



**Jay High School - Class of 1924**

# History of the Jay High School

Written about 1980

The present day Jay High School plant is located in the midst of a fifty acre lot that is shared with the Jay Elementary School. The school's plant is located about one mile south of downtown Jay, Florida, on State Road 89.

Prior to the year of 1925, the Jay School was located about one mile east of the town of Jay on State Road 4. The school was a wood frame building, and accommodated students only to the 10th grade. Students who wished to finish high school had to travel to what is now Century, Florida, or to Milton, Florida.

The communities of Cora, Crossroads, Ebenezer, Greenwood, Mt. Carmel, Pine Level, and Fidelis, all had their own small schools. In fact, at one time in the history of Santa Rosa County Public Schools, there were 84 separate public schools scattered throughout the county. Talk for consolidation of the smaller schools had been on the minds of the residents of Santa Rosa County for a long time. The people created a petition for a "special tax bond", so the consolidation of the school could become a realization. During the years of 1924-1926, the consolidation of Santa Rosa County Public Schools began. The construction of brick school buildings became a common sight in Santa Rosa County.

The consolidation of Cora, Mt. Carmel, Pine Level and Jay came together to form one central educational plant, and the school plant was called The Jay School. The new school was a two-story brick building with 17 rooms and was built on the same site on which the present day Jay Elementary School plant now sits. The auditorium and the elementary occupied the first floor of the new brick building, which had a balcony; and the high school occupied the second floor. The new high school faculty consisted of only eight members, which also included the principal. The commencement exercises of 1926 had five seniors to graduate.

Funds were not available to operate the new school the following year of 1927. The Jay School had to close its doors until funds could be secured. The class of 1927 graduated with the class of 1928. Because a shortage of funds still remained, the school term had to be cut short and the teachers were paid in "script" redeemable at a future date. Many teachers gave a month or more of their free time to the school so the students could still receive their education.

During the next few years the faculty and the student enrollment increased with the consolidation of the Greenwood School, and the middle and high school students of the Crossroads School were consolidated with Jay. Then about 1929, the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades of Fidelis School consolidated with Jay School. After 1930, everything seemed to be going pretty smooth for the new school with a class graduating each year until in the wee hours on a November morning in 1933, the Jay School plant burned with all records being destroyed. Nothing of the school plant remained except for the four room home economics building and a .five-room teacher's home with a \$50,000 bond to payoff and about 800 students without a school to attend.

Classes were held in several local community churches for a few months. The school term was not completed for most of the students. However, the senior class continued the eight months' term, and their graduation was held in the old Jay Baptist Church.

Congressman Millard Caldwell helped to secure funds of about \$100,000, to rebuild the school plant. A fourteen-room brick building was constructed to house the Jay Elementary students, and a ten-room brick building was constructed for the Jay High School students. The school plant was hurriedly built for the 1934-1935 school term. During the early part of 1935, the auditorium was built, largely with W. P. A. labor. The auditorium was completed just in time for graduation in May.

The consolidation of Crossroads Schools was completed in 1955.

The only other school that was left in the Jay area that was not consolidated was the elementary and middle high school of Fidelis.

The Jay High School, even with its many additions, became too small for the growing student body. In the fall of 1975 construction was started on a bigger and newer high school.

The new school was built in three phases. Phase I was constructed in the fall of 1976.

Phase II was completed in January of 1977. Phase III was completed in the fall of 1979. In 1985 the complete consolidation of the Fidelis School was also completed. The present enrollment of students at Jay High School is approximately 500.

The present day Jay High School has a teaching staff of thirty-two, one principal and one assistant principal.

The Jay High School has a total of thirty support staff which includes bus drivers, a clerical/data assistant, custodians, food service workers, a secretary, a school bookkeeper, and four teacher assistants.

At one point in the schools history, the Jay School was considered to be the largest rural school in the state of Florida, and one of the largest rural schools in the nation.

Submitted by: Mrs. Doris J. Patrick

Written by: Linda Faye Nelson

Sources: Lora Botts, Doris J. Patrick, Martha Boutwell, H. J. Harrison, Verda M. McCurdy, Ola Mae Gill, and several citizens of Jay.

