

Camden and Wilcox County

Camden was founded in 1832 on land donated to the Wilcox County Commission by Thomas Dunn and his wife Martha Hobbs for use as a new county seat. The county seat was moved from nearby Canton Bend in 1833 to Camden, which was first known as Wilcox Courthouse and then as Barboursville, so named for Senator Philip P. Barbour of Virginia.

*Incorporated as a town in 1841, Camden was re-named by Dr. John D. Caldwell in honor of Camden, S.C.. Camden's notable residents include Gov. Arthur P. Bagby, Rev. Ebenezer Hearn, DeForest Richards, Gov. R.C. Jones, Miss Sally Jones, Dr. E.D. McDaniel, Hon. Col. D. Bloch, Wilcox County Courthouse Dr. Emmett Kirkpatrick, Built in 1857-1858 Gov. B. M. Miller and Dr. J. Paul Jones.



*Among the many noteworthy structures in Wilcox County is the Wilcox County Courthouse, built in 1857-58. The courthouse was dedicated after the War Between the States in honor of a local Confederate veteran, Enoch Hooper Cook, C.S.A. Cook (1803-1877), "gave more sons to the War between the Confederate States of America and the Union than any in the war, and six were killed in action."

*Wilcox County has more miles of river frontage than any other county in the state and had more river landings during the steamboat days.

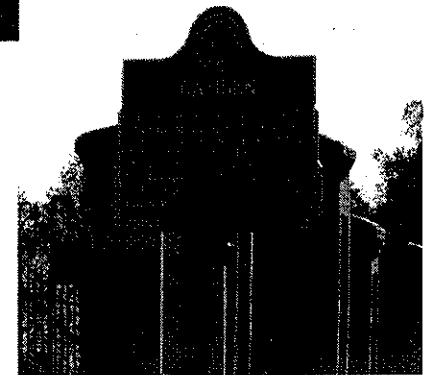
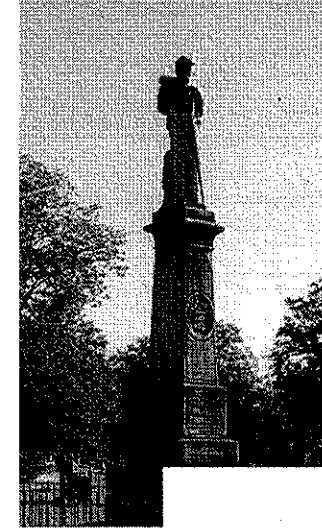
"High on the list of reasons for Camden's being what it is, is its loyalty to, its admiration for, and its real sense of continuity with the past."

A Place in Springs, by Viola Goode Liddell

This walking tour brochure was prepared by Nick Baggett as his Eagle Scout service project for Camden Troop 94.

Wilcox Area Chamber of Commerce
110 Court Street
Camden, AL 36726

A Walking Tour of Camden

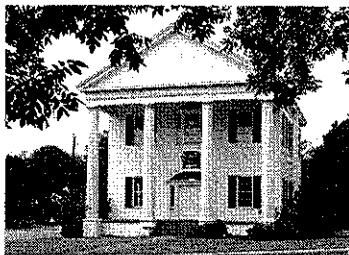


*Take a walk back in time in
historic Camden.*

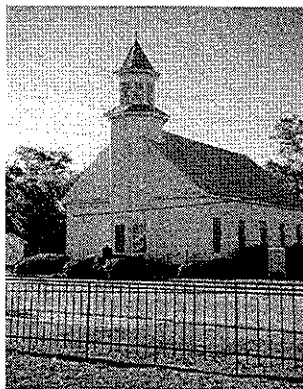


The Wilcox Female Institute, Broad Street, was organized in 1847-1850 as a boarding school for Southern young ladies who learned academic subjects plus cultural pursuits like music and embroidery. The Institute ceased operations about 1910 and the building was used as a part of the Wilcox County High School. When the Institute came close to being demolished in the 1960s, the Wilcox Historical Society worked to save it, gaining the deed in 1976. It's now the official headquarters for the historical society.

