childersburg school over the five year period. The per cent of total withdrawals remained practically the same for the two years of normal times. However, for the year ending 1942, the per cent of withdrawals almost doubled that of the normal years. Of the 1,348 students enrolled during that year, 604 withdrew, making almost a 50 per cent withdrawal. For the next year ending 1943, the withdrawals dropped more than 10 per cent. Yet the withdrawals showed a slight increase again in the year ending 1944. In this table, as the two previous ones, the construction year 1942, stands out as the most problematic year of the five year period.

Table 4

Number and Per Cent of Pupil Withdrawals from Childersburg, Alabama School, 1940-1944

Year	No. Elem. Pupils	No. Elem. Withdraw. During Year	% of Elem. Withdraw. During Yr.	No. Jr. High Pupils	No. Jr. High Withdraw. During Yr.	% Jr. Hi Withdraw. During Year	No. Sr. High Withdraw. During Yr.	No. Sr. High Withdraw. During Yr.	% Sr. High Withdraw. During Yr.	Total Pupils	Total No. Withdraw.	% of Total Withdrawn
1940	331	92	27.79	142	28	19.72	57	11	19.30	530	131	24.72
1941	330	82	24.85	165	53	32.12	60	8	13.33	555	143	25.77
1942	911	401	44.02	320	154	48.13	117	49	41.02	1348	604	44.81
1943	814	271	33.16	290	120	41.38	130	35	26.92	1234	426	34.52
1944	747	251	33.60	244	41	16.80	103	8	7.76	994	354	35.61

The Money Problem

Too much money in the hands of the students was another serious concern of the school. Not only did the father, but very often the mother also had an abnormal opportunity for lucrative employment. To add to this already full income of the family, the children could find profitable employment after school hours.

Juvenile Delinquency

Too much money in the hands of the school children is one of the many causes which is thought by school officials to be a contributing factor in juvenile delinquency. Other causes were thought to be the disruption of home life because of the congested area, the absence of the father in service, the absence of the mother through employment, the feeling of frustration among the children, and the lack of home responsibilities.

In a report on juvenile delinquency within Talladega County, the chairman of the Child Welfare Department has this to say:

Sums of money have disappeared. Teen-age children who are hitch-hiking to Birmingham without the knowledge or permission of parents, have large sums of money to spend from mysterious sources. Unwholesome brother and sister relationships are developing in homes while both parents are away at work; not to speak of sex irregularities among youngsters in this crowded area. Truancy in the Childersburg area has increased at an alarming rate. The school report shows as many as forty cases per month during the

year 1943-1944. There is stealing, truancy, general unrest, and sexual delinquency among both boys and girls.

Teacher Problems

After much effort, time and several trips to Washington, Mr. E. A. McBride, County Superintendent of Education, Talladega, succeeded in getting appropriations from the Federal Government to meet the salaries for extra teacher positions. However, the problem of crowded rooms and heavy teacher loads could not be solved until more class rooms could be built.

Table 5 presents the data concerning the teacher load during the five year study.

Table 5

Teacher Load in Childersburg, Alabama School, 1940-1944

Year Ending	Number of Teacher Positions	Number of Pupils	Average Pupil Per Teacher
1940	14	530	37.8
1941	14	555	39.6
1942	24	1348	56.2
1943	28	1234	51.2
1944	28	1094	39.6

This table points out that during the normal year ending 1940 that there were 14 teachers with an average

pupil load of 37.80. During the following year 1941, the teacher load was slightly increased, and the average pupil per teacher was 39.60. This slight increase was probably due to the few defense children who entered the last few weeks of the scholastic year ending 1941.

The year 1942 will be noted throughout the study as the peak year of ill adjustment. During this year, the teacher load increased from the already high of 39.60 pupil per teacher to 56.20 pupil per teacher. The teacher of the seventh grade enrolled ninety-five students that year.

This problem could not be solved immediately for two reasons. First, more class rooms must be built before further divisions of classes could be made. Second, there was the great difficulty of finding qualified teachers, and a still greater problem of securing room and board for those who could qualify.

Though the enrollment had dropped from 1,348 in 1942 to 1,234 in 1943, yet the teacher positions increased from 24 to 28. This decreased the teacher load from 56.20 to 51.20.

