

**A HISTORY OF SIMPSON COUNTY,  
MISSISSIPPI, 1824-1962**



**BY  
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## Preface

My purpose in writing this thesis is to cover as extensively as possible the diverse factors which are necessary in understanding the history of Simpson County, Mississippi.

Since the materials concerning Simpson County are far from voluminous I have been coerced to render, on several occasions, scant attention to specialized areas of interest which otherwise might be examined more exhaustively. Nevertheless, even with its comparative dearth of materials the county's history is interesting.

In the preparation of this volume I have been favored with the advice, counsel, and encouragement of a number of individuals, all of whom have rendered important suggestions for its improvement.

I wish to convey my appreciation of the assistance rendered by my adviser and Head of the Mississippi College History Department, Dr. Jack W. Gunn, whose careful reading of the entire manuscript enabled him to make important suggestions that were indispensable.

To Dr. Martha M. Bigelow, Dr. W. M. Caskey, Professor P. I. Lipsey, Jr., as well as Dr. Gunn, who directed me through my history studies at Mississippi College, I express my gratitude.

To my typists, Mrs. Gail Temple who typed the rough drafts of my manuscript, and Mrs. Sandra Price Burkett who completed this final copy, a special word of thanks is hereby given.

To Miss Meredith Johnson whose illustrations of Grierson's Raid and the Indian Concessions add to the credibility of this work, I express my



appreciation.

In particular, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mrs. Julius Melton, Mrs. G. W. Grimes, Mrs. Gene Caldwell, and Miss Ruth Kelly and other staff members of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, where most of the information for this work was collected, for their courteous and efficient assistance. Additional thanks are also due to the Mississippi College library staff who made available numerous resources essential to the writing of this history.

Also, I extend my unreserved appreciation to Mr. and Mrs. Gerald McIntosh and Lynn who assisted me in so many ways that it would be impossible to list them here.

Lastly, I would be most derelict, if I omitted from special mention my wife Geraldine and my mother, Mrs. Marie G. Bennett, whose unselfish devotion, constant concern, and confidence made this thesis as well as my college education a reality.

R. T. B.

Clinton, Mississippi  
August 4, 1962

## Abstract

Simpson County is located in the "heart" of Mississippi, 31 miles southeast of Jackson, the State capital.

Prior to its creation in 1824, the region now embracing Simpson County had been claimed by three European powers as well as the United States. Coincidental with these rival claims, it had been occupied by the Choctaw Indians, who were the county's first recorded inhabitants.

On January 23, 1824, seven years after Mississippi became a State, Simpson County was organized. From this time till the outbreak of the Civil War internal progress both socially and economically was slow.

During the periods of Civil War and Reconstruction the people in Simpson County as in other Southern States endured many hardships, and much of what had been accomplished was destroyed.

Around 1875, however, the county turned its attention toward constructive improvement and by 1890 many worthwhile changes had transpired; the most beneficial taking place in education and transportation. By 1900, with the advent of the railroad, the county began to prosper.

Immediately following the first decade of the twentieth century, lumbering became the county byword and growth was remarkable along all lines. Unfortunately, as time passed, timber lands became scarce and the county's economy dropped proportionately. Even the railroad which had earlier produced a favorable economy could not restore normalcy. Since the late twenties and early thirties progress within the county has been gradual. However, today Simpson County has a potentiality in timber resources and oil production.

Although a majority of its people are engaged in agricultural pursuits, there is an acute desire to induce industries to locate in the county. Actually, Simpson County is an area of future promise, and with the proper economic leadership it could become a prominent and wealthy part of Mississippi.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE . . . . .	iii
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS . . . . .	v
LIST OF CONTENTS.. . . .	vii
LIST OF TABLES. . . . .	viii
LIST OF MAPS. . . . .	ix
 CHAPTER	
I. The Natural Setting. . . . .	1
II. Life and Passing of the Red Man . . . . .	13
III. The County Emerges .. . . .	29
IV. The Era of Growth, 1830-1860 . . . . .	47
V. Civil War . . . . .	67
VI. Reconstruction, 1865-1875 . . . . .	90
VII. Post War Activities from Reconstruction to 1900. . . . .	101
VIII. Economic and Cultural Development in the 20th Century. . . . .	111
APPENDIX I . . . . .	126
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	130

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Normal Monthly, Seasonal, and Annual Temperature and Precipitation at Crystal Springs, Covich County and D'lo, Simpson County . . . . .	3
2. Mineral Analyses of Ground Waters from Simpson County . . . . .	6
3. Areas of Different Soils . . . . .	9
4. Growth of Population from 1830-1860 . . . . .	52
5. Simpson County Economic Development 1850-1860 . . . . .	54
6. Activities of the Simpson County Baptist Association 1862-1865 . . . . .	86
7. Population Distribution, 1940-1960 . . . . .	119

LIST OF MAPS

Map	Page
1. John Melish's Map of Mississippi, 1819 . . . . .	19
2. Indian Cessions, 1801-1832 . . . . .	27
3. Map of Mississippi, 1822 . . . . .	30
4. Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson's Raid through Simpson County. .	81
5. Map of Mississippi, 1850-1870 . . . . .	89
6. Map of Mississippi, 1942 . . . . .	123

## CHAPTER 1

### THE NATURAL SETTING

The natural setting of Simpson County is a bountiful one. It is a land of low rolling hills, swift flowing streams, abundant rainfall, temperate climate, productive soil, and rugged forest. It is located in the heart of Mississippi, the "Magnolia State"; its physiographic potentiality is only surpassed by the ambitions of its people.

Simpson County lies in the south-central section of Mississippi approximately thirty miles southeast of Jackson, the capital of the state. The county is bounded on the west by Pearl River, on the north by Rankin and Smith counties, on the east by Smith county, and the south by Covington, Jefferson Davis and Lawrence counties.<sup>1</sup> The county is shaped, roughly, in rectangular form. It has an area of 575 square miles,<sup>2</sup> or approximately 375,600 acres.<sup>3</sup> From north to south the county is approximately 19 miles in length and varies in width from 33 miles on the northern boundary to 28 miles on the southern boundary.<sup>4</sup>

The climate of Simpson County, like that of the longleaf pine area of

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<sup>1</sup>J. F. Pender, Overall Economic Development Program for Simpson County, Mississippi (Mendenhall: By the author, 1962), p. 7. Subsequently cited as Economic Development Program.

<sup>2</sup>Lloyd W. Stephenson, William W. Logan, and Gerald A. Waring, The Ground-Water Resources of Mississippi (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1928), p. 421.

<sup>3</sup>Pender, Economic Development Program, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

southern Mississippi in general, is mild. The county lies in that part of Mississippi called the "ozone belt", which is considered one of the most salubrious sections of the state.<sup>5</sup> January and February are the coldest months. The thermometer has been known to go as low as  $-7^{\circ}\text{F}$ ., but such cold periods are rare and of short duration. During the winter months there is considerable precipitation which generally extends for several weeks. However, with limited sunshine, excess water dissipates into the sandy elements of the soil with quick rapidity and normal conditions are easily restored. In low bottom lands the latter does not always apply. Snow is occasional and, as a whole, the winters are mild. The summers are long, but never excessively hot.<sup>6</sup> In summer months--June, July and August--the average maximum temperature is  $92.4^{\circ}\text{F}$ ., the hottest months of the year according to local weather records.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps, the proximity of this region to the Gulf coast has some influence on climatic conditions. Nevertheless, while the sun may become hot during the day, the nights are generally cool.<sup>8</sup>

From the combined records of the weather station at Crystal Springs in Copiah County and the recording station at D'Lo in Simpson County the range in temperature of the latter varies from  $-7^{\circ}\text{F}$ . in winter to  $108^{\circ}\text{F}$ . in summer. The average for the winter months is  $49.5^{\circ}\text{F}$ ., and for the summer  $80.7^{\circ}\text{F}$ .<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup>F. Z. Hutton, W. E. Thorp, and Clarence Lounsbury, Soil Survey of Simpson County, Mississippi (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1921), p. 8. Hereafter referred to as Soil Survey.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ponder, Economic Development Program, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup>Hutton, et al., Soil Survey, p. 8. Simpson County is about 126 miles north of Gulf Port, Mississippi, on the Gulf of Mexico.

<sup>9</sup>Ponder, Economic Development Program, p. 9. In the Westville News, February 16, 1899, it was reported that on February 13, 1899, at 8 o'clock in the morning, the "thermoniter" registered ten degrees below zero.



The mean annual precipitation in Simpson is 54 inches. The rainfall is well distributed throughout the year, and long periods of drought are of rare occurrence. Conventional storms occasionally pass over the region, but these usually come in the early spring and at rare intervals.<sup>10</sup> According to available data the amount of precipitation during the driest year is 37.20 inches and for the wettest year 79.02 inches.<sup>11</sup>

The average date of the last killing frost in the spring is March 16, and of the first in the fall is November 19. This gives an average growing season of 249 days.<sup>12</sup>

The following table, compiled from the records of the weather bureau at the Crystal Springs station in Copiah County and the recording station at D'Lo relates the average temperature and precipitation of the area embracing Simpson County.

TABLE 1  
NORMAL MONTHLY, SEASONAL, AND ANNUAL TEMPERATURE  
AND PRECIPITATION AT CRYSTAL SPRINGS, COPIAH  
COUNTY AND D'LO, SIMPSON COUNTY<sup>10</sup>

	Temperature			Precipitation		
	Mean.	Absolute Maximum	Absolute Minimum.	Mean.	Total amount for driest year.	Total amount for wettest year.
	°F	°F	°F	Inches	Inches	Inches
December.....	49.5	61.0	38.0	5.61	7.96	4.00
January.....	48.7	60.1	37.3	4.59	8.89	5.83
February.....	50.5	62.9	39.3	5.45	3.04	8.54
Winter....	49.5	61.0	38.2	15.76	19.89	18.37
March.....	57.6	69.9	46.7	5.01	4.06	5.34
April.....	45.3	77.4	53.3	4.79	1.93	9.87
May.....	72.5	84.5	60.6	5.29	.37	3.87
Spring....	58.8	77.2	53.5	15.09	6.36	19.08

<sup>10</sup>Hutton, et al., Soil Survey, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup>Ponder, Economic Development Program, p. 9; see also Ralph Sanders, Climates of the United States: Mississippi, United States Department of Commerce-Weather Bureau, Climatology of the United States, Number 60-22 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1959).

<sup>12</sup>Ponder, Economic Development Program, p. 9.

June.....	79.5	91.4	67.7	4.45	3.66	1.94
July.....	81.3	92.7	70.9	6.06	5.14	4.64
August.....	81.4	93.1	69.8	4.75	2.50	7.74
Summer....	80.7	92.4	68.4	15.26	11.60	11.32
September.....	76.6	88.4	64.8	3.30	1.22	3.49
October.....	67.0	80.7	53.4	2.47	0.55	7.26
November.....	64.5	68.0	61.0	2.97	2.80	2.76
Fall.....	69.4	79.0	59.4	8.74	4.57	13.51
Year.....	81.5	77.4	55.2	54.85	42.42	65.28

<sup>12</sup>The above table is a combination of climatographical data extracted from Ponder's, Economic Development Program, p. 9, and Hutton et al., Soil Survey, p. 9.

There are nineteen principal streams in Simpson County, namely: Pearl and Strong Rivers, Bowie Creek, Okatoma Creek, Banks Creek, Vaughan Creek, Riels Creek, Sellers Creek, White Oak Creek, Campbell Creek, Sanders Creek, Big Creek, Goodwater Creek, Limestone Creek, Silver Creek, Westville Creek, Hatchapalog (Hatchapaloo) Creek, Skiffer Creek, and Dobbs Creek.<sup>13</sup>

Pearl River received its name from the French who discovered large numbers of pearls at its mouth. It flows from the northeast to the south, marking the western boundary of the county and emptying into the Gulf of Mexico. This stream is about 300 miles long and drains about 7,000 square miles.<sup>14</sup>

Strong River flows from the northeast to the southwest into Pearl River and drains the northeast one-third of the county.<sup>15</sup> It received its name from its swift and powerful flow. Although the current is very rapid, the river is utilized for recreational purposes such as swimming, fishing, and boating. At the present time its drainage area is 429 square miles and average temperature

<sup>13</sup>Interview Mr. Harold Martin, Work Unit Conservationist, Mendonhall, Mississippi, June 6, 1962.

<sup>14</sup>James Hays McLendon, "History of Simpson County, Mississippi to 1865", (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Texas, 1936), p. 2-3: Hereafter cited as "History of Simpson County". See also Dunbar Rowland, Mississippi, the Heart of the South (Jackson: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1925), Volume I, p. 166.

<sup>15</sup>McLendon, "History of Simpson County"; p. 3.

of the water between the years 1943 and 1958 was a chilly 61.1°f.<sup>16</sup>

Boule Creek is located in the lower southeast part of the county and runs practically parallel with Skiffer Creek. These bodies of water proceed southward and eventually join Leaf River in Jefferson Davis County.<sup>17</sup>

Okatoza Creek drains a small area in the lower southeast part of the county. It flows approximately two to three miles south of Coats, and continues past the northeast periphery of Saratoga, and out of Simpson County. The name Okatoza, was given to the creek by the Choctaw Indians.<sup>18</sup> More than likely it is a compound of the Indian words oka and tozi or tomzi. Oka means "water" and tozi, tomzi, or tombi means "to radiate" or "to shine, as the sun".<sup>19</sup> Possibly the translation would literally mean "radiant or shiny water."

Banks Creek is a tributary of Strong River and reaches out in an irregular pattern for several miles in a southerly direction. In short, it is an out-growth of Strong River.<sup>20</sup>

Vaughn Creek flows into Pearl River. It is located in the lower southeastern corner of the county near Schley.<sup>21</sup>

Rials Creek is situated near the medial part of the county near Merit. It branches in a southeasterly direction from Strong River and extends for a

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<sup>16</sup>H. G. Golden, Temperature Observations of Mississippi Streams, Bulletin 59-1 (Jackson: Mississippi Board of Water Commissioners, 1959), p. 42.

<sup>17</sup>See General Highway Map of Simpson County, Mississippi; prepared by the Mississippi State Highway Department, 1958. Hereafter referred to as "Map of Simpson County"; Interview Mr. Harold Martin.

<sup>18</sup>McLendon, "History of Simpson County", p. 4.

<sup>19</sup>Cyrus Byington, A Dictionary of the Choctaw Language, Bulletin 46, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1915), p. 291; 355.

<sup>20</sup>"Map of Simpson County".

<sup>21</sup>Ibid. See also Robert Lowry and William H. McCardle, A History of Mississippi (Jackson: R. H. Henry, 1891), p. 570.

considerable distance past the Riels Creek Methodist Church approximately six miles from Merit.<sup>22</sup>

Sellers Creek is in the central part of the county and flows into Strong River. It moves past Mendenhall, Weathersby, Sanatorium and stretches out in several directions before reaching Magee.<sup>23</sup>

White Oak Creek does not exactly penetrate Simpson County. However, its upper tributaries reach approximately three miles into the northeast corner of the county above Upton. In actuality, the creek is a product of Smith County.<sup>24</sup>

Campbell Creek flows in the north central part of the county and extends into Rankin County. It empties into Strong River.<sup>25</sup>

Sanders Creek is a tributary of Strong River. It is in the central portion of the county and flows in a southerly direction.<sup>26</sup>

Big Creek, in the lower southwest part of the county, extends northerly from Strong River and eventually divides approximately two miles southeast of Harrisville.<sup>27</sup>

Goodwater Creek is located near Magee. Its route is irregular and served as a primary source of water when this area was first settled.<sup>28</sup> Today it is used for recreational purposes.

<sup>22</sup>"Map of Simpson County"; Interview Mr. Gerald McIntosh, Plant, Pest Control Technician for the United States Department of Agriculture, Magee, Mississippi, June 9, 1962.

<sup>23</sup>"Map of Simpson County".

<sup>24</sup>Interview Mr. Harold Martin.

<sup>25</sup>"Map of Simpson County".

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.; and interviews with a number of residents in the Magee area.

Limestone Creek flows southwest into Pearl River. It is located in the western part of Simpson County, and was named for the unusual amount of limestone found on its banks.<sup>29</sup>

Silver Creek drains the south central part of the county. It is composed of three prongs, and eventually flows into Jefferson Davis County.<sup>30</sup>

Westville Creek flows east from Strong River, passes Pinola and proceeds northeasterly past the old county seat, Westville.<sup>31</sup> Its proximity to the latter community is responsible for its name.

Hatchsplog Creek is found in the northeastern part of the county near Upton. It extends into Smith County.<sup>32</sup> The origin of its name is undetermined.

Dobbs Creek flows from Strong River. It is located near Mendenhall in the north central part of the county.<sup>33</sup>

Skiffer Creek drains the southeast portion of the county. It flows almost parallel to Bowie Creek and passes through Jaynesville. It drains into Jefferson Davis County.<sup>34</sup>

Evidently, nine of the previously examined streams were named for early settlers; some of these pioneers are listed on the first tax roll of 1824.<sup>35</sup>

There are no natural lakes, marshes or bayous of consequence in the county.<sup>36</sup> But there are approximately 4,100 ponds which contain an estimated

<sup>29</sup>McLendon, "History of Simpson County", p. 3.

<sup>30</sup>Interview Mr. Harold Martin

<sup>31</sup>"Map of Simpson County".

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.,    <sup>33</sup>Ibid.,    <sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Personal Tax Rolls, No. 359, of Simpson County, located at the Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi; Lowrey and McCardle, A History of Mississippi, p. 570.

<sup>36</sup>Interview Mr. Harold Martin. See also Simpson County Subject Folder--Watersheds, Jackson, Mississippi, State Department of Archives and History.

500 fish per acre.<sup>37</sup> At the present time, nine artesian wells are located in the county, and two inch wells of good water can be obtained at most any place in the county at depths of 100-250 feet.<sup>38</sup>

For a more technical analysis of ground waters in Simpson County the following relatively old, but reliable, table will be examined:

TABLE 2  
MINERAL ANALYSES OF GROUND WATERS FROM  
SIMPSON COUNTY\*

Parts per million, Analyzed by C. S. Howard, U. S. Geological Survey, 1920.					
1	2	1	2		
Silica (SiO <sub>2</sub> ).....	4h.	11.	Chloride Radicle (Cl)....	1.0	11.
Iron (Fe).....	.34	.07	Nitrate Radicle (No <sub>3</sub> )...Trace		4.3
Calcium (Ca).....	4.8	2.2	Total dissolved solids at 180°C. ....	11h.	56.
Magnesium (Mg).....	3.1	1.6	Total hardness as CaCo <sub>3</sub> (calculated) .....	25.	12.
Sodium and potassium (Na+K).....	11.	9.4	Date of collection	Dec., 1920	Nov., 1920
Carbonate Radicle (CO <sub>3</sub> ).....	.0	.0			
Bicarbonate Radicle (HCO <sub>3</sub> ).....	9h.	9.8			
Sulphate Radicle (SO <sub>4</sub> ).....	12.	3.7			

Drilled well, 200 feet deep, of Agricultural High School, Mendenhall. This school is no longer in existence today. Bored well, 40 feet deep, of county, at Mendenhall.

\*Lloyd W. Stephenson, William N. Logan, and Gerald A. Waring. The Ground-Water Resources of Mississippi (Washington, 1928), p. 423.

Simpson County lies in the soil region known as the Long Leaf Pine Hills.

<sup>37</sup>Interview Mr. S. W. Dyar, County Agent, Mendenhall, Mississippi, June 9, 1962. The streams and small farm ponds in the county are stocked mostly with bass, bream, catfish, and white perch.

<sup>38</sup>Ponder, Economic Development Program, p. 11.

which is the largest soil division in the State. The topographical features of this area vary from hilly to nearly level.<sup>39</sup> In general, the surface soil of Simpson County varies from 10 to 18 inches. This soil is very sandy-- "partly pebbly or intermixed with coarse sand, or, more generally, a fine, greyish-white, 'ashy' material, very silicious and unretentive".<sup>40</sup>

The following table gives the name and actual and relative extent of each soil type mapped in Simpson County:

TABLE 3  
AREAS OF DIFFERENT SOILS<sup>41</sup>

Soil	Acres	Percent
Ruston very fine sandy loam.....	105,856	30.4
Rolling phase .....	4,288	
Orangeburg fine sandy loam .....	78,784	25.9
Rolling phase.....	15,296	
Ruston fine sandy loam.....	34,240	10.5
Rolling phase.....	4,096	
Ochlockonee fine sandy loam.....	18,944	5.2
Susquahanna very fine sandy loam.....	13,760	4.2
Rolling phase.....	4,032	
Kalmia silt loam.....	16,384	4.5
Orangeburg very fine sandy loam.....	16,000	4.4
Ochlockonee silt loam.....	10,496	2.9
Kalmia fine sandy loam.....	10,304	2.7
Ribb silt loam.....	6,592	1.8
Myatt silt loam.....	6,080	1.7
Cahaba fine sandy loam.....	4,480	1.2

<sup>39</sup>E. N. Lowe, Mississippi State Geological Survey, Bulletin 14 (Jackson: State Geological Department, 1919), p. 243.

<sup>40</sup>Eugene W. Hilgard, Report on the Geology and Agriculture of the State of Mississippi (Jackson: E. Barksdale, 1860), p. 348. See Appendix I for the latest county soil survey.



Bibb very fine sandy loam.....	3,776	1.0
Cahaba silt loam.....	2,880	.8
Cahaba very fine sandy loam.....	2,176	.6
Grenada <u>Providence</u> silt loam.....	1,664	.5
Ruston silt loam.....	1,472	.4
Caddo <u>Bude</u> silt loam.....	576	.2
Hannahatchee fine sandy loam.....	512	.1
Leaf <u>Beechy</u> silt loam.....	192	.1
Total.....	362,880	....

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\*F. Z. Hutton, W. E. Tharp, and Clarence Lounsbery, Soil Survey of Simpson County, Mississippi (Washington, 1921), p. 19.

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The elevation in the county ranges from 325 feet above sea level in the north to 425 feet in the southeast area. The elevation in the county seat, Mendeshall, is 363 feet. This is approximately the geographic center of the county.<sup>41</sup>

The forest cover of Simpson County can be grouped in two types--pine-hardwoods and bottom land hardwoods. The pinewood type is found on the upland areas and the bottom land hardwoods are found in the stream bottoms.<sup>42</sup>

The loblolly pine and the shortleaf pine are the primary pine components. The longleaf pine is not uncommon in the county. The hardwoods in this type include the white oak, red oak, hickory, and blackgum. The water oak is the most common oak. Ash, beech, sweetgum, and poplar complete the remaining hardwoods. The spruce pine is commonly mixed with the hardwoods in the stream bottoms.<sup>43</sup> Maples, elms, magnolias, and sycamore trees can also be found in

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<sup>41</sup>Ponder, Economic Development Program, p. 7.

<sup>42</sup>Records of the State Mississippi Game and Fish Commission, Jackson, Mississippi, Subject folder Simpson County, Mississippi, p. 2. These records may be found in the E. T. Woolfolk Building. Hereafter cited as "Game and Fish Commission".

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.



the county.<sup>44</sup> Junipers, basswood, dogwood, holly, sassafras and similar fruit bearing trees are also located in the county.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to the abundant timber resources, a wide variety of wild flowers can be observed: daisies, violets, golden rods, mountain ivy, wild iris, blackeyed susan, water lily, wild rose, wild verbena, primrose, buttercup, blue daisy and asters.<sup>46</sup>

Within the boundaries of the county there is a diverse list of birds, mammals and furbearing animals. From the list of birds it can be found that the quail population is fairly large, and doves are plentiful.<sup>47</sup> There are four turkey ranges in the northcentral and three in the western half of the county.<sup>48</sup> The deer herd of the county is confined to the Strong River bottom. This herd is on the increase due to supervised legal protection. Moreover, the range has been extended westward across Pearl River into Copiah County.<sup>49</sup> The county has a fair squirrel population. Both fox and grey species are present.<sup>50</sup> Woodchucks are found on Pearl and Strong rivers but not in significant numbers. Other wetland species are limited, i. e. woodcocks and snipes. Additional waterfowl are practically non-existent.<sup>51</sup>

The furbearing animals found in the county are raccoons, mink, skunk, wild cat, opossum, beaver, otter, red fox, grey fox, weasel, rabbits, and bobcat. Raccoons are growing in population; minke are found but not in any

<sup>44</sup>Simpson County Subject folder--Forest, Jackson, Mississippi, State Department of Archives and History, p. 7.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>46</sup>Simpson County Subject folder--Flora, Jackson, Mississippi, State Department of Archives and History, pp 16-17.

<sup>47</sup>"Game and Fish Commission", p. 4.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid. Thus far this year, 1962, eight gobblers have been bagged.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 5.      <sup>50</sup>Ibid.      <sup>51</sup>Ibid.

appreciable number; beavers are abundant in all major streams of the county; weasels are present but seldom seen; rabbits are abundant; and bobcats are plentiful.<sup>52</sup> The other animals listed lack available data as to their population et cetera.

There are no alligators in the county but three types of lizards have been classified--the Fence Lizard, Sceloporus undulatus undulatus, the Ground Lizard, Leiolopisma unicolor, and the Blue-tailed Skink, Eumeces fasciatus.<sup>53</sup>

The leading towns in Simpson County are Magee, Mendenhall, D'Lo, Braxton, Weathersby and Pinola. The population census of 1962 states that the county has a population total of 20,454.<sup>54</sup> Of the latter figure, 7,194 are Negro.<sup>55</sup>

Paved highways serve the county with United States Highway 49 traversing the county from northwest to southeast, State Highway 20 from east to west, and State Highway 13 from northeast to south. These highways intersect at Mendenhall. The county's secondary road system is graveled to make the roads usable throughout the year.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Fannye A. Cook, Alligator and Lizards of Mississippi (Jackson: By the author, 1942), p. 18.

<sup>54</sup>Harry Hansen (ed.), The World Almanac and Book of Facts (New York: World Telegram Corporation and The Sun, 1961), p. 111.

<sup>55</sup>Ponder, Economic Development Program, p. 13.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 8

## CHAPTER II

### LIFE AND PASSING OF THE RED MAN

The origin of the American Indian is one of the most mystifying sagas known to man. Many speculative volumes have been compiled by adroit scholars; each desiring to perpetuate his point of view. Conjecture, by a train of ingenious reasonings and comparisons, has developed into probability, and finally almost settled down to certainty.<sup>1</sup>

Some early writers, nurtured on European mythology, have attempted to associate the American Indian with the lost continent of Atlantis. Others sought to prove their descent from ancient Egypt since many tribes were sun worshippers. Still other writers, mostly theologians, have tried to connect the Indians to the lost tribes of Israel.<sup>2</sup> But, on the whole, a supposition more plausible than any other is, that America was peopled from the northeastern part of Asia. Moreover, archaeological evidence estimates that man probably crossed the Bering Strait, in the extreme northern Pacific, from two to three thousand years to twenty-five thousand years ago.<sup>3</sup>

History does not record with exactness the date the Choctaw people settled in what is now Simpson County.<sup>4</sup> However, we do know that their

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Griswold Goodrich, History of the Indians of North and South America (Boston: Brown and Taggard, 1860), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>D'Arcy McNichle, They Came Here First (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1949), p. 22.

<sup>3</sup>Max Lerner, America As A Civilization (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Herbert C. Kinnard, Extension Agent, Choctaw Indian Agent, Philadelphia, Mississippi. Summaries of Lectures Given for Summer Conferences for Social Studies Teachers, Mississippi Southern College, 1952. Hereafter referred to as "Summaries of Lectures".

villages were distributed into three divisions: a northeastern, a western, and a southern. The Choctaw faction which roamed Simpson County composed the extreme southwest portion of the old Choctaw southern division. The latter was situated between the tributaries of Chicasaunay River in Jasper and Smith Counties. This particular area was known as Oklahonali or Six Towns.<sup>6</sup>

From an over-all perspective the Choctaws were the largest of all the Southwestern tribes,<sup>7</sup> and their dominion "extended from the lower Tombigbee in a northwesterly direction, to the Mississippi River;...they owned nearly all of southeastern Mississippi, much of the central portion of the State, and nine-tenths of the delta of the Yazoo, which embraces one of the most fertile and productive soil in the world".<sup>8</sup>

The center of this tribal land was Nanih Waiya a fifty foot high mound about twenty miles southeast of Louisville in the tip of Winston County,<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup>John R. Swanton, The Indian Tribes of North America, Bulletin 145 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1952), p. 181.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.; Frederick Webb Hodge, Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, Part II, Bulletin 30 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1910), p. 116; H. S. Halbert, "The Last Indian Council on Noxubee River," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Volume IV (Oxford: By the Society, 1901), p. 271; see also John K. Betteraworth, Mississippi: A History (Austin: The Steck Company, 1959), p. 25, for a map of this area. For a very technical study of the district divisions of the Choctaw nation see H. S. Halbert, "District Divisions of the Choctaw Nation", Report of the Alabama Historical Society, Volume I (Montgomery: By the Society, 1901), pp. 381 ff.

<sup>7</sup>Kinnard, "Summaries of Lectures," p. 16.

<sup>8</sup>Lowry and McGardle, A History of Mississippi, p. 250; see also Charles Etienne Arthur Gayarre', History of Louisiana (New Orleans: F. F. Hansell & Brothers Ltd., 1903), p. 350.

<sup>9</sup>Martha Nabers, "Nanah Waiya Presents Much Fact, Fantasy, Speculation," Winston County Journal (March 21, 1958).

and about 400 yards from the Neshoba County line.<sup>10</sup> Nanih Waiya occupies a unique position in Choctaw folklore in its intimate connection with both the creation legend and the migration legend of the Choctaw people, of which there are several versions. Perhaps the most accepted narrative is the version given below:

In ancient days the ancestors of the Choctaws and the Chickasaws lived in a far western country, under the rule of two brothers, named Chahta and Chikasa. In process of time, their population becoming very numerous, they found it difficult to procure substance in that land. Their prophets thereupon announced that far to the east was a country of fertile soil and full of game, where they could live in ease and plenty. The entire population resolved to make a journey eastward in search of that happy land. In order more easily to procure substance on their route, the people marched in several divisions of a day's journey apart. A great prophet marched at their head, bearing a pole, which, on camping at the close of each day he planted erect in the earth, in front of the camp. Every morning the pole was always seen leaning in the direction they were to travel that day. After the lapse of many moons they arrived one day at Nanih Waiya. The prophet planted his pole at the base of the mound. The next morning the pole was seen standing erect and stationary. This was interpreted as an omen from the Great Spirit that the long sought-for land was at last found. It so happened, the very day that the party camped at Nanih Waiya that a party under Chikasa crossed the creek and camped on its east side. That night a great rain fell, and it rained several days. In consequence of this all the low lands were inundated, and Nanih Waiya Creek and other tributaries of Pearl River were rendered impassable.

