CITY OF UNION SPRINGS
BULLOCK'S THRIVING CAPITAL

By D. W. McIver

Union Springs, Feb 18—(Special Correspondence)—The town of Union Springs is situated about an equal distance from Montgomery on the West, Tuskegee on the South, Eufaula on the East and Columbus on the North, and yet it has grown into a flourishing and prosperous place and there are yet great possibilities for it in the near future. The town was among the name by a party of hunters, who passed here on one of the sightly and excellent spring water, and the abundance of game to be found in the surrounding country, consisting of deer, turkeys and all the lesser of small game. They found at the foot of the hills upon which the town is now located a never-ceasing spring, which all united in one, forming one stream, and from that fact they called the place Union Springs. Most of these springs are still running, yet one of the best spring is now owned by Capt. P. H. Coleman; four are on the land known as the old yard lot, now owned by Mr. J. H. Eley; the remainder are met at the residences of Messrs. J. H. Eley and W. F. Singleton, and Mrs. S. A. Dexter. The land on which the town is located was bought from Charles G. Gunter by Mr. Michael Eley, the grandfather of Messrs. H. H. and J. H. Eley in the year 1836. Mr. Eley said to me that he (Mr. Eley) was the man who put that part of the land lying on the east side of Prairie Street and south of Conecuh Street, in cultivation and claimed it as a farm until 1861, when he sold it to a land company composed of Messrs. Arnold Searles, J. M. Foster, E. H. Powell, Robert Blackman and S. J. Foster as stockholders. This company employed Mr. M. N. Eley to survey and map the lands into a town, which the company named Sirenite, but the citizens would not adopt the name, continuing to call it Union Springs. The Mobile and Girard Railroad was completed to this place in about 1858, the Montgomery and Eufaula, in 1868, and the Union Springs and Northern in 1891, which with three railroads give renewed life and enterprise to her citizens.

The first church built in Union Springs was the Baptist, which stood just east of the hardware store of Mr. J. S. Griffith. The Presbyterians built a church on the lot now owned by Mrs. Ben Bessions in about the year 1858, which was blown down. They rebuilt a frame structure on the site, where their present handsome brick church now stands. The Methodist Church was built by Mr. Yarrington in about 1859 or 1860. The first school building was on Isabella, the rear of the lot now occupied by the Baptist Church. Rev. W. P. McCall, now at Troy, was the first teacher I remember. Then Dr. R. McIlwaine. The building was moved to about where the M. and E. Railroad bridge stands on Prairie Street, and James T. Jordan taught there for several years. Frank Butterfield bought and built a two-story school building on the residence lots owned by Mrs. Maggie Ridgeway and E. H. Cope and Mrs. R. D. Smith, and called the place "Woodlawn." Butterfield was assisted by Mrs. S. A. Dexter, Mary A. F. Eley, William Ferguson and Miss Julia McCann, all of whom are living save Dexter and who are still living except possibly Mr. Ferguson. The first bank was organized by Pinson and H. H. Powell in the year 1856 or 1857. Their bank office was the building now owned by the Carlile Drug Store, and the old vault is still intact. Mr. H. Blakely & Co. organized a private bank in 1860 and dissolved in 1865. L. Sessions and J. T. Lewis organized a private bank in 1866 and dissolved in 1868. When the Bullock County Bank was organized there were less than two banks with ample capital to supply all the demands of trade and to meet all the requirements of the rapid growth and progress.