By the end of the year 1944, the teacher load was approaching normality. In fact the teacher load for 1941 and 1944 was exactly the same.

Marital Status of Teachers

Table 6 gives a picture of the marital status of teachers over the five year study.

Table 6

Marital Status of Teachers in Childersburg, Alabama School
1940-1944

Year Ending	Total No. Teachers	No. of married Teachers	% of married Teachers	Number of single Teachers	% of Single Teachers
1940	14	7	50	7	50
1941	14	7	50	7	50
1942	33	30	90.90	3	9.10
1943	34	32	94.10	2	5.90
1944	48	44	91.66	4	5.30

The table reveals that during the normal years of 1940 and 1941 that 7 teachers out of the total of 14 were single. Thus, during these two years 50 per cent of the teachers employed were single and 50 per cent were married.

However, the year ending 1942 shows a drastic change in the marital status. Of the thirty-three teachers employed during this year, thirty or 90.90 per cent were married. The year 1943 shows that of the thirty-four employed, thirty-two were married, while of the forty-eight teachers employed in 1944, forty-four were married.

The percentage of single teachers steadily decreased from 50 per cent in 1940 to 5.30 per cent in 1944. This tends to show that the single girls avoided the school because of the unusual situation, especially the difficulty regarding room and board.

The school had to depend on employing the wives of defense workers to fill the teacher positions. This fact within itself lead to a most serious problem - the problem of teacher turnover. Often the husband of teachers was transferred to other localities with only a few hours notice.

Table 7 gives accurate data on the teacher turnover both within the year and also the turnover from the year before.

Table 7

Teacher Turnover in Childersburg, Alabama School, 1940-1944

Year Ending	Total No. of Teachers	No. of New Teachers	% of Turnover from Last Year	No. of Resignations during Year	% of Turnover During Year
1940	14	4	28.5	0	0
1941	14	4	28.5	0	0
1942	33	29	87.87	9	29.1
1943	34	21	78.60	6	21.4
1944	48	31	64.58	20	41.66

The study shows that during the two normal years that the per cent of turnover from the previous years was exactly the same, 28.50. During these two years there was no turnover within the years. Yet, for the year 1943, there was 87.87 per cent turnover from the year 1941. Nine teachers resigned during the scholastic year ending 1942, making a 29.10 per cent turnover within the year.

The turnover from 1942 to 1943 decreased almost 10 per cent. The turnover within the year ending 1943 also shows a decided decrease. This tends to show that conditions did improve to some extent after 1942.

The per cent of turnover from 1943 to 1944 again shows a decrease, yet the turnover within the year 1944 shows a definite increase. This tends to show that the unrest among the faculty was steadily growing.

Mrs. Mary Henderson, high school Supervisor of Talladega County, in her narrative report of the year's work, has this to say:

The school year of 1943-1944 has been one of continual adjustment. The swift-moving world events have been felt very keenly by teachers and children. The defense plants located in the county with Fort McClellan and the Anniston Ordnance Depot in an adjacent county have caused children and teachers to be continually on the move. The unrest in the world has had its effect on the communities, the schools and the children. This has been felt in many ways during the year.

The Supervisor has spent most of the time

for class room visits with the teachers new in the system. In many instances they have changed so fast that a new one would be at the school on her next visit. This continual change has been very hard on the pupils and the Supervisor has made every effort to bridge these gaps for them.

Table 8

The Number of Teachers Leaving Childersburg, Alabama School, 1940-1944 and the Reasons Given for Leaving

<u>Year</u> <u>Ending</u>	<u>Cause for Leaving</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Teachers</u>
1940	-	0
1941	Motherhood	1
1942	Motherhood	1
	Removed to other communities	4
	Took better paying positions	4
1943	Took better paying positions	2
	Removed to other communities	4
1944	Motherhood	3
	Returned to former positions	2
	Dissatisfaction with work	4
	Removed to other communities	8
	Accepted work on temporary basis	3

Table 8 shows the number of teachers leaving during each of the five year period, and the reasons for their leaving. Three of the most repeated reasons were motherhood, accepting better paying positions, and removing to other communities. The second reason perhaps could have been eliminated had the school been able to compete with powder plant in salaries. However, the school did not

pay anything like equal salaries with the plant. Negro janitorial service at the plant paid as much as \$35 per week. This meant that a negro woman who could probably neither read nor write could make \$8.50 per month more than the experienced class room teacher who had had four years of college training.