## One Account of the History of Jay

Before the 20th Century, Jay as such did not exist. In 1902, Mr. J.T. Nowling, having been appointed as the first postmaster, along with Mr. O. M. Wolfe, were part of a committee to select a name for this thriving little community in Northwest Florida.

At this time, the area was sparsely settled with farmers and lumbermen. JAY, being the name submitted to the Postmaster General was the name chosen and it was suspected this was for the "J" in Mr. Nowling's name. Mr. Nowling had the only store for a number of years. The size of the store is reported to have been 16 x 20 feet and made of rough pine board structure.

This little mercantile establishment sat on the exact spot where the old paint and body shop was across the street from Scott's Jay Appliance. [Northeast Corner at traffic light.]

Mail came to the tiny Post office three times a week from Pollard, Alabama and was delivered on horseback in two saddlebags. The mail was put in a stack and the postmaster sifted through it when someone came in to check for mail.

Mr. Nowling also had the first cotton gin and sawmill in Jay. John Abbott was the next merchant in Jay with a store east of J. T. Nowling's.

There was no refrigeration or ice in the grocery stores. However, you could get ice at Pollard, Al., and if you were lucky, you got some homemade ice cream occasionally.

In 1904 and 1905, Hiss McArthur (Faye Boles' mother) was teaching the three R's from beginning to 8th grade at Molon Pond School which served the population of Jay. As the population increased, rooms needed to be added and O. M. Wolfe (Winnie Wolfe's father-in-law) donated a site for a new school building. There were 7 classrooms and extended through the 10th grade. This was an unpainted wooden building located on a site very near where Linda Carden [Town Clerk] lives today.[Approximately ¼ mile east of the traffic light]

The next move was to incorporate Jay. It was accomplished in 1904 with Wiley Cannon as mayor, Jesse Abbott as marshal and John Abbott as City Clerk. Land here was worth \$4.00 an Acre and increased to \$8.25 an acre within the next year.

The Methodist and Baptist religious bodies were not long in building churches. The Baptist was first, followed by the Methodist and a few years later, the Church of Christ and Holiness Church.

Farming was done mostly with mules. However some people had mules and horses and a few had yoke of oxen. Cotton was king - their main money crop.

Dr. Nick Stallworth set up practice in Jay around 1915 or 1916 in a house on a site about the Bank's Parking lot. He served as Doctor, Dentist and even helped farmers with sick animals. Frank Higdon had a wooden store about where Bower's Store is now and Mr. Truss Hawsey

had a cotton gin behind where the meat packing plant now stands. Farmers planted peanuts only for feed.

There were 14 little bridges between Jay Escambia River and a ferry to take you across the river.

Harrison Mercantile Company was established in 1917 followed close behind by Floyd Boutwell, Neal Campbell and a store owned by Will Dobbs and Mrs. Jesse Abbott.

There were a few Model T cars around but Floyd Boutwell had a bigger car (my source couldn't remember what kind).

Mr. Bodie Higdon had a shop and he drew gas out of a drum and poured it into cars. Later he had a gas pump that was operated by hand.

World War I took its toll as many men were drafted and sent to Europe. A panic followed the war and Harrison Mercantile was the only store to keep its doors open. After the panic came the boom days of 1925-1926 and Harrison Mercantile Co. built a brick store. [Southwest corner of traffic light.]

Mr. J. P. Kent came to the scene with another brick store. Mr. E.M. Neal was not to be left out of the collection of merchants with brick buildings and he put his building where Jay Appliance stands today. [Northwest corner of traffic light.]

The post office which had been in several locations since the J.T. Nowling store was moved out of a stucco building into the Earl Neal Building and a health clinic was put in the stucco building. A few businesses had a Delco system which furnished electricity for lights.

The people decided to consolidate Cora, Mt. Carmel, Pine Level and Jay into one school and to extend it through high school. A \$50,000 bond issue was voted to build the school. A 17 room two story brick building was completed just in time for commencement exercises' of 1926. Five pupils graduated on that occasion: Gladys Hudson, Ella Cannon, Alice Moore, Ethel Calfee and Earl Neal. Lack of funds for maintenance caused the new school to close the following year, but after four months, it opened with M. B. Gross as principal.

