

Cullendale, Arkansas

In 1926, when International Paper & Power Company came to Camden, transportation was limited to very few autos. In those days, modes of transportation were limited to horseback, wagons, surrey, or walking. Therefore, it was necessary for the company to make some provision for their labor force, in particular, the skilled and administrative people. Therefore, they built company houses that they furnished either free, or for a very modest rent, to key personnel. Some of these houses are still standing today. The town site was named **Cullendale** for Richard E. Cullen, Chairman of the IP Corporation. As people became more financially able to provide for themselves, the company began selling these houses to mill personnel.

As the population increased, the need for shopping markets increased and the business area of the community formed. Over the years, there were many changes, in owners, types of business, etc. There were at least two hotels, a boarding house, apartments, grocery stores, dry goods, liquor stores, cafes, service stations, recreation halls, night clubs, etc.

Cullendale town site was surveyed and platted by J. W. Haynes in March 1927. Subdivisions developed down through the years and included Hillcrest (east of Louisiana St. with streets named Peach, Pear, Plum, Apple, Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas), J. W. Hecker Addition (lying east of Old Smackover Rd., including Hecker & Merritt Streets), Barnes Addition (included Cullendale business lots and the lots directly to the west of the town site), Garner Addition (bounded on the north by Victory Dr. and Ark Highway #7 on the east with streets named A, B, and C), and Highway Subdivision.

By 1961, many businesses were flourishing. Some are listed here: A&H Ready to Wear, Booker's Barber Shop, Coker's Laundry & Cleaners, Colvert Bros. Bldg. Contractors, Cullendale Beauty Shop, Cullendale Cleaners, Cullendale Laundromat, Cullendale Motor Service, Cullendale Sporting Goods, Davis DX Service Station, Davis Variety Store, Dedman Grocery & Market, Dixon Furniture, Fincher's Lion Service Station, Gateway Grocery, Gladys's Beauty Shop, H. A. Peterson Grocery & Market, H. O. Patterson Jeweler, Hall Hardware, Harrell's Rexall Drugs, International Paper Co., International Paper, Bagpak, John's Gulf & Glass Shop, Katherine's Beauty Shop, Keisler's Shoe Shop, Keystone Lumber Co., Lampkin Texaco Service, Lindsey Grocery, Lynn Tire Service, Maid Rite Concrete Products, Southern Pulpwood Co., Martin's Barber Shop, Modern Beauty Salon, OK Grocery & Market, Poor Boys Grocery & Market, Renfro Craftsman Service, Reynolds Texaco Service, Russell's Café, Sims Liquor Store, Smith Service Co., Southern Hotel, Spicer's Barber Shop, and Stevens Esso Servicecenter.

Also, as people moved to the community the need for more land increased, thus the various housing subdivisions formed; not only for the families working at IP's Paper Mill or Bagpak, but for other families who wished to live in the Fairview School District, which also originated in 1926.

Land for a public school was donated by Will Fearing & Judge W. F. Tate in 1925. Though the origin of the name is unknown, the school was named **Fairview**. Lafayette School, a Rosenwald School for black students, was also a part of the Fairview School District before it was closed during the desegregation of the 1960s. According to local historians, the adjoining area of homes and businesses, also called **Fairview**, took its name from the school. **Fairview High School's** doors opened in 1926 and churches were not far behind. Cullendale First Baptist Church was started in 1929 following a tent revival conducted by Rev. J. G. Harris and it continues to serve the community in 2013. The first post office was established in July 1934 and Loy Ellis served as Postmaster. In 1939, Harry Colvert took over that position. In 1956 the city of Cullendale was annexed by the city of Camden and Cullendale Post Office was made a station of the Camden Post Office. At that same time, city mail delivery service was established at Cullendale Postal Station. During this time several street names in Cullendale were changed, some because there were streets in Camden with the same name. Back St. became South St., Front St. became North St., and Wilson St. was renamed Jenkins St. because there was already a Wilson St. in Camden. **Cullendale** included the area where IP was built and where the businesses grew up across the road from the mill, as well as the houses that were built for mill employees. Everything else that grew from the development of IP within the community, including the school and later housing developments and businesses that grew up behind the school, was known to local residents as **Fairview**.

While Cullendale was basically a mill town, there were other successful businesses located within a few miles of the community. Tate's sawmill which had been operating since the 1940s and Keystone Lumber Co., Southern Pulpwood, and an occasional saw shop were other timber related companies doing business in the area. Rail service was available and at one time there was a tram that served Keystone Mill, going to Pedron Landing on the Ouachita River. During WWII there was bus service between Cullendale and Camden and what we know today as East Camden and the airport flight training school. Dynamic change came for the community in 2001 when after 73 years in south Arkansas, International Paper Co. and Bagpak closed their operations. The Cullendale business district had been in decline for a number of years before that, as business owners retired and traffic around the mill decreased when Highway 7 South bypassed the area. Some business owners moved to Cardinal Shopping Center west of Cullendale and others simply closed down. In 2012 the Post Office at Cullendale was closed as part of a cost savings effort by the Postal Service despite high walk-in traffic. Camden and Fairview school districts consolidated in 1991 and only one school building remains open in Cullendale, which houses Camden Fairview School District's kindergarten and 1st grade classes. The community is alive and well, but most of the major business interests are long gone.