Table 9

The Sex Status of Teachers of Childersburg, Alabama School, 1940-1944

Year Ending	Total No. of Teachers	No. of Women Teachers	% of Women Teachers	No. of Men Teachers	% of Men Teachers
1940	14	10	71.4	4	28.6
1941	14	10	71.4	4	28.6
1942	33	30	90.9	3.	9.1
1943	34	32	94.1	2	5.9
1944	48	46	95.83	2	4.17

Table 9 presents the data concerning the sex status of teachers in the Childersburg school during the years 1940-1944. During the years ending 1940 and 1941 there were four men in the faculty of fourteen teachers or 28.60 per cent of the faculty was men, and 71.40 per cent was women. During the year ending 1942, there was a sharp decrease in the percentage of men in the faculty. The percentage of men steadily decreased during the remaining

three years of the period of study. Presumably, the men instructors were either serving in the armed forces, had accepted better paying positions or were doing Civil Service work.

Table 10 reveals that the Childersburg School depended on an increasing number of states other than Alabama to supply its teachers. During the year ending 1940 and 1941, the faculty was all Alabamians. During the year ending 1942, three other states were represented in the faculty, Mississippi, Tennessee and Virginia.

There were six other states represented in the faculty during the years ending 1943, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, Illinois, New Jer Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Delaware.

Table 10

State Source of Teacher Population for Childersburg, Alabama School, 1940-1944

Year	Ala.	Ga.	Miss.	Tenn.	Fla.	Va.	Ill.	N.J.	N.Y.	Pa.
1940	X									
1941	X									
1942	X		X	X		X				
1943	X	X	X	X	X	X				X
1944	X	X	X				X	X	X	X

Table 11

Status of Teacher Training in Childersburg, Alabama
School, 1940-1944

Year	Total No. of Teachers Employed	No. of Teachers With Class A. Cert.	No. of Teach. with Cl. B. Cert.	No. of Teach. With Cl. C Cert.	No. of Teach. With Cl. D Cert.	No. of Teachers With Cl. F Cert.
1940	14	0	10	0	4	0
1941	14	1	8	1	4	0
1942	33	2	15	3	11	2
1943	34	2	13	5	8	6
1944	48	4	16	8	10	10

Year	No. of Teachers	% of Cl. A Cert.	% of Cl. B Cert.	% of Cl. C Cert.	% of Cl. D Cert.	% of Cl. F Cert.
1940	14	0	71.4	0	28.6	0
1941	14	7.1	57.1	7.1	26.6	0
1942	33	6	45.5	9.1	33.3	6
1943	34	5.8	38.2	14.7	23.5	17.7
1944	48	8.33	33.33	16.66	20.83	20.83

Year	Teachers	Points	Points	Points	Points	Points	Total	Av.
1940	14	0	40	0	8	0	48	3.43
1941	14	5	32	3	8	0	48	3.43
1942	33	10	60	9	22	2	103	3.12
1943	34	10	52	15	16	6	99	2.82
1944	48	20	66	24	20	10	140	2.92

A-5; B-4; C-3; D-2; F-1

The status of teacher training in the Childersburg school over the five year period is revealed in Table 11. A study of the table will show that the certificates of the teachers are classified into five divisions: designated as Class A, Class B, Class C, Class D, and Class F. A Class A certificate is held by a teacher who has completed at least five years of college work and has obtained a Master's Degree. A Class B certificate denotes that the holder of such has spent four years in college and has either an A.B. degree or a B.S. degree. A Class C certificate signifies that the teacher has credit for at least three years of college work. A Class D certificate means that the holder has had at least two years of college work. A Class F certificate indicates that the teacher has only finished high school.

A study of the table will show that there were only two classes of certificates during the year ending 1940. Ten teachers held Class B certificates, while the other four had Class D certificates.

During the year ending 1941, one teacher held a Class A certificate, eight had Class B, one a Class C, and four had a Class D.

For the year ending 1943, the classifications were two teachers with a Class A, thirteen teachers with a Class B, five teachers with a Class C, eight teachers with a Class D, and six teachers with a Class F.

