A Brief History of Fayette County

Fayette County was the 33rd county in Alabama, created by an act of the General Assembly (known today as the State Legislature) on December 20, 1824. The territory included in the county boundaries was taken from parts of Marion and Tuscaloosa Counties. Its western boundary abutted Mississippi territory.

The first settlers came to Fayette County mainly from Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee. A few came from Virginia and North Carolina. They began settling in this area as early as 1814 when this part of the state was still hunting ground for the Creek, Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians. Land grants were plentiful. From 1814-1819, 1,121 people received land grants in what was to become Fayette County from 1814-1819. These early settlers found a haven where two rivers flowed. (Sipsey and Luxapalila) Its river bottoms furnished fine farming land and the hillsides, rich with timber, furnished logs to build their homes and a bountiful supply of wild game for food.

Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church, at its same location today, was the first church organized in this area in 1818 and had a membership scattered over twenty or more miles.

The first post office was established in 1926 at Fayette Court House, the only incorporated town in the county. The town of Fayette Court House, (on the hill above 5-Points) was incorporated on January 15, 1821, and named for the French General Marquis de LaFayette. Hence, the county took the name "Fayette" when it was created 4 years later.

Although court was being held in an old log hatter's shop on the hill above Haley creek on Highway 43 north, in 1826, the Alabama General Assembly officially passed an act to locate a "Seat of Justice" in Fayette County. When Fayette Court House town officially became the county seat, a new log courthouse was built in the town.

On January 15, 1831, Fayette Court House town was re-incorporated under the name of Fayetteville.

The first public school, The Fayetteville Male and Female Academy was established by an act of the General Assembly in 1838.

In November of 1860 Fayette Countians voted overwhelmingly against succession from the Union. On January 11, 1861, before the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States, an Alabama Convention was held in Montgomery. Fayette County's delegates, Burr Wilson and Elliott Priest Jones voted against succession from the United States, as did most of the delegates from North Alabama. However, the vote to succeed won. By 1864, Fayette County had sent 678 men and boys to the confederate army and 155 to the Union

army. Another 250 to 300 who refused to fight on either side hid out in the hills and woods in the northern part of the county.

Fayette County was divided in half in 1967 and Jones County, which later became Sanford County and lastly Lamar County, was created.

On December 8, 1880 the town of Fayetteville was incorporated into a municipality, Although many people still referred to it as Fayette Court House, which was the name still carried by the post office.

The first newspaper was printed in the county in1849 and, although there were many different names and editors, Fayette County has had continuous newspapers since that time. (In 1906 the Fayette paper was edited by the Baptist and Methodist ministers. It was one of the best of the State's weekly papers, according to the April 4, 1906 edition of the *Birmingham Ledger*.)

The *Georgia Pacific Railroad* (*Southern Railroad*)was built through swampland about a mile from Fayetteville in 1883. The area around the railroad became known as "*Frog Level*". A Post Office was established near the railroad tracks and the first postmaster named it the *Frog Level Post Office*. Two years later, the second postmaster change the name of the post office to *Alfreda*, in honor his wife. The third postmaster changed the name to *Icy*, his daughter's name. As businesses from Fayetteville began to move closer to the railroad, People began calling the settlement *Fayette Depot Town*.

A movement was afoot to relocate the courthouse. One element of the population wanted the courthouse moved to the settlement around the railroad, another element want it to stay at its location in Fayetteville. Still, a third group thought that the courthouse should be located in the middle of the county and has chosen a site in the Stough community. Prior to the vote on relocation of the courthouse in 1991, the town around the depot incorporated as *Latona.*

After a process of elimination votes, the site for the new courthouse was chosen to be *Latona*. On November 8, 1989, the citizens of *Latona* voted to change the name to *Fayette.* The once thriving but now virtually abandoned city of Fayetteville ceased to exist and the area of Fayette County's first town became known as simply "*Old Town*".

The coming of the railroad and subsequent railroad stations built along the rail lines was cause for other towns and communities to spring up in Fayette County. The town of *Berry* was incorporated as *Berry Station* in 1883.

The town of *Glen Allen*, was first a settlement known as *Stewart's Gap.* After the *Kansas, Memphis & Birmingham (*later the *Frisco*) railroad was built through the settlement in 1885. The settlement was renamed *Glen Allen* using the last name of the two engineers who built the railroad. *Glen Allen* incorporated as a town in May of 1959.

The town of *Belk* was also a train stop in 1883, and for a short time was called *Mulberry Tank*. However, the *Belk* community did not officially incorporate as a town until 1969.

A disastrous fire swept through Fayette on March 21, 1911 and every business was leveled to ashes. The merchants and professionals were back in business the next day, operating out of temporary shacks and lean-tos. The townspeople swore to rebuild their town bigger and better and set about accomplishing their goal.

The paving of Temple Avenue was begun in 1925 and completed in 1927. Another 10 years would pass before another street or road in the county would be paved.

Coal was discovered in the southeastern part of the county in 1887. Tremendous amounts of natural gas and some oil was discovered in 1910. Fayette County's natural resources have long ago replace agriculture as the foundation of wealth in Fayette County. In 1969, Fayette County was listed as the top county in Alabama in per capita income.

Things have changed in Fayette County in the last 100 years. Few farms still exist. Manufacturing industries have come and gone. The people of this county with their belief in God and Country and their work ethic and commitment to make this county a better place to live are as strong as those of our ancestors.

Population figures for Fayette County have remained fairly constant over the past 100 years.

Fayette County, Alabama

Year	Population
1910	16,248
1920	18,365
1930	18,443
1940	21,651
1950	19,388
1960	16,148
1970	16,252
1980	18,809
1990	17,962
2000	18,495
2010	17,241