

EARLY SWEDISH HISTORY
OF
SILVERHILL, ALABAMA

1896-1930

BY

CHARLIE NORMAN



EARLY SWEDISH HISTORY OF SILVERHILL

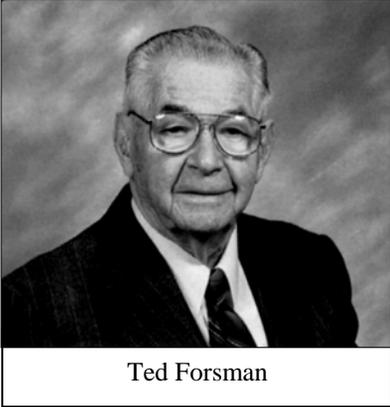
1896-1930

Written by
Charlie Norman

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Preface

Charlie Norman wrote this history in 1930. He typed it in Swedish with his left hand because he lost his right hand in an accident at the cotton gin that he and his brother, Patrick Norman, operated. He had a mechanical hand with two fingers that opened and closed to pick up items. Using his own descriptions, possibly taken from his journal, he hoped that this would help our children and their relatives understand the beginning of the Colony of Silverhill.

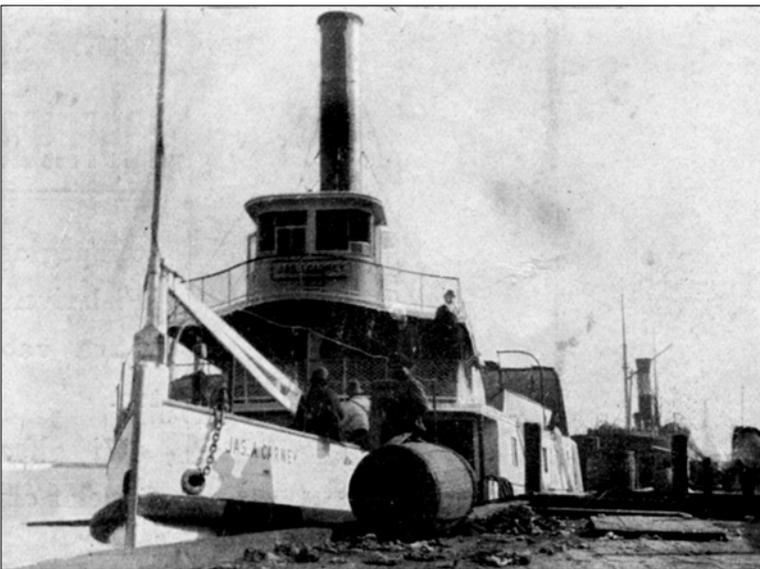


Ted Forsman translated the Swedish account in 2003, as a contribution to the Silverhill community, with the desire to give any proceeds of the sale of the booklet to the Silverhill Library. The translation is very general, trying to keep the Swedish “flavor” in the wording.

In the following pages, extra information that the translator thinks would help the reader understand what is translated is added in parentheses (such as this). Debbie Owen is the typist and editor.



Oscar Johnson's home,
in Silverhill built in 1897.



The Jas. A. Carney, Mobile Bay ferry, with
another ferry docked behind it, about 1903.

SILVERHILL DREAM

In the spring of 1896 several Swedish workers and business people in Chicago got together to discuss the possibilities of venturing out to seek a better way of life for themselves and other Swedish immigrants because of difficult living situations and to better themselves and others.

For this purpose came together Oscar Johanson (later spelled Johnson), J. Linden, C. Swanson, and C. O. Carlson, and Vallentin and decided to travel down south to investigate the possibilities of establishing a Swedish Colony.

The group went to the Illinois Central Railroad ticket office and asked for free travel to the South because of their interest of starting a new colony in the South. They were given free transportation as far as Nashville Tennessee; there they purchased tickets to Mobile, Alabama. They stopped over in Montgomery and became acquainted with a real estate man by the name of Scott. He gave them brochures and information on properties available in the southern part of Alabama.

They left Montgomery and traveled on to Mobile, St. Elmo and Theodore, Alabama. After a brief stay there the group went to Mobile, got a ticket on the boat to Battles Wharf, Baldwin County where they met a man by the name of Smith who had a horse and wagon that he had used to travel all the way from Ohio to Battles Wharf.

Mr. Smith drove the group of men about 15 miles east into the area of Fish River where they met a man, Aaron Hartford. He owned a large area of land that he was willing to sell. They discussed the types of land and the crops that could be raised in this area. The land was satisfactory but there were other things that had to be considered such as the few roads, which were practically impassable. The way was very rough, so no land was purchased at that time. They returned to Theodore, Alabama spending some time investigating and after a short time they went back to Mobile and stayed at the Windsor Hotel.

When they left Mobile they went back to Baldwin County. This time only Oscar Johnson, Vallentin and Mr. Scott, thought to be from Montgomery, took the train to Bay Minette where they met a man with a horse and wagon that they hired to take them 25 miles south to meet Aaron Hartford to look at land again. They discussed the possibility of the weather being suitable for people from the North.

A land purchase was arranged and the group went back to Chicago to advertise the property for any others that would be interested in joining the Swedish Colony in the South.