The teachers employed for the year ending 1944 were classified according to certificates as follows: four teachers with a Class A; sixteen teachers with a Class B, eight teachers with a Class C, ten teachers with a Class D, and ten teachers with a Class F.

The table of percentage shows that there was a slight fluctuation in the per cent of Class A certificates over the five year period, yet the inclination was toward an increase in per cent of Class A certificates. There was a definite uniform decrease in the percentage of teachers holding a Class B certificate. The percentage of Class C certificates showed an increase for each year over the five year study. The percentage of teachers holding a Class D certificate varied during the period of study, while there was a decided increase in the teachers employed holding a Class F certificate.

The writer devised a scheme of evaluating teacher training in numbers. A Class A certificate was given 5 points, a Class B, 4 points, a Class C 3 points, a Class D 2 points, and a Class F 1 point.

Teacher training measured by points showed a uniform decrease throughout the five year period except there was one-tenth of a point increase in the year ending 1944. However, the explanation for this slight raise tends to show still further the acute shortage of teachers. Two

teachers having a Class A certificate were borrowed from Cullman County School system for the first six weeks of the year ending 1944. These teachers worked in the Childersburg school during the time their school had vacated for cotton picking season.

Table 12

Monthly Teacher Salary of Childersburg, Alabama School,
1940-1944

Year Ending	Total Monthly Teacher Salaries	Highest Salary	Lowest Salary	Average Salary	Instructional Cost Per Pupil per Month
1940	\$1,347.50	\$197.50	\$80	\$95.54	\$2.54
1941	1,407.50	222.50	60	100.53	2.54
1942	3,235.00	225.00	65	94.40	2.32
1943	3,571.50	238.50	65	105.04	2.81
1944	3,779.50	250.00	75	114.53	3.80

Table 12 gives the instructional cost per month for the school during the five year period, 1940-1944.

In 1940, the total instructional cost was \$1,347.50. The highest salary paid during the year was \$197.50; the lowest salary was \$80; the average salary was \$95.54, and the instructional cost per capita was \$2.54.

The total instructional cost for 1941 was \$1,407.50. The highest monthly salary paid for the year was \$222.50;

the lowest was \$60; the average was \$100.53, and the cost per pupil per month was the same as in 1940, \$2.54.

Due to the amazing increase in enrollment and consequently to the addition of more teacher positions, the total monthly instructional cost for 1942 rose to \$3,235. The highest monthly salary for the year was \$225.00; the lowest was \$65; the average was \$94.40, and the cost per pupil per month was \$2.32.

Still more teacher positions were added in 1943. Therefore, the total monthly salaries for teachers showed a still greater increase. The total monthly instructional cost was \$3571.50; the highest monthly salary for the year was \$238.50; the lowest was \$65; the average was \$105.04, and the cost per pupil per month was \$2.81.

The number of teacher positions in 1944 remained the same as in 1943. But due to a uniform increase in teacher salaries, the total monthly instructional cost in 1944 was \$3779.50. The highest monthly salary was \$250.00; the lowest was \$75; the average salary was \$114.53, and the instructional cost per pupil per month was \$3.80.

The highest salary paid over the five year period of study was paid during the year 1944; the lowest salary paid was during the year 1941, and the lowest instructional cost per pupil per month was during the year 1942.

Table 13

Annual Instructional Budget of Childersburg, Alabama School, 1940-1944

Year Ending	Instruc- tional Budget	Total Enroll- ment Pu- pil Pop- ulation	Per Capita of Total Enroll- ment	Per Cent Increase or Decrease
1940	\$10,980.00	530	20.72	
1941	11,260.00	555	20.29	
1942	13,355.00	1348	9.91	
1943	28,875.50	1234	23.39	
1944	31,524.50	1094	31.71	

Table 13 reveals the total annual teachers' salary for the period 1940-1944.

The total instructional cost for the year ending 1940 was \$10,980.00. The average cost per capita for that year was \$20.72.

In 1941, the instructional budget increased, but due to a small increase in pupil population, the cost per capita decreased.

While the instructional budget of 1942 increased considerably, yet because of the tremendous increase in pupil enrollment, the cost per pupil was reduced to the lowest of the five year period.

Both the instructional budget and the cost per capita show a sharp increase in 1943.

There was still an increase in both items during the year 1944, though the increase was not so great as in 1943.

