

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.



BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

Whereas, A petition was filed on the 7th day of February, A. D., 1908, by ten freehold electors in the precinct in which the town of Olanta is situated, setting forth the corporate limits, the number of inhabitants of the proposed town, and that they desired to be incorporated.

AND WHEREAS, A commission was issued on the 7th day of February A. D. 1908 to W. C. Chandler, J. L. McRendon and A. M. McQueen empowering them to provide for the registration of all electors within the proposed corporate limits of said town, and to appoint managers to hold the election, and to have them to certify the result under oath to the Secretary of State.

AND WHEREAS, B. B. Thompson, R. M. Thompson and E. Willis managers of election duly appointed to hold the election for the purpose of determining the incorporation of the town of Olanta did, on the 1st day of June 1908, file with the Secretary of State a written declaration of the result of said election under oath signed by themselves, setting forth:

FIRST: In favor of corporation.

SECOND: The name of the proposed town to be Olanta

THIRD: That D. J. Cunningham was duly elected Intendant, and H. Brocklinson, R. J. Moore, G. C. Knight & R. A. Moore were elected Wardens.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, R. M. McQueen, Secretary of State, by virtue of the authority vested in me by an Act of the General Assembly, entitled "An Act to Provide for the Incorporation of Towns of Less Than One Thousand Inhabitants," do hereby issue to the Intendant and Wardens elect this Certificate of Incorporation, with the privileges, powers and immunities, and subject to the limitations prescribed in the said Act.

GIVEN under my Hand and Seal of the State, this the 1st day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and eight, and in the one hundred and 32d year of the Independence of the United States of America.



R. M. McQueen Secretary of State.

OLANTA 1908 - 2008

Thanking everyone that has contributed to the history of Olanta, especially those that have lived in Olanta and helped create the town as we now have it. The history, as it is being written today, is primarily a duplication of the written document of Mrs. Mae M. Moore on February 28, 1977. I have attempted to expand the history to include a few facts from prior to 1900, and to update to the Olanta as we now live and breathe.

The date of commission for Olanta was February 7, 1908. The municipal charter was issued June 1, 1908 with a population of 208 persons. Named on that document are T. J. Cunningham, duly elected intendant, G. H. Brockington, R. I. Moore, and R. A. Moore as Wardens. B. B. Thompson, R. M. Thompson, and E. Willis were named as Managers of the election. The Commission was issued to A. E. Chandler, J. L. McLendon, and A. M. McElveen for the formation of the town. Research has determined that the name of T. J. Cunningham should be T. J. Cottingham. It seems that he would be the first and youngest Mayor of record for Olanta. He was born September 20, 1883 in the Dillon area of SC. At the time of the formation of Olanta, he was a cashier in the local bank. He would remove his family from Olanta to the Lake City area before 1910(a record exists of his correspondence in August of 1908 of his attempt to gain return of tax money for roads for Olanta) and by 1926 he had again moved to the Birmingham, Al. area being found there in 1930 as a bank president. His death is recorded in 1956 in Decatur, Al.

The movement of civilization into the area around 1800 and prior was found primarily along the navigable waterways of Black River to the South and Lynches River to the North. Most plats for property in the area in the 1790-1810's would find at least one side of the property as having an "unknown" neighbor. It is common for deeds to property in the area to note that it was owned at one time by a Robert Fullwood. He would be holder of approximately 14,000 acres, north of Black River and south of Lynches Creek.

Historical records indicate that the area of Olanta would be spared from the battles of war in the area. However, that is not to say that the residents of the area were void of activity in those wars. Written records show that residents of this area were active during the Indian activity of the 1700's. During the Revolutionary War, records indicate that troops were actively passing through the area in route from, or to, activity surrounding the area. Proof of this movement is found in the payment of claims by John Piggott, Sr. of Darlington County. He not only served as a Sergeant with Francis Marion, he also would file a claim for movement of troops across Lynches River with his ferry system. Battles are recorded for Clarendon County to the south, along Black River and the Santee area. General Marion would establish a base near Johnsonville, SC on Lynches River at Snow Island. A major battle would happen in Camden as well as

battles in and around Charleston, SC. Other area residents would file claims asking for payment for items provided to troops during the conflict, including stock, and for feed for horses, and food for troops. Area names such as Chandler, Moore, Baker, Motts, Floyd, and many others are found in the list of troops related to General Francis Marion Brigade. Others would be found as members of units from North Carolina and South Carolina.

Limited involvement, in the war of 1812, is found in our area. But the 1860's Civil War would find a high involvement of members of families of the area. A great number would become members of a Unit known as the "Clarendon Blues", the area having been transferred to the county of Clarendon in 1858-1859. Others, depending on their actual residence, would link up with Williamsburg and Sumter County units. A great number of those participants would perish during the conflict due to wounds or health conditions.

In 1820, based on the available Mill's Map, we find the names of Baker, Hooten, Dubose, Coker, and Pygott. The name of Bright Hooten could not be traced, his name was found in the census of 1820 and as a handler of the "chains" during a survey for Zachariah Norwood. The other family names remain in the area, Pygott being changed to Pigate around 1845. The map would include Norwood's Crossroads (west of Olanta on now 341) which would be part of the estate of Zachariah Norwood. The "Sumterville" highway from Motts Crossroads (3 miles north of Olanta, now called Kelly's Crossroads) would pass through that area in route to Sumterville (Sumter) during the early times. There was 1 church located at Mott's Crossroads in 1820, thought to be the original Elim Baptist Church location. Elim would relocate to its current location before 1830, and in 1835 Bethel Baptist Church was formed in the woods of "back swamp".

The need for religious establishments and education are found to be the reasons surrounding the growth of the area into the town of Olanta. Prior to 1860, most records indicate that population centered their activities around what is historically known as Mott's Crossroads, located about 3 miles north of Olanta on Highway 301. Elections were held in that area. In 1868, a township system was implemented in South Carolina as a part of reconstruction, and the name that was established was Mott's Township. That name has held for the purpose of census taking and elections. In 1859, a school, known in legal documents as Lewisville Academy, is found to be located at the junction of the Charleston Road, now Highway 301, and the Lynchburg Highway, now W. Main St. Also the Beulah Presbyterian Church would move from the Norwood Crossroads/Max area to a lot adjacent to the school in 1867. This movement is an indication of the changing of the times.

