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# PART I

## GENERAL INFORMATION CHEROKEE COUNTY

Some facts about Cherokee County taken from a History of Northern Alabama in 1888 by Smith and Deland, Birmingham, Alabama.

County Seat—Centre; population 650; on Coosa river, 140 miles north by east of Montgomery, 20 miles north of Jacksonville.

Newspapers published at County Seat—*Cherokee Advertiser*, *Coosa River News*, and the *Telephone* (all Democratic).

Postoffices in the County in 1888—Alexis, Ball Flat, Blaine, Broomtown, Cedar Bluff, Cedar Spring, Centre, Chance, Colma, Davis' Cross-roads, Farill, Firestone, Forney, Fullerton, Gaylesville, Gnatville, Grantville, Hancock, Howel's Cross-roads, Hurley, Key, Kirk's Grove, Lay, Leesburgh, Maple Grove, Moshat, New Goshen, New Moon, Plano, Ricks, Ringgold, Rock Run, Rock Run Station, Round Mountain, Sand Rock, Slackland, Spring Garden, Sterling, Stock's Mills, Taff, Tecumseh.

Cherokee has an abundant water supply, being traversed by the Coosa, Chattanooga, Yellow and Little Rivers, and Cowan's, Ball Play, Wolf, Spring, Terrapin, Yellow and Mill Creeks. All these are valuable streams, which are fed by numerous tributaries. This is the only county the heart of which is penetrated by the beautiful Coosa River. With the exception of Etowah, near whose eastern boundary the river runs, it forms the border line of all the other counties which it waters. But Cherokee it divides in twain, imparting fertility and beauty from limit to limit of the county. The waterways already named have, almost without exception, immense capabilities of water-power adapted to the planting of vast enterprises.

The line between Cherokee and DeKalb Counties runs along the summit of Lookout Mountain.

The Broomtown Valley, in the northwest corner of Cherokee, is worthy of special mention by reason of its fertility and romantic beauty. The grandeur of this section is enhanced by its bold and clear streams which ramify it throughout.

The County of Cherokee was created from a portion of St. Clair County by the legislature on Jan. 9, 1836 and given the name of the Indian tribe that relinquished claim to the land when they were moved west of the Mississippi. At the time the county was created, an act provided that the temporary seat of justice "shall be the house of Colonel Hendricks." Tradition has it that the first court was held at the home, or store-house, of Singleton Hughes. This tradition is based on the information contained in Anthony's "Reminiscences." A search of the Acts of Alabama, 1836, revealed the name of Singleton Hughes and a precinct established at his house on Dec. 25, 1837. He was postmaster at Spring Creek in 1835.

First appointments to office in Cherokee County as recorded in the Civil Register, State of Alabama, Department of Archives and History, Montgomery:

George Birdwell, appointed March 24, 1836, Judge of County Court. Appointed March 25, 1836, Justice of Peace: Thomas Nelson, Josiah Harper, and James L. McCarroll; Constable: Hickman, Dunman, Tapley W. Nauls, Zachariah Laney; Sheriff: Robert Bell; Clerk of Circuit Court: Henry L. Smith; Clerk of County Court: John S. Wilson; Tax Assessor and Collector: John [unclear]. First representative to the state legislature was Colonel George Clifton, 1837.

Cedar Bluff was designated the county seat on June 24, 1837. A temporary courthouse, a log structure, was built. Between June and December, 1837, the county seat was renamed Jefferson. An act to incorporate Jefferson was approved on Dec. 23, 1837. In

1842 the name was changed back to Cedar Bluff. In 1844 Centre was chosen as the county seat, where it has remained. A frame building and log jail were built at Centre. Later, in 1853, a brick jail was erected. The courthouse at Centre burned in 1882. It burned a second time in 1895. The building erected following this fire was demolished and a new one built in 1936. A courthouse annex was added in 1952.

There is a historical marker at the site where the first courthouse, the log structure at Cedar Bluff, stood.

Broomtown Valley, named for Cherokee Indian Chief Broom, is marked with a historical marker. A National Council of Cherokee Indian Chiefs was held here Sept. 11, 1808. White pioneers from the Carolinas, Georgia, Virginia, and Tennessee were settled here among the Indians as early as 1810. There is record of a deed for land, where in 1830 the pioneer Garrett built what is now thought to be the oldest structure in the county. At the rear of this house, in the Garrett Cemetery, is the grave of another Indian chief, Chief Pathkiller, last of Cherokee chiefs in the area. The will of his wife, Peggy Pathkiller, may be seen in the St. Clair County survey.

The forty-two historical markers erected in Cherokee County tell its story and recognize its founders and leaders.

It can be seen in deed records that Moses Stroup owned an iron furnace, five miles northeast at Round Mountain, erected in 1849; John Lawson Burnett, born in Cedar Bluff Jan. 20, 1853, was Representative in United States Congress 1898-1919, father of United States Immigration Laws; John Johnathan Pratt, while Register in Chancery and later Editor of the National Democrat, about 1860, developed the first typewriter.

The Noble brothers became residents and landowners in 1862; they came from Cornwall, England and established Cornwall Furnace.

Samuel Porter Jones, the national evangelist, labored here as a driver of an ox-drawn charcoal cart.

The records show, it is believed, the first Prohibition Law in the United States was enacted by the Alabama Legislation for Cornwall Furnace. Perhaps there is a connection between this law and Samuel Porter Jones.

Three miles northeast of Centre on Spring Creek the Newberry Mills were owned and operated prior to 1864.

Dr. John Perkins Ralls lived here. He was a member of the Secession Convention as a delegate from Cherokee County.

Governor William W. Brandon lived here as a young man, attending Cedar Bluff Institute.

This mentions only a few of the pioneers whose records in the deeds, wills, and marriage books perished in 1882, the date the courthouse burned.

SOURCES: "History of Cherokee County," by Colonel Robert N. Mann. Department of Archives and History—Montgomery, Alabama.