To summarize, some of the changes taking place in the Childersburg school from 1940 to 1944 were:

1. The enrollment increased more than 250 per cent.
2. The student body composed almost entirely of natives of Talladega County became a cosmopolitan group with diverse home and school background.
3. A normally stable school changed to a school where new pupils enrolled and others withdrew daily.
4. Juvenile delinquency among the student body became more apparent.
5. An increased amount of money in the hands of the students became problematic.
6. The teacher load was made much heavier.
7. The per cent of single teachers dropped from 50 per cent in 1940 to 5.30 per cent in 1944.
8. There was a big increase in teacher turnover both from the previous year and within the year.
9. The percentage of men instructors steadily decreased throughout the five year period.
10. The state source of teacher population included several states other than Alabama.

11. The average professional training of teachers decreased.

12. Several teachers who had been out of the service for many years were recalled.

13. Salaries of teachers increased but not in proportion to teacher-load.

CHAPTER VII

HOW THE SCHOOL ATTEMPTED TO SOLVE SOME OF
ITS PROBLEMS

The School Plant

Before the end of the scholastic year 1941-1942, Mr. E. A. McBride, County Superintendent of Education of Talladega, had secured aid from the Federal Government for an extensive building program in Childersburg. Plans were made to almost double the original school building as well as to erect just south of that building a new edifice. The cost of the annex was \$25,000. This building is now being used to house the elementary school. The new building, costing \$125,000, is used for the high school.

The building program was practically completed by the opening of the school year, September 1942. At present the school plant is adequate to care for its entire enrollment.

The school plant now consists of three buildings. There are thirty-five class rooms, a home economics department, a work shop, a music room, two libraries, a commercial room, a lunch room, four rest rooms, shower rooms for both boys and girls, two first aid rooms, and office space for the principals of both the elementary and the high school. There are also two auditoriums complete with stage, curtains and pianos. The elementary auditorium

has a seating capacity of 350, while the high school auditorium is able to seat 700.



The New School Plant Erected in 1941

Teacher Problem

That the teacher problem was not so satisfactorily solved will be apparent by reviewing Table 5 through Table 13. The teacher load remained high; there was an abnormal percentage of married teachers employed; teacher turnover remained problematic; men instructors decreased steadily throughout the period; states other than Alabama were called upon to furnish teachers; the average teacher training continued to be lower throughout the five year period, and the teacher salary did not increase in proportion to the teacher load.

Yet with all these problems, seemingly the county officials did not despair. Objectives were discussed with the teachers and some were adopted. The objectives for 1943-1944 are given below:

Long Time Objectives

1. A program which finds the child the basis for its existence.
2. A program based on democratic ideals in teaching and practice.
3. A health program in keeping with the basic need of children.
4. A program to develop social awareness and responsibility.
5. A program which will foster and develop emotional stability.
6. A program which will develop aesthetic values and appreciation.
7. A program which will contribute in every way to life in the community.
8. A program which will teach in a functional way skills necessary for everyday living.

In order to achieve these objectives the following techniques and procedures were used:

1. Three weeks workshop for teachers before the opening of school.
2. County-wide teachers' conferences.

3. Principals' Luncheon Club.
4. Inter-school visitation.
5. Individual conferences.
6. Group conferences and committee meetings.
7. Faculty group conferences.
8. Class room visits.
9. Visiting speakers.

Transportation

The transportation problem was another question to be encountered. Because of the extremely heavy plant traffic through the town and on the highways leading into the town, the school hours had to be adjusted in such a way that school buses could steer clear of the heavy traffic. This necessitated opening school at nine o'clock in the morning and dismissing at three in the afternoon. The tire shortage, the difficulty in getting necessary parts for repair of buses, and the inability to buy new buses were other problems that could not be solved.

Course of Study

Because of the limited number of teachers and their restricted qualifications, very few changes could be made in the course of study. The most pronounced change was made in the commercial department. Business Arithmetic and Shorthand were added subjects. There was also a decided change in the number enrolled in this department.

The average number enrolled in the commercial department previous to 1942 was about sixteen. The average number enrolled from 1942-1944 was fifty, a gain of more than 300 per cent. Spanish was added to the course of study in 1943 while Latin was added in 1944. Vocational Agriculture was dropped from the course in 1943. Lack of a demand for the course was the reason given by Mr. A. H. Watwood, principal of the school.