The 1860 census would find a 21 year old doctor, Z. R. Fullmore, located, in that area. Zachariah Fullmore would enter the war as a physician with the rest from the area, and after the war would return for medical service in the area of Cades, SC. The postal location for the period would be Bethlehem. That facility would appear on maps as being several miles south of Olanta on now Park St., leading out of Olanta toward Black River. A letter written by R. S. Moore, of the area, to his attorney in Sumterville, is postmarked as Bethlehem. That postal service would continue service until after 1908. Other postal

services for the surrounding area would be found as Taylors, located near Hobb's Crossroads, and Mott's Bridge, located on the property of Elijah Hicks, approximately 1 mile south of Lynches River on highway 301.

A portion of the area of Olanta was found to be included in a survey of 2900 ac. for William McKenzie in 1845. That land came into his name through the family of his wife, or from the Pygott family. A deed was created in 1863 for 200 ac. transferring the property to a Sarah Allen and her family from Sumter by Lewis Pigate. Research determined that the Allen family was living on 2 ac. in Sumter next to a Presbyterian Church, their house in bad condition. The children had a guardian, and in his approval of the purchase, a description of the property is shown as "about 200 acres of which perhaps fifty acres are cleared, that there is a very comfortable dwelling house and corresponding outbuildings. The land is very good for that section of the county, not rich, but fair land." This land would transfer to the Cunningham family of Indiantown in 1883, and then through that family to various others, including Millard Moore, Robert M. Thompson Sr., and J. J. Dickerson. The first Olanta High School location is part of the Millard Moore section, obtained through a sale of 2 acres from his son Thomas J. Moore to the Beulah School District. That property was identified as being 100 yards north of the Presbyterian Church property, extending east for 200'.



In 1923, a two story block building near where the Olanta School facility is located today. In 1957 that would be torn down and a new High School would be built. That facility would remain in use as the Olanta High School until 1985 when children of High School age would be transported to Lake City. The facility would then become a part of the Olanta Elementary School facility for the area and remains to this date.



An agriculture building would remain on the Olanta School campus for many years.



In 1933 the Olanta elementary school was renovated to replace the two story facility with a safer one story facility providing steam heat.



(Picture taken from the SC Archives Index of Olanta)

Prior to the integration of schools, there was a five room school, referred to as Olanta Training School which was used until 1957 when a new brick facility would be completed. High School students were transported to Lake City during that time.

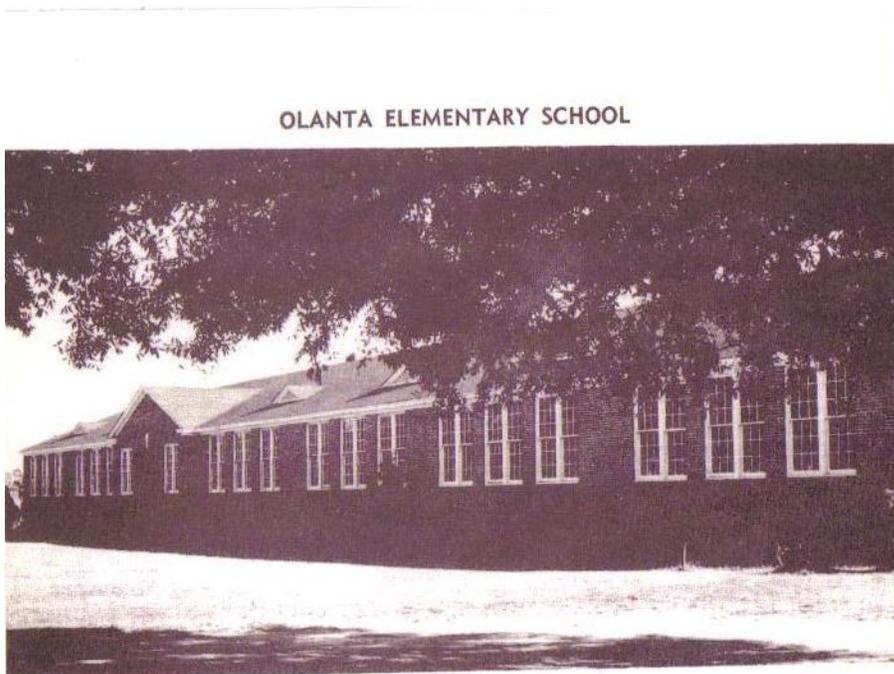


(Picture taken from the SC Archives Index of Olanta)

The Olanta Gym was constructed in 1952, and is not in use today. It is in need of repairs, and attempts to repair and use for other community purposes are on the table.



And the history of Olanta would not be complete without the picture of a school that meant so much to a lot of the readers of this history, that being the Olanta Elementary School pictured below. The school was built in 1951 and would serve the area until 2001 when it was removed and replaced with today's structure.



The early 1900's would have several factors that would enter into the forming of Olanta. Of importance are, but not limited to, the following.

1. The U. S. Postal service had authorized the change of geographic place names. 12 principles were established for the name changes
2. In 1906, the law establishing the SC High School was being written.
3. In 1909 the original Lewisville Acad. School property was returned to the Family, as it was no longer in use and the Olanta High School is in use.

Just prior to 1908, the community was recognized as Beulah Crossroads and postal service indicates that Bethlehem was accepted by some due to it being the name of a local post office. Written reports of troop reunions were reported as being held at the Beulah Crossroads. Around 1906, a new name was sought, and a committee was formed to select the name. Several reasons have been offered for the name of Olanta. There is the one that Olanta was selected while thumbing through a Postal guide from Clearfield County, Pa., finding Olanta, Pa. Another offered, finds a map being used to pin the tail on, pointing out Atlanta, thus changing the name to Olanta. The "History of Olanta" as written by Mrs. Mattie Bowers states that "a prize of \$5.00 was offered for the best name. Olanta was suggested by a Mr. T. J. Cottingham and the committee in charge accepted it." And this writer will offer the reason for his suggestion to be the outgoing of the Lewisville Academy and the incoming of a new school that is thought to be the product of Robert M. Thompson, thus Old Lewisville Academy now Thompson Academy. This thought is offered based on the changing of schools, and Robert M. Thompson, Sr. was an attorney that was found to be involved in education while in Manning and probably after his arrival in Olanta in the 1880's.

It seems that during the period of being known as Beulah Crossroads, the first store was built by the Sydney Moore family and operated later by Mr. S. R. Chandler. A second store would be built by Joyner and Dixon, being operated later by Mrs. E. Willis. In a report of 1902 by R. G. Dun Mercantile Agency, Bethlehem was recorded as having a population of 100, with 7 business operations. Residents of the area had access to one physician with a drug facility, one grocery facility, four general supplies, and millinery. A fire is recorded for 1903 that destroyed all the buildings of the date.