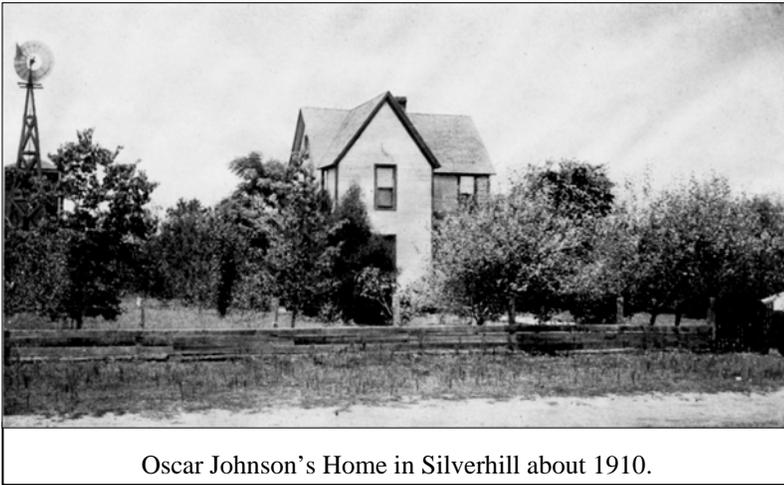
FIRST COLONY ACTIVITY

In June 1896 papers for the purchase of the land were drawn up. Oscar Johnson traveled south and stayed this time for 3 months in the Swedish Colony of Thorsby, Alabama. After that he continued on to Silverhill.

In the spring of 1897 Oscar Johnson cleared a place for his house to be built (building number 5I on the map on the inside back cover) and in the summer, when J. Linden joined him, with his help they began to build the house. That summer a terrible sickness broke out called yellow fever. Because of the illness all contact with Mobile and Pensacola was discontinued.

The epidemic caused Johnson and Linden to return to Chicago until after the yellow fever had subsided.

When he returned, Oscar Johnson brought with him Mr. and Mrs. (Axel Theodore) Westerlund and daughter Louise (Ester Lovisa who would be later known as Louise Johnson Lundberg), and Slauson (Mr. Clauson Slosson). Since the Johnson house was the only house, they all moved in with Oscar Johnson. The house had almost been completed, but because of the yellow fever, no supplies of windows or doors could be brought into the area. So the windows were boarded up and doors were fixed with boards. Since no furniture had arrived, boards nailed



together served as beds, tables, and benches. They made mattresses of pine straw and dry grass covered with quilts and blankets and lived in the house as it was.

To make matters worst, the quarantine also prevented the shipment of a stove, so they had no convenient way to cook their meals.

With a woman's ingenuity, Mrs. Westerlund (who would later become Mrs. Theodore Johnson after the death of Mr. Westerlund

in August of 1900), seeing a stump on fire, took her kettle and coffee pot, went out to the stump and cooked oatmeal and coffee. That was the first delicious home-cooked meal that was prepared in Silverhill, Alabama.

Since the cooking was done outside, Mrs. Westerlund had to constantly be on the lookout for wild animals; among which were wild hogs that were running free in the woods.

By Christmas Eve 1898, Oscar Johnson's windows and doors finally arrived and been installed in his house and the chimney built. This in itself brought more Christmas Joy than words could ever tell. Even though there were only five persons in the Colony, they had a real Swedish Christmas with fish and creamed rice. On New Year's Eve they had coffee and dopp (coffee cake and coffee bread) at 12 o'clock midnight.

The purchase of basic groceries during the early days of the colony was a difficult task, since it was a long way to Daphne, the closest store. Travel to the store in Marlow (where the old ferry used to be) was also difficult. The only groceries that could be bought were: coffee, sugar, salt, pork (salt pork) and corn meal.

The first of January 1899, Mrs. Oscar Johnson arrived with her children Elvera and Agnes. This was truly a welcome occasion to all especially to Mrs. Westerlund, the only woman in the colony up to this point, and to little Ester who had been the only child (at less that two years of age).

The first real excursion to arrive in Silverhill came February of 1899. It consisted of Otto Solberg and his wife, Charley Johanson, Ernest Dahlberg, Mr. Lind and his wife, and Mr. Colander with his family, and Mr. Ankarberg.

The following episode about the difficulties the first settlers had to face may be of interest. One of the problems that had to be faced was that there was no milk to have in the area.

Therefore, Mr. Solberg took it upon himself to see if a milk cow could be found to fulfill this need. On a Thursday morning Solberg and Dahlberg headed north on foot looking for a milk cow to purchase, not knowing how far they would have to go, but thinking surely they would be home by Friday evening. When it began to get dark Friday and they had not showed up, Mrs. Solberg became worried. She lit her lantern and found a tree that had half fallen down; she crawled up in the tree and stayed there till midnight to give them a light to come home to. However, they did not come back that night. On Saturday evening Solberg and Dahlberg finally came home with a cow.

The colony grew and expanded the first five or six years after the first new building in February 1899. During the fall and winter months there was a vigorous moving in to the colony. For those that decided to settle here in Silverhill, it became necessary to put a great amount of effort and strength into clearing the land of woods for home and farming. (The timber was cleared



Otto Solberg plowing up potatoes Dec. 6th, 1899.

by digging around the tree, chopping it off below ground level, at least a foot to 18 inches. Then the scrap timber was piled up and burned.)

Here in Silverhill, like over this great land, we have seen northern (Scandinavian) people who have come here to live honestly, work hard, and win a good name. In among the pines here and there were houses built, and farms cultivated round about them, which have, after years of hard labor, become more and larger and have given the farmer returns for his labor.

Otto Solberg, a descendant of a guardsman for King Carl XV in Sweden, was the first of the colonists to put a plow in the soil of Silverhill.

The years 1899 - 1900

During these two years the farmers did not plant anything for shipment, only produce for their own use. They planted both sweet and Irish potatoes, corn, and rice for feeding the local people. Precious time was spent in building homes and farm buildings, clearing land, and experimenting to see what would grow in the soil and climate and for feeding their own families.

The years 1901 - 1902

During these two years they planted Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, string beans and strawberries. These products had to be transported by wagon to Daphne and from there by boat to Mobile. The market in Mobile was very poor because of the bad economy.

The years 1903 - 1905

On December 5, 1903, the farmers called together a meeting to discuss the possibility of planting peach trees and to discontinue the previous style of farming.