Pupil Problems

The problem of withdrawals tended to grow smaller after construction of the plant was finished. However, as shown by Table 4, see page 48, more than one-third of the total enrollment withdrew during the year ending 1944.

Too much money in the hands of the students is a problem that remained unsolved. The opportunity for the student to earn a greater amount of money grows as more and more of the adult population enter the armed forces or accept jobs in defense work.

The problems of transporting students grow more acute as the days of war are extended.

Definite steps have been taken to attempt to curb juvenile delinquency in both the community and the school. Realizing that the problem was an alarming one, and that to stamp it out would require concerted action, the

civic leaders, the religious forces, and the educational officials united in securing for the town an all around year's recreational program.

The program calls for a recreational supervisor whose salary is \$250 per month and two recreational leaders at a salary of \$150 per month. The total cost of the summer program beginning June 1, 1944 and continuing through August 31, 1944 is estimated to be \$2,460. Of this sum, the local community contributed \$700, while the Federal Government gave the balance.

The program is a varied one consisting of games, such as volley ball, basket ball, tennis, croquet, ping pong, badminton, etc. Handicraft, music, dramatics, and art are also included.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In retrospect, one recalls that a telegram on January 3, 1941, was the harbinger of a drastic change in the community life of Childersburg, Alabama. Within a few days after this message was received, the quiet, slow-moving, home-centered, little village was transformed into a busy, overcrowded, bustling, cosmopolitan town.

This sudden expansion of the village brought many problems such as housing needs, traffic congestion, health hazards, recreational demands, and educational adjustment.

The town needs have been partially met by the following: the erection of 330 government housing units, the building of two four lane highways into the plant, the erection of a modern health center, and the construction of a \$90,000 U.S.O. building which takes care of many of the recreational needs.

Because of the nature of the educational changes, the school could not so satisfactorily solve its problems. These problems may be classified as student, teacher, financial, and course of study changes.

Some of the student changes were:

1. An increased enrollment from 530 in 1940 to 1,348 in 1942.

2. Diverse source of school population.
3. An abnormal number of withdrawals.
4. An unusual amount of money in the hands of the students.
5. Prevalence of juvenile delinquency.

Teacher problems were:

1. Teacher load was greatly enlarged.
2. The percentage of unmarried teachers dropped from 50 per cent in 1940 to 5.30 per cent in 1944.
3. The percentage of men instructors decreased from 28.60 in 1940 to 4.17 in 1944.
4. Teacher turnover both from the previous year and during the years of the period studied increased enormously.
5. The acute shortage of teachers was revealed in that:
 - a. Teachers were employed from states other than Alabama.
 - b. Teachers were employed who had lower professional training than formerly.
 - c. Several teachers who had been long out of the profession were recalled for duty.

Financial changes:

1. Salaries were increased but not in proportion to the increase in teacher load.

Course of study changes:

1. The Commercial Department was greatly enlarged.
2. Spanish and Latin were added subjects.

3. Vocational Agriculture was discontinued.

At present, July 1944, only one of these problematic school changes has been completely solved. The increased enrollment is adequately cared for by the \$25,000 addition to the elementary building and the new \$125,000 high school building.

Recommendations

The question may be asked what should other communities do in case they find themselves in a condition of sudden and rapid expansion?

Thoughtful consideration of the foregoing thesis will lead to certain general recommendations:

1. Invest authority in a commission whose purpose will be to provide safe and sanitary dwellings for the overflow of population.
2. Enact community legislation which will insure that the buildings in the business section of town will be of incombustible fire-proof materials.
3. Enact community legislation which will prevent unwholesome commercial recreation.
4. Seek local and federal cooperation in the construction of hard surfaced roads and streets.
5. Prepare for the expansion of the water and sewage system.
6. Provide sufficient hospitals to care for the community population.

7. Investigate ways and means of providing free recreation for both adults and young people.
8. Encourage wholesome commercial recreation.
9. Seek Federal Aid in the construction of school plants, in providing extra money for additional instructional cost, and in increased transportation cost.
10. Adapt the course of study, as far as possible, to the needs of the student body.
11. Provide an all year school recreational program.

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Thesis Approval Form

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