The railroad was extended to and through Olanta around 1905 by the D. W. Alderman and Sons from Alcolu. It is reported that the train would back in and then pull out. The railroad would remain until the 1930's when the rail would be pulled up around 1937. It would appear that telephone service was at least attempted in 1906. Based on Florence County Council minutes for July 29, 1906, "telephone lines are authorized from Timmons ville to Beulah, if good poles can be provided". It was also noted on those minutes that Millard C. Moore would designated as "cotton weigher" for Bethlehem. Robert M. Thompson, Sr. was also paid \$4.16 for attending the meeting. In 1906, John McSwain from Timmons ville would build a store in the present business district. Later the Tomlinson mercantile business would be established. Two tobacco warehouses would also be built. In 1906, the First National Bank was organized with Mr. Duncan McKenzie as president (he would later be the president of the Beulah Real Estate Co.) and the first cashier was Mr. D. E. Frasier. In 1911, the Farmer's Bank was organized

with Mr. S. J. Tomlinson as president and Mr. Eugene Smith as cashier. In 1928 these two banks consolidated into The Farmers Bank. In 1930 The Farmers Bank was purchased by The Peoples Bank. The following year, the bank was closed with depression following. Many businesses were closed. In 1938, Mr. P. S. Lewis would move to Olanta from Asheville, NC, and start the Olanta Cash Depository which would eventually become the now well known Citizen's Bank. Mr. Lewis was originally from Williamsburg County, SC.

Olanta has always been proud of its churches. Beulah Presbyterian is the oldest church first found within the limits of Olanta, moving to its now location around 1867. The Methodist Church, which dates back to 1846, had its first building on highway 341, west of town near the Olanta city limits of today. The church would relocate to its current location around 1905. The Olanta Baptist Church was organized in 1910 with 56 members. The church would be a project of Bethel Baptist Church, it being on record in 1835 north of Olanta. The Church of God of Prophecy was organized in the 1950's just off Liberty St. the Pentecostal Holiness Church was erected on Avondale Dr. in 1976. True Faith Pentecostal has been formed on Augusta St. in Olanta.

The first high school yearbook was published in 1928, THE OLANTAN. It was dedicated to Mr. B. A. Graham in appreciation of his faithful service as a teacher. The Editor-in-Chief was Mrs. Marjorie Player. Local advertisers were: Olanta Barbershop, E. A. Carraway, S. D. Tomlinson Co. Livestock, Vehicles, & Harness, S. J. Tomlinson & sons Olanta's Best Stores, F & M Drug Co., Rush Brothers, G. M. Moore Standard Oil Products, J. A. Thigpen Jeweler, Mixon's Sanitary Market Meats Staples & Fancy Groceries, Webster's Garage with Service and Satisfaction with a Grocery Department, Sinclair Refining Co., A. N. Rush Agent, Floyd Drug Co., Moore's Garage, C. I. & Rue I. Proprietors, Compliments from Dr. L. C. Floyd, Olanta's 5 and Dime Store, C. H. Tallon proprietor, W. H. Player General Merchandise Caskets & Coffins.

The first resident doctor of the modern age was Dr. R. I. Moore in early 1900. Later Dr. L. C. Floyd, Dr. F. D. Kelly, Dr. E. H. Thomason, and Dr. Marion Carr would serve the area. As many as four doctors were practicing at one time in town. Drs. Moore and Floyd had a drugstore at the crossroads for a while. Later, Dr. Moore had his drugstore next door to his home. In the 1940's, Dr. Thomason built an office on 301. In 1956 Dr. Carr came to Olanta and was the only Dr. for a long period of time.

Dr. Elbert Truluck served Olanta long and well as a dentist from 1914 until 1965. Olanta was without a dentist from 1965 until 1972 when Dr. John Holt opened one on Magnolia Drive.

Drugstores have to be mentioned. The earliest drugstore was at the crossroads next to the Willis Boarding House. In 1912, the F & M Drugstore was established on Main Street, operated by Drs. J. Fred Rush and T. Hoyt Rush. This firm occupied several locations, being sold in 1971 to F & L Drugstore.

In 1922 the Floyd Drugstore was opened by Dr. J. Kelly Floyd, operated by Kelly Floyd until his death in 1970, when his son Kelton took over. He would be Mayor as well for a period of time. Ambulance service and funeral service would be rendered by the Floyds after 1928. Ambulance service is now provided by the county, providing a more medical enhanced transport service than was initially provided. Green's Funeral Home was in operation for years after 1954.

The Olanta Health Center opened in 1965. It was open for two partial days a week. This facility would be used as a Library after the 1980's, and today a new library is on the drawing board, to be constructed near the school location on E. Hampton St.

Postal service appears to be at the center for the name of Olanta. The Post Office had several locations along Main St., moving to its current location on 301 in 1962. The first Rural Route was in 1911. It consisted of a 17 mile route, being made by Mr. Willie Wall, utilizing his own horse and buggy. He had a yearly salary of \$630. He only had one route, and one route continues out of the facility today, but exceeds 70 miles.

The first jail for Olanta was on Main St. In 1946 a town hall was erected on Baker St. with the jail at that location. The town hall was moved to the corner of Main St. and Highway 301 in 1963-1964 on land purchased from Margaret Moore Holt and Lenora Moore Young. That facility is out of use today, but the town and area fire station is currently housed on a building adjacent. The fire department is voluntary, with members and was started in 1976.

Town water was first obtained in 1955, water treatment facilities in 1959. A new water tank was erected in 1969. Sewage was not started until 1976, at which time all citizens in the town limits were required to pay a fee for water and sewerage, even if they did not use the facilities.

In the early years (1908), there were lamp posts on each corner of Main Street. The lamps were refueled and wicks trimmed by local policemen. Later, a Delco plant was installed by Mr. Charlie McElveen, and a monthly fee was paid to him by all who used the system. In the late twenties, Olanta would see the light. Due to the persistent work of Mr. J. Fred Rush, the Carolina Power and Light Company came to Olanta. With this service, electrical appliances were put to use. "The good ole days" of much work done by hand, would gradually become more and more a part of history.

Dr. D. N. Baker began Olanta's first telephone company with about 100 subscribers in 1913. This was a local system with the central office in Baker's store, where all calls had to go through the operator. This system was set up with the skilled help of Mr. Sidney Moore. A fire in the early twenties destroyed the central exchange, and for several years the only telephone in town was a long distance line maintained by Mr. Baker, who was Postmaster from 1914-1934. Western Union telegrams were also sent and received through this office. In the late forties or early fifties, South Carolina Continental Telephone Company served Olanta. Again through the untiring efforts of Mr. J. Fred Rush, the General Telephone Company of the Southeast began serving

Olanta. Direct dialing in the early seventies was the improvement of the time. Finally Lake City, Scranton, New Zion, and Turbeville could be called locally. From that point to today, telephone service would improve to the point that we walk around, even go fishing with our cell phone in hand. At home or at work, we now connect through phone service by use of our computer systems. We have progressed from having “Sarah” connect our calls to being able to call places around the world without restriction.