After the subsidence of the waters, messengers were sent across the creek to bid Chikasa's party return, as the oracular pole had proclaimed that the long sought-for land was found and the mound was the center of the land. Chikasa's party, however, regardless of the weather, had proceeded on their journey, and the rain having washed all traces of their march from off the grass, the messengers were unable to follow them up and so returned to camp. Meanwhile, the other divisions in the rear arrived at Nanih Waiya, and learned that here was

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<sup>10</sup>Henry S. Halbert, "Nanih Waiya, the Sacred Mound of the Choctaws", Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Volume II (Oxford: By the Society, 1901), p. 223. Nanih waiya is located approximately 92 miles from Mendenhall, the county seat of Simpson County.

the center of their new home, their long pilgrimage was at last finished. Chikasa's party, after their separation from their brethren under Chakta, moved on to the Tombigbee, and eventually became a separate nationality. In this way the Choctaws and the Chickasaws became two separate, though kindred nations.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, from "the hill of origins" the Choctaws scattered to other parts of the country and formed their respective communities.<sup>12</sup>

The Six Towns Choctaw were differentiated from the other two geographical divisions by variations of cultural concepts and speech.<sup>13</sup> Possibly, the latter jargon was called "Mobilian" which was a popular linguistic trait prevalent among the Choctaws in this area.<sup>14</sup> These differences, however, are so minute that they have not been considered worthy of special attention.

Of the seventeen villages associated with the Six Towns division, fifteen have been located. None of these villages have been classified in Simpson County.<sup>15</sup> However, the following places are considered likely locations for villages or settlements because of the artifacts, peculiar to Indians, which have been found; namely, at the mound three miles north of D'Lo; at the

<sup>11</sup>Halbert, "Nanah Waiya, The Sacred Mound of the Choctaws," pp. 28-29. The first description of Nanah Waiya is found in Adair's American Indians--James Adair, The History of the American Indians (London: For E. and C. Dilly, 1775), p. 378. This information was given to Mr. H. S. Halbert by Reverend Peter Folsom, a Choctaw from the nation west, who was employed in 1882 by the Baptist of Mississippi to serve as a missionary among the Mississippi Choctaws. This account was related to Folsom by his father in 1833.

<sup>12</sup>See H. S. Halbert, "The Choctaw Creation Legend," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Volume IV (Oxford: By the Society, 1901), p. 267-70; Gideon Lincoum, "Choctaw Traditions About Their Settlement in Mississippi and The Origin of Their Mounds," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Volume VIII (Oxford: By the Society, 1904), pp. 521-42.

<sup>13</sup>John R. Swanton, Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians, Bulletin 103 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1931), pp. 55-6.

<sup>14</sup>Paul S. Martin, George I. Quimby, and Donald Collier, Indians Before Columbus (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 63.

<sup>15</sup>Swanton, Indian Tribes of North America, p. 181.

mound approximately one mile southwest of Mendenhall; at the mound on Frank Grantham's property about two miles west of Pinola; on the Lonnie M. Lee farm five miles southwest of Pinola; and on the W. C. Millis farm near Merit.<sup>16</sup> Other locations are said to have been sites of Indian villages or camps but little is known to substantiate these claims.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, chipped stone arrowheads, spear points, pottery, tomahawks, and bird points have been found in different areas of the county which indicates to some extent, that Choctaws inhabited the area.<sup>18</sup>

Another consideration of importance is that, as a whole, "the physical type and the skeletal material collected from the region formerly occupied by the Choctaw is scanty and of no great value. This is largely due to climatic conditions in the South, which are unfavorable to the preservation of skeletal remains."<sup>19</sup> This along with cultivation of areas previously inhabited by Choctaws helps to explain why relics and similar objects are negligible in this county.

An important Indian trail crossed Pearl River in the southwest corner of the county. This path is referred to by several sources as the Three-chopped Way. Others say that it was the Matches to Homer Creek road. At any rate, much hearsay evidence is present concerning its actual route. From

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<sup>16</sup>Each of these sites, except the mound three miles north of D'lo, has been examined. Many individuals vouch to its authenticity, but hesitate to indicate its actual location. The only other tangible item which adds credibility to Indian occupation in the areas mentioned above was a chipped arrowhead obtained from Mr. W. C. Millis, Merit, Mississippi, March 31, 1962.

<sup>17</sup>Numerous interviews with county residents; Melendon, "History of Simpson County," p. 19.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Henry B. Collins, Jr., "Anthropometric Observations on the Choctaw," American Journal of Physical Anthropology, Volume VIII (Washington: American Journal of Physical Anthropology, 1925), p. 425.



the east central side of the county where the Three-chopped Way extended, state land office records indicate that a path is recorded. This road is referred to as McClary Path which dissipated approximately one mile northeast of Riata. Positive evidence also states that this road passed southwesterly from White Oak Springs on the old Choctaw Boundary line. As to how or when this road disappeared, no one seems to know. Nevertheless, its presence is recorded on survey maps till 1821. However, no account is found in the official township plats or survey field notes from 1811 to 1821, except the route from White Oak Springs to the outskirts of Riata. Judging from the available evidence it probably entered the county at the lower southwest corner at Pearl River; followed a northeasterly route past old Westville by Riata, traversing Highway 49 between Weathersby and Sanatorium, and then proceeding easterly, culminating eventually at an Old Trading Post in what today is Clarke County.<sup>20</sup>

In the mid 1710's William Bartram, the American botanist, after traveling through Choctaw land, described them as follows:

...The males referring to the Choctaw as well as other Indians in the area traveled are tall, erect, and moderately robust; their limbs well shaped, so as generally to form a

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<sup>20</sup> Interview, Mr. Jack Jones, State Highway Designer, E. T. Woolfolk Building, Jackson, Mississippi, June 18, 1962; Official Township Plats from the State Land Office; and Survey field notes from 1811 to 1821. See original surveys found in records 2-C, 5-C, 7-C, and 9-C. These original maps are mounted on muslin and can be examined at the State Land Office. For additional information pertaining to this route see Early Indian and Spanish Trails: A Part of the Park, Parkway, and Recreational Area Study for Mississippi, (Jackson: United States Work Projects Administration, 1940), pp. 15-16; J. M. Kennedy, "History of Jasper County," Jasper County News (January 3, 1956), page number et cetera is not recorded--subject folder--Jasper County History, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi; Dunbar, Howland, Mississippi, Volume 2, L-2, (Atlanta: Southern Historical Publishing Association, 1907), pp. 568-69; Peter Joseph Hamilton, Colonial Mobile (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1910), pp. 380-81; John W. Monette, Monette's Valley of the Mississippi, Volume 2, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1848), pp. 380-81; J. F. H. Claiborne, Mississippi, as a Province, Territory and State, Volume 1 (Jackson: Power & Barksdale Publishers and Printers, 1880), p. 263, Note maps.

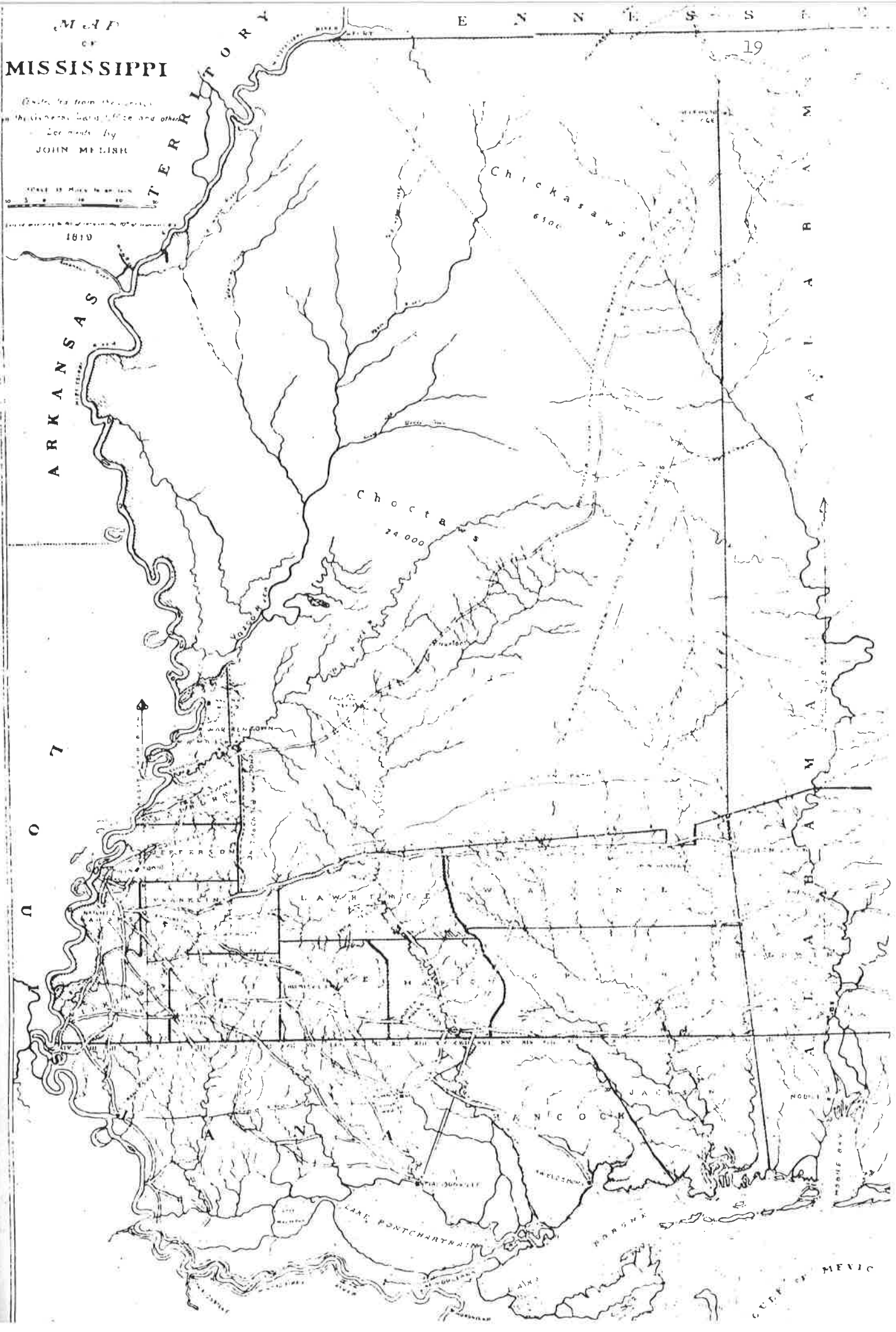


# MISSISSIPPI

Drawn by from the surveys  
of the Surveyors General and others  
See notes by  
JOHN MELISH



1819



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GULF OF MEXIC

perfect human figure; their features regular, and countenance open, dignified, and placid, yet the forehead and brow so formed as to strike you instantly with heroism and bravery; the eye, though rather small, yet active and full of fire; the iris always black, and the nose commonly inclined to the aquiline.

Their countenance and actions exhibit an air of magnanimity, superiority, and independence.

Their complexion of a reddish-brown or copper color; their hair long, lank, coarse, and black as a raven, and reflecting the like lustre at different exposures to the light.<sup>21</sup>

Another source stated that the Choctaw was slender in form and very active with graceful hands and feet; but very few could swim.<sup>22</sup> As a whole, "the men were handsome and well proportioned, but the women showed a tendency to be stout in later life. In their primitive state, deformity was known".<sup>23</sup>

The Choctaw were the most outstanding agriculturalists in the Southeast.<sup>24</sup> Their hunting areas were proportionately restricted and remained in close proximity to their respective towns. Small game, particularly squirrels, played a large part in their economy, but these were hunted mostly in the summer months.<sup>25</sup> In short, their living was from hunting, fishing and tilling small plots of land.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>William Bartram, Bartram's Travels (Philadelphia: James and Johnson, 1791), p. 481; Bernard Shipp, The Indians and Antiquities of America (Philadelphia: Sherman & Company, 1897), p. 260.

<sup>22</sup>Frank L. Riley, School History of Mississippi (Richmond: B. F. Johnson Publishing Company, 1909), p. 9; Angie Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw People (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), p. 23.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.; Adair, History of the American Indians, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup>Ruth Murray Underhill, Red Man's America: A History of Indians in the United States (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 46.

<sup>25</sup>John R. Swanton, The Indians of the Southeastern United States (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 264.

<sup>26</sup>Kinnard, "Summaries of Lectures," p. 16.

Their government was more of self-rule than any of the other tribes. It consisted of town rulers, district rulers, and the council of chiefs.<sup>27</sup> Councils of the district were called by its Head Chief, and Councils of the entire Nation by the Head Chiefs acting in concert.<sup>28</sup> The Council usually dealt with such matters of public policy as peace, war, or foreign relations, and more than likely served as a judicial body.<sup>29</sup> The Councils were distinguished with high decorum, and eloquent orations by its members.<sup>30</sup> Although the Head Chiefs had considerable influence the final decisions were made by the assembly.<sup>31</sup>

A description of their dwelling's follows:

They the Choctaws lived in houses of logs, but very comfortable.... Their houses consisted generally of two rooms, both of which were used for every domestic purpose-- cooking, eating, living and sleeping; nor was their furniture disproportionate with that of the dwelling-- for the sitting room, a stool or two; for the kitchen, a pot or kettle, two or three tin cups, a large and commodious wooden bowl, and a horn spoon, constituted about the ultimatum-- 'twas all they needed, all they wanted, and with it they were perfectly contented and supremely happy.<sup>32</sup>

The Choctaws were sun-worshippers. They regarded the sun as the essence of the Great Spirit. And as the Sun-God warms, animates and vivifies everything, he is the Master or Father of Life, or, to use the Choctaw expression, "Aba Inki," "the father above". In like manner, according to their belief, as every earthly thing came originally from the earth, she is the mother of creation.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 21.

<sup>29</sup>Swanton, Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians, p. 95.

<sup>30</sup>Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 21.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>H. B. Cushman, History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Natchez Indians (Greenville: Headling Printing Company, 1899), p. 231.

<sup>33</sup>Halbert, "Sacred Mound of the Choctaws," p. 226

Another characteristic distinctly Choctaw was the custom of flattening the heads of their young. This was accomplished by tying bags of mud around the temples or frontal lobes and by placing their young in wooden cradles with special structures extending from the sides which kept the infant's forehead in a slanted position. This custom supposedly added to the physical attractiveness of the individual.<sup>34</sup>

Both sexes in the Choctaw tribe allowed their hair to grow long, and one custom wholly peculiar to the Six Towns seems to have been the practice of tattooing blue marks at the corners of the mouth, and were referred to by some as "Bluemouths".<sup>35</sup>

The ancient Choctaw mortuary process was quite different and of such a striking character that it has often been described. One account stated:

...if a doctor declared the patient could not recover, he was killed without more ado. The house of the deceased was burned along with the provisions it contained or the latter were sold at a low price. The corpse was first laid on a scaffold near the house along with food and property, the skull being painted red. The bier was made of cypress bark and the body covered with bear or bison skins or a woollen blanket. The scaffold was decorated and the poles painted red if the deceased were a man of note. A small bark fire was lighted under the scaffold four days in succession. The mourners anciently had their hair entirely cut off but later on a single lock was treated in this manner. At any rate the women left their hair disheveled, paid mourners were utilized, and there were wallings three times a day--at sunrise, at noon, and at sunset. Benches were made near the scaffold for the mourners, and there was a fence or mud wall about the scaffold itself. After the flesh was thought to be sufficiently decayed, the bone picker or "buzzard man" of the particular canton appointed a day, and in the presence of the mourners, who meanwhile sang lugubrious songs, he removed the flesh from the bones and restored the latter to the family, who put them into a chest made of bones and splints or a hamper and took it in procession to the cantonal mortuary house....Early in November there was a

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<sup>34</sup>Adair, History of the American Indians, p. 284; Hodge, American Indians North of Mexico, Part 1, p. 286; Bartram, Bartram's Travels, p. 515; Swanton, Indians of the Southeastern United States, p. 539.

<sup>35</sup>Swanton, Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians, p. 57.

great feast to the dead when the cantonal ossuary was visited by the relatives of those whose bones had been laid away there.... At these feasts each moiety cried and danced alternately for the deceased belonging to the other, and each piled up and buried the bones of the opposites.<sup>36</sup>

Their peaceful agricultural endeavors allowed the Choctaws much time for play. In fact, of all Mississippi Indians, they were probably the ones most interested in dances and games.<sup>37</sup> Of the latter activities, their ball game, ientaboli, was most popular.<sup>38</sup> It is likely that the Boggan residence was a playground for Choctaw games.<sup>39</sup> Although authoritative information is non-existent, this region would provide a logical meeting site for the tribe.

Before examining the problems of Indian removal and the difficulties over land ownership it will be well to note the alien claims of European monarchs who theoretically, or in some cases, allegedly, owned the territory in which Simpson County is presently located.

Due to methods of exploration and its location, white men, doubtless, did not penetrate the area embracing Simpson County for more than two hundred years after Columbus' memorable voyage. The closest contact this area had with the early explorers was the expedition of DeSoto who came no closer than fifty miles from this county. It is possible that adventurous traders from coastal settlements entered the area, but there is no record to substantiate

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<sup>36</sup>Swanton, Indians of the Southeast United States, p. 726. See also H. S. Halbert, "Funeral Customs of the Mississippi Choctaws," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Volume III (Oxford: By the Society, 1900), pp. 353-66.

<sup>37</sup>Betterworth, Mississippi: A History, p. 33.

<sup>38</sup>Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup>Interview, Mrs. Gussie May Boggan, D'Lo, Mississippi, December 19, 1961.

this conjecture.<sup>40</sup>

Although DeSoto was the first man to officially mention the Choctaws, and, perhaps, the first white man to conduct an expedition within the immediate vicinity of what is now Simpson County, the Frenchman, Robert Cavalier de La Salle, in 1622, was the region's first claimant.<sup>41</sup>

Early in the eighteenth century the ownership of this vast area was contested by England. Furthermore, in the year 1732 George II created the province of Georgia which boasted an almost infinite western boundary; terminating on the Pacific coast. Thus in 1732 most of the present state of Mississippi and the area now in Simpson County was claimed by England as well as France.<sup>42</sup>

For the next thirty-one years a bitter contest issued between England and France over the territory in question. However, this struggle for supremacy in North America had its end February 10, 1763. On that day the French and Indian War was drawn to a close by the Treaty of Paris and France lost all her possessions east of the Mississippi except the Island of Orleans in Louisiana.<sup>43</sup> Thus following decades of hostilities, the region comprising Simpson County became a part of Great Britain.

Eighteen years later in 1781, while the Thirteen Colonies unified their effort during the American Revolution for independence from England, Spain

<sup>40</sup>McLendon, "History of Simpson County," p. 29. For a contemporaneous map of the DeSoto wanderings which was apparently prepared by one of his followers note Frederick W. Hodge and Theodore H. Lewis, Spanish Explorers in the Southern United States, 1528-1543 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), p. 132. In Pearl V. Guyton's, Our Mississippi (Austin: The Steck Company, 1957), p. 27, DeSoto is routed directly through Simpson County.

<sup>41</sup>Frederick Webb Hodge, Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, Part I (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1907), p. 288; Bettsworth, Mississippi: A History, p. 57.

<sup>42</sup>McLendon, "History of Simpson County," p. 31; Rowland, Mississippi the Heart of the South, Volume I, pp 237-38; Bettsworth, Mississippi: A History, p. 62.

<sup>43</sup>Rowland, Mississippi, the Heart of the South, Volume I, p. 253.



having entered the colonial cause in 1775, seized control of all of West Florida.<sup>44</sup>

Later, following the terms of the second Treaty of Paris, which ended the Revolutionary War in 1783, America was formally recognized as an independent country, and Spain obtained West Florida.<sup>45</sup>

Immediately after signing the treaty, a series of boundary disputes erupted between the new United States government and Spain. Spain claimed ownership of all lands up to the 32nd parallel<sup>46</sup> which included the southern half of Mississippi as well as approximately three-fourths of the area under consideration.

For the next two years Spain encouraged immigration into the disputed northern section of Florida. But this was to no avail. Moreover, as time progressed, Spain's army and navy had grown weak, and she began to realize that her overall efforts were on the wane. Finally, when it began to look as though the United States might declare war against her, she yielded and signed the Treaty of San Lorenzo el Real on October 27, 1795.<sup>47</sup>

The terms of this agreement were simple and direct. It was agreed, in part, and most importantly, that Spain would cede all lands north of the 31st parallel.<sup>48</sup> With this treaty the area comprising Simpson County became legal territory of the United States. On April 7, 1798, the territorial government of Mississippi was created by an act of Congress<sup>49</sup> and the problems of Indian removal and state development enter the story to become paramount considerations in the history of Simpson County.

Doubtless, the most important factor in territorial Mississippi, following

<sup>44</sup>Guyton, Our Mississippi, p. 64.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 67-68. <sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 68. <sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 68; 78.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 78. <sup>49</sup>Bettsworth, Mississippi: A History, p. 121.

the Treaty of San Lorenzo, was land. It was land that brought settlers flocking into the rich, fertile acres of territorial Mississippi; and it was land that eventually sealed the doom for thousands of Indians who were pressured from all sides to part with their ancestral homes.

In 1805, Choctaw tribal leaders concluded the first treaty that opened a large tract of land in Alabama and Mississippi to the government for white settlement--the Treaty of Mount Dexter.<sup>50</sup> This cession extended to the southern boundary of Simpson County.<sup>51</sup>

Following the Treaty of Mount Dexter which perpetuated the northern boundary lines of Wayne, Jones, Covington, Lawrence Counties and the northeast line of Franklin County,<sup>52</sup> Mississippi, in 1817, assumed statehood. However, it was not until the cession of Doak's Stand in 1820 that Simpson became a part of Mississippi and officially opened for settlement. As Dunbar Rowland wrote:

...During this negotiation the Choctaws ... ceded to the United States nearly 5,500,000 acres of land in the western and central part of the State, or the southern portion of the Yazoo delta.

Thus that great and fertile tract of land with its marvelous future was brought under the ownership and exploration of the white race.

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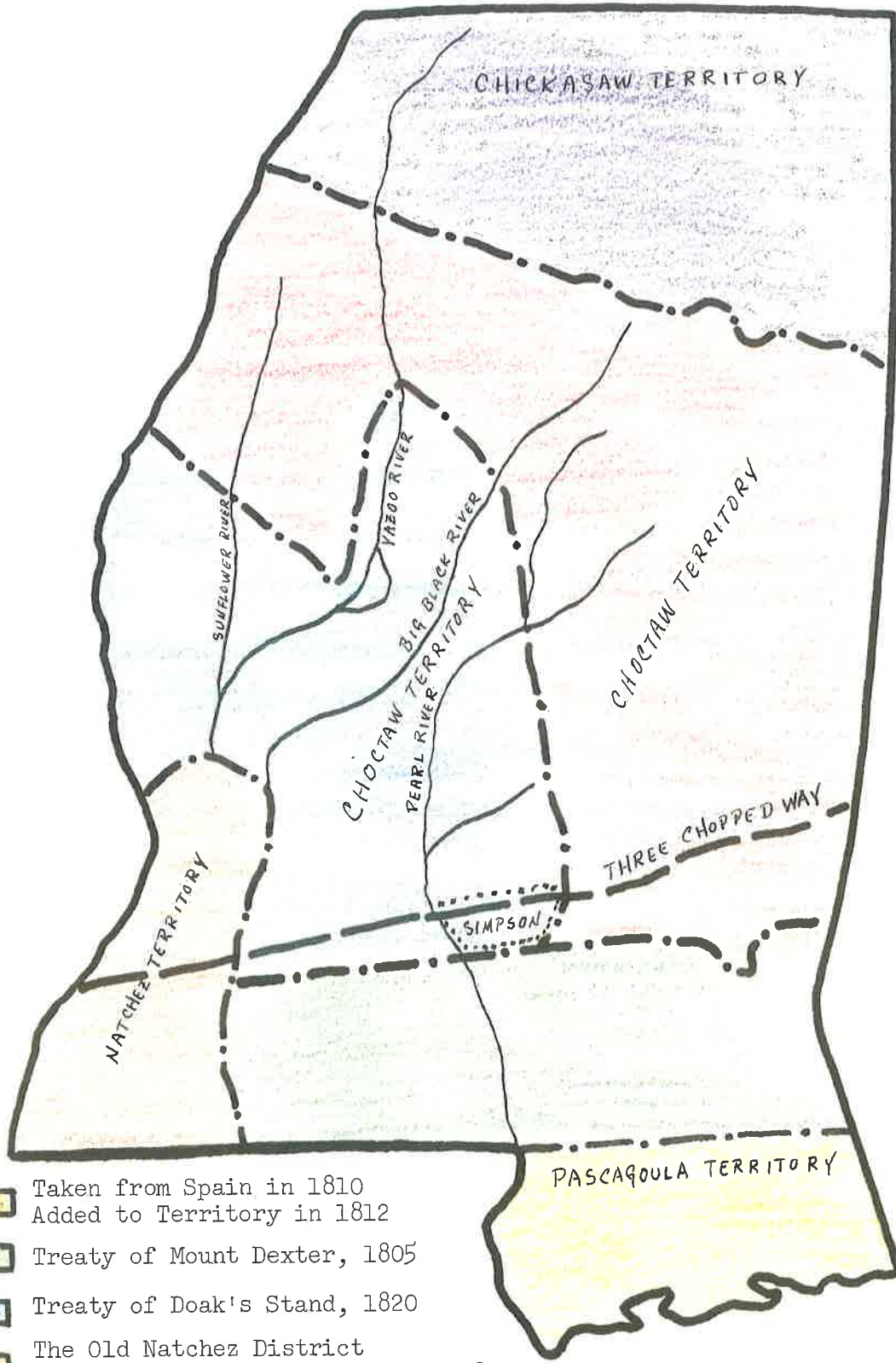
<sup>50</sup>John William Wade, "The Removal of the Mississippi Choctaws," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Volume VIII (Oxford: By the Society, 1904), p. 398; Indian Treaties and Laws and Regulations Relating to Indian Affairs, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1826), pp. 160-64; Rowland, Mississippi, Volume II, p. 816; Irvin M. Peithmann, The Choctaw Indians of Mississippi (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1961), p. 104; A. Hutchinson, Code of Mississippi: An Analytical Compilation of the Public and General Statutes of the Territory and State, From 1798 to 1848, (Jackson: Price and Fall, State Printers, 1848), p. 119.









<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 120; Arthur H. De Rosier, "Negotiations For the Removal of the Choctaw: United States Policies of 1820 and 1830," The Chronicles of Oklahoma History, Volume 38, (Spring, 1960). Detached copy available in the Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>52</sup>Rowland, Mississippi, Volume II, p. 816.



Indian Cessions, 1801-1832



-  Taken from Spain in 1810
-  Added to Territory in 1812
-  Treaty of Mount Dexter, 1805
-  Treaty of Doak's Stand, 1820
-  The Old Natchez District
-  Ceded by Treaty of Fort Adams, 1801
-  Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, 1830
-  Treaty of Pontotoc, 1832

The...cession comprised all the lands, except a few reservations, which lay west of a line drawn northwardly from a point on the former Choctaw boundary near the southeast corner of Simpson County to the source of Black Creek, a tributary of the Yazoo; thence westward to its mouth, and from that point by a direct line, to the Mississippi River one mile below the mouth of the Arkansas.

The New Purchase was subsequently erected into the counties of Hinds, Simpson, Copiah, Rankin, Madison, Bolivar, Yazoo, Washington and Holmes, and was rapidly filled up with new settlers of Anglo-Saxon origin from the older communities of the Southern States and from the southern counties of Mississippi.<sup>53</sup>

By the above treaties the Choctaw had been pushed from their homes; no longer free to roam the land of their forefathers. Federal policy during the preceding twenty years, "though unmarred by deceit, violence, and bloodshed that characterized later relations with the Indians of the far west, had nonetheless effectively undermined the power of the Choctaws to resist the advancing white frontier".<sup>54</sup> By the mid-1830's most had emigrated west of the Mississippi River, and the land of the Choctaw was opened for settlement.

Thus after one hundred and seventy-seven years of European entanglements, Indian controversies and diplomatic negotiations, Simpson County began its era of growth.

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<sup>53</sup>Rowland, Mississippi, the Heart of the South, Volume I, p. 509-10.

<sup>54</sup>Martin Abbott, "Indian Policy and Management in the Mississippi Territory, 1798-1817," The Journal of Mississippi History, Volume XIV (Jackson: Mississippi Historical Society, 1952), p. 169.