In the spring of 1904, they began peach tree planting on a large scale, and by February 4, 1905, they had planted 11,500 peach trees in the colony. Those that had planted waited and hoped for a good income; instead they found by the second year, disease and drought had killed most of the trees. Very few trees were left. This was a costly and sad experience for the colonists.

In 1904, cotton was planted although the price was not high, they made some profit.

The year of 1907

In the spring of 1907, Mr. Stall, a representative of Newhall and Sons from Chicago, came to interest the farmers in planting cucumbers for shipment to Chicago, where demand and prices were high. The firm was to furnish seed, fertilizer, and baskets; the farmers were to furnish land, labor, and shipping. At the end they were to split the profits. The agreement was approved at a town meeting. The farmers went to work planting cucumbers, competing with each other to see who could produce the finest and best cucumbers in the hopes of seeing a profit.



Cucumbers ready for shipment packed in baskets stamped F.Newhall & Sons.

When the crop was produced and sent, they waited, hoping for a good financial return, but all they received was a bill for the shipping. However, after this disappointment, they decided to spit in their hands, take a new hold, and start over.

In 1908, a man by the name of A. F. Jound and Company from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, came and offered a similar proposition, as did the firm from Chicago. They wanted the farmers to plant Irish potatoes, cucumbers, strawberries, and sweet potatoes. As a result of this deal they came out a little better than before, at

least they were not in debt.

The years 1908 - 1913

The farmers continued planting for this firm through 1913. They planted Irish and sweet potatoes, cucumbers, strawberries, and considerable amounts of cotton. The farmers began to work at improving their cattle. Therefore, a larger area was cleared for planting large amounts of hay and corn for the livestock's feed. They also planted various kinds of legumes, sugarcane, and rice and continued planting cotton.

The years 1913 -1920

During this time the farming was successful and this encouraged more families to move into the area.

Since 1913, Mr. B. Lindberg purchased Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, and cucumbers on consignment for Warley Produce Company of Mobile. About this same time the farmers association (The Silverhill Farmers Association), which was in Robertsdale, purchased on consignment the same type of produce.

The years 1920 - 1930

For the first two or three years it was a booming time for the farmers. Prices were good for potatoes, cucumber, and cattle. In the years following that, the prices had stabilized and continued at that level until the years of 1928 and 1929. In 1930, the price for milk cows was bad; a farmer could not dispose of them for any price, except to sell them for slaughter. With these conditions it was impossible to sell even at cost.

About 1920, the Bohemian people began moving into the Silverhill area. They bought land, cleared it, and built homes. These were a truly frugal and ambitious people in their farming and business affairs. A person could see that they were an industrious people. When one looked around the Silverhill community one could see the quality of their homes and the desire to make the area beautiful by planting shrubbery and flowers around their homes.

The year 1930 was a very difficult year for the farmers because the cucumbers and potatoes did not give a good yield. (This was in the beginning of the Great Depression.) The farmers were hopeful for better times in 1931.

Development of the Creamery

On December 9, 1905, a meeting was held for the purpose of discussing the possibilities of making a definite move toward development of some other industries other than farming. Nothing developed at this time, until 1908, when Mr. Claus Person from Minnesota came to interest the farmers in a creamery to process and handle milk and cream. The closest creamery was in Fairhope where the farmers had to transport the milk to be processed. The roads were difficult and long so it was an acceptable idea to build and operate a local creamery.



Silverhill Creamery about 1910-1915. Man with a beard is O.P. Forsman.
Man drinking is Charlie Gustafson.

In the fall of 1909, Mr. Claus Frisk from Michigan, who was trained in the operation of a creamery, built the Silverhill Creamery. It started operating April 1910, when he began receiving milk and cream from the farmers. This was truly a bright future for the farmers where they could bring their milk to the creamery to be processed instead of Fairhope. This was a good constant income for those

in the colony. (The Creamery is building 3P on the map on the inside back cover.)

From this time, the farmers began to be interested in upgrading and purchasing of better cattle. This gave the farmers a desire to go ahead with the work of developing better herds of cattle and expanding the work of the creamery. At the beginning there were some difficult problems, but with the guidance of Mr. Frisk, it became a real blessing to the community.



Alfred Carlson in buggy to the left, Charles Frisk by the door, and Axel Rundquist to the right.

Silverhill Creamery began operation in April 1910.

Industry and Business



Olander Hotel in Silverhill about 1905.

Because of the influx of people inquiring about the area and the community, there arose a necessity for a hotel for people to stay so they could look over the area. Therefore, in 1899, Mr. Olander built the first hotel in Silverhill, which also included a general merchandise store. Until that time, people would have to go to Marlow, which was the closest place to purchase merchandise for their day-to-day living.

Silverhill's post office opened in 1902 in the Olander Hotel with Charles Olander as postmaster. (Number 0L.)

May 1902, Johan Isackson built a blacksmith and repair shop which was necessary for the needs of the community.

In June of 1902, Theodore Johnson opened a first class general merchandise store (Peoples Supply Company) where the people could purchase all of their needs including clothing, shoes, hardware, and groceries (which at Christmas time included Lutefisk, pickled herring, anchovies, and other Swedish favorites).

In the year 1902, Oscar Johnson built a sawmill that was to be used for the production of lumber for home building. It operated until October 30, 1903 when a catastrophe struck. It burned down until there was nothing but ashes. However, they went right back and rebuilt so that the mill was back in operation by the New Year 1904. (The sawmill was located on Pole Cat creek at the end of what are now West Boulevard and Rada Road. The mill required water for steam since the mill was steam powered).



In the year 1903, Otto Solberg began the operation of a syrup and sugar producing operation, which produced sugar and syrup of the best quality. It used locally grown sugar cane for the processing.

In 1904, Oscar Johnson began a brick works; it had a very short time of operation.