Pictured above is the fire that consumed the Baker Building in Olanta.

For about thirty years, beginning in the early twenties, Olanta was one of the state's largest cotton markets. She had several buyers, cotton gins, seed buyers, and storage warehouses. These occupations are found in census information for the periods. These were a great advantage to the nearby farmers because they could sell their cotton as soon as it was ginned, thus saving the expense of transportation to other towns. Messrs. J. H. Baker, D. N. Baker, Duncan Thompson and A.B. Smith were mainly responsible for the good cotton market.

Olanta is found in what was the tobacco belt of South Carolina. Tobacco was very important in the early development and growth of the town. Around 1908, two tobacco warehouses were built. Farmers from miles around came to sell their golden weed in Olanta, making it a first class tobacco market. The names of these tobacco warehouses were: Tucker's on Main Street and Gorman's which was back of Main Street, southwest of Main and Liberty Streets.

During the off-season for tobacco sales, the warehouses were used somewhat as town coliseums. Evangelists' meetings, basketball games, skating rink, school commencements, dancing, etc. made use of the buildings. For several years a community fair was held in the Tucker's Warehouse on Main Street where nearby citizens displayed their choice products and handiworks. Various gimmicks and entertainments were enjoyed. One memorable stunt was a "husband calling contest" which Mrs. S. D. Tomlinson won. Another gimmick was paying a dime to see an "oily red bat" which was in a box nailed to the wall. Participants climbed a ladder to look in the box, only to see a red brick with oil on it. In the early twenties, another warehouse was built in the vicinity of where Jim's IGA on 301 now stands. This was known as the Coop Warehouse, but was short-lived. It closed in 1926 and the tobacco market for Olanta was ended. This building was used for public meetings also until the building of the block high school in 1923.

From the 1915-1925 range of time, Olanta had one newspaper, "The Olanta Observer". As one can imagine, it carried mostly local news and advertisements. The paper was edited by Mr. Frank McCormick. The paper was burned out in the early 1920's, along with Mr. D. N. Baker's store and the telephone office.

Paving of roads in the area was an event, in 1928 highway 301 was paved and Main Street was paved around 1938. Highway 301 was a main "direct" north-south route for tourists. This movement created many "filling stations", motels, and eating places in the area, boosting the economy of Olanta. Then in 1969 I-95 was finished, bypassing Olanta. Some businesses were closed, others were changed.

During the 1950's, then Mayor R. D. Thompson brought to light that if Olanta was to grow, services required would create the need for a payroll. A survey was made of the available potential labor force, finding that 1850 women and 750 men were in the area and available to step into jobs. The town would get a boost with the founding of

Avondale, a manufacturing plant for children's clothing in 1958. The plant was founded by Messrs. Martin J. Green, W. J. Moorer, and possibly Harry Silvers. In 1966 Green and Silvers were bought out, and the firm merged with Elkay Industries of New York. Avondale was expanded in the years to come until .

A few years later, the Sparkle spinning plant was built, being short-lived. It was replaced by Bulkspun in 1969, it being supported by the Olanta Industrial Board.

A water plant was installed in 1956 for between \$75-100,000. With that, a town and rural fire department became a service to the area. The firemen, civil defense, and rescue squad was composed of the same group of men. It seems that Civil Defense came about, based on the Cuban crisis around 1960. The Rescue Squad became active in 1976. At that period of time there were twenty-four men, with the leadership of Mr. Ledelle Mckenzie as chief. Today Florence County provides service for assistance and transportation from a facility located just outside the city limits on Highway 341. Construction of a new facility for housing of the fire department and first responder unit is now in the planning stages. The first town provided police car was furnished in the early 1960's. It seems that for a brief period of time prior to that, a motorcycle was used.

A business through the years is the Floyd's Flower and Gift shop. It has been in service since 1952, owned by Mrs. Lazelle Hancock. Another Floral shop would be opened by Mrs. Maude Floyd in 1958. And another would open in 1971 being operated by James Graham, known as Isla's Flower and Gift Shop.

Shoe repair, the art of being of a "cobbler" was found in Olanta in 1918. The service was provided by Mr. E. C. Bochette. His initial shop was found in the area of the Church of God of Prophecy. His son, Blease, carried on the work when Mr. E. Bochette became disabled. In 1939, another son Earle would take over and continue the work.

Mr. C. H. Tallon was the proprietor of Olanta's first 5 and dime (you know times have changed when the computer doesn't show the cent sign) in the late teens and early twenties. In 1952 Brown's five and dime store opened on Main Street. In the mid-sixties it moved to 301 being known as B-Mart.

Livery stables were important during the early years. Mr. S. D. Tomlinson operated one, another by Mr. Elijah McElveen and Mr. A. H. McElveen, with a third by Mr. L. A. Moore. With horse use was the need of a blacksmith that function being served by Mr. Baxter and Mr. Wash Sims. The 1930 census shows the changing of times, with garage ownership and mechanic service being found.

In the 1940's the town was served by Trailway and Greyhound bus schedules. As the number of autos increased, this service was reduced, and then discontinued as the town was removed from the main flow of traffic.

With the increase of autos, and the speed that would be found associated with them, came the need for insurance against accidents and the loss of those autos. As well

as auto insurance, life insurance would become a viable business. The presence of this was seen as early as the 1910 census with Mr. Robert Thompson, Sr. now showing Life Insurance Sales as his occupation. Up to this reporting, he was an attorney, first in Manning, SC. Mr. C. A. Buddin was a long time salesman of life insurance, retiring in 1976. Mr. B. A. Graham would also serve the Olanta area with Virginia Life. In 1961, Mr. S. A. Moore went into general insurance business. In 1971 he expanded into residential and small commercial building business. In 1974 he added real estate, being joined shortly by Mr. W. C. Mills, then taking on bookkeeping and tax business.

In September of 1936, the Olanta Garden Club was organized. The Gardenia and Rose Clubs were organized later. The women of these clubs would be instrumental in the creation of the now seen John Mack Truluck Park found on Park Ave. The lot for this park was donated by Mrs. J. M. Truluck in memory of her husband. These Clubs would post the street names. Without these clubs, the "hog pastures" might still be seen in the back yards of the homes in the area.

Men's civic organizations in the town are many. The Lion's Club dates back to April, 1958. The Masons are probably the oldest, being named the Beulah Lodge 259. A Masonic Hall was constructed in the late 1940's. The American Legion was organized in 1948. The Chamber of Commerce was organized in 1925 with a membership fee of \$1.00.