## CHAPTER III

### THE COUNTY EMERGES

Following the creation of Mississippi in 1817 and interim between the treaties of Mount Dexter and Deak's Stand, Simpson County was theoretically a portion of Washington County. Moreover, prior to its final division Simpson County had been a part of two other counties, Hinds and Copiah.<sup>1</sup>

Simpson County was established January 23, 1824, from "all that portion of Copiah county east of Pearl River".<sup>2</sup> It was named in memory of the Honorable Josiah Simpson<sup>3</sup> who served as territorial judge of Mississippi from 1812 to 1817.<sup>4</sup> Judge Simpson was a native of Pennsylvania, and was educated at Princeton college. He resided at a place called Green Hill, in the vicinity of Natchez. As J. F. H. Claiborne said, "Nature had given him a vigorous intellect, and being a close student and very methodical in his habits, with great purity of character and simplicity of manners, he was fully equal to the high station to which he had been called".<sup>5</sup> His deep knowledge of law, rectitude

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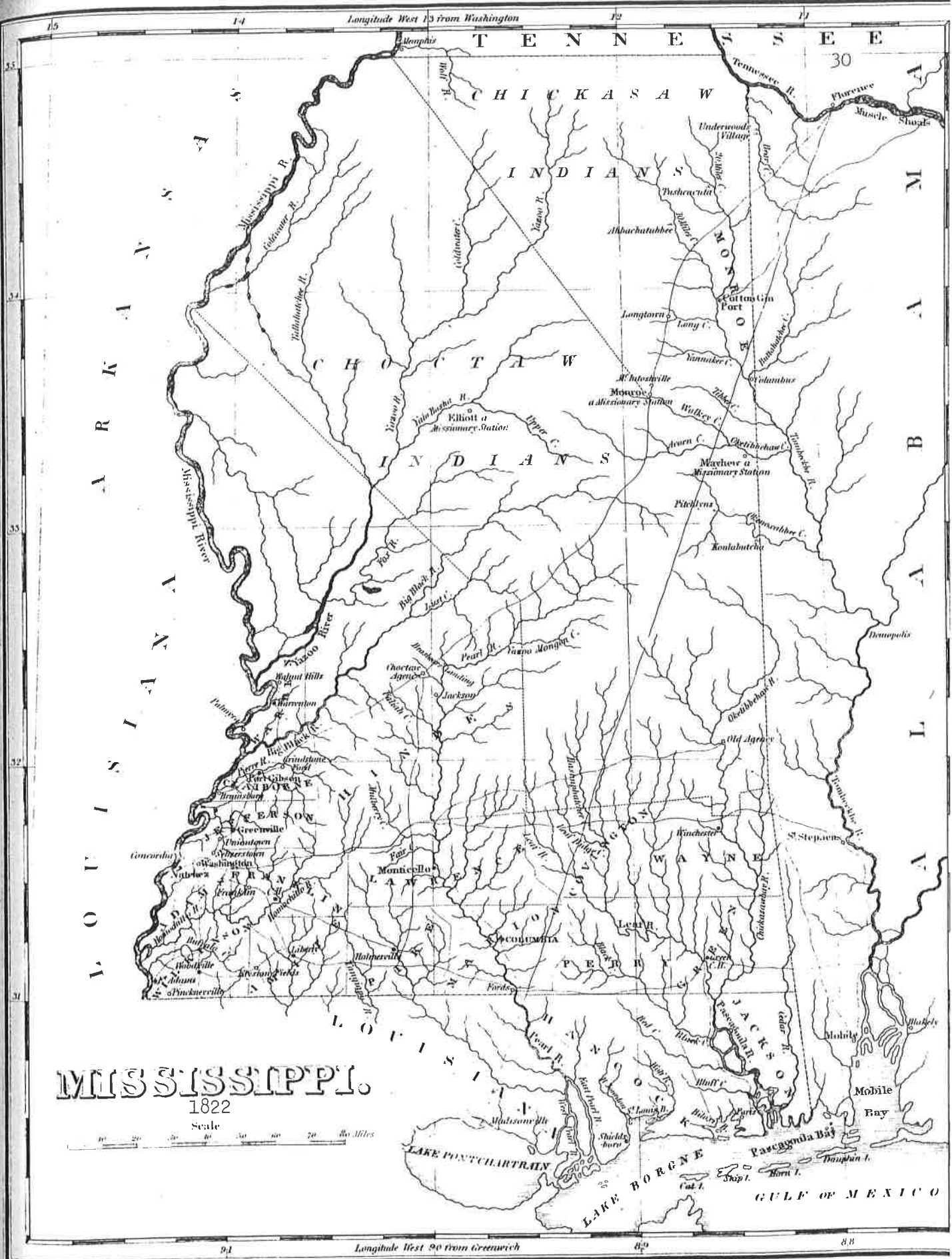
<sup>1</sup>Eron O. Rowland, History of Hinds County Mississippi (Jackson: Jones Printing Company, 1922), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>A. Hutchinson, Code of Mississippi: An Analytical Compilation of the Public and General Statutes of the Territory and State from, 1798 to 1848 (Jackson: Price and Fall, State Printers, 1848), p. 79; Laws of the State of Mississippi, 1824, p. 87; Rena Humphreys and Marie Owen, Index of Mississippi Session Acts 1817-1865 (Jackson: Tucker Printing House, 1937), pp. 282-83.

<sup>3</sup>Henry Gannett, "The Origin of Certain Place Names in the State of Mississippi, Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, VI (1902), p. 347.

<sup>4</sup>Rowland, Mississippi, Volume 1-3, pp. 667-68.

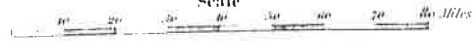
<sup>5</sup>Ibid.; Claiborne, Mississippi As a Province, Territory and State, p. 352.



# MISSISSIPPI.

1822

Scale



Longitude West 15 from Washington

Longitude West 90 from Greenwich

CHICKASAW  
INDIANS  
CHOCCTAW  
INDIANS  
MOBILE  
TOMBIGBE  
WAYNE  
LEACH  
PERRY  
JACKSON  
LAWRENCE  
MONTGOMERY  
ADAMS  
BALDWIN  
BOLIVAR  
CALHOUN  
CARROLL  
CLAY  
COCHRAN  
DEKALB  
FRANKLIN  
GIBSON  
HAMILTON  
HARRISON  
HEWITT  
HOOPER  
JACKSON  
JEFFERSON  
LINCOLN  
LITTLE  
MADISON  
MARSHALL  
MERCER  
MONROE  
MURPHY  
NASSAU  
NEAL  
OLIVER  
OSBORN  
PERRY  
PIPER  
POLK  
RANKIN  
REYNOLDS  
SHERBURN  
SIMPSON  
STANLEY  
TALBOT  
TAYLOR  
TERRY  
TOWNSEND  
UNION  
WALKER  
WASHINGTON  
WATKINS  
WEBB  
WELLS  
WHITE  
WILKINSON  
WOODRUFF  
YAZOO

and unpretentious manner impressed many, and "no man was more beloved".<sup>6</sup> Most of Judge Simpson's activities as a jurist in Territorial Mississippi are unknown. Moreover, his reasons for emigrating to this region are also uncertain.

It is known, however, that the motives for migration from the old, well-established communities of the United States into the fresh lands of Mississippi varied with individuals. Doubtless, extreme debt, unproductive fields, breach of the law, complexities of family and marital relations, personal tragedy, opportunity, and love for adventure influenced immigration. But the motive most common to the majority was the acquisition of new lands open for purchase and occupation.<sup>7</sup>

Most of the early pioneers who settled Simpson County emigrated from Wayne County and the settlements on the Mississippi River near Natchez, where they had temporarily located on their exit principally from the Carolinas and Tennessee.<sup>8</sup>

Other settlers were reaching this part of the territory by way of the Federal Road which extended from the Atlantic coast through Alabama and into Mississippi. This road branched into what is referred to by Thomas P. Abernathy on his map of Territorial Mississippi as McClarey's Path previously cited. Additional pioneers came in "from the north along the road leading from the Valley of Virginia to Knoxville, and then to Nashville, where they picked up the old Indian trail leading to Natchez on the lower Mississippi".<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.; Dunbar Rowland, Courts, Judges and Lawyers of Mississippi, Volume I (Jackson: By the Author, 1935), p. 29.

<sup>7</sup>Frank Lawrence Owsley, Plain Folk of the Old South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), pp. 23-4.

<sup>8</sup>Goodspeed's Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi, Volume I (Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1891), p. 211.

<sup>9</sup>Thomas P. Abernathy, The South in the New Nation 1789-1819 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1961), p. 462-63; 467.



No records are available to ascertain with exactness the first actual settlement in the county. However, scattered settlements were recorded in 1813 when the area now embracing Simpson County was sectionalized by surveyors.<sup>10</sup>

One of the oldest known structures intact today is a roughly squared smokehouse on the R. T. Gardner property about one mile south of Weathersby. This smokehouse was originally part of an old hewn-log dwelling constructed sometime before 1820. One of its early occupants, Mrs. Lottie Williams reportedly emigrated to this county in 1822 at the age of thirteen and stated that this building had been built some years before that time.<sup>11</sup>

Approximately four miles north of Magee off State Highway 514 stands the old Turner home. The house, constructed in 1826, is made of hand-hewn logs, and on its right side the original shutters are still visible. It is built off the ground, has a lengthy front porch and gives the impression of being well preserved, comparatively speaking, in spite of its years.<sup>12</sup> The Turner home and the Williamson homestead cited above were among the first permanent dwellings in the county.

Among the first residents of Simpson County, according to Lowry and McCardle was:

...a man by the name of Vaughn, for whom Vaughn's creek was named. He was soon followed by the Briggs family, and by James McDuff, a man of thrift and energy who built the first mill on Vaughn's Creek; Jacob Keen and Elder James Powell, a highly esteemed Baptist minister, lived near the location made by Mr. Vaughn; Beasley Cambell was an elder settler, for whom Campbell's

<sup>10</sup>Hutton et al., Soil Survey, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup>McLendon, "History of Simpson County," p. 47.

<sup>12</sup>See Simpson County subject folder--Old Homes, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. The most practicable route to this home is as follows: travel north from Magee on highway 514; pass the New Bethlehem Baptist Church; take the first dirt road to the left and proceed approximately a quarter of a mile. The homestead is about thirty-five yards to the right.

Creek now supports a thrifty and industrious population, among whom are some of the descendants of the early settlers notably, the Sinclairs, Colquhouns and others; Pepkin Smith was among the first settlers on Silver Creek approximately 1821, and... Prior to the organization of the county John Berry, ...settled on Silver Creek, also James Bogan, Reverend Francis Walker, W. T. Brown, Owen Weathersby and Stephen Gardner; Phillip Magee, ... located at an early day on Good Water Creek; John Price, Benjamin Thornton, Archie McCulloch, D. A. McLaurin, J. C. McLaurin, and James Lee and the McIntypes were among the first settlers on Bowie. John Graves, Joseph Carr, Duncan McLaurin and Jacob Grubbs were early settlers on Skiffa Creek. John McElhany, Eggleston Overby, father of Peter Overby and... George W. O. Overby and Abram Cook, opened farms on Rocky Creek.

The first settlers on Strong River were David Bishop; ... John Phillips, the Alfordes, David Quilon, James McCaskill, James Taylor, the Lees, William May, ... James May, Bedford Gates, Rheasa Kennedy; the Ponders, the Laytons, David Womack, Brewster Jayne, L. C. Gibson, T. J. Perkins, Lewis Harper, Alex. McNair...; Peter Hubbard, Eli Smith, John Tullis, William Hayes, Asa Miller, Nathaniel Goff and Dempsey Touchstone... Other settlers were John Richardson, the Barlows, Barbers, Johnathan Bass, Edward Brown, Thomas Hilton and... Stephen Tullis.<sup>13</sup>

Other early settlers were the Bells, Bridges, Deers, Banks, Chandlers, Newsoms, Suttons, Fortenberrys, Mangums, Stubbs, Wilkinsons, Turners, Williamsons, Everetts, Sullivans, Halls, Kellys, Mahaffey, Weekes, Green Penn, John Dunford, J. B. Mendenhall, the Fultons, Youngs, and Bishops.<sup>14</sup>

Generally speaking, between 1824 and 1830, the county was wild and sparsely settled. The following account by Ruben Davis which describes the conditions in early Mississippi is applicable to Simpson County:

Every man did what was right in his own eyes, but in spite of general recklessness and lawlessness, there was a rough code of honor and honesty which was rarely broken. The settlers lived a life of great toil and many privations, but they were eminently social, kindly, and friendly. They practiced the most

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<sup>13</sup>Lowry and McCordle, A History of Mississippi, pp. 569ff.

<sup>14</sup>Goodspeed's Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi, Volume I, p. 211. See also Thomas B. Mendenhall, "Historical and Traditional Reminiscences of Simpson County and Its Early Settlers," The Westville News (December 1, 1898), Ibid., (August 15, 1889).

cordial and unstinted hospitality; and in case of sorrow or sickness, or need of any kind, there was no limit to the ready service rendered by neighbors and friends. In those days, people who lived many miles apart counted themselves as neighbors, and even strangers soon became friends. There was this great advantage that, while none were very wealthy, few were poor enough to suffer actual want.<sup>15</sup>

The first houses in Simpson County were log cabins with dirt or "punchcon" floors, covered with clap-board shingles, and the spaces between the logs being "chinked".<sup>16</sup> The chimneys were made of sticks cemented and plastered with mortar made of clay and occasionally large open fireplaces would be "nearly the same dimensions at the end of the house, so that the whole family in cold winter months could be comfortably seated in front of the fire".<sup>17</sup> The loft was reached by a ladder which served as a stairway in one corner of the room.<sup>18</sup> The open door and broad chimney afforded some light during the day, and a roaring fire or a tallow candle furnished light by night.<sup>19</sup> The beds, tables, stools, and chairs as well as a wall lined with pegs upon which to hang things were all made of wood.<sup>20</sup> The cooking and eating utensils of the ordinary folk were a few iron pots, and stoves were unknown. However, dirt ovens, which were built out in the yard, were greatly utilized.<sup>21</sup>

Besides the dirt oven, the cooks had another useful implement which was

<sup>15</sup> Ruben Davis, Recollections of Mississippi and Mississippians (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891), pp. 3-4.

<sup>16</sup> Jesse L. Boyd, A Popular History of the Baptist in Mississippi (Jackson: By the Baptist Press, 1930), p. 66.

<sup>17</sup> "Historical and Traditional Reminiscences of Simpson County and Its Early Settlers" Simpson County News (April 14, 1921). Subsequently referred to as "Mendenhall Reminiscences".

<sup>18</sup> Boyd, A Popular History of the Baptist in Mississippi, p. 66.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Owsley, Plain Folk of the Old South, p. 35.

<sup>21</sup> Boyd, A Popular History of the Baptist in Mississippi, p. 66; "Mendenhall Reminiscences" (April 14, 1921), p. 1.



called a "crane" or "pot rack" which was made of iron in shape of a square and fastened to the wall or chimney on the side of the fire place, and swung on a pivot so that the pots or vessels that were used to cook in could be filled or emptied by standing on the floor without stooping over the fire, and when desired, could be returned or removed from over the fire".<sup>22</sup>

Because this section of the state was one great pasturage when received from the Indians,<sup>23</sup> the first settlers engaged almost exclusively in raising stock. The country had an abundant supply of running water and a luxuriant growth of grass and cane on which the cattle grazed the entire year without being fed.<sup>24</sup>

Another factor which greatly retarded early agricultural pursuits was inadequate transportation facilities. The latter being confined to ox teams and wagons.<sup>25</sup> In addition, the closest markets were either Mobile or Natchez, approximately 100 miles away, which imposed considerable inconveniences.<sup>26</sup>

Besides crude and primitive means of travel, communication with the outside world was slow and seldom.<sup>27</sup> The people lived practically alone "in the pine barrens of the interior".<sup>28</sup> There were no daily newspapers and as a whole the people were illiterate; they remained socially and politically

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>A. B. Hunt, Mississippi: Its Climate, Soil, Productions, and Agricultural Capabilities (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1883), p. 19.

<sup>24</sup>Goodspeed's Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi, Volume I, p. 211.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.; "Mendenhall Reminiscences," (April 14, 1921), p. 1.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Boyd, A Popular History of the Baptist in Mississippi, p. 63.

<sup>28</sup>Hack Swearingen, Early Life of George Poindexter: A Story of the First Southwest (New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1934), p. 37.

inarticulate.<sup>29</sup> Yet, these folk of the simple stock took their religion seriously. Family prayers, "camp meetings" and circuit riders were highly popular.<sup>30</sup>

As to what religious denomination first appeared in the county it is difficult to say. It is known that Methodism entered Territorial Mississippi as early as 1799,<sup>31</sup> and by 1806 circuit riders were traversing the wilderness in search of "lost souls".<sup>32</sup> Apparently the first Methodist minister to preach regularly in what is now Simpson County was Reverend Wiley Ledbetter, who, in the fall of 1818, was appointed pastor of the Whitesand Circuit in what today is Jefferson County but the circuit reached far beyond the headwaters of the creek. But what effect its influence had on Simpson County prior to 1830 is indeterminable.<sup>33</sup>

In 1827, the organization of the Sharon Presbyterian Church, in the southeast portion of the county denotes a group of settlers of that faith residing in this vicinity at that early date.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.; Boyd, A Popular History of Baptist in Mississippi, p. 63; Simpson County subject folder-Press, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi, p. 1; William Garrett Brown, The Lower South in American History (New York: Peter Smith, 1930), p. 42.

<sup>30</sup> Boyd, A Popular History of the Baptist in Mississippi, p. 68.

<sup>31</sup> John G. Jones, A Complete History of Methodism, Volume I (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1887), p. 17; Rowland, Mississippi, Volume II, p. 224.

<sup>32</sup> John G. Jones, A Concise History of the Introduction of Protestantism into Mississippi and the Southwest (St. Louis: P. M. Pinckard, 1866), p. 103. See also Walter Brownlow, The Development of Methodism in the Old Southwest, 1783-1824 (Tuscaloosa: Weatherford Printing Company, 1933), p. 35ff.

<sup>33</sup> Letter from Reverend J. B. Cain, Director Historical Research, Mississippi Methodist Conference, to Richard T. Bennett dated July 3, 1962.

<sup>34</sup> Several life-long members of this church whose parents were instrumental in its early organization were interviewed. Unfortunately, the original church records are not in existence today. The church is located three miles southeast of Magee off State Highway 28.

The third, and, perhaps, most influential denomination, were the Baptist. As early as August 25, 1827, a group of county residents organized the Strong River Baptist Church approximately two miles southwest of Pinola. The organizational account of the church is as follows:

State of Mississippi August 25, 1827  
 Simpson County Elder F. Walker  
 & C. Flowers and Isham Russell met pursuant to an  
 Appointment at Strong River meeting house and finding  
 the area in orthodox State they was constituted in a  
 church State and called by the name of Strong River  
 Church  
 2nd Appointed Brother Isaac Harrel Deacon of the Church  
 3rd Appointed Brother Willis Owens Churches Clerk  
 4th Unanimously called Brother F-----(?) to the  
 Pastoral Supply of the Church for one year 5th  
 Appointed Brother F Walker to Write the letter to the  
 Association head and Received 6th Deputed Brother  
 Isaac Harrel to the association 7th Agreed to send  
 2 Dollars for 20 Coppers.

County "of" Simpson 1827

Simpson County Miss  
 August 25, 1827

In pursuance to previous appointments Elders Francis  
 Walker, Elisha Flowers and Isham Russell, together  
 with Brethren and Sisters to wit, Isaac Warrill, Mary  
 Williams, Mary Howard, Elizabeth Rowell and Mary Dear,  
 Met on the day above mentioned at Strong River meeting  
 house for the purpose of Constituting a Baptist Church  
 to be called the Strong River Baptist Church....<sup>35</sup>

In 1828, Simpson County churches participated in the membership of the  
 Pearl River Baptist Association and, in 1829, Fork and Salem Churches were  
 admitted into that organization.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Minutes of the Strong River Baptist Church, August 25, 1827. These  
 minutes can be obtained from the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission,  
 Mississippi College Library, Clinton, Mississippi. There is further evidence  
 to indicate that another Baptist church was found in 1824, Mount Zion. This  
 church, however, was organized in Covington County and did not move to Simpson  
 until 1839, making Strong River, technically, the oldest Baptist Church in the  
 county.

<sup>36</sup> Z. T. Leavell and T. T. Bailey, Complete History of Mississippi  
 Baptist, Part I (Jackson: Mississippi Baptist Publishing Company, 1904),  
 pp. 136-7.

Boyd describes the early "camp meetings" as follows:

The camp ground consisted of a large square of ground with an arbor in the center for the religious services, which was surrounded by buildings temporarily constructed to take care of all who might attend the meetings. These revival seasons were set at the time of the full moon which supplemented their fagot fires in furnishing light for the occasion. At the appointed time the people "poured in the woods and remote seclusions", some in coaches, chaises, wagons and carts, and others on horse-back, while still others came on foot...They came from miles around to share with their neighbors the ecstasy of the spiritual festival. The minister, traveling from month to month along lonesome horse-paths, acquired a pensive and romantic turn of thought, whose preaching was highly popular. With his eloquent voice and intense earnestness he often 'dissolved his audience to tears,' and at his invitation many came forward and prostrated themselves in an excitement of penitence and joy, while others 'who came to mock, remained to pray'.<sup>37</sup>

Although religion played a vital part in the lives of these people, many of the early settlers were indifferent about educating their children. Schools were few and meagerly equipped. The school houses were built of logs and were seldom occupied for more than three months at a time. A few communities were especially favored with a teacher-preacher, or some other, who taught the rudiments; that is, "reading, writing by copy, and arithmetic so far as the double rule of three".<sup>38</sup> In short, the county lagged somewhat in the field of educational cooperation and advancement.

Along with inadequate educational facilities, adverse transportation conditions restricted the early settlers' social life. Friendly visits were made frequently for long distances when the stay would be prolonged for two or three or more days.<sup>39</sup>

These visits along with log-rollings and house-raisings were joyous

<sup>37</sup> Boyd, A Popular History of Mississippi Baptist, p. 69.

<sup>38</sup> Goodspeed's Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi, p. 211; Boyd, A Popular History of the Baptist in Mississippi, p. 65.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

occasions, not only for the exchange of work, but as social events of rare value.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, in attending church, those in the remote settlements often departed on Friday afternoon, and returned on Monday, spending the long weekend with friends who were in close proximity to the "meeting house". The people lived at a slow pace, took their time, and enjoyed themselves.<sup>41</sup>

As time progressed, several legislative acts were passed to alleviate many of the county's inconveniences and crude conditions.

In 1824, Simpson County was attached to the Second Judicial District of Mississippi. The first responsibility delegated to this tribunal by the state legislature was to appoint a group of commissioners who in turn were authorized to secure idle land for the purpose of locating a jail and permanent seat of justice. In addition, the commissioners were obligated to reserve, near the center of each town, two acres of land whereon buildings to house local courts were to be constructed.<sup>42</sup>

Between February 1, 1825, and January 27, 1827, court sessions were conducted in the home of William Gibson.<sup>43</sup> Thereafter, Westville was declared the permanent county seat, "and that the several courts of record should thereafter be held in said town, at such place as the sheriff should provide until a courthouse could be erected".<sup>44</sup> The first structure which served as a bonafide courthouse was built on the corner of the public square in old Westville.<sup>45</sup> It was described as a "log building about 20 by 24 feet", and

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Laws of Mississippi, 1824, pp. 87ff.

<sup>43</sup>Laws of Mississippi, 1825, pp. 49-50; Lowry and McCardle, History of Mississippi, pp. 569-70.

<sup>44</sup>Lowry and McCardle, History of Mississippi, p. 570; Laws of Mississippi, 1825, p. 109.

<sup>45</sup>"Mendenhall Reminiscences," Simpson County News (February 17, 1921), p. 1.

was later used as a blacksmith's shop. Evidently, the "frame building" courthouse destroyed by fire in 1844 was not this building.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, in actuality, two courthouses were in existence between the years 1827 and 1844.

Although legislation had been ratified and the necessary steps for monetary appropriations made available, evidence shows that no jail had been constructed in the county until sometime after September 17, 1827. The Circuit Court records of that date show that James M. Taylor was found guilty of "assault with intent to kill". The jurors, Daniel Beasley, Jacob Sepums, David Keely, Ezekiah Mitchel, Joseph Penis, David Glanada, E. T. Wingote, William Glawow, William Drummonds, Frederick Carr, John Grimes and Isaac Carr, found the defendant "guilty in manner and form as charged". In lieu of the verdict, the defendant was "fined in the sum of fifty dollars and imprisoned sixty days in the jail of Lawrence County and [ordered to] enter into a Recognizance, ...in the sum of two hundred dollars, with two securities in the sum of one hundred dollars each conditioned for his good behavior for the space of six months after the expiration of the said imprisonment..."<sup>47</sup> On October 7, 1827, a petition for pardon was sent to Governor Brandon signed by 172 petitioners requesting that Taylor be released from custody because he had "a large family which requires his daily presence at home for their [sic] proper management and support and that this is the first charge of a criminal or penal nature that was brought against...Taylor...and your petitioning [sic] Solicit your Excellency to quonen a general pardon..."<sup>48</sup> The reply to this communication is unknown.

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<sup>46</sup> McLendon, "History of Simpson County," p. 82.

<sup>47</sup> Governors' Records--Correspondence, Petitions, August 13, 1827--August 10, 1828--Administration of Governor Gerald C. Brandon. Mississippi State Archive Files Series E, Volume 14. Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.



One source briefly mentioned that a log jail was built at an early date and Willis Huckaby claimed to have "toted the first pole" used in constructing it and was the "first man who was sent to jail".<sup>49</sup>

In January, 1825, the county militia was organized. This vanguard constituted the twenty-second regiment of militia and was attached to the third brigade of the state's First Division. Following the election of regimental officers William Herrin received 61 votes for Colonel, Joseph R. Plummer was selected lieutenant Colonel with 60 votes, and Daniel McCaskill was elected major with 59 votes.<sup>50</sup>

One year later another act of legislation was passed for the general welfare of the people, an act to erect a bridge over Strong River. This effort greatly facilitated contact with new areas as well as new markets. James Gibson, Daniel McCaskill, and Bartholomew Hornesby were appointed commissioners. This bridge was constructed on the road leading from Covington County to Vicksburg and thereby shortening the distance between Simpson, Covington, and Warren counties.<sup>51</sup>

Another law was passed in 1827 with reference to internal improvements, a law establishing a board of road commissioners. This status selected Frederick Carr, Robert Lard, Daniel McCaskill, William Steen and Joseph A. McRaven to "view and lay off a road leading from Covington county, near the residence of James Smith by Westville in Simpson County to cross Pearl River at Fortner's Ferry and intersect the road leading from the town of Jackson to Vicksburgh, [sic] near the plantation of Miles Fleetwood".<sup>52</sup> This addition,

<sup>49</sup>McLendon, "History of Simpson County," p. 82.

<sup>50</sup>Governors' Records--Administration of Governor Walter Leake: Resignations and commissions, civil and military, February 22, 1822--October 29, 1825. Also papers of Acting Governor Gerald C. Brandon, November 17, 1825--January 7, 1826. Mississippi State Archive Files Series E, Volume 10. Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>51</sup>Laws of Mississippi, 1826, p. 55. <sup>52</sup>Laws of Mississippi, 1827, pp. 132-33.

like the bridge across Strong River, improved the county's trade, transportation and general economy.

The only serious and determined effort to promulgate a "Seminary of Learning" in Simpson County is shown in an act approved in January, 1827. The measure provided for the establishment of Westville Academy "at or within two miles of the town of Westville". Hugh R. McLarin, Tristram Stubbs, Jacob Carr, Neal McHair, Thomas Hughs, Malcom McDuffie, Arthur Gibson and Joseph R. Plummer were appointed trustees. These men could employ "a preceptor and other professors", and make the necessary arrangements for the construction of an "academic edifice". The president was to be chosen from the trustees at large, and it was their sole responsibility to "examine into the proficiency of the students, and make all such rules and regulations" for their general well-being. The trustees could also arrange to raise a sum not exceeding \$5,000 by lottering and the academy would be exempt from taxation provided the "clear yearly value should not exceed \$1,000".<sup>53</sup> As to what extent this institution developed in the period under consideration is uncertain. Undoubtedly, the academy made little progress for had the institution prospered some evidence would remain today. A renewed interest in education was made approximately twenty-three years later.

Other items of legislation which were of interest during this period dealt with the time for holding Circuit Court;<sup>54</sup> the establishment of election districts;<sup>55</sup> a special tax for the construction of additional public buildings<sup>56</sup> and the erection of another bridge over Strong River.<sup>57</sup>

The following is a list of the county officers for the year 1824, the year the county was created:

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 73.    <sup>54</sup>Ibid., 1825, p. 49.    <sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 1828, p. 26.    <sup>57</sup>Ibid., 1830, p. 15.



Duncan McLaurin, Judge of Probate; William Morris, Peter Stubbs, Neal McNair, Richard Mall, James B. Satturfield, Associate Justices; Laughlin McLaurin, Jacob Carr, James Briggs, John C. Halford, Justices of the Peace; Richard Sparks, Sheriff; Neal McNair, Assessor and Collector; Daniel McCaskill, Coroner; Eli Nichols, Surveyor; John C. McFarland, Treasurer; Daniel L. Ferrington, Notary Public; Oideon Royal, Ranger; other county officers in 1825, 1826, and 1827 were John Briggs, Joseph R. Flummer, John Campbell, Absalom Harper, James Welch, Joseph Carr, Justices of the Peace; John R. Hubert, Associate Justice; William B. Easterling, Treasurer and Surveyor; Malcom McDuffie, Ranger.<sup>58</sup>

During the county's formative period, as previously mentioned, the majority of the people were simple folk. There were no large plantation owners with hundreds of slaves typical of the older areas to the south and southwest. The aristocratic class in this county constituted a small but, perhaps, dominant influence in the realm of politics and county leadership. However, from an over-all perspective the small farmer and gentle husbandman who isolated themselves from the affairs of the outside world composed an overwhelming majority of the population.<sup>59</sup>

The state census of 1825 certified the following:

A correct return of the census of Simpson County for the year 1825, and of the births & deaths of 1824,---

White males	White Females	Taxable Inhabitants	Births 1824	Deaths 1824	Persons Over 70
497	487	180	44	05	02

Certify the above to be a correct return and so far as I could ascertain the fact.

Neal McNair T. C.<sup>60</sup>  
S. C.

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<sup>58</sup>Rowland, Mississippi, Volume II, p. 666; Registrar of County Officers, 1818-1827, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi, p. 103; Lowry and McCardle, A History of Mississippi, p. 573.

<sup>59</sup>See Swearingen, Early Life of George Poindexter, p. 37.

<sup>60</sup>Reports of State Census for the years 1820, 1822, 1823, 1824, 1825. Mississippi State Archive Files Series F, Volume 101. Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

In 1830, the original returns stated the following:

Census Abstract for the year 1830			
Males	Females	Total	Taxables
1,146	1,021	2,167	382

Taken from original returns made to (certified  
Taken 19th of Nov. 1830 John A. Grimball Secy of  
State<sup>61</sup>

A study of tax rolls during the years 1824-1830 revealed the following:

Year	White Polls	Carriages 2 wheels	Free Persons of Color	Slaves	Taxes Paid
1824	156	1	2	173	\$235.75
1825	189	0	2	229	\$318.75
1826	(nonexistent)				
1827	268	..	1	376	\$379.05
1828	394	..	1	427	\$453.67 $\frac{1}{2}$
1829	336	..	1	508	\$517.84
1830	333	..	1	448	\$577.38 $\frac{3}{4}$ <sup>62</sup>

The following is the only document during the period which indicates voting returns by precincts.