It was destroyed by fire in the wee hours of a November Morn in 1933. Nothing of the educational plant was left but a 4 room home economics building and a 5 room teacher's home with a \$50,000 bond to pay and 700 children school-less. Classes were held in local churches which proved unsatisfactory. Graduation was held that year in the Jay Baptist Church. A successful movement was held to obtain a \$100,000 grant and a 14-room building was established for elementary and a 10 room building for high school.

Farmers began raising peanuts on a larger scale in the 20's and 30's. The peanuts had to be pulled up by hand, shook, and then stacked. After they dried, they were picked by hand and later shelled by hand. Peanut candy was very popular.

Songs which were popular were Stardust, Suwannee, Sweet Georgia Brown and Charleston which was also a popular dance.

Then came the stock market crash of 1929, followed by the Great Depression. One person told me that on returning to Jay in 1931, the streets were dirt and pigs were all in the streets.

There was no stock law and fences were erected to keep the livestock away from the crops. Jay was hit hard by the depression; however many farmers produced their milk, butter, eggs, pork, grits, meal, syrup and many other vegetables.

In 1935, Mr. Bill Hudson put in a barber shop on the corner where the old drug store stood. (He was Harold's Grandfather).

In the 30's, rolling stores were popular and also ice was delivered by icemen.

Peanuts became a money crop in the late thirties, however the method of growing them was different from today and much more time consuming.

Jay had its first newspaper in the fall of 1938. It was called the Jay Tribune and was edited by the Amos' Family.

In December of 1938, R. C. Wagoner conceived the idea of a modern theatre in Jay and immediately began construction of a home for his theatre which was a credit to any town twice the size of Jay. The theatre opened in January 1939.

A large fireproof gymnasium was erected on the Jay School grounds by the people of Jay and surrounding territory. In June 1939, the community of Jay was again incorporated as a town by an act of legislature with J. H. Cannon as mayor. He was the son of first mayor. Some popular songs in the thirties were "Brother, Can you spare a Dime?" "Trying Times", "In the Hood" and "Happy Days are Here Again"

The WPA working under the State Road Department built the bridges across Escambia River and paved the road which is now Highway 4 and Highway 87.

A number of farmers in the Jay Area pooled their money and bought 12 acres of land for a site to build a livestock auction market as livestock production was money making venture.

During the year of 1939, Mr. J. P. Kent enlarged his building by adding two stores on the ground floor and adding a top floor to the entire building. The new buildings were occupied by the Escambia River Electric Cooperative, J. P. Kent General Merchandise and the Jay Tribune.

Mrs. Ruby Williams of Milton erected a telephone line between Jay and Milton and began installation of a modern telephone exchange in Jay which she located on the second floor of the Kent Building.

Gulf Power came to this area with electric lines and some people were able to get electric lights, radios and refrigerators.

By 1939 the Jay Educational plant had expanded into one of the largest rural schools in the south: with an enrollment of over 1000. It had seven buildings among which were an auditorium with seating capacity of 650, a modern gymnasium and cafeteria. The school had electric lights throughout, water works and an adequate heating plant. Attendance at the school was absolutely without cost to the student even to the books and bus transportation.

In 1939, while Hitler was marching across Europe, people in Jay knew very little about; however on Dec. 7, 1941, Jay as well as every place in the U. S., was shaken with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The United States declared war on Japan on December 8, 1941. On December 11, 1941, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. Some men volunteered for service and many were drafted. It was a sad time for the people here. Gas, tires, coffee, sugar and shoes were among many items which were rationed.

Whiting Field was built in the early 40's and Jay welcomed many sailors here on the weekends. Many Jay girls chose husbands from the sailors who came.

Most improvements were at a stand still as this country used its resources for war material.

On May 8, 1945 the war in Europe ended. It was not until the U.S. dropped the Atom Bomb on Hiroshima on Aug 6 and on Aug 9 on Nagasaki that Japan finally surrendered and August 15 was proclaimed V J Day.

Going to the movies was the popular past time for the people. Buck McCurdy owned the theatre during this time. Some songs of the 40's were "Sound Off", God Bless America". Bell Bottom Trousers and Ballerina skirts and Gibson Girl blouses were the fashion of the time.