In 1905, brothers Charles and

Patrick Norman built a cotton gin operating engine. It brought advancement to the new colony. (Number 5Y.)

In 1905, A. A. Norden built a new hotel to take care of people who had come to visit and stay for longer or shorter times. (Number 5G, the hotel burned down in 1940.) In the fall of 1906, B. Lindberg opened a small business in the Silverhill Hotel.

In 1909, O. Forland began pressing sugar cane for syrup until 1918 when the Silverhill Cooperative Association bought the cane pressing operation.

In 1910, Claus Frisk and creamery installed a new ice-making machine. Between the years 1912 and 1919 there was considerable advancement in the machinery and operation at the creamery.

In 1910, A. A. Norden opened a general merchandise store in his hotel. He also opened a mail counter and became the new postmaster.

In 1911, Dr. O. F. E. Winberg along with Oscar Johnson, Breaden, and Hokanson began planting satsuma and pecan trees. After much encouragement they had planted about 1,000 acres of satsumas and pecans.

In 1913, Charles Hoff built a first class blacksmith shop and a machine works. He

installed a trip hammer (a large gasoline powered machine used to sharpen the plow shares), the first in Silverhill. (Number 5H.)

Oscar Gustafson opened a photography studio in 1914, but he left after a few years and moved to California to live.

In 1919, Paul Anderson built the first garage in Silverhill. There were not many automobiles here at this time, only a few Fords.

In 1921, there was a huge catastrophe when a fire burned the Silverhill Creamery to the ground, on July 19. It was a great loss for the community.

In the fall of 1921, the farmers sent to Selma, Alabama for milk cans so the milk and

cream could be collected on the veranda of the Silverhill Hotel. February 1922, a new cooperative creamery opened and received milk and cream until the year 1930 when it closed its doors because of the depression.



Peoples Supply Company about 1905.

The Farmer's Organizations

The farmers in Silverhill, among themselves, have started several organizations through the years for the purpose of expanding and developing better use of the land.

On September 3, 1903, the Silverhill Agricultural Society organized and continued until November 3, 1906.

The farmers in Silverhill joined the Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union of America on July 9, 1907. Its purpose was to purchase equipment and necessary supplies at a better price through the national organization than would be found dealing with the local stores. The local union was required to send eighty percent of their profits to the national organization. When the members of the organization realized that such a large percent of their profits went to the national organization, interest died and the organization discontinued in 1912.

July 1912, the Farmers Association was organized. December 6, 1913 this organization was incorporated under the laws of Alabama. They were a great help for the farmers in the selling of their produces as well as purchasing supplies. (This organization probably was later called the Silverhill Farmers Association, which continued until about 1970).

July 5, 1919, the Silverhill Bull Association was organized for the purpose of bettering the quality of the farmer's livestock.

The storms that affected the local area contained much wind, rain, thunder, and lightning. The first storm (hurricane) that came through the area arrived during the night of September 26 and continued through the morning of September 27. This storm did much damage to the fruit crop. It came with much thunder and rain. Much of the woods blew over and many of the houses were damaged. The corn was blown down and partially destroyed.

The second storm arrived on July 5, 1916; the third storm arrived on October 18, 1917. The fourth storm arrived September 19, 1926. The last three storms contained much wind and rain but they were not as bad as the first storm.

In May 1919, Emery Johnson bought the cotton gin and machinery and improved it by purchasing a new and larger engine (diesel powered), for the old one was not powerful enough to operate the various machines in the mill. (Number 5Y on the map).

In 1922, a Bohemian, Bill Hlobill, opened the first barbershop in Silverhill. He continued his business there until Mrs. Esther Anderson opened a restaurant in its place in the year 1924. In 1925 Mrs. Nitteberg took over the restaurant, which she operated until 1927, when Mrs. Tilden took over, and it is still operating in 1930. (Number 5K on the map).

In 1923, Peter Forsman built the first shipping platform where the farmers could bring their cucumbers, potatoes, sweet corn, and other produce for sale. He also purchased chicken and eggs and had a feed store located by the platform. (Number 5N on the map.)



Peter Forsman's shipping platform and feed store built in 1923.

The Silverhill Bank opened May 6, 1924 and had its operation in the old Silverhill Hotel (Olander Hotel). It operated in that building for four years. In 1927 a bank building was built which opened in 1928 and continued until 1930 when in September the Federal Government closed the bank. It reopened in October of the same year; for sure it was a glad time for many.

1924, Clarence Anderson built a garage for the sake of repairing automobiles. He also built his home next door at the same time. (Number 0N). In 1925, Paul Anderson purchased the garage and repair shop.

In 1926, Mr. Heni opened a small blacksmith shop in Paul Anderson's old or first repair shop. In 1928, Axel Rundquist opened a general merchandise store in the Silverhill Hotel (Olander Hotel). Mr. Theodore Johnson sold his general store (Peoples Supply) to Mr. Gurd Marinoe from Loxley on January 1, 1928.

The Independent Shippers and Growers built their shipping platform in 1926. In 1927, the Hub Truckers Association built a shipping platform. They are (in 1930) still purchasing potatoes, cucumbers, sweet corn, and sweet potatoes.

The Beginning of the Churches

The natural trend of the Swedish people, wherever they settle, is to organize Sunday Schools and Churches, as their first priority. This happened very soon after the Silverhill community was organized. The people immediately began religious work in Silverhill.

On May 29, 1898, which was Pentecost Sunday, Mr. A. T. Westerlund began a Sunday School with eight children. This was the first religious work in Silverhill. Mr. Westerlund continued this work for about a year, when he could no longer continue because of illness. At that point, J. A. Edfelt took over the Sunday School until the Baptist assembly was organized and they took over the operation of the Sunday School.

