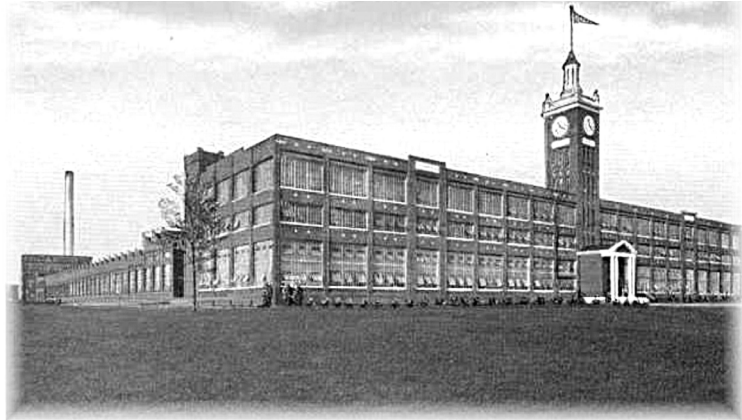


## Goodyear Tire & Rubber

In the late 1920's, the largest tire plant in the world (at the time) was built in Gadsden, Alabama. Situated along the Coosa River, the plant went on-line at or around the beginning of The Great Depression. One could only imagine the economic impact that such an enormous plant had on the city and area as one of a handful of manufacturer's in the area.

What is particularly personal is that many of my family worked at this place – either as part of The War effort or as a career. *Of the cuff*, both my granddads, at least three uncles, a brother-in-law, a cousin and still more...spent time making tires and other rubber-based products.



This plant – as it appears in the illustration – has been apparently replaced through more modern facilities and operations; yes, it is still there, clock tower and all, but the frontage is no longer visible from the road or main entrance. Whether textile or other operations, such classic plant designs have seemed to dissipate – either due to obsolescence and/or globalization.

When I was a boy, the distinct memory of Goodyear was standing at the fence and watching the employees file-out at shift; and at least one among these was my relation, a granddad. At Christmas, we grandchildren received a gift from the clubhouse and when my dad was a boy, he caddied around the clubhouse. Goodyear was at the center of the town and much of my family. As with other cities in the region (and perhaps most everywhere), the “plant” or manufacturing works was *the backbone* of the economy.

Times have changed and so too has Goodyear. The ups and downs of the plant have been extreme – particularly during the last several decades – and have created a kind of bi-polar condition of dying or living, closing or growing, and so on. Yet, even now, the plant is still there; and like the substance of its product – rubber – it seems to be rather elastic or flexible.

Appreciation and thanks must be extended however, for the simple reason that this plant employed much of my family; and perhaps left me with the indelible sense that making or manufacturing goods is vitally important.

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