In 1950 the Town of Jay floated a bond issue for a water system for Jay and construction began. The town purchased a fire truck for \$6,800 and a volunteer fire department was formed. Shortly after the water system was installed, the town purchased some property from J. P. Kent and a city hall was constructed.

The Bank of Jay was chartered on June 20, 1951 and opened its doors for business on July 7, 1951 with less than \$1/2 million in assets. It was a state chartered bank. The first Board of Directors were: J. P. Kent, chairman, C.W. Mapoles, Jack Hendrix, Davis Dobson, W. L. Smith, Jr., and Ben White. The first president was Mr. T. B. Melson. In 1953, Mr. John Malone became the bank president.

In 1956 a fire destroyed the building where Bowers Dept. store is today. [Southwest of the traffic light] Fire Departments from Whiting Field, Milton, Flomaton and Brewton responded to aid the Jay Fire Department. The fire was so hot it broke the glass in the Bank which was across the street.

In 1966, the Jay Clinic was constructed in memory of Dr. Stallworth and was initiated by the Jay Lions Club. One of the first doctors was Dr. Morero. In 1960 the clinic was remodeled to 32 beds and made a hospital.

In 1962 the Town of Jay brought natural gas to its residents. The residents also were rendered Garbage Service in the late sixties

On a bleak Wednesday, January 24, 1963, with bank auditors in town, two masked men entered the Bank of Jay and ordered everyone to lay face down on the floor and escaped with \$54,611. The money is assumed to have been found; however no one has ever been apprehended for the crime.

A Sewer collection system and a disposal plant were installed in 1968-69.

The Jay Hospital was again remodeled to a 52 bed facility in 1968.

In 1966, Mr. A. L. Ellis bought the bank and shortly thereafter changed the name to First National Bank of Jay. When it became a part of the Ellis Banking Corp., the name was again changed to the Ellis First National Bank of Jay.

1970 – Oil discovered northwest of the tiny community of Jay, Florida was the talk of the area. People came in wanting to lease and buy mineral rights all over the northern part of Santa Rosa County.

After the discovery of several other wells, Exxon built a small separating plant and the area was spotted with drilling rigs. Excitement was in the air and people were thinking how nice it was going to be with oil flowing everywhere.

However, everyone was not that lucky.

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In 1951, The Escambia River Electric Cooperative built a new building west on Hwy 4 to house the operational equipment.

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In 1978, an explosion shook the town when the Empire Gas Company and the residence of Frank Vinson were destroyed.

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In November 1979, Baptist Hospital took over the Jay Hospital.

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The Town of Jay recently purchased a new fire truck at a cost of \$55,000. The fire department, with the help of the local citizens, has purchased several other pieces of fire equipment including the Jaws of Life. It is one of the best equipped Fire Departments in the nation.

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# HISTORY OF JAY

A Second Version

In 1902, a committee of two, J.T. Nowling and O.M. Wolfe, was appointed to select a name for the town. Since Mr. Nowling was the first postmaster general and he owned the first grocery store, they decided that his first initial would become the town's new name, Jay.

The city of Jay was incorporated in 1904. Wiley Cannon was the mayor, and Jess Abbott, the city clerk.

The Methodist and Baptist churches began to build. Later a Church of Christ was built across the road.

Jay was known for its good farm land. In the late 1920's (1928), the oldest dwelling in Jay was the Jenkins Hotel.

The J.T. Nowling house later became the O.M. Wolfe place. Years later it was sold to Wiley Warrick, and at his death was divided between his heirs.

Minnie Warrick Grimes became the owner of the home place. Due to her death it was sold to Rufus Jones and is now the property of Bill and Doris Patrick.

The post office was later run by Hurbert W. Campbell and his wife, Abbie.

The Harrison Mercantile Company store was built in 1917 where Carr Gas Company now stands. Later a new store was built where the first bank was put. The post office was moved in the new building and managed by H.W. Harrison.

There was a blacksmith shop run by Dozier May, where the Gulf Coast Packing Company is now.

Red Hudson and Ed Cannon owned a barber shop in Jay. Red Hudson's grandfather opened Jay's first barbershop in 1906, and the Hudsons have had one here ever since. It is now owned by Harold Hudson. Ed Cannon's barber shop became Ed and Leroy's Barber Shop.

