

History of town of Elkmont and Trinity School on markers

By Rebekah Davis

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It's time for more stops on the historical marker tour of Limestone County, hitting 25 markers in all.

I'm spending a few weeks sharing the information about these markers. If you want to go ahead and check them all out, you can get maps and GPS coordinates to each one by searching for Limestone County's historical markers on www.lat34north.com.

Today's markers are:

- **Elkmont, Alabama/Tenn. & Ala. Central Railroad:**

Elkmont, Alabama – The earliest settlers to this area moved across the Chickasaw boundary before 1810 and established the Sims and New Garden settlements. The area came to be known as Elkmont, for the once abundant elk, the Elk River and the "mount" on which it sat. It began to flourish with the completion of the Tennessee and Alabama Central Railroad in 1859. The name of the Fort Hampton post office, established in 1859, was changed to Elkmont in 1866. Elkmont grew to be a commerce center for North Limestone County and was incorporated on March 28, 1873. The first high school in Limestone County was established here in 1912. Today, Elkmont's converted railroad bed welcomes visitors to connect with the past as it passes through a Civil War battle site to the south and a covered bridge to the north.

Tenn. & Ala. Central Railroad – The Tennessee and Alabama Central Railroad reached Elkmont in the fall of 1859. By 1862, the Union army controlled North Alabama and the railroad, an important supply line from Nashville to Chattanooga and Atlanta. 1.1 miles south of this spot is the site of one of the bloodiest land battles in Alabama at Sulphur Creek Trestle, part of the Sept. 1864 raids of C.S.A. General N.B. Forrest. The rail line became the Nashville & Decatur Railroad in 1866. The Louisville & Nashville Railroad had control by 1871, and in 187, built the existing depot. The L&N served this area many years, bringing perishable goods, mail, providing transportation and export of cotton. L&N became part of the seaboard system in 1982. The line was abandoned in April 1986. Marker on County Road 49 east of Railroad Street, Elkmont.

- **Fort Henderson/Trinity School – 1865-1970:**

Fort Henderson – Built on this site in 1863 by federal forces occupying Athens. It was a five-sided earthen fort with some frame buildings and underground bomb-proofs. Abatis lined the fifteen-foot deep perimeter ditch, a small portion of which is still visible. On September 24, 1864 after a brief fight and a clever ruse orchestrated by Confederate General Nathan B. Forrest, the fort and its 900 man garrison of mostly the 110th U.S. colored infantry were surrendered. After moving the prisoners and captured supplies South, Forrest's campaign followed the railroad North to the Union fort at Sulphur Creek Trestle which he took the following day. Federals re-occupied Athens shortly after Forrest's departure.

Trinity School – Established by the American Missionary Association of New York in 1865, Trinity was one of many schools set up in the South to educate the children of freed slaves. Originally located east of the railroad, it was moved here, to the site of Ft. Henderson in 1907. It was re-built several times; having burned twice in the first location and once here. Through the dedication of its principals and teachers, Trinity School

achieved accreditation, and a tradition of educational excellence during its existence. Numbered among its graduates are authors, artists, teachers, judges and Patti Malone, of the Fisk University Jubilee Singers. Trinity Congregational Church (founded 1871) has long been the spiritual partner to the school.

Marker is on Browns Ferry Street (County Road 29) west of Allyn Street, Athens.

- **General N.B. Forrest, C.S.A.** – Hemmed in by superior forces Forrest's fast-moving cavalry raided and destroyed Union supply lines and strong points, captured 2,360 men, valuable Stores.

By swift action, surprise and bluff Forrest disrupted Union military plans from Decatur to Columbia.

Marker is on Bee Line Highway (U.S. 31), Tanner.

About the Archives:

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