I came to Union Springs in just about the first of the year, and was a reporter on the Union Springs Herald which Col. H. H. Powell and Mr. J. T. Grew started at that time, the former as the editor. There are not at this time but two citizens who were then engaged in business here, that I can recall, Messrs. E. H. Franklin and Mr. A. Miles, one is the drug business at his present site and the latter at the corner store under the Masonic Lodge—but now under The Herald office. Many of the business houses of that day are continued, but the sons have taken the place of their fathers, long laid down by their fathers. There are not many of the boys here now who were grown men when I came here, most of them living gone to their reward, some moved away and the balance still here as useful, enterprising business men. Among the latter I mention J. H. Norman, who is one of the leading lawyers in the several Bullock Counties and now a member of the Council, and recently a member of the Constitutional Convention. Mr. T. L. Cowan, the City Clerk and a business man possessing the confidence of all the people. Mr. W. H. Hays, enjoying a large practice; Walter Kistler, who is also a prominent business man. Dick Grady, who is in Dr. Franklin's drug store, and all are active members of the old Chiptonian Society, of which the president, Mr. Hays was a member and where he received his first lessons that made him for the duties of statesmanship he is so ably and successfully discharging. Among those who have left never the River, to which I recall with the greatest pleasure, as they were my boyhood friends and closest associates, and whose absence I note with regret, were Col. Sol Bessions and Alex Thomas all of whom had made names for themselves and who had the most promising future before them There are others, but space prevents any further indulgence in recalling the most pleasant days and reference to the vacations so dear to all, and to the memory I so fondly cherish.

Those were happy days spent here—far from care and responsibility. I did not know it then, but I do now, and count them among the happiest hours of my life the time here spent in the pleasant and most fortunate place in the Union, of that best of men Col. H. H. Powell and his charming wife, who treated me as one of his own family and I felt as kindly toward me, most valuable, and I have found it so in after life. Kind and gentle and full of all he was like a ray of sunshine in his home, and I can look back and see him now in my imagination, with his little daughter Mary, daughter upon his knee, nicknaming her "Pinson," the figure of happiness, beyond others' happy lot, surrounded them with only the desire to live uprightly and correctly in the sight of God and in conversation. Colonel Powell was one of the greatest men I ever knew, and I knew—he was my friend at all times and under all conditions, and that although old enough to be my father he treated me as a brother, and I loved him as one boy, and as a friend I have long since learned to appreciate and to honor, for they are very scarce and all the more highly appreciated. But one of the boys of this family remain and he has proven to be a most useful and valuable citizen, Mr. Norborne Pearl, having often represented Bullock County in the lower House, and in the different conventions of the party. He is pleasant and affable in his manner, makes friends of all who know him and is deserving all the popularity he may succeed in attaining and worthy of filling any position within the gift of the people.

Besides the many changes in population, Union Springs of today is not the town when I used to know it. When I lived here there were but few brick buildings, the Pullum Hotel stood in the center of the block and back from the street where the Bullock County Bank and a whole row of brick buildings are now located. The City Hall was then a wooden structure with the engine and hook and ladder companies underneath. Then there were two fire companies, Citizens' Engine Company and Clanton Hook and Ladder Company. I was at one time foreman of this company but I learned to be a pretty good fire fighter. On the other side of the street most of the buildings were frame structures and they were scattering, while now the two main business blocks are made up of solid brick buildings all being occupied. The grand and inspiring monument in the centre of Prairie Street tells of the love and veneration of these brave and beautiful people for the Confederate soldier who gave his life for his country's sake, and reminds me of the word that their deeds of heroism and daring will never be forgotten. One of the largest and most profitable enterprises in this town is the cotton mills established about 1892, under a charter by that excellent citizen and connectively successful business man, Dr. C. H. Franklin with his wide-awake and sterling young associate, Mr. E. H. Franklin, who is a member of the board of directors composed of some of the best peer for this country, claiming that it is almost free from blight, has a most magnificent fruit, and is an early and late variety.

Mr. A. B. Strickland also has a Flower Nursery plant in the heart of the city, in which he grows different varieties of roses, geraniums, chrysanthemums, cannas, and all kinds of ornamental shrubs. His collection of ferns, palms and house plants is truly magnificent. Plants from both these nurseries have been shipped all over the country and adorn the tables for and wide as a source of pleasure and for the production of fruits and flowers.