The Harrison Mercantile Co. built a gin to accommodate the Jay farmers. Don Fails and Mr. Kearley operated the gin. The cotton was baled and hauled to Andalusia to be sold.

The first drugstore was built on the corner at the red light in Jay and was run by R.C. Wagoner.

In about 1925, Jess Abbott was elected Justice of the Peace.

There was a barn built in 1926 by Will Dobbs. This was a horse-and-mule stable where people bought and sold horses-and mules. It was located where the Edeker dry cleaners and store once were. The Fosters had a house joining this. It is now the gift shop.

The Kent family moved to Jay and built a two-story brick building. They rented out the upstairs apartments. Later one room was used for the telephone operators in Jay. A store was put in the downstairs section. When the first Escambia River Electric Cooperation, Inc., was located in Jay, it was put in the Kent building. It was managed by W.W. Butler.

The first beer joint was opened adjoining the Kent building by O.F. Wolfe. Later it was converged with the Snack bar operated by Willis S. Jones and his wife.

Hubert and Lucy Cannon opened a grocery store with a gas tank. Then the highway was built through Jay.

A beer joint and eating place, owned by Daisy Hudson, was in an old wooden building where Eloise's Beauty Shop now stands. The city police at this time was William Rufus Jones.

Dr. N.T. Stallworth, a country doctor, moved to Jay. He lived across from the Jenkins Hotel, the Faye McBride home place.

A new grammar and high school was built in 1934. Mr. H.T. Weathers, the principal, lived in a teacherage, a two-story building by the school.

The old school was near Ted May's Barn on O.L. Wolfe's property on Highway 4 East. Mr. H.T. Weathers was the first principal of this school. Years later, Mr. M.B. Gross replaced H.T. Weathers as principal.

In November of 1933, Jay School was burned to the ground. A new school was built separating the grammar school from the high school. In three or four years, a new auditorium was built. Then a new library was built, and then a combined agriculture and home economics building was built. Mr. Woodruff was the first agriculture teacher.

In 1931, Mr. Merle V. North and Mr. Ray Boles came to Jay. Mr. North was the first football coach to have a team.

There was a second-hand furniture store that came to Jay. It was managed by Byrum Norred.

O L Wolfe's Service Station was built across from the present location of the red light. Mr. E.M. Neal had an all-purpose store, a brick building, which stood where Scott's Furniture and Appliance now stands. In November, 1938, Mr. Neal died and his property was sold to Manuel Fowler.

Mr. Herman Cannon built a new brick building where Bower's Department Store is now. He owned a service station and a cafe which was run by Minnie Grimes. In four or five years, Minnie Grimes built a new cafe of her own on her own property, now the location of Harold Hudson's Barber Shop.

In the year 1950-51, the first bank was built on Main Street in Jay next to the Five-and-Ten Cent Store's present location. The first president of the bank was Mr. J.P. Kent.

Later, the Jay Theater was built by W.J. McCurdy. His son, Buck McCurdy, was the theater manager.

Mr. Bowers came to Jay and built a new ice plant. Later he added a meat plant to cure meat and butcher fresh meat. He then built a brick building, adjoining to the meat market and ice house, which became a furniture store, operated by Ben White.

About this time, the first fair came to Jay. The fair was held at the American Legion grounds. The brick building, having been built by the American Legion in 1945, was used for the fair exhibits. The American Legion also had a store where they sold beer.

Mr. Jess McCurdy was the manager of the stock pen, built by the state. When his health began to fail, Mr. H.T. Woodruff was appointed to help Mr. Jess McCurdy. Later, Horace McCurdy became the manager.

In 1974, Mr. James Anderson from Andalusia built the peanut shed. It was located on the ground where the first gin at Jay was built. This brought in a lot of business to Jay and provided employment for those needing jobs. The peanuts were hauled to Andalusia by truck.

Another cotton gin was built in Jay by Mr. Burkhead; it was located across the road from the Jay Cemetery.

Mr. Ed Golden built another cotton gin. It is still in its present location near the Jay Stockmarket.

The city of Jay then bought property for a city swimming pool. This gave children a recreation area for the summer.