The following is a correct Statement of the Parties taken in Simpson County at the different Election precincts on

<sup>61</sup>Census returns for the year 1830. Mississippi State Archive Files Series F, Volume 102. Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>62</sup>These figures were extracted from the following sources: 1824, Auditor's Records--Assessment Rolls--Real and Personal Assessment Rolls. For the year 1824. In 20 counties. Mississippi State Archive files Series G. Volume 66; 1825, Real and Personal Assessment Rolls. For the year 1825. In 14 counties. Mississippi State Archive files Series G, Volume 67; 1827, Real and Personal Assessment Rolls. For the year 1827. In 13 counties. Mississippi State Archive files Series G, Volume 70; 1828, Real and Personal Assessment Rolls. For the year 1828. In 16 counties. Mississippi State Archive files Series G, Volume 72; 1829, Microfilm tax roll 359, Department of Archives and History; 1830, Real and Personal Assessment Rolls. For the year 1830. In 11 counties. Mississippi State Archive Files (over size Tax Roll Box) Series G, Volume 75. The above sources are located in the Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

the Third & fourth days in August 1829 is stated. To wit for Governor Gerald C. Brandon & George Winchester for Lieut Gov Abraham M. Scott Representative Franklin E. Plummer for Sheriff Daniel F. Farrington and Malcom McDuffie Corner Thomas L. Brooks & Elijah Young to which the following votes given for the above candidates

Westville	Precinct	Mangum do	Goffs do	Sepacus do	Total
Brandon	143	* 51	= 24	" 21	= 239
Winchester	47	* 9	= 0	" 0	= 56
Scott	183	* 55	= 18	" 21	= 177
Plummer	174	* 42	= 19	" 21	= 256
Farrington	121	* 32	= 21	" 21	= 195
McDuffie	61	* 29	= 2	" 0	= 92
Brooks	126	= 34	= 12	" 21	= 193
Young	0	* 3	= 0	" 0	= 3

I certify the above to be a correct statement of the polls given in Simpson County as Stated agreeably by to Law Given under my hand & Seal the 4th day of August 1829

John C. Halford (J. C.)  
Seal

And Returning Officer for Simpson County<sup>63</sup>

In 1830, there were 2,600 residents in Simpson County, of which 666 were Negro.<sup>64</sup>

The means of livelihood of these residents was limited both by their skills and the nature of the land. One source gave the following description of the people and the land:

Those settlements east of the Pearl River [during this period] were constituted of a different people [from the agricultural population farther west]; most of them were from the poorer districts of Georgia and the Carolinas. True to the instincts of the people from whom they were descended, they sought as nearly as possible just such a country as that from which they came, and were really refugees from a growing civilization consequent upon a denser population and its necessities. They were not agriculturists in a proper sense of the term; true, they cultivated in some degree the soil, but it was not the prime pursuit of these people, nor was the location sought

<sup>63</sup>Returns of elections, local and general, 1829. Credentials of elected officials. Mississippi State Archive Files Series F, Volume 75. Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>64</sup>A Summary of Statistical Data Relating to the Growth and Distribution of Mississippi Population, 1800-1930, p. 39.

for this purpose. They desired an open, poor, pine country, which forbade a numerous population.

Here they reared immense herds of cattle, which subsisted exclusively upon coarse grass and reeds which grew abundantly among the tall, long-leaved pine, and along the small creeks and branches numerous in this section. Through these almost interminable pine-forests the deer were abundant, and the cane-brakers full of bears. They combined the pursuits of hunting and stock-raising, and derived support and revenue almost exclusively from these.<sup>65</sup>

From 1821 to 1830, life in Simpson County was full but rustic. It was a new country, teeming with varied interests and full of adventure. There was no tameness, no timidity.

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<sup>65</sup>Owsley, Plain Folks of the Old South, p. 39. See also William H. Sparks, The Memories of 50 Years (Philadelphia: Claxton Rensen & Haffelfinger, 1870), pp. 331-33; William O. Lynch, "The Westward Flow of Southern Colonist Before 1861," Journal of Southern History, Volume IX (August, 1943), pp. 303ff.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ERA OF GROWTH, 1830-1860

The history of Simpson County during the three decades preceding the Civil War was one of change. Prior to 1837 the county was an area of potentiality. Settlers were rapidly pouring into the region, and optimism ran rampant. Unfortunately, however, during the Panic of 1837, with its economic stress, prosperity was uncertain and people throughout the land became apprehensive regarding their monetary security. But, soon after 1840, prosperity reappeared.<sup>1</sup>

During this period, class distinction throughout the South, as well as in Mississippi, was becoming clear-cut and plain. At one end of the scale were the wealthy owners of great plantations. At the other end were the slaves who served in varied capacities. Between these extremes were people of various classes who differed greatly in wealth and in social position.<sup>2</sup> The people of Simpson County composed the latter category.

The general economic and environmental conditions of the county during this period were slightly improved by the advent of the sawmill which greatly facilitated the construction of homes and public buildings. The sawmill had greatest influence around 1850.<sup>3</sup> Prior to this time, the homes were simple

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur Meier Schlesinger, Political and Social History of the United States, 1829-1925 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1925), pp. 57ff; William E. Dodd, Expansion and Conflict (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1915), pp. 96ff.

<sup>2</sup>Charles S. Sydnor and Claude Bennett, Mississippi History (Richmond: Rand McNally & Company, 1939), p. 152.

<sup>3</sup>United States Industrial Census, 1850, p. 485. There were five sawmills in 1850.

but comfortable. As one source stated:

...the common folk dwelt in humbler dwellings, built of hewn logs or round poles and 'almost, if not entirely, without nails'. Even the boards on the roofs were made secure by means of 'weight poles', and the logs of the walls, after being 'mortised', were pinned together with wooden pegs, thus making the houses practically storm worthy. The cracks of the walls were 'chinked' with a mixture of mud and straw, and the 'stick-and-dirt' chimney still prevailed. In the latter part of the period, lumber came into vogue as building material which was cut with a 'whipsaw' and planed by hand. In the operation of cutting it two men were necessary; the one above the log and the other underneath.<sup>4</sup>

Although the above included a majority of the county's population, at least seven homes of considerable size were in existence; namely: the McNair home in the southwest part of the county, constructed in 1837; the Gibson home, built about 1860, near Merit; the Hubbard home located at old Jaynesville; and the old Weathersby residence which stood "in full view of the public road leading from Brandon to Westville situated about four miles South of the Rankin county line."<sup>5</sup> This house was dismantled in the fall of 1939 by Mr. A. L. Boggan who constructed his present home from its original timber.<sup>6</sup> Immediately to the right of the Boggan home is an old well that was built by slave labor. Approximately two-hundred yards southeast of this same residence is a cemetery where, at least three generations of the Weathersby family are buried.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Boyd, A Popular History of the Baptists in Mississippi, p. 89.

<sup>5</sup>G. A. Howell, "Historical Sketches" Simpson County News (September 17, 1936), p. 8; Simpson County subject folder--Old Homes, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>6</sup>Interview Mr. A. L. Boggan, Braxton, Mississippi, June 24, 1962.

<sup>7</sup>In this cemetery, there are numerous tombstones. The dates on several are as follows: Lewis Howell, 1799-1833; Preston Howell, 1840-1858, and Mary Howell, 1772-1856. These are among the earliest marked graves in the county.

Other homes which deserve special mention are: the Albritton home on the Pinola-Braxton Road; and the old W. A. Dickson home five miles South of Pinola on Highway 28. Both of these structures were more than likely built during this period.<sup>8</sup>

One home still intact is the S. E. Banks residence located at Westville. This house has seven spacious rooms, a large hall, high ceilings, and a front and back porch. From one end of the house, the old Rockport Road which traversed this portion of the county during its formative period can still be identified. During its prime this home was known as "The Big Chunk."<sup>9</sup>

In 1839, the state legislature named Cowles Mead, H. G. Runnels, William M. Gwin, D. W. Haley, Robert A. Patrick, D. B. Morgan, John A. Grimball, John Montgomery (of Madison County), H. K. Moss, S. C. Farrar, Thomas J. Coffee, John W. King, Charles Lurch, Duncan McLaurin, Isham Brown, Samuel Hayne, James Murray, James B. Mendenhall, James Mitchell and Brewster H. Jayne to incorporate the Mill-Haven manufacturing company. The factory or factories were to be located at Mill Haven or some other suitable place within forty miles of Westville. The fundamental object of the company was to manufacture "all such fabrics as the company may think proper to make cotton, or wool, or any other material."<sup>10</sup> The progress of this manufacturing company is listed

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<sup>8</sup> Simpson County Subject Folder--Old Homes, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. The old Dickson home no longer exists. However, Mrs. May Bush, whose father built the house in this period, was interviewed. Mrs. Bush described the residence as having two stories, a huge porch, two fire places, "a kitchen away from the house", and six commodious rooms. Three of the latter were bed rooms and one was compatible to our contemporary den. The house also had an "outside staircase which led to a large room on the second floor." Interview, Mrs. May Bush, Pinola, Mississippi, June 30, 1962.

<sup>9</sup> Interview Mr. S. E. Banks, Westville, Mississippi, June 30, 1962.

<sup>10</sup> Laws of Mississippi, 1839, p. 367.



in the industrial census of that year.<sup>11</sup>

In the 1830's Brewster Jayne constructed a large set of mills on Strong River near D'lo. L. C. Gibson, John McIntosh and a man named Brothers were mechanics who undertook most of the construction.<sup>12</sup> These mills were built on a rock foundation, and the grooves that were chiseled out to imbed the mud sill, are still visible when the water is low.<sup>13</sup> It is said that a large portion of the lumber used in constructing the Old Capital in Jackson was originally a part of these old mills.<sup>14</sup>

Also during this era, J. B. Mendenhall, while touring the North, purchased a wool carding machine which "was placed in a nearby mill and became a great boon and labor saving institution".<sup>15</sup>

Prior to this innovation, woolen clothes were made by hand. Later wool was brought from surrounding counties, and the machine was often utilized day and night making from twenty to twenty-five dollars a day for Mr. Mendenhall.<sup>16</sup>

In addition, at Jaynes Bluff on Pearl River, a steamboat landing was in operation where cotton was processed for shipment.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Mill Haven was located on Strong River, nine miles North of Westville. See L. A. Besancon, Besancon's Annual Register of the State of Mississippi, Volume I (Natchez: L. A. Besancon, 1838), pp. 195-6.

<sup>12</sup>"Mendenhall Reminiscences," Simpson County News (April 21, 1921), p. 2.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Interview Mrs. Gussie May Boggan, D'lo, Mississippi, December 19, 1961. The site of these old mills is on the Boggan property, about one mile north-east of D'lo.

<sup>15</sup>"Mendenhall Reminiscences," Simpson County News (February 24, 1921), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., (February 17, 1921), p. 1; Ibid., (July 25, 1899).



Actually, between 1830 and 1860, manufacturing was limited. The industrial census of 1850 recorded five saw mills, four grist mills, three cotton gins, and two tanning and finishing shops. Other industries in the county prior to the Civil War were shoemaking, ginning, blacksmithing, grinding, and two saddlery shops.<sup>18</sup> Although there was \$37,850 invested in the above industries, only thirty-one individuals served as full-time employees.<sup>19</sup>

Some of the earliest known merchants were the Freemans, C. K. Brown, J. B. Mendenhall, G. W. Williams, and H. V. Stanoard. Perhaps, some of these men engaged in "shipplasters" which was "a kind of individual general banking system by which merchants and traders would issue small scrip or bills redeemable at their office."<sup>20</sup> During the early part of this period, there were scattered stores and similar establishments for the normal course of exchanging goods.

As time passed, grass lands began to disappear, game became scarce, and the early settlers gradually turned their attention to agricultural pursuits. Many of these accumulated considerable property. Others moved farther west and some turned to new occupational endeavors.<sup>21</sup> However, the population of the country increased. The following table shows the expansion during three decades:<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>United States Industrial Census, 1850, p. 485.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Simpson County News (February 17, 1921), p. 1; Ibid., (July 15, 1899).

<sup>21</sup>Goodspeed's Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi, Volume I, p. 211.

<sup>22</sup>See also Census Returns for the year 1830. Mississippi State Archive Files Series F, Volume 102; Census returns for the year 1837, in ten counties. Mississippi State Archive Files Series F, Volume 103, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

TABLE I

Growth of Population from 1830-1860<sup>23</sup>

Census Year	Total	White	Colored
1830	2,680	2,014	666
1840	3,380	2,473	907
1850	4,734	3,190	1,546
1860	6,080	3,744	2,336

A Summary of Statistical Data Relating to the Growth and Distribution of Mississippi Population, 1800-1930, Mississippi State Archives, 1939, p. 39.

Official census returns for the county in 1837 showed:

Number of white males over the age of forty-five.....	109
Number of white males between the ages of twenty-one and forty-five.....	347
Number of white males between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one.....	55
Number of white males under eighteen years of age.....	701
Number of white females over sixteen years.....	482
Number of white females under sixteen years.....	622
Number of male slaves in each family (total).....	418
Number of female slaves in each family (total).....	473
Total of free white inhabitants in the county.....	2,392
Number of acres of land cultivated by each family, in the year 1836 (total).....	11,214
Number of bales of cotton produced by each family, in the year 1836 (total).....	1,512 <sup>23</sup>

The Census of 1840 contained the following statistics:

Free white males.....	1,304
Free white females.....	1,169
Free colored males.....	0
Free colored females.....	0
Male slaves.....	433
Female slaves.....	474
Total population for 1840.....	3,380
Persons employed in mining.....	0
Persons employed in agriculture.....	1,140
Persons employed in commerce.....	1
Persons employed in manufactures and trade.....	32
Persons employed in navigation of the ocean.....	0

<sup>23</sup>Census returns for the year 1837, in ten counties. Mississippi State Archive Files Series F, Volume 103.

Persons employed in navigation of canals, lakes, and rivers.....	0
Persons in learned professions and engineers.....	6
Number of pensions for revolutionary of military service.....	1
Deaf and dumb white persons.....	0
Insane and idiot white persons.....	1
Blind white persons.....	3
Deaf and dumb colored persons.....	0
Insane and idiot colored persons.....	0
Blind colored persons.....	0 <sup>2h</sup>

In the abstract census returns of January, 1841, the following agricultural and live-stock figures reported that there were:

Bales of cotton gathered in the year 1839.....	1,697
Bushels of corn made in 1839.....	132,066
Horses and Mules.....	1,115
Meat cattle.....	7,693
Swine.....	13,271
Sheep.....	1,120
Number of bushels of wheat.....	2,134
Number of bushels of oats.....	2,677 <sup>25</sup>

In 1845, the real and personal assessment rolls indicated that \$7,115.15 was loaned or employed in the purchase of stocks, bonds, notes, checks, bills and similar instruments; and there was \$5,650 worth of merchandise sold by county merchants. Of the county's 3,973 inhabitants, 1,134 were Negro. The county tax collected at this time was \$525.90<sup>1</sup> and the state tax totaled \$1,051.85.<sup>26</sup>

Of the 3,190 white persons, in 1850, who resided in the county, 1,505 were born out of state, and 51 were from foreign countries. These groups

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<sup>24</sup>Thomas Allen, Compendium of the Sixth Census (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1841), p. 56-0.

<sup>25</sup>Census returns for the years 1840-41, in thirty-eight counties; also abstract of State Census, Mississippi State Archive Files Series F, Number 104, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>26</sup>Real and Personal Assessment Rolls. For the year 1845. In 23 counties. Mississippi State Archive Files Series G, Number 113, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

composed 698 families.<sup>27</sup> In addition to these enumerations, the Census of 1850 showed:

Farms numbered	151
Acres improved	23,152
Acres unimproved	52,147
Value with improvements and implements	1,154
Head cattle numbered	7,652
Sheep numbered	3,405
Swine numbered	18,123
Wheat bushels numbered	113
Rye and oats, bushels numbered	6,201
Indian corn bushels numbered	165,099
Irish and sweet potatoes, bushels numbered	40,952
Peas and beans, bushels numbered	21,589
Barley, bushels numbered	5
Buckwheat bushels numbered	0
Butter and cheese in pounds numbered	26,143
Hay, tons numbered	1
Hops, pounds numbered	0
Clover and other grass seeds, bushels, numbered	0
Flax seed, bushels numbered	0 <sup>28</sup>

A good comparison of the county's economic development can be derived from the following census returns:

TABLE 5

## Simpson County Economic Development, 1850-1860\*

Category	1850	1860
Real Estate Value	\$220,405	\$990,400
Personal Estate Value	\$1,000,706	\$26,320,000
Total or True Evaluation	\$1,221,111	\$3,622,400
State Tax	\$1,156	\$2,982
County Tax	\$587	\$2,982
Special Tax	\$115	\$2,982

\*United States Social Census, 1850, pp. 520-29; United States Social Census, 1860, Counties listed in alphabetical order.

<sup>27</sup>J. B. D. DeBow, Statistical View of the United States: Compendium of the Seventh Census (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1854), pp. 280-83.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.; See also B. L. C. Waller, Report on the Agricultural and Geology of Mississippi (Jackson: E. Barksdals, State Printers, 1854), pp. 203-05.

A careful study of these and additional compilations will point out that the county, prior to the Civil War, was a region of future promise. It had expanded in population, agricultural production, and industrial output. Moreover, numerous internal improvements had enhanced communication and transportation. Perhaps, the best way to grasp a comprehensive picture of Simpson County's development between the years 1830-1860 is to briefly examine the historical significance of Westville.

When Simpson County was created in 1821, the county seat was subsequently located at Westville, named in honor of Cato West. As one source said, Franklin E. Plummer, then residing there, and the only congressman who ever lived in the county, assisted in laying out the village, which was then "only a crossroad place, where a grocery was kept and a store and tanyard were owned by Nathaniel O. Freeman."<sup>29</sup> But as time progressed, Westville became the "heart" of Simpson County, and during the 1830's and '40's it was a thriving trade center with a population of over two hundred citizens. There was considerable wealth about the town and society sported all the frills of the 40's.<sup>30</sup>

After the first Westville courthouse was erected an amusing incident once occurred which indicates the innocence and oversimplification of the times:

...A man by the name of Kit Dias rode up to the door and called out "Hello! tapster, hand us half pint." The judge ordered the sheriff to bring the man into court, which he did. The joists of the house being rather low, and Dias a tall man, he placed his hands on one of the joists and begged the judge's pardon and asked to be excused as he had never been in court before, but seeing a crowd standing around the house he actually thought it was a grocery. The judge excused him on condition

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<sup>29</sup>Goodspeed's Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi, Volume I, p. 211.

<sup>30</sup>G. L. Martin, "Westville Down in Simpson, Another 'Deserted Village'," The Commercial Appeal (Memphis), (September 14, 1930).

that he would not disturb the court again.<sup>31</sup>

Some of the first lawyers at old Westville were Tobe Huddleston, T. L. Mendenhall, and Thomas Dickson. In later years, in big murder cases, "there were usually on hand Green Huddleston, Anse McLaurin and Bob Miller, with Judge A. O. Meyers on the bench."<sup>32</sup>

A quarter of a mile away from the center of town was a race track where every kind of animal "from a plug mule to a thoroughbred was trotted out."<sup>33</sup> Jockeys from Mount Carmel, Old Williamsburg, Slaton, and Gwinville gathered there to exhibit their skills, and, perhaps, to do a "little 'hoss' swapping on the side."<sup>34</sup>

For many years there were from two to five saloons in Westville where fist fights, red liquor, profane language, shootings, and cutting affairs were common.<sup>35</sup>

One night a row took place in one of the saloons...Evan Magee was cut with a knife from the effects of which he died. A man by the name of Revels was indicted for the murder and when his case came up for trial, he applied for a change of venue and his case was moved to Smith County where he was convicted of manslaughter, this having occurred before there was a penitentiary in the state, he was branded for the crime.<sup>36</sup>

A difficulty occurred between J. M. Lane and Joe Carr, at this place Westville in 1834. Carr had made threats against Lane, which he anticipated he would attempt to execute upon their next meeting was thoroughly convinced that his expectations were true, one day while he was standing on the store gallery in front of the Covington house, from the demonstrations that Carr was making while approaching him in a

<sup>31</sup>"Mendenhall Reminiscences," Simpson County News (February 10, 1921), p. 1.

<sup>32</sup>Martin, "Westville Down in Simpson," Commercial Appeal (Memphis) (September 11, 1930), p. 5. See also The Westville News (June 22, 1889), p. 5.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.; "Mendenhall Reminiscences," Simpson County News (February 17, 1921), p. 1.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.



threatening manner. He threw a welking [sic] at Carr, one end of it struck him on the head and fractured his skull. The lick felled Carr to the ground and a pistol fell out of his pocket. The fracture proved fatal and Carr survived but a short time. Lane was acquitted on the ground of having acted in self defense.<sup>37</sup>

The county being sparsely settled there was little demand for hotels. However, travelers prospecting the country in search of land or locations to settle upon, kept Westville's two hotels in existence with limited patronage. One of these hotels was operated by Elijah Thurman, the other by Britton Lewis. They were log dwellings, and actively housed itinerants throughout the period.<sup>38</sup>

In 1838, Westville contained a court house, "one-hundred white inhabitants, four stores, two taverns, no churches nor schools of any kind."<sup>39</sup>

By 1846, the first Masonic Order in the county was founded in Westville. The organizational report stated:

Westville Number 78 Simpson County (1846)

Dispensation granted, -1846; chartered February 17, 1847.

(Report from February 20, 1846, to February 15 1847.)

Officers-E. N. Talley, W. H. M. A. Banks, S. W.; J. D. Smith, J. W.; J. M. Layne, Treasurer; William H. Smith, Secretary, D. C. Gibson, J. D.; J. K. Stratton, S. and Tyler.

Members.-G. J. D. Funchess, John Freeman, James Patterson, J. B. Mendenhall, John Myers, Michael Durr, H. S. Crump, H. I. Lewis, G. H. Webster.

Initiated.-O. J. Dye

Initiated and Passed.-J. A. Graves

Passed and Raised.-H. S. Crump

Raised.-Michael Durr

Initiated, passed and Raised.-J. K. Stratton, G. J. D. Funchess, John Freeman, James Patterson, J. B. Mendenhall, John Myers, H. T. Lewis, G. H. Webster.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.; The Westville News (October 27, 1898), p. 1.

<sup>39</sup>Besanccon, Besanccon's Annual Register of the State of Mississippi, 1838, Volume I, pp. 195-6.

Rejected.-E. M. Riley,<sup>40</sup>

Prior to the construction of a church building, religious services were held in the court house, then the Masonic Lodge. Finally, in 1850, D. L. Sinclair constructed a Methodist meeting house.<sup>41</sup>

Schools were taught in and around town, but no building of any consequence had been built until 1850. At this time, the citizens built a "very commodious one and established a first class school where prior to the war Civil War was taught an excellent school presided over by Professor John Hamilton, aided by two assistants and a music teacher." The school was attended by nearly a hundred students.<sup>42</sup>

Today old Westville is a memory; a deserted community engulfed by weeds, briars, and tall trees. Only an unkept cemetery, and a few scattered homes remain. But by carefully examining the old town site many signs of past occupation can be observed.

About twenty-five feet from the unpaved Westville Road, one and one-half miles east of Pinola the decaying court house walls are still visible. By moving approximately twenty yards to the west one can see the old floor to the jail's death cell. South of this location a dry forty-five foot community well can still be seen. By proceeding in a southerly direction across the road, fragmentary remains of the Thurman Hotel are likewise apparent, especially the foundation, cellar, and chimney sites. Numerous bricks next to a large sycamore tree east of the old jail indicate the location of one of the three early saloons. Another well, one-hundred yards north of the Westville-Pinola

<sup>40</sup> Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi (Jackson: Clarion Stream Printing Establishment, 1882), p. 620.

<sup>41</sup> "Mendenhall Reminiscences," Simpson County News (February 17, 1921), p. 1. The Westville News (October 27, 1898). p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.



road, was used by a nearby hotel. The water in this well is still visible. About a quarter of a mile to the west, the site of the first school house, constructed in 1850, can faintly be recognized. Down Tanyard Creek, east of town, several tan vats, about four feet wide, can still be observed. These vats were used to process cow hides and similar skins and convert them into shoes and shoe-strings. Additional evidences of old Westville can be found in and around these locations.<sup>43</sup> These and other outward signs of a once vigorous community indicate the most representative area in the county between 1830 and 1860.

There were a series of statutes passed by the state legislature for the general welfare during this era. The minor laws dealt with levying of special taxes for internal improvements;<sup>44</sup> the changing of court sessions;<sup>45</sup> and the creation of another bridge over Strong River.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps, the most important legislative act was the bill to establish a system of common schools within the county. This statute ratified in 1856, provided that all revenue arising from fines, forfeitures, penalties, and licenses be forwarded to the county treasurer who would subsequently transfer this money to the Board of Police. Furthermore, it stated "that all sums of money that are paid for license to retail vinous and spirituous liquors in the town of Westville, be applied towards the maintenance of a school or schools within the corporate limits of said town."<sup>47</sup> It was the responsibility of the police board to meet

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<sup>43</sup>Interviews with Mr. J. Alonzo Grubbs, Mr. S. E. Banks, and Mrs. Lucy Bradley, Westville; Mr. and Mrs. Ike Farmer, Pinola, and Miss Scarlet Lee, Westville, June 30, 1962. Miss Lee is responsible for almost all of the above information.

<sup>44</sup>Laws of Mississippi, 1852, p. 452.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 1848, p. 205; Ibid., 1850, p. 178; Ibid., 1859, p. 128. Under the law of 1850, Simpson County was attached to the Southern Chancery Court District.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 1830, p. 15.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 1856, p. 109.

annually to employ teachers and regulate the affairs of the school,<sup>48</sup>

The following census tabulations reveal the county's educational status:

For the year 1841

Number of Students.....	0
Academies and Grammar schools.....	0
Number of Scholars.....	0
Primary and Common Schools.....	4
Number of Scholars.....	70
White persons over twenty-five years of age who cannot read and write.....	182 <sup>49</sup>

For the year 1850

Colleges, academies, and private schools.....	2
Pupils.....	414
Public Schools.....	13
White scholars during the year.....	594
Whites over twenty unable to read and write.....	57
Libraries with volumes totaling 700.....	3 <sup>50</sup>

For the year 1860

Seminaries (at Westville).....	1
Teachers (at Westville).....	4
Pupils (at Westville).....	100
Public schools.....	13
Pupils.....	234
Libraries.....	0 <sup>51</sup>

Even though Simpson County made considerable progress in the field of education, no newspapers were in existence between 1830 and 1860. In fact, most areas throughout the state had local newspapers except the Piney Woods area.<sup>52</sup>

In accord with other areas of county expansion between 1830 and 1860, the various religious denominations grew in large numbers. In 1850 there were

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Census returns for the years 1840-41, in thirty-eight counties; also abstract of State Census, Mississippi State Archive Files, Series F, Volume 104, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>50</sup>DeBow, Compendium of the Seventh Census, p. 261.

<sup>51</sup>United States Social Census, 1850, p. 528-29.

<sup>52</sup>Nell Augela Heidelberg, "The Frontier in Mississippi," (unpublished Master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1940), p. 169.

nine Baptist churches, five Methodist churches, and one Presbyterian church.<sup>53</sup>

In 1860, the Baptist churches numbered eleven, the Methodist churches eight, and the Presbyterians, evidently, lost their one congregation.<sup>54</sup>

Between the years 1853 and 1860 the following Baptist churches joined the Strong River Baptist Association:

<u>Church</u>	<u>Delegates</u>
Bethlehem - 1853	Jesse Deer, W. B. Chandler
Mt. Zion - 1853	W. T. Brown, L. B. Walker
Mountain Hill - 1853	A. Cook, T. H. Thomas
Macedonia - 1855	L. Howell, E. Bishop
New Zion - 1853	John Guynes, Robert Mahaffey
Palestina - 1853	James Murry, R. D. Middleton
Pleasant Hill - 1853	Isaac Bush, B. Bridges
Strong River - 1853	S. B. Mullen, Alexander Murray
Concord - 1856	Not listed
Oak Grove - 1857	Not listed
Gum Springs - 1859	Not listed <sup>55</sup>

While the Baptist denomination was making its influence felt throughout the county, the first Methodist circuit, the Westville circuit, named for the county seat, was formed in 1853. James R. Thomas was appointed as its first pastor.<sup>56</sup> As one source disclosed:

From that time 1853 ... and throughout this period ...  
 Methodism in Simpson County was served in the main by the pastor of the Westville circuit. As the name indicates the pastor served several churches and traveled on horseback to these various communities, visiting his members and other people en route. Revivals were regularly held in all these churches but they were usually brief, lasting only a few days in most cases. Campmeetings were also common and there were campmeetings undoubtedly in the county but we have no record of any. There were popular campgrounds in adjoining

<sup>53</sup>United States Social Census, 1850, p. 528-29.

<sup>54</sup>United States Social Census, 1860, Counties are listed in alphabetical order.

<sup>55</sup>J. C. Boyd, An Abstract History of the Simpson County Baptist Association, 1853-1927 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 3-5, 8, 11.

<sup>56</sup>Letter from Dr. J. B. Cain to Richard T. Bennett July 3, 1962.

counties, Sinai and Shiloh in Rankin County, so that Methodists in great numbers went from Simpson County to these other counties to attend campmeetings.<sup>57</sup>

While the Baptist and Methodist churches influenced the spiritual life of the county, the social and economic life of the county was influenced by the institution of slavery.

In 1840 there were 907 slaves in Simpson County.<sup>58</sup> In 1850, 1,541 slaves were recorded<sup>59</sup> and in 1860, the slave population composed thirty percent of the county's population.<sup>60</sup> Although Simpson County did not have as many slaves as other areas of the state, the following observation is applicable to this region:

Much good and much bad might be said about slavery. Usually the Negroes were cared for, given enough food and clothing, and not required to do more than a reasonable amount of work. When a Negro was ill, or in years when crops were poor, he still received good care. As he grew old, his labors were lightened. There was friendship with other slaves, fishing now and then in the near-by streams, religious meetings, and occasional merry-makings, all of which helped make the life of a slave pleasant.

