

KOASATI/COOSADA

Coosada, located in western Elmore County, is situated on the west bank of the Alabama River a few miles below the confluence of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers. The town appears on many early French maps. Some historians say that DeSoto visited Coosada in 1540. All agree that Coosada's history began with the arrival of an Indian tribe. They came from the west, (1520-35) a wandering tribe who followed the pole, traveling each day in the direction it pointed. They arrived on the banks of a mighty river and once again drove the pole into the ground. The next morning the pole was standing straight. "Alabama" the Indian word for "Here we rest", gave this tribe the name "Alabamos" and from them the state and river took its name.

The Alabamos Indians named their village Koasati, meaning white cane. They found the area charming in climate, rich in soil, magnificent forest, abundance of game, and most important, remote from their enemies.

The French explorer, Bienville visited the Indian village in 1714 and was cordially welcomed. He embarked in canoes to explore the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers. He resolved to build a fort, first named for the Alabamos, later redistricted in honor of Count Toulouse.

By 1763 French traders were settled in the Koasati area. Later the British took over the fort and British traders arrived.

In 1790 Koasati Chief Stinafurti accompanied Alexander McGillivray to meet with President George Washington in the cause of peace.

During the 1700's, the village and Indians were referred to as Koasati, Couchati, Couchatta, Conchatys, Coosawlee, Coosaudee.

In 1802 the first commercial cotton gin was built by Abraham Mordecai on Coosada Bluff.

In 1812 Tecumseh traveled among the Creek Confederacy with hope of creating a rebellion against the United States. Many chiefs joined him, but not the Chief of Koasati. Captain Issacs spoke out with contempt for Tecumseh. One warrior born and raised in the area of Koasati was William Weatherford. After the War of 1812-14 he surrendered to Andrew Jackson. The Indian Town of Koasati was burned in 1814.

As early as 1812 some Indians had started moving away. In 1816 white settlers were building their homes in the area. Senator William Wyatt Bibb arrived in Alabama in 1816 and established a land estate. He was associated with land companies. The Town of Coosawda, located in the same location as the Koasati Village, was surveyed and laid out in streets with 116 lots, boat landing, and an academy (with W.W. Bibb as trustee) before 1817. Captain Robert Billups Glenn was one of the earliest settler and had a saw mill in 1818. Some of the other families coming early were Bibb, Lewis, Jackson, Long, Hall, Clopton, Elmore, Walker, Fitzpatrick, Rives, Allen, Robinson, Williamson, Mayhew, and Pope.

Dr. William Wyatt Bibb was appointed Governor of the Alabama Territory in 1817 and in 1819 appointed as the first Governor of the new state of Alabama. Governor Bibb built his home in 1817, a mile from the Town of Coosawda. He died in 1820 from injuries he received in a fall from his mule. The Bibb cemetery is near the home site (where Elmore Hall has his home today). This area was in Autauga County from 1818 until Elmore County was created in 1866. Elmore County took its name from John Archer Elmore, a Revolutionary War soldier. John Elmore's home,

"Huntingdon", is located just off Mortar Creek near Coosada and is still standing in excellent condition.

Benjamin Fitzpatrick, Governor from 1841 to 1845, had a home near "Huntingdon" but it burned in the 1970's.

Coosawda was the important hub of the area later known as Robinson Springs, Rocky Mount, Edgewood, Elmore, and Millbrook. Mail and freight was first delivered here by wagon train, boat, and circuit riders. A mail route was established in 1818 by Fort Jackson. Coosawda had a post office in 1821. Jones B. Clopton was the first postmaster with a yearly income of \$10.22. The post office was in homes, stores, and once in a blacksmith shop. The first post office building was in 1897. When the North and South Railroad was built from Montgomery north through Coosawda in 1872, some of the town moved a mile from the river to the railroad area. Many homes were already scattered over the country side. The Jackson-Hall home (first called Mayhew-now the Elms) was built in 1836. Other homes were Crawford Jackson, Joel Zeigler, Chapman, and Allen. Around 1889 a railroad sign painter accidently changed the spelling of Coosawda to Coosada.

School was taught in the homes by mothers, aunts, or older daughters. As the settlement grew, a teacher was hired. In 1831 the Coosada Academy was founded. John Archer Elmore advertised in a Montgomery newspaper for "an instructor in Romance Language for Coosada Academy." In the later 1800's there was a teacher-family arrangement. One family would furnish the room and board for the teacher and school, and the other families made up the salary. The teacher changed homes yearly. This arrangement continued until 1896 when the Rives built a school on their property on Cedar Lane. The building was used until school attendance outgrew it.

In the early 1900's the town was again prosperous with several stores, cotton gin, saw mill, pottery plant, ferry, etc. A town hall was built in 1902 on the corner of Coosada Road and Kennedy Avenue. In 1904 the school was moved to the town hall. The hall became the center of activities. Money for the building was raised by ice cream suppers, dances, etc. A school on Gibson Town Road was also well attended.

Early settlers attended church in Robinson Springs where a non-denominational church was organized before 1828. In 1845 the present Methodist Church was built. Baptist Church service was first attended in Coosada in 1857. In 1888 a Baptist Sunday School was held on the Washington Lary place. A Baptist Church was built in 1890 on land donated by Mrs. Isabella Presley. Around 1920 church services were moved from the church (on Airport Rd.) to the Coosada Town Hall. In 1925 Coosada and Robinson parents met at Coosada to consolidate for a better school. Lunley Chapel, County Line, and Millbrook asked to come in. The consolidated school was built at Robinson Springs in 1926. Three school buses carried the children. The church continued to have services in the Coosada Town Hall, and in the late 1940's the Coosada trustees deeded the Town Hall lot and building to the Baptist Church so that a larger church could be built.

A public meeting was held in April, 1974 to incorporate the Coosada area. Over 95% of the community residents signed petitions to incorporate so that Coosada could keep its identity, remain intact, and to allow Coosada citizens to govern themselves. The Town was incorporated March 10, 1975. A large area was annexed in 1976 at the request of the property owners.

Today Coosada includes over 3600 acres of land. The current population is estimated to be 1300.

Coosada is proud of its 20-acre park which contains a community center building, baseball field, comfort station, tot-lot playground, bar-b-que pit, picnic tables, walking trail, and a large play area.

Coosada is a small semi-urban residential country town but has much potential for industrial growth. Coosada is located on the Alabama River with railroad, natural gas, and is close to the Wetumpka airport and to I-65. The largest industries are Jenkins Brick Co. and the Alabama Gas Co. LNG Plant.