Baptist Church

On the recommendation of Pastor E. Wingren, a reporter for the Nya Wecko Posten (New Weekly Post), who owned land in Silverhill, the Swedish Baptist Church was organized with eight members, on November 5, 1899. This organization rented room in the Olander Hotel where they held their meetings each Sunday. Then they began meeting in the Land Company Office until the church building was completed.



Baptist Church Sanctuary about 1905.

Pastor Wingren had given the church three lots where they could build the church and parsonage.

From his sawmill, Oscar Johnson donated one day's production of lumber to the church, which amounted to about \$175. That began the work on the church and it was a major gift. The rest was done by free day's labor. C. Johnson and Charles Forsberg gathered the balance of the money needed for the building. On December 6, 1903 Pastor Charles Palm, a Sunday School promoter from the Swedish Baptist organization, dedicated the church.

During the summer of 1907, they began the construction of the Baptist parsonage under

the leadership of N. P. Linden. Frank Liljigren who was also the pastor handled the purchasing of supplies.

The following pastors served the church for various lengths of time:

April 1901-Feb. 1902, P. A. Sword who passed away.

Nov. 1, 1904-Nov. 1, 1905, Karl Arry served.

Oct. 28, 1906-Aug. 26, 1909, Frank Liljigren served.

Dec. 5, 1909-April 24, 1911, C. G. Johanson served.

Nov. 24, 1913-Dec. 4, 1914, C. F. Walberg served as pastor, May 1, 1920 moved to Groveland, Florida.

Beginning July 1, 1920 Pastor Ekblad served the congregation at various times.

Sept. 1923-Sept. 1928 Charles Palm began his work here.

In the fall of 1929 Pastor Dalquist came from Enterprise, Kansas.

In the year of 1899, when the Baptists were organized, there were eight members, and by 1920 they had increased to 57 members. The organizations within the church are the Sunday School, the Ladies Work, and the Young Peoples Work.

The Mission Church (Evangelical Covenant Church)

With Mr. Monson's and Mr. Isakson's leadership, the Mission Church was organized November 20, 1902, with ten members.

During that fall, a meeting was called to look into the possibilities of building a church building. They decided to go ahead with the work and men from the colony donated their time instead of money. Since this was the first church building in the community, the understanding was the church would be used freely for anyone who preached a true evangelistic gospel for anyone to hear.



The Svea Land Company donated the land for the church. Under the leading of Mr. Monson the church was completed with 367 man-days of donated labor. Whenever they were working on the church, Mr. and Mrs. Isakson served coffee and dopp (any kind of cake or baked goods that is dunked in coffee).

The foyer was built the following year under contract to Edward Anderson and Charles Gustafson for a cost of \$184 labor and material.

(The total lumber bill for the main sanctuary was \$176 and a few cents. Three hundred pounds of nails cost eight dollars).

Pastor Jacobson served the church as pastor for the next eleven years. He did not have a regular salary, but agreed to work for the next five years for one collection per month. And then for the following two years he was given a salary of ten dollars per month. The following year he got fifteen dollars per month, and the last three years he was given twenty dollars per month.

Since Jacobson left Silverhill, the church has not had a steady pastor. During the winters of 1915 and 1916, Pastor Hagstrom served as pastor. During the winters of 1917, 1918 and 1919, Pastor Wenstrand served the church.

During the years following this, there was no formal pastor. For a half year a Mr. Lundgren, a man from Sweden served as pastor. After he left, the work was continued by people serving from within the congregation, primarily by Mr. Nils Benson, until a formal pastor was acquired.

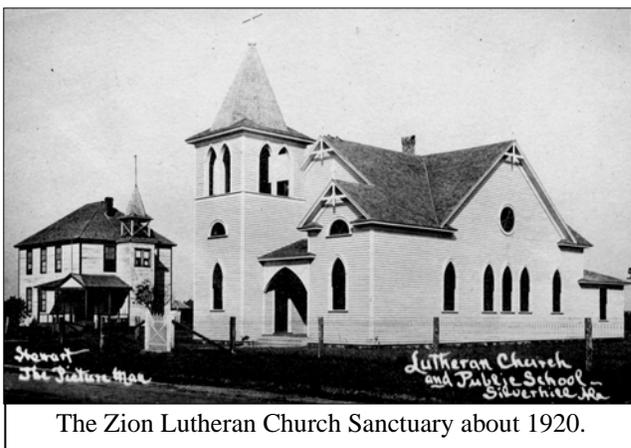
The first of May 1926, Pastor O. E. Osterberg began serving the congregation for the next several years.

The organizations within the church were the Sunday School, Ladies Aid, and the Working Band Class (young adult organization, Sunday School and Bible study group, doing necessary work for the church).

With ten members at the beginning of the organization of the church, by the year 1920 there were 36 members. Even if the growth was not that great, it was a great influence in the religious community for the promotion of righteousness.

The Zion Lutheran Church

Early on, before a formal organization meeting was held, Pastor J. E. Headberg from Thorsby, Alabama, served the group on occasion. After Headberg left, Pastor E. J. Werner took over the work and continued on as had been done for Silverhill.



The Zion Lutheran Church Sanctuary about 1920.

Though no definitive effort had been done by December 18, 1905, the Augustana Synod (Swedish Lutheran Organization in the United States) sent Pastor H. F. Hatelius. He held a meeting for the purpose of organizing the group into a Church. The church was then organized January 22, 1906 with sixteen members. They were accepted into the Augustana Synod December 22, 1906. May 1906, they were incorporated under the laws of the state of Alabama. Pastor Hatelius came to Silverhill every other month to hold meetings

in the two story School House (across from the present Zion Lutheran Church building). After a period of time he left and the work came to a stand still for a period of time. The Augustana Synod sent a new missions pastor for the Alabama Sunday School work. Pastor Swanlund came in the year 1913. Under his leading the work was revived.