There is also a telephone exchange located in the heart of the town and it is taken by most of the business men and citizens in their stores and residences

Up a number of years the Mayor and Council had let a contract for the building a system of water works, not only a system of water, but of furnishing an abundant supply of water but water that would come up and from an overflowing from crystal spring or fountain. To cities that had they begun at first by boring for an artesian well, and after many months of trials and disappointments they finally struck a vein of water more than fulfilling their brightest hopes. The well is 1,000 feet in depth and rising within 50 feet of the surface and then raised by means of hydraulic power to the reservoir situated in close proximity to the well, and that is pouring a flow of 1,500 gallons per minute, an abundant supply for all time to come.

For a week was a rival to another Country town and the debt made by the former on the expense of the system. The present city government is composed of the following gentlemen, Mayor, Dr. C. H. Franklin, councilmen J. D. Norman, J. H. Hainer, Jr., W. Lee Eley, Jr., Walter Kistler and J. T. Copeland, has worked wonders and since the last administration the town has made great progress. The town now owns the water works, electric light plant and in all owns $5,000 worth of property with a very small debt, easily paying the interest and promptly meeting all obligations. The present City Clerk, a most meritorious Chief Executive, and with the aid of such wise and successful business and professional men to aid in the Council, the city has been most successful in its enterprises and is highly praised by the citizens. It is a splendid thing when they have men of ability and every reason to be proud of their city government.

Just at this moment Union Springs offers great inducements for investment of new enterprises of any kind of business in the Union. In the mercantile world the merchants are known far and wide for their probity and honor, scarcely a failure ever having been recorded against them, and in the dark days of 1893, when the wonderful institutions, financially, of the country, were tottering to their ruin, there had been no shock and heavily overcame it. Her banks stands as the top, and many of them have written their names high up on the roll of fame in the decisions of the Supreme Court of the State. Her physicians have gained not only local distinction, but have had admission in researches in the advancement of medical science have been quoted all over the country. And another inducement for investment is that there is here a God-fearing, law abiding people. On the other hand her schools and colleges stand in importance in the market of the fleecy staple. Surrounded by the most fertile lands that ever the sun shone on, where neither droughts or floods are known, with a climate that outlives the famed regions of Italy or Southern France, Union Springs cannot but commend itself to the capitalist seeking a place for investment. The railroads entering here offer incomparable facilities; and the adjacent country is the golden opportunities for those who will take advantage of this "tide in the affairs of men" and push it on to a successful close.

The New Railroad

A new railroad has recently been built from Union Springs to Fort Davis, in Macon County, several miles away, which connects with the Seaboard trains for Savannah and Montgomery and the new road promises much for the development of the town, giving more connections in freight rates and opening up a new territory for trade. The President of the road, Mr. W. M. Blount, is the projector of this enterprise and its construction is due mostly to his energy and enterprise. The officers, Messrs. W. H. Eley, J. M. Hills, A. E. Singleton, Geo. W. Walker, C. E. Chouteau, W. M. Pitts, Chas. A. Jones, Ernest L. Blue, W. H. Miles, Hugh Foster, are among the leading citizens and they are confident that the road will pay handsome dividends. Mr. Blount has recently returned from the East where he went to consult in regard to the future of the road.

The Herald has an interview with him knowing that the President had just returned from the East whither he went in connection with railroad matters relative to certain rates for Union Springs "He said he was better clearer and more explicitly before them. They admitted that his propositions were fair and just and that his requests could, with all consistency, be granted by the S. A. L. They mean the establishment of whole-sale and jobbing grocery and dry goods houses which can compete with those of any city in the Southern States, or any city in Georgia. Freight rates have always been against such enterprises. Nothing stands in favor of such houses where there is more railroad competition have existed, and with railroad competition it is perfectly natural that they should exist; but they will be done away with.

Thus the people hope for great things from the railroad, and it is now up to them to extend it at no distant day through the Birmingham district, if it will open another line to the outside world.