On the other hand, the master might die or be unsuccessful in business. Then the slaves might be sold and families separated. Some, especially the more intelligent Negroes, wanted to be able to go where they wished and to work for whomsoever they chose. And there were also some Negroes whose owners were cruel men. But even such owners generally gave their slaves fairly good care. A slave was worth a great deal of money. Harsh treatment might cause the injury or even the death of the Negro and a consequent loss.<sup>61</sup>

The following bill of sale was typical of slave trading in the county:

State of Miss--

Simpson County August the 10th 1838  
Received of John Myers, Jr. the sum of twenty-two hundred dollars for Two Slaves a boy by the name of Dave about

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.      <sup>58</sup>Allen, Compendium of the Sixth Census, p. 56.

<sup>59</sup>DeBow, Compendium of the Seventh Census, p. 260.

<sup>60</sup>Percy Lee Rainwater, Mississippi Storm Center of Secession, 1856-1861 (Baton Rouge: O. Claiton, 1938), p. 296.

<sup>61</sup>Sydnor and Bennett, Mississippi History, p. 160.

Twenty four years of age a girl by the name of Silpy about  
 Twenty Six years of age Said Slaves I do warrant sound in  
 body and mind and Slaves for life and Said Slaves the right  
 thereof I do warrant and forever defend unto the Said John  
 Myers Jr. his heirs and assigns and all other claims  
 whatsoever given under my hand and seal

Lewis C. Gibson<sup>62</sup>

In 1850, the slave census recorded that the county had 235 slave holders,  
 and forty of this number had more than ten slaves. The following individuals  
 had more than twenty slaves:

James B. Mendenhall	56 slaves
John D. McLaurin	52 slaves
Michael Durr	39 slaves
Willis Walker	36 slaves
William Massey	28 slaves
Charles McNair	28 slaves
William B. Easterling	26 slaves
John Horwood	26 slaves
Isham Brown	24 slaves
John Phillips	25 slaves
Joseph Bogan	23 slaves
Dixon Magee	23 slaves
Elizabeth Walker	23 slaves <sup>63</sup>

Thus, from this list and the data extracted from the slave census of  
 1850, it can be seen that only a small portion of the county's population  
 possessed slaves. But it is known that during this period, the slave popula-  
 tion expanded from 666 in 1830, to 2,336 in 1860.<sup>64</sup>

Perhaps, the two most important elections during this period, excluding  
 local, state, and national elections, were the votes on the repudiation of  
 State bonds in 1851, and the attitude of the people in this county for consider-  
 ation to the State Constitutional Convention in 1832. The vote on the bond

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<sup>62</sup> McLendon, "History of Simpson County," p. 114.

<sup>63</sup> 1850 Census Population Schedules--Mississippi (Slave, T-6, Roll 152,  
 microfilm, The National Archives, Madison (part) through Yazoo Counties),  
 Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>64</sup> See page 52, table 4.

issue was 254 to 116 against payment,<sup>65</sup> and 334 to 140 for the Constitutional Convention of 1832.<sup>66</sup> For delegate to the Convention, John B. Lowe defeated Abraham Carr, John C. Halford, and Brewster Jayne.<sup>67</sup> During campaigns, of any nature, there were public speeches everywhere. Great barbecues succeeded each other, and were attended by large crowds, who thronged to the appointed places in wagons and carriages, on foot and on horseback; traveling for miles to enjoy these gatherings which served as both a social as well as a political outlet.<sup>68</sup>

The representatives to the State legislature from Simpson County during this period were:

	<u>Senators</u>	<u>Representatives</u>
1830	Joseph Cooper	Franklin E. Plummer
1831	A. M. Keegan	Frederick Carr
1833	Charles Lynch	James Powell
1835	Richard Hargis	.. Brown
1835	..	Alex McCaskill
1837	Thomas J. Coffee	Alex McCaskill
1838	Thomas J. Coffee	B. H. Jayne
1839	Thomas J. Coffee	J. D. Mendenhall
1840	Thomas J. Coffee	John Berry, Simon Thomas
1841	Thomas J. Coffee	John Berry, .. McCallum
1842	George T. Swann	John Berry, .. McCallum

<sup>65</sup>Returns of general elections, November 2 and 3, 1852, by counties, Mississippi State Archive Files Series F, Volume 73. Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. These bonds were issued in 1836, payable to the Mississippi Union Bank, in the sum of five million dollars, to aid the bank in obtaining a capital loan. The bonds called for interest at the rate of five percent per annum, and they were due, one-fourth on February 5, 1850, and three-fourths on February 5, 1858. None of the principal or interest of these bonds has ever been paid by the State.

<sup>66</sup>Returns of elections, local and general; also militia elections and credentials, 1831. Mississippi State Archive Files Series F, Volume 34. Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>67</sup>Returns of elections for State officials and Presidential electors; also credentials of elected officials, 1832. Mississippi State Archive Files Series F, Volume 36. Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>68</sup>Davis, Recollections of Mississippi and Mississippians, p. 111.



1843	George T. Swann	John Berry
1844	George T. Swann	H. C. Bennett
1846	George T. Swann	J. Berry
1848	P. S. Catchings	James M. Dampier
1850	P. S. Catchings	James M. Dampier
1852	P. S. Catchings	James M. Dampier
1854	M. A. Banks	T. D. Magee
1856	M. A. Banks	H. F. Johnson, John Berry
1857	M. A. Banks	John Berry
1858	P. S. Catchings	John Berry
1859	P. S. Catchings	L. B. Walker
1860	P. S. Catchings	L. B. Walker <sup>69</sup>

Throughout the period, the Simpson County militia held regular elections and evidently kept their organization in constant readiness.<sup>70</sup>

In 1860 the following communication was sent to Governor James J. Pettus:

Westville, Miss. Sept 18th 1860

To His Excellency James J. Pettus

We the undersigned Citizens of Simpson County, have associated ourselves together for the purpose of forming a Volunteer Military Company in said County, and therefore pray your Excellency to grant an order for the election of officers for said company. We have adopted Mississippi Rifles with bayonets for our arms and have adopted as our uniform dark blue with yellow buff trimmings, cap with red-topped pompoon, name adopted "Westville Guards"

L. B. Walker	Jacob Hurst
T. H. Berry	J. C. Gowin
F. M. Walker	W. W. Gardner
H. J. Banks	J. W. Quinn
J. J. Berry	C. H. Robinson
Wm J Douglas	G. W. Norwood
V. H. Hutherford	F. A. Walker
O. J. Robinson	C. D. Odum
Wm Gilce	H. F. Smith
E. C. Sandifer	G. W. Owens

<sup>69</sup>Lowry and McCardle, A History of Mississippi, p. 573.

<sup>70</sup>The election of officers were held July 21, 1835, in 1839, October 6, 1858, and October 5, 1860. See Returns of elections (local) held in November, 1835; Mississippi State Archive Files Series F, Volume 41; Returns of elections for Governor and other State officers; also military elections, 1839. Mississippi State Archive Files Series F, Volume 51; Returns of the general election in November, 1843, arranged by counties. Mississippi State Archive Files Series F, Volume 58; Returns of election for Judge of High Court of Errors and Appeals; also for county officials. Mississippi State Archive Files Series F, Volume 81, respectively. These documents are on file in the Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.



Wm B. Easterling  
 E. P. Eagan  
 L. M. Holloway  
 G. Walker  
 O. J. D. Funchess  
 H. Eagan  
 J. W. Farlow  
 L. C. Gibson  
 O. H. Webster  
 Wm Peacock  
 W. E. Dickson  
 P. M. Thurman  
 James H. McDonald  
 A. J. Lee  
 J. J. Jones

G. B. Banks  
 W. Crisco  
 Asa Walker  
 J. N. Bishop  
 E. R. Bennett  
 T. L. Mendenhall  
 G. W. Weathersby  
 W. Turner  
 J. D. Bishop  
 G. O. Jones  
 N. W. Lee  
 James May<sup>71</sup>

Later, on October 5, 1860, the following officers were elected:

Brigadier General, B. Taylor; Colonel, T. R. Gowan; Lieutenant Colonel, A. F. Betterworth; Major, John Allbritton; and Captain, O. J. Robinson.<sup>72</sup>

Immediately following the organizational functions of the above military unit, the secession movement commenced in South Carolina. From South Carolina, the movement spread to Mississippi, and, in 1861, Simpson County, along with other counties throughout the State, sent delegates to Jackson to consider the practicability of withdrawing from the Union. The fundamental causation behind this action was the bitter quarrel over slavery which had existed for the past two decades. The arguments had reached their climax, however, in 1860, when Abraham Lincoln, an opponent of slavery extension, was elected President of the United States.

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<sup>71</sup>Governors' Records--Administration of Governor John J. Pettus; Correspondence for the year 1860. Mississippi State Archive Files, Series E, Volume 49. Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>72</sup>Returns of election for Judge of High Court of Errors and Appeals; also for County officials. Mississippi State Archive Files, Series F, Volume 31, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

## CHAPTER V

### CIVIL WAR

On January 9, 1861, a convention which met in the old Capitol at Jackson adopted the Ordinance of Secession, and Mississippi became the second state to secede from the Union.<sup>1</sup> The enactment clause of this ordinance was as follows: "An Ordinance to dissolve the Union between the State of Mississippi and the states united with her under the compact entitled the Constitution of the United States."<sup>2</sup>

As the record indicates, the delegates to the Convention of 1861 from Simpson County, voted unanimously for the Ordinance and opposed any and all proposals for amendment which were suggested from the floor.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, following the official formation of the Confederacy on the fourth day of February, 1862, Simpson County joined hands with her colleagues to combat any force which might be classified as hostile to her "Southern way of life."<sup>4</sup> Little did they conceive of a "long and bloody war" as prophesied by Jefferson Davis in 1861.<sup>5</sup> They optimistically faced the future with

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<sup>1</sup>Journal of the Mississippi Secession Convention, January, 1861. (Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1962), pp. 13ff.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 95; George H. Ethridge, Mississippi--A History (Hopkinsville: The Historical Record Association, 1938), p. 274.

<sup>3</sup>Journal of the Mississippi Secession Convention, 1861, pp. 13ff; Rainwater, Storm Center of Secession, 1856-1861, p. 210.

<sup>4</sup>Mary Virginia Duval, The Student's History of Mississippi (Louisville: Courier-Journal Print Company, 1887), p. 138.

<sup>5</sup>Dunbar Rowland, The Heart of the South, Volume I, p. 785.

confidence and security.

The actual war activities within Simpson County were very limited. Being excluded from any real conflict, the county was spared much of the horror and painful suffering which characterized other sections of the state.<sup>6</sup> However, the unified co-operation and contribution made by this county was unreservedly in support of the Confederacy. They gave nearly 1000 soldiers who fought and died at Vicksburg, Gettysburg, Lookout Mountain and many other places.<sup>7</sup> They remained loyal to the Confederacy until the very end.

Doubtless, the question of Federal usurpation of local rights as well as the principle of independence compelled the people of Simpson County to unite their energies in order to eradicate the opposition to the South which possessed many cherished institutions, especially slavery. However, it is difficult to believe that their primary purpose in fighting the Civil War was to retain slavery in order to have the privilege of controlling a backward race. In comparison to other areas, as previously stated, they had few slaves. However, several historians credit the owners of one or a few slaves and the "poor whites" with being the least compromising of the proponents of slavery.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Simpson County Subject Folder--Reconstruction, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. This source extracted material from a thesis written by Professor Frederick Monroe Ball which was published in the Simpson County News, January 26, 1911. Unfortunately, every Simpson County News for 1911 is nonexistent. Professor Ball's original manuscript can be located on file at the University of Mississippi, University, Mississippi. The work is an unedited volume with numerous notations on practically every page. The study is nineteen pages in length.

<sup>7</sup>Simpson County Subject Folder--War, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. Confederate Military Records--Master Rolls. List of Indigent and Disabled Soldiers and their Dependents, 1864-1868 (3 volumes). Mississippi State Archive Files Series L. Volume 89, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>8</sup>Rainwater, Mississippi Storm Center of Secession, 1856-1861, pp. 445-48; William E. Dodd, The Cotton Kingdom (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920), p. 9; Ray A. Billington, Westward Expansion (New York: Macmillan Company, 1960), p. 328; Chester C. Maxey, Political Philosophies (New York: Macmillan Company, 1959), p. 440.

Regardless of purpose, the county did its part to perpetuate the ideas and philosophies of the South.

Because of the lack of actual fighting within the county the activities of the greater number of troops from Simpson can be best observed from the records of three regiments, the Sixteenth, the Sixth, and the Thirty-ninth. Within these regiments were found practically all of the men enlisted from this county. However, others served in other units and some were mustered into State Service. The first unit organized in the county became Company B of the Sixteenth Regiment of April 20, 1861. The Regimental officers of the Sixteenth Infantry Regiment were:

Colonels--Carnot Posey, promoted Brigadier-General, mortally wounded at Bristoe Station; Samuel E. Baker, killed at Bloody Angle; Edward C. Council, mortally wounded at Weldon Railroad.

Lieutenant-Colonels--Robert Clark, James J. Shannon; Abram M. Feltus, killed at Spottsylvania; Seneca Mc-Neil Bain,

Majors--Jeff H. Bankston, Samuel E. Baker, E. C. Council, S. M. Bain, Thomas R. Stockdale.

Surgeons--A. B. Snell; G. Alston Groves, died at Bettysburg. Assistant Surgeons--Gwin and Groves.

Chaplains--S. H. Ross, died 12 February, 1863; A. H. Lomax, 1863-65.<sup>9</sup>

The men from Simpson County composed the Westville Guards, Company B, Sixteenth Regiment, and were mustered into the Confederate Army at Westville on April 20, 1861. The company officers were:

Captain--George J. D. Funches.

First Lieutenant--Samuel N. Gaston.

Second Lieutenant--Charles B. Banke.

Third Lieutenant--William J. Douglas

Captain Henry Smith, missing May, 1864.

Lieutenant J. S. Arnold, commanding May, 1864.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Dunbar Rowland, The Official and Statistical Register of the State of Mississippi (Nashville: Brandon Printing Company, 1908), p. 459. Hereafter cited as Mississippi Register. See also War of the Rebellion, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series IV, Volume II (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1889), p. 931. Subsequently referred to as Official Records.

<sup>10</sup> Mississippi Register, 1908, p. 459.

After spending three months at Corinth, Mississippi,<sup>11</sup> the Regiment was sent to Virginia,<sup>12</sup> and then proceeded to Manassas on August 8, 1861.<sup>13</sup>

In northeastern Virginia the regiment was assigned to a brigade commanded by General George B. Crittenden.<sup>14</sup> They remained near Centerville through the winter,<sup>15</sup> and dropped behind the Rappahannock where they united efforts with Stonewall Jackson and participated in the famous Shenandoah Valley Campaign of May and June, 1862.<sup>16</sup>

They were in the Fort Royal and Winchester battles and shared the forced marches of the army, but their most active engagement was at Cross Keys and Port Republic, June 8-9, where the Sixteenth received meritorious acclaim from General Richard S. Ewell.<sup>17</sup>

By June 17, the regiment was at Cold Harbor where General I. R. Trimble observed that the Sixteenth gallantly charged and drove General George B. McClellan's troops from their supposedly impregnable position. Prior to this charge many Confederate commands had withdrawn and declared the day was lost.<sup>18</sup> General I. R. Trimble stated that "the charge of the Sixteenth Mississippi and Twenty-first North Carolina, sustained from the first movement without a falter could not be surpassed for intrepid bravery and high resolve."<sup>19</sup> The regiment was also actively engaged in the battle of Malvern

<sup>11</sup>Official Records, Series 1, Volume II, Part 2, p. 197; 200; Series 1, Volume III, p. 105.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Series 1, Volume II, Part 2, p. 197; 200.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 206; 217.

<sup>14</sup>Mississippi Register, 1908, p. 461.

<sup>15</sup>Official Records, Series I, Volume V, p. 985.

<sup>16</sup>Mississippi Register, 1908, p. 461.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 462.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Official Records, Series I, Volume XI, Part 2, p. 616.

Hill on July 1.<sup>20</sup>

After this campaign the regiment was transferred to Featherston's Mississippi brigade of Wilcox's division, Longstreet's corps.<sup>21</sup>

In the second Manassas campaign on August 21, 1862, near Kelly's Ford on the Rappahannock General C. M. Wilcox reported the gallant action of the Sixteenth Regiment. And on August 30, 1862, at Second Manassas, the entire unit "behaved with great gallantry during the few hours' action."<sup>22</sup>

In September the Sixteenth entered Maryland by wading the Potomac at Leesburg, and assisted in the capture of Harper's Ferry.<sup>23</sup> On September 17, 1862, the regiment engaged in the battle of Sharpsburg where the Sixteenth displayed valor beyond description.<sup>24</sup> Captain A. M. Feltus, commander of the Sixteenth, gave a vivid report of the battle where 144 of the 228 men in the unit were killed or wounded, leaving only 84 men.<sup>25</sup>

At Fredericksburg, in December, the Sixteenth was in the line of battle three days and nights, under heavy artillery fire.<sup>26</sup>

In the Chancellorsville campaign the regiment had a brisk engagement with the enemy on the Furnace road,<sup>27</sup> and lost their regimental colors in one of the many skirmishes which characterized their activities in the battle.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 600; 608.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., Series I, Volume XIX, Part 1, pp. 603-4; Series I, Volume XXI, p. 539.

<sup>22</sup>Mississippi Register, 1908, p. 463.      <sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Official Records, Series I, Volume XIX, Part 1, p. 684.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 885.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., Series I, Volume XXI, p. 616.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., Series I, Volume XXV, Part 1, pp. 871-72.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 819; 873; Ibid., Series I, Volume XXXVI, Part 1, p. 545; Ibid., Series III, Volume IV, p. 817.

At Gettysburg, in July, 1863, the Sixteenth was held in reserve until quite late, "when it went well up in front, but had little opportunity before being recalled behind the Pegram batteries, where the brigade was held under fire during the battle of the third day."<sup>29</sup>

In the "battle of the Wilderness" the regiment was outstanding.<sup>30</sup> "Later, on May 12, the officers and men of the Sixteenth were among the foremost of the gallant recoverers and defenders of the Bloody Angle."<sup>31</sup> On December 17, 1864, Lieutenant-General Richard S. Ewell, the Sixteenth's old division commander, wrote General N. H. Harris the following communication:

The manner in which your brigade charged over the hill to recapture our works was witnessed by me with intense admiration for men who could advance so calmly to what seemed and proved a most certain death. I have never seen troops under a hotter fire than was endured on this day by your brigade and some others.<sup>32</sup>

Also, after this battle, Major-General Ed Johnson commented in part:

I have not forgotten the conduct of the Sixteenth Mississippi Regiment while under my command from Fort Royal to Malvern Hill. I am glad to see, from a trial more severe than any it experienced while in my division, that the regiment is in a brigade of which it may well be proud.<sup>33</sup>

During the remainder of the war the Sixteenth was in numerous skirmishes and battles. Early on April 2, 1865, they were ordered to Petersburg and put in Battery Gregg. This section was later assailed on all sides by troops of General John Gibbon's Twelfth Regiment. Finally, "the assailing hosts swarmed through the ditch, over the parapet, and after a hand-to-hand fight of nearly half an hour, the survivors of the gallant defenders were compelled to surrender."<sup>34</sup> The Federal generals reported that 250 surrendered and 55

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<sup>29</sup>See Ibid., Series I, Volume LXVII, Part 2, pp. 663-4; Mississippi Register, 1906, p. 464.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 465.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.



were found dead, and their own loss was about 120 killed and 600 wounded.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, the Federal General John Gibbon said that "the assault of his men was one of the most desperate of the entire war, and succeeded only through obstinate courage at a fearful cost."<sup>36</sup>

Possibly Francis Lawley, an English observer, in his "Dying Hours and Struggles of the Confederacy," summarizes the devotion and courage of the Sixteenth Mississippi Regiment when he wrote: "In those nine memorable April days there was no episode more glorious to the Confederate arms than the heroic self-immolation of the Mississippians at Fort Gregg."<sup>37</sup> Thus, the activities of the Sixteenth Regiment came to a close.

Another Confederate Army unit with Simpson County citizens was the Sixth Infantry Regiment. The regimental officers were:

Colonel—John J. Thornton, wounded at Shiloh; Robert Lowry, promoted as Brigadier-General February 4, 1865.

Lt. Colonel—Enoch R. Bennett, to May 1862; A. Y. Harper, Thomas J. Borden, W. R. Handon,

Surgeon—William Allis,

Assistant Surgeon—Jackson L. Riley.

Quartermaster—John P. Stevens,

Commissary—Edward G. Williams

Adjutant—Abram B. Willis; William Thornton, to May, 1861.

Chaplain—Joseph W. Ard.

Sergeant-Major—William Sharkey, discharged, disability, 1861.<sup>38</sup>

The Simpson County Fencibles, designated Company H, Sixth Regiment, was mustered into state service at Westville on July 9, 1861. The officers were:

Captains—Enoch R. Bennett, selected Lieutenant Colonel; John S. Husbands, to reorganization.

First Lieutenant—Warren G. Magee, resigned, 1861.

Second Lieutenant—Willoughby T. May, resigned, 1861.

Third Lieutenant—German Walker.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Quoted in Rowland, Mississippi Register, (1908), p. 467.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 556.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 557-8. See also Official Records, Series IV, Volume II, p. 930.

After being mustered into the Confederate States' service at Grenada, Mississippi, on August 24, 1861, and a brief encampment there, the regiment moved to Kentucky in the last of October, and was reviewed by General W. J. Hardee at Bowling Green, November 3, 1861.<sup>40</sup>

While stationed in Kentucky the regiment suffered from typhoid fever and measles; reducing some companies to 10 or 15 men.<sup>41</sup>

After the fall of Fort Donelson the Sixth Regiment was concentrated at Corinth under General Albert Sidney Johnston.<sup>42</sup>

During the battle of Shiloh on April 6-7, 1862, the Sixth Regiment "rushed forward toward the Federal camps, in a place where they were outflanked and embarrassed by a morass in their front that broke the line."<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, the Sixth charged the enemy's line only to meet a "quick and bloody repulse."<sup>44</sup> But "again and again, unaided, the Sixth Mississippi charged the enemy's line, and it was only when the regiment had lost 300 officers and men killed and wounded, out of an aggregate of 425, that it yielded and retreated in disorder over its own dead and dying."<sup>45</sup> Colonel J. J. Thornton, Brigade Commander, wrote, "It would be useless to enlarge on the courage and devotion of the Sixth Mississippi. The facts as recorded speak louder than any words of mine."<sup>46</sup> Later approximately 60 men reformed, and remained in battle until they were marched to the rear.<sup>47</sup> The remaining elements of all the regiment participated in the battles at Corinth and Tupelo.<sup>48</sup>

Next the Sixth was transferred to Vicksburg, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and

<sup>40</sup>Mississippi Register, 1908, p. 558.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 559.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.; Official Records, Series I, Volume X, Part 1, p. 581.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 582.

<sup>48</sup>Mississippi Register, 1908, p. 559.

then to Jackson, Mississippi.<sup>49</sup> The first half of the year 1863 was spent in the battle of Vicksburg.<sup>50</sup> The most active engagements of the regiment being in the vicinity of Port Gibson, Bruinsburg,<sup>51</sup> and Grand Gulf.<sup>52</sup>

Following several minor engagements the Regiment under Colonel Robert Lowry was detailed on March 20, 1862, to "take charge of the expedition against deserters and disloyal men between Pearl River and Tombigbee, south of the Southern Railroad."<sup>53</sup> During the expedition 9 men were hanged, 2 shot and 1 wounded, and his loss was 1 killed, 2 wounded.<sup>54</sup>

Afterwards, on May 14, 1864, the regiment was ordered to Rome, Georgia, and took an active part in several battles there.<sup>55</sup> The fighting at New Hope Church line and Hickkillet road are two of many engagements during this critical period which witnessed the efforts of the Sixth Mississippi.<sup>56</sup>

About the first of February, 1865, the unit was ordered to the Carolinas where it participated in the battles of Kinston and Bentonville, the latter on March 19-21, 1865, in which the "division was distinguished by a gallant and successful charge."<sup>57</sup>

At this time, hostilities terminated and the army surrendered April 26, 1865, at Durham Station, North Carolina, and paroled at Greensboro, ending the

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.      <sup>50</sup>Official Records, Series I, Volume XV, p. 18.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., Series I, Volume XXIV, Part 1, pp. 663-4; 672; 674.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 251-2; 256.

<sup>53</sup>Mississippi Register, 1908, p. 562; See also Official Records, Series I, Volume XXII, Part 3, pp. 819-20.

<sup>54</sup>Mississippi Register, 1908, p. 562.

<sup>55</sup>Official Records, Series I, Volume XXVIII, Part 4, p. 689. See also Ibid., Part 3, pp. 879-80; 891.

<sup>56</sup>Mississippi Register, 1908, pp. 562-63.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 564.

activities of the Sixth Mississippi.<sup>58</sup>

The third and last infantry unit from Simpson County was the Thirty-ninth Regiment. The officers were:

Colonel-W. B. Shelby,  
Lieutenant-Colonel-William E. Ross.  
Majors-W. Moore Quin, resigned; R. J. Durr.<sup>59</sup>

The men from Simpson County composed Company A, the Simpson County Greys. This group was organized March 8, 1862. The company officers were:

Captain-R. J. Durr,  
First Lieutenant-J. Hoskins,  
Second Lieutenant-J. Clower,  
Third Lieutenant-T. E. Dryson.<sup>60</sup>

Several weeks later, on March 29, 1862, the Pearl River Guards were organized and became Company F of the Thirty-ninth Regiment. The officers were:

Captain-C. B. Banks,  
First Lieutenant-A. T. Gerard,  
Second Lieutenant-T. J. Murray,  
Third Lieutenant-J. A. Smith.<sup>61</sup>

This regiment was organized May 13, 1862, and sent to Grenada and became a part of the brigade of General John B. Villepique, who was ordered to Vicksburg, June 23, 1862.<sup>62</sup> After serving briefly in this area, the regiment engaged in the battle of Corinth October 3-5, 1862, where the Thirty-ninth participated in a limited effort against the enemy.<sup>63</sup>

Next the Thirty-ninth was ordered from Oxford to reinforce the Confederate garrison at Port Hudson, Louisiana.<sup>64</sup> There, a siege ensued on May 27, 1863,

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. <sup>59</sup> Official Records, Series IV, Volume II, p. 934.

<sup>60</sup> Mississippi Register, 1908, p. 720. <sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 721.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.; See also Official Records, Series I, Volume X, Part 2, p. 608.

<sup>63</sup> Mississippi Register, 1908, p. 722; See also Official Records, Series I, Volume XVII, Part 1, pp. 410-11.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., Series I, Volume XV, pp. 934-35.

which resulted in unconditional surrender of the garrison on July 8, 1863.<sup>65</sup> However, throughout the assault, the Thirty-ninth inflicted heavy losses to the enemy.<sup>66</sup>

After a period of re-organization centered around exchange and parole of personnel<sup>67</sup> the Thirty-ninth was attached to the brigade of General C. W. Sears, in March, 1864; which moved into Alabama and Georgia.<sup>68</sup> Later, in the defense of the "cut at Allatoona," a large portion of the Thirty-ninth surrendered to Major J. C. Edson of the Fourth Minnesota.<sup>69</sup>

From this engagement the troops marched to Nashville, and were detached to support General N. B. Forrest in the siege of Murrensboro. Later, the remnant marched back to Nashville over "icy roads, many barefooted." On December 26, 1864, they crossed the Tennessee River, and then into Northeast, Mississippi.<sup>70</sup>

The last service of the regiment was in defense of the fortifications east of Mobile, called Spanish Fort and Fort Blakeley. After much bitter hostilities the Confederate defenses were forced to surrender on April 9, 1865. Of the 5,000 prisoners taken most were the remnant of the Thirty-ninth. The captives were later paroled after some capitulation at Citronelle, Alabama, May 4, 1865.<sup>71</sup> Some members of the Thirty-ninth Regiment were sent to Ship Island following the surrender of Mobile and found the conditions somewhat trying on

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., Series I, Volume XXVI, Part 1, pp. 622-24.

<sup>66</sup>Mississippi Register, 1908, p. 723.

<sup>67</sup>Official Records, Series I, Volume XXVI, Part 1, p. 143; Ibid., Series I, Volume XXXI, Part 3, p. 733.

<sup>68</sup>Mississippi Register, 1908, p. 723.

<sup>69</sup>Official Records, Series I, Volume XXXIX, Part 1, p. 751.

<sup>70</sup>Mississippi Register, 1908, p. 725.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

several occasions. There seemed to be a definite lack of food and other necessities. One of the greatest luxuries available to prisoners of the Thirty-ninth was "parched corn."<sup>72</sup> Needless to say, the latter was a rarity.

Besides the above mentioned military units, Simpson County contributed troops in other divisions of the Confederate Army and Navy and State service. Moreover, immediately prior to the termination of the war, the following summary was formulated by the Simpson County Clerk on February 18, 1865, which indicates the important contribution in manpower of the county made to the Confederate service.

#### Recapitulation

1st District - Number of Soldiers	204	
Number of Beneficiaries		356
2nd District - Number of Soldiers	93	
Number of Beneficiaries		98
3rd District - Number of Soldiers	292	
Number of Beneficiaries		426
4th District - Number of Soldiers	124	
Number of Beneficiaries		172
5th District - Number of Soldiers	238	
Number of Beneficiaries		410
	<u>951</u>	<u>1,162</u>
	Soldiers	Beneficiaries

#### The State of Mississippi

Simpson County - I T. L. Mendenhall Clerk of the Probate Court of said county whereby certify that the within and foregoing 30½ pages do contain a true and correct copy & transcript of the names and number of soldiers & beneficiaries in said county as the same were reported to me and filed in the office of the Probate Clerk of said County by Commissioners who were appointed by the Board of Police of said County as Military Relief Commissioners & as the same now remains in file in my said office in testimony whereof I have hereunto set my

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<sup>72</sup>Interview with Mr. Lawrence DeLoach Bush, Sr., December 21, 1961, Pinola, Mississippi, age 95, who exhibited a personal account written by his father, J. R. Bush. The latter served in Company A, 39th Mississippi Regiment from 1864-65, until he was captured at Mobile on April 9, 1865. He was paroled May 12, 1865. The account was dated September 17, 1906.

hand & seal of office February 18, 1865.