At the annual meeting January 18, 1915, it was decided to go ahead and build a church building. The money was to be assembled by subscription by the members. Oscar Johnson gave three lots to the organization. John Elfstrand gave a sizable donation of money. Under the leadership of Victor Olson, the construction of the church was built. It was built free of debt.

Since the year 1913, the following men have served as pastors: S. S. Swanlund, Arnold Nilson was a temporary pastor, who worked at Hess and Stone. The church's next pastor was John Benson who resumed the pastor's position August 3, 1919.

Organizations within the church were the Sunday School, Ladies Organization, and the Youth Organization. Members at the beginning of the church were 16, and in the year 1930 there were 65.

The Seventh Day Adventist Work

An Adventist moved into the area of Marlow, Mr. Priger, was promoting the Adventist work. P. W. Poulson took over the work from Priger in the Silverhill area.

Summary

During these difficult years, hard work and persistence brought forth the daily bread, and the religious work held the people together and gave them faith to continue.

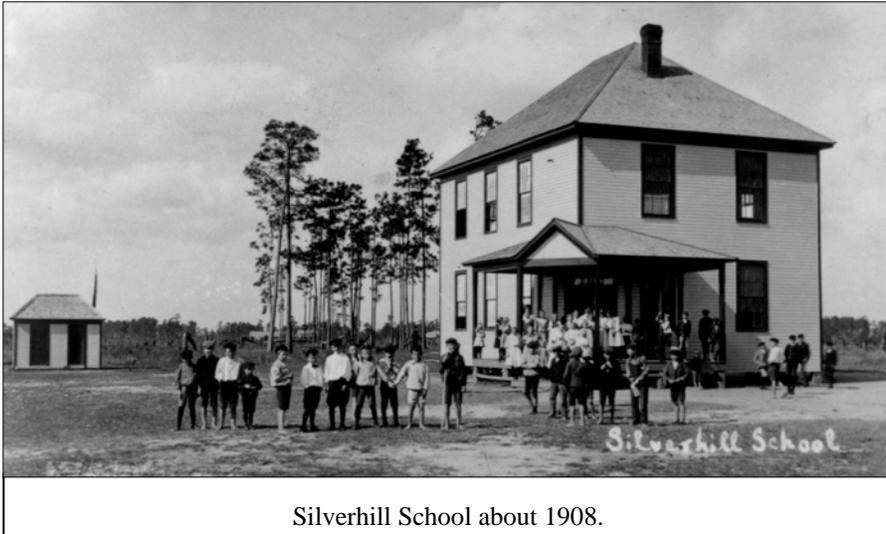
The Sunday School work for the children of the community was diverse and necessary for their guidance and their growth both for education and socialization.

The women's work was a strong financial aid for the churches as well as providing for the social needs of the older people.

The churches got together at Christmas and at midsummer festival, which was a bright and joyous occasion and was something that interested all the people. Therefore, it can be said without exaggeration that the religious work was a healthy tree in the development of the community's history.

Public School

The first schoolhouse in Silverhill was 22 feet by 30 feet, one story high. This was finished in June 1899 by the Svea Land Company. It was used for the Schoolhouse till 1903, when they found it was too little to use. The Schoolhouse was then used for Oscar Johnson's office.



The next Schoolhouse was a 30-foot by 40-foot two-story building. This building was completed for the beginning of school Oct. 1, 1905. It was built by donated labor on three lots of land owned by the Svea Land Company. The materials bought to build the school cost \$552.

The school term of 1904-1905, while this new school was under

construction, the children were taught in the Baptist Church. Mr. Owens was the only teacher at that time. The first teacher in Silverhill was Emellia Anderson. The second teacher was Sarah Carlson. The newest teachers (in 1930) Agnes Johnson, Louise Johnson. The Svea Land Company paid the teachers salaries for the years 1899-1902.

The school now (1930) has eight classes with seventy children this term. 1921 and 1922 the teachers were Miss Thompson and Miss Simmen and the years 1923 and 1924 up through the years 1930 the teachers were Miss (Lilly Bell) Emmons, Miss Cherry, Miss Wilkes, Miss Tharpe (Genie Carlson), Miss Pepper, and Miss Manning.

School Improvement Association

The School Improvement Association was organized Nov. 5, 1909. The members of this organization were the married women of the colony, who paid 50 cents annual dues, which were used for off setting needs for the school's operation. At this time (1930) the name of the organization is the P.T.A. (Parent Teacher Association), which has the aim of bettering the school's needs. The first president was Mrs. T. A. Johnson.

The School Library

The School Library, at this time, has assembled 204 books for the children's needs. These books were purchased with funds provided by the state \$30, the county \$30, and the colony \$30.

The Public Library

The Public Library has assembled 338 volumes, which were assembled by the Non Pareil Organization, and from gifts from people of the community, brought together in one room of the School House. The Library was begun in 1922, but has now been moved to the Oscar Johnson Office in 1930.

Non Pariel Club

The Non Pariel Club was organized in 1907; it consists of young women with the aim of purchasing and assembling books for the use of the community and also became a place for the women to have a social time together.



Silverhill School
about 1935.

Social and Improvement Club

This club was organized March 11, 1905, for the purpose of not only socialization but for the beautification of Silverhill by planting of trees. This club built a pavilion (in the Oscar Johnson Memorial Park) for social outings, nicknamed *Sk 'ldpadden* (The Turtle). They also built a stage under the roof of the pavilion for performances. This club discontinued in 1911.

The Silverhill Athletic Association

This club organized in 1911, for the purpose of social activities. Its aim was for the betterment of young men with interests in athletic activities, they took over the work of the Social Improvement Club. They discontinued in 1914.

Social Improvement Club for the Younger People

This club began in 1914, and was an upgrading of the old Social Improvement Club with the same aims. One of its purposes was to better and beautify the streets and community. In 1917, a hurricane came through and destroyed the clubhouse; they sold what items they had left and gave the money to the public school and ceased operation.