Ted May built a horse stable to sell and train horses.

The post office was then moved to a stucco building on the corner of the Neal property.

The Neal property was then sold to the Shells who sold it to the Scotts. Scott's Furniture and Appliance now stands there.

Mr. John Pittman bought the property adjoining the Scott's new brick building. This property was for the new post office.

Then Bower's Supermarket was set up in the place where Herman Cannon's store had been for years. Now it is Bower's Department Store.

Mr. H.B. Lewis built a gin and mill combined. Its location was where the present first Baptist Church's recreation building stands.

The first gas company was Charlie Wilkerson Gas Company; gas was now being used in the homes of Jay.

Scott's Grocery was built between the two highways going through Jay. At this time, Scott's

Grocery was the only grocery store in Jay. The Scotts then bought the property for Scott's Plaza. It contains a doctor's office, Mary's Beauty Shop, Scott's Grocery, Scott's TV and Radio Repair Shop, Scott's Service Station, May's Flower & Gift Shop, and a drug store run by Cecil Phillips.

The Beauty Shop in the Grimes building was bought by Talathia Baker and later sold to Wavoline Dauge. The barber shop there is now run by Harold Hudson. Both of these businesses were part of the original Minnie Grimes property.

The bank was moved to a location on Highway 4 going east of Jay and was called the First National Bank of Jay. This was a change in the name from Ellis First National Bank. This renaming took place a year after its relocation in March, 1974.

The Jay Hospital had its open-house on Sunday April 2, 1960. Dr. Virgil Metts was the first doctor in the new hospital.

Now in 1979, a new medical center is being built.

Verda Mae McCurdy [Grimes] February 27, 1980

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**Brief History of Jay**  
**Oct 5, 1939**  
**The Jay Tribune**

The early history of this community is hard to ascertain, for the ones who made the first farm settlements here have long since gone to their rewards, and those old enough, or well enough versed in the history of the beginning of this community are hard to find to give definite information.

The history of this community as Jay begins in 1902 when Mr. J T Nowling and Mr. O M Wolfe were a part of a committee to select a name for the thriving little farm community. At this time there were only a few families living around Jay. Jay being the name submitted to the Postmaster General and that "J" was the name chosen. Mr. J T Nowling is modest about saying so, but we suspect the "J" in his initials had something to do with the name of the community. Mr. Nowling was first postmaster of Jay, having been appointed to that position in 1902. He also had the first store in Jay, which was the only store for a number of years. The size of the store is reported to have been 16 by 20 feet of rough pine board structure. This little mercantile establishment sat on the exact spot where the A. M. Neal brick building now stands.

Being the first postmaster and merchant was not the only ways in which Mr. Nowling was like the father of our community "First in Peace, and first in war, and first in the hearts of his Countrymen". He also had the first cotton gin, and saw mill at Jay. We wonder what Jay would have done without J. T.

John Abbot was the next, merchant in Jay with a store on the spot where Wolfe's Service Station and garage now stands. The building was owned by Tom Cannon, who was Mr. Abbot's father in law. This business was sold to Byrans, Hardy and Company which soon dwindled to Bry and Brothers.

The next move to modernize Jay was a bill to Incorporate. This was accomplished in 1904 with Wiley Cannon as mayor; Jessie Abbot as marshal; and John Abbot as city clerk. It is interesting to know that the assessed valuation of this town [Incorporated] was only enough to raise \$104.00 in taxes to pay the running expenses for one year.

Land here at that time (1904) was worth \$4.00 an acre and jumped in value within one year to \$8.25 per acre. Some of the best farms here were bought for \$4.00 to \$15.00 per acre. The present cost of land here is from \$75 to \$100 per acre, and bargains at that price. The Methodist and Baptist religious bodies were not long in building churches. The Baptist Church was first to be built, followed soon after wards by the people of the Methodist faith. Then followed in later years by the Church of Christ and Holiness faith.

The Harrison Mercantile Co. was established in 1917 with the Pure Food Store following closely behind with Mr. Will Dobbs and Mrs. Jessie Abbot in partnership. The Neal Campbell Store came into existence about this time also. Then along came the panic following the World's war and the Harrison Mercantile was the only one to keep their doors open and weather the panic.