T. L. Mendenhall Clerk <sup>73</sup>

As previously stated, there were no actual battles within the county. However, on April 23, 1863, Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson, of the Sixth Illinois Cavalry, with a force of approximately 1,700 men, traversed Simpson County and spent one night two miles west of Westville. Grierson, who had departed from La Grange, Tennessee, nine days earlier, was primarily concerned with turning Confederate attention from Grant's effort to cross the Mississippi River below Vicksburg.<sup>74</sup> His official report states:

...at 6 o'clock on the morning of the 26th, we crossed Leaf River, burning the bridge behind us to prevent any enemy who might be in pursuit from following; thence through Raleigh, capturing the sheriff of that county, with about \$3,000 in government funds; thence to Westville, reaching this place soon after dark. Passing on about 2 miles, we halted to feed, in the midst of a heavy rain, on the plantation of a Mr. Williams.

After feeding, Colonel Prince, of the Seventh Illinois Cavalry, with two battalions, was sent immediately forward to Pearl River to secure the ferry and landing. He arrived in time to capture a courier who had come to bring intelligence of the approach of the Yankees and orders of the destruction of the ferry. With the main column, I followed in about two hours. We ferried and swam our horses, and succeeded in crossing the whole command by 2. P. M., (April 27th).<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Confederate Military Records--Confederate Muster Rolls. List of Indigent and Disabled Soldiers and their Dependents, 1864-1868 (3 volumes). Mississippi State Archive Files, Series 1, Volume 89. Department of Archives and History Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>74</sup>Official Records, Series I, Volume XXIV, p. 552; See Alexander Brown, Grierson's Raid: A Cavalry Adventure of the Civil War (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1954), p. 139. See also Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Volume IV (New York: The Century Company, 1864-1867), pp. 414-15; note map, Volume III, p. 442; Francis Vinton Greene, Campaigns of the Civil War: The Mississippi (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), pp. 120-1; Vernon Blythe, A History of the Civil War in the United States (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1914), p. 150.

<sup>75</sup>Official Records, Series I, Volume XXIV, Part 1, p. 526.



Later, Grierson proceeded westerly and then south to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, his destination.

The actual depredation of this raid through the county is not recorded; however, Grierson stated that "during the expedition we killed and wounded about 100 of the enemy, captured and paroled over 500 prisoners, many of them officers, destroyed between 50 and 60 miles of railroad and telegraph, captured and destroyed over 3,000 stand of arms, and other army stores and government property to an immense amount; we also captured 1,000 horses and mules."<sup>76</sup> Because Grierson's encampment was brief and there was no actual fighting in the county it is unlikely that Simpson County contributed heavily to this list. However, the description that Grierson gave of the country through which he passed could, doubtless, be applicable to Simpson County. He said:

Much of the country through which we passed was almost entirely destitute of forage and provisions, and it was but seldom that we obtained over one meal per day. Many of the inhabitants must suffer for want of the necessaries of life, which have reached most fabulous prices.<sup>77</sup>

On occasion, minor raids by deserters and other undesirable elements would cause the people to bury food, clothing, and items of personal value.<sup>78</sup>

The following document adds credence to the above account:

Simpson County Miss March 31st  
1863  
Gov. J. J. Pettus

Sir

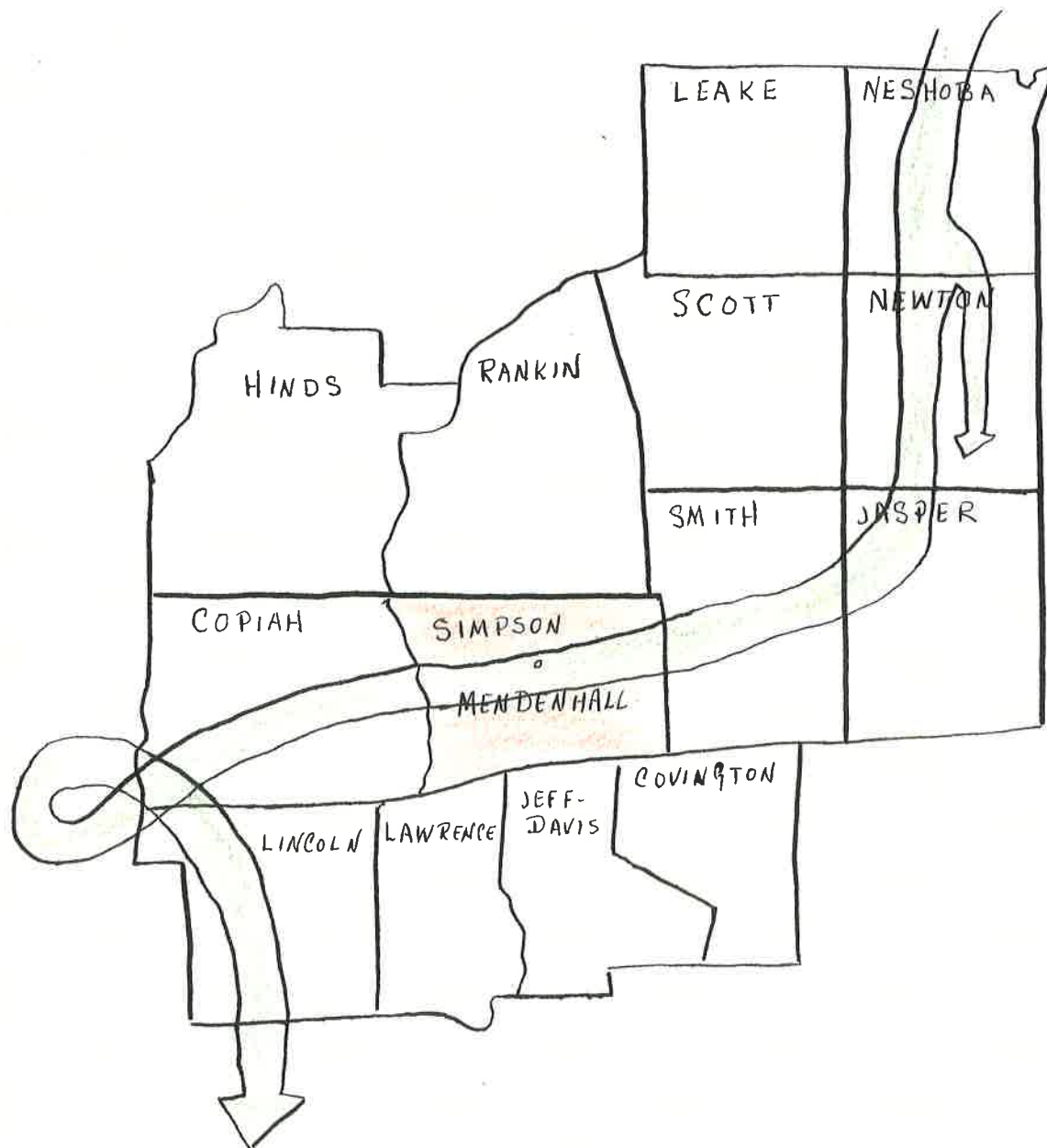
I take this method of informing of a set of deserters in my county, I have tried every means in my power & of the citizens to arrest them & they lay out in the woods & are upheld by their friends in the neighborhood I have caught some of the set twice & they have come both times & broke

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 528.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 529.

<sup>78</sup>Interview with Mrs. Gussie May Boggan, D'le Mississippi, December 19, 1961.

Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson's Raid through Simpson County\*



\*Based on Civil War in Mississippi, 1861, 1865 (Bolton: Ken Parks Association, 1959), back cover; Dr. Jack W. Gunn, "Vicksburg Surrendered 97 Years Ago," The Clarion-Ledger (July 3, 1960), p. 1.

them out of Jail & I understand houses & one Bridg across the River, Sunday Night I therefore call upon you to send me down one hundred Calvry as speedy as possible & use all precaution in letting the news come before the Calvry, theirs is no telling what they will do in the balance of the citizens that has assisted me in theirs arrest for further particulars Capt May will inform you as he can explain in person better than I can by writing & your compliance will oblige me much &

Yours with Respect

Jas H. Thompson

Shiff of Simpson Co.<sup>79</sup>

The response to this request is not determined. Furthermore, this band or set of deserters numbered twenty-five men, and following their escape from jail "no one in the county dared molest them."<sup>80</sup>

Also, during the latter stages of the war, the distant rumble of gunfire as well as artillery flashes in the horizon from Vicksburg, Jackson, and other nearby points kept the people fearful and uncertain about their welfare.<sup>81</sup>

The following communication indicates the concern of worried citizens who feared raids or similar attacks against the county:

Mt. Zion Simpson Miss  
June 30th 1863

His Excellency J. J. Pettus

Dear Sir As the enemy is making frequent raids through the county. And there being no troops in this part of the State. If the citizens that are at home was to form Companies and drill and hold themselves in readiness to meet any company of the enemy that might pass through the county. Could the State or the confederate government under the late law furnish ammunition. there is but little if any ammunition in the county and indeed the guns is not of the kind to meet the

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<sup>79</sup>Governors' Records--Administration of Governor John J. Pettus: Correspondence, May-November, 1863. Also some undated executive papers. Mississippi State Archive Files, Series E, Volume 61, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>80</sup>John K. Bettersworth, Confederate Mississippi (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), pp. 240-41; Governors' Records, Administration of Governor John J. Pettus: Correspondence, March-April, 1863. Mississippi State Archive Files, Series E, Volume 60, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>81</sup>Interview with Dr. Ed Everett, D'Lo Mississippi, December 20, 1961. Most of this gunfire probably came during the battle of Vicksburg in 1862 and 1863.

enemy with their long range guns Please let me know as soon as convenient what could be furnished

Very Respectfully your

Obedient Servant J. C. Malaurin

address Mt. Zion

Simpson  
Miss.<sup>82</sup>

Although there was some uneasiness behind the lines, patriotism ran high among the people. Moreover, while its men were gradually absorbed into service, county citizens turned their gold into confederate bonds.<sup>83</sup>

As time passed, however, the county's economy began to diminish and sources of income became limited. Although the county had rich timber land, its lack of manpower impaired exploitation. On the creeks and bottom lands large fields of cotton and corn were tended by the women and children or by trusted slaves. These efforts produced only small profits.<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, the people felt assured they would meet hardships and danger as it came, and they did just that. However, many alterations had to take place.

The blockade of Mobile by Union forces in 1861, where the farmers and merchants of Simpson County had previously obtained supplies, suggested the necessity of contriving some way of conserving their supplies and other items.<sup>85</sup> This could only be done by ingenious substitution and tedious frugality.

In place of coffee, the South's daily beverage, sweet potatoes were cut into small squares, dried and parched, which made a palatable substitute. Also okra seeds were made into coffee. Grits were substituted for rice. Eye

<sup>82</sup>Governors' Records. Administration of Governor John J. Pettus: Correspondence, March-April, 1863. Mississippi State Archives Files, Series E, Volume 60, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>83</sup>Simpson County Subject Folder-War. Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi, p. 1. Hereafter cited as War File.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

hominy made of whole corn, hushed with hickory ashes was a standing dish through the winter and substituted for the absence of hot biscuits. Soda was made from burnt corn cobs and candles were remolded from candle wax which had previously been utilized. Soap for laundry use had always been made on the farm. It was made by pouring water over wood ashes (oak) which in turn was caught in keys containing cracklings and resin from pine trees and places over a slow burning fire. An excellent lye soap resulted.<sup>86</sup>

The previously cheap and indispensable commodity in the economy of the housewife, salt, became a costly and scarce item. Soon, however, it was learned that the dirt floors of smoke houses could be dug up, placed in hoppers, "and run down after the manner of leaching ashes, and if the brine was boiled down and dried out, the result would be salt."<sup>87</sup>

In time cloth for all needs--table cloths, towels, sheets, blankets--came to be woven. The cloth was stitched with homespun thread which was dyed from coloring from bark, roots, leaves, and trees.<sup>88</sup> Also, sheep were sheared for wool. Knitted socks and sweaters made clothes for the soldiers and household. In this process the looms were used extensively.<sup>89</sup>

Shoes were made from beef hides and carried to the nearest tannery. On some occasions Negroes who were trained for this occupation made leather shoes. Shoes were worn as long as they could be mended.

Usually the soles outlasted the upper part of the shoes and when the shoes had depreciated considerably, they were ripped apart and the stitches from the soles were used again to hold the new uppers intact. The new uppers

<sup>86</sup>Gusale May Boggan, "County's Women Met Hardships In War Between States," Simpson County News (November 3, 1960), p. 1.

<sup>87</sup>War File, p. 3.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Boggan, "County's Women Meet Hardships...", Simpson County News, (November 3, 1960), p. 1.

were made from ante-bellum cloth, poplin and alpaca. Needless to say, such indispensable articles as sewing and knitting needles were consistently protected.<sup>90</sup>

Women as well as the few men who remained in the county actively engaged in farming. Moreover, wild game was plentiful and most families raised their own meat and grew their food. The average meal was not extraordinary but wholesome, and "the children always ate mush and milk for supper."<sup>91</sup>

Throughout the war the county lacked doctors; only the older physicians remained. However, the county had several individuals who were adroitly talented in utilizing herbs for medicine. Mullein was placed in tea to reduce fever and fever-few, a herb, was also used. Other herbs were: catnip, to make tea for young babies; cherry bark for cough syrup; hear hound "candy" for "worny" children; and leaves from the Kinson Weed were smoked for croup and asthma. Women were also used, as in most areas, to deliver babies and to care for the sick when the doctors' services were detained or too pressing.<sup>92</sup>

In addition to assisting local physicians, the women of Simpson County saw that their children attended school; even if they had to walk three or four miles. The average school could be described as being a log building with one teacher. Classes lasted approximately two or three months in the summer. The "three r's" as emphasized by McCuffy's Reader and The Blue Back Speller were probably the main text books. Furthermore, classes were undoubtedly in "tune with the hickory stick." Most of the schools were private and conducted the first through the tenth grades.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup>War File, p. 3.

<sup>91</sup>Boggan, "County's Women Meet Hardships...", Simpson County News, (November 3, 1961), p. 1.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.; Interview Mr. Lawrence Deloach Bush, Sr., December 21, 1961.

At the same time the women were exerting every effort to improve the educational level of their children the Simpson County Baptist Association continued to function as practicably as possible. There were few weddings during the war; however, the remaining citizenry, mostly women and children, attended church services.<sup>94</sup> Sometimes services were held in a neighbor's home but mostly they worshiped in their own sanctuaries. The slaves sat in the balconies or segregated in a similar fashion. Some slaves had their own houses of worship.<sup>95</sup>

The following table will indicate the activities of the Simpson County Baptist Association between 1861 and 1865:

TABLE 6  
ACTIVITIES OF THE  
SIMPSON COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION (1862-1865)\*

YEAR	CHURCHES REPORTING	BAPTISMS	MEMBER- SHIP NEGROES INCLUDED	NEGROES	COLLECTIONS
1861	27	79	2,117	261	\$119.65
1862	22	79	..	285	\$381.00
1863	25	119	2,041	285	\$579.50
1864	24	320	1,850	343	\$870.39
1865	26	282	2,070	..	\$174.50

\*J. L. Boyd, An Abstract History of the Simpson County Baptist Association, 1853-1927, pp. 14-19.

Progress of the Association up to 1862 was shown along every line, and the missionary interest increased till the war's blight came to detract from every other object and the people fasten their attention onto the needs of the soldiers in the fields and camps of the Civil War. At the end of 1862

<sup>94</sup>War File, p. 4. See also Leavell and Baily, A Complete History of Mississippi Baptist. Volume II, pp. 796 ff.

<sup>95</sup>Boggan, "County's Women Meet Hardships...", Simpson County News, (November 3, 1960), p. 1; Interview Mr. Lawrence Deloach Bush, Sr., December 21, 1961; Interview Mr. Marion Quitman Holbrook, life long resident of Magee, Mississippi, December 21, 1961.



the people were in the grip of troublesome times, and their every effort was centered around the struggle.<sup>96</sup>

Throughout the next decade harmony and peace prevailed among the brethren in their deliberations. Nevertheless, the Civil War had disrupted all their missionary plans and work in the destitute sections of Southeast Mississippi. The Association was slow in taking up this work after the close of the war. Later, however, they were in closer touch with the State Board and the Foreign Mission Board, Richmond; the State Board and some of the churches were forwarding amounts annually to the foreign board.<sup>97</sup>

In the eleventh annual session of the Association in 1863 the organization printed Testaments for the soldiers, and passed a "circular letter" which criticized merchants who overcharged some of the families of soldiers who were in need of provisions and clothes.<sup>98</sup>

The minutes of the 1864 session contained a list of soldiers who held membership in the churches having been killed in battle and died of disease. The list had many familiar names. Twenty had been killed in battle and fifty-six had died of disease. It was resolved:

That while we can but deplore our irreparable losses, and bow with submission to our lot, we feel it incumbent upon us to pray with renewed earnestness that the Lord would speedily terminate the war so that we, as an independent people, might enjoy the blessings of peace throughout our heartfelt sympathies and prayers to surviving relatives and friends of our deceased and wounded brethren.<sup>99</sup>

There are no additional records available to show the activities of other denominations within the county proper. The Civil War had offered its moments of glory, but with the South defeated, the citizens of Simpson County

<sup>96</sup>Boyd, An Abstract History of the Simpson County Baptist Association, 1853-1887, p. 17.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

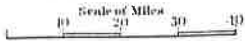
<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

faced a grim future. Uncertainty filled the air as the county moved into the period of reconstruction.

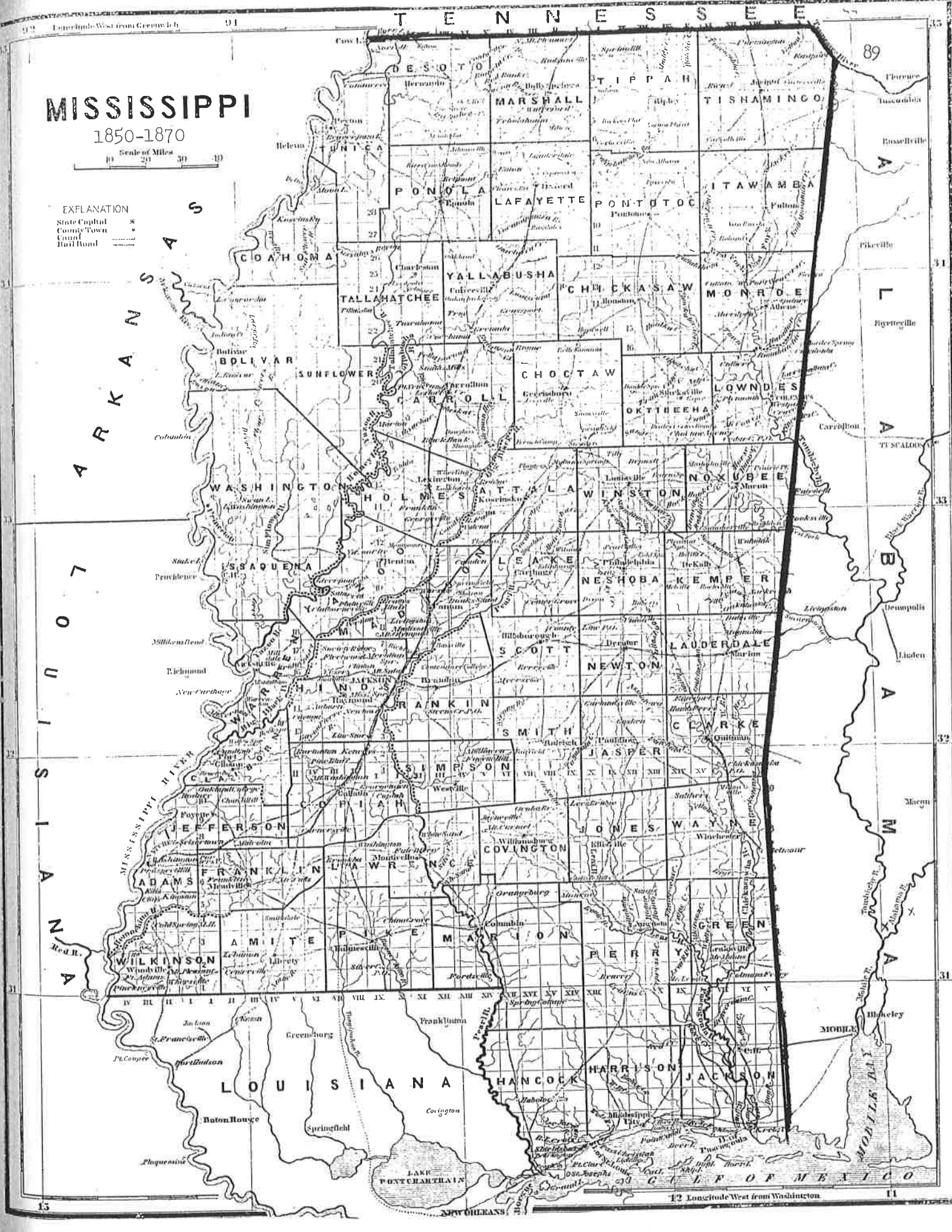
# MISSISSIPPI

1850-1870



## EXPLANATION

- State Capital
- County Town
- City
- Rail Road



12 Longitude West from Washington

11

## CHAPTER VI

### RECONSTRUCTION, 1865-1875

The reconstruction period following the Civil War was difficult for Simpson County as it was throughout the former Confederate States. Yet, Simpson County was fortunate in one respect following the war, for the land, in general, escaped the destruction of property from which other parts of the country suffered. However, upon their return the Confederate soldiers found their homes, almost in ruin from neglect.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Southern whites in defeat lamented the ruins of war and the shattering of their once cherished way of life, but the Negroes, who at last were free, thought the day of jubilee had come.<sup>2</sup>

On May 9, 1872, the County courthouse was destroyed. The belief was prevalent that it was the work of a carpetbagger.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the records of Simpson County up to and through the reconstruction period are exceedingly meager.

There are no records to show to what extent taxes really increased before 1872, but much land had been forfeited for taxation, land and every other form of wealth had declined. All of this loss, added to the freeing of the slaves, left the people in an economically deplorable condition. The following report

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<sup>1</sup>Simpson County subject folder--Reconstruction, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. Hereafter cited as Reconstruction File.

<sup>2</sup>John D. Hicks, The American Nation (Cambridge: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1958), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Reconstruction File.

taken from Federal Census surveys will afford some insight as to the devaluation between 1865 and 1875:

	1860	1870
Real estate (value)	\$ 994,400.	\$145,980.
Personal Property (value)	\$2,632,000.	\$152,500.
Paupers	3.	15.
Cost of Support	\$225.	\$1,100.
Taxes	\$2,982.	\$4,443.
Libraries (private and public)	52.	55.
Schools and Academies	14.	12.
Mills (1850)	20.	
Capital invested (1850)	\$37,850.00	
Mills (1870)	12.	
Capital invested (1870)	\$10,400.00 <sup>4</sup>	

Although economic conditions were far from satisfactory in many areas, most of the elections between the years 1865 and 1875 were conducted in a dignified and legitimate way. Since the Negroes composed thirty percent of the county's population, it would seem that they would take little interest in county elections, but this was not the case.<sup>5</sup> Great interest was taken, and without violence.

Only one Negro was a candidate for representative in 1868. This Negro was defeated by a Democrat whose party was decidedly in the majority throughout this era.<sup>6</sup>

Most elections lasted several days and many methods were employed to win the Negro electorate. Torch processions, free suppers, public dinners, and musical entertainments were given to which the Negroes responded in large numbers.<sup>7</sup>

In the election of 1869 the following report indicates the interest shown by both races as well as parties in the political activities of Simpson County.

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<sup>4</sup>United States Industrial and Social Census, 1860; Ibid., 1870.

<sup>5</sup>Reconstruction File, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

1869 Election Statistics

Number of whites registered	707
Number of Negroes registered	387
Number of white votes cast	650
Number of Negro votes cast	322 <sup>8</sup>

Usually, however, some tactics were used to secure and ameliorate the desires of the Democratic party as the following account illustrates:

The election commissioners usually had the ballot box in an enclosure, to which no outsider was admitted. The Negroes were formed in line. They marched up, two abreast, and handed their votes to the commissioners. If before casting his vote, the Negro was impudent enough to let a white man see his ticket, a democratic ticket was frequently substituted thereupon. This method worked to an appreciable extent, but not on every occasion. When this method failed ballot box stuffing was resorted to. There were numerous ways of doing this. Commissioners would often have democratic tickets up their sleeves and by skillful manipulation substituted them for the ticket which the Negroes were trying to vote.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, no carpet-bagger or Republican was ever elected to office, but they caused some trouble in the county by obtaining limited support. When a carpet-bagger or Republican offended the Democrats they were treated harshly as the following accounts depict:

Wagner, a carpetbagger, came South and located about five miles north of the present town of Harrisville on the place known as "Wagner Field." This man held secret meetings with the Negroes. Just what business was transacted is not known, he was, however, notified by the Klu Klux Klan that his presence was no longer desired in the county. Later Wagner disappeared. Some think that the Klan killed him. Others think he returned to the North. Suffice to say, he was never heard of after that night.

Another carpet-bagger, Williams by name, did a great many things to influence the Negroes. His influence was felt in all parts of the county. Later, he was killed by two men for some personal matter. The killing occurred near Mount Creek bridge on the Jackson and Westville road, six miles south of the present town of Florence.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 6.



The only other episode of violence had occurred immediately following the war in 1865.

During the conflict there were several bands of deserters throughout the vicinity, as previously noted. One of these bands left a legacy of lawlessness. At the mouth of White Oak Creek which runs into Strong River such a group camped and formulated their plans to raid the county. They were originally led by Newt Knight of Jones County who had received word from one of his relatives, while fighting for the Confederacy, informing him of several clandestine relationships which had allegedly occurred between his wife and brother-in-law. Consequently, he deserted, and returned home, shot his brother-in-law, and became both a murderer and deserter. Also, because of the conditions "back home" Miles Cook, Oliver and Hilliard Miley left the Confederate Army to join Knight.<sup>11</sup>

After creating such discontent and ill-will within the area Captain Calvin Green Boone and Henry Jackson Everett with a group of local men captured Miles Cook and two brothers, Oliver and Hilliard Miley. Because the Miley's caused so much trouble, they were hanged "on two limbs of a big tree" at "D'lo Rocks" on Strong River.<sup>12</sup> Later in the year, the skeletons of these two men were found in a fish trap miles below the site of execution. Miles Cook lived to be 98 or 99 years of age and told of "the hangin" until he died.<sup>13</sup>

Although some residents refused to acknowledge the government of the

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<sup>11</sup>Interview with Dr. Ed Everett, D'lo, Mississippi, December 20, 1961; B. Keating, "A Walk Through Mississippi's History," Holiday, Volume 31 (March, 1962), p. 203; Gussie May Boggan, "The Jaynes Bridge Hanging," The Simpson County News (October 27, 1960), p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>Boggan, "The Jaynes Bridge Hanging," p. 1.

<sup>13</sup>Interview Dr. Ed Everett, December 20, 1961.



United States many Simpsonites renewed their allegiance and requested official pardons. The document below contains the standard obligation under such a condition.

ANDREW JOHNSON,  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME GREETING:

Whereas, L. B. Harper, of Simpson County, Mississippi, by taking part in the late rebellion against the government of the United States has made himself liable to heavy pains and penalties;

And whereas, the circumstances of his case render him a proper object of Executive clemency;

Now, therefore, be it known, that I, ANDREW JOHNSON, President of the United States of America, in consideration of the premises, divers other good and sufficient reasons me thereunto moving, to hereby grant to the said L. B. Harper a full pardon and amnesty for all offences by him committed, arising from participation, direct or implied, in the said rebellion, conditioned as follows:

1st. This pardon to be of no effect until the said L. B. Harper shall take the oath prescribed in the Proclamation of the President, died May 19th, 1865.

2nd. To be void and of no effect if the said L. B. Harper shall hereafter, at any time, acquire any property whatever in slaves, or make use of slave labor.

3rd That the said L. B. Harper first pay all costs which may have been accrued in any proceedings instituted or pending against his person or property, before the date of the acceptance of this warrant.

4th That the said L. B. Harper shall not, by virtue of this warrant, claim any property that has been sold by the order, judgement, or decree of a court under the confiscation laws of the United States.

5th. That the said L. B. Harper shall notify the Secretary of State, in writing, that he has received and accept the foregoing pardon.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto signed my name and caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this  
twenty-third day of October A. D. 1865,  
and the Independence of the United  
States the ninetieth.

(Seal)

Andrew Johnson

By the President:

William H Seward Secretary of State<sup>14</sup>

A contrary attitude was expressed in a communication directed to

<sup>14</sup>Pardons issued by President Johnson to citizens of Mississippi in 1865. Mississippi State Archive Files, Series E, Volume 76, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. The only other pardon on file was that of J. C. McLaurin signed February 15, 1866.

Governor Benjamin Humphreys. It stated:

Jackson Miss

November 29th 1865

The following statement of my grievances are respectfully submitted for the consideration of the proper officials, with my humble petition for redress, and relief from the wrongs received from parties hereafter mentioned in the manner as to them may see best--

On Saturday 25 "Just one Benj Brown sheriff of Simpson County Miss accompanied by Bill Maze, Samuel Mangrum, James Mangrum, and Thomas Rose and others, all of the said county did send me notice that I had to leave the said county immediately else "look up a limb," and that they would come to my Father and Mother from the county. I am not aware of having broken the law in any way whatever, and have done nothing to incur the displeasure of the above named parties, more than to hire and feed two colored men who came to me in seek of employment which I gave them.