Olanta actually had a theatre on Main St. being operated by Mr. Green. The contents of the movies of the day were based around movies such as Samson, being seen for \$.25. The history of Mrs. Moore indicates a drive-in theatre in the area, but this possibly was the overlook being used somewhere around Lynches River or Woods Bay, and watching the ducks going by.

The charter of 1908 indicates that a Mr. T. J. Cunningham(found to be Cottingham) was the intendant(mayor). The first Mayor,by that name, for Olanta was Mr. Millard Moore, who also was the first postmaster for Olanta. He was the first in many things, operating a grist mill, being cotton weigher, Mayor, Postmaster, and probably more especially considering the fact that his family owned a considerable portion of the Olanta area first being sold and developed during the early days.

In the early days, between 1903 and 1923, the remaining soldiers and families from the Civil War would meet in the area as a Reunion. The meeting place is said to be where the Old Bearcat Drive in is located across from the Avondale plant on 301 south of town. Apparently a lease existed for 20 years, not being renewed when it ended. By that time most of the "Old Soldiers" were deceased. The time apparently was the "fair" for the period, providing much needed fellowship.

Main Street Olanta has changed through the years, as in most towns. As usual, it is easier to buy and build a new facility versus renovating a present facility. Take a ride down Main Street and look at what is there, and has been there for years. Dates will be

found on some of the buildings dating back in time even to the picture found as being “Olanta 1908”



1910 Census Information

Street Names Listed:

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| E. Main St. | E. Boundary St. |
| South Liberty St. | Railroad Ave. |
| Moore St. | N. Railroad Ave. |
| Lynchburg St. | W. Main St. |
| South St. | |

Total Dwellings Listed **43**

Total Citizens **236**

The citizens were primarily born in South Carolina, but 1 is shown from Virginia, 2 from North Carolina, and 1 from Alabama.

The High School Principal was Paul Halfacre, which was from the Newberry area of South Carolina. He would register for WWI and later die in North Carolina. Other occupations included 2 physicians, cashier, bookkeeper, logger, livery stable proprietor, livery stable driver, lawyer, farmer, butcher, lumber mill, insurance sales, preacher, blacksmith, dress maker, barber, sewing machine sales agent, lumber mill engineer and retail drugs.

1920 Census Information

Street Names Listed:

| | |
|-----------|--------------|
| Jones Rd. | Main St. |
| Baker St. | Railroad St. |

Kingstree Rd.
South Jones Rd.
Lynchburg St.

Manning Rd.
Liberty St.

Total dwellings Listed **78** Total citizens **409**

Their jobs would change in variety. Mack Weaver was listed as policeman, and there was a city night watchman as well. There was a jewelry salesman, a “tooth” dentist, cotton buyer, cotton seed salesman, as well as bank tellers, draymen, **garage** proprietor, merchant, druggist, bookkeepers, salesmen, Railroad Depot Agent and yardman, banker, carpenter, physicians, horse trader, post office clerk, livery stable, butcher, blacksmith, school teachers, laundry workers, preachers (retired & active), sawmill, house painter, machine agent, and an undertaker is listed.

1930 Census Information

Total dwellings Listed **95** Total citizens **433**

Most of the citizens were born in South Carolina, but 1 was found from Ohio, 1 from Virginia, and 10 being born in North Carolina. Noted that a number of those born in North Carolina were the wife of South Carolina born husbands.

The census for the time period was enumerated by Robert C. Black, which would also be listed as a Baptist Minister. We found that Pinkney Welch was listed as the Town Police. The town would show 2 doctors, Dr. L. C. Floyd, and Dr. Frank Kelley. Elbert Truluck would be listed as the dentist and David Baker as Postmaster. It would appear that mail was being delivered by Cleon Moore for that period. Olanta would have 1 attorney being shown, John Mack Truluck.

Employment for the time period was still found as mainly farm laborers, but also listed were grocery store, general merchandise sales, druggist, teacher, fertilizer sales, auto mechanic, railroad agent, music teacher, bookkeeper, auto shop, live stock dealer, dress maker, nurse, carpenter, bank cashier, shoe repair, and furniture sales.

The 1930 census is the last available at this time. Census information is released only after 70 years have lapsed.

Efforts are being made to revitalize the downtown area. It is still a place to operate a business, and be a part of history at its best.

In 1957, the following businesses were located on Olanta Main Street.

1. Package Shop run by Kenneth Hodge, later D. E. Gowdy.
2. Old Jail Alley
3. Furniture store, possibly Gallaway Furniture – operated by Cecil Kirby.
4. Rudolph Kirby Supermarket later W. L. Moore Grocery.
5. Olanta Theater by Mr. Green
6. Joye Dry Cleaners in 1958
7. Shoe Shop with Earle Bochette

8. A. H. McElveen Grocery and Hardware
9. Mayor's office
10. McElveen Motors managed by Ollie McElveen
11. Car Lot
12. Moore's Old Filling Station
13. L. E. Thompson General Merchandise
14. Shop of Mrs. Ruth Bingham
15. F & M Electric Shop with Wilmont Truluck
16. Farmers & Merchant Drug Store with the Rush Brothers
17. Lake City Dry Cleaners with O. N. Bridges
18. W.E. Sandifer, Jr. bookkeeping
19. Bingham and Barrineau Grocery Store
20. J. M. Thompson Mercantile
21. Olanta Hardware with Thompson and Chandler
22. The Citizens Bank
23. R. M. Thompson Supermarket
24. Old Hotel being used as apartments.
25. Hodges Garage and Used Car Lot with Earle Hodges
26. Webster's Garage being used by Wilbur Floyd as a repair shop
27. Welsh Barber Shop
28. Café with Mrs. Annie Lou Graham
29. Tomlinson Dry Cleaners with Hubert Tomlinson
30. Graham Insurance Agency
31. Law Office of Mr. Keith Truluck
32. Yelberton Beauty Shoppe
33. Graham's Mercantile
34. Brown's Five and Dime Store
35. Hancock Fruit and Vegetable Stand
36. Truluck's Feed and Seed Company
37. Floyd's Flower and Gift Shop with Mrs. Lazalle Hancock.

In 1977, Olanta had the following places of business listed.