Business and Professional Men.

Among the most prominent and successful business men and professional men of the town the following are worthy of mention as having done much to augur its growth and prosperity:

Dr C. H Franklin

Dr C H Franklin is one of the oldest citizens and enterprising public-spirited business men of the town. He was born in Albany, Ga., having been born in that city in 1856 and was educated in Cuthbert Academy and after reaching manhood entered the medical department of the University of Nashville, from which he graduated. He enlisted promptly and served his country in Cuba and Mexico faithfully. After the war he entered the drug business in Albany, Georgia, where he remained and was generously rewarded for his pains. He came to Union Springs and has resided ever since practicing his profession and conducting the drug business and being connected with every enterprise which has been in existence. He is one of the leaders of the Union Springs Cotton Mills and through his skill in management they have paid a dividend from the beginning. He has also loaned interests out of his own money to citizens desiring to build brick houses and thus has made a fortune and has gained the confidence and esteem of his fellow citizens. He is a gentleman and is well informed on every subject. He is always active very energetically and is one of the most popular and influential men in the town. He prides himself on his business success and his ability to make a fortune for himself and he is sufficient to assure its success. He is more thoroughly identified with the progress of the town and he is always ready and willing to join any movement looking to its advancement. He has the greatest confidence in the future of the town and can look back with pride on the part he has taken in bringing it up to its present high standard.

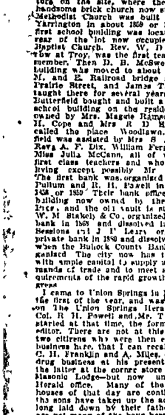
Dr. L. Sessions.

Dr. L. Sessions was born near Gryfin, Bulloch County, Ga., and came to Union Springs in 1866. He married in Chambers County in 1866. He practiced medicine here for twenty-one years and then resigned on account of his health, after having done a big much of his time to farming, which he has found profitable. He built the drug business with Judge Pullum, which he conducted for many years. He built the first brick house and erected the first warehouse here. He established the first bank ever opened here in 1866, and has since been connected with every enterprise and undertaking of importance in the town. He has made a great deal of money here and although not in active business, he is always fully posted on what is transpiring, and keeps in close touch with the progress and advancement of the town. He has been was for a long time one of the leaders in the medical profession in this section of the State and was one of the originators and took an active part in the organization of the first Medical Society formed in the State at Tuskegee in 1861. He yet has a great confidence in the profession from which he was forced to retire by failing health. He is possessed of large means and has invested his money wisely and judiciously. He is at the head of a most flourishing bank in Union Springs. He is a most pleasant companion and talks with much interest of the days when he was actively at work and it is recognized that he has done much to promote the growth of this place and that he is ready now to do his full part in keeping alive the spirit of progress and advancement which seems to have been revived anew with the building and proposed extension of the new railroad.

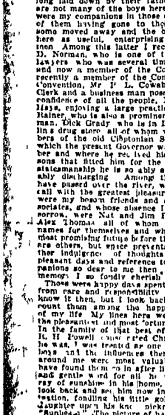
Bullock County Bank

Dr. L. Sessions, J. F. Leary, M. B. Houghton, C. S. Anderson and J. H. Eley organized the Bullock County Bank in 1894 with L. Sessions, President; J. H. Eley, cashier, with a capital of $50,000, which was increased to $70,000 in 1896. Messrs. J. F. Leary, J. H. Eley and estate of S. J. Foster, deceased, own the entire stock. They have an extensive line of deposits and have the confidence and patronage of the public. They own large interest in city improved property and large landed interests in county, independent of the bank stock, and are alive to the progress and enlargement of their town's growth. Mr. J. H. Eley was a member of the Constitutional Convention, and is a safe, calculating and prudent business man. Mr. J. J. Lee is the Treasurer of the Union Springs and Northern Railroad and was a co-operator with President W. M. Blount in securing that road for Union Springs and he was also the principal mover and subscriber in securing the cotton factory for Union Springs, and has

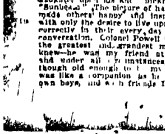
Mr. J. H. Eley.