The Colored men have also been ordered to leave the State of Mississippi, or forfeit their lives for no other offense than having left the places of their former Masters to seek labor elsewhere

his  
R. M. x Birch  
mark<sup>15</sup>

The headquarters for the Freedman's Bureau was located at Jackson. This organization was placed there on the pretense of protecting the Negroes. But to a large extent, it served the purpose of cementing the Republicans in power, and to alienate the Negro from the white man. It was supposed to protect the Negro and to give justice to all. Consequently, the white man suffered many unjust penalties. The Negroes would often falsely report that depredations had been committed by men who were innocent. As a result, the accused were arrested. Among those who were arrested and sent to Jackson were Jeff McBride, M. S. Gatlin, charged with stealing a Negro girl, and C. W. Barlow who was charged with whipping a Negro child.<sup>16</sup> At these trials the

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<sup>15</sup>Administration of Governor B. G. Humphreys: Correspondence October-December, 1865. Mississippi State Archive Files Series E, Volume 77, Department of Archives and History; Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>16</sup>Reconstruction File, p. 10.

necessary elements of mercy were lacking, and the entire system of jurisprudence seemed a mockery. Later, informed and competent judges reduced a majority of the ridiculous and contemptible court room scenes.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time the Freedman's Bureau was actively protecting the Negroes, the Klu Klux Klan was organized in Simpson County by an unknown party. Its organization was introduced, at first, in the northern part of the county, one mile from Rankin County.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the greater part of the Klans' membership was made up of prominent men both in church and the affairs of state.

There were a number of dens in the county. The first den originally held its meetings in Rankin County five miles northeast of the present town of Braxton. Although most of the meetings were conducted in Rankin County, a great number of the members were men from Simpson County. A second den held its meetings in "Bussard Hollow" one mile north of the present town of Harrisville. A third den held its meetings on the Harrisville and Westville road, five miles north of Harrisville, near New Begin, a Negro church. It was the work of this Klan that contributed to the disappearance of the carpet-bagger Wagner previously mentioned. A fourth den held its meetings near a place called Clear Branch. The latter place was in Rankin County, though the constituents of the Klan were principally men from Simpson.<sup>19</sup>

The Klan exercised great power in other counties "keeping the Negro down." However, the activities of the Simpson County dens were negligible. The Klan that met near Harrisville did nothing more than ride around in the night, arrayed in white apparel. They would appear at the homes of Negroes, ride around, make a few mumbling noises and go away. This usually had the desired effect.<sup>20</sup> The robes worn by the Klan were made by the wives and used

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

primarily to frighten the colored man. Some felt that the robes were "defensive not offensive."<sup>21</sup>

Also following the war other organizations beside the Klu Klux Klan were created to restrict the Negroes.

In 1874, an organization without a name was formed. It was similar to the Freedman's Bureau. However, the Negroes were exploited. Whenever the Negroes were dissatisfied with a white man, they would pay as much as they could to this "bureau" in order to obtain protection and justice. Needless to say, they never received the desired security.

On the other hand, some organizations were created to aid the Negro. One such group was organized at Westville and conducted weekly meetings, the Loyal League. The organization's primary concern following hostilities between North and South was to control the Negro vote. Though at first some of the Loyal Leagues gave good advice to the Negro citizens, most of them soon fell under the control of unscrupulous men and were used for the purpose of putting these men and their friends into office and appropriating money for them.<sup>22</sup>

In 1875, the group was attacked by white men who "fired cannons" and blew instruments known as a "dumb bull."<sup>23</sup> The Negroes fled and in all probability caused its president to send the following letter to Governor Ames:

The State of Mississippi  
Simpson County

To his Excellency Adelbert Ames  
Governor of the State of Mississippi  
Jackson, Mississippi

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<sup>21</sup>Interview with Mr. R. C. Russell, Magee, Mississippi, December 22, 1961.

<sup>22</sup>Cuyton, History of Mississippi, p. 193.

<sup>23</sup>Reconstruction File, p. 18.

We the colored Republicans of Simpson County of Beat No. 3. have formed ourselves into a club in behalf of the Republican Party of said county and State. We are all law abiding citizens and dont expect to do anything in violation of our state constitution in our club meetings though there is objection raised by the apposing and they say that we have no right to hold our club meeting and they at the same time are holding their club meetings and we ask your Excellency as Governor of the state of Mississippi to grant us your permission under hand and seal to hold our clubs in said county of Simpson. We wish nothing in violation of the law of our state hence we wish to know through your Excellency if we have a right as citizens of Simpson Co. to hold our club meetings or not.  
Your abt. Serbt.

Polk McNair Frest.  
Joseph Owen Sec.

Sept 20th A. D. 1875  
P. O. adress Westville  
Simpson Co. Miss.<sup>24</sup>

The response to this letter is undetermined. However, the general attitude toward the Negro can possibly be surmised in the following newspaper account which was published during this period.

The example and influence of the Negro, if placed in power, would be most injurious. View them as a race and see the preponderance of vice to virtue. We fail to see any claim that he can justly set up to rule this county; it belongs to the white man by every title known to the world, and it is the height of presumption and folly for the Negro to assume<sup>25</sup> control of the government and dictate to the intelligent whites.

There were other minor organizations in the county referred to as the "Minute Men" and the "Red Coats." The latter is disputed as to whether it really existed. At any rate, no authoritative information is available regarding their activities.

Although many whites had a hostile attitude toward the freedmen, G. W. Williams, of the Strong River Baptist Church introduced a series of

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<sup>24</sup>Governors' Papers--Adelbert Ames, 1874-1876, Box 9, Folder 83, August 12, 1875--October 31, 1875. Mississippi State Archive Files, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>25</sup>"Is this the White Man's Country," The Westville News (August 19, 1874), p. 2.

resolutions which would indicate a contrary view. These resolutions stated that:

Whereas, the Strong River Baptist Association, seeing the destitute condition of the freedmen, with regard to the teaching of the Gospel; and feeling it their duty to aid and assist them, therefore,  
 Resolved, That this Association recommend the churches composing their body that they set aside one Sabbath in each month at their respective churches for the purpose of letting the freedmen organize a church if they desire it; under the supervision of the pastor (or whom they may call) and deacons of said churches. Be it further resolved, That our ministers within the bounds of our Association are requested to act as Missionaries in this matter, and report the time they have been occupied in said service, also the churches organized, members baptized, and a full account of all their respective labors, to our next annual meeting. Be it further resolved, That the said freedmen's Churches may be represented in our association by proxy, viz: by any of our ministers or brethren in good standing in this Association. And, resolved further, That the Strong River Baptist Association was organized under the government of white persons only, and not of negroes, and that they have the clear and inalienable right to forever exclude the sons of Ham from seats as delegates from churches in this body.<sup>26</sup>

During the reconstruction period Simpson County acquired its first newspaper, the Westville News. This publication, established in 1872, was one of the first pioneer newspapers in South Mississippi. Its first editor was a "brilliant young" Westville attorney, Joseph L. Meade. The paper, "a former four page, six column folio, was printed on an old hand press...from hand-set printers' type, and 250 to 500 was considered a large circulation."<sup>27</sup> The paper was ably edited and welcomed in the rural homes of the day.<sup>28</sup>

In 1875, the epoch known as Reconstruction came to an end. Fortunately,

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<sup>26</sup>Boyd, Simpson County Baptist Association, p. 20.

<sup>27</sup>Simpson County Subject Folder--Press, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

the reconstruction period did not crush the spirit and ambition of the people. They struggled forward and overcame many obstacles, and in the ensuing years Simpson County continued to prosper and develop.



## CHAPTER VII

### POST WAR ACTIVITIES FROM RECONSTRUCTION TO 1900

Between the years 1875 and 1899 Simpson County sought to reestablish a feeling of normalcy. The stigma of reconstruction with its sectional animosity and economic degeneracy was drawing to a close, and most of the citizenry had turned their attention toward constructive improvement.

Although the county's total property evaluation dropped from \$598,480 in 1870<sup>1</sup> to \$235,203 $\frac{1}{4}$  in 1883,<sup>2</sup> the county's population increased more than two-fold.<sup>3</sup> There were 5,718 residents in 1870, 8,005 in 1880, and 10,138 inhabitants by 1880.<sup>4</sup>

The only available records, other than fragmentary and isolated newspaper clippings, which dealt with agricultural and industrial activities from 1876 to 1900 were a few census returns. These totals revealed that between June 1, 1879 and May 31, 1880 there were at least four lumbering industries producing over five hundred dollars annually.<sup>5</sup> These corporations were owned by Colow Floyd, Charles Barners, T. J. Roger, and J. M. Carley.

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<sup>1</sup>United States Social Census, 1870, counties are listed in alphabetical order.

<sup>2</sup>Simpson County Personal Assessment Roll, 1883, on microfilm in the Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>3</sup>A Summary of Statistical Data Relating to the Growth and Distribution of Mississippi Population, 1800-1930, p. 68.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Tenth Manufacturing Census, 1880, counties are listed in alphabetical order.

There was a total of \$8,600 invested in the businesses with seventeen full time employes. Two of these companies were located on Strong River, one on Bials Creek, and one on Goodwater Creek.<sup>6</sup>

The tenth county agricultural census, in 1880, showed that there were 840 farmers, out of a total population of 6,008.<sup>7</sup> Other enumerative totals, in 1880, relating to farm areas and farm values revealed the following:

Farms.....	840
Improved land.....	33,755 acres
Value of farms including land, fences and buildings.....	\$406,200
Value of farming implements and machinery.....	\$12,877
Value of livestock on farms June 1, 1880.....	\$130,969
Cost of building and repairing fences, 1879.....	\$5,130
Cost of fertilizers purchased, 1879.....	\$523
Estimated value of all farm productions (sold, consumed, or on hand) for 1879.....	\$384,897 <sup>8</sup>

Additional agricultural computations indicated the over-all principal vegetable productions as follows:

Barley	0 bushels
Buckwheat	0 bushels
Indian Corn	169,130 bushels
Oats	350 bushels
Rye	0 bushels
Wheat	0 bushels
Value of orchard products	\$100.
Hay	0 tons
Hops	0 pounds

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Tenth Agricultural Census, 1880, counties are listed in alphabetical order. This source contains forty-six pages of individual agricultural statistics which are not totaled. It can be found in the Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>8</sup>Compendium of the Tenth Census, Part I (Washington, 1883), p. 712.

Sugar-cane	
a. Sugar.....	o bonds.
b. Molasses.....	20,951 gallons
Rice.....	40,534 pounds
Cotton.....	3,501 bales
Potatoes	
a. Irish.....	515 bushels
b. Sweet.....	50,832 bushels
Tobacco.....	1,329 pounds

County livestock figures and its productions for the year 1880 showed:

Horses.....	1,367
Mules and asses.....	363
Working oxen.....	1,352
Milch cows.....	2,429
Other cattle.....	3,346
Sheep.....	4,188
Swine.....	13,861
Wool (pounds).....	8,725
Milk (gallons).....	110
Butter (pounds).....	30,830
Cheese (pounds).....	750 <sup>10</sup>

Of a total population, in 1880, of 8,008, 7,998 were native Mississippians, ninety-seven were from Georgia, eighty-six from South Carolina, sixty-one from Alabama, twenty from Virginia, and eleven from Tennessee.<sup>11</sup> Also during this year, ten foreign born residents were registered. Seven were from Ireland, and one from British America, England or Wales, and German Empire, respectively.<sup>12</sup>

The general economic characteristics of this period described below are representative of Simpson County:

'Hard times' eased up a bit, the people becoming more prosperous as they continued to work and save and live the frugal life. And signs of an economic comeback were soon apparent, which resulted in the erection of what was termed later as the 'new South' on the ruins of the old. Business revived, and industry looked this way..cotton mills were established here, and oil mills soon began to consume the cotton seed that was formerly regarded as worse than useless--these being cast into the running streams and on the road-sides to get them out of sight and out of the way. The lumber industry, also, came to the fore, the owners of the virgin pine forests eagerly grasping the opportunity of selling the

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 788-89.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 545.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

timber, land and all, at what was regarded by them as a handsome price--\$1.50 to \$5.00 per acre. Save for the set-back incident to the yellow fever epidemic of 1878, the slump in the price of cotton in the early nineties, and the financial panic of 1897, Mississippi experienced an industrial awakening up to the close of the century, which heralded a new day for all classes of her people.<sup>13</sup>

Along with industrial and agricultural advances, mediums of travel were slightly improved and public roads became more numerous. One source recognized the advantages of good roads by stating that:

The question of good roads is agitating the public mind just now and very properly so too, for this is of greater importance to the masses than any other one thing. The News is not an advocate of reckless expenditure of public money, but believes the most profitable investment our county could make at this time would be on our public highways. The mode of road working must be changed if we ever expect to have our descent roads...<sup>14</sup>

Two months later the News stated that "good roads and good bridges will benefit the farmers of Simpson County more than any other one factor."<sup>15</sup> The following month it was reported that the:

Board of Supervisors of Copiah County working jointly with the Simpson County Board ordered the building of two iron bridges across Pearl river--one at Georgetown and the other at Rockport. It is estimated that the combined cost of these structures will be about \$15,000, of this Simpson County is to pay \$2,500--her board of supervisors having passed an order agreeing to appropriate that sum and Copiah County the balance.<sup>16</sup>

From the above commentaries, it is evident that the influence of the press was seriously noticed. Moreover, to further indicate the newspapers'

<sup>13</sup>Boyd, A Popular History of the Baptist in Mississippi, pp. 133-4. In 1899, the timber lands in Simpson County were very much in demand; and a Mr. O'Hara from the Eastman Gardiner Company, Laurel, Mississippi, purchased 6,000 acres for \$2.00 per acre, scattering considerable capital through the county. See the Westville News, (April 6, 1899), p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>Simpson County News, (June 30, 1898), p. 1.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., (August 25, 1898), p. 4.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., (September 15, 1898), p. 1.

popularity; another publication, The Magee Courier, was organized on March 19, 1899, by Will Jarvis, who had been "connected with newspapers in this section of Mississippi for forty years."<sup>17</sup> Today both of these newspapers are widely circulated.

Although the State legislature passed several laws from 1876 to 1894 altering some facets of county life,<sup>18</sup> the most remarkable change was in the field of education.

The following extract from the Westville News denotes the county's advance along this line.

A Boom! The Westville School To Be The School.

A meeting of the patrons of Westville High School was held last Monday evening and a no-backdown move was made to build up a number one high school-- inferior to none.

A large amount of money has been raised to add another room to the present excellent building. The school will be thoroughly equipped by September. A music department will be added. Young men and young ladies can be prepared to enter any class in any of our colleges. A Normal department will be a special feature.

Professor H. L. Whitfield, already well known to the people has been selected as Principal, and Mr. W. L. Easterling, a graduate of Mississippi College is the elected Assistant. Mr. Easterling is a talented and enthusiastic student, and graduates with distinction.

Arrangements will be made to board pupils from a distance. Et cetera.<sup>19</sup>

In the fall of 1891, an advertisement appeared in the News which indicated the high school's policy of registration and enrollment. It stated:

The Westville High School will be divided into three classes

<sup>17</sup>Simpson County subject folder--Press, State Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. During the first decade of the twentieth century, the title Westville News was changed to the Simpson County News which it continues to bear today.

<sup>18</sup>See Laws of Mississippi, 1874-1894.

<sup>19</sup>Westville News, (June 18, 1891), p. 1.

according to advancement. Pupils of the class of the least advancement will be charged each, per month \$1.50; the next class, each pupil \$2.00; advanced class, each pupil \$2.50.

During the free term, a fee of 50 cents will be charged for each study not in the public school curriculum.

Pupils are expected to be regular in their attendance, and no deductions will be made for loss of time except in case of protracted illness.

Tuition due at end of each month.

September 3, 1891<sup>20</sup>

H. L. Whitfield  
Principal

As the article below shows, students with future promise had an opportunity to enter competitive scholarship examinations.

Simpson County is entitled to two free scholarships in the Industrial Institute and College at Columbus for girls, and four in the Agricultural College at Starkville for boys.

These Scholarships will be awarded to applicants, on the 3rd Saturday in August, 1891.

Examination to commence at 10 a.m....at Westville.<sup>21</sup>

In 1892, the following schools and their respective instructors were listed in the Westville News: "Rocky Hill, S. M. Williamson; New Zion, J. R. Williamson; Rials Creek, W. E. Williamson; Mt. Zion, Miss Emma Shivers; Palestine, Miss Pearl Williamson; Jones Branch, W. T. Murray; Macedonia, [sic], P. B. Williamson."<sup>22</sup> Other nearby schools, which more than likely enrolled Simpson County students were: the University of Mississippi, Mississippi College, Harrisville High School, Herbon High School, Harris' Business College and School of Shorthand (Terry, Mississippi), Braxton High School, and Braxton Collegiate Institute.

Along with educational advancement the respective religious denominations expanded in many areas. As previously cited, from 1853 to approximately

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., (October 6, 1891), p. 4.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., (July 23, 1891), p. 1.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Volume XX (November 10, 1892), Sec. 1, Col. 1, p. 2. A formal school of music was organized in the county, sometime prior to 1898, The National Normal School of Music. It was located at Mt. Zion and was entering its eighth session on "Monday morning, August 1, 1898." The school term lasted eighteen days, and terminated with "a grand concert." See the Westville News, (July 7, 1898), p. 4.

1900, Methodism in Simpson County was served in the main by pastors from the Westville circuit. The influence of the circuit rider was very great. For one thing he was in many cases the only person of some education from outside the community to come with a message not only of spiritual things but of general information. The long distances to be traveled and the slow means of transportation made it necessary for him to spend the night in the homes of many people and in that way exert an influence that a more casual visit would never have had.<sup>23</sup>

Another factor in the development of Methodism was the influence of the presiding elder. He was usually a man of greater experience and in many cases preaching ability and his messages to the congregations carried much weight and helped not only to bring many people into the church but also helped to establish the principles of righteousness in these communities.<sup>24</sup>

The Simpson County Baptist Association continued to expand in appreciable numbers. Membership increased 1,036 while the number of churches increased from twenty to thirty-five.<sup>25</sup> Their influence was far reaching and they continued to be the largest denomination in the county.

Entwined with religious development and returning prosperity were political barbecues, picnics, and large rallies. During such an event "magnificent speeches" were rendered by "rising young statesmen" and old party "stand-bys." At one rally the Silver Creek brass band "thrilled" the gatherings by "furnishing sweet music for the occasion." In addition, "lovely females with nodding plumes and floating ribbons enhanced the occasion, all

<sup>23</sup>Letter from Dr. J. B. Cain to Richard T. Bennett, July 3, 1962.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid. An Announcement of a Methodist "Protracted Meeting" was found in the Westville News of September 16, 1897. This indicates to some extent that the Methodist were functioning during the period under consideration.

<sup>25</sup>Boyd, An Abstract History of the Simpson County Baptist Association, pp. 34ff.



bespoke Democracy!" Moreover, an estimated crowd of 2,000 added prestige to the "gathering".<sup>26</sup>

Some of the candidates who were elected to public office from Simpson County from 1870 to 1890 were:

REPRESENTATIVES	SENATORS
1870 Joseph Bennett, Charles Caldwell.....	T. R. Gowan
1871 Joseph Bennett, Charles Caldwell.....	T. R. Gowan
1872 T. J. Hardy.....	German Walker
1873 T. J. Hardy.....	German Walker
1874 T. L. Mendenhall.....	S. Leggett
1875 T. L. Mendenhall.....	S. Leggett
1876 T. L. Mendenhall.....	Joseph L. Mead
1877 T. L. Mendenhall.....	Joseph L. Mead
1878 Stanley Gilbert.....	Duncan McCollum
1880 Stanley Gilbert.....	D. W. McInnis
1882 James S. Eaton.....	Robert E. Rhodes
1884 Thomas A. Dickson.....	R. W. Hall
1886 Thomas A. Dickson, George S. Dodds.....	R. A. Banks
1888 Alex Fairly, George S. Dodds.....	G. W. Johnston
1890 Alex Fairly, George S. Dodds.....	Barney Smith <sup>27</sup>

Throughout this period the respective courts continued to adjudicate the affairs of law, and between April and October 1881, it was reported that fines and forfeitures amounted to \$58.50 from the Justice of the Peace and \$57.05 was paid to the Circuit Court.<sup>28</sup>

Other than the activities previously examined only two additional events between 1876 and 1898 of notable significance deserve mention. These are the Constitutional Convention of 1890, and the role of Simpson County during the Spanish American War in 1898.

In 1890, there was much pressure for a new state constitution. The old Reconstruction Constitution of 1869 had not been amended since the overthrow of carpetbag rule. Thus, the Democrats felt compelled to revise that

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<sup>26</sup>Simpson County News, (November 10, 1892), p. 2; Ibid., (January 4, 1894).

<sup>27</sup>Lowry and McCardle, A History of Mississippi, p. 573.

<sup>28</sup>Reports of Fines and Forfeitures, 1881. Mississippi State Archive Files Series G, Volume 254. Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

instrument and eradicate its antiquated provisions.<sup>29</sup> The delegate from Simpson County at this convention was Thomas L. Mendenhall.<sup>30</sup> From convention records it is found that Mendenhall favored the Constitution of 1890, and served the people of the county in an advantageous fashion.<sup>31</sup> This document was placed in effect without being submitted to the votes for ratification, and remains today as the fundamental law of this State.<sup>32</sup>

In 1898, the United States went to war against Spain. Strong resentment of United States citizens against the harsh rule of Spain in Cuba, large American investments in this great sugar island, and the mysterious destruction of the battleship U. S. S. Maine in Havana harbor contributed to the outbreak of war.<sup>33</sup> As to what extent Simpson County contributed man power to this conflict it is hard to determine. But in 1890, the number of men in Simpson County subject to military duty were 1,732.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, it is probable that Simpson County men actively participated in nearby regiments. In 1898, when hostilities terminated, it was found that war had served to make Mississippians forget the old bitterness of the sixties; it had also made them forget their economic miseries, for when peace was secured prosperity returned.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Bettsworth, Mississippi: A History, p. 376.

<sup>30</sup>Proceedings of a Reunion of the Surviving Members of the Constitutional Convention of 1890 (Jackson: Premier Printing Company, 1927), p. 44.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Bettsworth, Mississippi: A History, p. 361.

<sup>33</sup>T. Walter Wallbank and Alastair Taylor, Civilization Past and Present, Volume II (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1960), p. 330.

<sup>34</sup>Biennial Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of Mississippi for the Years 1896 and 1897, to the Governor, (Jackson: The Clarion-Ledger Printing Company, 1897), p. 42.

<sup>35</sup>Bettsworth, Mississippi: A History, p. 390. Throughout the war with Spain, excellent journalistic coverage was found in practically all copies of the Simpson County News.

Prior to 1899, Simpson along with ten other counties possessed no railroad.<sup>36</sup> However, by the end of that year the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad had begun its penetration of the county with great rapidity. By the turn of the century this revolutionary conveyance had become a reality and Simpson County faced the twentieth century with confidence and renewed ambition.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>The Westville News (January 19, 1899), p. 4.

<sup>37</sup>With the introduction of the railroad such statements as "Magee, on the Gulf and Ship Island is Flourishing," and "Magee is on the boom!" were found in several local newspapers. In fact, by December 28, 1899, three new business firms had opened in Magee because of the railroad. Ibid., (December 21, 1899); Ibid., (December 28, 1899); Ibid., (September 18, 1899); Ibid., (May 18, 1899); Ibid., (September 21, 1899).

## CHAPTER VIII

### ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE 20th CENTURY

When the new century dawned in 1900, Simpson County was characterized by widespread economic optimism. Although there had been difficult times in the preceding period, by 1900 conditions had improved greatly and prosperity seemed inevitable.

Before examining the overall economic and cultural development in Simpson County since the turn of the century it will be necessary to discuss three significant events: the influence of the railroad; the transference of the county seat from Westville to Edna, now Mendenhall; and the creation of the Mississippi State Sanatorium. Each of these memorable events transpired before 1918.

The first railroad to traverse Simpson County was the old Gulf & Ship Island line, which became a part of the Illinois Central network in 1925.<sup>1</sup> This company entered the county at Braxton on "the second Sunday in June, 1900."<sup>2</sup> Coincidental with its construction, people began to move toward the railroad with every expectation of capitalizing on its enumerable benefits.<sup>3</sup>

Three years later, the fifty mile connection between Mendenhall and Columbia was begun, and by June 10, 1903, it had reached Strong River. The

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<sup>1</sup>Carlton J. Corliss, Main Line of Mid-America: The Story of the Illinois Central (New York: Creative Age Press, 1950), p. 375.

<sup>2</sup>Simpson County subject folder--Transportation, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

road was extended southward piecemeal, as funds, labor, and supplies became available. Finally in May, 1906, the railroad reached Columbia.<sup>4</sup> In 1900, the 40.9 miles of track from Saratoga to Laurel was opened for operation, and the county developed in rapid stride.<sup>5</sup>

With the advent of the "first rails" an intense commercial rivalry developed between different towns throughout the county. Encouraged by local merchants and similar vested interests, aggressive measures were adopted to secure large segments of the rapidly expanding industry. One such rivalry developed between Westville and Mendenhall.

Following the completion of the Gulf & Ship Island from Gulfport to Jackson, a demand arose for removal of the county seat from Westville, located in the interior, to some point on the railroad. In accordance with this supplication the State legislature approved a bill on March 10, 1900, authorizing the Board of Supervisors to conduct an election to determine whether or not the county seat should be changed.<sup>6</sup> The only other town in nomination besides Westville was Edna, now Mendenhall. The election returns showed that 644 electors voted for removal, 260 against, and a total of 625 ballots favored Mendenhall as the new county seat.<sup>7</sup> At the July meeting of the Board of Supervisors in 1900, acting upon the results of the prior election, the Seat of Justice was changed from Westville to Mendenhall. Interim Mendenhall had purchased a building from H. L. Heflin for \$1500, which was designated to serve as a court house. On July 1, 1900, the county records were moved from

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<sup>4</sup>Corliss, Main Line of Mid-America, p. 381.

<sup>5</sup>Subject folder--Transportation, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>6</sup>Laws of Mississippi, January, 1900, p. 201.

<sup>7</sup>Simpson County News, (May 9, 1907), p. 4.

Westville to the new court house at Mendenhall.<sup>8</sup>

A short time later a law suit was filed by T. J. Buckley and three hundred and seventy five other appellants charging that under Article 14, section 259 of the Mississippi Constitution, the court house removal was unconstitutional and that Westville was in fact the county site.<sup>9</sup> This constitutional provision states that:

No county seat shall be removed unless such removal be authorized by two-thirds of the electors of the county voting therefor; but when the proposed removal shall be toward the center of the county, it may be made when a majority of the electors participating in the election shall vote therefor.<sup>10</sup>

After months of legal proceedings the State Supreme Court rendered a decree ordering the sheriff to move, on or before November 12, 1905, the county records back to Westville. On November 10, 1905, the records were returned.<sup>11</sup>

In 1906, Representative J. D. Wilkinson, in response to wide popular demand, introduced a bill in the House of Representatives, authorizing the county's Board of Supervisors to conduct another election to settle the removal question once and for all. After a hard fight the bill passed both

<sup>8</sup>Ibid. There are no records available to reveal how or when the name Edna was changed to Mendenhall. The change was made, however, before 1907, and in honor of Thomas Mendenhall, a beloved county resident.

<sup>9</sup>T. W. McWillie, Report of Cases Decided by the Supreme Court of Mississippi at the October term, 1902, Volume 81, (Nashville: Marshall & Bruce Company, pp. 474-81.

<sup>10</sup>Joe T. Patterson, (ed.), The Constitution of the State of Mississippi, 1890 (Jackson: By H. Lachner, Secretary of State, 1959), p. 194.

<sup>11</sup>T. W. McWillie, Report of Cases Decided by the Supreme Court of Mississippi at the November Term, 1904, Volume 85: Marshall & Bruce Company, 1905), pp. 713ff; The Southern Reporter: Containing all the decisions of the Supreme Courts of Alabama, Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi, December 20, 1902-April 25, 1903, Volume 33 (St. Paul: West Publishing Company, 1903), pp. 650-51. This case is cited as Simpson County v Thomas J. Buckley et al.

houses and signed into law by Governor James K. Vardaman that same year.<sup>12</sup>

On July 12, 1906, the election was conducted in accordance with law and the following results were tabulated: favoring removal, 1,041; against removal, 405. For the location of the new county seat, Mendenhall received 937 votes, Pinola, 360, Merit 85, and Modena 7.<sup>13</sup> Finally, on November 28, 1907, at the cost of \$59,900, the present county court house was constructed, and the bitter struggle over court house removal terminated its course.<sup>14</sup>

In 1917, ten years after the court house was built, the Mississippi State Tuberculosis Sanatorium was organized in Simpson County. This hospital is located on United States Highway 49, forty miles south of Jackson, Mississippi, near Magee.

Prior to its official opening, Dr. W. H. Rowan, who had been appointed as the Sanatorium's first Superintendent, died unexpectedly, and Dr. Henry Boswell assumed the duties of Superintendent in August, 1917.<sup>15</sup>

From 1917 to 1957, under the leadership of Dr. Boswell, the institution made tremendous progress. In 1917, the hospital could only serve a maximum of forty patients; today the 240 acre institution has a patient capacity of 617; the hospital staff numbers 437. This number includes 156

<sup>12</sup>Laws of Mississippi, January, 1906, p. 258; Simpson County News (May 9, 1907); Ibid., March 1, 1906, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. (May 9, 1907); Rowland, Mississippi Heart of the South, Volume II, p. 823.

<sup>14</sup>Simpson County News (May 9, 1907), p. 1.

<sup>15</sup>"Information for Patients," (Sanatorium, 1960), pp. 44-48. See also "From an Acorn a Mighty Oak Stands," The Magee Courier, (Magee, Mississippi) December 12, 1957, p. 1; Ibid., December 19, 1957, p. 1; Jerry Proctor, "Sanatorium Chief Once 'TB' Victim," The State Times, (Jackson, Mississippi), December 23, 1956, p. 1; "Dr. Henry Boswell Ranked Among Top Medical Leaders of Our Time," The Clarion-Ledger, (Jackson, Mississippi), December 18, 1957, p. 10; Sydnor and Bennett, Mississippi History, p. 103; Bettsworth, Mississippi: A History, p. 404.



nurses, both white and Negro; and a medical staff of nine doctors, one of whom is a dentist.<sup>16</sup>

The facilities available for patient rehabilitation are modern and numerous. Besides a nine-hole golf course, swimming pool, auditorium, and housing accommodations for Sanatorium employees, a preventorium is also present. The preventorium is a two-story colonial building which has a capacity of 50 children between the ages of four to eleven years.<sup>17</sup> As one source said:

These children come from homes where there is or has been tuberculosis, or children who are weak, and undernourished who need the sunshine, fresh air, good food and recreation supplied here. [At the preventorium] They have their own dining room, kitchen and dietary staff; and the second story furnishes living quarters for the director of the preventorium and for the staff. This building is entirely separate from the tuberculosis hospital.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, a new million and a half dollar Negro infirmary is located at Sanatorium; the most modern and up-to-date institution of its kind in the South.<sup>19</sup>

In the main hospital is found a beauty shop, barber shop, library, the administrative offices, the Post Office, the Vocational Rehabilitation Office, the Occupational Therapy Shop, and the In-Sanatorium newspaper, the 'Pulse'.<sup>20</sup>

Since the organization of the Sanatorium many thousands have been cured.<sup>21</sup> It has served to drastically reduce the dreaded disease of tuberculosis and continues today as one of the nation's leading medical institutions.