1. Thompson Oil with Mr. R. D. Thompson
2. Floyd and Moore Oil Co. on Liberty St.
3. C. K. Truluck, Lawyer on Main St. operating as Magistrate until he resigned in favor of Cecil Kirby in 1976.
4. Knight's Exxon Service Center on 301 from 1950 being operated by Gary Knight.
5. Mac's Gulf Service on 301 from 1938 until 1976 then becoming Roy Lee Weaver Garage
6. Ed Bryant's Texaco Station on 301, formerly Moore's
7. D. C. Wilson Garage from 1947 on Liberty St.
8. Joy Dry Cleaners on Main St. from 1958
9. D. E. Gowdy Package Store on Main St.
10. Olanta's Laundromat with Mrs. Mood Kelly from 1966 on 301 South
11. Bear Cat on 301 South
12. Stella's on Main St. with Mrs. Ted Thompson from 1974

13. Western Auto on Main St. with Donald Jones from 1957
14. Truluck Electric Shop from 1970 on Main St.
15. DuRant's Factory Outlet on 301 from 1966
16. Coker's Farm and Garden, on 301 and Main St. with Warren Coker
17. Jim's IGA on 301 from 1964
18. Florence County Bookmobile from 1965
19. DuRant's Furniture on Main St. from 1962
20. Olanta Hardware on Main St. with Chandler
21. Bennett's Thrift Way on Main St.
22. Olanta Fabric Shop on Main St. from 1976 with Mrs. Thelma McKenzie
23. B & B Grocery on Main St. with Ledelle McKenzie from 1976
24. V. R. Thompson General Merchandise on Main St.
25. Olanta Floor Covering on Main St. and Liberty St.
26. Olanta Tire and Auto Parts on Main St. from 1967
27. Quality Upholstery on Main St. from 1974
28. Fitch's Cloth Shop on Main St. from 1970
29. Gulf Filling Station at the Intersection of 301 and Main St. with L. McKenzie.
30. Kirby's New and Used Furniture on Main St. from 1975
31. W. W. Car Sales on Highway 301.

People of interest from Olanta include many professionals that would show the reason for their successful journey as the leaders from the area which would include teachers, clergy, and others. An early representative in this class would be T. J. Mims, graduating in 1917 from Olanta, listed in "Who's Who in the World".

Some of the individuals that have excelled from the area as professionals are

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Dr. Coyt Ham | Dr. Clem Ham |
| Dr. Blease Floyd | Dr. Hazel King |
| Dr. L. C. Floyd, Jr. | Dr. Richard Truluck |
| Dr. Charles H. Truluck | |
| Dr. Michael Hodge | Dr. Johnny Thomason |
| Dr. Harry Wells Floyd | Dr. Tommy Rush |
| Dr. Bud Granger | Dr. Brian Truluck |
| Dr. Wyman Morris | Dr. Harry Jordan |
| Dr. John W. Holt, Jr. | Dr. Priscilla Welch |

Pharmacists from the area include

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| J. Fred Rush | T. Hoyt Rush |
| J. Kelly Floyd | Marty Truluck |
| Ozeda Floyd | Averitt Moore |
| Fred Moore | Frank Systrunk |

Morticians

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| Kelton Floyd | Kell Floyd |
|--------------|------------|

Lawyers

J. M. Truluck
 R. D. Thompson
 S. R. Floyd, Jr.

C. K. Truluck
 Raymond K. McKenzie
 George Thomason

And with the church representation in the area, we must mention the following

Ministers

Lonnie Wall
 H. B. Tomlinson
 Charles Allen Thigpen
 LeRoy Floyd
 Ira Moore
 Aerial Tallon
 Jerome McKenzie

Thomas Truluck
 Rue I. Moore, Jr.
 Floyd Jordan
 Jerry White
 Carlos Gardner
 Meredith Floyd
 Harry Rogers

Morgan Rogers
 David Moore
 Van Pigate

Sports

Don Buddin

Military

Ret. General Bobby Floyd

There are others that are not mentioned. And as records are opened to the public, they will be recognized. While doing the research, attempting to expand on the written history, one such name was Ms. Inez Jordan. I am sure that a number of the 2008 History readers will remember her as a first grade teacher at Olanta, and she was also in 1930 census.

Some of the businesses found in Olanta in 2008 are

Black River Healthcare
 Blake Electric Co
 Bobbies Family Hair Care
 Buddy's Auto Service
 Chinatown
 Citizen's Bank
 Cliff's Food Stores
 Cooper's Lounge
 Corner Stop Car Wash
 Cynthia's Styling Salon
 Dollar & Up
 F & L Drug Store
 Floyd Flower & Gift
 Floyd Funeral Home
 Footsie's Rest
 Frierson's New & Used Furniture
 Gifts 4 Less

Jolei's Institute
 Kelly's Fine Arts
 Melissas Flower & Gift
 Moore & Assoc. Ins.
 Olanta Country Store
 Olanta Fabric
 Olanta Family Care
 Olanta Fashion
 Olanta Floor Covering
 Olanta Hardware
 Paul Bunyon Auction
 Southern Impressions
 Split Image Salon
 Styles by Debra
 Thompson Oil
 Vivian's Sandwich Shop
 Wallace Plumbing

HD's
Illusions Beauty Salon
Jack's Welding

There are other business's that service the area from out of town, and I am confident that some local business names are missing. But for sure the area is active and can still be called your "home town" USA.

Mayors of Olanta have been many, but I will mention two at this time. The first and youngest leader, was referred to as intendent at the time, was Thad Jerome Cottingham. The current and first female to serve is Betty Sims.

Olanta must thank Samuel A. Moore and family for the current Town Hall in use. A tour of the facility will show the reasons why the Town is happy to be in the facility. Be sure if you visit, to note the memorial on the wall, placed in honor of the men of the area that have served our country and state during times of peace, as well as conflict.