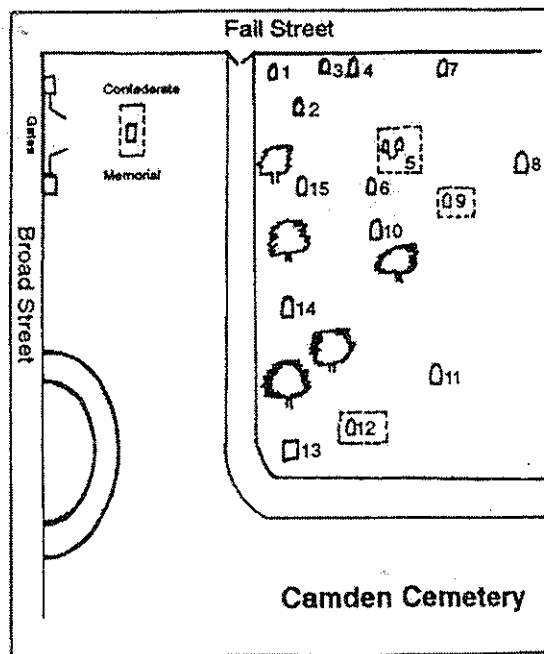
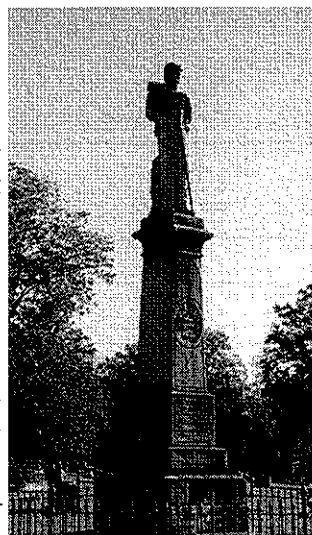
The Dale Masonic Lodge was organized at Dale Town (later Prairie Bluff) in 1827. Dale Town was named for Indian fighter Sam Dale. When Dale Town declined in the 1840s, members voted to move the Lodge to Camden where the cornerstone was laid in November 1848. Union Troops camped here while passing through Camden in April of 1865.



The Camden Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church was built in 1849 as a Cumberland Presbyterian Church. It's the only antebellum church in Camden. The city's historic Episcopal Church is now a private home.



The Confederate Memorial Statue was erected by the Ladies' Memorial and Wilcox Monument Association on April 26, 1880, honoring the Confederate Dead of Wilcox County. The monument cost \$1,064.39 with fund-raising efforts beginning in 1866. The monument was made by J.N. Montgomery and was unveiled in ceremonies where Professor J.C. Andrews led the band and Confederate Veteran Charles L. Scott delivered the address. The inscription quotes Jefferson Davis, "The manner of their death was the crowning glory of their lives" and explains again the honored sacrifice: "They gave their lives for us; For the honor of Alabama; For the rights of the states; And for the principles of the Union as these were handed down to us by the fathers of our common country."



Dating back to the early 1800s, the Camden Cemetery is located on Fail Street. All graves face east in this historic cemetery. Here are some of the Wilcox County leaders buried there:

1. Emmett Kilpatrick, d. 1968, educator. As a Red Cross official, he was captured by the Bolsheviks in 1917 and held in a Russian prison camp. He was later an interpreter for President Woodrow Wilson at Versailles.
2. This pile of bricks is believed to be a common grave for victims of the tragedy of Orlene St. John, a riverboat destroyed by fire in 1850.
3. Alexander Bragg, d. 1877, architect and carpenter, Bragg built the Wilcox County Courthouse and numerous antebellum homes in the county. His brother was General Braxton Bragg.
4. William Brutus Howard, d. 1876, lawyer, writer. Considered to be one of the best political speakers in the state.
5. William R.K. and Franklin K. Beck, d. 1885 and 1864. They were nephews of William Rufus King who named Selma and was vice-president of the United States.
6. Thomas Dunn, d. 1838. Camden's pioneer, Dunn patented 40 acres where Barboursville (Camden) was established and deeded 12 acres to Wilcox County in 1832.
7. Richard Channing Jones, d. 1903. Jones was University of Alabama Chancellor from 1890-1897.
8. Benjamin Meek Miller, d. 1944. Miller was governor of Alabama from 1931-1935 and was known as the "Sturdy Oak of Wilcox."
9. Margaret Beck, d. 1822. The sister of William Rufus King, Mrs. Beck's tombstone was moved to the Camden Cemetery from the site where McMillan Bloedel was built in the 1960s.
10. Joseph Gilmore, d. 1853. Joseph was 4 years, 4 months old when he died, "intentionally drowned by a family servant."
11. Delitha Cook, d. 1915. The wife of Zo Cook, the probate judge who saved county records during the War Between the States by moving them from the courthouse and who was the son of Enoch Cook, who had more sons in the Confederacy than any other man, 10 sons and grandsons.
12. Ebenezer Hearn, d. 1890. A Methodist Circuit rider, Hearn was a veteran of the War of 1812 and built the home which is now Gaines Ridge.
13. Marker honoring Lt. Joseph M. Wilcox, War of 1812 veteran who is buried at Claiborne.
14. James Hawthorne, d. 1906. Winner of the Southern Cross of Honor, his battles are listed on the stone.
15. Dr. John Daniel Caldwell, d. 1878. Dr. Caldwell named Camden for Camden S.C. and was Camden's first intendent (mayor). He was a survivor of the Orlene St. John fire.