The Progressive Club

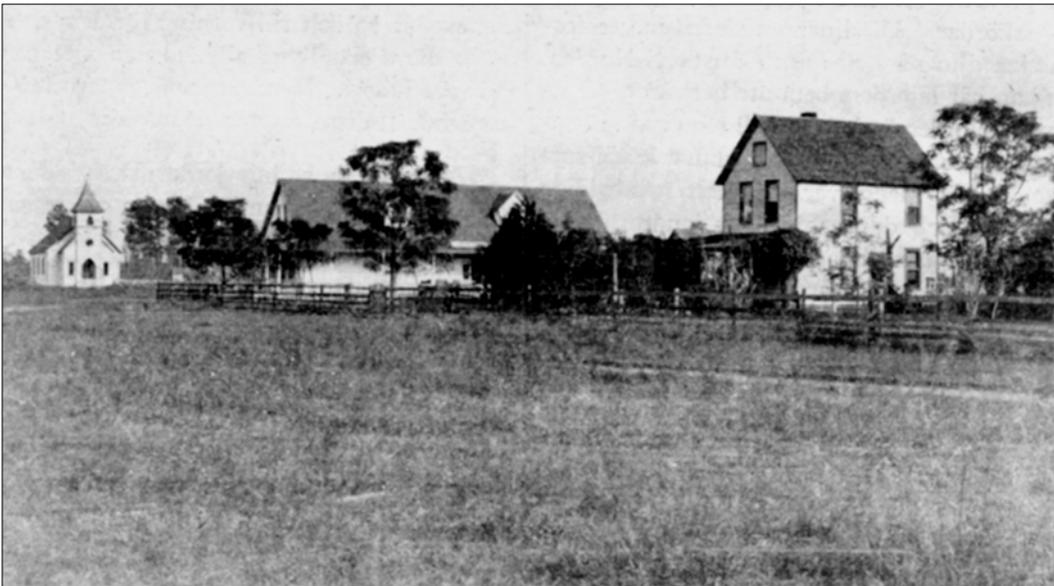
This organization began in 1912 for the study of political science and the fostering of the socialist system of society. Because of difference of opinions and aims of the club, it discontinued in April the same year to become the Socialist Political Local.

The Socialist Political Local

This club organized in April 1912, with the purpose of winning people to the Socialist Labor Party, for spreading the ideas and the details of the socialist system that continued on into 1917 and 1918 during the time of World War I.

The Cemetery Association

C. A. Wallentin donated 20 acres of land for the cemetery's beginnings. An open meeting to discuss the design and layout of the park was discussed December 15, 1913. On December 18, the organization was founded under the name of the Silverhill Cemetery Association, incorporated under the laws of the state of Alabama. After it was incorporated, the Cemetery Association laid out the further particulars over the cemetery's workings, operation, and set prices for the lots to be sold.



Oscar Johnson home right, Peoples Supply center, Mission Covenant Church left, about 1907.

Midsummer Fest Association

Shortly after the new year of 1917, the idea came up that the colony should, if there was anyway possible, have a festival to celebrate the Swedish Midsummer Day Fest. It was planned to be a day of singing, recitations of literature, public speaking about industry, and the culture. The money made during this event would be given to the public school. On February 16, 1917, three representatives from various churches and organizations appointed a committee to make the plans for the various activities of this occasion.

The Community Chorus

In March 1917, there gathered together a group to organize the community chorus. This chorus' first appearance was to be held on the first Midsummer Fest. It was to be open to anyone who was interested in being a part of this chorus.

The Girls Scouts

This club organized itself in 1917, with eight girls under the leadership of Miss Evelyn Wilkes. The name of this group was the White Rose Troop. Their purpose was to work at the production of articles of clothing for the soldiers in the military and for the exercise of social activities. Later another group was organized of younger girls under the leadership of Miss Louise Johnson. Its aim was the same as the White Rose Troop.

The Lone Scouts

This club took the name Blue Fox Tribe and was organized July 18, 1918. It consisted of young men and boys with the aim of living closer to nature.

The Red Cross Circle

Since our country was involved in World War I, the women all over the land organized the Red Cross Circle. This organization was even organized here in Silverhill, for the purpose of helping support our soldiers in the war. This circle was organized June 28, 1917, with 158 ladies. Under the time of their existence they assemble a sum of \$429, which was sent to the Red Cross headquarters. This organization discontinued in February 1919.

The Loyal Daughters

This was an organization for the younger women and existed a short time as a social, intellectual, and spiritual up building.

The Nifty Nine

This organization was organized with nine gifted women and existed for the promotion of new ideas and social entertainment.

Lesser Clubs

Under this heading there were a number of clubs organized among school children with the state's leading such as: the boys' and girls' poultry club, the boys' corn club, the tomato club, the girls' canning club. They have in all thirty members.

The Fair Association

November 28, 1921, the Silverhill Community Association began with the purpose of organizing the Fair. They met the third Saturday of each month to make plans for the operation of the Fair. This group ceased February 1922 with the idea that the Swedish Midsummer Fest Association instead should do the work of assembling and promoting the Fair. The Schoolhouse was used as the auditorium for the Fair and its displays.

The Dairy Association

The Dairy Association organized July 20, 1922, to seek out the possibility of interesting the farmers in bettering their cattle and the dairy industry.

The Boy Scouts

The Boy Scout Troop was organized in the fall of 1930 with eight members under the direction of Mr. Axel Rundquist. This troop had its meetings in the old Schoolhouse (Number 7G) and was a very fine troop.

Industry Activity

In the year 1925, Dvorak and son built their general merchandise store and moved into the new store building, which became a first class general merchandise store.