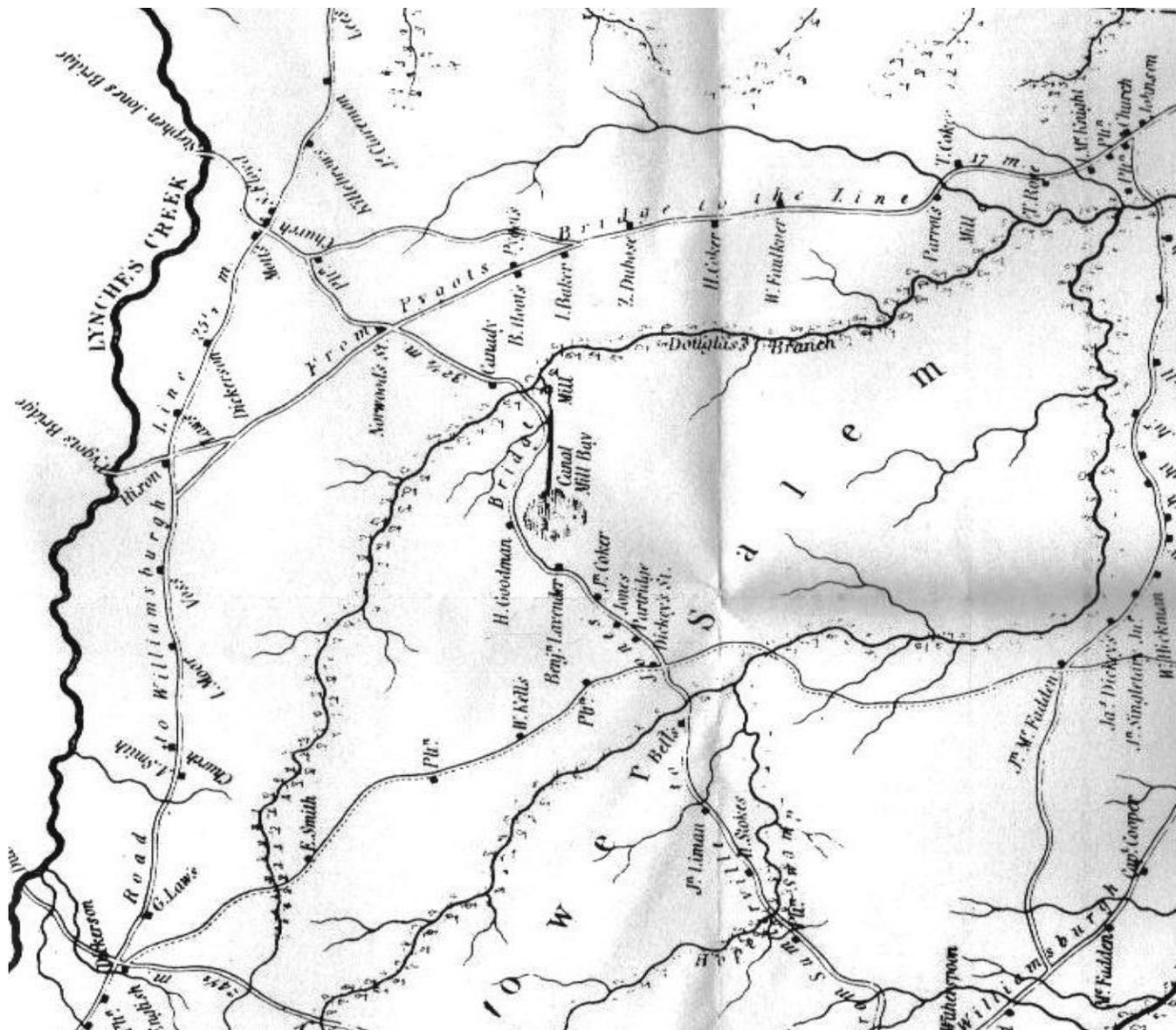
Olanta has been going through a period of financial strain for several years. Manufacturing facilities for the town have closed with the exception of Southern Impressions. Strong and strict requirements for the providing of water and sewage service for the town citizens have created high costs that now have to be supported by those citizens for the most part. The Town Government is working hard to control costs, while providing services needed for the citizens. New citizens are seen in the town and more are welcome. Positive movement is seen in improvements being made to the sewage system and a new larger library has been approved and funding made available. Construction is expected to begin before the end of 2008. Olanta provides a small town image with a large town heart.

In conclusion, I am confident that mistakes will be found in the wording or dating of events recorded within. I am sure that there are events that can easily be justified as being included in the record of the history of Olanta. And while the history itself cannot be changed, the correct recording of that history can. If anyone has anything that is felt to be worthy of being included, or if errors are found, please let us know. We would like to have the History of Olanta to be as complete and correct as possible.

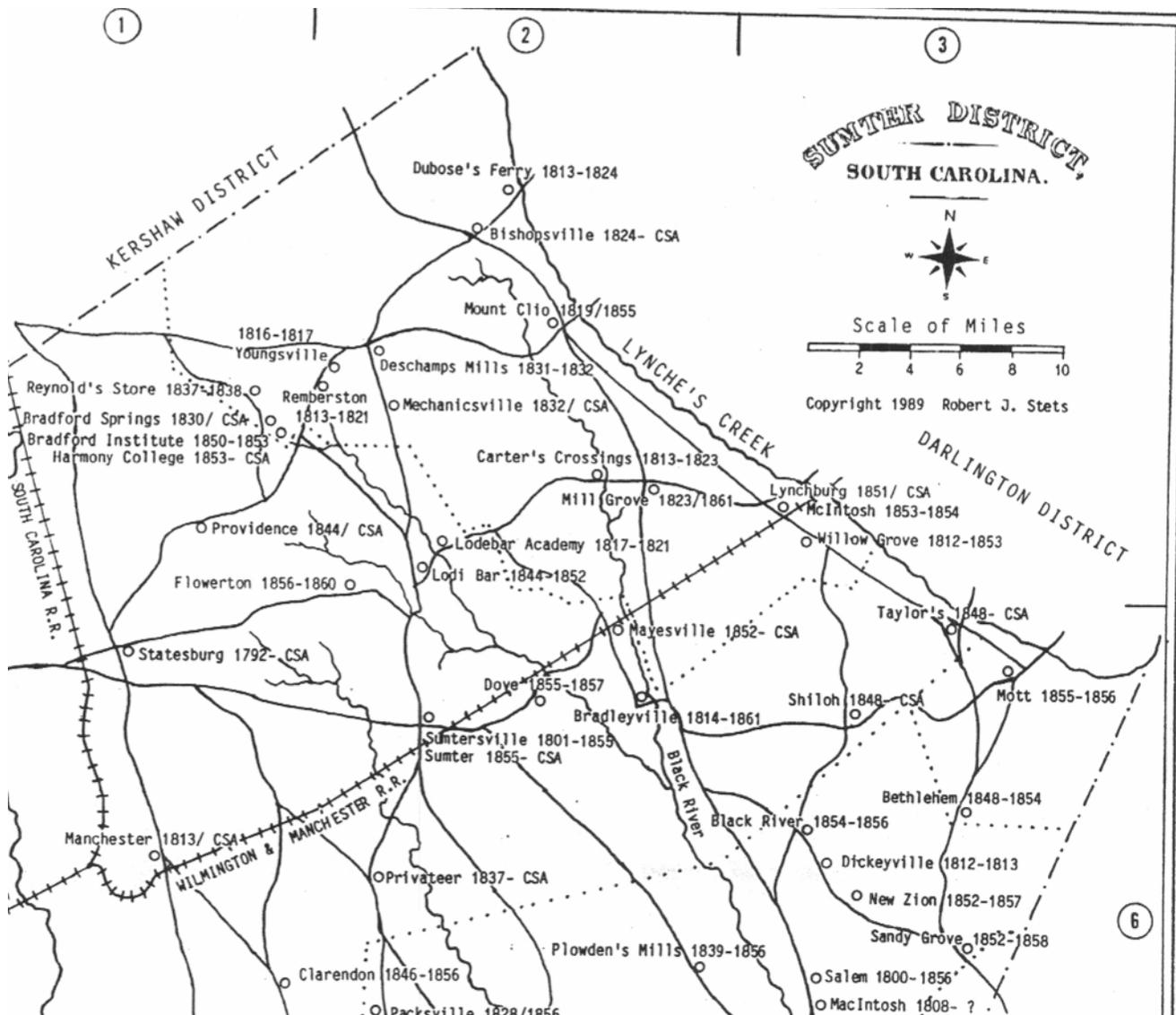
The information included within has been found at the following facilities. If you haven't been involved in research of this nature you might be interested in getting involved for your family participation in events. You will be surprised as to what is available today, and I am sure that more will become available in years to come.