Mr. Floyd Boutwell was a merchant in Jay also along with the others just mention. Mr. Boutwell's store was burned several years ago.

Following the depression of 1920-21 came the "boon days" of 1925-26 when the sky was the limit. New buildings were erected and a look of faith took the place of the look of hard luck. Harrison Mercantile built a big brick store. J P Kent came to the scene of the action with a brick store building, with E M Neal not left out of the collections of merchants with brick buildings.

Next came the Mrs. W J McCurdy constructed a large brick building built in 1935 with seven store rooms suitable for business places. They have been occupied by different businesses since completion.

In September of 1938 a community fair was held at the Jay School and was sponsored the Jay and Allentown Chapters of the FFA, which was successful in every way and which really started the wave of progress that Jay has enjoyed for the past 12 months.

Immediately after the fair, The Tribune was established, it having been printed and edited in Milton until January 1st 1939 at which time it was moved to Jay in the Neal Building.

Next on the program was the establishing of the Square Deal Store, under the efficient management of Mr. H W Harrison, who is one of the early settlers of Jay.

About this time a general store was opened by W J McCurdy in the corner building of the Mrs. W J McCurdy Building which was later moved to its present location, in the new building next to the Santa Rosa Theatre.

During December of 1938 RC Wagoner, a local businessman, conceived the idea of a modern theatre for Jay and immediately began the construction of a home for his theatre, which is a credit to any town twice the size of Jay. The theater opened about January 1st and since that time has enjoyed a wonderful business.

Next on the program was the building of a modern filling station by Martin Baker on the corner next to the theater. Harrison Mercantile then erected a large warehouse and display room next to Wolfe's Garage. This building houses a modern hardware and feed department.

During this time a large fireproof gymnasium was erected on the Jay School grounds by the people of Jay and the surrounding territory. This gym isn't the finest in the country, but it is

one of the best constructed in this section, and was built with less cost than any building of its size that we know of. It is a structure that Jay is very proud of and is very useful in many ways.

About this time new homes were built by Mr. A J Hawsey and Mr. Don Fails. Mr. Hawsey having sold his farm to Mr. Owens, on which Mr. Owens has constructed a new home.

In February W J McCurdy built a new store adjoining the theatre and moved his business in the new store. Mrs. C. C. Higdon then moved her lunch room into the building vacated by McCurdy and installed a modern soda fountain. C M Burketts Shoe Shop now occupies the store vacated by Mrs. Higdon.

In June the community of Jay was incorporated as a town by an act of the State Legislature and the following officers were appointed, after having been recommended by a mass meeting held prior to the date of incorporation: J H Cannon, Mayor, B S Warrick, Marshall, Frank Vinson, City Clerk, and J P Kent, J W Roberts, O M Wolfe and W C Edeker councilmen. B S Warrick resigned as marshal and G B Foster was elected to fill the vacancy. Since the date of incorporation the town of Jay has made much steady progress.

During the early summer months several new homes were built by the following; J S Amos, Mrs. Clarence Dees, and a home built for Prof R L Carruth by W J McCurdy, Mrs. Nowling, and J G King. At present a new home and a building in which a mattress factory is to be installed is being built by H B Lewis. Also during the summer Mr. J P Kent enlarged his building adding two stores on the ground floor and adding a top floor to the entire building. The new buildings are occupied by the Escambia River Electric Cooperative Inc., J P Kent, General Merchandise, and the Tribune Office. Between now and November 1st a 'dime store' will be located in the front of the building occupied by the Tribune. The top floor of the Kent building is made up of offices and a large storage room.

Jay was fortunate in being chosen as headquarters for the REA unit which employs several people and Covers several counties in West Florida. During this year 8 miles of hard surfacing has been completed on S R No 88 from here to Milton.

In June a transaction was made whereby L N Finley became owner of the gin at Jay. He has installed a grist mill and is to install a saw mill and planer mill within a few months.

Mrs. Ruby Williams of Milton is erecting a telephone line between Jay and Milton, and will begin the installation of a modern telephone exchange in Jay within a few days. After summing up all the progress made by Jay in the past years, we feel that we can truthfully say "That Jay is the biggest little town in the USA"