Dr. L. Sessions.



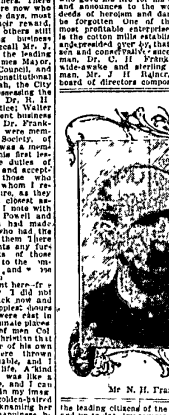
Mr N. H. Fraser.



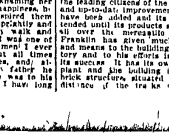
Dr C H Franklin

Store of W. R. PIERCE

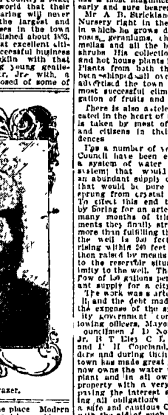
W. H. Hall & Thomas Bank

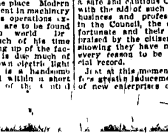


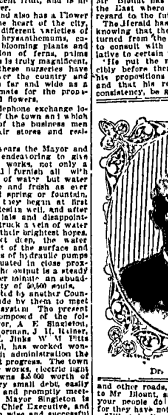
PASSENGER HOTEL

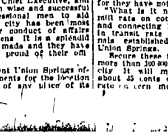


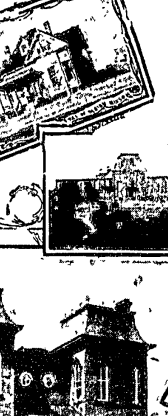
BULLOCK WAREHOUSE

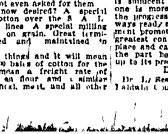


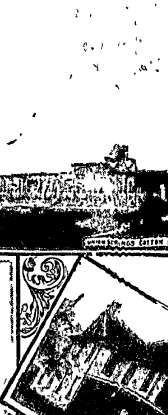


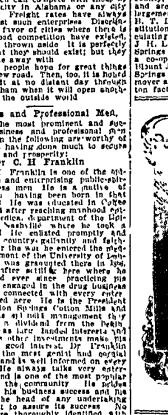


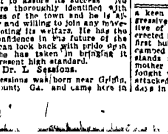


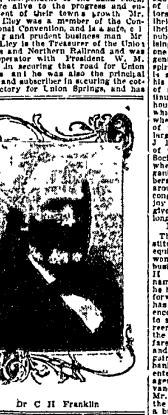


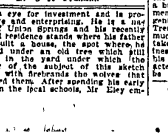


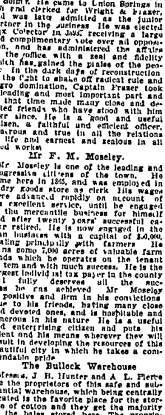


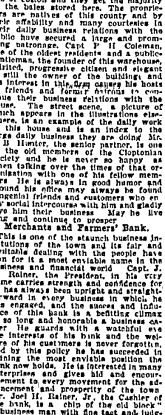


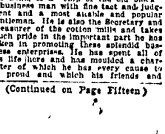












Sheriff Ritch is probably the youngest Sheriff in the State. In the interest of the tariff he resigned his chairmanship in the primaries and his administration of the duties since his election has been prompt and satisfactory and has fully justified the confidence reposed in him by the people. He boasts that by taking an active part in the work he has never yet been called upon to make a scratch in the discharge of his duty. Personally he is pleasant and affable, easy of approach, and has made a good impression with his fellows, he is a model officer, his grandfather, his father in his office and has received an excellent training in all the duties devolving upon him in the performance of his responsibilities.