- 1. South Carolina Archives and History – 8301 Parklane Rd. – Columbia, SC**
- 2. Florence County Library – 509 S. Dargan St. – Florence, SC**
- 3. Sumter County Genealogical Society – 219 W. Liberty – Sumter, SC**
- 4. Clarendon County Historical – 211 N. Brooks St. – Manning, SC**

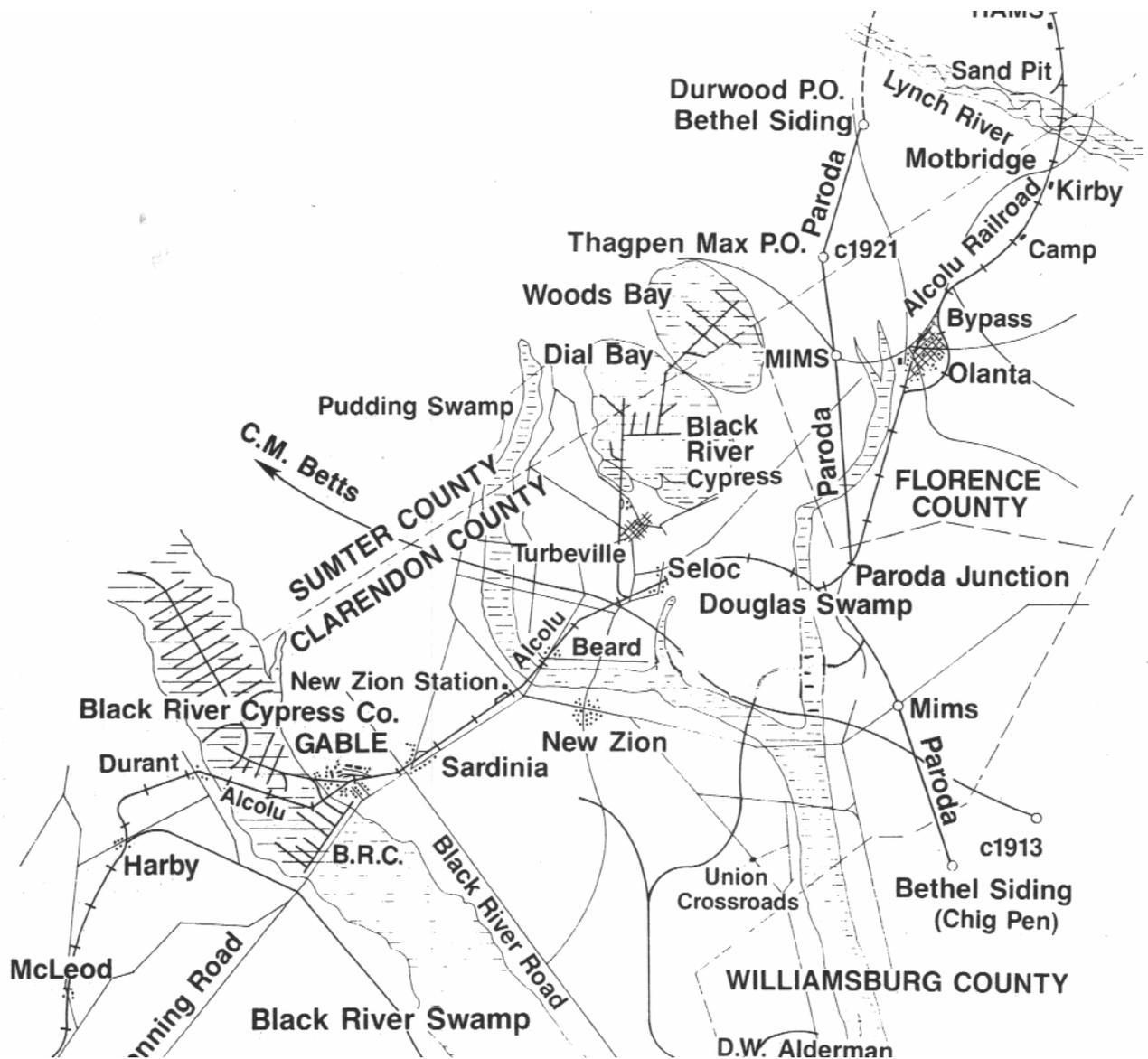
Most of these have on-line sites available as well. They will provide information that will provide for hours of interesting study. You will miss something, however, if you don't visit their facilities and see the books and other forms of information they have gathered for our assistance.



1825 Mills Map -- To locate Olanta, locate Lynch Creek and Stephen Jones Bridge, Current 301, follow it south, 1st intersection is historic Mott's Crossroads, now Kelly's Crossroads, church shows at the location is thought to be then Elim Baptist, now location of Bethel Baptist. If you continue that line south, you will find a fork that was Sumterville Hwy. to the right, now is Sunberry Rd. leading to Norwoods Crossroads. But continuing South, you will find another fork that was Olanta of the period, at the junction of the Darlington road, joining to form the Charleston Hwy. of the period, now Park St./Burnt Branch Rd.



The Bethlehem Postoffice opened in 1848, closed in 1854. It would reopen in 1855 with Frederick Rush as Postmaster and would remain in service until the postoffice in Olanta opened in 1908. Documents for corporations in Olanta actually show Bethlehem as their address as late as 1911. Please note that Bethlehem was located south on today's Park St. a short distance out of what is today's town limits.



This map shows the railroad service provided to and through Olanta beginning around 1905, with the rail being removed around 1937. The D. W. Alderman Co. was using the line with the primary purpose of movement of timber back to its mill. Numerous records exist of timber right of ways being issued to various land owners of the area during that period. The remains of railroad bridges still can be found on Lynch River today.