In the year 1925, Harold Fosberg, Clarence Anderson, and Charles Lyrene, began to build a dam on Fish River (on the south side of the bridge of highway 104) for the purpose of producing electricity. The work came to a halt because there was not enough financial backing to continue the dam. An electric line was built from Robertsdale to Silverhill, so the town had access to electricity for each home.

The Community Hall (a large wooden building, located where the fire hall now is, number 6L) was built in the year 1924, with the purpose of having all sorts of programs and productions (which included a movie theatre, that showed a movie every weekend). This building could be used for farmers' meetings, political meetings, and any public type of meeting that might be held in the area.

In the fall of 1926, the town of Silverhill incorporated. The first mayor was Mr. Oscar Johnson; the councilmen were Dr. O. F. E. Winberg, Mr. Mickylicky, Charles Norman, Charles Huff, and Nils Mhoe. These men were the first to guide Silverhill.

The new public school building was built in the year 1928; this building was a stately brick building. The school had eight classrooms, with a large auditorium and principal offices. In the last months of 1930 and the first months of 1931, a fence was built around the school grounds; shrubbery was planted around the building. An area for a playground was prepared and a drainage ditch was dug west of the school grounds to divert rainwater.

An Updating of Construction of the Last Ten Years

(The following people built homes during the 1920's) Mr. Johan Isakson, Charles Norman, Mrs. Edfalt, Otto Johanson, Harold Fosberg, Gust Sundin, Bert Sandel, Theodore Johanson, John Hess, Mrs. Kozel.

These lines are as factual as possible without any fantasy because the one who is writing this down has lived here since the beginning of the colony. I have gone through the various phases of the beginning of the community and its hard labor and much sacrifice, which always is part of the building of a new community.

I hope that this history will be of help to our children and people in the following years, which tells of the times through which we have gone thus far.

This record covers the time period of 33 years, from 1897 through 1930.

Location of Early Buildings in Silverhill

--- BUILDINGS ON 1ST STREET

1A O.P. Forsman 2nd Home

--- BUILDINGS ON 2ND STREET

--- BUILDINGS ON 3RD STREET

3P Silverhill Creamery built 1909 by Claus Frisk

--- BUILDINGS ON 4TH STREET

4H Mission Covenant Church built 1903

--- BUILDINGS ON HWY 55

5D The Independent Shipping Shed

5E Dvorak's General Merchandise Store built 1925

5F Charles Hoff Home built by 1913

5G Norden Hotel built 1905 by A.A. Norden

5H Hoff Blacksmith Shop built 1913 by Charles Hoff

5I Oscar Johnson Home built 1897

5J Peoples Supply Company built 1902 by Theodore Johnson

5K Barber Shop built by 1922 operated by Bill Hlobill

5N Shipping Platform, Feed & Poultry Store built 1923 by Peter Forsman

5Y Grist Mill & Cotton Gin built 1905 by Charles and Patrick Norman

--- BUILDINGS ON 6TH STREET

6I Svea Land Company Office built 1898 by Oscar Johnson

6L Silverhill Community Hall built 1924

--- BUILDINGS ON 7TH STREET

7G Silverhill School two-story schoolhouse built 1905

7M Baptist horse and buggy barn

7N Edfelt Home built about 1899

--- BUILDINGS ON 8TH STREET

8M Erlandson's Cabinet and Carpentry Shop

8N Isaakson Home built by 1902

--- BUILDINGS ON 9TH STREET

--- BUILDINGS ON HWY 104

0A Hess Home

0C Rundquist home

0D Oscar Gustafson home built before 1910

0F Dr. Oscar Winberg home built before 1910

0L Olander Hotel and Post Office and Home built 1899 by Charles Olander

0N Automobile Repair Garage built 1924 by Clarence Anderson

0O Baptist Parsonage built 1907

0P Clarence Anderson Home built by 1924

0Q Baptist Church built 1903

0S Charles Norman Home built in 1920's

--- BUILDINGS ON NORTH BLVD

NJ Emery Johnson Home built before 1919

NR Dave Forsman Home built about 1919

--- BUILDINGS ON 2ND AVE

--- BUILDINGS ON 4TH AVE

ZR Silverhill School eight-room brick built 1928

ZQ Zion Lutheran Church built 1916

ZP Lutheran Parsonage

ZM Charlie Ard's Meat Market

--- BUILDINGS AROUND THE TOWN SQUARE

UC Dry Goods Shop operated by Mrs. Heni

Town of Silverhill

5Y

Location of some early buildings

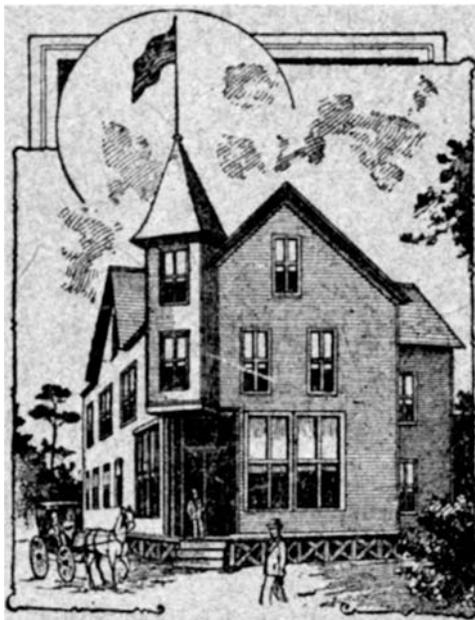
NR

NJ

							3P	
	8N	7N			5N			
	8M	7M 6L			5K UC			
		0P 0N 0L					0F	0C
HWY 104 West	0S		0Q 00 6I					0A
				5I	5J	4H		0D
		7G ZQ ZP		5G	5H 5F			1F
	ZS			ZM 5E	5D			

Co.Rd. 55 South

1A



The Olander Hotel built in 1899.