Mr. Ritch is a native of this county, having been born at Brunsville, and reared in the county. He attended school in this county before going to the State University, which institution he entered in 1891. He graduated from the University in his junior year, but was at that time well qualified, from an educational standpoint, to commence the battle of life. He is progressive and up-to-date, and readily takes an active part in any movement looking to the advancement and growth of the county.

Mr. M. N. Eley

Mr. M. N. Eley is now the Tax Collector of the County and has entered the University of Alabama from Coffee County. At 14 he went to Troy and with him as a company of cadets which was attached to Jones's command and assumed the duties of guards at the close of the war, and was in the battle at Selma. He came to Union Springs in 1865 and clerked for Wright & Fraser, and was soon admitted as the junior partner in the business. He was elected Tax Collector in June, 1896, by a large and complimentary vote over all opposition, and has administered the duties of the office with a zeal and fidelity which has endeared the position of the people. In the dark days of reconstruction in the Court to stand off radical rule and negro domination, Captain Fraser took a leading and most important part and at that time made many close and devoted friends who have stood with him ever since. He is a public spirited and useful citizen, a faithful and efficient officer, generous and ready to lend a helping hand of life and earnest and zealous in all good works.

Mr F. M. Moseley.

Mr. Moseley is one of the leading and progressive citizens of the town. He came here in 1865, and was employed in a dry goods store of the Messrs. Wagon were advanced rapidly on account of his energy and service, until he engaged in the mercantile business for himself and after twenty years' successful career retired. He is now engaged in the farm business with a capital of $40,000, dealing principally with farms. He owns some 7,000 acres of valuable farm lands which he rents on the cash rent term and with much success. He is the oldest Masonic Lodge in the county and has served as Master twice for a number of years. Mr. Moseley is positive and firm in his convictions true to his friends, hating many close and devoted friends, and is generous and generous in his nature. He is a useful and energetic citizen and his talent and his means wherever they will result in contributing to the growth of the beautiful city in which he takes a commendable pride.

The Bullock Warehouse

Messrs. J. H. Hunter and A. L. Pierce are the proprietors of this most useful and substantial warehouse, which being centrally located and having ample room for the storage of cotton and they get the majority of the cotton grown here. The proprietors are natives of this county and have their affability and many courtesies in their favor, and the business of the public have secured a large and prominent patronage. Mr. A. L. Pierce, one of the oldest residents and a public spirited citizen, is a most pleasant, whole-spirited, progressive citizen and elegant in his manners, and is generous and his interest in this, he causes his hosts of friends and patrons to feel, and continue their business relations with the house. The street scene, a picture of which appears on the opposite page, is where, in an example of the daily work of this business, and it is one of the large daily business they are doing. Mr. J. H. Hunter is the son of one of the old members of the Chiptonian Society and he is a chip of the old block as when talking over the time of that organization with him he is ever forgetful of them. He is always in good humor and friend to all, and he may always be found congenial friends may always be found in pleasant intercourse with him and gladly give him their patronage. May he live long and continue to prosper

Merchants' and Farmers' Bank

This is one of the staunch business institutions of the town and its fair and equitable dealing with the people has won for it a most enviable name in the business and financial circles.

Reiner, the President, in his very name carries a guarantee of success for he has always been upright and straightforward in the business in which he has engaged, and the success and influence of his bank is due in great degree to so long and honorable a business career. He is actively and well versed in the interests of his bank and the welfare of the town and he never forgotten, and by this policy he has succeeded in gaining the most enviable position the bank now holds. He is interested in many enterprises and gives his aid and encouragement to every enterprise for the advancement and prosperity of the town. Mr. Joel H. Eley is the Cashier of the bank, is a chip of the old block. He is a native of this county, is a large landowner and a most stable and popular gentleman. He is also the Secretary and Treasurer of the cotton mills and takes much pride in the important part he has taken in promoting these and other business enterprises. He has spent all of his life here and is a most active and efficient of which he has every cause to be proud. He is a man of many friends and

(Continued on Page Fifteen)