About three miles southeast of Sanatorium on Highway 545 stands the Mississippi Sanatorium Farm. This farm was founded in 1918 to provide milk, eggs, and vegetables for patients confined to the hospital. Although this

<sup>16</sup>"Information for Patients," pp. 44-48.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.    <sup>18</sup>Ibid.    <sup>19</sup>Ibid.    <sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Interview Mrs. May Rowland, Former patient and Sanatorium employee for 39 years, Sanatorium, Mississippi, July 10, 1962.

farm is owned by the State, it falls under Sanatorium supervision.<sup>22</sup>

Originally the farm had 306 acres, a few grades and unregistered Jersey cattle, and a small number of white leghorn chickens which were utilized for laying and breeding purposes as well as meat for Sanatorium patients. At the present time, the laying flock numbers from 2,500 to 4,500 hens.<sup>23</sup>

Today the farm has expanded to almost 600 acres. It has one one-hundred ton, one two-hundred ton, and one three-hundred ton tile silos, and two trench silos. Two milking barns with 101 stanchions, a barn for males and two loafing barns for milk cows, three barns for dry cattle, cows, and calves can also be found. Silage and hay needed for cattle feed is also produced on the farm.<sup>24</sup>

During years of surplus milk, sweet potatoes, and eggs are sold to other State institutions. However, in recent years, the farm has been mainly producing dairy and poultry products. Additional farm crops are oats, corn, sorghum and sweet potatoes. All milk consumed by hospital patients is pasteurized and bottled in one-half pint bottles on the farm. Buttermilk is made from whole milk, and bottled the same way. No cheese or butter is produced by the farm.<sup>25</sup>

Farm employees are hired by the State. Of the fifteen full-time and five part-time employees, none are Sanatorium patients. Most of these live in homes which are located on the farm property. There are eleven homes for white employees and four for colored.<sup>26</sup> Today the farm provides an invaluable service to the Sanatorium as well as to other sections of the State.

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<sup>22</sup> Interview Mr. Walter Johnston, Retired farm manager, who served in this capacity from January 1, 1925, to March 31, 1961, Magee, Mississippi, July 10, 1962.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

In 1914, one of the largest and most complete lumber mills in the state was built at the cost of more than one million dollars at D'Lo, the Finkbine Company. As one source stated:

This sawmill consisted of two nine-foot bands and a large re-saw and had a daily capacity of more than 225,000 feet. To operate such a plant the necessary preparations were something immense...the company built more than 150 good residences, equipped with light and water, and a large ice plant, a large store, drugstore, hospital, up-to-date YMCA, school, electric light plant, turpentine camps, railroad camps in which many miles of railroad were built into the forest to move the logs to the mill.<sup>27</sup>

This company was in operation for thirteen years with an average daily labor force of approximately 400 men. In addition to this number, 100 men served in the by-products department; 100 men in the turpentine department; and 250 men in the logging sections; making a total daily labor capacity of approximately 800 employees.<sup>28</sup> The average weekly payroll was about \$21,000, and an annual payroll of not less than \$1,100,000. During the life of this mill it produced more than 600,000,000 feet of long-leaf pine timber, furnished the railroads more than twenty cars of freight daily, and built one of the most potent communities in Simpson County.<sup>29</sup>

In 1927, the Finkbine enterprises sold its interests to the Great Southern Lumber Company. By 1930, this plant had expended its resources.<sup>30</sup> As the Simpson County News stated:

The story of what happened to the virgin forests is the same old story. It is a story that tells of good times,

<sup>27</sup> Simpson County subject folder--Industry, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.; Interview with Mr. E. A. Knight, past secretary to the Finkbine General Manager between 1920-1930, Jackson, Mississippi, July 12, 1962. See also Nellie Hickman, Mississippi Harvest Lumbering in the Longleaf Pine Belt, 1840-1915. (Montgomery: The Paragon Press, 1962), pp. 179; 246.

<sup>29</sup> Simpson County subject folder--Industry, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>30</sup> Interview Mr. J. H. Teunisson, Representative of the Great Southern Lumber Company between 1920-1939, Mendenhall, Mississippi, July 10, 1962.

high wages, plenty of work for everyone, tax money rolling into the coffers of the local government and communities, but the story does not end with a 'Happily Ever After'. It ended suddenly, to almost everyone's surprise, because the forest had ended. The taxrolls stopped, good times went out one door and the wail took up his place at the other. Land was sold for taxes until there was finally no one left to buy it. Human misery and discouragement reached the lowest ebb... Unemployment...reached enormous proportions.<sup>31</sup>

Following World War I, Simpson County continued to rise economically and culturally. In the late twenties and early thirties, however, the county fell into the period of world wide depression. Throughout the thirties economic adversity continued, but culminated by 1939 as the threat of World War II was becoming manifest. From 1941 through 1945, the people of Simpson County along with other Americans, contributed every available resource toward Allied conquest.

In 1945, following the surrender of Germany and Japan, another period of re-adjustment transpired, and returning service personnel found Simpson County in a state of rapid expansion. This condition continues today.

During three wars, Simpson County has given considerable manpower. In World I Simpson County contributed 464 service men; 2,467 in World War II, and 911 in the Korean Conflict.<sup>32</sup> Also during World War II, D'ho had more service men to enlist in ratio to its over-all male population of draft eligibility than any other community, town, or city in the Nation.<sup>33</sup>

Although the county's population has decreased somewhat as the following population totals indicate this drop has not drastically hindered economic development.

<sup>31</sup>B. A. Grobmeier, (no title), Simpson County News (February 4, 1937), p. 3.

<sup>32</sup>Interview Mr. H. B. McCleure, Jr., Employee State Veterans Affairs Committee, W. T. Woolfolk Building, Jackson, Mississippi, July 12, 1962.

<sup>33</sup>Interview Mrs. Berta Lou Bishop, Clerk, Selective Service Board Number 69, Mendenhall, Mississippi, July 10, 1962.

Population Distribution Table 7\*

	1940	1950	Per cent change 1940-50	1960	Per cent change 1950-60	Per cent change 1940-60
Population Total	22,014	21,819	-1.0	20,454	-6.3	-7.0
Magee	1,221	1,738	42.3	3,039	17.3	67.0
Mendenhall	1,282	1,539	20.0	1,949	26.4	60.0
D'le	400	516	29.0	426	-17.0	7.0
Braxton	220	206	-6.0	191	-7.0	-13.0
Weatherby	149	145	-2.9	80	-45.0	-47.9
Pinola	229	143	-37.8	116	-19.0	-49.0
Beat 1	8,128	8,318	2.4	8,446	1.5	3.9
Beat 2	4,052	4,231	4.4	4,248	0.2	4.6
Beat 3	5,661	5,556	-1.9	4,568	-18.0	-17.5
Beat 4	2,286	2,067	-9.5	1,702	-17.1	-25.0
Beat 5	1,897	1,647	-13.0	1,496	-9.0	-21.2

\*J. F. Ponder, Economic Development Program, p. 12; United States Department of Commerce, 1961 Census of Population of Mississippi.

In 1960, Simpson County ranked eleventh in thirty oil and gas producing counties in Mississippi. At the present time, there are thirty-five producing oil and gas wells in the county. The assessed value of these wells is approximately \$4,400,000.<sup>34</sup>

Since 1959, 860,000 acres of forest land have been planted. Of this number 277,000 acres are under fire protection.<sup>35</sup> Forestry and timber production continues to be a basic source of income for a large segment of the county's population.

According to geographic surveys Simpson County has one salt dome located almost in the geographic center of the county. The exact size and economic commercial value of this dome is not known at present. Sand clay gravel is plentiful in the county for use on county roads. However, it is not of great economic value. Other non-metallic minerals such as asbestos granite, clays, phosphates et cetera are non-existent. There are no known metallic minerals

<sup>34</sup>Ponder, Economic Development Program, p. 14.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 16-17.

as copper, iron, lead, zinc, in the county.<sup>36</sup>

Simpson County schools, at present, are under the County Unit System. This system is administered by a county school board composed of five persons. Each person is elected for a five year term and represents a specific district. The Secretary of this Board is the County Superintendent of Education who is elected for four years by the qualified electors of the county. The County Superintendent also serves as administrative head of all county schools.<sup>37</sup>

The following list shows the number of schools and their respective enrollment for the 1960-61 school term:

	<u>White</u>	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>Teachers</u>
Magee		1,372	46
Mendenhall		901	33
Pinola		374	13
Harrisville		334	15
		<u>2,981</u>	<u>107</u>
	<u>Negro</u>		
McLaurin Vocational		852	26
Harper Vocational		835	24
New Hymn		752	23
		<u>2,439</u>	<u>73</u>

White High School Graduates per year---170  
Colored High School Graduates per year---60<sup>38</sup>

At the present time, Simpson County has approximately seventy churches, including both white and colored. A census of churches include White Baptist 44, Colored Baptist 14, Presbyterian 2, Catholic 1, Church of Christ 1, Methodist 9,<sup>39</sup> and 1 Jehovah Witness.

Today Simpson County is served with excellent communication facilities. Five newspapers serve the area. The Magee Courier, The Simpson County News, The Jackson Clarion-Ledger, The Memphis Commercial Appeal, and The New Orleans

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

Times-Picayune.<sup>40</sup> Magee has one radio station, WBJC, while six Jackson stations cover the county. Although the county lacks television stations of its own, three are available; two from Jackson and one from Hattiesburg.<sup>41</sup>

The following list gives a true and accurate evaluation of the county's medical facilities:

- |                              |                 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| A. <u>Magee</u>              |                 |
| Number of Hospitals          | 1...50 beds     |
| Number of clinics            | 1               |
| Number of physicians         | 3               |
| Number of dentists           | 3               |
| Number of chiropractors      | 1               |
| B. <u>Sanatorium</u>         |                 |
| Mississippi State Sanatorium |                 |
| Hospital                     | ...550 beds     |
| Number of doctors            | 9               |
| C. <u>Mendenhall</u>         |                 |
| Number of hospitals          | 1...30 beds     |
| Number of clinics            | 2               |
| Number of physicians         | 6               |
| Number of dentists           | 2               |
| Number of chiropractors      | 1               |
| D. County Health Department  | Mendenhall.     |
| E. Veterinarians             | 2 <sup>42</sup> |

Simpson County is serviced by the Illinois Central Railroad at Braxton, D'lo, Mendenhall, Weathersby, Sanatorium, Magee and Pinola.<sup>43</sup> The junction point of this railroad is Jackson, thirty miles northwest of Mendenhall. A branch line also goes from Mendenhall to Columbia.<sup>44</sup> Four miles west of Magee on the Riata Creek Road is the future site of the county's first airport. This field has a strip approximately 3200 feet long and 250 feet wide. It is

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 46. Of this list, The Magee Courier and Simpson County News are weekly publications.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.      <sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>43</sup>The Illinois Central Railroad in Mississippi (Jackson: By the company, 1953), p. 7.

<sup>44</sup>Ponder, Economic Development Program, p. 40.



presently being used by small aircraft and final completion is expected to take place some time in the immediate future.<sup>45</sup>

The following highways traverse the county: United States Highway 49, and state and county highways 13, 28, 43, 511, 545, 469 and 540. Today Simpson County has a total of 132.8 miles of hard surface roads. Of this number, the county has a total of approximately 30 miles hard surface farm to market roads. All of these highways are maintained by the State Highway Department. In the near future approximately twenty-eight miles of new four-lane highway will replace the now existing two-lane highway forty-nine.<sup>46</sup>

Most of the county's income is derived from agriculture. However, cattle production, lumbering, and eleven manufacturing enterprises are found. From available data, 325 employees are engaged in manufacturing.<sup>47</sup> Other occupations vary with community and individual, and contains a long diverse list.

Located in the center of Mendenhall is the Mendenhall Hotel, "Home of the Revolving Table." This dining establishment has been featured in National Geographic Magazine, The Chicago Tribune, The Times-Tribune and numerous other publications. Today people patronize "the round table" from all areas of the State as well as the nation. The hotel was built in 1912, and since that time it has been operated by three members of the same family. According to the hotel's owner, Mrs. C. Fred Morgan, the revolving tables are about sixty-five years old and were constructed by members of the family. On these tables may be found three meats, twelve vegetables, biscuits, cornbread, garlic-bread, three to four salads, a choice of drinks--sweetmilk, buttermilk,

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with several local pilots, and by personal observations.

<sup>46</sup> Ponder, Economic Development Program, p. 40.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

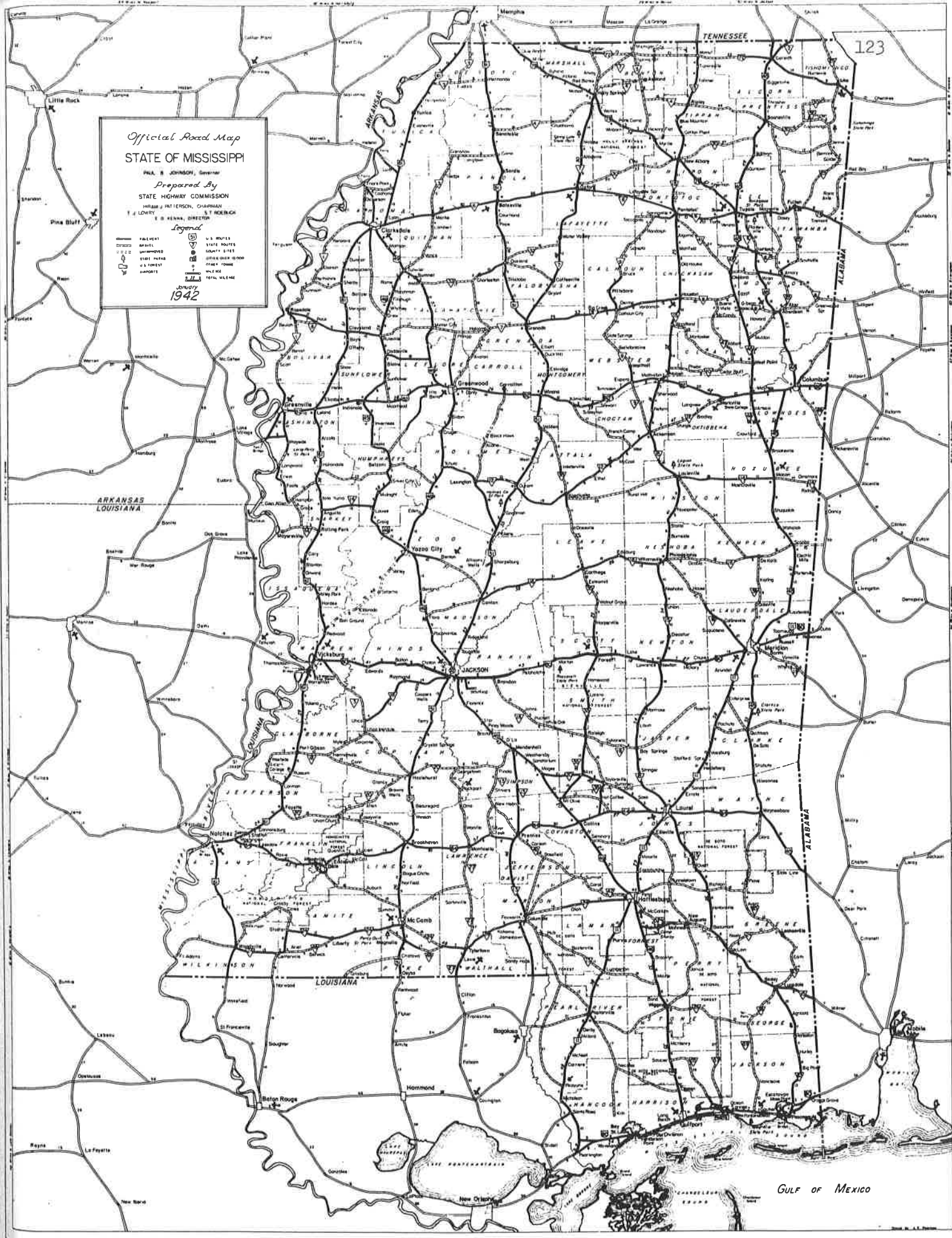
# Official Road Map STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

PAUL B. JOHNSON, Governor  
Prepared By  
STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION  
WILBUR J. INTERSON, CHAIRMAN  
T. L. LOWRY, S. T. ROBERTS  
E. B. HENDS, DIRECTOR

*Legend*

	U.S. ROUTES
	STATE ROUTES
	COUNTY HIGHWAYS
	STATE HIGHWAYS
	U.S. FOREST
	NATIONAL PARK
	NATIONAL MONUMENT
	NATIONAL SHRINE
	NATIONAL CEMETERY
	NATIONAL SHRINE
	NATIONAL CEMETERY

January  
1942



GULF OF MEXICO

tea or coffee, homemade cakes, pies and cobblers. In addition one can have "all you can eat."<sup>48</sup> In short, "the round table" is one of the best known and patronized points of interest in the county.

Off State Highway 28 on the west bank of Strong River two and one half miles west of Pinola is Camp Mondamin owned and operated by the Jackson Young Men's Christian Association. This camp was organized by the Vicksburg YMCA. Camp activities center around swimming, canoes, fishing, archery, horseback riding, crafts, hiking, riflery, and vespers.<sup>49</sup> The camp is well attended and proves to be an excellent outlet for young men.

Simpson County has limited public recreational facilities. On Highway 49 approximately midway between Mendenhall and Magee is Legion Lake. This seventy-five acre lake is the only public facility for fishing and swimming in the county other than natural streams and private farm ponds. Magee and Mendenhall have municipal pools, park, tennis courts, softball fields, and supervised youth programs during the summer months. A small golf course located at the State Sanatorium is used by several persons but this is very inadequate since the purpose for this course was to provide recreation for employees of this State owned institution. One roller skating rink is located in the Magee community. This facility is used by youth throughout the county.<sup>50</sup> Several movies as well as miniature golf courses can also be found in the county.

There are numerous civic, fraternal, and farm organizations throughout the county. These groups hold regular meetings and enhance the general economic

<sup>48</sup> Interview Mrs. C. Fred Morgan, owner of the Mendenhall Hotel, Mendenhall, Mississippi, July 10, 1962.

<sup>49</sup> Pamphlet secured from the Jackson, Mississippi Young Men's Christian Association. Note the proximity of this camp to the old Indian mound on the Grantham property. See page 17.

<sup>50</sup> Ponder, Economic Development Program, p. 48.

and cultural position of the county.<sup>51</sup>

As in other counties throughout the State, Simpson County has a County Board of Supervisors who act as the county government. These members are elected by the qualified voters in each of the five districts in the county for a four year term. They may succeed themselves, and undertake measures within State constitutional limitations for the general welfare of the people.<sup>52</sup>

From this chapter we can see that Simpson County has every possibility of exerting considerable influence in the affairs of our State and Nation. Since its formation 138 years ago it has developed from a barren wilderness to an area with potentiality. If the county continues to promulgate programs based on sound economic insight, progress in agriculture and industry seem assured. Moreover, with this type of policy, the county can continue to rise in prosperity and prominence.

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

## APPENDIX I

The upland soils of Simpson County, comprising about 75 to 80 per cent of its total area are derived chiefly from sedimentary materials of late Coastal Plain formation--this is, from beds of sand, sandy clays, with many local beds of gravel, consisting mainly of chert and quartz.

Since the accumulation of this material, changes have been brought about through the influence of vegetation, leaching, and oxidation, and probably also through deoxidation in the more poorly drained situations, where an excess of moisture has prevented aeration.

The upland soils are derived from the beds of sedimentary sand, gravelly sand and heavy clay. The Ruston and Orangeburg series are derived from the sandy and gravelly material and the Susquehanna from the heavy clay beds. The Caddo Beds soils are derived from silty material containing considerable sand. In the northwestern part of the county there are some small areas of Grenada Providence silt loam, a soil which contains very little sand but much silt and clay, and is derived from a mantle of material that may have been deposited by the wind.

The bottoms and second bottoms consist of alluvial material washed from the uplands of the region. The soils consist chiefly in color, the result of differences in drainage conditions. They contain considerable organic matter, and generally show a less marked difference between the soil and subsoil layers than do the upland soils. As material is deposited over the bottoms at nearly every overflow, there has been no opportunity for leaching and working out of the fine material from the surface portion or for advanced oxidation, as there has been in the older soils of the rolling uplands. In the case of the older alluvium--that on the terraces of second bottoms, where overflows occur no longer or only at long intervals--the material has undergone more change, and much of the soil on these terraces approaches in characteristics certain upland types. The poorly drained soils of the uplands, bottoms, and second bottoms contain considerable amounts of dark-colored and rusty-brown concretions and concretionary material in the deeper subsoil, which is in most places compact, often having the nature of hardpan.

There is a certain relationship between the physiography and the soil distribution, but this is not

everywhere definite or pronounced. The principal types have a rather wide distribution and a varying topography in the uplands. The more sandy soils are confined to the country of more rolling topography and to the steep slopes. In the small flat areas of ridge-topland, where drainage lines have not yet encroached, the silty soils of the Ruston and Caddo Bude series are encountered. In many cases the Susquehanna soil areas occupy a narrow belt following around the slopes on the same general level. In general, the Orangeburg soils occupy the steeper slopes, while the Ruston soils occupy the higher portions and tops of the ridges. There are several exceptions, however, in which the Orangeburg soils occupy the top of the ridge, while the Ruston soils occur on the gentle slopes. In the eastern part of the county, in areas where the topography is not so rugged, the Ruston occupies both ridges and slopes, in places merging into Caddo Bude or poorly drained Ruston near the base of the slope.

The first-bottom soils are considerably mixed along the smaller streams, which are subject to frequent heavy overflows. In the broader bottoms, lying along the larger creeks and streams, the lighter sandy soils generally occupy areas adjacent to the stream, while the heavier, poorly drained soils lie adjacent to the uplands.

In Simpson County 20 soil types were mapped. These are grouped into 12 series. The Ruston soils are characterized by the grayish color of the surface soils and the reddish-yellow to yellowish-red color of the subsoil. These soils are derived from sedimentary materials of the Coastal Plain.

The types in the Orangeburg series have friable, mellow, greyish-brown to light-brown surface soils and a red friable subsoil, which in some places is more sandy in the lower than in the upper part.

The Caddo Bude series includes types characterized by the gray to ashy-gray color of the soils and by the mottled grey and yellow color of the subsoil. As a rule, the lower subsoil is compact, and in many places it contains a considerable quantity of ferruginous material, which gives it somewhat the character of a hardpan. In Simpson County these soils are found in flat, poorly drained upland areas or on slopes adjacent to streams and around stream heads.

The Granada Providence series includes types having a light-brown surface soil underlain by reddish-yellow to yellow silty clay or silty clay loam, generally passing below into silty clay to clay. The lower subsoil is yellowish, with mottlings of gray and contains rusty-brown concretions and concretionary material. The mottled stratum is compact, in places resembling hardpan. The lower subsoil contains noticeably less than that of the Coastal Plain soils. The



Granada series occupies the tops of knolls and ridges. The material consists of a comparatively thin layer of what is believed to be loessial material deposited over the Coastal Plain sediments. The areas mapped in Simpson County represent remnants of the loess deposits from the higher silt and lower sand content, the Granada Providence silt loam resembles the Ruston soils

The types included in the Susquehanna series have gray to light-brownish surface soils, change to yellow below, and grade into a subsoil of mottled red and gray, plastic, heavy clay. These soils are derived from beds of heavy clay of sedimentary origin.

The surface soils of the types included in the Cahaba series are brown to reddish brown, and the subsoils yellowish red to reddish brown or dull red. The series occupies stream terraces lying largely above overflow, and represents in this county the best drained lands of such terraces. The material giving the series consists of wash from the Coastal Plain uplands, and is relatively old, having been deposited when overflows covered the occupied areas.

The Kalmia series includes types having gray to grayish-yellow soils underlain by a yellow friable subsoil, which in the lower part is in most cases mottled yellow and grey. These soils occupy second bottoms which are rarely overflowed. They are closely related to the Cahaba soils, differing essentially only in their poorer drainage and the consequently less advanced oxidation of their subsoils. The surface is usually flat, and the drainage in most cases inadequate.

The types in the Myatt series have grey to dark-gray surface soils and grey to bluish-grey subsoils, mottled with yellow. The lower subsoil is usually bluish gray, compact, and impervious. The soils of this series represent the more poorly drained parts of the stream terraces. These soils now lie above overflow, but are so flat that water often stands on the surface for long periods after heavy rains. Occurring in close association with the Cahaba and Kalmia soils, they are composed of about the same material, and they differ principally in their poorer drainage and lighter and more mottled color, the result of that condition.

The soils of the Leaf Beechy series are of a gray to light-brown color. The subsoil characteristically consists of mottled grey and yellow silty clay, which grades into mottled red and grey or red and yellow plastic clay. Iron concretions are of common occurrence on the surface. These soils are developed on the stream terraces.



The Ochlockonee soils are dark gray to brownish, with a light-brownish or mottled brownish, yellowish, and grayish subsoil. These soils occur in the first or overflowed bottoms of the streams. They are composed of wash from the Coastal Plain soils. The areas are subject to overflow, but between overflows the drainage is good.

The Bibb soils are light gray to almost white in the surface and almost white or mottled gray and yellow in the subsoil, the lower part of which is usually compact and impervious. These soils occur in the first bottoms of streams and are subject to overflow and to intermittent wet and dry stages. The material is derived from the Coastal Plain soils.

The Hannahatchee series includes soils of brown to reddish-brown color, with subsoils of a red color. The soils are well drained between overflows. The material is derived largely from Orangeburg soils, representing wash from the hills occupied by soils of that series.

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Hutton, F. A., Tharp, W. E., and Lounsbery, Clarence. Soil Survey of Simpson County, Mississippi, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1921), pp. 16-19. The soils cited in this reference are fundamentally the same today; changes are indicated in brackets. The only variance would be newer concepts which would not radically alter this appendix. In short, soil nomenclatures change occasionally but the respective soil descriptions remain. Interview Mr. Earl E. Nail, Soil Scientist for Rankin and Simpson County, Brandon, Mississippi, June 8, 1962. See also J. C. Scott, Soil Guide: Southern Extension Districts Mississippi (By the author), 1945.

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- Bush, Lawrence Deloach, Sr. Life long resident of Pinola, Mississippi, December 22, 1961.
- Bradley, Lucy (Mrs.). Life long resident of Westville, Mississippi, June 30, 1962.
- Dyar, S. W. County Agent, Mendenhall, Mississippi, June 9, 1962.
- Everett, Ed. Retired Veterinarian, noted geneologist and life long resident of D'lo, Mississippi, December 20, 1961.
- Grubbs, J. Alonzo. Life long resident of Westville, Mississippi, June 30, 1962.
- Holbrook, Marion Quitman. Life long resident of Magee, Mississippi, December 21, 1961.
- Johnston, Walter. Retired Sanatorium farm manager who served in this capacity from January 1, 1925 to March 31, 1961, Magee, Mississippi, July 10, 1962.
- Jones, Jack. State Highway Designer, Jackson, Mississippi, June 18, 1962.
- Knight, E. A. Past Secretary to the Finkbine Lumber Company General Manager between 1920-193, Jackson, Mississippi, July 12, 1962.
- Lee, Scarlet (Miss). Life long resident of Westville, Mississippi, June 30, 1962.
- Martin, Harold. Work Unit Conservationist, Mendenhall, Mississippi, June 6, 1962.
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- Nail, Earl S. Soil Scientist for Rankin and Simpson County, Brandon, Mississippi, June 8, 1962.
- Rowland, May (Mrs.). Former patient and Sanatorium employee for 39 years, Sanatorium, Mississippi, July 10, 1962.

Russell, R. C. Life long resident of Magee, Mississippi. During his more than fifty years as an attorney, Mr. Russell has served as chancery judge, United States Attorney and State presidential elector on the Democratic ticket from 1932 through 1944, December 22, 1961.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH  
of author

Richard Thomas Bennett was born December 30, 1939, in Birmingham, Alabama. In 1947, his family moved to Miami, Florida, where he subsequently attended Riverside Elementary, Ada Merritt Junior High, and Miami Senior High School. At Ada Merritt he served as president of the student council and editor of the school paper. At Miami High he was elected president of the student body, president of the Florida Boys' State Senate, and received the Harvard Book Award, American Legion Award, and Danforth Leadership Award. He also received the Elks "Most Valuable Student Scholarship" and a scholarship from the Downtown Miami Elwanic Club for his first year in college.

In the fall of 1958 he entered Mississippi College, and graduated three years later with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in history and political science. While in undergraduate school, he served as class president for two years, president of the Pre-Law Club, president of Circle K, and as District Governor. He was also active in debate, student senate, Omicron Delta Kappa, Phi Alpha Theta, and Pi Gamma Mu. During his senior year he was chosen for membership in Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.

On September 1, 1961, he married Geraldine McIntosh of Magee, Mississippi.

During the 1961-62 school session he served as a teaching Fellow in the Department of History at Mississippi College.

Clinton, Mississippi  
August 9, 1962

Dr. Howard E. Spell, Dean  
Mississippi College  
Clinton, Mississippi

Dear Dr. Spell:

The undersigned are members of the thesis committee of RICHARD THOMAS BENNETT, a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts with a major in HISTORY. Mr. Bennett's thesis has been read and approved by the undersigned committee.

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DATE August 9, 1962

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